

Life Point Men's Ministry Bible Study

The Book of Jude

This is a 7-week study of the book of Jude. It is our hope that this Bible Study will equip you with knowledge and resources to begin to understand and communicate the historical and cultural context of the book, the theological and doctrinal implications as well as the application of content.

The importance of prayer

Pray for your time during this study. Ask God to guide and strengthen your thinking. As believers in Jesus, we have God, The Holy Spirit, dwelling inside us. May He graciously guide us in understanding and fellowship during our time together as well as our time preparing for discussion.

Discussion

It is the intention of this study to prepare you for discussion. Come to the meetings prepared to participate, review, share and ask questions. Don't be afraid to ask questions and be honest about what you encounter in the text and during the study. To get the most out of discussion, take time before the meeting to go through the included resources and questions. We don't grow passively. Let's put the work in so we are building each other up when we meet.

Structure

Week 1 – The Book of Jude overview
Week 2 – Jude 1-2
Week 3 – Jude 3-4
Week 4 – Jude 5-11
Week 5 – Jude 12-16
Week 6 – Jude 17-23
Week 7 – Doxology and wrap up

Resources

This study is provided to you for free using free resources from Logos Bible Software, Bible Gateway, and Bible Hub. All resources can be accessed for no charge by anyone with an internet connection and a smartphone/pc.

Additionally, the study guide includes references and excerpts from the following resources.

- The Lexham Bible Dictionary. Copyright 2016 Lexham Press. Lexham Press, 1313 Commercial St., Bellingham, WA 98225. LexhamPress.com
- Faithlife Study Bible. Copyright 2012, 2016 Lexham Press. Lexham Press, 1313 Commercial St., Bellingham, WA 98225
- Jude, 2 Peter. Volume 50 of Word Biblical Commentary: Jude, 2 Peter, Richard J. Bauckham. Word Books 1983.

The Letter of Jude (ESV)

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James,
To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ:
May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day— just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.” But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion. These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.

It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.

But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.” It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy

on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Week 1 - Overview

Background

The letter identifies Jude as a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James (1). In the early church, the most well-known James was the brother of Jesus (Gal 1:19)—so Jude (also called Judas) often has been understood to be another of Jesus' brothers, even though the letter does not state this (compare Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3).

It is not possible to know for certain when Jude was written. If the author was indeed a brother of Jesus, the letter probably was in circulation before the end of the first century. Jude has a literary relationship to 2 Peter, which could be used to help date Jude more accurately, but the date of 2 Peter also is unknown. Many scholars suggest a date of around 68-70 AD.

Jude warns against a heresy that in some ways resembles what later became Gnosticism, a philosophy that regarded physical matter as evil and spirit as good. This way of understanding the world often encouraged people to do whatever they wished with their physical body. In addition, the false teachers whom Jude addresses apparently were guilty of rebellion against authority, presumptuous speech, and sexual immorality. Jude rebukes them for deceiving unstable believers and corrupting the Lord's Supper. Although the date and author of Jude is uncertain, the social situation is obvious: A group of false teachers are wreaking havoc in the congregation, and this must be stopped.

The letter emerged from a genre of literature known as Jewish Apocalyptic and addressed an audience capable of understanding Jude's subtle Old Testament references. Several of the early church fathers appeared to use Jude; for example, Clement of Alexandria's early references to Jude's letter may improve the likelihood that Jude was written from Alexandria at a relatively early date. However, Bauckham's commentary in the Word Biblical series points out that it was much more impressive that Jude was widely accepted as canonical as early as the end of the second century (Bauckham, Jude, 16). This implies that, from wherever it was written, the letter was widely distributed and accepted as an authority by many in the early church.

Structure

The book of Jude is one chapter in modern Bibles. After the introduction and greeting (Jude 1–2), the author begins by explaining his reason for writing (3–4): He wants his readers to contend for the faith in its true form because false teachers are distorting it. The bulk of the letter (5–16) is devoted to describing and denouncing these opponents of the faith. The language that Jude uses in this section is similar to remarks in 2 Peter (with 2 Peter perhaps drawing on Jude's words). Jude characterizes the false teachers with examples from the Old Testament (5–7, 11), from nature (12–13), and from ancient writings outside the Bible (9, 14–15).

Jude advises believers to build themselves up in faith, prayer, and love, and to help those whom the false teachers have led astray (17–23). The letter ends with a powerful statement called a doxology that praises the only God, our savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord (24–25).

Outline:

- Greeting (1–2)
- Purpose for writing (3–4)
- Judgment on false teachers (5–16)
- Exhortation to persevere (17–23)
- Doxology (24–25)

Themes

The primary purpose of the letter of Jude is to warn against false teachers and therefore contend for the Christian Faith. Jude felt a pastoral responsibility to this community to keep them from straying into dangerous territory. In doing so, Jude shows that false teaching is nothing new: It has happened before in the community of God's people, and it even happens in the spiritual realm. The church always needs to be on guard against distortions of the truth.

Jude also shows us that we are all vulnerable to mistaking our own desires for God's will. Although a false teaching might seem plausible at first—and a false teacher might appear authentic—it ends up pointing away from God and toward destruction. To avoid being led astray, we need to rely on the Spirit's guidance and invite other believers to help hold us accountable (17–23). We should take advantage of these safeguards—staying on the path and assisting others who are struggling. Jude encourages us to uncover falseness by contending boldly for the faith, with full assurance that God's power will keep us from stumbling.*

*Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). Faithlife Study Bible. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Questions

The Bible contains many books that use various types of literature: narrative, poetry, prophecy, history, letters, etc. What type of literature is the "book" of Jude and how does this help us understand its meaning and purpose?

Originally written in Greek, there are numerous English translations of the book of Jude. How do the translations differ? Why are there different translations? Can the differences impact the meaning and application of the book?

In your own words summarize what Jude talks about in the letter (without any interpretation or application).

Week 2 - Jude 1-2

1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: 2 May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

Comments

Jude begins his letter by identifying himself, describing his relationship to Jesus and James, and defining his audience as believers in Jesus. If the author of the letter is the brother of Jesus (Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3), then the letter would have been written before the end of the first century AD. Based on its specific nature, the letter of Jude was probably originally addressed to an individual congregation, although which congregation is unknown.

The Greek name *Ioudas* derives from the Hebrew name Judah and was a popular name among Jewish men. The name Judah recalls the tribal founder and son of the patriarch Jacob. This Jude is likely Jesus' brother, but another Jude is a possibility.

Jude is the only NT writer to introduce himself by identifying his family connections. The James here is likely Jesus' brother (Matt 13:55), but it could be another James. If Jude is the brother of the former James, then he is also Jesus' brother. James and Jude may be Mary and Joseph's children or just Joseph's (if, for example, Joseph was a widower prior to his marriage with Mary).

The Greek version of the name *Ioudas* would normally be rendered in English as "Judas." However, because of Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Jesus, English translations almost never use "Judas" to translate the name of this letter's author.

Jude may not have identified his familial relationship to Jesus directly because he considered himself unworthy to be called Jesus' brother. Instead, Jude indicates that he is a servant of Jesus Christ.

The Greek word, *doulos*, for servant (also translated as slave), describes Jude's devotion to Jesus (compare to 2 Pet 1:1, 1 Cor 6:19, Rom 1:1). The word may also associate Jude with Old Testament figures referred to as servants of Yahweh (e.g., Josh 14:7; 2 Sam 7:8; Jer 7:25; Ezek 38:17; Joel 3:2; Amos 3:7.) Here, Jude substitutes the divine name Yahweh, for Jesus.

A *doulos* more closely resembled an indentured servant than our modern idea of a slave; nonetheless a *doulos* had no rights in the first century Graeco-Roman world. Since Jude has a choice about serving Jesus, *doulos* is used here to make the point that as a believer, he no longer views his life as his own; instead, he understands himself to be fully at the service of Jesus Christ.

The Greek word, *christou*, used for Christ literally means "anointed one" and serves as Jesus' title, not His personal name—emphasizing Jesus' role as the promised one of Israel.

Questions

Who wrote the letter of Jude and how can we know this?

What does the author say about himself?

Who is the letter of Jude written to?

What associations do you have with the word “slave”?

What associations might the biblical writers have had with the word “slave”?

How are the associations or usages the same? How are they different?

Would you consider yourself a slave (or servant) of Jesus? Why or why not?

Week 3 - Jude 3-4

3 Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. 4 For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Comments

The Greek word *agapētos*, meaning “beloved” or “dear friend,” serves as a tender and affectionate form of address.

Jude notes that while he intended to write about a certain topic, salvation, he felt compelled to address a different topic giving the subject of his letter a sense of urgency.

The common salvation Jude mentions consists of freedom (Jude 5), the gift of the Spirit (v. 20), and the ability to live a pure life—all of which are offered freely because of Jesus’ death and resurrection (v. 24; compare John 3:16–17). Jude is referring to the salvation that both he and his audience have experienced.

The Greek verb used for “contend”, *epagōnizomai*, occurs only this one time in the NT. The word comes from another verb, *agōnizomai*, which refers to ancient Greek athletic contests in which participants “contended” (compare 1 Tim 6:12).

Jude says certain people have crept in unnoticed. This probably refers to traveling teachers who proclaimed falsehoods; itinerant preachers were common in the first-century church (read Acts 13:15; 2 John 7–11). False teachers could also have arisen within the community, established themselves as trustworthy, and then brought in destructive teachings from the outside (compare 2 Pet 2:1; Gal 2:4; Acts 20:29–30; Rom 16:17–18). Either way, it appears these people were acting as leaders and in the process were leading others astray.

The NT often uses the Greek term, *asebēs*, to describe “ungodly” conduct (e.g., 2 Pet 2:5–6; 1 Tim 1:9). Jude uses the word here to describe the shameless deeds and illicit desires of the false teachers (Jude 15, 18). Jude goes on to describe the specific activities that exemplify their ungodly actions; such as licentiousness. This implies sexual debauchery, which the false teachers were engaging in (the same word for licentiousness is used in 2 Pet 2:7 to describe sexual conduct). Ultimately the misrepresentation of the gospel of Jesus by these false teachers was equivalent to denial of Jesus Himself (compare with 2 Pet 2:1).

Jude’s introduction emphasizes his authority and his close relationship with his audience. In the first century, family was all-important; Jude wrote to his new family in Christ. The beloved of God (himself included) were unified in their salvation and were all one family as children of God, the Father. In contrast to the “us” of the family who possessed the “faith handed down from the saints,” the opponents were the “ungodly” who were not part of the family, and who

had “crept in unnoticed.” He implies that, if the family had noticed these outsiders, they would never have been allowed to creep in. The family was the basic unit of society and had to be defended against all attackers.

This “us versus them” or “insider versus outsider” background is an aspect of Jude that social scientific criticism has brought to light. The challenge of the opponents is real, and the Church must address it. However, the metaphor for the battle is the preservation of the family unit. The danger was not that God would be destroyed, but that His family in this world would be dishonored and its unity destroyed- potentially from the inside, out.

The defense and preservation of honor and status was another cultural norm in the first century that social scientific criticism has brought to light. A person was thought to share the same characteristics and actions as his father, to possess honor inherited from his father, and he or she was expected to defend that honor against all challenges. Honor and status were demonstrated by behaving faithfully in accordance with the family norms embodied in the father of the clan—in this case, God Himself. Godly behavior demonstrated a person was a legitimate member of the family and was maintaining the honorable status of the family.

One way to attack or defend the family status was by name calling in a positive or negative fashion. A negative attack with a demeaning name required a defense against the attacker. Jude did this in his letter. He originally intended to write about his family’s common salvation in Jesus Christ but had to change subjects to defend his family against the danger of others who attacked their common faith. The letter doesn’t describe exactly what the opponents have done, but it does present Jude’s reaction to the situation and his defense and to his attackers.

Questions

What “faith” is Jude appealing to his audience to contend for?

What does it mean for the faith to be delivered “once for all”? (compare Heb 1:1–2; John 14:6–7).

Jude says the faith was delivered to the “saints”. This root of this Greek word is *hagios* which means holy. What does the word holy mean? How does this apply to those Jude is referencing?

Where are the “ungodly” people Jude mentions? How did they get there?

Week 4 - Jude 5-11

5 Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. 6 And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day— 7 just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

8 Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. 9 But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.” 10 But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. 11 Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion.

Comments

In this section, Jude recalls three examples from the OT. Each of these examples highlights a particular aspect of the false teachers' errors: They practiced the sin of unbelief (Jude 5), they sought authority they did not deserve (v. 6), and they engaged in immoral behavior (v. 7).

In verse 5, Jude says “you know everything” implying that his audience is informed about the message of Jesus and the events, derived primarily from the OT, Jude is about to cite (compare 2 Pet 1:12–15). Some translations read “once and for all” in verse 5 once and for all. This phrase in Greek appears in different places in various manuscripts, either next to the statement about the audience's knowledge or following the statement about the salvation during the exodus.

In verse 5, some translations read “the Lord” instead of “Jesus”, however, the earliest manuscript evidence favors an original reading of “Jesus.” If this is the case, Jude specifies that the preexistent Jesus was present throughout the exodus deliverance (see 1 Cor 10:4), perhaps as the Angel of Yahweh (read Exod. 23:20 and Judges 2:1).

During the Exodus, the Israelites did not believe that Yahweh would give them the promised land. As a result, Yahweh declared that the generation he first brought out of Egypt would die in the wilderness without entering the promised land (see Num 14:20–35; compare Heb 3:16–19; 1 Cor 10:1–11).

Jude also describes the fall of the rebellious angels, who sinned by abandoning their assigned domain. Because of their rebellion, God judged them and confined them to darkness. Jude likely draws this viewpoint from the “sons of God” narrative in Gen 6:1–4 and Jewish tradition about that story, such as the extrabiblical book 1 Enoch 6–19. (compare with 2 Pet 2:4). Jude's reference to this event suggests that his audience was familiar with this interpretation and understating of this event. According to the Jewish tradition represented in the books 1 Enoch

and Jubilees, these angels are the spiritual beings from Gen 6:1–4 who sinned by taking human wives (see Gen 6:1–4; compare 1 Enoch 6–11; Jubilees 4–5). Jude 6–7 also implies that the angelic rebellion was sexual in nature.

Although most Christians do not consider the book of Enoch part of the biblical canon, literate Jews who became Christians, like Jude, were familiar with this work. The book of Enoch is actually a series of books that along with many other literary works were in circulation in the time leading up to and after Jesus' ministry. These books come from what biblical scholars refer to as the "2nd temple period" or "intertestamental period". During the time between the Old and New testaments, Jews continued to write and circulate religious and theological texts that became part of the educational background of the New Testament writers.

Some other references to the "sons of God" in the bible include:

Genesis 6:2;4

Deuteronomy 32:8 (Dead sea scroll and Septuagint manuscripts)

Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7

Psalms 29:1; 82:6; 89:6

Let's look at what Jude has to say about the "angels":

- *kept in eternal bonds* - Now in bondage, these fallen angels await God's judgment on the day Jesus returns to earth. Compare to 2 Pet 2:4.
- *deep gloom* - Refers to some sort of underworld (Tartarus, Hades, hell, or *Sheol*; compare to 2 Pet 2:4 and 1 Pet 3:19).
- *Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.* - Genesis 19 mentions only Sodom and Gomorrah by name, but Gen 19:25 states that other cities in the valley were also destroyed. They indulged in sexual immorality (Gen 19:5). In addition, Ezek 16:49 indicates that Sodom also had a reputation for excess and injustice. Sodom and Gomorrah is regularly used in the OT as an example of general wickedness and lawlessness (e.g., Jer 23:14; Zeph 2:9; Matt 11:23; Rev 11:8).

In verses 8-9, Jude equates his three examples of sinful actions (Jude 5–7) with the actions of the false teachers, who he notes even dishonor spiritual powers. Verse 8 Likely indicates that the false teachers were relying on dreams (or visions) that they claimed were prophetic. They used these dreams to excuse their immoral behavior. The false teachers were placing their personal, flawed revelations above God's truth (compare 2 Pet 1:16). The false teachers are rejecting God's authority in their lives and this is manifest in their sinful actions. The false teachers act in a way that also slanders the words or authority of powerful, spiritual beings. (compare 2 Pet 2:10).

Jude also mentions a dispute between Michael and the devil over the body of Moses. This is not found in the Bible, but it is from another ancient text from the 2nd temple period called The Testament of Moses (also called the Assumption of Moses). Jude's inclusion of texts that are

not part of modern Bibles or mainstream tradition may indicate a familiarity of his audience with the material. He doesn't explain or retell the stories, rather he uses them as proof texts to support his arguments.

Michael is one of two archangels mentioned in the Bible (the other is Gabriel; see Dan 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19; Rev 12:7). Others, such as Raphael and Phanuel, are mentioned in early Jewish texts (see 1 Enoch 40:9; 71:8–9). Daniel 12:1 portrays Michael as a special guardian to Israel. The reason for his argument over Moses' body is unknown.

After citing a contrasting example (Jude 9), Jude shifts again to criticizing the false teachers for their words and actions. To illustrate his point, Jude presents figures from the past who resemble the false teachers. He discusses three OT figures—Cain, Balaam, and Korah (v. 11). He says they blaspheme all that they do not understand and refers to speaking against the truth of God, which the false teachers do not comprehend, despite their claims otherwise. They are like the irrational animals (Compare 2 Pet 2:12). Jude uses a prophetic pronouncement of impending judgment, “Woe to them” (compare Isa 5:8–23; Hab 2:6–20; Matt 23:13–29; 1 Cor 9:16) Jude cites three examples:

1. Cain's pride resulted in violence leading to murder and ultimately divine judgment. (Gen 4:5–8; compare 1 John 3:12).
2. The error of Balaam - A false prophet who spoke against God's people (Num 22–24).
3. The rebellion of Korah - Korah perished after rebelling against God's appointed leaders, Moses and Aaron (Num 16:1–35). The false teachers likewise rebelled against God's appointed leaders—the apostles.

Questions

What 3 transgressions does Jude describe in verses 5-7?

In verse 11, Jude mentions the way of Cain, the error of Balaam and the rebellion of Korah. How are these references related? How do they relate to the transgressions in verses 5-7?

What location might Jude talking about when he mentions the angel's proper dwelling place? Do humans have a “proper” dwelling place? If so, describe where and why.

Read Jude 5 – Who saved the Israelites out of Egypt?

Read Exodus 20:2 - Who saved the Israelites out of Egypt?

Read Judges 2:1 – Who saved the Israelites out of Egypt?

Who does Jude identify Jesus with? How does this factor into the context of verses 5-11?

Read 1 Peter 3:18-20 – What similarities do you see in these passages? How does this relate to the overall narrative of the spiritual world? Does this have any bearing on the physical world?

Week 5 - Jude 12-16

12 These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; 13 wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.

14 It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, 15 to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him." 16 These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.

Comments

The Greek word for "hidden reefs" (*spilades*) occurs only this one time in the NT. It may be translated as "blemishes" (as in someone who makes something impure or ruined) or "hidden reefs" (like a coral reef that could destroy a ship). This word seems closely related to the word used in 2 Peter 2:13 (*spiloî*) to describe false teachers as "stains" when they feast together with you.

In the ancient world, shared meals were significant social events; feasts were held for various celebrations and helped bring people together for a common purpose. In Christian circles, this included celebrating the Lord's Supper.

Jude uses four metaphors from nature to condemn the false teachers. In biblical numerology, the number four is the number of creation. For example, the four winds, four corners of the earth and four living creatures in Revelation (compare Rev. 7:1 and Rev 4:6). Jude compares the false teachers to clouds swept in the wind, fruitless trees, untamable waves, and stars (or planets; vv. 12–13). Jude's overall point is that the false teachers are living worthless lives that do not benefit anyone and only hurt others.

The first two metaphors from nature illustrate the false teachers' inability to provide benefit for others. Waterless clouds carried away by winds would be of no use for those hoping to have their fields watered. The words of the false teachers are valueless (compare 2 Pet 2:17). Jude then describes them as fruitless trees in late autumn. This time of year is associated with harvest and Jude implies that the false teachers have nothing productive to offer (compare Mark 11:12–25). Trees bearing no fruit would first be declared dead and then uprooted, making them only useful as firewood (compare John 15:2–6).

The next metaphor from nature is the "*wild waves of the sea*" The lives of the ungodly resemble raging tides that litter the shore with refuse or seas that are so tumultuous that they are impossible to navigate (compare Isa 57:20 and Rev 21:1).

The final metaphor from nature is wandering stars. The Greek word used here is *planetai* and may be literally rendered as “wanderer.” It could refer to planets, which in the ancient mindset disappeared into blackness for no apparent reason. It may also reference shooting stars, which appear for just a moment and then vanish. Likewise, the false teachers briefly provide light, only to move into darkness—leading others astray. They mix truth (light) with falsehood (darkness). This stands in contrast to the account of creation on the 4th day (Gen 1:14-19).

In verses 14–15, Jude supports his arguments by quoting from the extrabiblical work of 1 Enoch 1:9:

*And behold! He cometh with ten thousands of His holy ones
To execute judgement upon all,
And to destroy all the ungodly:
And to convict all flesh
Of all the works of their ungodliness which they have ungodly committed,
And of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him*

Jude connects the judgment of 1 Enoch 1:9 to the false teachers, emphasizing the false teachers’ arrogance and selfish desires (compare 2 Pet 3:3). This could also be related to Jesus teaching about false prophets (Matt 24:23–24). Jesus had noted that false prophets would even perform signs and wonders for the ultimate purpose of leading others astray.

This passage is the only place in the Bible where Enoch is described as a prophet. The “seventh from Adam” is also found in Genesis 5 and 1 Enoch 60:8. The prophecy of the tens of thousands of his holy ones can be compared to Matt 16:27, 25:31 and 2 Thess 1:7.

Questions:

Read Ezekiel 34 and John 10:1-16. How might these passages relate to Jude 12? (beyond the obvious mention of shepherds)

Given Jude’s use of metaphor in these and other passages, can you think of other passages in the bible that use metaphor? How can we know when to interpret the bible literally?

In a similar way to how the apostle Paul quoted something outside of the Bible (Acts 17:28), Jude quotes Enoch. How might extrabiblical texts have influenced biblical writers? How does this affect us today?

Week 6 - Jude 17-23

17 But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. 18 They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." 19 It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. 22 And have mercy on those who doubt; 23 save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

Comments

In this section, Jude tells his audience that the apostles predicted scoffers, and that these people will attempt to create division in the church. These people dispute the truths of the gospel. This may also be a general reference to anyone adamantly disputing the truth of the claims of the apostles and Jesus. Jude's quotation of the apostles implies that his audience heard the preaching of the apostles and can be viewed as evidence that this letter may have an early date.

Jude denounces the actions of the scoffers as devoid of God; this seems to be in juxtaposition to the false teachers' claims that they rely on dreams, which they probably argued were from God (v. 8). Jude fervently exhorts his audience to keep themselves in the love of God by building themselves up in their most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit. He also tells them to "keep yourselves in the love of God." It is not that God's love is dependent on their actions, but that their actions are a result of experiencing God's love enveloping their lives. (compare Phil 2:12–15). He then mentions looking forward to the mercy of our Lord Refers to Jesus' return to earth (His second coming), which provides an eternal hope for believers (compare Heb 11:1–2).

After noting that obedience to God finds its power in future hope (compare to 1 John 3:3), Jude asks believers to be concerned for those in danger of succumbing to false teachings. False teaching can cause those who are uncertain about what they believe (or those with less discernment) to be misled, even to the point of doubting Jesus' return (compare 2 Pet 3:4). Rather than decide that they are lost, believers should lovingly convince doubters to return to true faith in Jesus. False teachers are on the path to experiencing God's wrath (Jude 4). Those being misled by false teachings could suffer the same fate (compare Zech 3:1–5). Christians are thus to take an active role in drawing doubters away from false teachings and toward truth.

Questions

How can you assess your own personal spiritual condition and how does this prepare you to deal with the dangers of false teaching?

How can we know the difference between true and false teaching?

How does Jude want his audience to think about false teaching?

In verse 22, Jude says to show mercy on those who doubt. How can we do this?

In verse 23 Jude says, “save others by snatching them out of the fire.” What do the words “save” and “fire” mean? Whenever we see these words in scripture, do they always mean the same thing? How can we know?

What risks, if any, are there of attempting to help those who have succumbed to false teaching?

What kind of caution should believers take when engaging with those who have succumbed to false teachings?

Week 7 – Jude 24-25

24 Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, 25 to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Doxology

Jude concludes with a doxology expressing praise and blessing to God. A doxology is a hymn or form of words expressing praise to God.

A relationship with God Himself, through Jesus, is the ultimate safeguard against false teaching and sin (compare John 14:16). Jesus is a direct manifestation of God through whom people have a relationship with God. It is through Jesus that the saving act of God has come to humanity. Jude testifies to both God's character, as one worthy to be praised, and to God's right to rule all things, both now and forever. In doing so, Jude gives all credit to God, as seen in Jesus.

While some specific details may be unclear, the problems Jude's original audience faced are still relevant to the church today. For example, a postmodern rejection of absolute right and wrong for ethical relativism, where the truth is flexible and sin questionable, challenges the modern church in the same way Jude's "others" did. Jude's solution remains as viable today as it was in the first century.

Wrap-up

The Identity of the false teachers is unknown. Rather than assign names to their heresy, such as antinomianism or Gnosticism, they should be identified by the characteristics that Jude found so offensive:

- They rejected all moral authority as exemplified in Moses in the Old Testament (Jude 8–10) and Jesus in the New Testament (Jude 4, 8).
- They believed they were free to use their own standards to determine what behavior was correct for them.
- They believed they no longer had to obey laws in order to be saved or lead a moral life, suggesting they followed the principles of antinomianism. However, calling them antinomians would be going too far.

Ultimately, however, the problem in Jude was not that these men had false beliefs, but that they were apparently part of the church—possibly even teachers who received payment for their errant instruction (Jude 11–13).

An incorrect understanding of what it took to be saved and then live a moral life was not restricted to Jude's congregation. False teachers created problems (Matt 7:15; 2 Cor 10–11; and 1 John 4:1), abused the support of the local church (Rom 16:18; 1 Tim 6:6; and Titus 1:11), and claimed to have special inspiration from the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 12:1–3; Col 2:18). Bauckham also

identifies a parallel between the blaspheming angels in Jude and Paul's teaching about the elemental spirits of the world in Gal 3:20; 4:3, 8–9; Col 2:8–23; and Rom 8:33–39 (Bauckham, Jude, 12).

Questions

Are believers guaranteed to be kept from stumbling? Why or why not?

Are believers guaranteed to be blameless? Why or why not?

How do the answers to the above questions impact the significance of the praises Jude gives God in his doxology?

Why does Jude say, "*To the only God our savior through Jesus Christ our Lord*"?

Why does Jude list "*glory, majesty, dominion, and authority*" separately? Why not just one catch all phrase?

In a few sentences, try to summarize the letter of Jude in your own words: