

Hey Jude: A Reminder of God's Judgement The Gospel Gets Personal

Watch: https://youtu.be/x_zPzI1nfC8

Read: Jude 1-7

Consider: Jude was the brother of the James who became the leader of the church in Jerusalem. James made it clear that he was the brother of Jesus. That is, they shared the same mother, Mary, but not the same father. Jesus was God's one and only son born of the virgin Mary. Despite what some churches teach today, Mary and Joseph had children, and they came the usual way. We are given the names of the boys, but not the girls. They were James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas.

Jude is one of the English versions' ways of translating 'Joudas' in an attempt to keep the different people of the same name straight. The other two ways it is translated are 'Judah' and 'Judas.' Theologically speaking, Jude and his brother James, as do all who put their faith in Jesus, end up calling God their Father in heaven, just as Jesus did. But to emphasize the difference between himself and Jesus, Jude said that his relationship to Jesus was one of servant to master.

Jude wrote to the church, in general, not to a specific one. The church is made up, according to Jude, by those who are "by God the Father loved and who are by Jesus Christ called to be kept." (I used the original text's word order for this translation). In other words, the church is made up of those that God's love will keep safe from the coming judgment. It is for these that Jude prays for God's mercy, peace, and love to be multiplied.

Jude indicated that he was in the midst of writing a letter that emphasized our common salvation when he felt it necessary to send a different letter. One in which he would encourage the church to contend earnestly for the faith that had been handed down to it. Which means, that the church's faith was under attack, whether they realized it or not.

Jude affirmed what only some in the church back then realized: some bad people had crept into the church unnoticed and were influencing it in the wrong direction. Jude described them as having been, for a long time, previously "written down" to be judged. Jude said that they were impious people, who turned God's grace, His willingness to forgive and keep forgiving, into an opportunity to sin more instead of less. In acting this way, they denied, by their behavior, that Jesus Christ was their master and Lord. Jude's concern was that these people, and any who were influenced by them, would have no hope when the day of judgement arrived. Jude believed that trusting Jesus was the only way to survive that day.

That's why Jude wanted to remind the church of some examples of how God dealt with those who took advantage of His grace. He provided three examples that the church back then would have known all too well. We do not study God's word simply to learn something new, we study it to be reminded of the truth. We need to be constantly reminded of the truth because it is constantly under attack.

Jude's examples were: (1) Those who, after being delivered from Egypt, would not obey God. They were destroyed. (2) The angels who, after being given their own domain in heaven, abandoned it. They were locked away in darkness. (3) God's people who, after they were settled in Sodom and Gomorrah, choose to ignore God's design for the family. They were destroyed in a way that foreshadowed the coming punishment of eternal fire.

At this point in Jude's letter, his concern is quite clear. He believed that these examples were written down for our instruction. They were preserved to remind us of what did and could happen. We really are supposed to learn from the past so we don't repeat the same mistakes. Jude's unspoken question was "Who would ever give up their only hope of making it through judgement day?" The unspoken answer was "A lot more people who are showing up at church than we want to acknowledge." Jude hoped that with a gentle reminder, those in the church would never be among them.

Pray: Our Father, who art in heaven, thank you for loving us enough to send your son to die on the cross so we could survive judgement day. Amen.