



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Courage to Persevere (Jude 1-4)

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BIBLE STUDY

JUDE

Location:

122 CAP

Time:

2ND TUESDAYS (MONTHLY) @ NOON

Jude 1-4
"Courage to Persevere"

Introduction

The primary characteristic for the Epistle of Jude is an emphasis upon the authoritative nature of the Scriptures and how the teaching of the Lord Jesus was transmitted through the apostles. Indeed, the "beloved" believers are exhorted to "remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 17). Believers are encouraged to demonstrate courage as they persevere in the belief and practice of "the faith" (Jude 3, 24).

The practice of exhortation is well known throughout the history of God's people. The prophet Isaiah called upon the people of his day to regard the law and the testimony transmitted through Moses (Isa 8:20), in response to false teachers among them (8:19). As a matter of repetitive habit, the Lord Jesus referred His hearers to the Word of God (the Old Testament) as the authority to resolve any dispute (Matt 4:4, 7, 10; 19:4-6; 22:29-32). Writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:20-21), the Apostle Paul emphasized the written Word of God not only in his letters (Rom 3:19; Gal 4:21), but also in his preaching (Acts 13:40-41; 17:2-3).

Jude emphasized the contrast that exists between false teachers and true believers with regard to their life conduct. Consequently, there is a correlation that exists between authentic belief in God and living a life pleasing to the Lord. In essence, the Lord taught all believers the same truth: "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15). False teachers are characterized by their self-will; they do not submit to God's authority or trust the Lord's promises (2 Pet 2:1, 10; 3:3-4). Jude 4 refers to such individuals as "ungodly persons."

True believers live in contradistinction to false teachers because they are committed to God's authority and promise. Jude 3 calls upon believers to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints," and Jude 21 exhorts us to maturity in the sphere of God's love. There is a sobering aspect with regard to the actions of those who resist God's authority and promise. God has judged sinners in days past, which means there is a lesson to learn from history (Jude 5-16).

PERSEVERING WITH DIVINE PROVISION

(*vv.* 1-2) Jude began his epistle by identifying himself as "a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James." Jude was also a half-brother of Jesus (Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3; 1 Cor 9:5). Perhaps for reasons of humility, Jude identified himself by the lesser of two possible references. We all know individuals who speak in an opposite manner: always using titles whereby they are able to communicate how important they are. Such individuals do not possess low self-esteem; rather, the opposite is true. They believe themselves to be so important that they must desperately tell others (by seizing recognition they believe others should grant them); if they fail to receive recognition, they claim it for themselves. Such efforts are futile attempts to increase one's supposed worth before others; it is a prideful action to be avoided. Jude's identification of himself is certainly interesting because he did not identify his physical relationship to the Lord Jesus; rather, he regarded himself "a bond-servant of Jesus Christ."

TRUE FREEDOM . . . IS BASED UPON A TRUST RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.

"Bond-servant" is a common appellation throughout the New Testament. The concept is expressed most completely in Romans 6—7, wherein the believer's emancipation from slavery to sin has resulted in slavery to righteousness. The new slavery is, of course, true freedom because it is based upon a trust relationship with Christ Jesus our Lord. To become Christ's slave one must be bought with a price (i.e. our Lord's sacrificial death on Calvary's cross), which results in a willingness to obey His commands. The opening verse of Jude is instructive toward attitudes of pride and true freedom.

CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES

SECOND TUESDAYS OF THE MONTH @ NOON, 122 CAP (*open to legislators, lobbyists, staff*)

Jude addressed his readers as “those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ.” There are several triplets throughout this Epistle, and verse 1 contains the first. Christians are called by two means: an outer call, which is the proclamation of the gospel; and, an inner call, which is through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. Verse 1 is referring to the latter call, and is emphasizing that salvation is through the love of God the Father and maintained by the protective care of Jesus Christ. Verse 2 is a prayer that God’s provisions, which have already been received (by “those who are the called”), would “be multiplied.”

PERSEVERING WITH DIVINE REVELATION

(*vv. 3-4*) Jude 3 communicates the purpose for this epistle. Although the original intent was to write with regard to the “common salvation” of believers, it became necessary instead to write with an appeal to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.” The reason for the change in writing was because “certain persons [had] crept in unnoticed” with disastrous teachings and lifestyles. They entered “unnoticed” yet became a potent influence for ungodliness to which some were tempted to succumb.

The vigorous appeal to “contend earnestly” means to protect that which an enemy is attempting to destroy. The accomplishments of the church (and the individuals who comprise it) must not be lost (2 John 8). Unbiblical teaching and practice can confuse and hinder the spiritual growth of those who have developed “good morals” (1 Cor 15:33). “The faith” has been given in a complete and final manner. God’s Word contains all that is necessary for “life and godliness” (2 Pet 1:3; cf. 2 Tim 2:12-14). God has given a sufficient revelation to His people for overcoming destructive teachings and lifestyles.

Jude 4 indicates three characteristics of those who threaten the Christian faith: (1) ungodliness; (2) sensualness; and, (3) rebelliousness. “Certain persons” were “ungodly,” which means they were irreverent; they had no reverence toward God, just like Cain (Jude 11). Such individuals may believe the Bible is true, but do not respect God enough to submit to it.

Sensualness means the “ungodly persons” were self-centered, that is, practicing an ethic that was focused upon doing whatever made them “happy.” They practiced hedonism, which is living for one’s own pleasure as opposed to living for the glory of God. It is possible that such individuals also embraced antinomianism, which is an ethical system that denies the obligatory nature of any supposedly absolute or external laws upon individual behavior. Christians are not saved by obedience to God’s law, yet there is still a

responsibility to live with moral purity (Lev 11:44-45; 1 Pet 1:16). Believers are compelled to serve one another in obedience to the biblical command to “LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF” (Gal 5:13-15), which is possible as one walks and is led “by the Spirit” (5:16-18). The Holy Spirit continually works to transform believers into Christlikeness (Rom 8:29; 12:1-2; 2 Cor 7:1; Col 3:1, 7-10; Tit 2:11-12).

Sensualness is “licentiousness,” which is distorting genuine Christian liberty into a license to sin (cf. Rom 6:1-4; 1 Cor 8:1—10:33). Verse 4 communicates that such individuals pervert the grace of God into sensuality, that is, they pervert (distort and misuse) the Bible to defend their actions. Verse 8 states that such individuals “defile the flesh” by “following after their *own* lusts” (Jude 16). Licentiousness is self-centered and selfish, and will culminate in condemnation (vv. 5-16).

GUARD YOURSELF AGAINST THOSE WHO ARE UNGODLY, SENSUAL, AND REBELLIOUS. “CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH” BY PERSEVERING WITH GOD’S PROVISION AND REVELATION!

The individuals who threaten the Christian faith are also rebellious: they “deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” They are just like the angels “who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode” (v. 6). Those who hate obedience to God’s authority and rule in their life are also characterized by denying their appointed positions, which may be evident in their despising their role in the home, society, and church. They “reject authority” (v. 8), and are compared to “wandering stars” (v. 13) because they rebel against their divinely appointed position and purpose in creation. As opposed to submitting to authority, they dependent upon dreams (v. 8), which allows them to formulate their own version of Christianity based upon their own imagination. They even blaspheme angels by assuming authority that even angels would reject (vv. 8-9). Such individuals act contrary to the will of God because they lack spiritual wisdom; therefore, they destroy themselves by acting “like unreasoning animals” (v. 10). Guard yourself against those who are ungodly, sensual, and rebellious. “Contend earnestly for the faith” by persevering with God’s provision and revelation! *If I may help in that regard, please let me know, as this is why the ministry of Capitol Commission exists.*

ABOUT CAPITOL COMMISSION

Capitol Commission state directors are pastors/missionaries who teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for legislators, lobbyists, and staff members. These Bible studies are hand-distributed to each legislative office, emailed, and made available throughout the Capitol community. The love and grace of God compels us to proclaim the truth of the Gospel with compassion for the Capitol community, to faithfully teach and apply the Word of God, and to build meaningful relationships that bear fruit for an eternity to come. With the Bible as our foundation and authority, the mission of Capitol Commission is obedience to the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) within the Capitol communities of the world. We are not a lobbying group attempting to garner votes or reform society. Our mandate is to see the hearts and lives of elected officials transformed with the Word of God. Capitol Commission is a ministry of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message, and to help believers mature through the verse-by-verse teaching of Scripture. In the Bible, we see God’s great love for the world, especially for those who have been placed in authority. This is the foundation for our ministry to you. The church is instructed to submit and to honor government leaders (Rom 13:1-7), and to pray for their eternal salvation (1 Tim 2:1-4). The desire of Capitol Commission is to witness God transform the hearts and lives of elected officials, lobbyists, and staff members. We apply this mandate to four major areas of making disciples: (1) *evangelize* those who have not experienced saving faith in Jesus Christ; (2) *establish* those who desire to grow in their faith and knowledge of Scripture; (3) *equip* those called to spiritual leadership; and, (4) *encourage* churches to participate with us in ministry.