

Jude's Greeting and Purpose

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[0:00] We began last time with a look at Jude, a little book right before Revelation.

! I'll make a sabbatical of two, three Mondays at Christmas time so you guys can enjoy shopping with your wives.

But before I get into the actual lesson, and this is part of the lesson, but I left Texas Saturday evening at 5.30.

I had a lot of opportunities to listen to tapes, and one of them really spoke to me, and it really kind of dovetails with this, but I never thought, probably not brave enough to put it this way in a huge setting, I never really thought, but he said, the speaker said, if you'll think about it, the majority of churches in America and in the world are really worshipping an unknown God.

It's a God of their imaginations. I mean, you might as well run your fingers down a blackboard. You young guys don't know what a blackboard is, but the older guys do.

[1:38] When people say, well, God as I perceive Him to be, what is that? You know?

We worship the God who is. And I'm probably going to develop that into a message someday if I have to fill in for Don, but it really spoke to me.

And this is really where Peter and Jude and later John, quoting Jesus, got to these closing books of the New Testament.

And if you read the short book of 2 Peter, and we're going to do that probably a year from now if we're still on earth, you will note that the apostle Peter will devote most of that letter as a warning against apostasy and false teachers.

Very consistent with Paul's writings, very consistent with the Gospels, the words of Jesus, Matthew 7 and other places, warning about false teachers.

[2:49] Well, the book of 2 Peter and Jude are very closely related. A lot of New Testament scholars believe Jude was written as a sequel to 2 Peter.

And Peter came along and he gave a warning to the church in his day. And some of this is redundant from last week, so I'm not doing the same lesson over again.

He said the day was coming when the church would be filled with mockers and scoffers and false teachers.

And he said this in 2 Peter 3, verse 3, Know this first of all, that in the last days, mockers will come with their mocking.

And he's talking about inside the church. That's inside the church. And he said they're coming and the church must either get ready for them or be overtaken by them.

[3:59] And I want to tell you, a lot of churches have been overtaken. A lot of denominations have been overtaken. He had earlier described them with these graphic words, this is 2 Peter 2, But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

Many will follow after their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their judgment from long ago is not idle. And their destruction is not asleep. He said the way of the truth will be maligned. That's why we're calling this the truth wars. And we really are in a war.

A battle for truth. Peter was able to look back into the Old Testament era. He saw false prophets and false teachers proliferate.

He then looks to the future, obviously by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and says, they will come. Peter's writing this.

[5:25] He wrote those words around 68 AD, give or take a few years. Obviously this is the early days of the church. The Lord had been gone for 30 plus years.

Churches had been planted in the Jewish world, as well as in the Gentile world. And Peter issued this stern warning.

He said, just as false prophets infected believers before, speaking of the Old Testament, they will also do so in the future.

And when they arrive, they will introduce destructive heresies. Very destructive heresies. Now let me take kind of an aside here and address a question that is pertinent to our day, because this is the 21st century.

A long time from Peter as we measure time. Not very long as God measures time. But a long time as we do. How are they going to pull this off?

[6:38] How are they going to go in and destroy denominations and destroy seminaries and destroy churches, individual churches? How are they going to do that? How do these ministers of Satan destroy a church, or for that matter, an entire denomination?

And the answer is, they do it the same way they have always done it. They do it by infiltration. They infiltrate.

They come within a church, within a denomination, and they do their destructive work. They corrupt seminaries, institutions, and literature.

They tamper with the literature that the denomination has been putting out. And they do whatever they can do to destroy truth. Truth is the target. Truth is in the bullseye.

And let me say something to you fellas. The battle is not so much out there. Yeah, we do have to battle with the world and the devil, and the flesh, but the battle is really inside the church.

[7:52] And many, many have gone. I've used this example before. A good friend of mine, we were in the FBI together and at the academy together and shared a suite.

He wasn't a roommate, but he was right next door. And a great guy. I called him. This was a long time ago. I said, How you doing? I'm doing good. I'm doing good. I said, Are you and your family in a church?

Yeah, yeah. He said, We're going to a Methodist church here in Wichita. He said, We're thinking about looking for something else though. I said, What's wrong? He said, Well, last Sunday was the 18th sermon on homosexual rights.

I said, You've got to get out of there. Go to a church that preaches Jesus and Him crucified. I said, Get out of there. That's not a church.

I think he did. I've seen him since then. But here is the main point I'm trying to get across this evening. Peter wrote that these false prophets from hell would one day infiltrate and infect the church.

[9:04] He gave it as a warning. And a few years later, and it's just a very few years later, Jude comes along, inspired by the Holy Spirit, Jude comes along and he says, You know what?

They're here. It just took a few years. Peter warned, and Jude says, Peter's warning has come true. They are here and they are destroying churches.

All this is before the end of the first century. It was just a couple of years after Peter wrote that Jude says, They have arrived.

They have arrived. These things happen with frightening speed. And when Jude wrote, the mockers and the scoffers had arrived. And let me tell you something. And this isn't part of the notes here, but it was just a few years later, after Jude, John writes the titanic book of Revelation.

Revelation. And John quotes Jesus. If you've got a red letter Bible, these are in red letters. And the Lord Jesus talks about the seven churches of Revelation.

[10:26] And five of them had been infiltrated to the point of destruction. And if you'll read that closely, starting with the church at Ephesus and go down to the church at Laodicea, skipping the church at Smyrna in Philadelphia because there was no condemnation for them.

They were doing it right. You will go from Ephesian church, who had some good things, to Laodicea.

And you see this spiraling downward of these churches, the five that received condemnation. When you get to Laodicea, there's no believer inside the walls of that church.

Not a single believer. How do we know that? Because Jesus said, Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anybody will open the door, I'll come in. We use that as a great evangelism tool.

Guys, that doesn't have a thing in the world to do with evangelism. I'm not suggesting not use it. If it works, you know, then do it. A.D. Rogers said, I'll give you the bullets if you want to shoot the gun. [11:41] But, that has nothing to do with evangelism. What's Jesus saying there? If there was one believer inside the Laodicea church, I'd be in there. Because I'd be in his heart.

Never leave him. Never forsake him. I'm out here because you don't have any believers in there. Jesus, the door didn't obstruct Jesus. He can kick that off the hinge anytime He wants to. And He's not sitting in heaven wringing His hand saying, Boy, I wish somebody could get saved today. That's not how it works. But, when we get to Laodicea, Christless church. Of course, He reserved for strong words with them. You know, I'll spew you out of my mouth. I'll spew you out. The message is so important to the church and it's important to our church. Because these things can happen with blinding speed. And you know, I don't want to be unkind, but if a guy comes forth and says, Yeah, I'm a Christian. [12:44] Then, okay, well, let's find out. Let's talk. Worse is calling on someone to be a teacher because they're willing and available.

I mean, my gosh, I mean, the old days, if you came three weeks in a row, we'd let you take over the bus ministry or, you know, teach a class on doctrine as long as you showed up three weeks in a row.

John says, test the spirits. Paul said, test the spirits. Make sure they're from God. the apostasy that Jude saw, he said, will grow and grow until the Lord returns.

And the Lord Himself told us, He said, there will be more false teachers at the end just before my return than there are when He was walking on the earth.

And there were plenty to go around them. In our day, the church around the world and especially in the West, and by that I mean America, gives evidence that it's lost its will to fight for truth.

[13:57] You just don't, you don't hear people engaging much anymore. And when you give up your will to fight, fight for the truth, air is going to sweep in.

There's a vacuum created and it will be filled by error. Jude saw this, so he issued to the church what is in effect the battle cry.

And he says this in verse 3, Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation. Now let's stop there.

Picture Jude. He's wanting to write about salvation. What does it mean to be saved? How are you saved? How can you be certain you're saved?

He's wanting to write all this. And I just see him in his study and he's got these watered up balls of paper laying all over the floor and he hit the trash with some of them and he missed with some of them. And the Holy Spirit won't let him write.

[15:01] He's got writer's block. He said, I want to write to you about our common salvation. But then the Holy Spirit moves in and he says, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

There's our called arms. That's our called arms. Contend. Jude understood that the times in which he lived were critical.

And he also understood by divine revelation that the times that were coming upon the church would be even more critical.

He understood that. Truth would be under assault and it was going to take an army of God to fight for the faith that had once been delivered to the saints.

And if you ever want to really experience that fight, read about Martin Luther and the Reformation. And if you're not a reader like me and Mike, there's a couple videos out that will even show it to you.

[16:25] Boy, there the battle was joined. I have people all the time criticize Martin Luther. And I tell them, you know, you're going to go to church Sunday as a product of what Martin Luther did.

You're not going to go to a mass in Latin because of what Martin Luther did. So, when Jesus departed, we entered into a period that the New Testament writers call the last days.

Many of them refer to this period since the ascension of Christ when He promised He would come back. Kind of thought He might come back last night, but He's not on my time schedule. And the writers call it the last days.

John called it the last hour. 2,000 years ago. Beloved, we're in the last hour. This is God's clock, by the way. You know, if the last days of the last hour started 2,000 years ago, then I would have to say we're in the last seconds on the prophetic clock.

So, how do we know that these are the last days? Well, you know, I've been looking at that. I taught a class in here on Sunday morning a few weeks ago on prophecy.

[17:49] There's a lot of signs. The blood moon is a sign. It reminds us of the wrath to come. But there were other signs. And there's a lot of them. But, and we don't have time to just study this today.

But let me tell you the big sign. you will know you're in the last days when you see deceivers and demons, doctrines of demons and hypocritical liars deceiving the church.

There will be a great deception within the church. And brothers, we are in that deception. One of the reasons I'm so thankful we've got a pastor that takes a stand.

We've got a doctrinal statement that takes a stand. It tells us who we are and what we believe. I've got to tell you, we can't play with that nowadays.

You can't play with that. You can't play with that with your family. You've got to sit down and, you know, with wives and children and grandchildren and you've got to get them well versed.

[19:00] We know we're in the last days because the gospel of Christ is under intensifying assault by deceivers. The great deception has come and we live in a time of what I would call the great falling away from cardinal truth.

You know, it's amazing when you look at church advertisement, particularly on the West Coast, is we don't preach sermons. Don't bring your Bible.

Come in shorts on the way to the soccer game. It's okay. We're not going to be critical of you. The message from the pastor will not go over seven minutes.

These are the great advertisements to lure people in to the church. We live in a time of a falling away.

It is a time of apostasy. It is a time of massive departure from the truth. Truth doesn't matter anymore. And Jude is going to help us to spot the apostates.

[20:08] And I promise you, they're in every congregation of any size. There's someone that's going to hold to apostate views of Scripture.

So what is an apostate? An apostate, and this is foundational, if we don't get this down, we're going to stumble later. An apostate is someone that is a defector from the truth.

they have defected from the truth. When I was in the FBI, we dealt with defectors. And we interviewed them.

An apostate is someone who has been exposed to the truth, who has known truth, been associated with truth, been around truth, perhaps at one time proclaimed truth, and possibly claims to be supporting the truth even now.

But in fact, the apostate rejects the truth. He rejects the truth. The danger is when the apostates remain in the church.

[21:35] Usually they'll leave. They don't like to be around the Holy Spirit, quite frankly. They don't like to be around truth. I'll never forget the day Dr. McBride was preaching, and this couple came to visit, and we were packed.

There was a seat on the front row, and this young couple came walking down front right past Diane and I in our pew and sit down on the first row.

And Mike was making a... He was talking about the sin of abortion. And he mentioned that, and that lady, she got right up. I mean, she hadn't been there ten seconds.

Grabbed her husband and drug him out of our church. And Mike paused while they left, and Mike said, this word divides. It divides.

Divides families even. Then he went on. So an apostate is someone that knows the truth. And the danger is when they stay in.

[22:37] It would be better if they would leave, but they remain, and they spread their heresy just a little bit at a time. How much leaven leavens the whole lump? Just a little bit, right?

One of the hallmarks of an apostate is that they serve to fulfill their own sinful desires. And they are great pretenders.

They pretend to serve and support the church, but in truth, they are serving Satan and are part of his kingdom. They've rejected the truth. Many apostates will get themselves, they will worm their way into a teaching role.

Once there, they will pervert the teachings of the Bible. Had a guy in this church tell me directly, I'm not gossiping, I was there when he said it to me.

He said, I believe Darwin was wrong on how we were created, but I also think Moses was wrong. And he was a teacher.

[23 : 43] And I underlined the word was. They get themselves into leadership in the teaching role. Once there, they will pervert the teachings of the Bible.

They will twist it and pervert it. And it's so rampant in America that the Bible really is secondary to a lot of churches and denominations. It's secondary.

secondary. Often, probably always, they do this covertly under the table as opposed to overtly. You know, that wouldn't be very successful, particularly with a solid conservative church. And the error that they start out with is almost imperceptible.

Well, it's just off a couple of degrees. It reminds me when we had that mission to Mars, obviously unmanned, and they started out and basically when they launched the satellite, it was like two inches off from the ground.

[24 : 51] Well, guess what it was when it reached Mars? Millions of miles off. You start this way and you get off.

ultimately, the identifying mark of an apostate is the denial of the Lordship of Christ. And let me tell you, for the last 30 years, that's where the battle has been joined in the church.

The evangelical church. And we have a whole wing of the church that claims in their books say His Lordship is irrelevant.

You can accept Him as Savior and not as Lord. Or they're fond of saying, well, I accepted Him as Savior when I was 30, but when I was 40, I made Him Lord.

That's blasphemy. You don't make Jesus Lord. He is Lord. He is Lord. God the Father made Him Lord. But the Lordship of Christ is where the battle has been joined in our day.

[26 : 09] And if you go back in time, it was different during different periods. But apostasy is an inside job. And that is why apostates are so dangerous.

So very dangerous. Jude told his generation that the apostates creep in unnoticed. See, they're so close to the real McCoy.

Any McCoys in here? Maybe Hatfields, huh? They're so close to the real thing that Jude says they creep in unnoticed. That's how they come in.

They're unnoticed. You may note something. When someone comes to our church that we really haven't been meeting with and they come forward for membership, usually Pastor Don will look my way.

Primarily because I'm down front. And I'll go up there. I know that's the signal. And I'll go up there and I'll take them to another room.

[27 : 14] And that's where we begin the process of examining their beliefs to see if they conform to the teachings of the Word of God. That's where the process begins.

That's where I set up with them or initiate a home visit with the pastor. And let me tell you something. You can learn a lot about a person based on a home visit.

Michael knows that being my plumber. He can tell a lot about the Holland family. But Don insists almost always, not always, but almost always with a home visit.

We caught some just about three years ago. And it was terrible. And they came that morning. They were a little upset they couldn't join that morning.

And I was trying to smooth them in the hallway back there saying, well, you know, the pastor really likes these home visits and you can get to know us better and what we believe and all this. And he did a home visit and they were gone.

[28 : 22] They wanted nothing to do with this church. So Peter said false teachers are coming and Jude says they're here.

And they were in a big way because they destroyed five of the seven churches in Asia Minor.

They're there in a big way. So the book of Jude that we're going to be looking at is really a manual for waging war for truth.

It's our manual that God gave us toward the end of the New Testament for waging war on behalf of truth. It is God issuing every believer in this room and this is the leadership of this church right here. It is a call to arms by which to engage the enemy. The enemy within and the enemy outside the church.

It is our call to arms to engage in battle. And you have to love the way Jude begins his writing. Jude a bondservant of Jesus Christ by the way that word there bondservant has been mistranslated for

generations.

[29:47] That's slave. And brother of James to those who are also called beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ may mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.

Jude tells us at the outset who he is. He's the brother of James. And if we look at all the Jude's in the Bible and there are several there's only one who is the brother of James.

Only one. And both James and Jude have a link with a half-brother that is pretty common to everybody and their half-brother was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

All three shared a mother named Mary. James and Jude's father was Joseph and he was the stepfather of Jesus. So remember Jesus had an earthly mother and God was his father.

The Holy Spirit was his father. we should marvel at the way the Holy Spirit has Jude write this.

[31:12] Because if I had written this I would say well fellas this is the brother of Jesus talking. Sit up and take notice and when the plate is past dig deep it's Jesus' brother up here.

Wow that's how people would do it. Jude doesn't do that. Instead of identifying himself as the brother of Jesus which would have done what?

Immediately bring attention to himself. Would have immediately brought attention to himself. He describes himself in our translation as a bondservant of the Lord.

The English word bondservant is a mistranslation. Has been for generations. It is the Greek word *doulos* meaning slave. He is a slave to the Lord Jesus.

Jude knew well what a slave was. He lived in a world of slavery. Many of the apostles and servants of Christ came to see themselves in light of first century slavery.

[32:20] Now let me add something here again not in your notes. Don't think of America in the 1860s. or before when you think of Middle Eastern slavery it was wholly different.

Wholly different than the American experience. But Jude understood this word *doulos*. Many of the apostles and servants of Christ came to see themselves in light of first century slavery.

Paul, Peter, and Timothy all saw themselves as slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we saw ourselves in the same light it might shake up the church in the 21st century.

Well who are you people? We're slaves of Jesus Christ. Of course that has such a negative connotation. But that's who we are. Christians embrace or we're supposed to embrace our slavery to Christ.

He said my yoke is gentle. He is a protective master. He loves those who are his own. As his slaves we are freed from the condemnation of the law and we become slaves to righteousness and we belong to the righteous one.

[33:40] We want to be his slave. We want to belong to him. But then listen to what Jude says in verse 4. For certain persons have crept in unnoticed.

We looked at that earlier but we're going to do it for emphasis. Those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation. Ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ.

Apostates never live under the authority of Christ. Christ. They may pretend but eventually it will come out.

They don't place themselves under the authority of Christ. They may place themselves under the authority of a denomination or a bishop or an archbishop or a cardinal.

They cannot handle true slavery. They don't even know what it means. they live out a false salvation which will become identifiable because false salvation cannot restrain the flesh.

[34:56] How many times have we seen that? Jimmy Swaggart. Jim Baker. And I could name many, many more.

Benny Hinn. I won't condemn him outright. Just look up. He's talked about it. When he separated from Christ and hooked up with Paula White in Rome, Italy.

For three days. It's been well documented. False salvation can't restrain the flesh. this is why Paul said in Galatians you cannot begin in the spirit and then finish in the flesh.

You can't do it. You watch the life of an apostate. Sooner or later he's going to leak all over. He will leak all over.

So we're supposed to be like Jude. Willing slaves to Christ. That's whom the Lord's looking for.

[36:05] Now, we know that Jesus is Lord. We try and live that truth. And at times we do so poorly, don't we? And Jude is very clear here that he is writing to the saved.

In fact, he wanted to write about their salvation. And the Holy Spirit wouldn't let him. He calls them the called, the loved, the kept, the blessed ones. That's you and I, brothers. Unless you haven't been called, loved, kept, or blessed, I think you all have. I pray you have. And because we are the called, we will not be washed away in the tidal flood that is now drowning the church.

churches are being drowned. Denominations are being drowned. And I've said this before, don't ever underestimate how close we came in our own tsunami of destroying this denomination. We flirted with disaster. They got rid of a lot of apostates who moved right over into the very liberal denominations. And the guys that did that, what were they accused of?

[37:26] Oh, you don't have any love. That's unlove. I say the ultimate love is standing up for God's Word and God's Savior, our Lord, God's Son.

God has put a protective calling around His own. Well, let me tell you something. in this world, we're going to be buffered, we're going to be battered, but we're not going to be cast away.

Jesus never casts away one of His own. We are kept by the power of the indwelling Spirit. And we're seeing Christians battered and bruised.

We saw one last night at Highland Park. If you missed that, you missed a blessing. you missed a big blessing. We're kept by the power.

But let me tell you, the church in our day is being buffered and battered. I believe in pre-tribulation rapture. I don't believe the church is going through the tribulation. I think we're going to feel the wind, hear the thunder, see the lightning.

[38:42] But I would be hard-pressed to go to Syria today and sit down with a Christian family whose wife has been taken by ISIS into sexual slavery, whose children have been beheaded, and tell that man, by the way, we're not yet in the tribulation period.

How would I explain that to him? Although I still hold of that fiercely. We are kept. So apostasy is present in the church today, and guess what?

It's going to get worse. I got an officer, he's a good guy, but he takes everything personal. The other night, his car broke down. And he's not a believer, far from it.

And he's cursing, and he's mad. So I got him, and I said, look, don't left, this is life. This is life.

You're going to have problems. They're going to go away.

And be replaced by something worse. So don't worry about it. Bad's still coming at you. You know?

But for us, we don't have anything to fear.

[39:53] Why? We're secure in Christ. I hear people, I hear well-meaning Christian people say this. Well, if I could just get to heaven, close the door, I'd be safe.

Do you realize how many millions of created beings fell from heaven? Lucifer and a third of the angelic hosts were cast out.

Our security is not in a place. It's in a person. We're secure in Christ. And if he's in heaven, I want to be there with him.

If he's down here on earth, I want to be there with him. If he's coming between the two in the air, I want to be with him there, but I'm going to close my eyes because I don't like heights. I told you, I hope the raptors really fast, you know, but we want to be with him.