

There are three men named Judas or Jude in the New Testament. Judas Iscariot was one of the original twelve apostles and is the one who betrayed Jesus. Judas the son of James was another of the original twelve apostles. To help distinguish him from “Bad Judas”, he became known as Jude of James or Judas Thaddeus.

The third man was known as Jude, the brother of James.¹ That is me. I wrote one of the shortest books in the New Testament, appropriately named *Jude*. In fact, I start my writing by naming myself as Jude, the brother of James.

I also name myself as a slave or bondservant of Jesus Christ. This was a title that many New Testament writers used for themselves to denote their complete devotion and submission to their Lord Jesus Christ.

I intended for this letter to be circulated among the churches because many of them were experiencing a common problem. This problem was false teachers. Peter addressed this problem in much detail in his book, *Second Peter*. In fact, Peter and I use almost identical language in some cases. He and I were in complete agreement about the seriousness of the problem.

Many of the false teachers were teaching outrageous things hoping to get paid money for doing so. They were teaching that Jesus did not come in the flesh because flesh is sinful. Somehow, their twisted logic led them to believe that evil and immoral actions were not evil and immoral. They had no idea what dangerous ground they were on...or if they did, they didn't care.

I am diligent to write about salvation, but I also find it necessary to write at this time to exhort everyone to defend the faith that the saints have received. Defending the faith is necessary because false teachers have crept in unnoticed, and these people turn the grace of God into a license for immorality, and deny the only Lord Jesus.

In the first case, they pervert the Grace of God by denying that sinful actions are sinful. They give themselves and their hearers unlimited license to do just about anything they want. In the second case, they deny the Lord Jesus by saying that he did not come in the flesh.

Just as Peter did in *Second Peter*, I remind my hearers that God saved people on various occasions, but then destroyed those who did not believe or act appropriately. He did the same

¹ Many people believe that this Jude is the same as Jude the apostle.

with angels, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. These punishments were not just a slap on the wrist, but included damnation by eternal fire. It's very serious stuff.

In a like manner, false teachers act immorally, reject authority, and speak evil of those who really do have authority. They speak evil of things they don't know or understand. Even Michael the archangel was afraid to act in this way. I mean, very serious stuff.

These false teachers have taken the way of Cain. They act as they want, without regard to how God wants them to act. They act greedily in order to gain money, just as Balaam did. Balaam betrayed his own people and God just to make money. Because they act in these empty and immoral ways, the blackness of eternal darkness is reserved for them.

I mention that false teachers have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion. By this, I mean that they are self-destroyed. Let me remind you about Korah's rebellion so you will see why. It's a story that the Jews knew well, but most Christians don't think about.

Korah led a rebellion of about 250 Israelite men against Moses and Aaron. These men represented themselves as being holy and with the Lord. They essentially wanted to take over the priesthood from Aaron, and leadership of the people from Moses.

Moses set up a contest to see who the Lord wanted in leadership. Korah and the other leaders were swallowed up by the earth, and the rest of the 250 were killed by fire from the Lord.

It didn't matter that the 250 were community leaders. It didn't matter that they thought they were holy. What they tried to do was wrong, and they were punished by death. They were not the true representatives of God. Moses and Aaron were.

In the same way, I want everyone to know that Peter, Paul and the other apostles are chosen by God to lead the Christian community. Any who oppose their teachings and leadership are self-condemned.

Let me pause for a moment. Some of you might be under the impression that all important Jewish and Christian writings are in the Old Testament and New Testament. Let me remind you that countless other religious writings existed after the Old Testament and after the New Testament. Many of these have been lost through time, but some still exist and are easily available.

I reference at least one of these extra-Biblical writings when I quote Enoch and his prophecy of God's judgement on the ungodly. With or without this quote, it is clear that God will punish the false teachers.

How are God's people to identify false teachers? They are grumblers, and complainers. They follow their own desires. They say flattering things in order to gain advantage. They mock those

who have spiritual authority. They cause division among God's people. They do not have the Spirit or follow the sound teachings of the apostles of Jesus.

Contrary to that, God's people are to build up their faith, pray in the Spirit, stay in the love of God. God's people are to have compassion, and help save those who are in danger of eternal fire.

I draw a line in the sand, as did Peter and Paul. On one side of the line are the false teachers and those they mislead. They follow their natural instincts. On the other side are the apostles and their sound teaching, and those who follow that teaching to the glory of God. They follow the Holy Spirit. There are only two sides, and everyone...including all of those who say they believe in Jesus, will be found to be on one side or the other.

It is necessary that those who keep themselves in God's love must build themselves up in holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.

I urge the believers to be merciful to those who doubt, and save others by snatching them from the fire. How to do this? Share the Gospel with them and convince them of the salvation that is theirs through the Lord Jesus.

I don't want to brag, but I end my letter with one of the finest endings to any letter ever. It is all about Jesus and God, so how could any ending be much better?

"Now to him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless for the presence of his glory with exceeding joy...to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion power, both now and forever. Amen" Amen.