

“Secure In Christ”

Jude 1-2

If you were asked to list the most common themes mentioned in all the New Testament letters, you would probably say salvation, spiritual growth, evangelism, and of course, all of them are quite prominent. However, there is at least one other prominent theme that appears in almost every New Testament letter; Jesus talked about it in the gospels. The apostles encountered it in Acts. Paul mentions it many times in his letters. John said a lot about it in his letters. Peter talks about it in 2 Peter. And it's the focus of Jude. And that is false teaching. Those who disguise themselves as followers of Jesus who infiltrate churches to manipulate the truth, seeking to lead true followers of Jesus away.

Paul's letters to Galatians and Colossians were all trying to correct wrong teaching. 2 Thessalonians was written because false teachers had twisted Paul's teaching in 1 Thessalonians. 2 Corinthians was written because of false teachers had accused Paul falsely of being a phoney apostle.

John wrote 1 John because false teachers had twisted the gospel and the identity of Jesus and he addressed it again in 2 & 3 John. Peter wrote 2 Peter warning people to beware of false teachers who may show up at their door. And Jude wrote his letter because they had already crept in unawares into local churches.

Jude is hidden at the back of our Bibles, possibly being skipped over to get to Revelation. Jude is the 4th one chapter letter in the New Testament whose brevity should not fool us into thinking a little letter has a little message. “All Scripture is God-breathed . . . and is profitable” (2 Tim. 3:15-17) so we will profit from studying it.

False teachers abound today. Some are in cults, some are on TV, some have and are seeking to sneak into good Bible believing churches and to try to confuse, control, and cause damage with their manipulating messages which is usually accompanied by immoral living. Jesus said, we will know God's people by their fruit, and vice versa. Jude urges his readers to “contend for the faith” so that the truth of the gospel keeps going on from generation to generation until Jesus returns. And here we are almost 2000 years later, continuing a succession of faithful godly churches who have done that very thing.

But before Jude asks us to contend for the faith, he wants to go over the truth of our salvation. Why? Because he wants to remind us why our salvation and the gospel are worth fighting for!

He tells us in v.3 that he initially intended to write a letter about salvation itself. However, news that some false teachers had infiltrated a church had reached his ear. While he changed the primary purpose of his letter, he did use his introduction to remind his readers and listeners of “the salvation we share” so that we are secure in our identity in Christ. The better we know the truth the quicker we'll spot the error. Jude reminds us in v.1

Our Identity is in Jesus Christ Through Faith
(v.1a)

Who was Jude? His real name in the Greek is Judas but almost every New Testament translation refers to him as Jude. No doubt shortening his name to Jude distinguishes him from Judas, a name that has become synonymous with deception or treachery. It is somewhat ironic that Judas writes a letter warning followers of Jesus' to beware of Judases in their midst. This Jude identifies himself as one in Christ through faith when he says,

¹ Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James

This Jude was a brother of James, meaning James the leader of the Jerusalem church as we read in Acts. Not James the apostle, who was martyred in Acts 12. These two, James and Jude were stepbrothers to Jesus. Notice he doesn't identify himself by his earthly relationships but by his spiritual relationship to Jesus, a bond-servant or slave of Jesus, meaning, Jude believed Jesus was his Lord. But he didn't always believe Jesus was Lord. Where do we find out about his earthly connection to Jesus?

Mark 6:3 Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.

Paul mentions this James in Gal. 1:19 as one of the leaders in the Jerusalem church

Gal. 1:18 Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days. ¹⁹ I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother.

Who Paul calls one of the 'pillars' in the church in 2:9. But James and Jude and the other siblings didn't believe Jesus was Lord for most, if not all of His earthly life. In Mark 3, soon after Jesus began His ministry and was attracting crowds, His family was worried about Him since some people were claiming Jesus was evil and was demon-possessed.

^{3:20} Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. ²¹ When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."

³¹ Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you."

³³ "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. ³⁴ Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

In John 7 when the Feast of Tabernacles was near, His brothers sarcastically challenged Him,

^{7:3} Jesus' brothers said to him, "You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. ⁴ No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." ⁵ For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

So what changed? The resurrection. After Jesus' death and immediately after His ascension, we read this in Acts 1:13

Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴ They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Somewhere between His death and His ascension James and Jude believed. Paul tells us in 1Cor. 15:7, after Jesus had appeared to Peter, then the 12, then 500 others,

⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Jude reminds us all that no matter what earthly connections we have, what positions we hold or don't hold, what titles we have or don't have that our identity is found in our relationship to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Which is better than any relationship or earthly connection. And Jude reminds us in his greeting how we become Jesus' followers.

So Jude says remember what a privilege it is to be saved. First,

We are Called by Grace **(v.1b)**

When Jude describes believers as "those who have been called", he means we've been called by God. This calling is God's divine prerogative to have "compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Ex. 33:19). Paul says in Eph. 2:8-9 that

"it is by grace you have been saved through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works so that no one can boast."

If you are saved God is the One who led you to Him. Paul says being saved does come by faith but even that is a gift from God so that no one can say 'I did it of my own free will and choice'. Jesus said God is the orchestrator of our salvation when He said in John 6:44

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent Me draws him and I will raise him up on the last day."

So do we have no part in our salvation? Yes, of course. The word "called" also means invited. You and I have to accept God's invitation and place our faith in Jesus alone to save us from our sins. This is the choice we must make, yet God invites us, leads us and draws us to the point where we accept and are saved. Were it not for God we would not be saved, so remember what a privilege it is to be called by God. God calls us out of sin and into a relationship with Himself to be lived out in holiness.

^{2 Tim. 1:8} So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, ⁹ who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

^{1 Pet. 2:9} But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

While we made a decision to accept Jesus as our Saviour, once saved we begin reading Scripture and begin to understand how God called us to lead us to that decision. From our perspective we choose, from God's perspective, He calls.

“To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father”

We are Continually Loved by Our Heavenly Father **(v.1c)**

Just as children need constant reassurance that their parents love them and are for them so God constantly reassures us in His Word that we are loved, selflessly. The word for love here is ‘agape’. It means I love you without conditions. God’s love for us is not based on performance. ‘Loved’ is in the perfect tense meaning, He loved us beforehand, He loves us now and He’ll always love us unconditionally. John writes

¹ John 3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

¹ John 4:9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another

When we value and appreciate God’s love for us it should show in how we treat others. The greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and love others as we love ourselves. But what about when we sin? Isn’t God mad at us? That’s a false understanding of God. As our heavenly Father He is saddened when we disobey Him but His love for us doesn’t change. Paul tells us in

Rom. 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

And ends the chapter saying

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ:

We are Securely Kept for Our Future Union with Christ **(v.1d)**

“Kept by Jesus.” This word kept shows up a few times in Jude’s letter. It means preserved, watched over, and cared for. We are saved and kept until our life ends and then we are kept forever with God for all eternity. Paul says in Eph. 1:13-14

¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.

In John 10:28-29 Jesus said,

"I give them eternal life and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father who has given them to Me is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand."

And Peter too, assures us in 1 Pet. 1:3-6,

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

Interesting how Peter tells us these things are true even when you go through difficult times as a follower of Jesus. Because that's often when we are tempted to doubt our salvation because we forget these promises and we forget verses like

John 16:33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Ps. 34:18 The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. ¹⁹ A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all;

Jude reminds his readers who they are in Christ and then prays for them in v.2

² (May) Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

Jude's prayer/blessing is also a reminder that we are

Increasingly Blessed by God's Mercy, Peace & Love **(v.2)**

He prays that God would multiply these things in our lives. Do we acknowledge that He constantly is merciful towards us for how many pain-free, problem free or even limited problems we've experienced in life? How many days have you and I went hungry? How many nights in our life have we not had shelter? How many church services have we had over the years when the police have told us to shut it down for teaching truth?

Mercy is God's compassion that meets our needs even though we don't deserve it. Peace is that inner tranquility that comes to a believer in the most difficult circumstances when we trust God and seek to be anxious about nothing. Love is agape, selfless love, that seeks the welfare of others over one self. God constantly is looking out for our wholeness, our spiritual welfare because He's committed to conforming us into His Son Jesus, which gives us the most satisfaction. Jude prays that these would overflow from God in our life because we have need of them every day.

What's our response to these great reminders of our salvation?

Thanksgiving Thank God that He saved us as His gift to us.

That He called us out of darkness and into His light. Thank Him for all the little mercies He shows us every day, for the peace that he gives us when we're anxious, for His never-ending love.

Service Jude calls himself a bond servant of Jesus, one whose total allegiance is owed to Jesus and is dependent on Jesus. How are you showing Jesus is your Lord today? What areas of your life have you yet to let Him control?

Pray Jude was concerned for his flock here in this letter, some of whom were probably being influenced away from Jesus. So His prayer that God's mercy, peace and love would be multiplied in their life showed he cared about them. And his willingness to teach them difficult things is also a reminder that we need to pray that God would protect our church and each other from manipulative, sweet-talking, flatterers who want nothing more than to see us stumble and fall.

¹⁷ But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. ¹⁸ They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." ¹⁹ These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.

²⁰ But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. ²¹ Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

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If you have any comments or questions about this message, please
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