

Sermon Title: Called, Beloved, and Kept
Scripture Text: Jude 1-2 (Bible Postcards #6, Jude #1)

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 10-23-22

Today, we continue our series on the "Bible Postcards"—those one-page books of the Bible. The final one of them is the next-to-last book in your Bible—in the English Bible, anyway. It is the Book of Jude.

This one is the most cryptic of the "Postcards"; indeed, arguably, even though it's only one page long, it may be one of the most difficult books of the whole Bible, as far as things that are meaty and difficult to understand. This one certainly has more of those than the other "Postcards," combined. Indeed, this tiny book contains more deep stuff than many books much longer than itself.

To hear most sermons and most discussions of the Bible, you might get the idea that the Book of Jude contains nothing except its final two verses; they are the great friend of every pastor who has needed to sound spiritual at the end of the service: "Now to Him who is able..."—and we'll go on; we'll get there in due time.

But this is a special occasion for me to talk about Jude today. I have done it before, but this is the beginning of something that I have wanted to do for almost 50 years. I have preached on Jude; I have preached all the way through it in one sermon, and I have done it in up to three sermons—and even when I did *that*, I felt *squeezed* for time. So, Lord willing, this is going to be the first of a seven-part series on this book. Scott Basolo and I are going to team up on you; and we are going to wallow, splash, frolic, and rejoice through the Book of Jude. A little secret is: We planned this many months ago; and I thought, "Hey, what a great run-up for that: to talk about the *other* Bible Postcards"—and it happened to fit *exactly* into the amount of time we had after Ephesians. Sometimes I think somebody else plans this stuff...

I mentioned that something happened almost 50 years ago. I was in a Greek exegesis class in seminary, taught by the legendary Dr. Robert Thomas. Dr. Thomas is arguably the finest New Testament scholar of the 20th Century. I fancy that when Dr. Thomas arrived in the presence of the Lord—September 6th of 2017—that he was immediately asked questions by people who had studied the New Testament over the last nearly 2,000 years.

One day in our class, Dr. Thomas said that if any of us were looking for a Master's Thesis topic, he would love to see someone write a thorough exegetical commentary on the Book of Jude. Well, I was one of three who stormed up to him after class to volunteer, and I hoped he would pick me. Well, as it turned out, he said, "I think there's enough for all of you." But soon, one changed his mind; he would up writing a very good thesis, but for a different professor in a different department. And the other two of us dug in; we both produced theses. And as it turned out, the other guy wrote on one aspect of the background of Jude, not even everything about the background; he devoted himself to answering whether Jude quoted from Second Peter, or whether Peter quoted Jude. My thesis ended up with the catchy title: "The Identity And The Sin Of The Angels In Jude 6 And 7." It has sold *zero* copies worldwide since then, but it is in a library.

At the rate that my friend Monte and I handled our theses, that detailed exegetical commentary on Jude would end up being over 2,400 pages. This is a special book!

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And I don't mean we are going to write a 2,400-page commentary; but my task for today is to get us started, so I'm going to do two things: The Background and The Beginning. We are going to plow our way through a whopping two verses of this book.

For The Background, we will start with the standard "Five W" questions: Who? What? When? Where? and Why? Look at Verse 1 of Jude with me: "Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ." (LSB)

First, the "Who?": Jude describes himself in relationship to "Jesus Christ" and to His earthly brother, "James" (cf. Gal. 1:19). We will circle back to that in a few minutes. He is the author of this book—no secret there.

It is harder to identify the original readers because they are not described by a place, or a time, or in relationship to an event held in common with Jude. There are no greetings from one group to another group here. So this is clearly one of the "General Epistles"—meant to be distributed generally throughout the Body of Christ. As a matter of fact, it is clearly meant for all Christians when he says it is "To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ" (vs. 2, NASB-1995; and throughout, unless otherwise noted). And we will also circle back to that in a few minutes.

We *can* take a cautious, educated guess about who this book was written to, and the simple answer is: everybody who loves Jesus. But we know that there were probably some Jewish believers among the group; and of course, we know Jude was rather Jewish, being a half-brother of Jesus.

This book has at least seven allusions to Old Testament history, as well as a quote from a Jewish document that was not part of the Old Testament, but was widely circulated and well-known among the Jews and the Jewish Christians of the First Century. We will learn about the Book of Enoch when we get to that part of the book.

So we know that Jude's brother James wrote specifically to Jewish Christians. James 1:1 is "To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad," and then he talks about their faith in Christ; so he specifically wrote to Jewish believers.

Now you have his brother, Jude, specifically *not* using primarily Jewish terminology, so we really do believe that this is was originally addressed to a group of a mixture of Jews and Gentiles, which is to be expected in the latter part of the First Century (cf. Gal. 3:28).

So that's the "Who?" Now, the "What?" Really simple to answer that: This letter is a warning to Christians about false teachers, how they influence Christians and churches, and how to resist their influence. That's an easy question; read through Jude—you'll agree with that.

So that's "Who?" and "What?" And then: "When?" Well, the fact is, the date doesn't matter very much to you and me, as far as how we understand the book; but it *is* a source of debate among the scholars.

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There are a couple of issues. One of them revolves around the relationship between this book and Second Peter. You can find some *very* similar terminology; it looks like one referred to the other; and it is a legitimate question: whether Jude used material from Peter, or Peter used material from Jude. The best evidence is that Jude quoted from Peter, which makes this book after Second Peter. Even *I* can figure out that you don't quote things that have not been written yet.

We will see in Verses 17 and 18 that Jude refers to "the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles"; now, that sounds like Jude is putting himself pretty clearly *after* the rest of the Apostles; and that would make a case for saying that Jude *did* write after the other Apostles—and he is specifically going to refer to Peter, who certainly was one of the original Apostles—but we know that all the rest of them, except for John, were dead by then. So it seems that Peter was warning of something that was to come, and Jude is saying, "It's here! We have to deal with it." That other master's thesis that I mentioned dealt with which of Peter and Jude was the chicken and which was the egg, and the conclusion is: Peter is the chicken, and Jude is the egg. Peter came first, and then Jude. Peter warned; Jude said it was happening.

I believe, therefore, that the letter was probably written between 75 and 80 A.D. Now, Dr. Thomas agrees with me, so—I'm right. I mean, you *never* disagree with Dr. Thomas on anything regarding the New Testament, and win the argument. However, most of the Bible scholars—and probably your study Bible—dates this book at around 68 to 70 A.D. And that could be. It just has to be after Second Peter for it to make sense.

But the sole reason that people say that Jude has to be somewhere after 68—because that's after Peter—but before 70 is that the Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, and they say, "Since Jude doesn't mention the destruction of the Temple, it has to be before 70." But if you want to apply that logic, First John has to be before 70, Second John has to be before 70, Third John has to be before 70, the Gospel of John has to be before 70, and the Book of Revelation has to be before 70—and they aren't. So you can't make a dogmatic conclusion about something that *isn't* said. The *point* is—if you're going to make *any* point about it—is that Jude did not mention the destruction of the Temple. That *wasn't* the issue, because it wasn't the destruction of the Temple that had anything to do with the false teachers who were coming around.

So I'm going to stand with Dr. Thomas. I hope I have many more years before I see him face to face, and I can say, "Were you right on that one?" We will see.

In the notes that I publish in the bulletin every week—and you who are watching online, you can go the same place you're watching this, and you can click on "Downloads" and you can get the notes from this—on the last page of that, I included some timelines of New Testament history, the ministry of Jesus, and the dates of the writing of the books of the New Testament. I'm not going to go over that with you *per se*, but I think it might be helpful for you; it could be one of those things you might want to fold and stick in the back of your Bible for quick reference, if you like to do things like that. Scott Basolo did something very similar to that Wednesday night with the Book of Daniel, and I loved it—so I thought, "Well, if *he* is going to do it, I'm going to do it, too."

Sermon Title: Called, Beloved, and Kept
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Date: 10-23-22

Who? What? When? and then: Where? This one also is not clear. This book has no geographical references to help us—so obviously, it isn't necessary for us to know where Jude was, or where his original readers were. From the book itself, and the fact that we know there were both Jew and Gentile believers among the original readers, and we surmise that it was intended all along to be sent around to all of the churches, we could just say: It really doesn't matter. Most people seem to think that Jude was *probably* located in or around Jerusalem—that was the headquarters of the Apostles; that's where his brother James was the leader of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Gal. 1:19; 2:9, 12). But the exact "Where?"—we don't know, and it doesn't matter.

And the final of the "W" questions: Why? Well, I give this book the subtitle: "Beware Of False Teachers." John MacArthur wrote a little tiny book on it, and I love his title, too: "Beware The Pretenders." And the reason is that this book deals with apostasy. "Apostasy" comes from a Greek word that literally means: "falling away." "Apo" is the preposition "from," and "stasis" is "standing"; it is "to fall away from where you were standing."

And it describes a phenomenon mentioned many times in the Scriptures: A person may hear the Gospel and *claim* to come to faith in Christ (Matt. 13:20). That person may act for some time like he or she knows the Lord, may become an active part of a fellowship in a local church—and then eventually turn from Him and deny it all (Matt. 13:21). Others may continue as phonies their whole life, and the reality of their spiritual condition may not be known until judgment (Matt. 7:21-23).

This book is a warning to us to be aware that there *are* such people, that they *will* infiltrate the church (Acts 20:29-30), and we need to beware of their influence and know how to deal with them.

Since I only have two verses, and we have almost finished one of them, let me show you some of the Scriptures that deal with this concept:

Matthew Chapter 7, at the end of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus' words: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven..." Now, stop right there. There *are* people who say, "Jesus is my Lord," and they *don't* belong to "the kingdom of heaven." "Not everyone" who says that, "but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter." In other words, you *live up to* what you claim: that Jesus is the Lord, and you are the slave. He continues: "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord,'—and then, listen to this resume; it's some pretty flashy stuff—"did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I *never* knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.' " (vss. 21-23; cf. Ps. 145:18; 2 Tim. 2:19; Titus 1:16; Heb. 3:14; 1 Jn. 2:19; Rev. 14:12)

I had *shivers* down my spine, the first time I read that! And I wondered, "Could *I* be?" Well, the answer to that is: Do you want to do the will of God? If you do, you're not one of those (cf. Ps. 119:97; Ezek. 36:27; Jn. 7:17; 10:27; Rom. 7:22; Phil. 2:13). But there *are* people who are (e.g., Jn. 6:70-71; Acts 8:13, 21-23; Col. 4:14 with 2 Tim. 4:10).

Sermon Title: Called, Beloved, and Kept
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There is also Jesus' parable of the four kinds of soils. You know, one is like hard soil—seed bounces off the hard soil; the Word of God bounces off of hard hearts (Matt. 13:19). Then there is a soil that receives the Word and it sprouts and blossoms and bears much fruit (vs. 23). But in between, there are two other kinds of soils. Matthew 13:20-22— "The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away." There's that word. "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful."

Now, there are preachers and commentaries and books out there that try to make those two cases be a category that they describe as Christians who never bear fruit—so they *will* be in the Kingdom, but in *this* world it won't show that they belong to the King (contra Jn. 15:2a, 6). Well, that teaching receives a certain acceptance. *I wish it was true!* All of us know people who *claim* to know Christ—or, *have* claimed to know Christ—but they don't *live* as if Jesus is Lord. And we *want* those people to go to Heaven.

There is actually a book I have in my library that came out almost 50 years ago, that says that if, at *any* point in your life, for *any* amount of time, you declare you believe in Christ, you are saved. Oh, how I would like that to be true! Frankly, as much as I love you, I would spend a *whole lot* more time going out and doing *anything* I can to manipulate people to say those magic words, or repeat a magic prayer or something, so I can get them into Heaven! It would be *cruel* not to—if that was true.

But that is not what Jesus meant (cf. Jas. 2:14, 26; 1 Jn. 2:4). He also said: "Every good tree bears good fruit" (Matt. 7:17); and if you are "abiding" in the "vine," you *will* "bear fruit" (Jn. 15:4), and God will "prune" you so that you "bear more fruit" (vs. 2) and "much fruit" (vs. 5).

So, right after the Parable of the Soils—that mentions a couple of categories of apostates—Jesus also told the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. The "tare" is the weed that looks just like "wheat" (Matt. 13:25); and during the sprouting and the growth cycle, you can't tell the difference between "wheat" and "tares"—only at the "harvest" do you find out that you have weeds there (vs. 30). And so there are some who are never exposed in this life, but they fall "short" (Heb. 4:1). There is a warning about them.

Jesus, during His ministry, had a lot of people follow Him. And near the height of His popularity, *Jesus* challenged the faith of some of the people who were following Him—who *said* they believed. He had just said that He is "the bread of life" (Jn. 6:35), and some people were trying to figure out what He meant by that; they could not understand it. And so, to people who were following Him, Jesus said this, in John 6:64—"But there are some of you who do not believe." And Verse 66—"As a result of this, *many*"—ooh, *that* is an "ouchy" word—"many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore." Jesus, *during His life*, had *many* who *said* they believed, *said* they would follow—and then they walked away when He challenged them to total commitment.

Sermon Title: Called, Beloved, and Kept
Scripture Text: Jude 1-2 (Bible Postcards #6, Jude #1)

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Date: 10-23-22

Then, there's John 8:30-32. This is at one of the feasts that Jesus attended in Jerusalem: "As He spoke these things, *many*"—there it is again—"many came to believe in Him. Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him"—at least, they had said so—Now, look at this; there is an "if/then" statement: "If you abide in My word"—in other words, "If you live up to what you hear; if you live by what you *say* you believe—"If you abide in My word, *then* you are *truly* disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (NASB-1977) (cf. Heb. 3:14; Rev. 14:12) How many times have you heard, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"—and you haven't heard the *first* part of that sentence? Notice that that word "truly" means that there are "falsely" ones; there are ones that are "false" disciples (2 Cor. 11:26).

The Apostle Paul understood this as well. Later in Paul's life, he wrote to Timothy. In First Timothy Chapter 4, Verses 1 through 3, he says: "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will *fall away*"—there's the verb form of "apostate" again—"fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth."

Now, that isn't even *subtle*. That isn't even hard to understand. Someone who says that if you want to be super-spiritual, you have to remain unmarried—ever heard anybody say that? Ever heard of any groups that say that? That is "*doctrines of demons*"! Have you ever heard of any groups that say you have to eat a certain *diet* in order to be spiritual? Yeah—they are there! "Doctrines of demons"—they have "fallen away from the faith" which actually *sets us free* from that kind of legalism! (e.g., 1 Tim. 4:4-5)

Then there's First John 2:18-19. John—probably writing *after* Jude, even—says: "Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared..." He had read Peter; he had probably read Jude; and he said, "They're here!" "Many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour." Now listen to this: "They went out from us, but *they were not really of us*; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us."

So by the time Jude wrote this, there was good reason to be concerned about doctrines that were being taught by some people who *professed* to be Christians. Satan has *always* attacked the Church by counterfeiting and by introducing "strange doctrines" (1 Tim. 1:3) and trying to confuse the issue of who has the authority to even understand and decide upon doctrine. Jude addresses those things *head-on*.

That's The Background. Now, let's look at The Beginning. My *entire* assignment for today—two verses: Verses 1 and 2—"Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ"—your Bible probably says "bond-servant" or something like that; it's the word for "slave," and I like the better translation. "Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ: May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you." (LSB)

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It is interesting how Jude identifies himself as the "brother of James." That is not a reference to James the Apostle, who was the brother of the Apostle John; that James had been killed—he was the first of the Apostles to be murdered (Acts 12:2). The James that is the well-known James is James the brother of Jude, one of the half-brothers of Jesus—one of the natural children born to Joseph and Mary (Matt. 1:25)—and Jude identifies himself as the "brother of James." And he also calls himself "a slave of Jesus Christ."

So this means that Jude was one of the half-brothers of Jesus. He is mentioned by name as one of Jesus' half-brothers in two places. Let me show you Mark Chapter 6, Verse 3—which is practically identical to Matthew Chapter 13, Verse 55. This is a case where some people were challenging Jesus, criticizing Jesus, and walking away; and they were saying this: Mark 6:3—"Is not this the carpenter..." Who does He think He is? He's just a carpenter from the little village of Nazareth! "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas"—or, "Jude"—"and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him."

So this means that two of Jesus' half-brothers wrote part of the New Testament; the other one is, of course, the Book of James—written by James. And I'm not sure if you are aware how *he* introduces himself: James 1:1—"James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." (LSB) Now, think of the background of that. I don't know how many of you grew up in large families. We know there were *at least* seven children in that family: Jesus—virgin-born; after Jesus, *at least* those four brothers that are named; and it says: "Are not His *sisters* here with us?" Well, you have to be at least two to be plural. So there were at least four boys and at least two girls born to Mary and Joseph after Jesus.

When you have seven kids, stuff happens. Now imagine how the younger six would handle it when Big Brother was *always right*, and *never* sinned (1 Pet. 2:22). Could there have been just a *little* bit of resentment there? There could have been a whole lot.

We know that during Jesus' ministry, His brothers and sisters *did not* believe in Him (Jn. 7:5). In a couple of situations, they *specifically tried* to get Him out of their hair; and in one of them, arguably, you could say they were trying to set Him up to get *killed* (e.g., Jn. 7:3-4). Ah—it can be pretty embarrassing when Big Brother is running around saying, "I'm God" (e.g., Jn. 5:18; 8:58); "I'm the Messiah" (e.g., Jn. 4:25-26); "I'm the King who was promised" (e.g., Matt. 9:6; 12:8; 13:41; cf. Dan. 7:13-4). They didn't *buy* it!

But then He was "crucified" (1 Cor. 1:23), and He was "buried" (1 Cor. 15:4), and He "rose again" (2 Cor. 5:15)—and they *did* believe. So now, can you *imagine*...I mean, I probably know how *I* would play that: "You know Jesus? *I grew up with Him!* That's my brother! Want to hear what He was like when He was in Junior High?" I would probably play that up. Both James and Jude call themselves "a *slave* of Jesus Christ," and their claim is that *they* are brothers in the Lord.

You see, once you realize that Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again, and you trust in Him for salvation, it becomes *very* clear: "He redeemed me, He bought me out of my slavery to sin; so *He* is the Lord, *He* is the Master—I am the slave! I do His bidding." (cf. Rom. 10:9; Eph. 6:6; Phil. 2:11)

Sermon Title: Called, Beloved, and Kept
Scripture Text: Jude 1-2 (Bible Postcards #6, Jude #1)

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Date: 10-23-22

So as I said: James wrote primarily to Jewish believers. His book was likely the first one of the New Testament written—at least the first epistle that was written. This one is clearly intended for *all* believers in Jesus Christ, probably the last of the epistles to be written.

But as we launch into it, I want you to see that not only is this book a warning—and this book has some heavy-duty, difficult-to-understand, and right-in-your-forehead kind of confrontation—but it also has *great* encouragement to true believers in the certainty of our Lord and who He is. And I want to point out to you three ways that Christians are described, right in Verse 1:

"To those who are *the called*"—Number 1.
"*beloved* in God the Father"—Number 2.
"and *kept* for Jesus Christ"—Number 3.

"Called" is that primary word there. Actually, the way this sentence is, "called" is at the end and there is an article at the front—which means this is all a description of one entity; so I say this is the threefold description of what it is to be a Christian.

You become a Christian—or, if you *are* a Christian, you *became* a Christian—when you made a *decision* to commit your life to follow Jesus Christ (cf. Mk. 1:15; Lk. 7:29-30; Jn. 1:12; 3:16). For some, it was a very *sudden* thing. For some, it was a gradual thing. But the point is: *You* have decided to follow Jesus (cf. Matt. 11:28; Rom. 10:9). How did we sing it? "Hallelujah! All I have is Christ! Hallelujah! Jesus is my life!"—based on what Paul wrote (Phil. 1:21; 3:8). ("All I Have Is Christ" © 2008 Jordan Kauflin, Sovereign Grace Music)

But you need to understand that when you made your decision to follow Christ, that was a result of the work of God to "call" you to Himself (Jn. 6:37, 44-45; Acts 13:48; 16:14). This word "calling" is very significant. You chose God because He chose you (cf. Ps. 27:8; 2 Tim. 2:10, 25). Or, as First John 4:19 says: "We love, because He first loved us."

Now, about this word "called"—we are "*the called*," "the called ones." Understand that the Bible teaches two senses in which God calls people to Himself. There is the Universal Call; this is a call to *everyone*: Come to Jesus, repent and believe, and you will be saved (e.g., Is. 55:1; Ezek. 33:11; Acts 10:36, 43; 16:31; Rev. 22:17). "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whoever* believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." There is a Universal Call to salvation.

One of the ways that Jesus put it Himself: Matthew 11:28-29—"Come to Me, *all* who are weary and heavy-laden..." And now, bear in mind: He is speaking to people who have been *buried* under this pile of all these legalistic "do's and don'ts," and it was a *crushing* load (Matt. 23:4; Mk. 7:3-4, 9, 13; Acts 15:10). "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." What do you need to have your soul be at rest—you're delivered forever from the penalty of your sin? Come to Jesus! That is a Universal Call.

Sermon Title: Called, Beloved, and Kept
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Or, John 7:37, at another of the feasts: "Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If *anyone* is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.' " "Does your *soul* need to be slaked? Come to Me, and drink of the *living waters* of eternal life!" (cf. Jn. 4:10, 14)

No one can *ever* say that he or she is not invited to believe in Jesus Christ (cf. Is. 45:22; Rom. 1:16; 1 Tim. 2:3-6). That is one sense of the word "calling." The *other* aspect of "calling" is what is usually described as the Effectual Call. That is the work of God when He *specifically* brings a person to faith and salvation (e.g., Jn. 3:3, 5; Acts 16:14; 1 Cor. 1:30; Gal. 1:15-16; Eph. 2:8b; 2 Thess. 2:13b; Titus 3:5b; Jas. 1:18; 2 Pet. 1:1).

And I just thought of a really, really lame illustration; let's see if it works: You might be driving down the highway. You might see a billboard that says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." And you go, "Hmmm. That sounds like a pretty good deal." Then you're driving a little bit farther and your cell phone rings, and the Caller ID says: "Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords." "Jim! Come *now!*" That is the Effectual Call. That is God *specifically* calling individuals to Himself. He brings people to faith and salvation. It *is* the work of God from beginning to end.

Remember Ephesians 2? The chapter starts out: "You were *dead* in your trespasses and sins." "Dead" people do not respond (Ecc. 9:5; cf. 1 Cor. 2:14). Get down to Verse 5—"But God...made us alive" in "Christ." He effectively, effectually "calls" people "to Himself" (Acts 2:39; cf. Jn. 1:12-13; 6:37, 44-45; 15:19; 17:2, 6; Acts 16:14).

Just to illustrate, Romans 8:29 and 30 says this: "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and"—now, listen to this—"these whom He predestined, He also *called*; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified." Do you see the unbroken chain there? Everyone who is "predestined" is "called," and everyone who is "called" is "justified" and "glorified" (cf. Jn. 6:39).

So, when he says you are "the called ones"—you are the ones that God has brought to Himself. Now, I would love to take you on a delightful theological side-trip and show all that to you in depth and breadth, but I won't. But I will give you a reliable summary. You don't have to believe me on this, but check it out: Every time you see the word "call," or a form of it like "calling" or "called," when you see that word in the New Testament *epistles*—Romans through Jude—every time you see it in the epistles, the word "call" always refers to the Effectual Call (e.g., Rom. 1:6-7; 9:11, 24; 1 Cor. 1:2, 24; 7:22; Gal. 1:15; Eph. 4:1, 4; Col. 3:15; 1 Thess. 2:12; 5:24; 2 Thess. 2:14; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 1:9; Heb. 3:1; 9:15; Jas. 2:7; 1 Pet. 2:9; 5:10; 2 Pet. 1:3, 10). Read it that way, and you will never feel like you are being misled (cf. Rev. 17:14).

So, "Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are *the called...*" We have been "called into" the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 1:9). Now, *that should thrill your soul*, because *you could not get there any other way* than by the Effectual Call of God in Christ Jesus (cf. Jn. 6:44, 65). You can't scrimp and save and claw and gouge and kick and swim and fight and talk yourself into it! It *cannot be done!* (Matt. 19:26; Rom. 8:7)

Sermon Title: Called, Beloved, and Kept
Scripture Text: Jude 1-2 (Bible Postcards #6, Jude #1)

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 10-23-22

"There is *none* righteous, *not even one*; there is *none* who understands, there is *none* who seeks for God" (Rom. 3:10-11)—*None!* You sought God because *He* called you (Acts 13:48; 18:27; Phil. 1:29). *Wow!* It's *His* work! It is for *His* glory! (cf. Rom. 9:11-16)

Now look at the second description of a Christian: "beloved in God the Father." "God so *loved* the world"! "We love because He *first* loved us." And there is a careful choice of a verb form here that makes it clear that when he says "beloved," it means that you *have been*, you *are now*, and you *always will be* "beloved" by God (cf. Ps. 103:17; Jer. 31:3; Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:9; Rev. 17:8).

File that thought, because after our Mission Sunday next week, then Scott is going to start the main part of the Book of Jude, and you are going to find out that he says, "Beloved"—that's what he calls the people here: "beloved" of God. So, that's the noun of direct address there; be ready for it.

"Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are"—Number 1: "the called"; Number 2: "beloved in God the Father," and Number 3: "and *kept* for Jesus Christ." The third description of your standing in Christ is "kept."

And again, the wording is precise. The verb tense here—and there are about three people in the room that *might* someday be able to get a little individual goose-bump out of this—it's perfect passive. *Isn't that thrilling?* What that means is that the security of your salvation is completely provided, and it is maintained by someone *outside* of yourself: God (Phil. 1:6; cf. Ps. 37:24, 28; Jer. 32:40; Jn. 6:37b, 39; 10:27-29; Rom. 5:9; 8:1, 33-39).

You can't *bring* yourself to Christ because you are "dead in your trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1; cf. Jn. 6:44; 8:43; 1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 4:4). You also cannot *keep* yourself in Christ because you still have the sin that is in you, in "the body of this death" (Rom. 7:24; cf. Jas. 3:2; 1 Jn. 1:8).

The idea that you can lose salvation flies in the face of the character of God (cf. Rom. 8:32; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:2). This book deals with some people who might *appear* to have lost salvation (cf. Matt. 24:13; Heb. 10:39), but the book itself affirms the doctrine of the security of the believer (vs. 24).

One of the ways that I have always liked to say it is: There is no such thing as *temporary* eternal life (cf. Jn. 5:24). You cannot have it and then lose it, and then have it again (cf. Heb. 6:4-6, 9).

Apostates are those who "fall away" from the faith (Mk. 4:17; 1 Tim. 4:1) because "they were not really of us"—First John 2:19—"for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us" (cf. Prov. 4:18; Matt. 7:23; Heb. 3:14; Rev. 14:12).

When I talk to somebody who does believe that you can lose your salvation—we know the same person who heard the Gospel, came around, was part of the church for a while, wandered away, drifted away, and now he kind of denies it—and I say, "Okay: You believe that that person was lost, and then found and saved, and now is lost again." Well,

Sermon Title: Called, Beloved, and Kept
Scripture Text: Jude 1-2 (Bible Postcards #6, Jude #1)

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it says you are saved by the will of God (e.g., Jn. 17:2), so you'd have to believe God changed His mind *twice* for that to be true. But here is what *I* would say to that person: "We *care* about this person, and they are not living right. So, what would you do if you think he is lost? You would go to him, you would pray for him, you would preach the Gospel to him, you would open up the Scripture and show him the error of his ways, and call him to give his life to Jesus Christ, right? Now, *I* would believe that this is a person who *never was* really 'of us,' so how would *I* treat this person? I would pray for him, I would go to him, I would preach the Gospel to him, I would open the Bible to him, and then call him to repentance and to turn to Jesus Christ."

There are only two kinds of people in the world: lost and saved (cf. Matt. 12:30; Jn. 8:47; 10:26-27; 1 Jn. 3:10; Rev. 20:15). Jude is telling you: You are secure in Christ; and, boy, do you have an enemy out there! (cf. 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 12:17)

All of that difficulty with the sovereignty of God and calling and election and the security of the believer is that much of the time, we can't tell the difference between a wandering, temporarily disobedient Christian who is doing something he shouldn't do (cf. Ps. 32:3-4; Matt. 26:69-75; Lk. 22:32) and an apostate who is rejecting what he said he believes (cf. Matt. 26:14-16; Acts 1:25; 1 Tim. 4:1).

One more quick note here; it's from Verse 2. There is a small group of you that might understand what a perfect passive verb is. Now, for the super-duper-*hyper*-elect—*very* special individuals—let me tell you that Verse 2 has something unique about it. "May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you." There is one verb there, and the verb would be translated "may be multiplied to you." We can't put it all in English in the order that it is in Greek, because that is all one verb. But here is the really cool thing: This is one of the very few verbs in the entire New Testament that is in the—are you ready for this? I think you're prayed up—this is in the *optative mood*! Wow! We don't have this verb form in English; we don't have a way to directly translate this, so we have to circumlocute. The "optative mood" is the verb form that expresses a wish or a hope regarding a certain action: "May this be multiplied to you."

So just like I said in Second John, and like I said in Third John, here is Jude's version of it. He gives you a *great* way to pray for fellow believers! What better could you ask for than, "May mercy and peace and love be *multiplied* to you"?

"Mercy" means that you don't get what you deserve (Jas. 2:13b). You *deserve* "wrath" (Rom. 1:18), but Jesus took the "wrath" so that you can receive mercy (Rom. 5:9), by His grace (1 Pet. 3:18; cf. Is. 53:5).

"Peace" means that you are no longer "alienated" from Him (Col. 1:21). While you were His enemy, He died for you: Romans 5:8-10—"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Oh, "beloved" ones "called" of "God"—I *pray* that your understanding of that will be "multiplied" every day!

Sermon Title: Called, Beloved, and Kept
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Before we go for today, I have two exhortations for you:

One is: We are going to be here for a while—Lord willing, a seven-part series and one interruption, so over eight weeks—so I would ask you to please read through Jude a few times. Whatever else you're reading in your Bible, you can add Jude on; it will add a few minutes to your day. And as you do, it would be great to write down the things that you observe that you would like to go deeper with, the questions that come to mind, and the things that you think need further study. I think there's a pretty good chance that your list will become *longer* than the Book of Jude. Why, you might have a 2,400 page list of questions. I don't know; we'll see. That's why we just want to *marinate* ourselves in this book. It *will be* a blessing.

But *much* more importantly: Beyond getting our questions answered, make sure you understand what it means, and that it describes you—that you are "called," "beloved in God the Father," and "kept for Jesus Christ." (cf. 1 Pet. 1:3-5; 2 Pet. 1:10a)

And let's pray:

Our Father, how we thank You for the privilege that is ours to be in Christ. Father, we are trophies of His grace, and it is for His glory. I ask that You will give us discernment to be able to not only understand just the basics of Your Word, but to distinguish what is right and true from what is almost right and sounds good. Father, use this book to that end in our lives. And please, if there is anyone here who has not yet heard Your call to faith in Christ, bring them to Yourself today. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.