

The Letter of Jude



Thursday Morning Bible Class
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Wauwatosa, WI

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Introduction

- Jude warns against supposed believers who practiced a perverted lifestyle.
- He urged Christians to continue in godliness and love.
- He closes the letter with a beautiful doxology.

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Authorship

- The writer identifies himself as “a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James.”
- The names “James” and “Jude” (or Judas) were common. Two apostles were named Judas (Luke 6:16) and Jesus had a brother named Judas (Mt. 13:35)
- The author is probably the brother of James and half-brother of Jesus.

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Date and Recipients

- **Written sometime between 65 and 80 AD**
- **Jude and 2 Peter are remarkably similar.**
- **The letter is general in nature and could apply to Jewish or Gentile Christians in any location.**

4

Occasion

- **Jude wanted to write of salvation in Jesus, but instead was compelled to warn about immoral men in the church who were perverting the grace of God.**
- **These false teachers believed that being saved by grace gave them license to sin.**

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Occasion

- **Some believe Jude was referring to the Nicolaitans, condemned in Rev 2:6, Rev. 2:15.**
- **Nicolas was one of the first deacons (Acts 6), who, it is believed, developed a theology that was permissive to the extreme, believing that if grace covered all sin, we could sin all we want. (Rom. 5:20)**

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Greetings

- 1 – A servant of Christ and the brother of James, to “those who have been called”.
- 2 – A benediction. The word “may” in the ESV is implied in the Greek, but is better left out. This is not a prayer, but a statement of fact.

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The Sin and Doom of Godless Men – 3-16

- 3 – Jude wanted to write about sin and grace, but instead was compelled to write that the teaching of God’s grace was in jeopardy.
- 4 – The problem: Godless men have changed the grace of God into a license for immorality.
- But their lifestyle denied Christ who calls us to a life of obedience to God.

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The Sin and Doom of Godless Men – 3-16

- **Three examples of divine judgment:**
 - 5 – God “destroyed the Israelites that did not believe.”
 - 6 – Angels who refused to obey and became the devil and his angels.
 - 7 – Sodom and Gomorrah – God destroyed them because of their sexual perversion.

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The Sin and Doom of Godless Men – 3-16

- **8 – These godless men were called “dreamers” because they were out of touch with truth and reality.**
- **They:**
 - **1)Polluted their own bodies**
 - **2) Rejected authority**
 - **3) Slandered celestial beings.**

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The Sin and Doom of Godless Men – 3-16

- **9 – Refers to a 1st century writing called “The Departure of Moses”**
- **We know from Deut. 34 that Moses died on Mt. Nebo, and that God buried him, and that his burial spot was unknown. The devil seems to have wanted to reveal his burial site to the Israelites so that they might establish an idolatrous worship of it. The archangel Michael, however, prohibited the devil.**

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The Sin and Doom of Godless Men – 3-16

- **10 – They speak abusively about things they do not understand, but what they understand by instinct – sexual perversion—will destroy them.**
- **11 – Three examples of God’s Judgment:**
 - **1) Cain who murdered**
 - **2) Balaam’s error of greed**
 - **3) Korah’s rebellion who rose up against Moses. (Num. 16)**

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The Sin and Doom of Godless Men – 3-16

- **12-13 – Six graphic metaphors:**
 - 1) “Blemishes at your love feasts” – they pervert the communion service.
 - 2) Shepherds who feed only themselves
 - 3) “Clouds without rain” – The promise truth but can’t deliver.
 - 4) “Autumn trees without fruit”
 - 5) “Wild waves of the sea” - they stir up moral filth
 - 6) “Wandering stars” – like shooting stars that fly off into oblivion.

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The Sin and Doom of Godless Men – 3-16

- **14-15 - Jude quotes from the book of Enoch, an apocryphal book from the 1st century BC.**
- **Enoch had prophesied that the Lord was coming to judge the wicked.**
- **By repeating “ungodly”, Jude is underscoring the coming judgment.**
- **16 – They are grumblers who follow their own evil desires.**

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A Call to Persevere

- **17 – The apostles had predicted the coming of these ungodly men. (Acts 20:29; 2 Tim 3:1-5)**
- **18 – Words of warning similar to 2 Peter 3:3**
- **19 – “Men who divide you” – sin always divides!**
- **20-21 – The defense: Build yourselves up in the faith and pray to the Holy Spirit.**
- **24-25 – The letter ends with a beautiful doxology.**

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