

JUDE'S MESSAGE FOR TODAY:
CONTEND EARNESTLY!
JAMIE MCNAB
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Jude is one of the shortest letters in the New Testament.

BACKGROUND: Written by Jesus' half-brother Jude (Greek is actually Judas ... but translations prefer to avoid this).

Probably written 66–80 AD. Written to believers “generally” — rather than to a city (Corinth ... Ephesus ... etc).

There was a serious problem in the Church that Jude wanted to deal with — false teachers!

Is that applicable to us today?? Probably worse!! False Churches have had plenty of time to develop their false teachings! Plus the internet to help them spread those teachings to thousands at a time.

Jude 1:1-2

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

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

2 Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

Jude doesn't mention his “family connection” to Jesus! But does refer to the fact that he is brother to James — the chief elder in the Jerusalem Church.

Wasn't Jesus an only child — as taught by the Roman Catholic Church?

Matthew 13:53-57

53 Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there.

54 When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, “Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works?”

55 **Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary?** And **His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?**

56 And **His sisters**, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?"

57 So they were offended at Him.

But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."

Jesus had 4 brothers and at least 2 sisters. James and Jude — both authors of New Testament letters.

Jude 1:3-4

3 **Beloved**, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, **I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.**

4 For **certain men have crept in unnoticed**, who long ago were **marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men**, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

This was not a letter that Jude wanted to write!

He wanted to discuss our shared salvation — but even as early as 60 ish AD — he can see serious problems. CORRUPTION OF THE TRUTH!

He wants to encourage them to exert effort — focus on sticking with The Truth — The Faith (the essentials of the Gospel they'd already been given).

"Contend earnestly" is a single word in Greek (a long one!). Part of it is "AGONISE" — implies REAL EFFORT!

We can see reference to **"The Faith"** elsewhere. (The content of the Gospel)

BE CAREFUL OF ALLEGED "NEW TRUTH"!

We can see some references to THE FAITH.

Acts 6:7

7 **Then the word of God spread**, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, **and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.**

OBEDIENT TO THE FAITH.

Acts 14:21-22

21 And **when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples**, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, 22 **strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith**, and saying, **“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”**

CONTINUE IN THE FAITH.

Jude 4 shows that believers are not going to be “left alone” to pursue The Faith!

False teachers had already “crept in” — **“The Creeps”**.

Jude 1:4 NET

4 For **certain men have secretly slipped in among you ...**

Jude 1:4 HCSB

4 For **some men, ... have come in by stealth;** (*undercover... unnoticed*)

Even in the days of Peter ... Paul ... Jude ... John — this was a problem. How much more today?

These teachers don't wear a sign! They slip in surreptitiously!

There are lots of warnings about them throughout the New Testament.

Matthew 24:3-5

3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

4 And **Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you.**

5 **For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.**

Jesus’ first warning to His own disciples — “take heed” of deceivers.

We had better not be too complacent!

Acts 20:25-31

25 “And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. *(This is his last visit to the area)*

26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men.

27 For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

28 Therefore **take heed to yourselves and to all the flock**, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, **to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.**

29 **For I know this**, that **after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.** *(Abuse the flock ... abuse the sheep — abuse the brethren!)*

30 **Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things**, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

31 **Therefore watch**, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone **night and day with tears.**

Paul’s final warning with the elders of Ephesus — **WATCH OUT FOR GRIEVOUS WOLVES** who will come into the flock. **Plus deception from within.**

Deception can lead to death! It’s a theme throughout the New Testament.

Jude 1:4

4 For **certain men have crept in unnoticed**, who long ago were **marked out for this condemnation**, **ungodly men**, who **turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ**.

Jude 4 confirms they pervert God's grace or favour. **Lewdness (or lasciviousness in many translations) has the meaning of bold or shameless conduct**. People who are sensual (influenced only by their physical senses — their lusts).

Some preachers today teach even if you murder — or commit serial adultery — you'll still "go to Heaven"!!

Many mainstream churches are okay with same-sex relationships. Despite what God's Word says. "The Grace of God is inclusive of all" they would claim.

IF the saints don't CONTEND EARNESTLY ... if they yield to these wolves in sheep's' clothing ... they'll be doomed.

Jude gives 3 Old Testament illustrations of God's judgments and destruction:

Jude 1:5-7

5 But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, **that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.**

6 **And the angels who did not keep their proper domain**, but left their own abode, **He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day**; (*angels are now in prison and will be judged*)

7 as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, **having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh**, are set forth as an example, **suffering the vengeance of eternal fire**.

Israel were saved/delivered from slavery in Egypt. They saw and experienced great wonders and miracles!

Guaranteed to arrive in the Promised Land? God is their all-powerful Leader.

We know the story! It's not how you start that counts — but how you finish! Only 2 of the adult Israelites — out of 600,000 men — entered Canaan. Not even Moses.

Endless rebellion ... lack of faith ... walking by sight.

This should be a lesson to all saints.

1 Corinthians 10:1-6

1 Moreover, brethren, **I do not want you to be unaware** that all our fathers were under the cloud, **all passed through the sea,**

2 **all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,**

3 **all ate the same spiritual food,**

4 and **all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.**

5 **But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. (Only 2 survived)**

6 Now **these things became our examples**, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.

Our examples.

1 Corinthians 10:11-12

11 Now **all these things happened to them as examples**, and **they were written for our admonition**, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

12 Therefore **let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.**

Take heed — lest you fall. DON'T BE COMPLACENT!

Jude is clearly concerned about the saints. He doesn't want to see a repeat of Israel's history!

Another illustration is the fallen angels. Surely they had a great start? Personally created ... powerful spirit beings.

Jude 1:6

6 And **the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;**

But they rebelled. Didn't contend for the Faith — or Way of Life — they were created to follow.

These particular angels are now in everlasting chains of darkness.

2 Peter 2:4

4 **For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; (Cast into Tartarus — awaiting future judgment).**



The specifics of their sin — not sticking with their proper domain — is somewhat obscure. The most common view (though controversial)



... is that **these were angels who cohabited with women before the Flood — who then gave birth to a race of giants or Nephilim.** Which then led God to bring on the destruction of the Flood.

Jude wants to remind the saints of the terrible penalty which came upon the angels. So they'd better **remain alert! CONTEND EARNESTLY!**

Finally — Jude gives the illustration of Sodom and Gomorrah.

This illustration of God's judgment on sinners is still an example today. The location of Sodom and Gomorrah is totally desolate.

The major sin of Sodom was of course sodomy! Ironically — Tel Aviv — approximately 60 miles away — is a world capital of homosexuality! No lessons learned!!

Notice Sodom's sin of sexual depravity and strange flesh is in "similar manner" to the angels' sin. **This could be a hint of the type of sin of the angels — illicit sexual intercourse?**

Sexual sin wasn't the only problem of Sodom.

Ezekiel 16:48-50

48 "As I live," says the Lord GOD, "neither your sister Sodom nor her daughters have done as you and your daughters have done.

49 Look, **this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness;** neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

50 And **they were haughty and committed abomination before Me;** therefore I took them away as I saw fit.

Pride ... abundant/comfortable lifestyle ... "plenty" — leading to idleness (the devil makes work for idle hands). Perhaps partly why Lot's wife looked back — a very comfortable lifestyle?

Not unlike many cities today? And — maybe a similar judgment lies ahead?

SUMMARY: Jude is encouraging the saints to work hard at staying with their original faith. Because of the danger of carelessly heeding the Creeps and their false teachings ... is severe judgment — such as Israel ... fallen angels ... or Sodom and Gomorrah!

Don't make the mistake of heeding these Creeps!

No one wants that! Including you and me!