

Sermon: Leaders and Followers Need to Be Spirit-Led.

Text: [Jude 1-25 ESV](#)

Gary L. Wackler

September 18, 2022

Introduction: It appears to me that Jude was the brother of James, the leader of the Jerusalem Church and a half-brother to Jesus. He was not one of the apostles (see [v. 17](#)). It also seems that Jude may have been written to a Jewish-Christian community of believers within a Gentile environment probably about 62 C.E. before Peter's death a few years later under Nero's reign. **II Peter** more than likely borrowed some of its words from Jude.

Jude uses what is called OT pseudepigrapha in this short letter. "In [v. 9](#) he refers to an incident described in the *Assumption of Moses*, where Michael, the archangel disputes with Satan about who will take custody of Moses' body, and then in [Jude vv. 14-15](#) Jude quotes directly from [Enoch 1:9](#). These two extracanonical references (Enoch and Assumption of Moses) are not included in our OT.

The Apostle Paul used quotes from secular poets to make his points in [Acts 17](#) and [Titus 1:12](#). Illustration and even "truth" can be found in secular writings to demonstrate the truthfulness of God's Word. Where God's Word and other writings disagree, God's Word is always right.

We begin Jude with a salutation. [Jude 1: 1-2 ESV](#) ¹ Jude, a servant [[δουλος](#))] of Jesus Christ and brother of James, To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for[by] Jesus Christ: ² May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

Jude and James were the brothers born of Joseph and Mary after Jesus' miraculous virginal conception. Jude or Judas was a very common name. We see James and Jude listed as brothers of Jesus in the NT. [Matthew 13:55 ESV](#) ⁵⁵ Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?

Q. The Roman Catholics do not believe (Joseph and) Mary ever had any children after Jesus. Why?

A. They believe in the false doctrine of the sinlessness of Mary (even her mother Saint Anne) and Mary's perpetual virginity and even her assumption up into heaven. None of this is biblically based and Scripture like [Matthew 1:25](#) makes this position nonsense.

[Matthew 1:25 ESV](#) (speaking of Joseph) ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus. **JB** does not have "until,"

Let's look at how Jude addresses these faithful Christians: "called," "beloved in God," and "kept for [by] Jesus Christ."

Called: [Isaiah 41:8-9 ESV](#) ⁸ But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend; ⁹ you whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, "You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off";

Beloved in God: [Isaiah 43:3-4 ESV](#) ³ For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you. ⁴ Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life.

Kept for Jesus Christ: [Isaiah 42:6 ESV](#) ⁶ "I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations,

The first three verses really talk about a more important issue than just talking about their common (koinonia) salvation. This letter becomes a more urgent topic:

I. A Challenge to the Church (vv. 3-4).

[Jude 1:3 ESV](#) ³ Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

A. Contend for the Faith (v. 3).

The word translated here "contend" can also mean "to struggle for, to exercise great effort and exertion for something. The word was used of athletic contests and the struggle and effort of the athletes in their games." - Rienecker, p. 803

[I Corinthians 9:24-27 ESV](#) ²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. ²⁵ Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶ So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

What we are fighting for is the Truth and our Savior who gave every bit of life, blood and strength He had, all for us.

B. Recall the settled message you received (v.3).

Jude is saying there is no need for a new Gospel or a “progressive” message for the world. God’s words are timeless and always true.

The recipients of this letter are representative of the 1st-century issues confronting the Church. The word translated in the ESV (received, παραδιδωμι) means “to deliver over, hand down, to commit and entrust. The word is used for handing down authorized tradition in Israel, and Jude is therefore saying that the Christian apostolic tradition is normative for the people of God - a body of truth” (Rienecker, p. 804) now given to the Church - the new Israel.

I Corinthians 15:1-4 ESV ¹ Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ² and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. ³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

And we heard Paul also a little earlier in the same letter: **I Corinthians 11:23-26 ESV** ²³ For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

What is passed on has an obligation for the hearer to proclaim the “same” message.

C. Ungodly People Have Infiltrated the Church (v. 4)

Jude 1:4 ESV ⁴ For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Heresy originates from within the church, but the church’s leaders cannot allow this to happen. Teaching and discipline must be used to keep God’s message pure! Who are these people who have slipped in secretly and unnoticed? These ungodly and impious people are under God’s judgment and will not go unpunished by Him. Because these heretics have a warped understanding of grace and who Jesus is, they defame Jesus with their bodies and try to sound like they know God - which they do not. - Gnosticism Jesus is not an Idea, but a Person with Whom you must have a saving relationship.

II. A Thoughtful Reflection on the Past (vv. 5-16)

A point here that needs to be made is that heresy is more than wrong words. We also can deny our Lord by living immorally and not being guided by the Holy Spirit. These false teachers were again saying as long as you talked right you could act any way you wanted. They kept their thoughts and their actions held separately. **Titus 1:15-16 ESV** ¹⁵ To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled. ¹⁶ They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.

God will not put up with false teachers or false living. They have nothing but doom and judgment in their future. We should take a lesson from them. **Jude 1: 5-7 ESV** ⁵ Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus (**not God specifically, or Moses**), who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. (the chosen people of God) ⁶ And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day (**angels**)— ⁷ just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in **sexual immorality** and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

Q. What does Israel, angels and the population of Sodom and Gomorrah have in common?
A. They were severely judged because they had no faith and would not submit to God and his leadership.

Even those who think they are close to God like the false teachers can fall. Even the angels: “Privileged position and full knowledge had not saved them whose faith had grown dim, and whose selfishness had waxed hot...” - Green, p. 180

The word translated “serve as an example” (v. 7) - **προκεινται** means “to lie before, to be exposed to public view. The word was used of a corpse lying in state (BAG).” - Rienecker, p. 805

Sodom and Gomorrah stand as an historical reminder of what will also certainly happen to those who refuse to obey God in future generations. Even though judgment may be delayed, no one should assume it has been suspended.

Example after example from the past is used to show that those who live in the present are much like their prideful, blasphemous, and selfish counterparts from the past. These current false teachers are like Cain who was selfish and killed his brother, or Balaam who would do anything for the right amount of money and put others at a disadvantage, and finally Korah who would not submit to God’s leadership through Moses and paid with his life and his family’s - incinerated with all their belongings.

Verse 8 continues a description of those in Jude's time that had not learned from history. **Jude 1:8-11 ESV** ⁸ Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. ⁹ But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." ¹⁰ But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. ¹¹ Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion.

According to rabbis, Cain brought corruption into the human race, "He became their instructor in wicked practices (Josephus Ant. i:61)." Like Cain these false teachers of Jude's time were devoid of love. Like Balaam, they were prepared in return for money to teach others that sin did not matter. Like Korah, they were careless of the ordinances of God and insubordinate to church leaders (Green)." - Rienecker, p. 807

Michael Green, p. 185 - "Progressive morality' and 'progressive thinking' often go hand in hand with progressive deafness to the voice of God...The whole thrust of Jude's letter constitutes a stirring call to wake to moral integrity, intellectual humility and spiritual sensitivity." Oh, that people of our time could hear and understand and then obey the voice of God!

Jude 1:12-13 ESV ¹² These are hidden reefs[blemishes] at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; ¹³ wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.

These "love feasts" in **verse 12** included a common meal and also communion, but these so-called shepherds were only looking out for themselves. They were dead men walking... These leaders are just the opposite of how the righteous are described in **Psalm 1**. Listen to the comparison.

Psalm 1 ESV ¹ Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ² but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³ He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. ⁴ The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. ⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; ⁶ for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Jude 1:14-16 ESV ¹⁴ It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, ¹⁵ to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” ¹⁶ These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.

Aren't grumblers and complainers fun to be around? The word translated “grumblers” is the same word that described those under Moses' leadership who were never happy.

I Corinthians 10:10 ESV ¹⁰ nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer.

Grumbling is a sign of being without thought for God - only thought for oneself.

Philippians 2:14-15 ESV ¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

III. A Call to Faithfulness (vv. 17-23).

Jude 1:17-23 ESV ¹⁷ But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.” ¹⁹ It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. ²⁰ But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. ²² And have mercy on those who doubt; ²³ save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

Those described in **verse 19** who are *devoid of the Spirit* are not Christians, no matter how loud they claim otherwise. The very ones (these gnostics) who claimed to have the Spirit and superior knowledge, enlightened beyond others, were the very ones who Jude insists are lost.

I Corinthians 2:14 ESV ¹⁴ The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

Here in **verses 20-21** we are given four ways that we can contend for the Faith.

1. We need to use the Gospel for our foundation.
2. We need to be inspired in our prayers by the Holy Spirit.
3. We need to remain in God's love by obeying and submitting to His lordship.
4. We need to be ever expectant of the Lord's next and final coming - Maranatha!

Conclusion: The final remarks in this letter are a doxology that insists that our God is able!

Doxology and Benediction: **Jude 1:24-25 ESV** ²⁴ Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, ²⁵ to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

He Is Able

Author: Greg Ferguson. **Author:** Rory Noland. **Copyright:** Words © 1989 Maranatha

He is able more than able
To accomplish what concerns me today
He is able more than able
To handle anything that comes my way
He is able more than able
To do much more than I could ever dream
He is able more than able
To make me what He wants me to be

Submit to the Lord!

It does matter what you believe! False teachers are dangerous to the Church in any age, and as false teaching is accepted it affects the lives of all God's children. Even though antinomianism and Gnosticism were starting to take hold in the first-century Church, it still exists today! The Gnostics would have said it is what you know, not what you do. Even those in the church were teaching that you could live an ungodly life as long as you confessed Jesus, and as long as you knew the liturgy.

Even in a covenant period of grace, we have an obligation to be moral, ethical and holy. We need to depend always on God to reach the goal of our lives - eternal life with Him. We need to be found righteous through faith in Jesus, and our lives lived to God's glory.