

## CHURCH CAMP 2011

### SESSION 1- JUDE 1-7

Read vs. 1-7

Introduction:

The book of Jude is just one chapter long, and consists almost entirely of warnings. It starts with specific warnings about the dangers of following false teachings and continues with general warnings about the danger of believing that “sins don't matter” because we will always be forgiven. If you have been in church in the last year you probably recall hearing some similar warnings in the book of Romans. The author here, just as Paul does in Romans, tells us that we should not and cannot disregard the impact and damage sin does in our lives and the lives of others, we can't take a position that living in sin is OK, because it is not. There is always consequence to sin.

I should tell you that this book is one of the most controversial books in the Bible- it was the closest (or among the closest, along with Hebrews and Revelation) to not being included in the New Testament for certain theological reasons and references to non-Biblical sources. One of the main reasons it was apparently included was the author's connection to Christ-even though I believe the author goes out of his way to not use that as his authority. We can certainly discuss the canonization of Scripture and this book specifically as a side bar, but it is sufficient for me in writing this session to trust that the book is God-breathed and inspired.

It is not certain that Jude was referring to the Gnostics in this book, but it certainly seems logical that is who he is talking about, or some similar group. It is clear that the teaching they were putting forth was consistent with Gnostic belief that we should “sin so that more grace could

abound”. Again, where have we heard that argument refuted lately? So let's begin our study of this book and try to keep the context of some of the things we have studied recently in Romans, because there is certainly a connection.

Verse 1:

**Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,**

**To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ:**

As we begin our study of this short little book, in fact the shortest book in the New Testament, our first task is to identify the author. Obviously, it is written by a man named Jude or Judas. But which Jude are we talking about....there are a couple different ones referenced in the New Testament. But we are given enough information to know which one, and I think the first thing that is worth noting is how this Jude defines himself. The very first thing he says about himself is that he is a bondservant of Jesus Christ. The literal Greek word is *doulos*, which means servant, but in either a figurative or literal sense, therefore frequently meaning servant in a qualified sense of subjection or subservience; as one who has willingly given himself to service.

You may remember we studied this same concept recently in our study of Romans 6 and 7. Paul started his string of logic in Romans 6:15 with the question: “What, then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? Certainly not!” These apostates in Jude, these gnostics, are in similar fashion posturing that very notion- that we CAN sin so that grace will abound. They are not slaves to anything or anyone...the grace they claim in Christ allows them to do whatever they want. But Jude is stating right from the start...I am a slave of the Lord Jesus Christ and as such bound to serve Him.

I wonder if it's not possible that Jude established his position as a bondservant before anything else for this very reason- not so much as an introduction, not to establish any personal acclaim, (calling yourself a slave isn't the best opening line to establish credibility in most cases) but to establish that his bondservant status is in direct opposition to what these certain men were slaves to. I think it's entirely possible that Jude is drawing the battle lines right from this first sentence....this is who and what I am and it is in direct opposition to who and what these men who have crept in are. It is likely that these men wouldn't even accept the concept of being a bondservant to Christ...that would fly in the face of what they practiced, which was total license to do whatever they wanted under the cover of Christ's provision of grace. Jude goes beyond that and says, yes, those who believe in Christ are bondslaves to Him...and these men are slaves of their sinfulness, slaves to their fleshly desires. He points out, as Paul does in Romans, that we are slaves to one or the other...period.

Jude further goes on to identify himself as a brother of James. Now think about this for a minute...in Mark 6:3, we see that James and Jude are both brothers of Jesus....this brother of James is also a brother of Jesus. Now let me ask you a question...if you were trying to establish yourself as someone who was well-connected with Jesus Christ, wouldn't you maybe be sure to mention that he is your brother (or half-brother)? Why wouldn't Jude state it that way? Wouldn't it have made sense? Wouldn't it lend legitimacy to his argument he was about to make? I believe Jude didn't state it that way in his introduction because he recognized it was not particularly relevant. It wasn't his earthly connection to Jesus that was significant, it was his acceptance of Him as the Christ that was relevant, and that didn't happen apparently until after the crucifixion. It is important to note here that John 7:5 tells us that Jesus' brothers did not believe he was the Christ when he was on earth. They came to Jesus as Christ the same way we

must...by accepting the grace he offers us; by believing that He is THE WAY THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE; by bonding yourself to Him as a wife and a husband; by being a faithful, loyal bondservant of the good Master. He was writing as a slave to the Christ, not the brother of Jesus.

Jude didn't look at himself primarily, or at least didn't think it relevant to the argument, as a half-brother or brother of Jesus. Jude saw Jesus as his Lord. When Jesus told his disciples "You call me Master and Lord, you say well, for so I am.", Jude properly saw himself in that position as well.

Secondly, in this verse we see who the letter was written to. As Mike has often pointed out in other books, remember this is a letter and we are reading someone else's mail. Surely, it has application to us, it is intended for us to read, it is certainly for our benefit and edification, but it was not directed toward us originally. He is sending this to people for whom he has some affinity and history and with whom he has a connection to....beloved brothers with whom he shares a common salvation. They are further described as sanctified, or loved, by God the Father. I know I make this point every year...but think about that for a moment. These people and all of God's people are loved by Him! How precious is that? As undeserving as they were and as we are...He loves us. We need to stop and get our heads around that for a minute! We need to take stock of what it means to be loved by the Creator of all things. I remember Mike talking about a great theologian (I can't remember who), and he was asked what was the single most important truth he had ever learned in all his years of study. And his answer was "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." I am not suggesting that we minimize the depth of our study of God's word, but I am suggesting that in doing so, we never stray too far from that one first fact....that we frequently re-orient ourselves to that simple fact. The God of the universe loves me, therefore I should live how?

The next thing we see is that they are preserved in Jesus Christ...preserved or kept. The Greek word is tereo (tay-reh-o), to guard from loss or injury by keeping the eye upon. Kept" is a key word in this epistle occurring five times (vv. 1, 6 [twice], 13, 21).

Other Scriptures elaborate on this concept (i.e. Jn. 10:28-30):

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand. 30 I and My Father are one." (Jn. 17:9-19 9) "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. 10 And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. 11 Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We *are*. 12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. 13 But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

Many of you put up preserves every year. Many more of us apparently enjoy them after they have been prepared, judging by our waist lines. You know when you are making preserves that you have to very carefully watch until they reach the right temperature, then you set them out and watch and listen until they seal. If you don't take those precautions, you will find that they

were not preserved and you have to throw them out. You take watchful care because you want them to be preserved for the future. You oversee the preservation process. In like fashion, Jude cares for this flock...he is overseeing what has been preserved in Christ. Similarly, Paul in Acts 20 says “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. “

**Verse 2- Mercy, peace and love be multiplied....**This is a common greeting, at least common in frequency...it is found in other places in Scripture, but it is uncommon in terms of its implications...mercy, peace and love from God. This is basically Jude saying that he is praying for these things for these people. It isn't like us saying some casual passing greeting to some acquaintance on the street...there is substance behind it. This is wishing them TRUE mercy, peace and love... The kind that is only found within the brotherhood of Christ and under the one, true God. And if we have these things in abundance, they can and should be multiplied...multiplied in ourselves, in our church....built on, passed on to others. We need God's mercy in view of our exceedingly sinful condition. We need His peace in view of the subtle and stimulating temptations that surround us on every hand. And we need His love to sustain and encourage us in our spiritual warfare. Jude's readers needed all this help in view of the false teachers' influence, which he proceeded to discuss.

**3-4 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out**

**for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.**

One literal translation I found on this, from Word Studies from the Greek New Testament wrote these verses this way: “Divinely-loved ones, when giving all diligence to be writing you concerning the salvation possessed in common by all of us, I had constraint laid upon me to write to you, beseeching you to contend with intensity and determination for the Faith once for all entrusted into the safe-keeping of the saints.” So, first of all, note in this verse that he calls them Beloved...and I refer back to what I said earlier about why he is contending in such a strong fashion...he has a history, a track record and a commonality in Christ with them. They are dear to him... precious. They are beloved to him and devinely loved by God, but what he is going to say to them probably isn't going to sound very loving (though in fact it is). He is going to use strong, harsh words that leave no doubt. It's the kind of love you would expect a parent to use when they are warning a child...the kind of love you as a flock should expect from a shepherd. One of the most difficult things I have ever endured as an elder and overseer of this church, is a time in which I do not feel that I adequately protected the flock and there were significant consequences. It was not a time for negotiation or debate or discussion group sessions; it wasn't a time for being nice and compromising, it was a time for discernment and warning and guarding at all cost. Churches are blown up all the time by just this sort of thing....usually not by confrontation, but by lack of due-diligence, vigilance, strength. The wolves CREEP in and devour. When the shepherd is caught off guard as much as the sheep, he might be able to relate to them, but he sure as heck can't protect them.

The question I have to ask myself...the application I have to make as an overseer...is this: Are you all beloved to me? Beloved enough that I wouldn't take the path of least resistance in contending for you? If I was writing this letter to you, could I protect and warn and shield you with the same

fervency as Jude? Could I address you as “beloved” and do it without hypocrisy? I am working on my answer to those questions. Next he says that he was diligent to write concerning our common salvation. Again, don't confuse this to make it out to say that our salvation is common in the sense of being ordinary or unremarkable, because certainly it is not. Certainly, it is common in that it is shared...they have it in common, it is a common-bond. Also, understand that the word common is the English translation of the Greek word *koines*. The New Testament was not written in classical Greek, but in *koine* or common Greek, so that it could be understood by all, educated and uneducated.

So here he begins to tell his beloved readers his purpose for writing...the need to write, which is apparently because of circumstances: he is writing about their common salvation and to warn and exhort that they contend earnestly for the faith that he shares with them and that is established once and for all...that it is being challenged and will require their utmost diligence to ward off. Jude is a call to arms. It is screaming out to them to wake up before it's too late. It's the burglar alarm going off, warning of trespassers. Hit the warning lights! In Eph. 5:8-14, we read: “8 For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), 10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. 14 Therefore He says: “Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light” We need the light that Christ provides in order to expose the works and the workers of darkness. We need the burglar alarm going off and the automatic dusk to dawn motion detecting light. The evil that is out there is insidious, deceitful, hidden from plain view. To put it in modern computer-age terms, we need the anti-virus running. These believers needed it and Jude is sounding the alarm.



A while back there was a computer virus that went across the whole world via the internet...I think it originated in Cuba, and it was called the “I love you” virus. You would get this e-mail that looked like it was legitimate from someone you knew and it was titled “I love you”. But when you opened it, it would wreck your operating system and in the process get all your contacts and send them a little love note, too. This is how these certain men worked...they crept in under the guise of something appealing and soon could destroy the whole church “network”. Jude is telling the believers “ Use the anti-virus that was once for all delivered to you .Check your spy-ware! I already installed it for you before. Don't delete the warning-it's there to help preserve your operating system.”

I read that the Greek word for the verb “crept in” is *pareisedusan*, which indicates a stealthy, secret and subtle insinuation of something evil into a society or a situation. I don't know if there is an actual connection, but when I read the word, my first thought was it sounded like parasite, and that sounds pretty accurately descriptive to me.

The next point I want to make from this verse is: Remaining in the faith requires that we contend for the faith. There are several tools that are required to do this, and God has provided us with all of those tools. It requires knowledge of what the faith consists of, and he has given us His word that defines it. But we have to study it, we have to exegete it. We have to know it intimately. How can we properly defend it if we don't know fully what it is? How can we keep from things creeping into it if we don't recognize them as being opposed to what it is? You have to know your subject matter...this is true of any topic. As part of my job, I go around to the schools and teach things like how to use a fire extinguisher and CPR. I couldn't very well do that if I didn't know the topic explicitly...it would be very easy for some wrong method being taught if I didn't completely understand the right method. I've been taught the right way to do those things and that is my first defense in knowing the wrong way someone else might try to teach.

So we need to know it, then next we have to remember it. One of the greatest downfalls that can be tracked in the early church and certainly more so today is that Christians forget to remember.

Philippians 3 verse 1, Paul stated-

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you *is* not tedious, but for you *it is* safe.

Folks, never get weary of hearing sound doctrine, never say 'Oh, we've heard all that before', or, 'We know all that', or, 'We're sick of hearing that' -or "When is he going to get off that point" because the moment you stop hearing it, and the moment you ignore error, that error and falsehood will become established! Remember what I read from Paul in Acts 20...for three years I didn't cease to warn everyone with tears. Do you suppose that just possibly Paul knew how important this was, how easily it would be for them to grow weary of it? The Scripture teaches that there is no new thing under the sun, and these apostates weren't new, and their behavior and their character weren't new at all - they haven't changed, in essence, from that day, in Jude's day, 'til today.

I don't know for sure about this church Jude is addressing, but I feel certain that it is true today among many who call themselves Christians that there is a general lack of theology. Many Christians, even ones that attend church regularly, I fear couldn't pass a rudimentary test about Scripture or explain the gospel. I remember Mike always saying that we should have a Ph.D. in Bible if we have been in church for any length of time, and he is right. I think I said this last year, but assuming we get an average of one hour of Sermon per week and one hour of Sunday School, that's 104 hours a year. The average college class runs about 6-8 hours a week for about 12-13 weeks. That just happens to be 104 hours. I would dare say (and I'm not bragging here) that we are pretty high up on the list on general Biblical knowledge compared to many other

churches...and yet, I don't feel anywhere close to having attained all that I need in even knowledge of Scripture, let alone the application of it.

Next, there is a lack of vigilance in guarding against false teachers in the church. That was apparently true in Jude's time and it is certainly true in ours. In these days of tolerance and political correctness, the pervasive attitude is to let little things slide. That's how a man like this Camping kook can get an audience...he can beguile you with things that are about 95% sound and slide in that 5% of nuttiness and before you know it your on a fast train to Wacko-ville. And that's what we have to watch for...that is why it requires vigilance, because these false teachers don't usually come at you in a full frontal attack...they sneak in, they creep around the sides, they worm their way in. Listen to the words I just used to describe them...sneaking, creeping, worms. They are the tares among the wheat. They are insidious, infiltrators, subtle, pernicious, imposters. You can't easily spot what they are up to. It takes attention, it takes resolve, it takes foreknowledge and it takes togetherness of the body. God has given us all those things through the faith, through His word and through the body of believers he puts around us. It also takes compassion for the brotherhood- The word contend, as Jude uses it, has in it the idea of agony. The Greek word is epagonizesthai (e-pag-oh-nizes-thai), and we get the word agony from the noun of this word (agonozamai), a word commonly used to describe an athletic struggle to overcome an opponent, as in a wrestling match. If you have ever wrestled, even just horsing around, you know what a tremendous amount of energy it takes. It conveys the expenditure of all one's energy in order to prevail. So this is in essence saying to contend agonizingly, clinging to the one faith, fighting with every ounce of strength you have. As the translation I read a minute ago said, contend with intensity and determination.

Now, about these false teachers, perhaps gnostics or if not some similar sect. There are two features that show us these imposters. The first thing about them is: they lived lives of license. 'They turned', it says in verse 4, 'the grace of our God into lasciviousness' - there was an absence, in their personal walk and life, of moral restraints in their behavior - they abused the liberty that they had in Christ. God had wiped the slate clean - and they thought that the slate wiped clean was like a blank check, that they could fill in with sin for whatever they wanted. 'God's forgiven me! I can do what I like! I can live as I like! I can say what I like or go where I like!' - but, of course, as Paul says 'Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?'. That's not what the grace of God is all about, the grace of God is not just forgiveness, the grace of God is a change of a person, where their heart is changed, their life is changed, their desires are changed - everything about them is changed, so much so that Paul says they become 'new creatures, a new creation in Christ Jesus'. And therefore the implication is that no man can have forgiveness if he lives a life of license. These men had no shame, they were carnal, they flaunted their sin in a spirit of arrogance - and today we see people who take the name of Christ, churches and church leaders, who are sinning openly, and encouraging sin in the world around us. And what, perhaps, began with them as a lack of reverence for the word of God - they just didn't obey it - is now becoming an interpretation of Scripture that they take, that turns the word of God on its head and legitimizes and legalizes their sin. There are men who can get anything out of the word of God - using the word of God to justify their sinful lifestyle. And that is like these apostates that Jude is talking about - a man who thinks he's saved, or claims to be saved, but is not saved! The life of God is not in his soul, the grace of God has never reached him, and therefore Jude concludes that there is no place for such a man or a woman in the church of Jesus Christ.

Now, one other thing I want to mention about this verse and then I'll move on...something that Mike reminded us of last week...we are contending for THE FAITH, which was ONCE AND FOR

ALL delivered to us, the saints. The one faith, not a faith, but THE faith. There isn't another one...and it is the faith delivered once and for all. There isn't The Faith, 2.0. There isn't a revised, updated edition. There's no need...because THE Faith is THE PERFECT FAITH...there is nothing to improve on. Again, this seems so critical to me to fully comprehend if we are going to spot false teaching and apostasy . There is only one faith...there are not 4 or 5 and one is just as good as the other. We see a great movement in the church to be accepted on something less than God's terms. We think it's nice to be compromising and accommodating. But God's word doesn't do that. It talks about THE faith and THE way and THE truth and THE life. These are exclusive of any other way.

5 But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. 6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; 7 as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

We conclude our study this evening with a look at three examples of what Jude was warning about...there will be more in Jon's session tomorrow. But these examples ought to jump out at us and give us a clear indication of how serious this is...to be compared to these things must have been, or should have been quite impactful. It should be no less so to us today. Basically, these verses compare the apostasy going on in Jude's time to three of the most notable failures of obedience found in Scripture. That's how serious this was...that's how serious it is today. First they are reminded of the Israelites wandering in the desert after their disobedience and disbelief, their lack of faith in God's ability to do what He had promised to do. When Israel came to Kadesh-Barnea, they refused to enter the Promised Land...they didn't think that God could bring

them into the land. They preferred to stay in the wilderness rather than believe. And God let them stay in the wilderness for 38 more years until all the adult generation had died-with the exception of Caleb and Joshua. The next generation finally did enter in, but not until those who had apostatized were left to die in the desert.

Then in verse 6, we see the second comparison and it is of the angels in rebellion who were cast out. In II Peter, which is a good parallel study of Jude, Peter writes: “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved until judgement.”

And finally, in verse 7, the comparison to perhaps one of the most vile, despicable periods and civilizations recorded in all of Scripture- Sodom and Gomorrah. I'm sure these creeps in Jude's time didn't start with this obvious, blatant kind of behavior...that's the sneaky part. They creep in and then the apostasy grows and before long you have rationalized to a position of total depravity. The groups mentioned in these three verses and the apostates and their followers had this in common- they had abandoned a position of great privilege and blessing, namely the opportunity to serve and glorify God.

One scholar pointed out that these three examples are not chronologically listed and suggested that they are mentioned in this order to show the progression of apostasy. It starts with disbelief; unbelief leads to rebellion against God; rebellion against God leads to total lawlessness and depravity. Ultimately they all then lead to God's severe judgment.

There has not been much positive to say in this session...it isn't a pleasant topic and Jude doesn't mince any words in describing the problem. And that is fine...often the things we learn the best are the things we have to get hit over the head with. But I hoped to have some positive spin on this as we close and I think I have found it without violating the text we just covered: Open your Bibles to Galatians 5:7-14 in closing:

7 You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? 8 This persuasion does not *come* from Him who calls you. 9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump. 10 I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.

11 And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased. 12 I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!

13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*”