

STUDIES IN JUDE – 4

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Scripture: Jude 1:14-25

We've been looking at the letter of Jude for 3 weeks now, and we are going to conclude it today.

Jude 1: 14-25

¹⁴ It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, ¹⁵ to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." ¹⁶ These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; ¹⁷ they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.

¹⁷ But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁸ that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts." ¹⁹ These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit. ²⁰ But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. ²² And have mercy on some, who are doubting; ²³ save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

²⁴ Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, ²⁵ to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Right at the outset, we said that Jude can be divided up into four groups"

1-4: has to do with the purpose of Jude. Why is Jude writing this letter? He was writing it predominantly to the church that was already started and flourishing in different parts of the world at that time. And we saw that his purpose was to tell people that there was the danger of false teachers who were coming into the church, coming in as wolves in sheep's clothing as it were, coming to distort the doctrine that had been passed down by the apostles and the teaching of Jesus.

5-16: We saw a description of these false teachers.

17-23: Backing up for 14 when we are there, he looked at the defense that we have against these false teachers

24-25: Ends with a glorious doxology.

As we look at v. 14, he says, "¹⁴ I was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, ¹⁵ to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

Now, I need to preface this because this showed up in v. 9 as well, when we saw that Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." These two verses come

to us from what is called 'pseudepigraphical literature'. This kind of literature was prevalent in the 1st century. There was a lot of literature that came up around that time, especially during the intertestamental period between Malachi the prophet and John the Baptist. These were well known by the Jews as well. And these 2 verses, the assumption of Moses which is where we get v. 9 from, and the book of Enoch from where we get vs. 14-15, came out of them.

Pseudepigraphical literature, a Greek word, is a compound word that can be split – pseudo which is false, not true, and epigraphia which is writings. It had to do with the fact that these were false in terms of just authorship. I want to make this clear. These were not false in terms of content; they contained a lot of good history, good scripture, a lot of good societal norms that were prevalent at that time and could be used as great information in understanding the church at that time. But, when the canon got put together, they decided that these were not inspired by the Holy Spirit, and so left it out. But these were materials that were prevalent at that time, including the Apocryphal books. There are many Apocryphal books in the Old Testament and in the New Testament that haven't made into our Bible. But they are still prevalent out there, some of which are being used by other distinctions as well. These words used by Jude had a certain authenticity to them and a rightness about what was going to happen; which is why Jude included it. So, when you talk about pseudepigraphical, it looks like it is false writing. The writing is not false. There's a lot of true historical content in them, but they were not treated as inspired to that they could be put into the canon or be made canonical.

So, looking at this, we see that Jude is saying that the key here is that judgment will happen. That the Lord will come to execute judgment upon all, to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. I've often said that wherever we see repetitive words in the Bible, we need to pay attention. The reason they have been repeated is that they are important. 'Verily, verily' as the old King James used to say, or 'truly, truly, I say unto you'. There are important statements that are being made.

So also, this v. 15 has one word that is repeated 4 times, and it's the word 'ungodly'. "To convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds, which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." In other words, the accent, the focus is that these people who are false teachers, are ungodly people. They are not godly people, not driven by the Spirit of God. In fact, he says "Ungodly sinners have spoken against Him," and the Him is capitalized, which means it is Jesus. Their speaking is against Jesus, and you cannot be godly when you are doing something like that. The accent is: Be careful of these false teachers who creep into the church. It's not that they come into the church like a tsunami and say, "We are here. Here's a new teaching; you've got to embrace it." They come in quietly like wolves in sheep clothing, act like they are part of it, but they have a distorted view of the gospel. He says, "These ungodly people – one day judgment will come upon them."

In v.16, he says, "Let me give you a description of them. These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lust. They speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage." These are grumblers, people who come into a church, and then at the end of a service, the only thing they can do is find fault, grumble about something. "O man, the worship leader never picked a song that I liked." Or "Today's sermon really didn't cut it. it didn't speak to me." "My goodness! Did you see that person who came into church?" Or they complain about the air-conditioning or something or the other.

Why is this bad? Because when you do that, they you're not focusing on the thing that you've come here for, which is to engage with the things of God. You're caught up with all these peripheral things

that have no bearing on our spiritual growth. He says that these are grumblers finding fault, just looking for things that they can pick and find fault with.

Following after their own lusts or following after their own flesh. Not listening to the Spirit of God but listening to their own cravings or their own flesh. Then they speak arrogantly. Then flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage. Saying nice things but to the end that they can exploit or take advantage of you. Jude is saying: Be careful of these kinds of people. These are the traits, the hallmarks that you will see of them. Be very careful of them.

Then in v.17, he says, "But you, beloved, are to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ." The key word here is 'remember'. Remember what? Remember all that you have heard about the teaching of the apostles, the teaching of the gospels, all that you have studied. Bring all of this to mind because that is what is going to help you navigate through distortion. He says, "remember the things that you have been taught," which also puts the onus on us, that we have enough of a Bible to remember. Do we have enough of the doctrines to remember, to be able to say, "That is not right doctrine"? Do we understand what must be part of the behavior of Christians and say "that behavior is inconsistent with the word of God"? He says, "Remember, when you are facing these things, remember what you have been taught."

And then he says, "beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, "also, in the last days, there will be mockers following after their own ungodly lusts." He says, "Remember too, that in times past, you have been warned about this period of time." You have been warned about it, that it is coming and that it will come.

I remember many years ago in one of the churches that we have planted, somebody came into the church, not the Sunday service, but met with one of the members, and asked if they can have prayer on a weekday. This member unwittingly said, "Yes, of course." Then he said, "Can you call some other friends of yours?" And so he called some other members. This man started teaching them things and before they knew what was happening, he was telling them that their baptism didn't hold good, that the things that they had in their rooms, photographs, heirlooms, all needed to be thrown out of their homes immediately. The next day he planned to arrange for a baptism and had them take sacks and throw out all the stuff that was in their homes. One of the members called me and said, "Pastor, this is what is happening. We don't know who this man is, but a lot of the church members are a part of it." Then I was able to help them understand what was going on. Did you check what was going on? Did you ask the right questions? Do you have enough knowledge to be able to thwart this kind of activity? It happened when it was too late; they had already lost so many things that had been thrown out of their homes. How careful we need to be!

Then he says, "These are the ones who cause divisions, are worldly-minded and devoid of the Spirit." The objective of these kinds of people with this kind of behavior, the grumblers and finding fault and all of that, is to cause division in the church, to break the church. They are devoid of the Spirit. The church has to be Spirit-led. The church cannot be led by the flesh. The church of Jesus Christ must be led by His spirit. But these people have no intention of being spiritual. All they are concerned is that the church will be divided and broken.

In v. 20 he says, "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith," Here's how you will stand against this kind of false teachings. Build yourself up on your most holy faith. The onus, beloved, is again on us. What are we doing to build ourselves up? What are we doing to know more about scripture than we knew last week? That might be a good place to start – to say that if I'm reading a chapter a day, at the end of one week I'm going to make it a chapter and a half a day. So

you, yourself, know that you are growing. Give yourself these kinds of measurable tools that allow you to know that you are growing in the faith.

Then he says “praying in the Holy Spirit,” continuously asking God: What is it that you have for me? 1 Corinthians tells us: Who understands the mind of God, but the Spirit of God. And the Spirit of God is in our hearts. So we know. God wants us to know the way to walk amidst all the things that we face. And the only way that we can know that is through a very healthy prayer life. So the question for us is: Are we praying enough? Are we making sure that we’re growing in our prayer life? Maybe we spend 15 minutes a day in prayer, half an hour. Increase it and say, tomorrow I’m going to spend more time. today I prayed for people; tomorrow I’m going to pray for three more families. Give yourselves the ability to check if there’s growth in your lives. Build yourselves up in the faith, pray in the Holy Spirit.

v.21 “Keep yourselves in the love of God.” In other words, abide in Him. It is only through abiding that there will be fruit. No branch that is cut and thrown away can draw nutrients from the tree. It’s gone. Nor will there be leaves or fruit that come from that branch. We saw that we will know these people by their fruit. Is there fruit in their lives? Consequently we also need to ask the question of ourselves: Is there fruit in our lives? Can I look at my life and say, “Yes, I see fruit of the Holy Spirit. There’s love, joy. I’m a patient person. All of these things.” Or even to be able to say, “I learn from scripture and I allow that to inform who I am.” Do I see fruit in my life? Keep yourselves in the love of God, abide in Him, let the love of Jesus be your motivation for everything that you do.

We had a bumper sticker, even a wristband, years back that read WWJD, which stood for ‘What Would Jesus Do?’ I think that’s an excellent question to ask ourselves when we are faced with a decision. What would Jesus do in this situation? And then do what you think He would do. So, Jude is saying, “These are things that you need to put in place so that you can be able to stand against these people. So build yourself up in the faith, pray in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God.”

Then, “wait anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.” He says constantly remind yourself that one day we’re going to be with Jesus in heaven. What a glorious day! One day to be face to face with Jesus and be able to say: Jesus, thank You for what You did on the cross. Because of that, I stand in heaven today. What a beautiful moment to actually be able to look into the Savior’s eyes and say thank you. And then not to forget all our loved ones who have gone ahead, that we’ll see them again. What a glorious time and place heaven will be. And he says, “Anxiously look forward.” The anxious here is not the negative; it’s a positive. Constantly be thinking about that. That’s where we are all headed. And our job is to make sure that we don’t get sidetracked by things that can come and corrupt our faith.

Then he ends this so beautifully. He says we don’t condemn people like this.

v.22 “Have mercy on some who are doubting.”

If you see somebody who is doubting, whose faith is faltering, go to them, stand by them, help them to come through. Don’t just leave them and say: O my goodness. I’m not going to have anything to do with them. But embrace them, help them to get back on track.

Then he says, “Save others, snatching them out of the fire.” In other words, for people like this, judgment is coming, and they’re going to be in eternal separation with God. He says, “Save them. If it’s possible for you to save them, do it.”

“And on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.” Again, not fear as in frightened of them, but fearful in the sense of the contamination of sin that is on their garments, metaphorically speaking.

We call the sin, but still value the person who is involved in them. Jesus did the same. In John 8, when He was dealing with the woman caught in adultery, they brought her to Him. All of them with this righteous indignation, saying, "The law of Moses says that you have to stone somebody caught in adultery. What do you say?" And Jesus, after a little bit of drawing stuff in the sand, made them wait a bit until their pomposity got drained, said, "The one who is without sin, throw the first stone." And they slunk away. Then Jesus finally looked at her and said, "Is there no one left to condemn you?" and she said, "No one, my Lord." He said, "Neither do I condemn you." Here's the delineation – value for the person. No condemnation, "but go and sin no more." This should not be a part of who you are.

And Jude is saying the same thing in different words. He's saying: Make sure that you still treat people like this with compassion, hoping that you can draw them into what is mainstream. Draw them away from false teaching.

Then he ends with this glorious doxology, a hymn of praise to God, the Triune God. "Now to Him who's able to keep you from stumbling," To Him. So we turn our gaze and our attention, we never lose sight of who it is who can keep us from stumbling. We never let go of the hand of the One who can take us through the waters or through the fire without it overwhelming us or singeing us. To Him who's able to keep you from stumbling, to make you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless with great joy. To Him, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forever. At the end of all this, he turns it and says, "Look to Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you blameless before the eternal God."

That's where our focus needs to be, beloved. That's where our eyes should always be focused on the Savior, to Him who's able to keep you, to keep me from falling.

Amen.