



# CONTEND

A STUDY IN JUDE

## Sermon Series Notes

### “Staying Free From Ungodly Influences” (Jude)

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Intro: Jude refers to quotations from two sources that were well known and read in his day. One is the book of Enoch, and the second is called The Assumption of Moses. While these books did not make it into the canon of Scripture, they still contain historical information helpful in Jude’s very important and urgent message to the church.

II Peter is very similar to Jude. Scholars are unsure which was written first, but I think it’s more likely that II Peter was written first, and Jude borrowed from the same truth found in Peter’s letter (See Jude 18; II Peter 3:3).

One of the most fascinating things about this little epistle is the writer himself. It is almost certain he is James the half-brother of Jesus (Mark 6:3 & Matt.13:55). Jude’s brother James also became a leader in the early church (Acts 15:13-21; 21:18; Gal.1:18-19). Initially Jesus’ brothers did not believe in him (John 7:3), but the resurrection changed their minds (I Cor.15:7). Acts 1:14 says that Jesus’ brothers were with the believers on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit fell upon them. And I Cor.9:5 tells us that these brothers became travelling ministers of the gospel.

It was the cross and the resurrection (the gospel) that made the difference in the lives of James and Jude. And it is only the gospel that will make a difference in anyone’s life. If simply living the Christian life before someone would change them, then James and Jude would have been changed long before the cross. Their half brother (Jesus) was the “perfect witness.” Hebrews 1:3 says that Jesus is the “radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being.” But it was not Jesus’ witness as the perfect man that changed his brothers’ lives, it was His death, burial, and resurrection.

See I Cor.15:1-4.

Rom.1:16; I Cor.1:17; II Cor.5:17; 9:13; I Thess.1:5-6a; II Thess.1:8; II Thess.2:13-15; I Tim.1:8-11.

Phil.1:27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Romans 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live **a new life**.

James wanted to write a very positive letter focused on “the salvation we share,” but then feels compelled to write what is sort of an “emergency epistle.” What was it that was happening that caused the Holy Spirit to change Jude’s mind? Read the text.

v.3 “Contend” is the Greek word “Epagonizomai,” and it is an athletic term. We get our English word “agonize” from it. So this is like an athletic event where people are competing against one another. The only difference is this is no game. Here we are contending for good & evil, truth & error, life & death – things related to the faith once for all entrusted to the saints; things related to “the gospel.”

v.4a See II Cor.11:13-15.

v.4b Their denial of Jesus Christ does not mean they do not profess to know him, but that they are not submitted to his authority, nor do they rightly represent his teachings. They are not living in a manner worthy of the gospel. They live immoral lives and use grace as an excuse to do so.

v.5 See I Cor. 10:6-11

v.6 We are not sure exactly what angels are being referred to here, but we know that they rebelled against God, and as a result are headed for future judgment.

v.7 We certainly know the record of the people of ancient Sodom and Gomorrah. Sexual immorality that ultimately led to blatantly open and perverse homosexuality. But let’s not forget the root of sin that led to the sexual sin.

- Ezek.16:49 Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed, and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy.

Put simply, they were consumed with themselves.

vv.8-10 “Dreamers” refers to what they claim as truth, but is not truth at all. They pollute their bodies by their immoral lifestyles, are not submissive to God-ordained authority, and even speak flippantly and arrogantly about things they do not understand. Another way of describing their behavior would be “irreverent” (lacking proper respect or seriousness), especially regarding religious and spiritual matters. What an incredible example of reverence is given here of Michael disputing with the devil about the body of Moses. Jewish tradition says that Michael was “gravedigger for the just.” Deut. 34:6 says that Moses died in Moab, and God buried him there, but no one knows where his grave is. Evidently the devil wanted Moses’ body, and Michael contended with the devil on the Lord’s behalf. And in contending with the devil, his reverence is noted in contrast to the lack of reverence in the godless people Jude warns us about. Michael is mentioned three times in the OT (Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1). Daniel 10:13 he is called “one of the chief princes,” and he there helped another lower ranking angel who was resisted for twenty-one days by “the prince of the Persian kingdom.” In Daniel 12:1 he is referred to as “the great prince who protects your people” (Daniel’s people, Jewish people). See Rev.12:7. Despite his great position & importance, he is reverent, even in contending with the devil.

v.11a Cain refused to respond to God’s instruction. He sought to be accepted by God without a willingness to walk in truth (see Gen.4:4-7). The reason Cain killed his brother Abel was spiritual at its root. Abel was a saved man who walked by faith in response to God’s instruction and direction. Cain was a religious man who never submitted his life to clearly revealed truth, and thus he was never saved.

v.11b See Numbers 22 (summarize the story); 25:1-3; Rev.2:14; 31:8; II Peter 2:15. Balaam's reckless path began when he went with the princes of Moab after God told him not to.

v.11c See Numbers 16 (summarize the story); once again, insubmissive, independent.

v.12a They can come to a communion meal and partake without the slightest bit of conviction of sin in their lives.

v.12b Self-consumed

v.12c They look impressive but yield no refreshing rain, and there is no stability in their lives.

v.12d Refer to Rev.20:14-15

v.13 Wandering stars could not be counted on for proper navigation.

v.16 This is what the majority did during the wilderness wandering. They did so because they never learned to walk by faith, and they were driven by their lust for the food they enjoyed in Egypt. The Pharisees and Jewish leaders were also faultfinders (Luke 6:1-11; John 8:2-6; others?).

The characteristics of these people who had infiltrated the church:

- Change grace into license for immorality
  - Gal.5: 13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature ; rather, serve one another in love.
  - I Peter 2: 16 Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.
  - Romans 6:1-2
  - Some people in the church live very immoral lives
- Knowingly & willingly reject the Sovereignty of Jesus Christ
  - Some people in the church are "dong their own thing"
- Not submitted to God-ordained authority
  - Some people in the church do things they keep hidden from parents, pastors, the police, etc.
- Irreverent
- Consumed with self ("feed only themselves")
- Grumblers & faultfinders

These are religious people who have no real relationship with God.

vv.17-19 Please do not miss the very practical message in this one verse. This is what Satan wants to do to every one of us. He wants to separate us from the true, genuine, saved, & spiritual people in the church. Jesus told Peter, "Satan has desired to sift you as wheat" (expound). See I Cor.11:19 (context); I Peter 5:8; Heb.2:1.

The message of Jude is really fairly simple. The people he warns the church about are people in their midst, people who attend services with them, even partake of communion, but do not really know God. And the proof of this is their lifestyles. They are immoral, they are ungodly. And if we are not careful, our association with them will lead us astray. We will end up not living in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

I began playing drums in a band at age 12, and our first gigs were mainly birthday parties. There was a song we learned and played often. Maybe you remember it (Play "Wipe Out"). I loved seeing people stare at my drums as I played Wipe Out. I began to see some of my new friends from these parties downtown, or at Ruth's Drive-In, and they would say they wanted to hear me play Wipe Out again. Sometimes I would just use my hands and immediately begin to bang it out on a counter or table top.

The new friends I was making did not attend the Christian school I did (Emmanuel Baptist Christian School), so the following year I talked my mother into letting me go to the public middle school, because that's where all my new friends would be attending. Slowly but surely, the Christian environment I had been a part of disappeared, and my life really began to change. At one of those future birthday parties, I was invited to get in a car with some of my new friends. None of us had driver's licenses, but one of them had an older friend who did. He and his buddy drove us to Small's Service Station. I was surprised when an attendant came to the driver's window, words were briefly exchanged, and a few moments later the same attendant came back to the window and quickly delivered a bottle of liquid I did not recognize. Cash was exchanged, and next thing I knew we were off. The bottle was passed around, along with what was called a "chaser." Without the chaser, I'm certain I would have lost it all (if you know what I mean). I was drinking 80 proof Vodka for the first time in my young life, and nobody instructed me to "take it slow." Before long I couldn't see straight. I awoke in the early hours of the next morning passed out in my front yard. I later found out that a guy named Fred Wilhelm dropped me off at my house (literally). You would think after that experience I would long to renew my Christian relationships, but that's not at all what happened. Next time I saw my new friends, they told me how fun (and funny) I was before passing out. I was extremely shy in those days, so drinking helped me "come out of my shell." Drinking led to smoking pot, and that led to popping pills, which led to my first experience with what was called purple haze (LSD, thought I was in heaven). Over time I became a full-fledged drug addict. For years I lived a selfish, immoral, and very ungodly life. And the beginning of that life was the result of newfound friendships with people who did not know the Lord, or if they did, they were not living for Him.

## CONCLUSION

1. What kind of influence is your life having on others around you?
  - Matthew 18: 6 But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. 7 "Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come!
  - Rev.2:14...You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.
  - See Num.25:1-2

2. What kind of influence are others having on you?
  - I Cor.15: 33 Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."
  - Matt.15:14 Leave them; they are blind guides...(religious people who have no real relationship with God).
  - II Cor.6: 17 "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."
  - Num.22:12 But God said to Balaam, "Do not go with them..."
  - Num.22:32 "...your path is a reckless one before me."
  
3. Are you saved?
  - Jesus died on a cross, was buried, and rose again from the dead so that you might be saved. He offers you today a new life, and a future hope that is beyond your wildest dreams. But you must repent, and receive Him as Lord & Savior.
  
4. Are you saved, but have drifted away?
  - Hebrews 2:1 We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not **drift away**.
  - Those new friends have not been a good influence on you. You need to find some strong Christian friendships...
  - II Cor.7:1 Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.
  - Christian, what sin do you need to repent of?