

Jude: A Message to Believers (Part 1)

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[0:00] This is our second lesson in the book of Jude.

We've got more than a handful to go. And last week we covered quite a bit of territory and the goal last week, which we accomplished, was to get the human author identified among the various men named Jude that show up in Scripture.

This Jude is the half-brother of Jesus and brother of James. This is the same James that wrote the book that bears his name and he also headed up the Jerusalem Council which issued a proclamation.

After a lengthy discussion that God was saving Gentiles the same way He was saving Jews, which was monumental.

And that method, by the way, is by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It hadn't changed any. There was an apostle named Jude, but he mainly went by the name Thaddeus.

[1:24] He was the son of James, making him a nephew to the author of the book we are studying. There was, of course, another disciple named Jude or Judas.

Judas Iscariot, the betrayer. And we pretty well established last week that he is not the author of Jude. We know that. So this evening we're going to move into part of the salutation which is contained in the first two verses of our book.

I'm not going to make any promises that we're going to get through the salutation tonight. In fact, I will tell you we are not going to get through the salutation tonight. For the most part, our study will take passages from the English Standard Version of the Bible.

And I am going to deviate at the very outset of our study by quoting the first two verses from the Holman Christian Standard Bible.

And the reason I'm doing this will become clear to us shortly. This is the first two verses from the Holman Study Bible. Our Standard Bible.

[2:41] Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ and brother of James to those who are the called, loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ, may mercy, peace and love be multiplied to you.

The Holy Spirit, who is the ultimate author, of Jude and the other 65 books of the Bible, has a way with words. Months ago, in anticipation of teaching this great book, I read and re-read these two verses.

I was struck by how many books and sermons could be written from just the truths contained in these 36 words of Jude verses 1 and 2.

And I've come up with some suggested titles. Jude, slave, James, the called, beloved in God, God the Father, God the Father, Jesus, which means He who saves, Christ, which means the Anointed One of God, kept by Jesus Christ, mercy, peace, and love.

A lot of sermons and a lot of books in those titles. By far, the biggest subject area in these two verses is that of the name Jesus Christ.

[4:22] John in the Gospel that bears His name said this in John 21, 28, Now there are also many of the things that Jesus did were every one of them to be written.

I suppose that the world itself would not contain the books that would be written. Amazing. Amazing things. So there you have it.

We cannot number the books and sermons that could be written from just the first two verses of the book of Jude. Jude. And for our purposes tonight, I want to start at least and draw, I'm drawn to that word slave contained in the Holman translation.

It's about the only translation that does so. Every other translation I'm aware of uses the word servant and uses the word bond servant.

I believe that Dr. McCarthy is the greatest expository preacher in the pulpit today. And in the spring of 2007, which wasn't that far back, he was on an all-night flight from London to the United States. [5:42] I've taken that many times. Both ways. He had brought with him a book written by Dr. Murray J. Harris entitled Slave of Christ.

Now, most of us have probably never heard of Dr. Murray. He is Professor Emeritus of New Testament Exegesis and Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. He was for a time Warden of Tyndale House at Cambridge University. He gained his PhD from the University of Manchester where he stuttered under the late Dr. F.F. Bruce, a Scottish theologian. The content of Slave of Christ became a pivotal moment in Dr. MacArthur's ministry. And he just celebrated 50 years this year.

Out of that experience, he wrote a book entitled Slave, I meant to bring it tonight, Slave, the hidden truth about your identity in Christ.

[7:00] I read that book in 2010. I want to read you a quote, a rather lengthy one, from Dr. MacArthur's book Slave. This is his feelings on it.

After more than 50 years of translating, studying, teaching, preaching, and writing through the New Testament, I thought I had its truths pretty well identified and understood, especially in the realm of New Testament theology of the Gospel.

In fact, clarifying the Gospel was the most important and constant emphasis of my writing. From, and these are books he wrote, from the Gospel according to Jesus, ashamed of the Gospel, hard to believe, and the truth war, to countless sermons and articles through the years.

But through all those efforts, a profound and comprehensive perspective, one that dominates the New Testament and is crucial to the Gospel escaped me and almost everyone else.

What is the discovery that has escaped the notice of about every Christian until now? The Bible uses a metaphor, a word picture you might not expect, but is absolutely critical to understanding what it means to follow Jesus and it is the image of a slave.

[8:37] Time and time again, throughout the pages of Scripture, believers are referred to as slaves of God and slaves of Christ. In fact, whereas the outside world calls them Christians, the earliest believers repeatedly refer to themselves in the New Testament as one of the Lord's slaves.

For them, the two ideas were synonymous. To be a Christian was to be a slave to Christ. That Greek word for slave is *doulos*, which properly translated is the word slave.

That is a difficult word for Americans to use and to conceive of. And what we have to do is we've got to divorce the biblical account concerning slavery with the American experience of slavery, which was a great evil.

They're not related. But MacArthur believes the term has been mistranslated for centuries by Bible translators translators who often tried to soften the word into servant or sometimes bond servant. Ironically, there are a number of Greek words for servant and bond servant, but *doulos* is not one of them. He believes that when *doulos* is used, it should be translated slave and it appears some 124 times in the New Testament.

[10:21] Now, on the surface, we can say no one wants to be a slave. There is one exception and that is being a slave to Christ.

One passage that popped in my head is, you know, his yoke is easy. His yoke is easy. He treats his slaves with the compassion of a father towards sons and daughters.

The very goal of MacArthur's book Slave was to see the riches of our salvation in a radically new way. Jude saw it because he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to see it.

Jude is introduced to us as a slave of Christ. Now, what does that mean? It means he had been transformed by God based upon the death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession of Christ Jesus.

It is an amazing transformation to go from a hell-bent unbeliever to one who trusts Christ as his Lord and Savior.

[11:48] At conversion, we become the slaves of Christ and he becomes our master. Now, as we saw last time, Jude did not have to refer to himself as slave.

He had other options. He could have used the very impressive title, half-brother to Jesus. Jesus is my older brother, but he chose the path of humility and that has stood as a great lesson to the church for two millennia.

Now, in the Greco-Roman world, slavery was widespread. To be a slave meant to be owned by another. And being owned by another, you are expected to render absolute and selfless submission to the master that owned you.

And when that master turns out to be the Lord Jesus Christ, it becomes much superior than being owned by a mere human. In Edward Gibbon's classic work, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, he records many instances of interaction between slave owners and slaves.

Sometimes there were tender stories. And there's records in the Roman world where slaves were doctors, slaves were head of households, ran the household for the owner, there were tender stories.

[13:32] There were also some heart-rending stories of abuse, the slaughter of slaves by the owner. I read one years ago where one slave broke a favored teacup of woman.

She had all her slaves executed. Brutal. Just brutal. Well, there are no such stories when Jesus is the master and the owner of a slave.

His relationship exuded love, compassion, mercy, grace, and fellowship and a lot more.

He is the great protector of those who are his own. So don't be alarmed when you see that word slave.

It's a good word when Jesus is the master. Jude next introduces us to the audience in this brief letter.

[14:32] We've got to know to whom he is writing. And we find that in the second part of verse one and in verse two. And those verses say to those who are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ, may mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

This is still part of the salutation. It is unmistakable that Jude is writing to people who are true converts to Christ.

These are believers. These are our brothers and sisters in Christ. They happen to be in heaven today. And the first evidence of that in Jude's employment of these words in the salutation is that phrase, the called.

Very important. Very important. Clearly Jude, and he's writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, so he's the ultimate author, sees as his audience those who are the called.

Now, there's several men in here that come on Monday night in the fall and winter months here at Highland Park in this room. We gather, the men gather for a Bible study.

[16:06] We call that fat boys. Don't jump to conclusions if you're not familiar with that. It's faithful, available, and teachable. And we've been looking at a topic entitled Salvation God's Way.

And last year, we devoted 25 lessons to that topic and we're not through. We're going to pick it up in September. And we will probably go at least, well, we're going to go beyond this year.

I promise you. But we'll continue that study in September. Central to our study has been an examination of what theologians refer to as the *Ordo Salutis*, which is Latin.

It's the only Latin phrase I know. Perhaps Ipvius Union, however we can't pronounce it. But the *Ordo Salutis* is the order of salvation. We could all probably figure that out.

Now, there are a great many things that happen when God saves the soul. And these are covered in the *Ordo Salutis*. One of those is referred to as the call of God.

[17:21] And more specifically, and what we studied was the effectual call of God. Very important topic. There are actually, and we studied this, and these guys have it all memorized, there are actually two calls referred to in Scripture.

One is the external call. Every human has, to some degree, exposure to the external call.

There's a God-shaped void in everyone. If somebody's in a lot of trouble, who do they call out for? I've seen atheists call out for God. Like they used to say in the service, there's no atheists in foxholes.

You know, when the bullets are flying, everybody believes in God. When they slow down, well, I don't know, I'm not so sure. But, we see then, this external call. People can go out and look at the night sky, and that sky, by the way, according to the psalmist, declares the glory of God.

They're getting an external call, looking at that. It's a shame that a lot of astronomers have lost God in the beauty of his heaven. Probably the worst was Carl Sagan, a brilliant astronomer, but he couldn't see it.

[18:42] He could not see the glory of God. But they're exposed by doing that to the existence of God, the very fact that there is a God. Of course, a lot of people don't even look up anymore, and if

you're in town, you don't get near the picture I do out there at the farm.

And most people ascribe to the night sky as some natural evolutionary process. And suffice it to say that the external call goes unheeded and rejected ultimately.

Well, to say all that, to say this, the external call is not what Jude has in mind. He's not talking about the external call. He is referring to the internal call.

And by the way, that goes by other names. The effectual call, regeneration, or the new birth, or more accurately, being born from above.

Greek word anōthen, a spiritual birth which comes down from God. This is the call by which God awakens the human will and imparts spiritual life to an individual.

[19:59] Let me say this about God. When He wakes someone up, they're awake. He knows how to wake people up. And they come awake. He woke me up. So this is the internal call.

The type of call referenced by Jude is that which causes a once dead sinner to embrace the gospel by faith. The Lord Jesus referred to this call in the great second scripture found in John chapter 6. And in verse 44 of John chapter 6, He made a declaration to the crowd. He said, no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.

That drawing is the call of God. That's the internal call. And that probably sounds fairly simple and straightforward, but it was so important that in verse 65, Jesus repeated that.

You can't come to me unless the Father calls you. I'll use that word because that's what it means. Now, in the very next verse, 66, it starts out by saying this is a hard saying.

[21:14] People were grumbling. This is a hard saying. And this is, I think, the saddest verse in Scripture. Verse 66 to John 6. After Jesus said that to them, you can't come to me unless the Father draws you, many of his followers turned back and no longer walked with him.

They left in droves. About the only people left there were the disciples. That's when Jesus asked me, are you guys going to leave too? And Peter, you know, he always had something to say. He said, you have the words to eternal life.

Where do we go? Of course, we're not going to leave. The Apostle Paul also referred to the effectual call in his second letter to Timothy.

2 Timothy chapter 1 verses 8 and 9. Therefore, remember when you see that word therefore, you've got to figure out what it's there for. He's referring to everything that came before then.

Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in the sufferings for the gospel by the power of God who saved us and called us, there's that word, and called us to a holy calling.

[22:40] It's on a high level, isn't it? It's holy. Not because of our works, but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages begin.

God gives us a holy calling, and it's devoid of human works. No human works involved in that. The call that is internal is results-oriented.

Things happen. Things are accomplished in the internal call. The internal call that God issues to his children is irresistible and effective.

Now, I use that word irresistible when people get upset. That means it bears fruit. It bears fruit. It does not mean there's not some initial resistance.

I'm proof of that. Some of us came to Christ kicking and screaming, but we came because of the irresistible call.

[23:48] But we came because the call of God was stronger than our ability to resist. It got to the point where we didn't want to resist.

We liked what we heard. We liked what we were experiencing. This is the call of God in elective purpose. It's how He saves people. And there are some results to the internal call of God.

Things happen when God saves people. It happens when we respond to the internal call. And one thing that happens is we have fellowship with Christ.

That's amazing. We can actually have fellowship with the Master. We're slaves, right? We can fellowship with the Master.

1 Corinthians 1.9 God is faithful by whom you were called, there's that word, into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

[25:00] So we have fellowship with Christ through the internal call. We also have peace. God has called you to peace.

1 Corinthians 7.15b, the second part of verse 15 chapter 7 of 1 Corinthians. We've been called to a life of peace in Christ.

And through the internal call, we have freedom. Galatians 5.13, for you were called to freedom, brothers, and I'll throw in sisters, only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love, serve one another.

Where'd that freedom come from? You were called. We also obtain a worthy walk. Ephesians 4.1, I therefore, a prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.

We have a new hope. And let me add something here, not in the notes. Hope in the New Testament is settled. Hope is not a pipe dream, it's not a wish list.

[26 : 24] Hope is going to happen. God's already determined, it's going to happen. We hope in Christ, it's going to happen. Well, through the internal call, we have hope.

There is Ephesians 4.4, there is one body and one spirit, just as you are called to the one hope that belongs to your call.

Powerful word, call. The called of God. Someone asks you, what's your religion? Just say, I'm one of the called of God. He called my phone number and I responded.

He had my cell phone. He also calls us to holiness. 1 Peter 1.15, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.

One of the results of the call is holiness. not unto perfection as a matter of direction. We have a new direction.

[27 : 29] We have blessing. 1 Peter 3.9 do do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling but on the contrary bless for to this you were called that you may obtain a blessing.

You are called to bless others that you may obtain a blessing from God. Wow. Powerful. And then in that internal call we receive eternal glory.

And after you have suffered a little while the God of all grace who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself restore confirm strengthen and establish you.

Amazing pieces of the call puzzle. I want to close tonight with a quote from Dr. MacArthur in his commentary on Jude he had this to say in his sovereign wisdom God chose believers based solely on his gracious purpose in Christ from before time began.

His call was not rooted in anything he saw in them not even their foreseen faith. In other words God didn't look down the quarters! of time and see meritorious behavior on our part and say wow I've got to call them had nothing to do with it.

[29 : 06] Rather his call was motivated by his own glory and good pleasure that his mercy might be eternally put on display.

If you want to read about that look at Romans 9 verses 23 to 24 believers believers then are those who are divinely elected to salvation they did not earn God's choice nor can they lose it or have it taken away and that's in a bunch of places thus they can rest in the security of God's gracious call even in the most dangerous conflict with false teaching and John ends that paragraph warning about false teaching because the entire book of Jude is written to protect us and combat false teaching that's why he wrote the book so we see here the audience the audience of the book of Jude is written to the called of God but Jude doesn't end there he will further identify the audience and that's where we're going to head next time so this message of Jude which was a message to believers tonight is part one we'll get to part two next Wednesday