÷THIRTEENTH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

COMMENTARY

JUDE

E-Mail - Pastor Henry Mahan

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Jude

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The module was created by kotg

**÷**THE COMMON SALVATION

Lesson 1

Jud\_1:1-3

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This epistle was written by Jude, one of the twelve apostles of Christ (Act\_1:13). It is called a "general epistle" because it is not written to any particular person or church but to the saints in general. The design of the epistle is to exhort believers to continue in and contend for the faith, to describe false teachers, to point out their principles, practices and dreadful end, so that we might shun and avoid them.

(Vs. 1.) "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ." This is a common title for all believers, yet here, as in other epistles, it is peculiar to an apostle, or a minister of the gospel. It is not just a mark of humility, but it reveals two other things: firstly, God called him to serve in the kingdom of Christ and, secondly, he obeyed Christ and faithfully performed the commands and the will of his Master.

"To them that are sanctified by God the Father." This does not refer to internal sanctification, but to the act of eternal election which is peculiar to the Father. The language is taken from the Old Testament Scriptures, used of persons and things that were sanctified and set apart for and unto the Lord (Gen\_2:3; Exo\_13:2; Exo\_29:44). God takes that which is ordinary and common and by divine decree sets it apart for his glory (2Th\_2:13; Eph\_1:3-4).

"Preserved in Christ Jesus." Those who are sanctified, or set apart by God the Father in election, are in Christ. They are chosen in him, they are put into his hands, they are redeemed by him, they are sanctified or made holy by him (1Co\_1:2; 2Co\_5:21), they are accepted in him and they are kept by him (Jud\_1:24; Joh\_10:27-28).

"And Called" – not merely externally by the preaching of the Word, but internally by the Spirit and grace of God (1Th\_1:4-5). This is a special and effectual call, whereby men are called out of darkness into light, out of bondage into liberty and out of the world into fellowship with God (1Jn\_1:3).

(Vs. 2.) Jude salutes them with a desire for the multiplication of mercy, peace and love unto and among them. Someone said, "Grace is God giving us what we do not deserve, and mercy is God not giving us what we do deserve."

"Mercy" is a perfection of God and is revealed in a special manner through Christ to all believers. We need eternal mercy, redeeming mercy, daily mercies and future mercy.

"Peace" may design a fresh and enlarged view of the peace we have through the blood of his cross (Col\_1:20), an increase of peace in our own hearts and conscience (Rom\_8:1; Isa\_26:3) – and may also include peace among ourselves.

"Love" is understood as that of God toward men as well as that of men toward God and toward one another. It is impossible to have one without the other (1Jn\_1:7; 1Jn\_1:9).

(Vs. 3.) "Beloved." Jude called the persons to whom he writes "Beloved." They were beloved of God, beloved of him and beloved of other believers.

"The common salvation" (Tit\_1:4). I believe Jude is speaking her of the gospel, redemption, faith and all things that pertain to our salvation. The covenant of grace and the blessings and promises of it are shared commonly by all believers. The gospel may be said to be common because it is preached to all believers. Jesus Christ is a common because it is preached to all believes. Jesus Christ is a common Saviour in that all of our righteousness, redemption, wisdom and sanctification are in him. We are bought with the same blood, justified by the same righteousness, called by the same Spirit and shall enjoy and posses the same glory.

"Earnestly contend for the faith." Jude here designs, by "the faith," the whole scheme of evangelical truths to be preached and believed. It is sometimes called the "word of faith", "the faith of the gospel", "the mystery of faith", "the most holy faith", or "the common faith". The faith is to be preached, contended for and defended against false teachers: the Trinity, the deity and sonship of Christ, the divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit, the state and condition of man by nature, the inspiration of the Scriptures, the grace of God in election, justification by his blood, imputed and imparted righteousness, regeneration and sanctification, final perseverance, the return of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the future glory of the saints and the eternal condemnation of the lost.

This is said to be "delivered to the saints" (Heb\_1:1-2). It was delivered to Christ as our Mediator. It was promised, pictured and prophesied by Old Testament writers and ceremonies. It was delivered to the apostles by Christ himself and to us by his apostles (Heb\_2:1-3).

We can contend for the faith by preaching it openly, boldly and faithfully, by bearing an experimental and holy testimony to it, by praying for the success of it, by supporting with our gifts, our presence and our prayers the preaching of it and by encouraging and exhorting other believers.

÷ENEMIES WITHIN THE CHURCH

Lesson 2

Jud\_1:4-8

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In the preceding verse believers are exhorted earnestly, boldly and faithfully to hold to, stand by and contend for all that pertains to the faith. This will not be easy, for there are enemies without and within the church who, motivated Satan, will seek to pervert, compromise and destroy the true gospel of redeeming grace as it is purchased by and revealed the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Vs. 4.) The most treacherous and subtle enemy is the one inside the church (2Pe\_2:1; 1Ti\_4:1-3). Satan sows his tares among the wheat. He does this in the night while men sleep, in order that he might corrupt the church. They creep in unsuspected and under false profession (Mat\_7:15; 2Co\_11:13-15).

"They were long ago ordained to this judgement." The church is not tried, nor the Lord Jesus betrayed, nor the gospel challenged except according to the counsel and will of God (Joh\_19:11; Joh\_17:12; Psa\_109:7-8). Those who creep in, infiltrate the church and corrupt the truth are foretold and their judgement is foretold. They, too, serve the purpose of God (Rom\_9:17; Pro\_16:4).

"They are ungodly men who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness." They abuse salvation by grace by living a life of sin and encouraging others to take an impure and profane attitude toward sin (Rom\_6:1-4; Rom\_6:15; Tit\_1:16; Tit\_2:11-14).

The true gospel is denied, the true grace of the Lord God is denied and the true redemptive work of Christ is denied by these men, if not in words, yet in works. Election is unto holiness (Eph\_1:4). Our calling is a holy calling (2Ti\_1:9). Righteousness is not only imputed but also imparted to us by his grace and Spirit (1Jn\_3:10). Those who use the grace of God as an excuse to sin or a cloak for their evil deny Christ and his gospel.

(Vs. 5-7). "I remind you of what you already know – that if any trifle thus with the grace of God, this contempt for his grace and glory of his Son will not go unpunished." This he proves by three examples.

1. The people of Israel were the chosen nation, a special people; yet, notwithstanding their wonderful deliverance out of Egypt, because of their unbelief, rebellion and evil, God destroyed them in the wilderness! No outward privilege and profession will screen a rebel from the wrath of God. God will make sever examples of those who despise his grace. The fountain of all their evil and sin was unbelief.

2. The angels enjoyed a higher state than Israel. They were free spirits who enjoyed the light and presence of God. They were high,honourable and happy; yet by deserting their posts of honour, being unwilling to be subject to God, they were turned out of heaven and reserved without hope unto eternal condemnation. Wherever they go, they drag their chains of bondage. To depart from the grace of God is to be for ever damned (Heb\_6:4-6).

3. Sodom and Gomorrha is a more general example, testifying that God will judge and punish all the ungodly without difference! To pervert the gospel of God, the grace of God, or the laws and designs of God will bring eternal condemnation. These men were given up to homosexuality and strange flesh (Rom\_1:26-28; Lev\_20:13).

In these examples unbelief, pride and fleshly corruption are found in creatures who had at one time or another enjoyed a revelation from God and special privileges of common grace, and were exposed to his truth. Take heed, brethren, lest these be found in us (Heb\_3:12; Heb\_10:38-39).

(Vs. 8). "Likewise," or in the same way as in the above examples, "these filthy dreamers" (false teachers), who creep into the church, are guilty of three great errors: they "defile the flesh, despise authority and slander dignities"!

1. They are called "filthy dreamers"; for what they taught was not the Word of God, but their own thoughts, imaginations and dreams, which came to them in their sleep of death and darkness (Jer\_23:25-28). They defiled the flesh by unclean practices and behaviour.

2. They despised the commandment of Christ, the rule of Christ and his Word. They chose to do as they pleased, unrestrained.

3. They spoke evil of the apostles, pastors and church officers, refusing their leadership and dishonouring them (Heb\_13:17).

÷FALLING STARS AND CLOUDS WITHOUT WATER

Lesson 3

Jud\_1:9-13

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In the preceding verses Jude describe the false teachers and enemies of Christ which have infiltrated the church, "creeping in unawares". They turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, they deny the gospel of substitution, they defile the flesh, despise authority and speak evil of the apostles, pastors and church leaders without any just cause. Their motive in discrediting the true preachers is to exalt themselves and draw away disciples to themselves.

(Vs. 9.) There is some controversy over what is meant by "the body of Moses". Some say it is the body of his laws. Calvin said, "It is beyond controversy that Moses died and was buried by the Lord, and his grave is concealed according to the purpose of God, that neither he nor his grave become an object of worship and idolatry" (Deut. 34:1-6). Evidently Satan, who encourages men to idolatry, will-worship and creature-worship, desired otherwise. The devil disputed with Michael over Moses' body. Michael dared not speak more severely against Satan than to deliver him to God to be restrained and rebuked. Michael was not afraid of Satan, nor did he honour and respect this condemned reprobate; but he chose to leave judgement and condemnation to him who alone has the right and wisdom to deal with principalities and powers!

The argument is from the greater to the lesser: that is; if Michael dared not give a railing word against Satan, how great is the insolence of these men who speak evil of God-ordained authority in whatever realm!

(Vs. 10.) These men, though they profess faith and piety, are natural men, without spiritual understanding. Men have a large share of natural knowledge of things physical, material, civil and even moral. But, being dead in trespasses and sin, kotg, they neither receive nor understand the things of God (1Co\_2:14; Rom\_8:7). Therefore, like brute beasts, they speak evil of the ministers of the gospel, sit in judgement on the Scriptures, take upon themselves to govern and disrupt the church, and in general deal with the great mysteries and interpretation of spiritual things which they do not understand.

(Vs. 11.) "Woe unto them." This is a declaration of deserved condemnation and a prediction of what shall befall them.

They have gone in the way of Cain." This was the way of envy. Cain envied the acceptance of his brother's offering. These men envied the gifts and success bestowed on true ministers. Cain's way was the way of hated. He rose up and killed his brother rather than admit his own error.

"They ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward." Balaam's great error was covetousness, or an immoderate love for money. False teachers are usually motivated by a love for applause, filthy lucre, or self-glory.

"They perished in rebellion like that of Korah" (Num\_16:1-3). As Korah contradicted Moses and Aaron, these men oppose the ministers of Christ, whom they would discredit and cast out that they might themselves rule.

(Vs. 12,13.) Hypocrites, false teachers and religious opportunists are "spots in your love-feasts"! Early Christians evidently met together for feasts of fellowship, unity and brotherly love to encourage one another, to edify one another and to strengthen one another. These deceivers came among them to feed themselves, to promote their own positions and to sow discord.

"They are clouds without water." They are compared to clouds for their great number, their sudden rise, their darkness, their stormy character, their elevating themselves in high positions and their being puffed up with pride, as well as their sudden departure and destruction. But mainly they are said to be clouds without water because, though having the appearance and promise of rain, they are without any grace, truth, or blessings.

"They are trees withered, without fruit, and twice dead." They are without leaves that provide shade and without fruit such as grace, love, humility and joy. "Twice dead" seems to imply that they are not only dead in sin, as all natural men, but also judicially blinded or given over by God to a corrupt mind!

"They are raging waves of the sea." This shows their great swelling pride and their frothy, showy, empty words, which are nothing but a noisy, empty, blustering ministry that ends in shame.

"They are wandering stars." The reference is probably to falling stars, which dazzle the eyes for a moment with a sudden light and then plunge for ever into darkness.

÷NOW UNTO HIM THAT IS ABLE TO KEEP US

Lesson 4

Jud\_1:14-25

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(Vs. 14,15.) This was Enoch, the son of Jared, who walked with God and was translated body and soul to heaven. Enoch did not experience death (Gen\_5:18-24). He is said to be the seventh generation from Adam, in the line of Seth. Evidently this prophecy of Enoch was handed down from age to age and was in full credit with the Jews, so the apostle Jude refers to it (or else he had it by divine inspiration).

The Lord Jesus will come again! This is not his first coming, which was to seek and save, not to judge and condemn. This is his second coming (Joh\_14:3; Act\_1:10-11; 1Th\_4:16-18). His second coming will show forth his glory and majesty, gather his elect together and mark the final judgement of the wicked. He will be accompanied by the redeemed and his holy angels.

To execute judgement upon all" (Joh\_5:22). His righteous judgement shall fall upon men, not only for their ungodly deeds, but for their words against him. The special reference here is to those false teachers and men who spoke against his person and offices, his blood and righteousness, his ministers and people! (Mat\_25:31-33.)

(Vs. 16.) These trouble-makers, false teachers and self-willed hypocrites are usually "murmurers and complaints". They have no joy, rest, or peace in Christ; so they murmur against God, his sovereignty, his providence, his government and his gospel of free grace. They murmur against ministers of the gospel, against civil magistrates, against their lot in life and against everything that is not to their liking (Num\_14:26-29). They walk after their own desires, not caring for the welfare or feelings of others. But they speak flattering words and openly court men whom they hope to entrap and from whom they hope to gain either praise or possessions (Jas\_2:1).

(Vs. 17,18.) The apostle addresses the true believers who might be disturbed and troubled by these murmurers and complainers. "The apostles of the Lord Jesus told you that in these last days scoffers, mockers and false preachers would arise, who seek not the glory of Christ but their own unholy desires" (2Pe\_3:2-3; 1Ti\_4:1-3; 2Ti\_3:1-4).

(Vs. 19.) These people are agitators, causing division and strife in the church. They are "sensual", or only natural men, who profess to know Christ but have never been regenerated or made partakers of the Holy Spirit (Rom\_8:9; Rom\_8:14-16).

(Vs.20,21.) Jude shows how believers can overcome the devices of Satan and avoid being influenced and deceived by false teachers and hypocrites in the church.

1. "Build yourselves up on your most holy faith." Christ is the object of our faith; the Word of God is the foundation of faith; but we should not be content with our present knowledge and condition. We desire faith to be increased and grow (Luk\_17:5; 2Th\_1:3; 2Pe\_3:18). Faith is strengthened through the ministry of the Word and fellowship with other believers.

2. "Pray in the Holy Ghost." The way of persevering is by the power of God through faith (1Pe\_1:5). No man can keep himself, whatever his knowledge and faith. We must flee to God in prayer, and that not in a formal manner but in the Spirit! (Rom\_8:26-27.)

3. "Keep yourselves in the love of God." There are two things which are applicable here. Firstly, the love of God for us in Christ is always to be set before us, kept in view and strength is to be drawn from it (Rom\_8:35-39). Secondly, we are to keep ourselves in love with God (Joh\_21:15; Rev\_2:4). Mature, strong love casts out fear, motivates good works and is" satisfied to feed on Christ.

4. "Look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus." The mercy of Christ may be considered as past, which consists of his covenant mercies, his redemption of our souls, his holy calling and thousands more; as present in interceding for us, comforting our hearts, keeping us and meeting our every need; and as future, which will be shown at death, resurrection and in his eternal kingdom! This mercy is to be looked for by faith.

(Vs. 22,25.) There are some who have gone astray, being deceived and tempted because of ignorance, infirmities and the force of temptation. These are not to be avoided and cut off, as one would the false teachers, but are to be instructed in meekness, brotherly love and compassion, pulling them out of the fire of soul-destroying doctrines and sinful practices. Pray for them, help them and restore them; yet despise and condemn their behaviour and conduct as one would a filthy garment.

(Vs. 24,25.) The epistle is concluded with a doxology or an ascription of glory to our Lord Jesus Christ, who is able to keep his elect from finally falling and is able to present them faultless before his glorious presence!