

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

JUDE

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Timothy Sparks and Ben Bailey.

Ben Bailey:

“Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). I’m Ben Bailey.

Timothy Sparks:

And I’m Timothy Sparks. Welcome to our study of the Book of Jude. This lesson is being brought to you by individual members and congregations of the church of Christ. We invite you to attend the church of Christ in your area. Let the people there know that you want to be a person who follows the Bible, and who does only as God has instructed us in the Scriptures. If you would like to request a copy of this broadcast on CD or DVD, you may do so by visiting our website at www.thegospelofchrist.com, fill out the request form you will find there, and we will send it to you. On the website, we also have streaming audio and video lessons available. If you have Bible questions, feel free to e-mail or write us, and we will try to provide you with a book, chapter, and verse answer.

Ben Bailey:

The Book of Jude begins by urging us to “contend earnestly for the faith.” This means that we must stand up for the truth. However, we can contend for the faith without being contentious. Yes, we must stand up for the truth. But the idea is not for us to “beat everybody up” with whom we disagree. Jude is writing to urge Christians to take a firm stand for what is right. Jude said that he was writing to urge Christians to “contend earnestly” for the faith. That word “earnestly” indicates that we are “fight valiantly” or to “wrestle strenuously” to defend “the faith, which was once for all delivered to the saints.” Christians must be willing to stand up for the truth, and to take a stand against error. Why? Because the truth has been “once for all delivered.” The Bible is God’s final revelation. There will be no more revelation coming from God to mankind. In Hebrews 1:1-2, we read, “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son.” We must defend the truth in a kind and loving way because it is God’s **last** revelation. We must take it **very** seriously, and be thankful for the Word of God. Obeying the Bible, exactly as it is written, is the only way a person can be saved. So, we must “wrestle strenuously” and do battle against error for the truth. It is interesting that in verse 4, Jude identifies the type of error that had crept into the church. “For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.” What were these people doing? They were saying that God’s grace was so powerful that they could con-

tinue to live in sin, and the grace of God would take care of it. This sounds similar to Romans 6:1, where Paul asked, “Shall we continue to live in sin, that grace may abound?” It appears as if there were some who were saying, “Grace will easily cover all our sins, so let’s just ‘live it up,’ chalk up our sins to God’s grace, and let Him deal with it.” Some, too, were apparently denying Christ. It might have been a form of Gnosticism. I cannot help but wonder if the problem that Jude was addressing isn’t akin to the false doctrine of “once saved, always saved”? This concept teaches that once you become a Christian, you can never be lost. Regardless of how much you may sin, God will take care of it. Isn’t that perilously close to what the false teachers of Jude’s day were saying? “We’ll go ahead and live a lewd life because God’s grace will cover it—no matter what!” Jude makes it clear that this is **not** the case, however, by providing three examples as proof of his point: (1) the Israelites who came out of Egypt; (2) angels; and (3) Sodom and Gomorrah.

Timothy Sparks:

Jude says, “I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe” (vs. 5). Jude uses, as an illustration of his point, the sexual immorality and fornication of the people of Israel after they exited Egypt. Yes, God had saved them from Egyptian bondage. But when they fell into sin, He dealt with them severely, slaying 23,000 of them in a single day (1 Cor. 10). When the Israelites become murmurers and complainers who rebelled in their hearts (Heb. 3), God destroyed many of them for their unbelief. Jude also discussed what happened to a certain group of angels. He says, “And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day” (vs. 6). We learn from this passage that Hell is a place reserved for the devil and his angels. God did not **intend** for us to go to Hell. It is a place of punishment for those who are wicked. For example, that is where He sent rebellious angels who sinned. He cast them down into Hell. Those who live ungodly and unrighteous lives, and those who are false teachers, fall under the same condemnation as the devil and his angels. But Jude lists a third example of those who fell because of unrighteousness. He mentions specifically Sodom and Gomorrah—the inhabitants of whom were destroyed along with their cities due to the sin of homosexuality. In verse 7, Jude spoke of “Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” These illustrations prove that people can fall from God’s grace, because the people in these examples certainly did.

Ben Bailey:

People **shouldn’t** fall from grace, but they **can** do so. Jude is admonishing us to contend earnestly for the faith against false doctrines like those which would suggest that grace is a license to sin. To get his point across, he offers the three examples discussed previously: (1) the Israelites coming out of Egypt; (2) angels who fell; and (3) Sodom and Gomorrah. All of those could have been right, but they chose wrong paths, and as a result, will be lost. In verse 9, Jude gets to the heart of the problem—which involves an incorrect attitude. He says, “Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries.” Then he brings up Michael the archangel, who, “in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’” (vs. 10). His point

was that some people simply do not respect the authority of God and His Word. They live lives of lewdness, they speak evil of people who are in positions of authority, and they reject the authority of the Bible. How, then, do we recognize false teachers? They are people who refuse to come to the Bible and say, "This is what we must do." The example of Michael is intended to reinforce this. Michael was an archangel. Yet he did not say, "This is what I say you should do." Rather, he said, "**The Lord** rebuke you!" Even though he was an archangel, he nevertheless deferred to the authority of God. We, too, should act in the same manner and simply defer to the authority of God in all matters. Too often, problems arise in the church today when people refuse to do what God said, reject the will of God, and insert their own will (such as living lewdly and expecting God's grace to cover it).

Timothy Sparks:

If anyone would seemingly have the right to speak from his own authority, surely it would have been someone like Michael, who was an archangel. Yet even he refused to do that kind of thing. The false teachers Jude was addressing spoke evil of things of which they had no knowledge, and the things of which they did have knowledge, they corrupted. In verse 11, Jude says, "Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah." Cain was a murderer who killed his own brother. Balaam pronounced a curse on the people of God for money, and in so doing, "sold out God." Korah rebelled against God, and lost his life as a result. These false teachers, to whom Jude is referring, are thus compared to people who are murderers, who sell out God for a profit, and who rebel against God's will. Jude makes it clear that we have an obligation to take a strong stand in defense of the truth, because we are engaged in a battle, a struggle. We must be careful, first, to uphold the truth by our own righteous examples, and second, by our refutation of error.

Ben Bailey:

Jude is careful to explain the destructive nature of these false teachers who make grandiose claims, but who are unable to deliver on those claims. Jude says, "These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves" (vs. 12). Some versions say "These are rocks in your love feasts." Here is an example of what he's saying. Do you remember the days when you would go visit your grandmother, and you would see her going through a bag of pinto beans before she cooked them, so she could cull out any rocks that had accidentally been packaged along with the beans? What if she hadn't done that, and as you were eating your beans at a meal, you crunched down on a big rock? That's what these false teachers were like. They were the "bad" mixed in among the "good." Is it "all that bad" to have a false teacher in our midst? Jude thought it was! He said that these "spots" or "rocks" were interrupting communion with God! Jude also compares false teachers to "clouds without water." Imagine that you are a farmer, you've planted your crops, and you desperately need rain. Along comes a big, dark rain cloud, which makes you so thankful that rain is on its way. But the cloud is empty; it has no rain. It robs you of your joy. Jude said that false teachers were like "raging waves of the sea" or "a wandering star." They have no substance, no surety. They cause destruction. They cause problems. False teachers are exactly the same, and we must not be associated with them because of the destruction they bring. Anytime that we allow people who do not hold to the Word of God to spread their error among the people of God, it causes terrible problems. The old adage about "one bad apple spoils the whole bunch" has more than just a grain of truth to it. We must

root out the bad, and replace it with the good. We are not saying that we have to be mean or unkind as we stand for the truth. We can contend for the faith without being contentious—if we do it in a spirit of love.

Timothy Sparks:

Jude also mentions Enoch (vs. 14), which may be a reference to uninspired literature (specifically, the Book of Enoch). This type of reference to uninspired works would not be unusual. Paul wrote to Titus, and said, “One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, ‘Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons’” (Titus 1:12). Bible writers could use (and sometimes did use) uninspired literature to make their points. This should give us no problem. The Holy Spirit was free to inspire the writers of the Bible to use whatever was available. What they wrote was inspired as they wrote it, and remains such to this day. Jude said,

“Enoch prophesied about these men also, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him’” (vss. 14-15).

Jude’s point, of course, was that God was going to send judgment on those who were false teachers, those who lived lewdly, and those who practiced ungodly living. We can rest assured that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God. The fact that it contains references from uninspired literature does not alter that fact. God’s Holy Spirit was the One Who chose to include the material, and that should settle the matter.

Ben Bailey:

In a single verse, Jude refers four times to false teachers as being ungodly, which makes it evident that he has a strong distaste for what they are doing and teaching. These are people who grumble, who complain, and who give in to their own lusts. They “mouth great, swelling things, flattering people to gain an advantage.” What are false teachers like? If you ever encounter some of them, you will learn very quickly that they are grumblers and complainers who are in it for their own pleasure. They use “five-dollar words” in order to gain an advantage over people. They want to have things **their way**. They are never satisfied, which is why they grumble and complain. Jude makes it clear that false teachers simply are not satisfied with God and His way. They want something more, and they want something better. We’ve seen this type of attitude elsewhere throughout the Scriptures. People in the days of Noah wanted to “eat, drink, and be merry.” Even though God had given them specific instructions on what to do to be saved from the destruction that was about to befall them, they insisted on “doing it their way.” There are other examples, such as Nadab and Abihu—two priests who decided to ignore God’s instructions and use “strange fire” in a sacrifice to God. That act was to their detriment, however, because God killed them with that fire. Throughout the Bible, we are taught that we must be satisfied with “God’s way,” rather than trying to strike out on our own and “do it our way.” We’ve all heard of false teachers in our own generation who are “just in it for themselves.” They embezzle money, engage in inappropriate sexual relationships, etc.

Timothy Sparks:

James said, “When desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death” (Jas. 1:15). One thing leads to another. If you apostatize from the Lord, it generally is not going to happen in one gigantic leap. Instead, it takes place slowly, over time. Jude described the false teachers of his generation as those who had gone after their own lusts, and as people who were sensual people who focused solely on earthly, not spiritual matters (vs. 19). Thus, Jude’s admonition to faithful Christians is, “Beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit” (vs. 20). Jude’s contrast was that the false teachers did not have the Holy Spirit guiding them via God’s Word. But Jude wanted to remind faithful Christians that the Spirit **should** be guiding them through the avenue of God’s Word. John said that we should “walk in truth, even as we received commandment from the Father...,” and that we “should walk after his commandments” (2 John 4,6). When we come to the Word of God and do what it says, we then have both the Father and the Spirit (2 John 9), and that is what Jude is urging us to do. If we want to “pray in the Holy Spirit,” then we must do the will of God and abide by His Word.

Ben Bailey:

In verse 21, Jude says, “Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” God has done **His** part to save me. Now, I have to do **my** part. I must “keep myself in the love of God.” In other words, I must continue to obey His will. There are those, of course, who suggest that once we become a Christian, there is nothing else we have to do, because God is going to take care of it all. That’s exactly what the devil wants us to think! But the truth is, we must continue to obey God’s will in order to keep ourselves in His love. As Jude moves on, he says, “Some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh” (vss. 22-23). When we contend for the truth, there is a two-pronged purpose in what we do. First, we stand up for what’s right, we do what the Bible says, and we let people know that God’s Word must be obeyed. Second, however, we also want to save those who are teaching error. Jude’s point is that some people will be reached with love, while others will be saved only through fear of God’s punishment. We will reach a certain number of people by reminding them of God’s love, and of Heaven that awaits them. But there will be times when we have to take a sterner approach, and remind people that if they continue to live in such a manner, they will be lost. We need to remind them that Hell is a horrible place, where no one should ever want to go. Matthew 10 teaches us that we must be as wise as serpents, and as harmless as doves. We need to work to understand human nature, so that we will know how to approach people properly. We need to get to know a little about their personalities, so that we will know whether to deal with them out of fear or out of love.

Timothy Sparks:

Jesus dealt with different individuals in different ways. This stands to reason, since on some occasions, Jesus taught the masses, while on other occasions, He taught individuals. When He dealt with the scribes and Pharisees, He often dealt harshly with them, even going so far as to call them hypocrites, because He knew their objective and their agenda. Yet when He dealt with the Samaritan woman at the well, He talked to her, reasoned with her, and even explained that although she had had five husbands, the man with whom she was living currently was not her husband. As a result, she was responsible for the entire city being able to hear about Jesus. We should imitate Jesus in this regard. We need to determine the appropriate course of action we take. Our first course of

action should be to treat people as Jesus treated the Samaritan woman. On other occasions, we may have to, as Jude put it, “speak with fear, snatching them out of the fire.” Jude 23 shows us clearly that, at times, God authorizes “Hell, fire, and brimstone” preaching. When we speak of Hell, and the fear that people should feel if they are living apart from God, that is a proper motivating force to help them want to live closer to God. However, people cannot remain motivated solely by fear. They have to move on to love. If you, for example, obeyed the Gospel because you feared Hell, that’s quite all right. That’s a proper motivating force. Jesus Himself preached about the horrors of Hell. But as we mature as a Christian, we must come to understand the love of God. We need to obey the commandments of God, not out of a fear that if we don’t, we will go to Hell, but instead because we love God and want to obey Him. We should move from fear to a faith that is based on the highest, purest concept possible—true love.

In verses 24 and 25, Jude brings the book to a close when he says, “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.” We see in Jude’s 25 short verses a power-packed message. Jude commands Christians to contend earnestly for the faith, in order to help avoid the possibility of apostasy. It is a corporate duty for the church, but it is also a personal duty for each and every Christian as we strive to keep ourselves within the love of God (vs. 21). It is a duty that arises out of a genuine love for the lost (vss. 22-23).

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If you have not yet obeyed the Gospel of Christ, we encourage you to do so today. Believe in Jesus as the Son of God. Repent of your sins. Confess Christ as the Son of God. Be baptized for the forgiveness of your sin. Then, live faithfully for Christ the remainder of your life.

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Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR JUDE

1. What is Jude urging Christians to do when he writes, “Contend earnestly for the faith”?
2. What is the implication of Jude’s reference to “the faith, which was **once for all delivered** to the saints”?
3. Jude referred to some people who “turn the grace of our God into lewdness.” What were these people doing that caused Jude to mention them in this manner?
4. Explain the connection between Romans 6:1 and Jude 4.
5. In verses 5-7 of his book, Jude reached back into the Old Testament to discuss three instances of rebellion against God. What were those three instances?
6. What was Jude’s point in discussing the three examples of rebellion against God discussed in question #5 above?
7. When Michael the archangel was talking to Satan, he said, “The Lord rebuke you!” What was Jude’s point in bringing up this example?
8. What is one of the best ways to recognize a false teacher?
9. In verse 11, Jude discussed the fact that false teachers went “a certain way.” He then used three examples from the Old Testament to get his point across. What were those three examples?
10. In verse 12, Jude referred to false teachers as “spots in your love feasts.” Explain what Jude meant by that statement.
11. Jude also compared false teachers to “raging waves of the sea” and “a wandering star.” What was his purpose in offering this comparison?
12. Paul, in Titus 1:12, quoted from an uninspired poet of his day. How did that affect biblical inspiration?
13. In verse 14, Jude referred to a prophecy from Enoch, in which the prophet said, “The Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment.” Of whom were Enoch and Jude speaking?
14. Jude said that false teachers “mouth great, swelling things, flattering people to gain an advantage.” What did he mean by that assessment?
15. In verses 22 and 23, Jude described two different approaches that could be taken in regard to opposing false teachers. What were those two approaches?
16. In verse 21, Jude made it clear that God has done His part to save me. According to the teaching of this verse, what part do I play in my salvation?