

THE **ONE** series

Standing Firm

...together

Part 1
Jude



...when the rest of the world is ***Falling Away***

JUDE Part 1, January-February 2015

From the Pulpit Ministry of Christ E Free Church

"...contend for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints."

--Jude 1:3

...while the rest of the world is falling away.

Jesus Christ

Our Highest Calling

Our Greatest Purpose

Our Soul's Source and Joy

And Our All Consuming Passion

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The book of Jude Text

Jude vs1-25 KJV Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: (2) Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. (3) Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. (4) For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. (5) I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. (6) And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. (7) Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. (8) Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. (9) Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. (10) But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. (11) Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. (12) These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; (13) Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. (14) And Enoch also, the seventh

from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, (15) To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. (16) These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. (17) But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; (18) How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. (19) These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. (20) But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, (21) Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. (22) And of some have compassion, making a difference: (23) And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. (24) Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, (25) To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

There are some who may say that we should never judge one another. There are those who would say that we should never make waves or cause divisions. There are those who say we should mind our own business and not point the finger at the activities of others. Some would even go so far as to say that we need to be open minded and be unified at all cost.

But the Bible teaches otherwise!

Beloved... contend for the faith that was once for all
delivered to the saints -Jude 1:3 ESV

The faith is that which was taught and practiced by the original apostles and early disciples of our Lord Jesus. Truth, therefore, was of utmost importance. The Word and will of God is never to be re-written or minimized in its impact.

Some things are indeed worth fighting for and the Word of God is one of those things. Likewise, is the Truth of the faith in every person's life and lifestyle. Few things can negate the power of the gospel and disgrace the name of our Lord Jesus, than people who claim to be believers in Christ, but fail or refuse to be true followers of Christ. Followers are disciples. Disciples are obedient or else they are not worthy to be called disciples.

Jude urges the church to be on our guard from damaging input and to be repentant from damaging behavior. God's holiness demands it and that we strive for personal and corporate purity. We must not settle for less.

An Overview:

“What’s This All About?”

Text: Jude Overview

January 4, 2015

"Remember this and *stand firm*, recall it to mind, you transgressors, remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me."

--Isaiah 46:8-9

In matters of style, swim with the current;
in matters of principle, stand like a rock.

--Thomas Jefferson

INTRODUCTION

In an airliner emergency, the Oxygen mask drops down and instructions are given to put your own mask on first, then attempt to help others. It makes sense. If you don't get the proper oxygen to yourself first, you won't be able to help anyone else, and you wind up being part of the problem.

“Standing Firm, *while the rest of the world is falling away*”, is about remaining established and firmly grounded in the faith. Its about fighting the good fight of faith for the sake of “the faith”.

Isa 46:8-9 "Remember this and *stand firm*, recall it to mind, you transgressors, (9) remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me,

Throughout Scripture, God issues the warning for His people to Stand Firm!

2Thes. 2:3 Let not anyone deceive you by any means. For that Day shall not come unless there first comes a *falling away*, and the man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition,

(1) Fight for the faith and (2) help others in their battle as well. Jude is directed to the Church. It is a charge and warning to the church as "Guardians of the Faith". How's that for heaping responsibility upon our shoulders? When we have the opportunity to help other in their fight for faith, we have the responsibility to help them in their faith for faith. We have responsibility for the spiritual well-being of others.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

We are all responsible for what was passed on to us, and for what we pass on to others. Every generation is responsible for the faith that is known and how it is passed along to others.

2Tim. 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

2Pet. 1:20-21 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. (21) For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Jude the Author

Jude is actually the word for Judas, not Judas Iscariot, like James is actually Jacob. This is transliteration. Translating the literal writing, letter for letter.

Traditionally the writer of this epistle we know as JUDE, was Jude, the half-brother of Jesus Christ (Matt.13:55; Mark 6:3) We refer to him as the half-brother of Jesus, because Joseph was not his biological father, so he is half-brother. Jude was also the brother of James, the leader of the Jerusalem church, and probably the author of the book of James (Jude 1; Acts 15:13).

[Dr.Constable]

Mat. 13:55 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?

Judas was likely not even a believer in Jesus, until after Christ's resurrection.

The Audience or Recipients

Jude was writing to dispersed Jewish converts to Christianity. Jude was written to Jewish Christians who lived in Syrian-Antioch, which is in the lower portion of Turkey, about 10 miles from the Northern border of Syria. (Bible.org)

These would have been driven and dispersed there by the earlier persecution and the **diaspora** of Acts8.

Act 8:1-5 And Saul was consenting to his[Stepheh's] death. And in that day there was a great persecution on the church at Jerusalem, and all were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. (2) And devout men buried Stephen and made a great mourning over him. (3) But Saul ravaged the church, entering into every house. And dragging men and women, he delivered them up to prison. (4) Then, indeed, the ones who had been scattered passed through, preaching the gospel, the Word. (5) And Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed Christ to them.

These people fled persecution under Paul. After his conversion to Christ, Paul would have most likely preached to these people while on one of his missionary journeys, after having persecuted them back in Jerusalem.

DATE AND WRITING

The Date of writing

The exact date Jude wrote this letter is uncertain but dates have been assigned from AD 60-85. Most believe he wrote it between 65-68ad.

The Setting and the Times

* All the NT was written in a time of transition between the life of Christ and the early apostles and the birth and growth of the church. This was a time of leadership transition, when Truth and authority were being challenged, as was the leadership of the apostles and their disciples. It was a time of influx of leaders of all kinds, both Godly and ungodly alike.

This was also the time of the Jewish & Roman Wars. By 66 A.D. the Jews had begun to rebel against Rome, in particular the Roman Procurator of Judea - Gessius Florus. His wife Cleopatra had been a friend of Poppaea, Nero's wife. A delegation of Jews protested against a pagan sacrifice that was set deliberately in front of a synagogue in Caesarea. Gessius Florus arrested them and later extracted money from the Temple treasury. He then ordered his troops to raid the markets in Jerusalem, and 3600 men, women and children were slaughtered. (Bible-History.com)

In 68 AD, the Gallic and Spanish legions, along with the Praetorian Guards, rose against Nero and he fled Rome. The senate declared him a public enemy and he committed suicide on 9 June 68 AD.

It became a time when Truth, leadership and authority were quickly viewed as being threatened and in need of defending and retaining its purity. This purity of Truth was being challenge by those who were "creeping in" the church(v4), thus threatening their apostolic message. As a result they are charged "to contend for the faith"(v3).

THE OCCASION AND PURPOSE

The Occasion for the letter

The greatest issues evidently for these believers, were not the threat of persecution, but heresies which were developing and spreading.

1) *The Rise of Gnosticism or secret knowledge*

Gnosticism believed that matter is evil and spirit is good. Mental enlightenment could result in spiritual ascent above or escape from the earthly physical and material realm.

Dr Constable writes this: Incipient Gnosticism seems to be the heresy in view primarily. "Here, in an undeveloped form, are all the main characteristics which went to make up later Gnosticism—emphasis on knowledge which was [separated] from the claims of morality; arrogance toward 'unenlightened' church leaders; interest in angelology; divisiveness; lasciviousness."11 (Notes on Jude, 2014 (Edition, p2)

Gnosticism: the thought and practice especially of various cults of late pre-Christian and early Christian centuries distinguished by the conviction that matter is evil and that emancipation comes through gnosis. (Merriam-Webster)

Gnosticism was viewed as “special knowledge” and was challenging the authority of Biblical Truth. Gnosticism did not complement or confirm existing Scripture, but challenged and conflicted with it.

THE Gnostic GOSPELS

The Gnostic Gospels were 52 texts discovered in Nag Hammadi, Egypt and include 'secret' gospels, poems and myths attributing to Jesus sayings and beliefs which are very different from the New Testament.

The story of the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library in **1945** has been described as 'exciting as the contents of the find itself'. In December of that year, two Egyptian brothers found several papyri

in a large earthenware vessel while digging for fertilizer around the Jabal al- rif caves near present-day Hamra Dom in Upper Egypt. As a result, what came to be known as the Nag Hammadi library (owing to the proximity of the find to Nag Hammadi, the nearest major settlement) appeared only gradually, and its significance went unacknowledged until sometime after its initial discovery. (Wikipedia)

Ironically, just one year later there was another astounding literary discovery.

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

The Dead Sea Scrolls are a collection of some 981 discovered texts between 1946 and 1956 in eleven caves from the immediate vicinity of the ancient settlement at *Khirbet Qumran* in the West Bank. The caves are located about 2 kilometres inland from the northwest shore of the Dead Sea, from which they derive their name.

The texts are of great historical, religious, and linguistic significance because they include the second oldest known surviving manuscripts of works later included in the Hebrew Bible canon. They also included deuterocanonical and extra-biblical manuscripts which preserve evidence of the diversity of religious thought in late Second Temple Judaism. There are only two silver scrolls which contain biblical text and are older than the Dead Sea Scrolls; they have been excavated in Jerusalem at Ketef Hinnom and are dating from around 600 BCE. (Wikipedia)

The Dead Sea Scrolls confirmed the accuracy, purity and authority of much of the content of our existing Scriptures.

Another occasion for the letter of Jude was...

2) The Fall Into Apostasy

Many believe the occasion for the letter of Jude was because of *apostasy*. *Apostasy* is a matter of obedience, not salvation. Christians can depart from the faith almost as easily as non-Christians. Many Christian teenagers abandon their faith in college and university, and many never return to it. (Dr.Constable)

He goes on to say that "Apostasy," as the word is commonly used in Christian circles, involves a major departure from the faith, not a momentary lapse (e.g., Peter's denial of Christ during His trial). It involves repudiating a major doctrine of the faith. "Backsliding" usually refers to a regression in morals and or spiritual enthusiasm. It may or may not involve a departure from the major doctrines of the Bible. "Carnality" refers to giving in to the flesh and indulging one's sensual appetites. This also may or may not involve a major departure from the faith.

These godless intruders (v4) could be considered apostates, in that they may have known about the Bible, Christianity and the traditional Jewish beliefs about God, but they have been deceived by additional, supplemental and updated information regarding various characters and stories in the Bible.

So many believe the focus of the letter is concerning apostasy. However, the concept of apostasy as it is generally understood, is not mentioned in the book of Jude. We often view apostasy as referring to people who are falling away from "the faith"; that is religious people like Christians, who will not escape if they turn away from Him that speaks from heaven^[Hev.12:25], falling from Grace^[Gal:5:4], and which becomes support for the position which states that Christians can lose their salvation, finding it impossible to be renewed again to repentance^[Heb.6:4-6].

2Th 2:3 Don't be fooled by anything they might say. That day of the Lord will not come until the *falling away* from God happens. And that day will not come until the Man of Evil appears, the one who belongs to hell.

Is apostasy really possible? Certainly! That is why Scripture warns against it. But the people causing the concern for Jude, are never described as being born-again, fellow Christians, church goers, apostle approved leaders or anyone who might be considered as once being part of the family of God in Christ.

These people seem to be outsiders from the beginning, who were never part of the inside Christian community. They are described as ungodly, and destined for eternal judgment from the very beginning [v4].

If they were genuinely apostates, then they are, much like our nation is apostate. America is not a bunch of Christians who have suddenly turned their back on God, renounced their own person faith in Christ and are now they're coming up with their own religion.

America has drifted slowly over time and generationally has elected leaders who have agendas opposing what our nation was founded on. There are those whose religion and morality, is one of supreme compromise, focusing more on becoming unified, rather than purified in Truth.

3) The Comparison to History

Jude gives us 3 *groups* from Biblical history.

Group #1: The nature of apostasy in Israel at Kadesh Barnea was *rebellion against God's revealed will* for her, the volitional root problem (v. 5) (cf.Num.14:29). This resulted in the premature death of the rebels. The apostate generation did not enter the land, but wandered in the wilderness, and eventually died there.

Group #2: The nature of the apostasy in heaven was some angels' *abandonment of God's place* for them—moral rebellion (v. 6). (cf Gen.6:2; 2Pet.2:4). Their action in rebelling revealed the rebellion in their hearts. The consequence of this conduct was and is presently bondage.

Group #3: The nature of apostasy in Sodom and Gomorrah was *repudiation of God's law* over the residents (v. 7). (cf.Deut.29:23; Gen.13) By their actions these ungodly people were saying that their way of life was right and God's was wrong, which was an intellectual error. The result of this apostasy was, and is, ultimate judgment. The Sodomites were initially blinded and then killed.

Jude also give us 3 *individuals* from history.

Individual #1: Jude used "Cain"(Gen.4:5 re: his offering and v7. re: his anger.) to illustrate apostasy because Cain did not submit to God's will for him volitionally (v. 11). He was a self-righteous person.

Individual #2: Jude used "Balaam" to illustrate apostasy because Balaam advocated to Balak that the Moabites seduce the Israelites to participate in their immoral feast (v. 11). (cf.Num.31:16) He was a greedy person who lusted after money.

Individual #3: Jude used "Korah" to illustrate apostasy because Korah tried to make wrong "right," and right "wrong" (v. 11). (cf.Num.16) He was a presumptuous person.

The purpose of His letter

This was also a time the beginnings stages of Gnosticism were beginning to surface. So as a nation has experienced apostasy, so people can begin to fall away from the faith or traditional religion.

Throughout Jude is the concern over ungodly intruders into the Christian community. They introduced poisonous heresy and threatened the purity of the Truth of God's word through the teachings of the Apostles, being passed on by the church.

These are not people falling away from their own practical personal faith. But these are falling away from "the faith", i.e. Biblical Truth and traditional (up till that point) religion, being, Christianity, and specifically the teachings of the apostles.

NOW WHAT? APPLICATION

The Relevance For Us Today

There is no end to the supplemental, revised and renewed versions of traditional Christianity, which takes the Truth of Scripture, and perverts it, twists it, negates it, destroys it, adds to it, takes away from it, personalizes it and poisons it.

This message from Jude is no new message. While on earth, Jesus warned against false teachers, false prophets and the like.

<p>Mat. 24:24 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.</p>
--

2Pet. 2:1-2 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. (2) And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them *the way of truth* will be blasphemed.

* *the way of Truth*, i.e “*the faith*” (v3)

Application for this week is for your own personal Bible research.

* Keep your Jude Study Guide

- 1) Read the book of Jude through 2-3 times this week.
- 2) Use Study Guide: mark the text (in the guide), phrases and term that are repeated.
- 3) What does Jude ask God to do for his readers?
- 4) What is the charge for the readers to do?
- 5) What is it saying about Truth?
- 6) What is ‘*the faith*’ that Christians should defend? What does Jude say about ‘*the faith*’?

Dan 11:32 He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who know their God shall ***stand firm*** and take action.



Salutations:

“A Work In Progress”

Text: Jude v1-2

January 11, 2015

“...to those who are called, beloved in God the Father
and kept for Jesus Christ”

--Jude 1b

Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction.

----John F. Kennedy

INTRODUCTION

Whether we want to admit it or not, relationships are a key part of our lives. We are relational beings. Some relationships we find encouraging and meaningful, while others are avoided or perhaps discontinued all together.

Jude reveals something to us, regarding his personal relationships, which, as Christians, relates to each of us, at one level or another. Patrick Morley from Man IN The Mirror ministries, says, “If you cut the Bible, it will bleed relationships”.

So how important are relationships to you? What are your 3 most important relationships? I wonder where Church oriented relationships rank in your top 3, or if they are in your top 3?

Our lesson begins in Jude v1, where we are given insight into ...

JUDE'S 3 KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Jude 1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James,

To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ:

Jude makes reference to 3 relationships here. (1) His relationship together with Jesus Christ; (2) His relationship together with James, and (3) relationships together with his readers or other Christians, which is why we have the book of Jude in the first place.

RELATIONSHIP #1: His Relationship Together with Christ

Jude identifies himself as a “Servant of Christ” (v1a)

If we can know anything about the author Jude, we can know he is a man of humility. How many among us, at some time or another have been a name dropper? “I know her.” Or “I met so-and-so..” Or “I’ve been to that church.” There is something about mentioning the fact that we know someone, that someone else may view as important or noteworthy.

Jude has a great opportunity to be a name dropper, because in reality He is the brother of Jesus and a fellow servant with James. However he identifies himself as a servant of Jesus and a brother to James. Both are correct, but He chooses the humble route and identifies himself as a slave of Christ. He is a humble man.

What does it mean to be a “servant (slave) of Christ?” The word used here is “slave”. We’re not talking about a butler, or a grounds keeper but a *slave* of Christ. We have to attempt to remove our American idea of slavery from the Biblical idea of slavery. Nor are we referring to the kind of slavery when Joseph’s brothers sold him into slavery. Those are clearly wrong.

From the Biblical perspective, slavery was not viewed as illegal and was not a sin, because it was instituted by God Himself, at least the Jewish slavery was.

(1) Slavery in the Bible that we are referring to

is slavery which actually had a *redemptive* purpose to it. It was a means by which a person could voluntarily sell oneself into slavery in order to allow a person's debt to be paid, and their dignity to be preserved. Dignity? Being a slave and working meant they did not have to beg or go to debtor's prison. Work was not as demeaning, as was begging, or imprisonment.

God made allowances for a person who was in debt to another person beyond what they could repay, to sell themselves into slavery as a way of working off the debt. It was not intended to be permanent, nor abusive. But was that process abused? Of course it was and Scripture has many laws and guidelines regarding the treatment of slaves. (Ex.21; Lev.19, 22, 25; Deut.5, 15, 16, 21, 23, 24).

After a period of time, the slaves were to be set free. With their debt absolved, they would regain their freedom or they could actually become part of the family who had owned them, if that was desirable.

(2) Biblical Slavery Allowed for Acceptance into the family. The circumcision of the slave, in accordance with the law given to Abraham, made him a true member of the family, equally entitled to all religious privileges. In the household of a priest, the slave was even permitted to eat the consecrated food: (Lev. 22:11.)

That seems to be the issue in Gen.15:2, when God has promised Abraham a son, but up till this point he has no son, and prays to God...

Gen 15:2 But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"

The Text indicates this Eliezer of Damascus is a slave of Abraham; He was quite possibly a slave who has become a part of Abrahams family, and therefore, qualifies to be his heir, if he has no biological children. Exodus 12:44 speaks of provisions for slaves to even participate in the Passover celebrations.

So Slavery in the Bible originally *had a redemptive purpose* to it, and even was a means whereby a person could become of part of the Jewish family with rights and even inheritance.

So why is servant hood or slavery important here?

(3) Jude - "A slave to Christ" – Perhaps Jude identified himself as a *slave of Christ*, because of his eternal indebtedness to Christ, for dying on the cross and paying for His own sins. He has been redeemed and spared the debtor's prison of hell. Now he willingly considers himself sold to Christ as a slave, for all that Christ has done in redeeming Him. This was not a demeaning term. It was an honor to be a slave to Christ.

RELATIONSHIP #2: His relationship together as a Brother of Another Servant (v1a)

This relates to each of us. Jude identifies himself, not only as a servant of Christ but also a brother of another servant, James. This would have been mentioned probably for no other reason than for proper identification, between this writer and all the others with the same name in that same time period and area.

- There is James, the brother of John, the sons of Zebedee (Mat. 4:21).
- There is James, the brother of Jude (sometimes called Joses), the sons of Alphaeus (Mat. 10:3).
- There is a James who was half-brother to Jesus (Mk 6:3).
- There was a James who was the father of another Judas (not Judas Iscariot) (Lk 6:16).

A WORK IN PROGRESS (v1b)

Jude reminds the readers that they are a work in progress. (v1b)

RELATIONSHIP #3: Jude also identifies himself by his relationship together with the church.

That is something each of us should bear in mind: "I am a work in progress". Hopefully, we are not who we used to be. Realistically,

we are not who we will one day be. God is not finished with us yet. There is much more God desires to do in our lives. This is not one or two people, but the church, and it seems to me, as Jude writes to this group of believers, he includes himself in the audience.

Jude 1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, **To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept in Jesus Christ:**

Jude refers here to his relationships together with his readers.

Those who are Called (v1b)

God is a God of *specificity*. That means *to be named*. It is this word “called” which, when a prefix added meaning “out”, is translated “church” in Scripture. The word for Church is literally, the “*called out*”. The word is used as an adjective to describe the believers.

This is not a general or a common kind of calling, like someone shouting “Hey” in a crowd. But it is more like someone shouting “**[your name here]**”. It gets your attention. It is specifically calling to you, using your name.

It is also a word used to “invite”. Again it refers to *specificity*. If you are preparing a list for a birthday party, you make up the list and on that list you put names of people you want to *invite*. Again, there is *specificity*. God is a God of *specificity*. His calling for you involves *specificity*. Your invitation is one of *specificity*. God’s purpose for you is a purpose of *specificity*.

1) Each true believer in Christ has been called with “a holy calling” or *specificity*.

2Tim. 1:9a *who saved us and called us to a holy calling,*

We are called for a specific relationship with God through Christ. *Specificity*. You are called for a special purpose in God’s plan. *Specificity*. God has called you out of darkness and into His marvelous light (.1Pet.2:9) *specificity*.

2) This calling was not according to our good works (v9)

2Tim. 1:9b who saved us and called us to a holy calling, **not because of our works...**

We are not called by God because of something we have done.
We are not accepted by God because of something we have done.
Relationships with God are not performance based.

3.) Their (our) calling was according to God's own good purpose and grace before time began

2Tim. 1:9c who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works **but because of his own purpose and grace...**

Our calling is based on God's specific plan and purpose for us and by His grace. Therefore our calling cannot be determined upon our good works or failure to perform good works.

(we are called- we are also...)

Beloved in the Father (v2)

As believers in Jesus Christ, we are part of God's family and we are beloved of the Father. This is not just a couple of special people or celebrity status Christians. But you are loved by our Father in Heaven, because you are created by Him, you are valuable to Him and he has a purpose for you.

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ today, you are so, not because of something you have done, so as to make salvation dependent upon your own goodness or ability. But even with your inability and your lack of moral goodness or righteousness, God has chosen you. He loves you. He purposed to bring you into His family because of that love for you.

2Tim. 1:9 who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works **but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,**

God called you; He had a purpose for you; He loved you even before time began. Its kind of hard to do something to earn God's

love, when He loved us and called us before we were even born and *before the ages began*. That is amazing love!

Jude 1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, **To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ:**

We are called. We are loved. And we are...

Kept In Christ

Secured in Christ; guarded in Christ – to be kept actually refers to keeping one's eye on an object. It's God's eye and you are that object.

The NT was written in Greek and that language is quite different from ours. The words "beloved" and the word "Kept" are both written in a manner which indicates something that is a past event, but retains a present reality. So we read it... "to those who are called, beloved in God the Father and Kept in Christ", but the Greeks would hear it more this way; "to those who have at one point been dearly loved in God, with the result that He still views you as His beloved; and to those who, in times past, have been kept in Christ, with the result that He still has His eye on you and has hold of you and will not let you go..."

How many times we look at ourselves and think, well I might have been a cute kid, but I'm not very lovable now? I might have been worth holding onto earlier on in life, but because of my actions and some of my choices, I'm probably not really worth holding onto now.

God has loved you before time began, with the result that He still loves you. God has watched over you since before you were born, and valued you, with the result that He still values you and still watches over you today.

With a God like that let me ask you something? **Why** would you **not** want to do things God's way? **Why** would you **not** be willing to relinquish your life into His hands and let Him do with you,

what He has always wanted to do with you, but you have not allowed Him?

Why not? Why not? God still loves you and He still has His eye on you. All He asks us to do -- is really very simple, but I guess its not all that easy – but all He wants us to do is to just quit fighting Him. Just quit fighting to do it our own way. **Why not? Why not** – just toss in the towel, throw up your hands, wave the white flag or whatever you have to do. But come to the point where you say, “OK God, I’m done! I’m done! I’m done resisting you. I’m done running from you. I’m done doing it my way. I’m done!

He loves you and He has his eye on you. And he awaits you coming to the point where you finally allow Him to do, in your life, what he has always desired to do – that is, to make something beautiful of your life.

JUDE’S PRAYER FOR GOD’S BLESSINGS

I believe this is Jude writing, describing what God wants each of us to experience

Jude 2 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: **(2) May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.**

To be multiplied, means to be abounding in your life. This is a bit of a prayer or a blessing. It is His own desire for his readers and a revelation of the heart of God. It’s what God wants for every one of His children.

Why would you not want God’s best for you? Why would you not want God’s love and forgiveness and salvation and eternal life for you? **Why not? Why not?**

God wants to fill up your life to overflowing, with His mercy, His peace and His love. These can only come from God. You can’t get what God wants to give you from any earthly relationship. These can only come from God.

These are available to each of us. But not each of us will experience these things. These are things of unspeakable value that people have fought for, searched for, since time itself began. People have panned for it, mined for it, stolen for and lied attempting to get it. People have bragged about having these things, yet ended their own life, unable to live any longer with their own fantasy.

Jesus says, “I came that you might have life and have it abundantly” (Jn.10:10) Then Jude writes in Jude v.2 “May mercy, peace, and love be *multiplied* to you.” So valuable, yet so elusive.

THE RELEVANCE FOR US TODAY

Now What? APPLICATION

Young person- **Why not?** Married couple- **Why not?**

Christian - **Why not?** *Skeptic* - **Why not?**

Jude 1:2 May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

“Mercy, Peace, Love, in abundance.” **Why** would we **not** want that? **Why not? Why not?**

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

Christ offers a treasury of blessings -- mercy, peace, love and life in overflowing and unending abundance.

There is only one catch. It can only come from God through Jesus Christ. The previous verse tells us the key to unlocking God’s treasury of blessings.

We want happiness, joy, peace, love, mercy grace and any other blessing God may have stored up, but too often – way too often, we are not willing to do what it takes to experience that. Let’s back up one verse and see the connection for experiencing God’s abundance.

John 10:9-10 **I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.** (10) The thief

comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

Jesus Christ is the way to the Father. He is the key to heaven's door. He is the door to heaven's storehouse of blessings.

Why not? Why not trust in Him today, and experience the fullness that God has for you in Jesus Christ. **Why not? Why not?** Surrender to Christ today, invite God to take control and make something beautiful of your life. **Why not? Why not?**

OPPORTUNITY TO COME FORWARD.

Why Not say Yes, to what God really wants to do in your life?
Why not? Why not?



“Standing Firm For The Faith”

Text: Jude v3-4

January 18, 2015

Be *strong* and *courageous*, for you shall cause this people
to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.

--Joshua 1:6

First they ignore you, then they laugh at you,
then they fight you, then you win.

--Mahatma Gandhi

INTRODUCTION

This is the occasion and purpose of Jude's concern and His writing. It was an issue in the church then and it is a growing issue in the church today. This is focused on false teaching and sexual immorality, both of which seem to be growing in the church of America today.

Just because this may be prevalent in the church, does not mean the church is to blame. Individuals make up the church and as long as individual humans are part of the church, the church will be in danger of these elements. These are issues that the true church of our Lord Jesus struggles with and fights to make right! I Praise the Lord for the Church which fights this good fight.

[READ Jude vs1-4]

Jude 1:1-4 (ESV) Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: (2) May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. (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. (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.

Illustration) As I understand it, a rattlesnake is deadly in a number of ways. The venom may begin to immediately cause the flesh to begin to deteriorate. It then begins affecting the nervous system, causing signs of nervous disorders and organ shutdown.

Eventually it can affect the respiratory system, affecting oxygen blood levels and eventually death. A Little bit of poison goes a long, long way. Jude writes this letter to the church in his area regarding the poison which was threatening the church in his day.

THE JOY OF COMMON FAITH (v3a)

Jude initially desired to address the things he shares together with the believers there, as part of God's family.

Jude v3 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.

The Blessedness of Things Shared

Together, they share something sweet – their salvation. Jude wanted to reflect on the sweet family relationship they share together in Christ. He wanted to consider together, the blessed work of Christ on behalf of a broken but growing group of believers. He already alluded to this relationship in v.1, as he addresses those who are called by God and who are objects of His

love; to those who are kept and guarded in Christ, by the keeping and sustaining power of Almighty God Himself.

The Diversity in Unity

Diversity does not mean division and disagreement does not mean lack of unity. In John chapter 17, Jesus speaks about being one, or unified.

Joh 17:11 And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may **be one**, even as we are one.

Joh 17:21 that they may all **be one**, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Joh 17:22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may **be one** even as **we are one**,

To be “one” is not necessarily a reference to agreeing on everything. Jesus speaks of Himself, being One or unified with the Father. They are One, but they are not one in the same. So believers can be unified or ONE, without being the same as another Christian, and we can disagree without becoming divided.

Unity does not necessitate sameness. If all are the same, then there would be no need for the command for them to be One. There can be unity in diversity, but that does require, patience, love and respect in that diversity.

Together, the believers share something really sweet and that is what Jude initially wanted to address in his letter. But urgency dictated that he change his topic to a kind of warning for his family.

THE CONCERN OF ENDANGERED FAITH (v3b)

In this letter, that which is of greatest need, superseded that which was of greatest pleasure.

Jude v3 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.

The greater need at the moment, is a warning which pertains to the dangers of false teaching. This is not just part of the diversity within the church family or a difference in some traditional interpretation. There is heresy in the camps. It is like poison in the water supply. They are not urged to simply “be careful”, but they are warned that there is death in the water. There is spiritual death in their teaching.

Contend for the Faith (v3b)

Jude urges the church to “**STAND FIRM** while the rest of the world is falling away”. He found it necessary to write to them, urging them to contend for the faith. Remaining passive is not an option. This kind of admonition is given many, many times throughout the New Testament.

1Cor. 16:13 Be watchful, stand firm in “the faith”, act like men, be strong.

Jud 24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from *falling*, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

1) Contend – fight – agonize over

“Contend” refers to an inner *angst*, that will not allow you to walk away from it and discount it as irrelevant. Its our word for *agonize*. These were fighting words and a battle call from Jude.

In 1 Tim.1:18, Paul urges Timothy to “fight the good fight of faith”. This is a matter of utmost importance because, Paul goes on in v.19, to state that some who have failed to fight the good fight of faith, and “have made shipwreck of their faith.” In other words, those who have negated or even minimized the importance of Biblical Truth in their lives, their faith and their relationships, have experienced spiritual shipwreck or catastrophe in their faith journey.

For people who are unaware of the spiritual struggle of the faith or the fight against our spiritual enemy, they will not understand Jude's letter. The seriousness of this letter will evade them. Some will be so caught up in attempting to keep, what they think is the mandate that Christians should never disagree or dialogue over issues of doctrine or theology, that they miss the point all together!

The Christian life and faith have always been viewed and described as a battle. Many of our old hymns depict this battle.

"I Am Resolved, no longer to linger, charmed by the world's delight, things that are higher, things that are nobler, these have allured my sight".

"Stand Up Stand up for Jesus, you soldiers of the cross, lift high His royal banner, it must not suffer loss."

"Onward Christian Soldiers Marching as to War, with the cross of Jesus, going on before".

You can probably recall many others with this same battle theme. It is in this perspective of fighting the good fight of the faith, that Jude urges them to be contenders.

2) "*the faith*" (Jude v3) a system of beliefs.

This is not just one person's own personal faith, but the faith, as it pertains to the overall teaching of God's truth and the religion of Christianity as a whole. It was also the doctrine of the apostles.

Act_6:7 And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

This is in regard to (1)Divine Revelation from heaven;
(2)Apostolic Teaching through God's prophets (Acts.2:42);
resulting in (3)the Established Doctrine of the church.

This Truth is not to be tampered with; its not to be adjusted; its not to be added to or taken away from. 2Pet.1:3, affirms that we have all we need for life and godliness. And that is through God's Word the Bible, and will ultimately affect their salvation and our own.

At Christ Evangelical Free church of Saegertown, “We want your faith, firmly established on in a firsthand understanding of God’s word, the Bible.” This is not just a call to fight against sin, but against the heresy of false teaching. This teaching is not merely mistakes or differences, but that which will bring eternal judgment upon the person if they believe it. That means the person will be condemned to hell if they believe it, because it has taken them away from the Truth of God’s word, the Bible and minimized the message fo the gospel itself.

Once Delivered to the Saints (v3b)

Jude v3 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.

Jude “emphasizes the unalterable and normative character of ‘the faith’.” (Dr.Constable)

God has given His message of Truth, through the prophets and apostles, and that message is to be proclaimed and protected by the Church. It is our responsibility, to keep our teaching pure and clear. It is our responsibility to be able to lovingly, but authoritatively address errors in understanding and the false teachers that may come into our congregation. That is why we NEVER, invite anyone new to come in and just start your own ministry and we’ll get behind you. That is why we NEVER ask just any warm and breathing body to lead a Bible study. That is leadership negligence and there’s too much riding on that.

“Once delivered” speaks of both the proclamation and protection of Scripture which has been entrusted to the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible is God’s Word and our well of Truth. If we allow poison into the water, there will be death in the church.

2Tim. 2:1-2 You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, (2) and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

The Early Church believed in it and as conservative Evangelicals today, we still believe in it – that is the Sufficiency of Scripture. That means, the Bible as the Word of God, holds all we need for faith, for life practice, for knowledge of God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, salvation, the church, the end times and eternity. It is all in the Holy Scriptures as we have them today, in the Bible. It is this premise and principle, that the Devil has attempted to attack and destroy since the beginning of time, even in the garden of Eden.

WARNING - DANGEROUS INTRUDERS (v4)

Jude gives warnings regarding some dangerous intruders. This is the reference to those who are falling away.

Jude (v4) 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.

Certain People (v4)

We like to say that everyone is welcome in our church. Yet we cannot allow false teachers to poison the waters.

1) They are *Purposefully Deceptive*

They “crept in, unnoticed”. They have secretly slipped into the congregation; they have come in under the pretense of believing like the church believed, but their purposes are deceptive. Like a sleeper cell, in which people of a different belief or moral system, attempts to blend into their new target environment, and take up residency, all the while, awaiting the right time to “awake”, activate their cause and begin their destructive mission.

Maybe they are really good at being deceptive. Maybe the church was guilty of being asleep in terms of being guardians of the purity of God’s Truth. Either way, the church has been infiltrated and the Truth was in danger of being compromised.

2) God has *Prescribed Judgment*

“Designated” refers to something that was written down beforehand. They were “*designated for this condemnation*” This

evidently refers, not to a specific person in the past, but a general kind of people who have historically rejected God's Truth and attempted to promote their own guidelines, and values apart from God's. These are intruders whose attitudes and purposes are being evidenced in the plans and teachings of the "certain people". We know that, because of the examples of those from history, who have done just that and which we will look at more in depth in next week's message (v5ff).

Godless Intruders (v4)

These certain people have an uncertain and undesirable agenda.

Jude (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.

1) they taught *Poisonous Heresy* (v4b)

Ungodly people attacking the faith of the church and the doctrine delivered by God Himself, through His prophets.(v3) The term ungodly refers to them being void of piety; destitute of reverence and lacking in awe towards God; It does not seem that they believe there is no God, but that they have a view of God that is empty of genuine honor and reverence and worship of the true God of creation, presented in Scripture.

These people are guilty of **Apostasy**. Remember, these are not described as Christians who have lost their salvation, but those who have purposefully "turned away" from God's Truth due to their own inner rejection, or they have "fallen away" from Truth unintentionally, due to being persuaded by outside influences. Either way it is a poisonous heresy at work, bringing death to all who drink from it's well.

J.Vernon McGee makes this comment: "Apostasy was but a cloud the size of a man's hand in Jude's day; but now it is a storm of hurricane force that fills our land." (Constable, p.8, f.n.#26)

They have rejected the Biblical presentation and identification of God. And in rejecting the proper understanding of God, they reject His Truth and morality.

2) They modeled *Perverted Living* (v4c

“Pervert the grace of God.... They are “ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” (Jude v4b)

“pervert” means to change from its original form. That is, people who attempt to teach opposing the word of God in areas of purity, sexual morality, or sexual immorality. These take the Truth of God, and use it to support of condone their own perverted lifestyle.

This is later described as **Blasphemy**. Blasphemy is a blatant, defiant disregard to the person, work and word of our holy God. It is to live as though God does not care or will tolerate sin. They may think that God understands. He doesn’t care what you do or how you live. He doesn’t care about sexual immorality, as long as we are unified, tolerant, and don’t condemn people for their sinful life; and certainly don’t be judgmental.

Their perverted living was evidenced in their sexual immorality, or their sensuality “Sensuality” has the idea of shamelessness or unbridled lust. Lust unrestrained, so as to continue in it practices, growing deeper and deeper into sexual immorality and perversion of God’s grace.

One thing Jude does not do, is condemn people outside the church, who are known sinners, or pagans. Neither does he condone the private lifestyle sins of those inside the church. What he unmistakably and unapologetically does, is to condemn those who have come into the church family (that is in terms of their physical presence), though probably not believers in Jesus, and who are teaching heretical, poisonous doctrine and living openly sinful lives, while calling themselves part of the faith or Christians. And what’s worse, they are presenting themselves as leaders within the Christian community.

Here is one principle of Spiritual life from Jude.

Poisonous Doctrine Leads to Perverted Living.

In fact Perverted Living is often the reason Poisonous Doctrines are fabricated and promoted in the first place. It is a way a person can excuse themselves and attempt to condone their own sinful practices.

Here's a "**How-To**" lesson on How-To pervert the grace of God and poison the doctrine of the Church? Ready to take notes?

1) proclaim to believe the Truth of God, or the Bible. It sounds good and presents you as a religious or spiritual person.

2) label yourself as a religious person or a Christian or a follower of Christ. The more times you explain this, the more you and your audience will begin to be deceived and believe it's so.

3) continue to live life as sinfully as you please. As a religious person who believes the Bible, your lifestyle is your own business. God will understand, as He is loving and not willing that any should perish. If you bring up any concern of their apparent sinful living, all they have to do is accuse you of being judgmental and they have made you the bad guy and themselves, the poor, helpless victim. This is Biblical perversion at its worst, but unfortunately, as it is often prevalent.

1Tim. 1:10 the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine,
--

Did you get that? Sexual immorality is the enemy to sound doctrine. Do you see what happens? The person who perverts the grace of God, does not need to proclaim anything wrong. They don't have to verbally teach any false doctrine whatsoever. All that is needed to pervert, twist, discount the grace of God, disgrace the name of Christ and poison the waters for others who will drink, is to claim to be a believer in Christ, but live like they aren't.

Remember, "Poisonous doctrine leads to perverted living."

And there you have it. A "How-To" lesson on how to destroy the faith of others. Please understand. This is not a Christian who

struggles against sexual sin, experiences victory, then is taken down by defeat. Then through repentance and confession of that sin, finds fresh forgiveness and victory for a time, then stumbles again. This is not hiding the sin, nor even denying the sin. This is not pretending sin doesn't exist, and certainly not deceiving himself nor others, into thinking that God doesn't care. These are people, who have believed the devil's lie, and condoned their own sinful lifestyle and have come to be comfortable with that. This adds poison into the well and brings death into the church.

APPLICATION

The danger in this, is that by what they claim with their words or testimony and how they live in the unrepentant sinfulness, they promote a false teaching and damnable heresy that gives the impression that 'God doesn't care how you live, just come into the religious community and keep living however you jolly well want to'. If that is allowed into the church, God says that is *death to the church*.

Will God understand if a Christian continues living in known sin? Does God care if a "Christian" is living a sexually immoral lifestyle? Does it matter if we bend and tweak God's word to allow for our own 'pet sins'?

You be the judge!

Eph. 5:5 For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

1Cor. 5:9-13 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people-- (10) not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. (11) But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother (or sister) if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed,

or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler--not even to eat with such a one. (12) For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? (13) God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you."

The Church that does not deal with sin in its own congregation, is ultimately nailing the lid shut on their own coffin.

I challenge you today, if you know a Christian who is living a double life in known sin, Ask them "**Why Not?**" **Why** would you **not** want to have your sins forgiven? **Why** would you **not** want to please God with your life and relationships? **Why** would you **Not** be willing to turn away from living that kind of lie? **Why not** just conform your life to the guidelines of the Bible?

The end result of a Poisonous heresy and perverted Living is denying the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Jude v4c) ...ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

"To *deny*" is not to deny the existence of God, but to refuse, or reject God or His truth. If you are a person who claims to be a believer in Jesus Christ, but living a life in known sin, you are living a lie and actively rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ. Rationalize it if you will, but living in known sin is not merely close to apostasy, having fallen away from Truth, but near to blasphemy, which is a blatant and defiant, disregard for the person, work and Word of our holy God. It is serious business, because it is a serious offense against God.

Therefore, fight for the faith. Fight to be sure yours is genuine. Fight to be sure you don't lead others astray. Fight to keep from spreading poisonous doctrine, by your perverted living. Fight to protect the faith once entrusted to the church and don't poison the waters of Biblical doctrine by the things we passively ignore and fail to address.

How-To STAND FIRM, while the rest of the world is falling away.

1) Don't be quick to fall prey to "new teachings". Test everything according to the written word of God, the Bible. Scripture will help us interpret Scripture or recognize false teaching.

2) Don't feel guilty or arrogant about affirming, "YES", the Bible is Truth for today. "YES", I do actually believe what the Bible says! Don't be deceived to feeling as though you are the divisive person, because you are the one standing up for God's Truth.

"Silence in the face of evil, is itself, evil. God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.

—D.Bonhoeffer

3) Hold to the Sufficiency of Scripture. The Bible is enough for all we need for faith and practice and lifestyle. New "truth", secret knowledge, supplementary authoritative books are most likely poison just waiting to be poured into you water system, which will only lead to death for those who drink from it.

4) Submit personally to the Authority of God's Word in your life. Don't just believe, OBEY!

5) Be Actively involved in "contending for the faith". (Eph.6:10-13) This is not just the job for 2 or three special people, but for every believer. ***It Takes a Church!***

STUDY EXTRAS

For a great help on "Contending for the Faith", long onto the link below and page 9 on the pdf document.

http://executableoutlines.com/pdf/ju_so.pdf

The Teaching of the Apostles

Act 2:41-44 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (43) And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. (44) And all who believed were together and had all things in common.

How We Received the Holy Bible

2Peter 1:21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

The Essence and Power of God's Word

2Tim. 3:16-17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, (17) that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.



“The Great Judgment Day”

Text: Jude v5-7

January 25, 2015

Theme: The judgment of God upon the souls of men.

And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

--Jude 22-23 (ESV)

Rescue a man and make him think he did it himself and you only have to rescue him for something worse the next time.

--One who was rescued

Jude 1:5-7 ESV Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that [the Lord], who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. (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-- (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.

INTRODUCTION

History reminds us of both good and bad. If it's accurate then its honest history. From the good, we are made thankful and from the bad, if its accurate, we tend to learn hard life lessons. At least hopefully, we learn from hard life lessons.

Jude wrote regarding the judgment to come upon those who live in known, unrepentant sin. The sin of his day and of his culture was that of sexual immorality. Not only was it prevalent, but was even condoned by the heretical religious leaders, and it was in danger of poisoning the church and its message.

Today's message is about historical reminders of God's judgment for sin. But it is not individually focused, but nationally. And Jude gives us 3 Historical Reminders of Gods' judgment for sin. These are *poignant* historical reminders of those who have *fallen away*. And be assured that all those who have "*fallen away*", have fallen away from God, and therefore have separated themselves from God, separated themselves from the hope that God provides and the life that only is accessible through God's Son, Jesus.

"God has appointed for men to die once; after that comes eternal judgment" – Hebrews 9:27

Jude's first reminder from history is the...

DELIVERANCE AND DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL (v5)

The Old Testament is full of messages of God calling his people to return to him and repent from their idolatry, pursuing false gods and for their unbelief. The culture of Jude's time was one of wide spread and growing – new teachings, and heresies, along with a growing acceptance of sexual immorality.

Jude 5 ESV Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that [the Lord], who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe

Jude refers to the historical reminder of ...

Israel's Deliverance (v5)

- 1) God saved the Israelites from bitter bondage of slavery.
- 2) God also had a plan to carry out the death penalty punishment for the sin of unbelief.

1) God's Process – *Hardship; challenge; opportunity*

God had a process to help His people. He heard the outcry of the Israelites. He responded and sent a deliverer, Moses.

God demonstrated that (1)He cares about His people, (2)that He listens to the prayers of His people and (3)in His time and in His way He answered those prayers. Interesting, that God answers the prayers of his people, and deliver's them out of slavery, even though He fully knows that so many will still fail to trust in Him and live for Him.

Regardless of your view of God, we have to agree that He is a God who offers opportunities to repent from known sin and gives second chances over and over and over again. He is a merciful and longsuffering God. God's process was a patient one.

2) Gods Purpose - *Deliverance; Trust; Glory*

God had a purpose for helping his people. Because Israel was God's chosen people, He had a purpose for them. And God had a purpose because of His covenant with Abraham – I will make your descendants like the sands of the sea and the stars of the heavens – they will be many. So we see Israel, who are the descendants of their father Abraham, growing into a large nation.

Make no mistake about, it was not because the people were deserving people, nor because Abraham was such a great person. It was because God had planned and promise to do all these things for His own Glory and to draw many people to Himself.

God's purpose was and is ultimately, His own Glory, honor and praise.

<p>Exo. 12:11 You are to eat [the Passover] quickly, for you are to be dressed for travel, with your sandals on your feet and your</p>

walking stick in your hand. It is the Passover Festival to **honor** me, the LORD.

Exo. 14:4 I will make him stubborn, and he will pursue you, and my victory over the king and his army will bring me **honor**. Then the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD." The Israelites did as they were told.

No matter how sincere our praise may be, it is not to be compared with the praise that God provides that enables us to endure hardship, nor that which brings deliverance from suffering. Without hardship, there is little true, heart-felt praise. With all the worship service possibilities, God chose to use suffering to bring Him the glory and praise that He deserves.

God's Destruction of Unbelievers (v5)

Some of the Israelites that God set free from Egypt, ended up not much different than those of the Egyptians, whose first born children were killed on the night of the Passover. Many from both groups died in unbelief.

Jude 5 ESV Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that [the Lord], who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who **did not believe**.

1) God's Provision - The Exodus

God provided Israel's deliverance and freedom from slavery, by causing death and misery for the Egyptian's first born. This eventually provoked Pharaoh to let God's people go.

2) God's Promise – To Believers

God promised to protect and provide for their needs,

Exo 3:22 ESV but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians."

3) God's Punishment – to Unbelievers

This is ultimately who the eternal judgment of eternal fire is reserved for, that is *unbelievers* who reject God and reject His provision for sin payment. Some of the Israelites that God set free from Egypt, ended up not much different than those of the Egyptians, whose first born children were killed on the night of the Passover.

Num 14:29 KJV Your **carcasses** shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, [v35 specifies the whole community]

Heb 3:17-19 ESV And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose **bodies** fell in the wilderness? (18) And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? (19) So we see that they were unable to enter because of **unbelief**.

These were not people who did not believe God existed. They were Israelites, who experienced God and knew all about Him, but when life became unpleasant or when God did not give them what they had wanted, they complained and were ultimately guilty of unbelief.

These were destroyed because they did not believe or live with lives obedient to him. They were not much different than the Egyptians who disbelieved. God did not strike them down, but merely withheld His help, His provision, His direction and blessing.

And remember, that those who fell away from God and disbelieved in Him, ultimately separated themselves from God, separating themselves from the hope that God provides and the life and blessing that is only accessible through God's Son, Jesus.

This is no indication that Christians lose their salvation and go to hell. It is simply, but clearly saying that God's eternal judgment will be experienced by unbelievers.

[Note: Numb.14:20 – God had forgiven these people as Moses had prayed.(v19) Nevertheless, the discipline for their sin was carried out. [cp. v2 and v28]

“God has appointed for men to die once; after that comes eternal judgment” – Hebrews 9:27

Next Jude refers to the historical account of the ...

REJECTION AND EXPULSION OF ANGELS (v6)

Jude 6 ESV (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-- (2Pet.2:4)

Rejected their position and purpose (v6)

Angels are the creations and servants of the living God. It is their job and their joy to do His bidding and carry out His orders.

1) position of authority - Angels were given position of authority. This is the reason and purpose for their creation, to serve God.

Heb 1:14 ESV Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

Angels were created to serve God, yet Scripture tells us that approximately 1/3 of the angels sided with Satan and rejected their purpose and rejected God.

When Satan fell from heaven (Lk.10:18) it is believed by many that at that time 1/3 of all the angels that sided with Satan and are part of his army now, and will share in his punishment later (Rev.12:3-9), fell also. They rejected God's created position and purpose for them.

2) left their proper dwelling place –

It is also believed that these specific angels may be a reference to Gen.6:4.

Gen 6:4 ESV The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

It is believed by many that this is referring to fallen angels having sexual relations with human beings. For some, that sounds more science fiction than Biblical, but many evangelicals believe this is what Jude is referring to. So the reference to them having left their proper dwelling place, would refer to those angels cohabitating with humans and bearing children, who were a kind of giant race of people. [ref. Num.13:32-33]

This is why they have been kept in strong chains, reserved for eternal judgment.

God's Punishment Awaits (v6)

Jud 6b he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day-- (2Pet.2:4)

“Kept” – guarded, set aside for; reserved for that judgment to come.

1) eternal chains – representing God's secure and unremoveable and irreversible punitive judgment and control and His inescapable purpose to punish. This refers to God's power and ultimate control over Satan.

[cf. Rev.20:1- an angel from heaven came with a chain and bound the dragon, satan...]

2) gloomy darkness - outside the presence of the Lord
Absence of God – absence of joy, peace, light, hope,

2Thes. 1:9 ESV They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,

The absence of God means the absence of His joy, and peace and His light and hope. This would result in what is expressed as eternal gloomy darkness. It is not so much a result of what God strikes them with, but rather what He with holds from them.

3) until the great judgment day – they remain there in holding, until the great day of judgment upon all the enemies of God in the lake of fire.(Rev.20:10, 14) This is not a judgment for only fallen angels and for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, but for everyone who does not believe in Jesus Christ.

John 3:17-18 ESV For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (18) Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

Jesus has power over all spiritual powers.

Col 2:13-15 ESV And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, (14) by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. (15) He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Jesus has victory over all his enemies.

1Co 15:24-25 ESV Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. (25) For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet..

Jesus' offers forgiveness, salvation and eternal life to all His believers.

Joh 1:12 ESV But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

The Historical reminder of...

SIN AND THE DEMISE OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH (v7

* Now the Holy Spirit reminds us of the most noted stories in the Bible, pertaining to God's judgment for sin.

Jude 7 ESV 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.

[ref. Gen.19:24-25]

The reality of Sexual Immorality

1) they indulged in sexual immorality – Sodom and Gomorrah was infamous for sexual immorality; unrestrained sexual immorality of all kinds, even men offering their daughters. (Lot and Gen.19:8)

2) They pursued unnatural desires - homosexuality; Homosexuality was being modeled when the men of the city demanded that Abraham hand over the other men, or so they thought, as they were actually angels from God on a mission to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities for just such sin.

As we recall from Scripture, there were less than 10 righteous people in all the city. What an unfortunate historical reminder of the sinfulness of any city or nation.

Example of eternal punishment of fire

Because of their sin of unbelief in God and unhindered sexual immorality there is ...

1) The promise of punishment – The great day of judgment for all who have rejected God and His sin payment through His son, Jesus. Their sin led to personal separation from God. And their separation from God lead to punishment for their sins, apart from the presence of the Lord.(2Thes.1:9)

The fiery destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah served as a physical example of the eternal spiritual judgment over personal sin.

2) The Promise of escape – With all this talk about judgment, it is important to remember that God takes no pleasure in judgment. In fact Scripture tells us that God is not willing that any would perish, but that all would come to repentance. (2Pet.3:9).

3) The way of escape from judgment for sin - The Bible assures us that there is one escape from eternal judgment, but only one escape. The penalty for sin is death, both physical and spiritual. But when Jesus died on the cross, He paid our death penalty for us, in our place. When we trust in Christ's sacrifice payment for our sins, we experience (1) forgiveness for our sins, (2)salvation for our souls and (3)eternal life with Him forever.

APPLICATION – Now What?

What does our silence condone? What does our lifestyle betray? There is a great day of judgment coming!

Remember **Togetherness**. Each of the 3 groups mentioned, were judged as a group. Yet each group is made up of individuals. These were individuals who were held accumulatively responsible for their nation, area or community.

ISRAEL - The nation of Israel was made up of all the individual Israelites. So why was there not a noticeable number of individuals who stood up against the unbelieving Israelites in support of God's man, Moses?

THE ANGELS – 1/3 of the angels of heaven who rebelled, were a group who were made up of individual angels. Where were the outspoken angels standing up to the rebellious leaders? "No, this is a bad idea!"

SODOM AND GOMORRAH - And what about Sodom and Gomorrah? Where were the righteous ones, for whom God offered protection from this destruction? The only Righteous people were those who escaped and those didn't seem too concerned or at least too vocal about the sinful state of their people, or at least we aren't told they were.

"God has appointed for men to die once; after that comes eternal judgment" – Hebrews 9:27

What difference are we making today in our culture? Our words, our love, our message, our lifestyle must be the message to the world around us of what pleases or displeases God. It must also

speak of the judgment of sin coming upon all who fail to trust in Jesus Christ and repent from their sins.

Togetherness... This is Jude's concern. The people who are preaching heresies, and living sinfully are going to suffer the eternal judgment of Almighty God. So why does he mention this?

Because of his concern for those, because of the church's responsibility to share the gospel, address the sin and offer the message and the gift of salvation to a sinful world.

Jude 22-23 ESV And have mercy on those who doubt; (23) save others by snatching them out of the fire; ...

Togetherness. They were not just to be concerned about themselves, but concerned for others. His analogy refers to saving people out of a burning building or the burning fires of eternal judgment. The readers are to consider their own individual responsibility for attempting to help others escape the fiery judgment to come, by helping them come to faith in Christ.

Being silent or passive regarding Christians living in sin only contributes to their problem and the church's problem. When was the last time you talked with another person about the punishment for sin and salvation through Jesus Christ?

The ranks of the redeemed have yet to be filled. Until then, we rejoice in our own salvation, yet continue to remember those who are still lost in their sins, separated from the love and presence of God, and destined to eternal judgment.

Remember our 2015 outreach Prayer focus and strategy.

ONE If every **ONE**, prays for some **ONE**, and connects with
ONE any **ONE**, and brings that **ONE**, then our church could
double in **ONE** year.

Togetherness – We have a responsibility toward one another. The church is a group made up of individuals. We need one another. The church is the group of what we as individual Christians make

it. We have a responsibility toward one another. It may not be a welcome or an appreciated responsibility, but it is a responsibility none the less.

The judgment of God upon sinful mankind is permanent. What are our corporate responsibilities as a church?

What are my personal responsibilities as a Christian?

What could possibly happen if I were obedient and productive in sharing my faith and the gospel message? What may happen if I do not carry out those responsibilities?



“Doing Our Best to *Be* Our Best”

Text: Jude v8-10

February 1, 2015

Theme: The ministry responsibility of togetherness and helping one another along in the faith, is inescapable.

“...not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some,
but encouraging one another, and all the more
as you see the Day drawing near.”

-Hebrews 10:25 (ESV)

A problem is your chance to do your best.

--Duke Ellington

Jude 8-10 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.

INTRODUCTION

Not doing *my* best or doing *your* best, but in the spirit of *Togetherness* in which Jude writes, our focus is from the perspective of the Christian Community. So today our perspective is, “Doing OUR best, to be OUR best” which refers to the church working together for our mutual benefit.

Jude is addressing the culture of his day and urging the church to “fight for the faith” (v3) and to **STAND FIRM**, even when it seems the rest of the world is *falling away* from “the faith”.

The ministry responsibility of *togetherness* and helping one another along in the faith, is inescapable.

Jude begins by referring to the...

GODLESS INTRUDERS (v8)

This addresses the battlefield of our minds and thought life.

Jude 8 ESV Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones

“*These people*” are ungodly people with erroneous faith (v4), which he refers to throughout this letter.

Now in v8, he states, “*Yet in like manner...*”. which is in reference to those from Sodom and Gomorrah, whom he has just mentioned in v7.

These God-less Intruders...

Rely on their dreams (v8b)

* This is the *practice* of their lives. These seem to be entertaining fantasies, probably in connection with their sexual immorality all the way back in v.4. Their minds are filled with all kinds of lusts and sinful desires which they pursue. This is the detrimental and destructive process of those who are *falling away*.

This is in reference to being *beguiled with sensual images and carried away to an impious course of conduct.*(Thayer) This is what Jude eventually refers to as “*animalistic instincts*” in v10.

Throughout Scripture, we are reminded of this battle of the mind and we are urged to take pre-emptive action to defeat sinful thoughts that would otherwise run rampant in our minds and poison our thought lives. Here are some good, immediate applications.

Col 3:1-2 ESV If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. (2) Set your *minds* on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

This is emphasizing thinking on eternal, spiritual things, rather than on temporary, fleshly or physical things.

Php 4:8 ESV Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, *think about these things.*

This is all about filling our minds and focusing our thoughts on positive, godly subject matter.

Pro 23:7 MKJV for as he thinks in his heart, so is he; Eat and drink, he says to you, but his heart is not with you.

Our thoughts are influential in our lives. We must take the initiative to purge out the lustful and re-fill our thoughts with pure and honorable thoughts.

These God-less Intruders...

Defile the flesh (v8b)

This is the *outcome* of their practices. Defiling the flesh is shaming or disgracing the body through sin.

Jude 8 ESV ... relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones.

These are ungodly thoughts, and ideas which lead to ungodly actions and lifestyles. Defiling the flesh is the result of focusing on dreams or allowing one's self to be captivated by and carried away by our thoughts, fantasies or even false teachings. So they defile their flesh or dishonor their bodies through perverted sinful activities. And we have more Biblical examples of that coming up.

Jude v6, refers to angels who defiled the flesh of humans in their immorality with humans in Gen.6:4. In v.7, in Sodom and Gomorrah humans defiled the flesh by men burning in their lusts for other men.

They Reject Authority (v8b)

These disregarded authority as the angels did in v6. Angels disregarded God's commands and purpose. And the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah practiced disregarding God's command and design for them. Likewise, these Godless intruders had rejected God's authority in their lives.

"Lust opposes restraint, is an enemy to authorities, and loves not to be bridled." (W. Jenkyn, M. A.) Oh, the excuses we can come up with, when we get caught up in our lusts and sinful pursuits.

They Blaspheme glorious ones (v8b)

This is also the outcome of the mental battles and sinful practices. The men of Sodom and Gomorrah sought to have relations with the angels, whom they thought were men. Blaspheming glorious ones, is in reference to speaking irreverently or in defiant disregard to angels and spirit beings regarding the creatures and their God given purpose and position. Pretty clear that's what he is referring to because of what is mentioned in the following verse.

We must do our best, to be our best, because that is what God expects of us as His church. There is a need for genuine *"togetherness"*.

The ministry responsibility of *togetherness* and helping one another along in the faith, is inescapable.

Jude now refers to...

MICHAEL AND SATAN (v9)

This section reminds us of the unseen spiritual battles behind the scenes. This is in contrast to the blasphemer's in v8b. There is a war between heaven and hell, and between God and Satan, and the earth and mankind are smack dab in the middle of that war.

Jude 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."

Identification of Contenders (v9)

"In this corner. from heaven's throne room, we have Michael, the arch angel." And in this corner, from the pit of hell, we have the devil himself." These are the contenders in this bout.

1) Who is Michael?

- Michael is a created angelic being.
- He is an Archangel or the chief of angels and the highest of God's servant angels. We are not told that there is only one Archangel, but only one is identified and named in Scripture.
- In Daniel, Michael is identified as the Prince of Israel and who is in Charge of God's people, and is the defender of the Jews.

Dan 10:21 ESV But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince.

- In 1 Thes.4, it is the sound of the voice of an archangel which announces the coming of Jesus Christ for the rapture of His church.

1Th 4:16 ESV For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

- In Revelation, at the end times, we see Michael fighting against the dragon Satan, and defeating him.

Rev 12:7-8 ESV Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, (8) but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.

2) Who is Satan?

- He is the dragon we just read about, in Rev. 12, who fights against God and His people.
- He also is a created angel – a *Cherub*

Eze 28:13-14 ESV You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle; and crafted in gold were your settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared. (14) You were an anointed guardian *cherub*. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked.

Cherub – one of the highest order of all angelic beings.

- It was cherub Angels which kept a flaming sword guarding the entrance to Garden Eden.(Gen.,3:24)
- There were Cherub angels whose wings covered the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant and the dwelling place of God in heaven.
- In the visions of Ezekiel, it was Cherubim who were evidence of the physical presence of Almighty God.
- **Satan** is a fallen created being. He is a fallen *Cherub* angel.

Isa 14:12-15 ESV "How you are *fallen* from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! (13) You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; (14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' (15) But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.

Satan is not a god. He is not the opposite of God. He is a created angel who rejected God and rebelled against God as his Creator and Source and instigates most of our problems here on earth.

The Battle over Moses (v9)

This was the *situation*. We're given a window into the spirit world. There is not a lot of detail, but like Job, it enlightens us to the reality and importance of the battle. This is the situation Jude referred to.

Jude 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."

* Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Didymus of Alexandria all claimed that Jude is referring to a writing referred to as "*the Assumption of Moses*". Small portions of the *Assumption of Moses* still exist today, but according to the record of other historians, Jude was quoting from a portion of "*The Assumption of Moses*" that is now lost.

Deu 34:5-6 ESV So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD, (6) and he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but no one knows the place of his burial to this day.

What we do know for certain from Scripture, is that God personally buried Moses' body. The latter quote seems to come from Zechariah.

Zec 3:1-2 ESV Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. (2) And the LORD said to Satan, "**The LORD rebuke you**, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this *a brand plucked from the fire*?"

This is part of what Jude was referring to in v9.

Michael Did not Blaspheme or Judge (v9)

This is the *outcome* of the situation. Michael did not pronounce

judgment or verbally tangle with the devil. Michael did not mock his enemy nor disrespect or underestimate his power and position.

Years ago, a group came to my home area and I remember an advertising on the radio; “We’re coming to town and the devil’s going down!”. Another fellow who specialized in “spiritual warfare” and dealing with demons, stated that when he came to town to begin his work, he discovered that “all the demons and turned tail and run away, because he had come to town.” A lot of arrogant foolishness, bordering on blaspheme.

Jude 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."

It’s not that we are to be polite and kindly toward Satan, but that we are realistically respectful of his power and wickedness. He is one of God’s highest created beings, an angel – a Cherub - and yet a fallen, evil created being.

...”but...***the Lord rebuke you***...” We aren’t told the full story as to the background of this situation or why this was taking place, only that they were disputing over the body of Moses.

But what we can know for sure is this:

1) Holy Scripture is inerrant.

2) Scripture tells us that Moses was buried by God Himself in Deut.34.

3) We can only assume from these references that there was a spiritual battle going on, and Michael and Satan were involved in fighting over Moses, whether it was figurative, spiritual or literal. Ultimately for Jude’s purpose, that is irrelevant to us. The issue here is how Michael dealt with Satan.

4) We are left with a reliable model of dealing with Satan and his spiritual attacks upon us. “*The Lord Rebuke You.*”

People who deal flippantly with demons, evil spirits etc.; these people should be viewed with caution and their teaching should be

considered suspect. This was what was going on with the “ungodly intruders” Jude was writing and warning his readers about.

While as believers in Jesus Christ, we are covered by His blood, and with His blood, His word and His Holy Spirit we have victory over the enemy. Nevertheless we are never to be flippant, mocking or disrespectful of the power he has, and the purpose he still has in God’s plan. As Martin Luther said, “He is the devil, but he is *God’s* devil.”

“The Lord Rebuke You.” – a simple reliance on the power and purposes of God over all his creation, especially His fallen creation.

The text teaches also another valuable lesson; that the strongest side of controversy is an appeal to God. Bring your adversary into the presence of his Maker and leave him in the Divine balance. (T. Davies)

These ungodly intruders evidenced...

ARROGANT IGNORANCE (v10)

How many times we disagree and argue about things we really aren’t fully or accurately informed on.

Jude 10 But these people *blaspheme*^(v3) all that they do not understand, and **they are destroyed by all that they**, like unreasoning animals, **understand instinctively**.

“*These people*” are the *certain people* mentioned in v4, and the *ungodly people* from v8. *These people* are compared with the ungodly and sinful people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Blaspheme what they don’t understand

This is the *practice* of fools. In v8, they mocked and blasphemed spiritual beings. Blasphemy is the blatant and defiant, disregard for the person work and word of our holy God or toward whatever the object of their blasphemy may be. In this case, the objects of the blasphemy were the angels.

They were Ignorant. They were ignorant pertaining to the spiritual realm and the powers at war. They blaspheme spiritual beings and in so doing, demonstrate their own ignorance.

They were Arrogant. Their arrogance implied they felt they had all power over all spiritual beings, which God Himself does not *fully* restrict at this point. These people seem to think they can boss Satan and the spirit world around.

They showed Weakness – their only help and hope is in the power of God working and protecting them on their own behalf, yet they do not perceive their own weakness.

Act 19:13-16 ESV Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims." (14) Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. (15) But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?" (16) And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

How shameful for a Christian to act like this and how humiliating for a Christian to be treated like that. Also, how unfortunate for a Christian to think so ignorantly, to act arrogantly, and to minister so weakly.

Destroyed by what they *did* understand

This is the *outcome* of their *practices*. They are “unreasoning animals” driven by the instinct of their lust filled desires, rather than conviction, and purpose of motive. These are like those who Paul refers to as having a debased mind.

Rom 1:27-28 ESV and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. (28) And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a *debased* mind to do what ought not to be done.

“debased” is also translated “reprobate mind”, which refers to a mind that is worthless in its ability to evaluate right from wrong. This is often what unrestrained, unconfessed and unrepentant sin leads to.

APPLICATION – Now What?

Christians should not claim to be perfect, but should strive to be all God wants us to be. And we need one another to help us accomplish that. We must help one another to “Do **our** best, in order to be **our** best.”

Rom 1:32 ESV Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

These people with a debased mind, are aware of the judgment coming to them due to their own sinfulness, yet their minds are so wasted from choosing sin, that even though they know they will be judged for these sins, they continue living in those sins, unable to turn away. That is what is referred to as a “reprobate”.

How can we **STAND FIRM**, while the rest of the world is **FALLING AWAY**? To begin with, we must be *on our collective guard!*

1) Take every thought captive. Understand how easily our thoughts can lead us astray theologically, as well as lead us astray morally.

2Co 10:4-5 ESV For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. (5) We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

2) Fight for the faith. “Contend for the faith” (Jude 3) Realize that there is a battle between heaven and hell and between God and the devil and we are right in the middle of it. God has us, but he devil wants to drag us away, and destroy our faith; or through our sin and false teaching lead others astray and destroy them. We

must be willing to fight against all that opposes *the Faith*, God's Truth and our purity.

***Dr. Thomas Constable summarizes** this section in these words. The things the false teachers **did not** understand but reviled probably refer to aspects of God's revealed will, that they chose to reject (cf. 1 Cor. 2:7- 16). What the false teachers **did understand** was the gratification of the flesh, and that would destroy them. "Their way of life is to allow the instincts they share with the beasts, to have their way; their values are fleshly values; their gospel is a gospel of the flesh. Jude describes men who have lost all sense of, and awareness of, spiritual matters, and for whom the things demanded by the animal instincts of man are the only realities and the only standard."

"Jude is stating a profound truth in linking these two characteristics together. If a man is persistently blind to spiritual values, deaf to the call of God, and rates self-determination as the highest good, then a time will come when he cannot hear the call he has spurned, but is left to the mercy of the turbulent instincts to which he once turned in search of freedom."⁶⁰

3) Don't Go It Alone! We must do our best in order to be our best. This is the importance of the church, we need one another. For a Christian to think they don't need the church, is like a drowning man thinking he doesn't need swimming lessons.

The Christian life is a battle, so don't go it alone.

⁵⁹Barclay, p. 222

⁶⁰Green, p. 171

****Dr Thomas Constable, *Notes on Jude*, p.14-15**

Gal 6:1-3 ESV Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. (2) Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (3) For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

We are to carry one another's burdens, as though they were our own.

Heb 10:24-25 ESV And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Don't give up meeting together, but **encourage** one another. Or Do our best, with one another, in order to help another to be their best. That cannot take place unless we are connecting together outside the context of the congregational meetings. We need the family life of Christians interacting together for one another's well-being and benefit. That is the "togetherness" concept Jude alludes to throughout his letter.

The ministry responsibility of *togetherness* and helping one another along in the faith, is inescapable.



“Empty Lives Eternal Losses”

Text: Jude v11-13

February 8, 2015

Theme: Emptiness may bring excitement today, but tomorrow emptiness will bring regret when we stand before God empty handed.

“Woe to them!” --Jude 11

Work gives you meaning and purpose
and life is empty without it.

—Stephen Hawking

INTRODUCTION

Php. 1:27 ...let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are **STANDING FIRM** in one spirit, with one mind striving *side by side* for the faith of the gospel,

“..striving *side by side* for the faith...” Here Paul refers to the underlying principle of *togetherness*, which we find in Jude. The Church working together to help one another in the faith and living the Christian life is what church is about.

Luk 8:13 ESV And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing **FALL AWAY**.

“Standing Firm, While the Rest of the World is *Falling Away*.”

This is the theme of Jude. Please follow along with me in your Bibles.

Jud 1:11-13 ESV (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. (12) These are hidden reefs 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.

ILL) Monopoly is a game loved by many. A little complicated to be called a game, in my opinion, but it has been a popular game. Its make-believe, and you live in a make-believe world, and carry out make-believe purchases and make make-believe financial transactions. You have a make-believe family, own a make-believe home, you drive a make-believe car, and buy make-believe investment properties, using make-believe money to build a make-believe empire. In my opinion, it's really a game of *emptiness*, because in the end of a stressful game, you have nothing of real life earthly value to show for it. *Oh, if only it was all real.*

Just so happens, this year is the 80th anniversary of Monopoly. And to celebrate, in one of its game boxes, the company has substituted the fake money in the bank with real money. So somewhere in the world there is a monopoly game, with real money.

So there is hope, that somewhere in the world, someone will end up with something of real value. Maybe that will take away the feeling of *emptiness* at the end of the game.

Jude is presenting to us, the *emptiness* of what it would be like to **Fall Away** from the Truth of God's Word and allow Heretical Teaching and Perverted sinful living into the church. The effects

could be, not merely emptiness, but could prove to be catastrophic. These people are living lives of emptiness even though they experience physical, sensual sin in their living, and all the while, feeling great about being Bound for eternal destruction.

And for some of you now, all you can think about is, as soon as this service is over, you're going to run out to Walmart and waste your hard earned lottery money, on a couple of Monopoly board games.

Just a brief review from last week, to bring us up to speed.

LEADING UP TO EMPTINESS AND DESTRUCTION (5-10)

* Review last week. v10

Those who failed to *STAND FIRM*, are examples of those have *FALLEN AWAY* and turned to apostasy away from the Truth.

Emptiness may bring excitement today, but tomorrow it brings regret when we stand before God empty handed.

3 Groups who were judged (v5-7)

- (1) - v5 – Israel who being judged by God for their unbelief, were destroyed in the wilderness.
- (2) –v.6 - The angels, who rebelled against God and are reserved with eternal chains for the eternal judgment of darkness
- (3) –v7 – Sodom and Gomorrah, who experienced the fiery judgment of God, and are an example for us today, of the coming eternal judgment of all who are separated from God and bound for destruction in eternal hell.

Characteristics of Apostasy (v8-10)

These were the characteristics of those who fell to apostasy

- (1) v8 – carried away with their unrestrained lusts and desires
- (2) v9 – rejected the authority, specifically the authority of God and His holy Word.
- (3) v10 – viewed and spoke irreverently against spiritual beings and spiritual matters.

The Outcome of Apostates (v10)

They are destroyed by the only thing they understand, that is their own sinful living. These are those without Jesus Christ and their own outcome is eternal destruction.

We begin this morning with a...

WARNING TO THOSE WHO ARE FALLING AWAY (v11)

JUDE 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.

Woe to Them (v11)

This could be viewed as a “curse upon them” or “grief to them”; grief because of the emptiness of life and eternal losses which are coming upon them and they aren’t even unaware of it. This is an exclamation of grief or pity. They are headed for grief. This warning is issued regarding the expected outcome for a specific sinful, Godless faith and lifestyle.

Now Jude gives us 3 individuals who have fallen away and “*they*”, in v11, are following their examples.

Followed False Teaching / perverted living

Previously in v.5-7, Three groups are mentioned who are examples of those who have fallen away from God’s Truth, both in faith and in lifestyle.

1) the way of Cain’s sin; (v11) [cf. Gen.4:5-12]

You know when a team wins, every individual on the team wins. When one individual loses, the entire team loses. A team fails because the sum total of its players fail. A group ***Falls Away*** because the sum total of its members ***Falls Away***. And Like it or not, the life of each person in the church affects the lives of others in that church, whether for good or for bad.

JUDE 11: Woe to them! For *they* walked in the way of Cain...

the way of Cain was that...

(i.) Cain rebelled against God.

Heb. 11:4 ESV By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.

Like the rebellious angels in v6, Cain also rebelled against God. He seemed to be a man lacking in faith and did not give his offering as an act of faith.

(ii.) He disregarded God's warnings regarding his anger turning to murder

Gen 4:7 ESV If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."

He receives a personal verbal warning from God Himself, and it is ignored.

(iii.) He belonged to the evil one.

1Jn.3:12 – Cain was of the “Evil one”

It may seem judgmental for one of us to say something like that about a person living a sinful life in direct disobedience to God, but the Apostle John is given a window into understanding perhaps what we cannot see or understand. And 1Jn.3:12 tells us that Cain was of the Evil one. This is not merely emptiness of life. This is in reference to a personal catastrophe of faith and eternal destruction of life and hope.

2) the Error of Balaam's gain (cf.Num.22-25;31:16)

JUDE 11 Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error ...

The problem with Balaam is hard to determine by reading the account in the book of Numbers. But Revelation helps us understand.

Rev 2:14 ESV But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality.

Balaam was paid by Balak to lead God's people to disregard His instruction and to disobey Him. In other words, Balaam's error was to lead others astray from God, causing them to **Fall Away** from God's Truth. These people are envying gain as Balaam did.

* *"Balaam's guilt was the greatest of all sins – the sin of teaching others to sin."* (Barclay commentary)

3) The end of Korah's Rebellion (cf. **Num. 16:1-30**)

Num 16:1-3 ESV Now Korah the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men. (2) And they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men. (3) They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?"

Num 16:19 CEV Meanwhile, Korah had convinced the rest of the Israelites to rebel against their two leaders. When that happened, the LORD appeared in all his glory.

This was the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, Abiram and On. They were self-seeking, divisive, and rebellious against God's leaders, Moses and Aaron. He was a rebel against the authority of God.

Emptiness may bring excitement today, but tomorrow it brings regret when we stand before God empty handed.

But there is something else of noticeable significance here. We see a purposeful progression. Another Triad from Jude.

“For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned or (greedily pursued) themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion.” - Did we get that?

They walked, they pursued, they perished or were given over to eternal misery. **THREE** points of progressing deeper into sin and its emptiness and destructive end. What happened to Korah and his followers? The Lord told the people to get away from Korah, his tents and from his family. (v24)

Num 16:29-34 CEV (v31).... the ground under the men opened up (32) and swallowed them alive, together with their families and everything they owned. Then the ground closed back up, and they were gone. (33) (SEE 16:32) (34) The rest of the Israelites heard their screams, so they ran off, shouting, "We don't want that to happen to us!"

Num 16:35 ESV And fire came out from the LORD and consumed the 250 men offering the incense.

“And the payment for sin is death.”

False teaching leads to sinful living. Sinful living leads to eventual judgment. You can't avoid it, or hide from it, apart from finding help and genuine salvation and eternal life through Jesus Christ.

And how does Jude refer to them??

JUDE 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.

These people entering into the church...

- (1) walked or were living as Cain lived.
- (2) pursued the dishonest gain as Balaam did.
- (3) perished in the rebellion of Korah – that is, Jude is stating a present reality as though it is already finished. They are presently in the state of eternal judgment and destruction – “they *have perished*”-- past tense.

Remember how Jude described them in v.4

Jud 1:4 ESV 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.

Because of their sin, their rejection, their rebellion, their false and deceptive teaching, they are presently entering into the judgment for all the ungodly perverters of God's Grace and have forfeited the salvation and life which is promised to all who believe in God and His Son, Jesus.

They have empty lives and are bound for eternal destruction!

ANALOGIES OF THE GODLESS (v12-13)

Jude 12 These are hidden reefs 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;

THREE more examples:

Hidden reefs (v12)

Rocks lying just under the surface of the water. They are dangerously deceptive.

1) At love feasts – sacred things and celebrations.

2) Feast without fear – without respect or reverence; God is not in their holy celebrations and services. These are only religious motions and motives without reverence. They disregard their own sinful ways, thinking God is somehow accepting of them and their sinful lifestyles.

These are Godless, irreverent, spiritual hazards who are dangerous and deceptive for others, potentially putting them in harm's way and causing shipwreck of their faith.

1Ti 1:18-20 ESV This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, (19) holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made *shipwreck* of

their faith, (20) among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to **blaspheme**.

Blasphemy: i.e.those who claim to be religious, yet hold a blatant and defiant disregard to the person, work and word of our Holy God.

Selfish Shepherds (v12 / Ezk.34:10

These selfish shepherds are guilty of neglecting the flock of God and are content with focusing on and pursuing their own interests.

Eze 34:6-8 ESV My sheep were scattered; they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them. (7) "Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: (8) As I live, declares the Lord GOD, surely because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd, and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep,

Eze 34:9-10 ESV therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: (10) Thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep. No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them.

These are selfishly focused, seeking their own gain, even at the cost of the sheep. They have a destructive effect on the faith of the other sheep. God does not take kindly to that kind of treatment toward His people and has condemned that long ago.

Waterless clouds

Emptiness of life. Their lives express the emptiness of God. These Empty lives are swept by wind; are carried along and are unstable.

Waterless clouds refer to the emptiness of their content. For the farmer, a cloud was a sign of hope in a dry season. It was what farmers prayed for and looked for. When clouds did arise, but were

waterless (void of rain), they were for certain, a great disappointment and thieves of hope.

Eph 4:14 ESV so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

This is a good, but condemning description of the people who were infiltrating the church in Jude's day; that is, they were empty of content and they were a great disappointment.

Fruitless trees

Fruitless trees would have been references to the emptiness of their spiritual life. Empty lives consist of emptiness of purpose, emptiness of eternal effect and impact for Christ and emptiness of eternal rewards.

Jude 12 ...fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted;

Consider the disappointment of Christ with the fruitless fig tree in Mk.13:28.

1) Late autumn: This was the season when all trees had born their fruit and were now barren of fruit. The indication here is that these people were characteristically fruitless, and consistently out of season, so to speak, in terms of bearing fruit for Christ.

2) Twice dead: Isn't once dead enough? How do you kill a person the second time? This is speaking of both physical and spiritual death. We can be born twice, and we also can die twice; physically and spiritually. And these people are considered as good as dead, being presently under the judgment of God, even though they are still "alive" and breathing.

3) Uprooted: They are considered *uprooted*, because there is no connection between these fruitless trees and the life giving soil in which they ought to be planted. Roots should go down deep and life giving supplies of water and nutrients should be taken in for healthy, fruit bearing productivity, but there is none!

Psalm 1, speaks of the person who is genuinely and deeply connected to God and rooted in Christ and the life that they will experience.

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.

--Psalms 1:3 ESV

these are like...

Wild waves of the sea (v13)

Jude 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.

This may refer to someone in whom there is a lot of action and lots of noise, but sadly, empty of meaning and spiritual life. And the result of manifestation of that life is the foam of shame and self-deception.

Wandering Stars (v13)

1) Wandering Stars - are those straying off course and headed toward darkness. We typically refer to them as shooting stars. They flash across the sky and cause everyone to stop and look up. They get people's attention. We see them and may gasp at the sight and maybe even make a wish on a shooting star. Another name for this which we are familiar with is a "falling star". Falling Stars streak across the sky, and catch a lot of attention, but they quickly and completely burn out and are gone!!

2) Reserved for gloom of utter darkness (cp.v.6)

People like that are headed for darkness and emptiness, apart from the abundant life offered to us through Jesus Christ. These have no restraints for their desires and no conviction over their sin. There is no remorse for, nor repentance from sin. There is no fighting the good fight of faith or striving against sin. And certainly, they are not contending for *the faith* as the church was urged in v3.

These are people who are failing to stand firm and have fallen away from the Truth of God's word. And even though they are enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season, they are not even aware

that they have empty spiritual lives and are bound for eternal destruction, apart from God and without Christ.

APPLICATION – Now What?

"Jude is stating a profound truth in linking these two characteristics – Emptiness of life and hopelessness of eternity.

Jude's desire for his readers is for the mercy, peace, and love of God in Christ be *multiplied* to them. (v20). He wishes them God's abundance.

In 3John 1:2, the Apostle John expresses his desire that life will go well and that God's blessings would be experienced in good measure, as their soul is growing.

James 4:14, asks, "What is your life?" What is your life made of? What is your life focusing on? What is your life amounting to? What is your life focused on or directed to?

Christ's own desire was that His true followers would experience, life and in great abundance.(Jn.10:10). With that, is it not out of the question to be sold out to the One who gave up everything for us?

2Cor. 5:14-15 ESV For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; (15) and he died for all, ***that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.***

"Life is empty, until it is lived fully for Jesus Christ."

1
ONE

If every**ONE**, prayed for some**ONE**, and connected with any**ONE** and brought that **ONE**, then our church could double in **ONE**year.

Today I'd like to ask you to join me in praying for those in our area of influence, but possibly are without Christ, living an empty life and bound for eternal destruction. I'd like to encourage you to pray out loud, "Lord, save _____." And when someone mentions another person's name, as a church we will make that

...while the rest of the world is falling away.

outcry to God our very own, and so agree together in prayer for each of these



“Behold the Lord Comes

with judgment for those ungodly”

Text: Jude v14-16

February 15, 2015

“Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, 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, -Jude 14-15

“My mouth is often wounded by my sharp words, so sometimes when I’m out in public, I’ll wear a large Band Aid over my lips.”

— Jarod Kintz, *This Book Has No Title*

Isaiah 35:3-4 ESV Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. (4) Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you."

Standing Firm = faithfulness to the Truth of God’s Word and the teaching of the Apostles; remaining strong in “the faith” that was once and for all, delivered to the saints (v3).

2 Timothy 4:3-4 ESV For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, (4)

and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

Apostasy= turning away or falling away from traditional Biblical Truth and from God Himself;

TODAY - “Behold, the Lord Comes with judgment for those ungodly” (v14-17

We learn What God will do and what we must remember.

Jud 1:14-17 ESV 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. (17) But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“*These*” (v14) are those who have fallen away from the faith and crept into the congregation, spreading their poisonous heresies and flaunting their perverted lifestyle.

INTRODUCTION

REMEMBER – Jude is not writing to correct the church’s beliefs or behavior. He is writing to *warn* them of the godless influences of the “*religious*” people who are seeping into the congregation there. He writes to encourage them to refute their poisonous heresies and guard against their perverted, sinful influences.

In this section, Jude writes to remind them of the plan of God, even before time began. He reminds them of the prophecies of old, pertaining to the times and influences of the present.

He encourages them regarding:

- (1) the promised second coming of the Lord
- (2) the coming judgment of God upon all ungodly sinners
- (3) but also the Mercies of the Lord to all who believe (v20-23)

Jude 14: "Behold the Lord Comes...". We do not want to confuse the rapture of the Church with the Return of Christ.

Rapture of the church vs. Return of Christ:

a. the Rapture of the church refers to the time when Christ will come in the clouds in the sky, but not to the earth itself. He comes with the trumpet call of God and the shout of the Arch Angel, and will resurrect all dead believers in Christ, and rapture or take away all living believers to meet the Lord in the air, and then to forever be with the Lord.(1Thes.4:15ff)

This is God removing the believing Christians from the earth, prior to the pouring out of His wrath upon the earth and all ungodly sinners who have rejected Jesus Christ.

b. the Return of Christ here is stated as the return of Christ to the earth at the end of the Tribulation period leading heaven's angels, at which time He will defeat the enemies of God, bringing about the wrath and judgment of God, upon unrepentant sinners outside of God's family. He will also reward His people, and will set up his thousand year reign on the earth.

c. the Confusion: the Return of Christ will be unmistakable and un-missable. The return of Christ did not occur in 70AD nor in 1957, or any other time. The only reason there is confusion about the return of Christ is because it has not occurred yet. When Christ returns to the earth, every eye will see him and all the peoples on the earth will mourn with fear and grief at his coming. (Rev.1:7) At that point, there will be no question as to whether or not Jesus Christ has returned or not.

* According to Acts 1:9-11 and the Ascension of Christ.

Acts 1:9-11 ESV (9) And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. (10) And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, (11) and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Jesus promised and the angels prophesied that HE would return.

Jude reminds us of ...

THE PROPHECY OF THE LORD'S RETURN (V14-15

* God's will does not develop as time goes on. God knows. God knew. His plan and purpose and promise for His kingdom were ordained and confirmed before time began.

Deu 33:1-3 ESV This is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the people of Israel before his death. (2) He said, "The LORD came from Sinai and dawned from Seir upon us; he shone forth from Mount Paran; he came from the ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand. (3) Yes, he loved his people, all his holy ones were in his hand; so they followed in your steps, receiving direction from you,

This is the same imagery Jude uses to remind us of the Lord's Promised return.

The Lord returns with His holy angels (v14

[cf.1En.60:8;1En. 1:9]

* Angels are God's heavenly servants.

Jud 1:14 ESV It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones

"Ten Thousands" is really an inaccurate translation. The word is "Myriads" of which we are familiar. It denotes no number or an innumerable amount of angels coming with Him, to carry out His bidding. Angels are God's ministers of fire and servants of the Most High.

Act 7:52-53 ESV Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, (53) you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it."

Here, we are reminded that even the law of God was delivered by God, by using His angels.

When the Lord returns, he will come with many angels. But that has not occurred yet. When He does return to earth, all confusion, questions and doubts will be laid to rest.

Acts 1:9 ...This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

How did Jesus go into heaven? He went up (1) physically (2) Literally (3) Visually (4) Unmistakably. So if he will return the same way he went up then, He will return (1) physically (2) Literally (3) Visually and (4) Unmistakably, so as to silence every argument, answer every question and lay to rest every doubt as to His return.

The Lord returns with His angels for His eternal Judgment (v15)

Jude v15 ESV 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."

"Execute judgment" (v15) also v.4, 6, & 7

Jud. 1:4 ESV "For certain people have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were designated for this condemnation..."

v.6) refers to rebellious angels who are kept in eternal chains and darkness until that day of judgment.

v.7) Sodom & Gomorrah is described as those who experienced the fiery judgment from God.

Revelation 16:8-9 ESV The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire. (9) They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory.

God knows. He knew and His plans and purposes were promised before time began and the judgment upon all these who rebel against God were designated long ago for condemnation (v4).

In Jude 15, these sinful people “spoke against him” i.e. spoke blasphemy against God. These are those who are not inside the family of God, but are outside in the community around them (v8).

Paul deals harshly with this kind of talk in 1 Tim.1:20.

1 Timothy 1:19-20 ESV holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, (20) among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

It even seems like those named above were part of the church and evidently Christians. It does not state they lost their salvation, but only that Paul took it upon himself to punish them or enacted church discipline against the blasphemers. (cp.1 Cor.5:8-13)

The Lord returns with his holy angels for eternal judgment upon all the ungodly (v15)

* “*ungodly*” = lit. without divine reverence; without true piety; Wicked, evil and malicious.

Jude v15 ESV *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.*

What kind of people will the fiery wrath and eternal judgment of God fall upon? **UNGODLY** people. Not the church, not Christian people who have stumbled into sin or struggling and fighting against sin, but those who are void of God, void of reverence and the fear of the Lord, no faith or no love for God and no life that reflects they have been changed and belong to Him. The wrath and judgment of God on sinners will be directed to those outside the family of God in Christ.

Only those who have rejected God and His payment for sins through Jesus Christ will experience this judgment. Nowhere does

it imply these are Christians who have fallen away from the faith or lost their salvation, but those religious people outside the church, who are falling further and further away from God's Truth and traditional morality. They are part of the community around the church, but not part of the family of God within the church. And, the "Togetherness" of Jude does not include these "ungodly intruders".

S & G – v7 "Certain people", are the Godless intruders (v4)

And these ungodly people are blaspheming God, angels and evidently God's people to some degree. Ungodly, religious people, posing as leaders, present a very present danger to a susceptible church.

2Tim. 3:5-8 ESV having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. (6) For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, (7) always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. (8) Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith.

Some people act like Christians; and try to talk like Christians with Christian terminology. But then it comes to their harsh and Godless words, their critical slanders and malicious speech and they cannot seem to control their tongues. In so doing, they expose themselves to be of, or controlled by the evil one.

Jude warns us of ...

THE SINFUL GRUMBLERS (v16)

* As Jude condemns godless and malicious speech in the church, so does James. Godless speech is a sign of someone outside the family of God, or a true believer living in sin.

Jud 1:16 ESV These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.

These are traits of these godless intruders.

The ungodly intruders are...

Grumblers – complainers; discontented;

James refers to the religion of the person who cannot control their tongue, as useless and calls into question their salvation.

Jas 1:26 ESV If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.

James tells us that the person who cannot control their tongue, or words or who is characterized with critical, condemning, blasphemous speech toward God or others, -- their religion is useless, worthless, void. And James goes on to even call into question the salvation of those who use such speech.

Malcontent

NIV translates this as “fault-finders”. Ever know anyone like that? If they didn’t have someone to criticize or something to complain about, they wouldn’t have anything to talk about.

These are quarrelsome, blaming others, and malicious speakers who practice tearing down and criticizing others. These are slanderous people who often have the attitude, “*I’m just telling you the truth.*” or “*I’m just telling it like it is.*” This is malicious, slanderous, critical, fault-finders and ungodly influences on others.

Remember slander is not slander because of its *content*, but because of its *intent*.

Slander and malicious speech is not slander because of its content, but because of its intent. Truth spoken maliciously is slander and it is a sin! It is meant to tear others down, in order that the other might feel more righteous or better than the person being maligned.

ILL) I was part of an online discussion group intended to discuss topics of theology. And that’s how it started, but slowly over the weeks, it began to slide into picking apart specific churches, specific preachers, specific celebrity Christians – nothing positive

or constructive about it. I told my friend who was leading this that I couldn't keep from responding to those posts that criticize those who weren't there to speak up for themselves. I tried to keep from responding but I just couldn't remain silent. So I finally just left the group completely. This whole conversation was like an avalanche, in that it was going nowhere but downhill!

The Arrogant

These ungodly people Jude refers to are arrogant. The ESV says they are loud-mouth boasters, referring to showing favoritism, ultimately toward themselves. (v11)

They are also self-seeking

These are partial and showing favoritism to gain advantage. Arrogant talk is fluff talk, enlarging their own image and reputation, whether real or imagined. And this influence was seeping in from the outside, like a overflowing septic tank, seeping into their drinking water. Again, this kind of talk and attitude has no place inside the church, or in the lives of the church family.

Jude urges us to...

REMEMBER THE PROPHECIES (v17)

Jude 1:17 ESV But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are called to remember the prophecies of the promised Falling Away. Dearly Beloved – the church - God knows. God knew. His plan and purpose and promises for His kingdom are of old.

Remember the predictions about what? About people and cultures who will fall away from the faith and from God and His Truth. And Jude writes to encourage us to Stand Firm, while the rest of the world is Falling Away. And he focuses our attention on the promised return of Jesus and the way things will be when He does return.

Application – Now What?

As we await the return of our Lord Jesus, how can we be preparing for His return? *By heeding his warnings.*

1) Worldly and Christian conversations – sometimes you can't tell the difference. Simply and Clearly put, we must not participate in malicious, slanderous, "smack-talk". We must not allow our silence to make people think we approve of their malicious slander or agree with its content. It is never appropriate to tear others down in order to make ourselves appear better than we are.

Remember slander is not slander because of its *content*, but because of its *intent*.

*That kind of talk is sinful among Christians and will be judged by God one day. The content may be true, but the intent may be malicious and slanderous. This is sin and must be repented of.

(2) "Let no unwholesome talk come out of your mouth..."

Ephesians 4:29-30 ESV Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. (30) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

* This is sin and grieves the Holy Spirit of God. Again, the sin of corrupt speech is not necessarily based on its content, but on your intent.

(3) Excuse yourself: If you don't feel you can change the conversation, politely excuse yourself from the conversation – but ideally do so in the middle of a malicious sentence or comment. At least the Christian should get the message and feel convicted. Don't hang around smack-talk like that, it gives the impression that you agree with it. Don't remain silent around malicious speech because it gives the impression you approve of it.

(4) Look for a way to redeem the conversation; If you can muster up the courage to change the conversation,

(a) *let the others know* that this kind of talk is not only inappropriate, but sinful and has no place in Christian conversations.

(b) *Change the talk to be positive talk*, build up others and benefit the listeners. (Eph.4:29). If you can do this, it may convict

the person talking and also provide a godly model of how to talk honorably about others, even those whom you may not particularly like.

These kinds of conversations are not uncommon among Christians, but are poisonous waters which can seep into the church's water system, putrifying the whole reservoir.

What about your conversations? At work? At church? At home? Among other Christians at the store or ball game? We must not allow ourselves to be drawn into it. We must keep the waters pure! We must contend for the faith, once handed down from the apostles – a faith that is reflected in words as well as in lifestyle!

What does your own speech reveal about your character? What does your response to malicious slanderous speech communicate? - approval? - agreement?

ADDITIONAL TEXTS ON SPEECH AND THE TONGUE

Psalm 5:9 ESV For there is no truth in their mouth; their inmost self is destruction; their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue.

Psalm 12:3 ESV May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that makes great boasts,

Psalm 15:2-3 ESV He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart; (3) who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend;

Psa 34:13 ESV Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.

Psa 37:30 ESV The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice.

Psa 52:2 ESV Your tongue plots destruction, like a sharp razor, you worker of deceit.

Psa 71:24 ESV And my tongue will talk of your righteous help all the day long, for they have been put to shame and disappointed who sought to do me hurt.

Pro 15:2 ESV The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly.

Pro 17:4 ESV An evildoer listens to wicked lips, and a liar gives ear to a mischievous tongue.

Pro 18:21 ESV Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.

Pro 26:28 ESV A lying tongue hates its victims, and a flattering mouth works ruin.

Jas 1:26 ESV If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.

Jas 3:5 ESV So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!

Jas 3:8 ESV but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

Eph 4:29 ESV Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Eph 4:31 ESV Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Rom 1:29-30 ESV They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, (30) slanders, **haters of God**, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,



Don't close this booklet yet

without considering this all important question.

Is Jesus Christ the Savior or *your* soul and the Lord of *your* life?

Every person is born guilty of sin and in need of forgiveness.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
--Romans 3:23

Our sin is against God, therefore our forgiveness can only come
from God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only
begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should
not perish, but have everlasting life. --John 3:16

God has appointed His Son as the payment for sins and sent Him
to die in our place.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is
eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
-- Romans 6:23

God's love is demonstrated through the sacrificial payment of
Jesus Christ in our place for our sins.

...but God shows his love for us in that while we were
still sinners, Christ died for us. ---Romans 5:8

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
will be saved." -- Rom 10:13

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name,
he gave the right to become children of God, - John 1:12

Before you close this book, why not be absolutely certain that you
are truly a citizen of God's eternal kingdom and loving family?

*Trust in Jesus Christ today and receive forgiveness for your sins
and citizenship into God's family and His Kingdom.*

The ABCs

A - Admit you have sinned and are in need of a Savior.

B - Believe Jesus died in your place, and you can no way help yourself.

C - Confess your sins to God. He already knows.
- also Confess Jesus as you LORD.

Prayer: Take time to talk to God right now and open your heart and life to His instruction and leadership.

Connect with a local Bible believing, Christ centered church.

Commit yourself to meeting regularly with other Christians who are growing in their faith.

Heb 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Act 2:41-42 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

For more information or for spiritual help, please contact us at:
Christ E. Free Church, PO Box 619, 19682 Hill Rd,
Saegertown, Pa, 16433, Ph: 814-763-2934, www.christefca.org

We have a free booklet on:

Water Baptism: The First Step of Believer's Obedience.
and also

A New Creation: Beginning Your New Life In Christ

It is our prayer that you find Jesus Christ to be, your greatest purpose, your highest calling, your soul's source and joy, and your all-consuming passion.

Other Free Booklets

1 PETER, pt.1-2 (2Vol): *Suffering in Sojourning*

1 PETER, pt.3-5 (3Vol): *The Church God Always Wanted*

100 YEARS OF MISSIONS: *So Where Are We Now?*

A NEW CREATION: *Beginning Your New Life In Christ*

ADVENT: *The Submission of Christ*

AMERICA ADrift: *A Culture in Crisis and the Challenges Before the Church*

CHALLENGES OF FAITH *From Characters in the Bible*

CHRIST'S COMING KINGDOM: *What Will Be Will Be*

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YOUR LIFE IS LIKE...: *The Challenge to Disciple A Community*

--- All downloadable free resources at: www.christefca.org --

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May each lesson bring a growing submission, a deeper obedience and an increase of the righteous reign of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the fullness of His Spirit, in His Church and throughout our mission field.