

The Epistle of Jude – Verse 1&2

This morning I want to begin a series on the Book of Jude. Within this short book contains a vital and important warning and challenge to the church as a whole. The author of this book was Jude who was a brother of Jesus and is thus mentioned in **Mark 6:3** as Judas.

As we get into Jude we find that Jude has an overwhelming need to speak to the church about the coming of false teachers. In fact he makes mention that the original reason that he was writing his letter was for the discussion of Salvation. Salvation is a very important subject for the modern day church yet equally important is the finding of salvation through sound biblical teachers to whom God gives authority and spiritual insight.

Jesus warned about false prophets and how they would come and lead people astray allowing sin to come and reign, thus making the love of God meaningless. **Matthew 24:11-12**

And many false prophets will appear and will lead many people astray. Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold.

The Apostle Paul spoke of followers of Christ being drawn away in **Acts 20:29-30**

I know full well that false teachers, like vicious wolves, will come in among you after I leave, not sparing the flock. Even some of you will distort the truth in order to draw a following.

I don't know about you but it scares me when someone of great influence in the body of Christ makes the statement, "I have a new revelation, something that has never been discovered." The reality is that the Bible has been around a long time and has been studied by many. The only thing that changes in biblical revelation is the application of truth and not the truth itself.

A liberal minister, with great show of learning, exerted himself in explaining away certain passages of the Bible, saying with finality that God didn't mean what the passages obviously said. An versed man in scripture responded to him and said, "If God didn't mean what He said, why didn't he say what He meant?" The unbeliever had no response.

Peter warned about false teachers and how people would follow their destructive ways in **II Peter 2:1-3**

But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach their destructive heresies about God and even turn against their Master who bought them. Theirs will be a swift and terrible end. Many will follow their evil teaching and

shameful immorality. And because of them, Christ and his true way will be slandered. In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money. But God condemned them long ago, and their destruction is on the way.

The existence of false teaching in our world today is rampant. It is true sign that we are in the last days. **I John 2:18** says

Dear children, the last hour is here. You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and already many such antichrists have appeared. From this we know that the end of the world has come.

The book of Jude has vital principles for us today as a book that speaks specifically to what we are currently seeing in our society. It is in this context that we begin to study and understand the direction in which Jude wants to speak to the church.

I want to look particularly at **verses 1-2**:

This letter is from Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ and a brother of James. I am writing to all who are called to live in the love of God the Father and the care of Jesus Christ. May you receive more and more of God's mercy, peace, and love.

Jude calls himself a "slave of Christ" which when translated from the Greek has the idea of subjection or subservience. The term subservience has the idea of submission, to bring oneself under the control of, or even to be held accountable. While subjection can be defined as serving to promote an end, showing extreme compliance and obedience even to the point of being domineering or overbearing.

When we think of the idea of being a slave so many negative ideas come to mind including that of being used and even abused by others. Yet, when we look at it in the context of Christ we find that it defines us as individuals who give up control to God, who serve God with the purpose of seeing his will take place, and who obey God with a deep, deep sense of conviction.

1. To be a servant of God is a "calling" of God.

In order for us to be a slave of God then we must have his calling on our lives. Look at **Romans 1:6-7**

You are among those who have been called to belong to Jesus Christ, dear friends in Rome. God loves you dearly, and he has called you to be his very own people. May grace and peace be yours from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not every human being has the desire or the willingness to follow God. To have a special motivation or even an inclining of searching for God. It has been placed there so that we would respond. Look at **II Timothy 1:9**

It is God who saved us and chose us to live a holy life. He did this not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan long before the world began – to show his love and kindness to us through Christ Jesus.

God is searching out his people within mankind. It is not based on our human effort or works but on a divine plan made specific to you and I. God chose you and me way before anything was created. His plan was in place before one breath was breathed. Why would he do something like this? Because of his grace (God's riches at Christ's expense).

Just about everyone enjoys playing computer games. One of the best is Microsoft's "flight simulator." In most versions of the game, you can choose a prop plane or a Lear jet, and you can also choose which of 180 airports around the country to take off from or to attempt a landing at. Only after acquiring landing skills after many hours of practice can a player avoid crashing a plane and land safely. It's all very realistic. You can crash into the Empire State Building in New York City, the Sears Tower in Chicago, or the Space Needle in Seattle. Your plane can break apart in midair, breaking the sound barrier over Dallas. You can nose-dive into Lake Michigan going five hundred miles per hour. The greatest thing about "Flight Simulators," though, is that the game always restores you. No matter what happens, you can start all over again. Whenever you crash and burn, fall apart, or splash into the ocean, the game always puts you back together and places you back on the runway ready to take off again.

There is nothing we can do to earn our relationship with God. There is no work on our part worthy of God's acceptance. He chose you and me because he wanted to. And his calling came to us through the Gospel, the Good News. **II Thessalonians 2:13-14**

As for us, we always thank God for you, dear brothers and sisters loved by the Lord. We are thankful that God chose you to be among the first to experience salvation, a salvation that came through the Spirit who makes you holy and by your belief in the truth. He called you to salvation when he told you the Good News; now you can share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. This calling of God is available to everyone yet not all are "called."

We do not serve an unfair God who only offers salvation to a select few because he is picky. We serve one who makes salvation available to all only if they will respond to it. **Mark 16:15-16** says

And then He told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere. Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned."

God doesn't want to lose a single soul. He wants his grace available to all. **II Peter 3:9** says

The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise to return, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to perish, so he is giving more time for everyone to repent.

God's heart is that all people will turn from their sin and turn to himself. To make a choice and to back up that choice by our faith, or trust in God, and our diligence, which is the application of expectations due to our decision.

a. Those who are called prove it by the way they live.

Our choice must be backed up with consistent and persistent action. Look at **II Peter 1:10-11**

So, dear friends, work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen. Doing this, you will never stumble or fall away. And God will open wide the gates of heaven for you to enter into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Mental acknowledgement of Christ is not enough. Even the demons know who Christ is. Yet, the obedience to Christ's words and our pursuing faith in his plans for us demonstrate his calling upon our lives. The Israelites fell into this trap of merely acknowledging God yet neglecting to hold to his truths. Look at **Hebrews 3:12-19**

Be careful then, dear friends. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. You must warn each other every day, as long it is called "today," so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ. But never forget the warning: (Ps 95:7-8) "Today you must listen to his voice. Don't harden your hearts against him as Israel did when they rebelled." And who were those people who rebelled against God, even though they heard his voice? Weren't they the ones Moses led out of Egypt? And who made God angry for forty years? Wasn't it the people who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom was God speaking when he vowed that they would never enter his place of rest? He was speaking to those who disobeyed him. So we see that they were not allowed to enter his rest because of their unbelief.

And God, in his mighty power, will protect you until you receive this salvation (eternal life in heaven), because you are trusting him. It will be revealed on the last day for all to see.

Look at **John 10:27-29**

My sheep recognize my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. So no one can take them from me."

We see here that God protects us from being taken away from him. This does not secure our salvation however. There is a responsibility on our part. In Jude 21 we find that he uses the same Greek word "tereo", meaning preserved yet in the idea of "keeping ourselves." Look at 21

Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

We must cooperate with God. His commands are to be our guide. Peter in **I Peter 1:5** said

And God, in his mighty power, will protect you until you receive this salvation, because you are trusting(showing faith) in him.

God will provide the protection but we must provide the faith. When Jesus told us that he was going to protect us from being snatched away he was speaking to those who had faith in Jesus Christ, not only by acknowledgement but also through walking faith.

4. Conclusion

Why is it that Jude felt it necessary to start out his letter about false teachers in the way that he did? We can only speculate. But in order to understand the trappings of a false teacher one must be fully grounded in their calling. And because of their calling to follow Christ they must be willing to expose the false teachings and to discern all "new revelations" given by teachers whether or not it will cost someone their acceptance by popular society.

We need people who will stand up to false teaching. We must understand that our salvation is one based on our living faith and not by our acknowledgment. That we can fall away from God thus resulting in eternal death. That we are to keep ourselves on guard so that we can be sure to do all that is written in the word of God.

We need to be grounded in our decision for God, in following his word, and in relying on God for his divine intervention. Then, and only then, can we avoid and help others avoid the trappings of the enemy.