

## Jude

A Bible Study  
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### Concerning The Book Of Jude

This letter was written by Jude, which is short for Judas, the brother of James. He was likely one of five men mentioned in the New Testament named Judas. Most people feel that the Judas mentioned in Mark 6:3, who was one of the brothers of Jesus Christ, is the author of the book of Jude. But more significant than which Judas wrote the book, is the fact that, *the* Judas that wrote this short letter to God's people was like the other men who wrote the letters that make up the New Testament Epistles.

The most obvious of the five men mentioned named Judas, that could not have written the book was Judas Iscariot. But the fact that we have a "book" called Jude in our New Testament tells me how much of a Redeemer our Lord is. The word Judas means praise. In Judas Iscariot we see a praise that betrays. But through this short letter we find the heart that is loyal and burdened for the health of the Church, which is the body of Christ. So for me the name Judas is redeemed from simply being related to betrayal or the man who betrayed Jesus.

### Jude The Slave of Jesus Christ

This man was like Paul, James, John, and Peter when it came to his relationship with the Lord. We see this in the first verse when we read *Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ*. The word for servant literally means to be a slave. To fully appreciate this word and what it implies to these men we must look back into the law that was given to Israel.

I cannot help but read these New Testament letters and hear allusions here and there to the first five books we find in the bible. The two books that come to my mind when I read the Greek word that is literally translated as slave is Exodus and Deuteronomy.

Exodus 21:1-6 and Deuteronomy 15:12-18 gives insight into the attitude of the heart that is behind the men the Spirit inspired to write the New Testament. This is what we are really after in this study, the attitude of the heart. We must see how serious this matter of the health of the Church really is to our Lord Jesus Christ. Hopefully, this matter will become important to us.

Exodus 21:1-6 reads **Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them. If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.**

Deuteronomy 15:12-18 reads **And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day. And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee; Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise. It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away free from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee, in serving thee six years: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest.**

We are not being forced to serve Jesus for six years then decide if what we shall do in the seventh year. Nevertheless, these passages serve as an exhortation. The Apostles did not go their own way after the day of Pentecost. They waited all their lives for the Messiah. He came on the scene. He did just what He said He would do. In the process of fulfilling the law and the prophets, He brought liberty to the captives. But these men did not end up walking away from their Master after liberty came to them through the New Covenant.

The New Covenant is related in many ways to our ears being nailed to the door post. That is the real issue here. Have we made a decision to accept Jesus, then went away free with our liberty? Yes, we all need to run into the glorious liberty of Christ. We do not need to live under the tyrannical bondage of sin. But the point emerging here is what kind of attitude do we bring into our relationship with Jesus. To know Him as Lord is to be like the slave that had his ear pierced through on the doorpost. Love is what keeps us in the house as we find in Deuteronomy 21:18. Because He loveth thee, as in his master and his master's house.

This illustration confronts the individualistic attitude that is common. Many come to the Lord only to be assured they will someday be in heaven and that is the sum total of their experience with Christ. They chose heaven over hell. But you see Jude chose Jesus over personal freedom. Paul begged his brothers in Rome to do the same. James lived this out by staying in Jerusalem as a witness to the froward generation, doomed, yet he stayed as the voice of warning. He could have fled instead of sticking around to be killed by his own country men. But he felt he was to best serve his master in Jerusalem, just as Paul felt best to spread the flame of the Gospel else where. The point is these men were not their own. They were not set free from sin to live their own lives under the dictates of their own passions. They crossed their red sea with the idea of following their heavenly Joshua right into the promise land, which had nothing to do with just simply dying and going to heaven.

John shows us what it looks like in the pages of the New Testament to have our ears bored through on the door post of the Master's house.

John 13:20-26 reads **Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.**

Jesus is troubled on the night of his betrayal. Peter wants to know who the betrayer is. He ask John, the one leaning on the bosom of Jesus, the one, if you will, leaning on the door post of his Master's heart. This same John was the one that was their at the foot of the cross with Mary. Not only was John entrusted with the care of his Master's spiritual house, the Church, he was entrusted with the care of his Master's natural house.

John 19:25-27 reads- **Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.**

Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit we too can lean on the bosom of the Lord, with our ears on the door post and hear His heart and learn what makes Him tick. In other words, we can learn to be sensitive to Him in such a way, that the things that grieves His heart will grieve our hearts. The things that He delights in can become things we delight in. We can hear the voice of wisdom when our hearts are in this posture. For Christ is the wisdom of God according to 1 Cor. 1:24. Furthermore we can grow in our faith with our ears on the door post, because faith comes by hearing.

## Our Calling

It was not enough to hear you must be born again. Men like Jude wanted to hear more. Otherwise Jude had nothing more to say the body of Christ. He wrote to those who were sanctified, which means those who were called, as in called out and called to assemble together. That is why the real issue here is the collective well being of those who have been called out by God. Jude is not addressing an individual.

If I could paint you an Old Testament picture of this calling I would go back to Exodus. They were set a part from all the other nations. They experienced the blood if you will, through the Passover, when they were still in Egypt. Egypt is a picture of our bondage in sin. We are reminded that God loved us while we were *still* dead in our sins, in our Egypt (Eph.2:4&5). They came through baptism in the water and the cloud according to the Apostle Paul. On the surface we can see the harsh treatment they endured as slaves to Pharaoh. We see the obvious, in their calling. They were rescued. After all the plagues deliverance comes. But what is so often missed is that they were not just rescued *from* something, as glorious as that is. They were rescued *for* something. It is the same with you and I, and all who have been called. Our salvation, our deliverance, our exodus, cannot be limited to coming out of sinful habits, coming out from under the wrath of God, or even coming out of a particular religious tradition. We must see that our *coming out of* implies a *coming into*. Spiritually speaking we must learn how to shift gears or we may find ourselves driving around in circles.

## It Was Needful

When writing to the called concerning the common salvation, Jude found it needful to challenge them and exhort to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. We see that the natural fruit of having that attitude of a slave of Jesus Christ is the willingness to speak into the need at hand as it pertains to the body of Christ. It was needful Jude writes. This is wisdom in action. It may not sound sensational, but it does not matter. This is love expressed to the body. That which is weighing on the heart of the Master is heard in the ear of his slave.

This also alludes to the father and son relationship we see so vividly displayed in the Gospels. Jesus, Himself was fully tuned to His Father's heart. Therefore, all that He did was needful in light of God's bigger picture. No random acts of kindness. It was pure unadulterated love incarnated with divine direction always toward the Father. All of this was needful for the health of what would be His corporate body.

By writing to that you should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered, Jude is basically saying the same thing Peter writes in 2 Peter 1:10 **Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.** Jude goes on in verse 5 to refer to those who did not make their calling and election sure as a warning to the Church. But before making reference in verse 5 he draws attention to something that was happening in during his lifetime.

## Certain Men Crept In Unawares

Jude speaks of these ungodly men who crept into the household of faith. Let us compare this with 1 John 2:18&19 **Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.**

In light of the fact we have touched so heavily on the slave theme in relation to Jude and the other New Testament writers, it is interesting to note that John writes *they went out from us because they were not of us*. This is a sharp contrast to the slave that loves his master's and wants to stay in his house. These men that Jude speak of who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, were denying the only Lord God. The phrase *denying the only Lord God* conveys the idea of denying the Lord in the sense of denying His ownership. The Concordant Literal translation reads in verse 4 that these men who crept in unawares were

**“disowning our only Owner and Jesus Christ.”** The same idea is conveyed in 2 Peter 2:1. **“Yet there came false prophets also among the people, as among you also there will be false teachers who will be smuggling in their destructive sects, even disowning the Owner Who buys them, bringing on themselves swift destruction.”**

While many will continue to wrestle with God's sovereignty and man's free will, from God's standpoint there is this matter of ownership that the writers of the New Testament are taking into account. The way a person handles God as owner is a great revelation of one's heart. Ownership brings us back to the slave theme. For men like Jude, being a slave out of love, was the response to knowing God as owner. To these corrupt men he wrote about, it was a light thing to be made in the image of God. It was nothing to live unto one's self and completely live for their own personal pleasures.

### **Revisiting The Exodus**

This denial of ownership also brings our attention back to the historical account of Israel's redemption in the book of Exodus. Jude, like Paul in 1 Corinthians 10, brings up the account of Israel in the wilderness. It is worth noting that these men, who were led of the Holy Spirit to care for the Church and inspired to write to them, drew heavily from history. They never gave the slightest hint of being under any pressure to try and come up with some new sensational idea to motivate others to change their behavior. They did not have to theologically pull a rabbit out of their hat to get the listener's attention. As a matter of fact, more often than not they were very repetitive and rightly so, because the Bible itself is very repetitive. It is great in depth and dimension, greater than my mind will ever know. It is also symphonic in all of its depth, but all the while, it is never stale, but very repetitive. Although a modern audience may not appreciate this, I for one am glad to know that when addressing the body of Christ, the issue is not *“have you already heard this before?”* but simply what is on the Master's heart. For Jude writes, **I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.**

Now we would do well to see the emphasis that Jude is using an example of those who were *saved* out of Egypt then destroyed in the wilderness. Some of these men who were destroyed died in swift destruction, such as Korah. Others simply died in their old age. But either way, there was a number of redeemed Israelites that experienced salvation, but did not enter into the purpose of their redemption. An entire generation was sentenced to wander for forty years, because as Jude writes, they believed not. The fact that he writes they believed not should draw our attention to the fact that they believed that they could not go, as the Lord intended for them, to possess the land He promised them.

This is the same theme the writer of Hebrews brings out in order to get the Christians to fully abandon the ceremonial system that was fading and fully embrace the New Covenant, in which the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is emphasized, as opposed to the temple. Today this is still relevant due to the fact that so much emphasis is placed on how we, as a church meets, as opposed to Who we are meeting with. Due to the fact that we assemble together with the Holy Spirit indwelling in us, Christ is in our midst. But there are many hang ups we can easily acquire along the way that keep us from entering into the good of the land.

For us, at this time, the good of the land is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. These are things the world cannot give us or take away from us. But we can, in our unbelief, fail to enter into the rest the Father has for us. The most subtle way this happens is when simply a fellowship starts going through the motions of meeting together, rather than realizing that our meeting together is part of our spiritual fellowship with the Father and the Son through the Spirit. We must ask ourselves do we simply go through the motions when we are alone with God or is their holy reverence and a joyful expectation?

We have enemies in the land that must be destroyed, such as fear. There are things that come and offend us. This is where we are tried in our faith. These sort of trials can leave a soul easily embittered. But we are not left without a present help to lead and guide us into all truth, truth that is not something separate from love, love that is not separate from justice, justice that is not separate from mercy. For our God is not divided.

It is not enough to simply state some nice philosophical thoughts about how God encompasses all that I have just mentioned. We must look at how this plays out in every day life. This is not just every day life as an individual, but life as a called people. Exodus 15:22-26 reads- **So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.**

It is interesting to note that the bitter waters were made sweet after three days. Today we have a tree that the Holy Spirit directs us to when we taste the bitter waters of life. It is the tree in which Jesus spoke these words from, *Father forgive them for they know not what they do*. On this tree Jesus also told a thief he would be with Him in paradise. On this tree Jesus cried it finished, literally it is paid in full. The debt was forgiven like in the year of Jubilee. His bitter experience has caused me to taste and see that the Lord is good. Is this not worth reflecting on when the bitter cup is passed our way? Oh, how we injure ourselves when we live as if we are our own!

You may ask what does living as if we are our own have to do with harsh circumstances that come our way. Only a slave of Christ is truly free. We learn that in order to look ahead, free of the bitterness life can bring, we must first look back. We look back to the cross our Lord hung on. We see how He willingly went through that ordeal. Love kept Him their not the nails. This same love can compel us to take up our cross. For when we willingly embrace the disposition of our Lord on the cross, we have done just that.

I think that this is an ongoing battle. We are called to grow in this disposition. We must keep our ear to the door post. We have got to lean into the bosom of our Lord. Otherwise the paradox of being a slave of Christ, rather than denying our Owner, remains locked up to our understanding. Michael Card has captured this better than I can state it in a song on his "Ancient Faith" recording. The song is called "Through the Eye." The lyrics read like this-

Through the eye  
They must always believe a lie  
Who see with and not through the eye  
With and not through the eye

You may see what angels long to see  
Hear the harvest's harmony  
Leave the prison of your shame  
Hear the sound of your own new name

Through the eye  
We see Salvation has come alive  
And only those who will see survive  
With and not through the eye

Only the eyes of the heart perceive  
That the deaf and blind can hear and see  
That insanity's saner than sanity  
That only a slave can be truly free

Through the eye  
We see our Life it has come alive  
And only those who will see survive  
With and not through the eye  
With and not through the eye

### **Paul's Resolution**

In relation to those who were destroyed after being saved out of Egypt we must consider what Paul had to say. For although he did not doubt his salvation, he was aiming for the purpose of his salvation. In doing so, he resolved to live in a way that would allow him to obtain that which was still before him.

**1Corinthians 9:24-27 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.**

Paul goes on to remind the Corinthians of the falling away from the faith that took place in the wilderness. **1Corinthians 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.**

Paul goes on to speak of those who sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play in verse 7. This is not a reference to Israel's mode of recreation in general. It is a specific reference to the golden calf. This comes from the account in Exodus 32 **Exodus 32:2-6 And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.**

This all came about because from where these Israelites were standing Moses had delayed his coming. Sometimes simply waiting on God can be a cross for a lot of us. They did not construct an Egyptian god to worship. This was an image, something they could see. Something that stood for the God that delivered them from Egypt. They were tired of waiting for Moses. Instead of waiting for the revelation of the invisible God, they made a visible image. It was their idea of God and Church. This image had to be shattered.

When a man or a woman's idea of God and His Church is shattered it can be a very bitter experience. Dietrich Bonhoeffer felt the sooner the image was shattered the better. Bonhoeffer may have been very eccentric in some ways, but that could be said of so many men of God. So let us consider his thoughts on the subject.

From "Life Together" pages 26-28.

Innumerable times a whole Christian community has broken down because it had sprung from a wish dream. The serious Christian, set down for the first time in a Christian community, is likely to bring with him a very definite idea of what Christian life together should be and to try to realize it. But God's grace speedily shatters such dreams. Just as

surely as God desires to lead us to a knowledge of genuine Christian fellowship, so surely must we be overwhelmed by a great disillusionment with others, with Christians in general, and, if we are fortunate, with ourselves.

By sheer grace, God will not permit us to live even for a brief period in a dream world. He does not abandon us to these rapturous experiences and lofty moods that come over us like a dream. God is not a God of the emotions but a God of truth. Only that fellowship which faces such disillusionment, with all its unhappy and ugly aspects, begins to be what it should be in God's sight, begins to grasp in faith the promise that is given to it. The sooner this shock of disillusionment comes to an individual and to a community the better for both. A community which cannot bear and cannot survive such a crisis, which insists upon keeping its illusion when it should be shattered, permanently loses in that moment the promise of Christian community. Sooner or later it will collapse. Every human wish dream that is injected into the Christian community is a hinderance to genuine community and must be banished if genuine community is to survive. He who loves his dream of a community more than the Christian community itself becomes a destroyer of the latter, even though his personal intentions may be ever so honest and earnest and sacrificial.

God hates visionary dreaming; it makes the dreamer proud and pretentious. The man who fashions a visionary ideal of community demands that it be realized by God, by others, and by himself. He enters the community of Christians with his demands, sets up his own law, and judges the brethren and God Himself accordingly. He stands adamant, a living reproach to all others in the circle of brethren. He acts as if he is the creator of the Christian community, as if his dream binds them all together. When things do not go his way, he calls the effort a failure. When his ideal picture is destroyed, he sees the community going to smash. So he becomes, first an accuser of his brethren, then an accuser of God, and finally the despairing accuser of himself.