

## **Who Was Jude?** **by Fred DeRuvo – Study-Grow-Know Ministries**

The book of Jude is only twenty-five verses in length, but it packs a spiritual wallop! Jude, the brother of James (and half-brother of our Lord Jesus), writes a message to believers about the times in which they lived. Those times are not at all that much different from the days in which we now live.

Jude warns against apostasy, licentiousness, and the mockers that are destined to be part of the last days. Even during Jude's day, mocking the Lord's return had already begun. How much worse is it today, roughly 2,000 years later?

In 2011, global society is experiencing many changes and not for the better. All of it points to the fact that this world is moving toward the end of human history. In spite of the obvious signs, people continue to change the gospel, watering it down into a "live as you please" dogma.

People ridicule the Lord and those who follow Him. Laws in society are changing at a very fast pace. It's out with the old and in with the new.

The most tragic part of everything is that within Christendom there are those who mock the Lord's coming, physical return. They say it happened spiritually in A.D. 70. Did it?

What message does Jude have for Christians today? How can we benefit from the wisdom of this man, who wrote hundreds of years ago and could not envision all that we are now experiencing?

In many ways, Jude lays a strong foundation for protecting the gospel, truth that has been entrusted to us by the apostles themselves. Jude also helps us understand that wolves exist among us. They come to us with flattery and false doctrine because they want not only to be accepted by us, but want to gain *from* us.

False teachers and prophets have existed for some time, going back to the days of Moses or earlier. They present a unique problem because of their proclivity to initiate situations that deliberately place them in a positive light.

As our society grows more dangerous because of its denial of God and His truth, we need to be more influenced by Him and His Word. While the enemy of our souls has plans to shipwreck our faith, Jude asserts that by anchoring ourselves to Him and His truth found in His Word, we will be completely prepared for the onslaught of the enemy.

Jude is a book of warning *and* hope. He warns us of the dangers that lie immediately ahead as godlessness continues to increase and urges us onward to the reality of hope we have in Christ Jesus. May the short book of Jude open our eyes to the tremendous truths found within God's Word, truth that makes us free to glorify Him.

*"Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James"* Jude 1:1a

The book of Jude was obviously written by a man named Jude. Who is this Jude? Church tradition attributes this short book or letter to the Jude whose brother was James, who was half-brother to our Lord. This would make Jude Jesus' half-brother as well.

It is likely that Jude chose to identify himself with James, who was understood to be the leader of the church at Jerusalem. This would pave the way for his letter to be accepted more readily than by simply saying that he was the half-brother of our Lord. He didn't want to be seen as capitalizing on the fact that He was half-brother to Jesus. By doing so, Jude also established the authority for his letter – the reason he wrote it and why it should be heeded.

Please notice that Jude refers to himself as a "bond-servant" of Jesus Christ. At its core, this means that Jude is literally *enslaved* to Jesus. As a slave, Jude willingly does whatever the Master – in this case, Jesus – asks of him.

Because he is a bond-servant, Jude has no mind of his own. He lives to fulfill the will of his Master, Jesus. Someone has wisely stated that the words "no" and "Lord" cannot go together when given an assignment.

We cannot sit back and say, *"No, Lord. I really don't wish to do that. Please don't make me."* To adopt such a position is to literally *deny* that Jesus is our Lord. In order to truly follow Jesus, we must be willing to go where He would have us go and do what He would have us do.

There is no middle ground here. Jesus Himself states this clearly when He says, *He who is not with me is against me* (cf. Matthew 12:30; Luke 11:23; see also Mark 9:40) and *I wish you were hot or cold, but because you are lukewarm, I spit you out of my mouth* (cf. Revelation 3:16).

The real truth of the matter is that it is incumbent upon each and every authentic Christian to take these words to heart, just as Jude did. Do we consider ourselves to be "*bond-servants*" to Jesus, willing to do whatever it is He commands? Are we completely sold out to Him and His purposes as He was (and remains) completely sold out for our salvation?

While He lived on this earth, Jesus never considered His own needs above the will of God. Daily, moment-by-moment, our Lord offered Himself into the completely capable hands of

the Father, depending upon Him to provide what He actually needed, not what He was tempted to *believe* He needed.

Once a person comes to saving knowledge of Jesus, we enter into that life through the narrow gate, from which the narrow road extends. It is called “narrow” for a reason.

First, the narrow gate that leads to a narrow road, which leads to eternal life, is difficult to find. “*For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it*” (Matthew 7:14). Why is this gate so hard to find (implied by the fact that “few” find it)? It is because humanity’s self-centeredness keeps us from finding it.

Most of us are too selfish to even want to learn about God’s things: eternal life, sin, etc. We think we are content to find our own way, but that way only leads to death – eternal punishment (cf. Matthew 7:13).

Finding life eternal is something that requires people to at least be willing to change their opinion about Jesus, something many refuse to do. They believe if they change their minds about Him it will mean that they will have to give up everything they have and become either a monk in some monastery or the Lord will surely send them to the remotest part of Africa as a missionary. It is a lie that the enemy of our souls continues to use because it has worked for so long.

What the Lord wants from us is our life – yes, that is true. However, what we often fail to realize is that He has gifted us with certain talents and gifts that were placed there specifically for Him to use.

For instance, I am a writer. I love to write and I love the study that goes along with that. At the same time, I am creative. I enjoy doing layout and design. When these two gifts are married together, I find that I thoroughly enjoy writing books and creating the covers and interior images that go with them.

I also love to teach and speak before groups of people. These things I believe were given to me by God. They are not things that I gave myself. While I can and have fanned these gifts into a flame by practicing them and doing what I can to make them better, the gifts themselves were given to me.

Maybe you have a gift in the financial area, making you a very good businessperson. Maybe you are gifted musically, playing musical instruments, singing, or both.

Maybe you have the gift of service. You thoroughly enjoy meeting the needs of others, not so that you might get something in return, but so that you will have the satisfaction of seeing someone else’s needs met.

These gifts and many others like them are given to us by God. Simply because we become Christians does not mean that all of a sudden the Lord is going to ignore those gifts. He may opt to use them in a way that you do not see coming, but the end result is that you will be far more satisfied when you realize you are using those gifts as God would have you use them, as opposed to simply using them the way you see fit.

Jude considered himself a bond-servant of Jesus. Are you? This is something I must ask myself every day. Am I submitted to His will for my life? Am I asking Him on a daily basis what it is He has for me *now, today?*

Thanks for joining me today. Until we meet again, may the Lord open your eyes to show you how blessed you are in Him!