

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes

1-31-18

Jude 1

¹ Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: ² Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

1:1 Jude's letter focuses on apostasy—when people turn away from God's truth and embrace false teachings. Jude reminded his readers of God's judgment on those who had left the faith. This letter warns against false teachers—in this case, probably Gnostic teachers (see the note on Colossians 2:4ff for a description of the Gnostic heresy). Gnostics opposed two of the basic tenets of Christianity—the incarnation of Christ and the call to Christian ethics. Jude wrote to combat these false teachings and to encourage true doctrine and right conduct.

1:1 Jude was a brother of James, who was one of the leaders in the early church. Both of these men were Jesus' half brothers. Mary was their mother, and Joseph was their father. Although Mary was Jesus' true mother, God was Jesus' true Father.

The Sin and Doom of Ungodly People - Verses 3-16

³ Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. ⁴ For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. ⁵ Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord at one time delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. ⁶ And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. ⁷ In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire. ⁸ In the very same way, on the strength of their dreams these ungodly people pollute their own bodies, reject authority and heap abuse on celestial beings. ⁹ But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"^L ¹⁰ Yet these people slander whatever they do not understand, and the very things they do understand by instinct—as irrational animals do—will destroy them. ¹¹ Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion. ¹² These people are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead. ¹³ They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever. ¹⁴ Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy

ones ¹⁵ to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness, and of all the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” ¹⁶ These people are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.

1:3 Jude emphasizes the important relationship between correct doctrine and true faith. The truth of the Bible must not be compromised, because it gives us the real facts about Jesus and salvation. The Bible is inspired by God and should never be twisted or manipulated; when it is, we can become confused over right and wrong and lose sight of the only path that leads to eternal life. Before writing about salvation, then, Jude felt he had to set his readers back on the right track, calling them back to the basics of their faith. Then the way to salvation would be clearer. “God’s holy people” refers to all believers.

1:3 How do ordinary Christians “contend for the faith” today? Think about these ideas: (1) We can contend for the faith by knowing the truth. We do that by studying the Bible. Don’t ever imagine that pastors and seminary professors hold a monopoly on this task. Without study, you cannot know what to defend. You must understand the basic doctrines of the faith so that you can recognize false doctrines and prevent wrong teaching from undermining your faith and hurting others. (2) We can contend for the faith as we grow personally with Christ. While knowledge is important, your personal relationship with Christ is essential. Through that relationship, God has given you the Holy Spirit as a teacher. Unattached to God, you may know everything, but understand nothing. Attached to Christ, you are given spiritual understanding as well as experiences with Christ that underscore your faith. (3) We can contend for the faith by remaining unified on the essentials. While Christians can certainly disagree on many nonessentials (music in worship, methods of worship, methods of outreach), we must always defend the truth of the basics of our faith as found in God’s Word.

1:4 Even some of our churches today have false (“ungodly”) teachers who “have secretly slipped in” and are twisting the Bible’s teachings to justify their own opinions, lifestyle, or wrong behavior. In doing this, they may gain temporary freedom to do as they wish, but they will discover that in distorting Scripture they are playing with fire. God will judge them for excusing, tolerating, and promoting sin.

1:4 Many first-century false teachers were teaching that Christians could do whatever they liked without fear of God’s punishment. They had a light view of God’s holiness and his justice. Paul refuted this same kind of false teaching in Romans 6:1-23. Even today, some Christians minimize the sinfulness of sin, believing that how they live has little to do with their faith. But what a person truly believes will show up in how he or she acts. Those who truly have faith will show it by their deep respect for God and their sincere desire to live according to the principles in his Word.

1:5-7 Jude gives three examples of rebellion: (1) the nation of Israel—who, although they were delivered from Egypt, refused to trust God and enter the Promised Land (Numbers 14:26-39); (2) the angels—although they were once pure, holy, and living in God’s presence, some gave in to pride and joined Satan to rebel against God (2 Peter 2:4); (3) the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah—the inhabitants were so full of sin that God wiped them off the face of the earth (Genesis 19:1-29). If the chosen people, angels, and sinful cities were punished, how much more would these false teachers be severely judged?

1:7 Many people don't want to believe that God sentences people to "eternal fire" for rejecting him. But this is clearly taught in Scripture. Sinners who don't seek forgiveness from God will face eternal separation from him. Jude warns all who rebel against, ignore, or reject God.

1:8 The "celestial beings" here are probably evil angels. Just as the men of Sodom insulted angels (Genesis 19), these false teachers scoffed at any authority. For information on the danger of insulting even the fallen angels, see the note on 2 Peter 2:10-12.

1:9 This incident is not recorded in any other place in Scripture. Moses' death is recorded in Deuteronomy 34. Here Jude may have been making use of an ancient book called The Assumption of Moses.

1:10 False teachers claimed to possess secret knowledge that gave them authority. Their "knowledge" of God was esoteric—mystical and beyond human understanding. The nature of God is beyond our understanding, but God, in his grace, has chosen to reveal himself to us—in his Word and supremely in Jesus Christ. Therefore, we must seek to know all we can about what he has revealed, even though we cannot fully comprehend God with our finite human minds. Beware of those who claim to have all the answers and who belittle what they do not understand.

1:11 Jude gives three examples of men who did whatever they wanted (1:10): Cain, who murdered his brother out of vengeful jealousy (Genesis 4:1-16); Balaam, who prophesied out of greed, not out of obedience to God's command (Numbers 22-24); Korah, who rebelled against God's divinely appointed leaders, wanting the power for himself (Numbers 16:1-35). These stories illustrate attitudes that are typical of false teachers—pride, selfishness, jealousy, greed, lust for power, and disregard of God's will.

1:12 When the Lord's Supper was celebrated in the early church, believers would eat a full meal before taking part in Communion with the sharing of the bread and wine. The meal was called a "love feast," and it was designed to be a sacred time of fellowship to prepare one's heart for Communion. In several of the churches, however, this meal had turned into a time of gluttony and drunken revelry. In Corinth, for example, some people hastily gobbled food while others went hungry (1 Corinthians 11:20-22). No church function should be an occasion for selfishness, gluttony, greed, disorder, or other sins that destroy unity or take one's mind away from the real purpose for gathering together.

1:12 The false teachers were "twice dead." They were useless "trees" because they weren't producing fruit. They weren't even believers, so they would be rooted up and burned.

1:14 Jesus is also mentioned as coming with angels ("holy ones") in Matthew 16:27 and 24:31. Daniel 7:10 speaks of God judging humanity in the presence of ten thousand times ten thousand angels.

A Call to Persevere - Verses 17-22

¹⁷ But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. ¹⁸ They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." ¹⁹ These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. ²⁰ But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. ²² Be merciful to those who doubt; ²³ save others by

snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

1:18 The "last times" is a common phrase referring to the time between Jesus' first and second comings. We live in the last times.

1:21 To "keep yourselves in God's love" means to live close to God and his people, not listening to false teachers who would try to pull you away from him (John 15:9-10).

1:22-23 Bringing people to Jesus saves them from God's judgment. We can do this through compassion and kindness. To hate "even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh" means that we are to hate the sin, but we must witness to and love the sinner. Unbelievers, no matter how successful they seem by worldly standards, are lost and in need of salvation. We should not take witnessing lightly—it is a matter of life and death.

1:23 In trying to find common ground with those to whom we witness, we must be careful not to fall into the quicksand of compromise. When reaching out to others, we must be sure that our own footing is safe and secure. Be careful not to become so much like non-Christians that no one can tell who you are or what you believe. Influence them for Christ—don't allow them to influence you to sin!

Doxology- Verses 24-25

²⁴ To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— ²⁵ to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

1:24-25 As the letter begins, so it ends—with assurance. God keeps believers from falling prey to false teachers. Although false teachers are widespread and dangerous, we don't have to be afraid if we trust God and are rooted and grounded in him.

1:24-25 To be sinless and perfect ("without fault") will be the ultimate condition of the believer when he or she finally sees Christ face to face. When Christ appears and we are given our new bodies, we will be like Christ (1 John 3:2). Coming into Christ's presence will be more wonderful than we could ever imagine!

1:24-25 The audience to whom Jude wrote was vulnerable to heresies and to temptations toward immoral living. Jude encouraged the believers to remain firm in their faith and trust in God's promises for their futures. This was all the more important because they were living in a time of increased apostasy. We, too, are living in the last days, much closer to the end than were the original readers of this letter. We, too, are vulnerable to doctrinal error. We, too, are tempted to give in to sin. Although much false teaching is around us, we need not be afraid or give up in despair—God can keep us from falling, and he guarantees that if we remain faithful, he will bring us into his presence and give us everlasting joy.