

Message #2

Jude 1:1-2

Back in the 1980's, Dr. S. Lewis Johnson looked at what was going on in Christianity and said that he was deeply disturbed about many things:

- 1) He was disturbed about the lack of serious interest in theology and doctrine.
- 2) He was disturbed about the lack of Bible reading because he felt most Christians were not reading their Bibles—which he determined by listening to conversations.
- 3) He was disturbed by the fact that churches seemed to be more interested in tailoring their meetings to the culture rather than have their meetings please God.
- 4) He also said that he was deeply disturbed by the lack of genuine vigilance against the rise of apostasy.

Dr. Johnson saw these things back in the 1980's and they are even more prevalent today. There is a major defection taking place in the vast majority of churches. Just this past week a Pastor from the United Methodist church has been confronted by a parishioner because he officiated at the homosexual marriage ceremony of his own son. Churches are losing their way and they are being led by leaders who have lost their way.

There is a major Biblical, moral and spiritual defection that is plaguing Christianity. Most churches today are far more interested in relating to the culture than they are pleasing God and that is why we are in desperate need of a book like Jude. As S. Lewis Johnson said, "Jude is a track for our times" (S. Lewis Johnson, *Jude 1-4*, p. 4).

If you look at your English Bibles, you will see that the title of the book is called in the New American Standard "*The Epistle of Jude*," in the New International Version it is called "*Jude*" and in the King James "*The General Epistle of Jude*."

Actually, the two most ancient manuscripts simply give it the title "Jude" (ΙΟΥΔΑ), which is the title in the UBS Greek text. In later years the title was expanded and took on various forms such as "*The Catholic Epistle of Jude*." This is the way the Textus Receptus Greek text (from which King James is translated) titles this book, "*Jude, Catholic Epistle*" (ΙΟΥΔΑ ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ ΚΑΘΟΛΙΚΗ). Then there were some offshoots of the title such as "*The Catholic Epistle of the Holy Apostle Jude*." One manuscript says, "*Jude, Brother of God*."

But regardless of how you title the book, this book is needed right here and right now and today we start our journey. Today we come to the text proper that opens this hard-hitting epistle. It is best to let Jude introduce things himself.

When we look at the opening verses, we see that there are three introductions Jude makes:

INTRODUCTION #1 – Jude introduces himself. 1:1a

There are three facts Jude gives us concerning himself:

Fact #1 - Jude is his name.

As we pointed out last week, Jude is his English name; Judas is his Greek name and Judah is his Hebrew name. This was a normal familiar name among Jewish people in the first century. It was a common name. If you would have walked down a street of a first century city and started yelling or singing “Hey Jude,” many would have looked your way. It was such a common name that six different men in the N.T. had it and two of them were apostles.

In the last 100 years, the top male names in the United States were Jacob, Michael, Robert, James, William and John. In the last 100 years, the top female names in the United States were Emily, Jennifer, Jessica, Linda and Mary. Back when the Bible was written, Jude was a top pick.

Since Jude was a typical name back in the first century, we learn that God can do wonderful things with common ordinary people who have common ordinary names. He can transform average people and use them in powerful ways to accomplish powerful things.

We read in John 7:5 “For not even His brothers were believing in Him.” So when Jude was growing up he did not even believe in Jesus Christ; but now, some 30-40 years later, his name stood for a man who loved Jesus Christ and would stand up for Jesus Christ. **You don’t need a name change to be great for God, you need a faith change. One needs to believe on Jesus Christ.**

We live in a time when it is religiously stylish to try and change your name so you appear to be something very religious. This is especially among the Muslim religion. Cassius Clay changed his name to Muhammad Ali to give it some religious significance. Lew Alcindor changed his name to Kareem Abdul Jabbar to give his name some religious significance. We even have a President whose real name was Barry Soetoro, who changed his name to Barack Hussein Obama to give it some religious significance.

Frankly these name changes don’t mean anything to God. What does matter is a faith change in Jesus Christ. Jude kept his same name and because of his faith change and commitment to Jesus Christ, his name is now forever known as a man of God who wrote this book in the Bible.

Fact #2 - Jude is a servant of Jesus Christ.

The fact is this is the highest title one may have in this life is to have actually been classified as a servant of Jesus Christ. Jude was that. He was a servant of Jesus Christ. This is a title that key men of God used in regard to their relationship to Christ. Paul identified himself as this way (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; Titus 1:1); Peter identified himself this way (II Pet. 1:1); James identified himself this way (James 1:1) and so did Jude.

Now there were two words that Jude could use to describe himself as a servant. One would be like a deacon servant and the other would be like a slave servant. Now the Greek word “servant” (δουλος) that Jude selects was the noun that was used to describe one who was a slave in the first century. It actually meant you were subject to someone as a slave (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 122). This is not a flattering or high society word to use concerning you. What this term means is that Jude willingly submitted himself to Jesus Christ as his Master.

When the President of the United States is introduced, they will say, “Ladies and Gentlemen, the President of the United States.” Can you imagine if the President were introduced this way: “Ladies and Gentlemen, the President, who is a slave of Jesus Christ”? We can’t even imagine someone saying, “Ladies and Gentlemen, the President, the Slave of the American people.”

But Jude wanted to be introduced that way. He wanted all to know right up front that he was a servant and slave of Jesus Christ. This is a tremendous statement of humility. The word order “Jesus Christ” means that Jude was a bond servant to Jesus the Savior and Christ the Messiah.

Now, of course Jude could have said I am the half-brother of Jesus Christ. Many would have done that. When President Carter was President, his brother, Billy Carter, surfaced who used his connection to President Carter to promote “Billy Beer.” When President Clinton was President, his half-brother, Roger, surfaced and used his connection to President Clinton to promote his rock band. So it is not uncommon for some brother or half-brother to try to take advantage of the sibling connection.

But Jude did not do that. He does not identify himself as the “half-brother of Jesus Christ,” which he is. The question is why? The answer is because **He came to realize who Jesus Christ was and He did not consider himself to be worthy of even saying that.**

The different names Jude uses for Jesus Christ in this letter makes it clear that his perspective of Christ was at the highest and holiest level. “Jesus” is the name that means Jude knew He was the Savior. “Christ” is the name that means Jude knew He was the Jewish Messiah and King. Jude uses the title “Lord” which means is the Master and owner over all things as God (v. 21, 25) and “God” means He is God (v. 25). In fact, when Jude ends the book he says that Jesus has glory, majesty, dominion, authority and eternity before all time and forever.

Jude was so aware of who Jesus Christ actually was, he could not even call himself his “half-brother”; he said, “I am His servant.”

Fact #3 - Jude is a brother of James.

John Calvin said there is only one James in the early church who was well enough known to be referred to simply as James, who was known to be the brother of Jude and that one was James, another half-brother of Jesus Christ, who became a great leader and pillar of the early church (Gal. 1:19; 2:9).

Now what we have here in the opening words of the book are the names of two brothers who grew up with Jesus Christ. When they grew up with Him, they did not believe in Him (John 7:5). After the resurrection of Jesus Christ, both of these brothers believed in Jesus Christ and then both of them ended up living out their days serving Him.

We don't know much about some of the other half-brothers and half-sisters; but these two brothers, Jude and James, had a transformation that was spectacular.

INTRODUCTION #2 – Jude introduces the recipients .

Now, there are three theological titles he uses to identify the recipients. By virtue of the fact that there is one article “the” before all of the titles, we know that all titles are applicable to any and every believer. If you are called, you are beloved and you are kept.

Theological Title #1 - Those who are the called .

Now the idea of being “called” (κλητοις) is the idea of God calling a person to salvation. It is a specific invitation given by God inviting a lost sinner into His family by faith in Jesus Christ (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 249). This call is, as John Calvin said, nothing more than an elevation of God's grace for His “eternal election” (*Jude*, p. 429).

Now why would Jude want believers to think about the fact that they have been elected by God? The answer is He wants them to think about the fact that God chose them and they need to stand up and defend truth as those who have been chosen.

We don't expect unsaved people to contend for the faith and for truth, but we do expect the elect of God to do it. So if you have believed on Jesus Christ, it was God who called you to salvation and part of the responsibility we have as the elect is to defend the truth.

Theological Title #2 - Those who are the beloved .

Now the participle “beloved” (ηγαπημενοις) is perfect passive. What that means is that those who are the elect have been loved by God from a past moment of time and are continually loved by God at the present and on into the future. So if a person has been called by God to salvation, he has a very specific relationship to God forever in that God perpetually views that person in the sphere of His love.

This is not speaking of a general love; this is a specific love for those who are His elect. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ you are loved in a very special way by God the Father. There is a co-equality between God the Father and Jesus Christ, but if you have believed in Christ, you are loved by the Father.

Now why would Jude bring up this point? Why would Jude want God's people to realize they are loved by God forever? The reason is clear, because it helps motivate people to defend someone who loves them.

If you know someone loves you and cares for you, you are much less likely to let people get away with attacking that person and what he stands for. You are much more likely to fight for and contend for someone who you know has always cared for you.

Theological Title #3 - Those who are the kept .

Now notice the third title, Jude writes to the "called." Jude writes to the "beloved." Jude writes to the "kept." That participle "kept" (τηρημενοις) is one that not only means the believer is eternally secure, but it also means that the believer is preserved, guarded and watched over by God (*Ibid.*, p. 445). Furthermore, that participle "kept" is perfect tense meaning every believer has this protection of God from the point you were called to salvation, now in the present and on into the future.

We often hear about God's grace that is so significant to our conversion. We often hear about God's grace that is so significant to our conclusion. Jude wanted every believer to think about God's grace that is so significant to our preservation. We live in a world in which we can become anxious about many things; but let us always remember we are kept and protected by God.

Now we may notice that the object of the keeping is Jesus Christ. We are kept for or in Jesus Christ. So if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you are kept forever in Jesus Christ and for Jesus Christ. Douglas Moo, in his commentary, said this means that we are kept "spiritually intact until the coming of Jesus Christ in glory" (*Jude*, p. 223).

It is our responsibility to stand up and contend for Him. God has called us, God loves us and He is protecting us. We need to stand for His truth and His Son.

INTRODUCTION #3 – Jude introduces his prayers wishes . **1:2**

Now first we want to talk about the verb "be multiplied" (πληθυνθειν). It is a rare word that means to continually increase and multiply something to a continually full level. Now the verb is passive which means Jude is asking God to do this for the people. In fact, the people would be the recipients of the action, not the source of the action.

Now the thing that is rare about this verb is that it is in the optative mood in Greek. There are less than 70 optative verbs used in the entire New Testament. This mood is used specifically in prayers that one prays in behalf of someone because he believes this is an expected or obtainable request. The reason the writer uses this mood is not because he is questioning God's ability to do it; it is because of the petitioners humility (Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, p. 481).

In other words, Jude has a wish and prayer for the elect of God and he does not even see himself as worthy of being able to pray for this. There are three prayer wishes Jude has for every believer in Jesus Christ.

Jude Prayer Wish #1 - Jude prays that mercy may be multiplied to the believers. **1:2a**

Jude prays that the pity and compassion of God will be increased over and over again to the people of God. The particular emphasis of this word is that God sees His people in constant need of His help because they are so helpless, so in His merciful and compassionate spirit, He pours out at an abundant level His mercy and pity.

Jude Prayer Wish #2 - Jude prays that peace may be multiplied to the believers. **1:2b**

Jude prays that God's people will have an abundant supply of God's peace. He prays that God will abundantly multiply his peace to His people. Jude prays that God's people will have peace with God all the way through life.

Jude Prayer Wish #3 - Jude prays that love may be multiplied to the believers. **1:2c**

The love is the "agape" love of God, which loves at the highest level and does the highest good. This is the love that God demonstrates to His people that always does the best and gives the best.

The prayer is that God's people will always have an overwhelming sense of God's love.

As Jude opens this letter, he wants God's people to realize that they are very secure in their relationship with God. He has saved them; He is keeping them and He is looking out for them.

Our responsibility is to know truth, apply truth and defend truth.