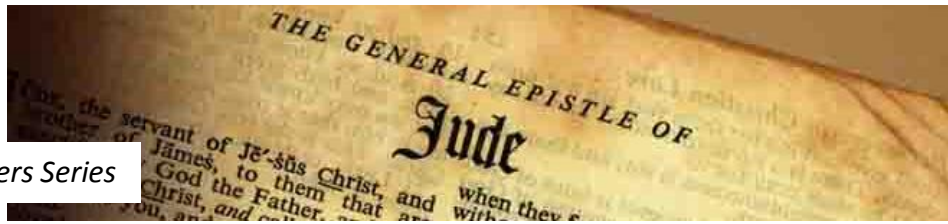


The Epistle of  
**Jude**

New Testament Letters Series



**Lesson 1-Contending for the Faith of the Saints against False Teachers**      **Focus: Ch. 1 v.1-7**

- 1. Introduction/Background:** “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James...” (v.1). The letter of Jude comes to us from **an exact date and place of writing to which we are not sure**. It is assumed that the likely date falls in between the times of 66 and 80 AD. The place where written from is uncertain, and we have no likely guesses. **It is generally accepted and believed that the author of this letter was in fact, one of the brothers of Jesus Christ, a “...brother of James” (v.1)**, who was also one of Jesus’ brothers (See Mark 6:3). It is believed that these siblings of Jesus were likely half-siblings, having come from Joseph and Mary after the birth of Jesus (as Joseph did know his wife Mary after that, see Matthew 1:24,25). Otherwise, these siblings might have been step-siblings from a previous marriage of Joseph (in which his previous wife may have died). **The “James” mentioned is believed to be the same brother of Jesus who had become a pillar in the early church (Acts 15; 12:17)**, and who likely authored the book of James. The author of the letter of James is believed to be the brother of Jesus, not the close apostle (who actually died at an early date in 44 A.D.—see Matthew 10:2 and Acts 12:2). Another interesting note concerning Jude is that, like his brothers, he did not believe in Jesus before His resurrection (Ref. John 7:1-9; Acts 1:14). It’s also helpful to note that “Jude” or “Judas” was a popular name in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD because of Judas Maccabaeus who died in 160 B.C. He was a leader of the Jewish resistance against Syria during the Maccabean revolt. That’s why we find several Jude’s mentioned in Scripture, and it’s important to distinguish between them based on their relationship to others as well.

The focus of this letter points out the terrible danger of false teachers who’ve now entered into the church. It describes their evil character and related issues. The content of this letter in many respects parallels that of 2 Peter 2. However, they are obviously not mere copies of each other, since the material clearly differs in some points. Some wonder which was penned first, however the stronger arguments lean in favor of 2 Peter 2 being written first (and Jude mirroring some of its basic content and ideas). This is believed because Peter speaks of false teachers yet in coming (2 Peter 2:1), while Jude speaks of false teachers who’ve now already come (Jude 1:3,4). It seems likely that he made reference to the ideas also mentioned by Peter.

The exact original target audience of this letter is not mentioned, and this letter was not widely spread at an early time. By reason of the latter point, some were hesitant to include it in the cannon of Scripture. However, the biblical practicality of it, it’s acceptance in the Muratorian Canon (about 170 AD), and other such attestations by early church leaders like Tertullian and Origen finally gave it a sure place in Scripture. Irrespective of all this early history, the letter provides a very fitting message for us to study and understand for today; “Contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints” (v.3).

- 2. Greetings and Issues at stake (v.1-4)**
  - a.** Jude writes with a heart full of love, peace, and mercy towards those yet faithful saints who soon were to receive his letter (v.1,2). Truly, only those who were faithful, sincerely holding the “like precious faith” (2 Pet. 1:1), could rightly understand and heed the contents of this letter to **“...earnestly contend for the faith which was once given to the saints” (v.4)**. Jude felt a great burden on his heart to share this message of exhortation (v.3). Some were trying to pervert the pure gospel message of Jesus Christ, a most serious and fatal crime indeed! (See Galatians 1:8,9). **And for that matter, we ourselves need to be on the lookout as well!** The devil is no less crafty in

our day, as he was back then! Satan seeks to destroy the church of God by two means; one, is persecution, while the latter, and perhaps even more serious is penetration, compromise, and the teaching of false doctrines! All the Apostles **warn us to be on our guard for false teachers!** See for example the admonitions of Paul, Peter, and John (Acts 20:28-31; 2 Peter 2:1,2; 1 John 4:1). We must be those who are truly on our guard against such things!! Evaluate critically and check everything by the Bible! The Bible is clear (**See Isaiah 8:20**).

- b. **These false teachers essentially wanted to turn the gospel of Jesus Christ into a license to sin, as if a “free pass” to commit all manner of sin, at will, and to receive free grace to cover this horribly willful life of sin!** Such could not be farther from the truth of God’s word! (For abundant support of stated point, see Matthew 5:8, 20; Romans 6:1,2; 8:12-14; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21; Hebrews 10:26; Revelation 21:8,27; etc.). Such an idea that Jesus Christ would allow His people to freely live in sin is pure mockery of the very core of the gospel. In fact, such an idea is so preposterous in the face of clear Bible testimony, that if it weren’t so serious, it would be even laughable and just plain foolish to suggest such an idea; It is a diabolical doctrine of demons and it has absolutely NO support in Scripture. To read every verse smashing down that heretical notion would be overkill to say the least. Even one or two verses would suffice us, but to catch every one you’d nearly have to comb the whole of Scripture—page after page is marked with quite the contrary to that false doctrine. **The pure gospel of grace saves men FROM their sins and uplifts them to purity and holiness** (Matthew 1:21; Titus 2:11-14). It does not allow anyone to live in sin (1 John 2:1), rather it calls men to “repent” or turn from their sins and be saved through Jesus Christ and His power (Acts 2:38).
- c. The men teaching such things are often termed “*Libertines*” since they boast freedom or liberty to live in sin. Their message is often referred to by others as “cheap grace.”

### 3. The fate of those who choose to live openly in sin (v.5-7)

- a. Jude pointed out in the previous verse that those who try to live in sin, and teach such a thing, are going so far as even “**...denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ**” (v.4). And in such denial of Him, they lose all possible reward of life; their only fate will be eternal damnation and fiery judgment for their chosen life of sin and corruption. [Additionally we can see the comment of Hebrews 10:26,27 or 2 Thessalonians 1:8,9 upon this point—All those who knowingly choose to live in sin will perish].
- b. **In verse 5-7, the servant of the Lord reminds God’s people of the certain destruction of those who at first held a condition of life, divine favor, or salvation, but who later, through their wicked deeds lost the pleasure of God and were condemned to most certain fiery destruction** or the like. This also blows out of the water the false assertion that “once saved” a soul would be “always saved.” That doctrine is also a false notion, and misunderstanding of the gospel. It is a false understanding of how security in Christ should really work.
- c. **The Bible demonstrates for us, just what security in Christ really is, and also what it isn’t.** Certainly, it’s not “once saved, always saved,” as we have the clear examples above, plus here’s a few more clear statements (Ezekiel 18:24; 1 Corinthians 9:27; 2 Peter 2:21). Having assurance, peace, and security in Christ comes from living by faith in His promises, and obeying from a pure heart, confessing our sins and faults as needed before God, and living with a clear conscience before Him. He will not “leave” or “forsake us” and He will not just cast us out either, “There is...no condemnation to those who are in Christ” and who live by the Spirit, obeying His word. It is our choice to live clearly before God and have life, but Christ will never force us to do so (See Hebrews 13:5; 1 John 1:9; 1 John 2:1,2; Romans 5:1; 8:1, 12-16).

### Questions for the Heart:

**Will it be your choice today to live by the faith of Christ, to experience His true Gospel, and to contend for its purity? \_\_\_\_\_**