

# JUDE



## Jude 1–4

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**1** *From Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James. To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father, and who are kept safe for Jesus Christ.*

Jude identifies himself as the servant of Jesus Christ rather than as His half brother. Jude, who once doubted his brother's teaching, finally realized the necessity of being related to Jesus by faith. Here, he confesses that he is a servant, which is a voluntary slave of the Lord Jesus Christ. He further identifies himself as the brother of James, which clearly establishes his identity.

Jude then identifies those people to whom he was writing, namely “those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father, and who are kept safe for Jesus Christ.” Each believer has been individually called out by God. “*People cannot come to me unless the Father who sent me brings them to me. I will bring these people back to life on the last day*” (John 6:44). Some translations read “sanctified by God the Father.” *Sanctified* comes from the Greek word *ἀγιάζω* (hagiazō), meaning “the setting apart of the believer for God.”<sup>1</sup> The

Father has set believers apart from the rest of the world by providing for reconciliation through His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who are called and set apart are also preserved or kept safe in Jesus Christ because He freely obeyed the Father's will and endured the burden of mankind's sin on the cross (*John 17:11–12*).

## **2 *May mercy, peace, and love fill your lives!***

Jude adds his own word of blessing to all believers in Christ, praying that God will increase their “mercy, peace, and love.” Although the word mercy is often used to describe the relationship among people, it is primarily used in the New Testament as the overriding blessing of God toward His people. Jude also wishes them peace. True peace only comes from God, the source of the believers' welfare in the kingdom of Christ. This is that same peace “beyond anything we can imagine” (*Philippians 4:7*). Finally, Jude wishes all believers love. The word used for *love* here is *ἀγάπη* (agape), of which the Lord God is the only source.<sup>2</sup> This love is most clearly demonstrated by the fact that God gave His only Son to be the only acceptable sacrifice for mankind's sin (*John 3:16*). Such love is totally self-giving (*1 John 3:16*).

These godly attributes are manifested in the believer through the indwelling Holy Spirit of the living God. By that same Spirit, these blessings continue to grow and bear fruit in the lives of believers.

## **3 *Dear friends, I had intended to write to you about the salvation we share. But something has come up. It demands that I write to you and encourage you to continue your fight for the Christian faith that was entrusted to God's holy people once for all time.***

Jude longed to share the joys of salvation, which was the dominant theme uniting all of the Christian community, but an insidious cancer developing within the body of the believers threatened to destroy their peace and unity. Because of this, Jude saw that it was far more

important to bring this battle into the open, to expose its heresy, and to encourage the believers to stand firm in the faith that had been delivered to them. Christians are not only to contend for their faith but to fight for it earnestly and wholeheartedly. The followers of Jesus Christ must be diligent, defending the faith that has been delivered to them with clarity of thought and strength of conviction in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The word faith as used here does not pertain to anyone's personal relationship to Jesus Christ but refers to the doctrine consigned to them through the teachings of the apostles and the Scriptures. They were to forcefully uphold the true doctrine originally entrusted to them against the false doctrine infiltrating their ranks. One's personal faith exists within the parameters of this great body of God-inspired truth. These are the teachings that must be defended against the onslaught of those who deny the authority of the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, as revealed in His Holy Word.

***4 Some people have slipped in among you unnoticed. Not long ago they were condemned in writing for the following reason: They are people to whom God means nothing. They use God's kindness as an excuse for sexual freedom and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.***

Jude identified the source of his concern. Some people had joined the fellowship of the believers and yet denied these doctrines. They were ungodly men who perverted the truth of the gospel and thereby undermined the grace of God. The believers' holy faith was being distorted by these corrupt men. This was evident in their lewd philosophy, which finally ended in a denial that Jesus Christ is Lord. These people were reprobate, without hope, and damned. Their description as being "condemned in writing" may be a reference either to God's ordained designation of their punishment or to the written warnings already provided to the believers about these men's condemnable acts. *"False prophets were among God's people in the past, as false teachers will be among you. They will secretly bring in their own*

*destructive teachings. They will deny the Lord, who has bought them, and they will bring themselves swift destruction” (2 Peter 2:1).*

As discussed in the introduction, the false teaching of Gnosticism taught that the spiritual realm and the physical realm were totally separate and incompatible. These imposters within the church believed that the Lord God ruled the spirit world but did not concern Himself with the things of the earth. Therefore, it was possible to pursue the special knowledge required to gain access to the spirit world while simultaneously indulging in the inordinate pleasures of the flesh. Since one did not affect the other, the Gnostics did not perceive this as inconsistent with Christian teaching, although the early church quickly identified it as heresy. Jude admonished his audience to be vigilant against these terrible fallacies that dilute and destroy the truth (*Ephesians 4:14*).

### **Notes/Applications**

In his prologue, Jude exudes the joy of the faith given to him by Jesus Christ. We catch a glimpse of his passion for that precious faith and see the depth of his concern about the safety and purity of the church. We hear his clarion call across the ages to contend for this faith with every fiber of our being.

Within the context of our faith, Jude first provides a wonderful assurance to all believers, reminding us that God calls us into this relationship with Him. We are set apart from the rest of the world as God exercises His sovereign will. We are kept safe amid this life’s struggle by the power of God, rooted in the saving grace of Jesus Christ. God is the initiator, and we are the grateful recipients of these blessings. With this sure foundation established, Jude then warns the believers of his time and of all ages about imposters who do not share in these blessings. Our eternal life is secure, kept from the hand of the devil, preserved in Jesus, the Anointed One, forevermore.

The Christian life will always be a struggle as long as we are in these earthbound bodies. We face this struggle knowing that the Spirit of God contends for us before the throne of God, nurturing us,

guiding us, correcting us, and keeping us. We are in the maelstrom of a constant battle. *“This is not a wrestling match against a human opponent. We are wrestling with rulers, authorities, the powers who govern this world of darkness, and spiritual forces that control evil in the heavenly world”* (Ephesians 6:12).

Jude writes this short, powerful epistle to encourage us in the midst of this battle. He focuses our attention on a serious conflict within the body of believers between those truly called and those who only appear to be called. The latter labor within the church under the guise of the redeemed but are in truth under the penalty of death. They may look and sound good, but they are ungodly people.

The text says these men were ordained to live under condemnation for this offense against the church of Jesus Christ. This simply means that all persons who falsely pervert the truth of the gospel are included in this judgment. Unfortunately, in our current age, there are many who serve our churches and espouse a doctrine that comes straight from Satan. They deny the only Lord God and the inerrant truth of His Scriptures. They affirm that the only criterion is sincerity. They commend other forms of religion that deny the true God. This is perversion because every man has sufficient evidence of Almighty God, so when he rejects the truth, he is without excuse. *“<sup>20</sup>From the creation of the world, God’s invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly observed in what he made. As a result, people have no excuse. <sup>21</sup>They knew God but did not praise and thank him for being God. Instead, their thoughts were pointless, and their misguided minds were plunged into darkness”* (Romans 1:20–21).

Such imposters deny the Lord Jesus Christ. They do not deny the existence of Jesus but simply reject that He is Lord, the Christ, the Anointed One. They deny that He is God and that He is coming again. They deny that He paid for sin on Calvary, that He is Messiah and Savior, or even that they need a Savior. However, denying any or all of these facts does not alter the truth about them. One day, everyone will stand before Almighty God and acknowledge Who He

is. In human terms, such people may be very moral, but from God's perspective, they are immoral and spiritually bankrupt.

The remainder of Jude's letter issues warnings and judgments against these kinds of people. They have always endeavored to destroy the work of Christ and will do so until Christ comes again. In the meantime, we are charged "to continue your fight for the Christian faith that was entrusted to God's holy people once for all time."