

## AT RISK IN THE COMMUNITY

**Bible Basis:** Jude 3-7, 19-21, 24-25

**Bible Truth:** Jude reminded his readers to contend for the faith entrusted to them, and to hold tight to their belief in Jesus Christ.

**Memory Verse:** And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. (Jude 22-23)

KJV

**Lesson Aim:** That you will reflect on a time you may have had difficulty with false teachings and commit to studying God's Word daily.

### LESSON SCRIPTURE

#### *Jude 3-7*

**3** Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

**4** For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

**5** 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.

**6** And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

**7** Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves

over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

#### *Jude 19-21*

**19** These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

**20** But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

**21** Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

#### *Jude 24-25*

**24** Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

**25** To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

### LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON

**AIM:** That you will know how false biblical teachings affect the new community—the church.

## **INTRODUCTION**

What Were the False Teachings That Caused Jude to Write His Letter?

Jude made many references to things that only Jews would know about, so we assume that he was writing to some Jewish Christians, although we do not know where they were located. Jude was written not more than 50 years after our Savior ascended into heaven, perhaps much earlier than that. So the Christian church was still young and many people were still unclear concerning the implications of their faith. Nobody had written any systematic theology books yet, and New Testament writings were still being composed and distributed. This was a situation in which false teachers could easily lead people away from the truth.

Bible commentators differ as to the exact heresy that was being taught which Jude was refuting. Some say it was an early form of Gnosticism. Others say it was too early for that; it was simply antinomianism—the belief that since faith alone is necessary for salvation, we do not need to obey any moral laws. Although Gnosticism was a much more complex philosophy, the end teaching was the same—moral living is unimportant. The Gnostics believed that everything could be divided into either material or nonmaterial. The nonmaterial or spiritual was good. The material world was all evil. So Gnostics believed that the things they did with their physical bodies had nothing to do with spirituality. Today people are still searching for spirituality that does not have any restrictions.

## **BIBLE LEARNING**

**AIM:** That you will know the danger of false teachers.

### **I. THE DANGER OF FALSE TEACHERS (Jude 3-7)**

Instead of writing a book full of praise for the wonderful salvation that we have in Christ, Jude unfortunately discovered some dangerous teachings among believers and wrote to defend the faith. Sadly, this was not persecution from without; rather, it was people within the church were threatening the faith. This sort of thing should not have been shocking, because Jesus already had told a parable forewarning about this problem (Matthew 13:37-43). He described the enemy as planting weeds among the crops. Just as a good farmer must leave the weeds in the field until the harvest, so we will find there are many sinners that are present right in the church who threaten to choke the growth of faith as weeds can choke healthy plant life.

#### **Jude Urged the Believers (verses 3-7)**

3-7. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. 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. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the

judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Jude urged the believers to defend the faith that God has entrusted to His church. Starting with Jesus Himself, our faith has been passed along to the apostles and then from generation to generation. The church is responsible for preserving God's Word and passing it along. Each generation will need to interpret the Word so that it is relevant for its situation, but the truth of the Scripture must not be tampered with.

The heresy that Jude preached about has its cousins in various beliefs of today. First, we see that people want to live without rules or limits and this is nothing new. Important to note these days are the perverted philosophies that try to defend an immoral, no-holds-barred (lascivious) lifestyle. Just as in Jude's day when people said that since salvation is by grace alone, therefore they had the freedom to live any way they wanted, so today, people make up all sorts of excuses for this kind of living. Even some people in the church say that they can't help their behavior because supposedly, for example, this is the way they were made.

The second part of the heresy was a refusal to believe that Jesus was fully God and fully man. The Gnostics believed that Jesus only resembled a human being, but in reality was only a spirit. So they did not believe that Jesus was truly a man, nor did they believe that Jesus was truly God. Many people today might say that Jesus was a great teacher, but they do not believe that Jesus was and is the Son of God. This is even taught in some seminaries. So we need to

know what the Bible teaches, what some of today's false teachings are, and how to tell the difference between them.

Then Jude reminded his Jewish Christian readers of how in the past God had dealt with those who perverted the faith. Those in the church who were leading Jude's readers astray thought of themselves as the superior spiritual leaders, but in fact they were very wrong. And so Jude showed that even those who have had great spiritual privileges, such as the Israelites who were delivered from slavery in Egypt, could take the wrong path and then fall under God's fearful judgment. Be reminded that of the Israelites who left Egypt, only two lived to enter the Promised Land—Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 14:6, 24, 30).

Jude then used the example of the fallen angels (Jude 6). Scripture tells us of a war in heaven with some angels following Satan as he tried to make himself equal to or higher than God (Isaiah 14:12). So we see that pride and rebelliousness caused even angels in heaven to fall.

Jude's last example in today's passage was Sodom and Gomorrah. This story is from the Old Testament (Genesis 19:1-11). In this incident, two angels in disguise as human visitors were staying overnight with Lot's family in the city of Sodom. The men of the city demanded that Lot send out the two men visiting them so that they could rape them. You can read the details of their attempted homosexual rape in Genesis, but the entire wicked city, plus the equally sinful city of Gomorrah and surrounding villages were totally destroyed in a rain of burning sulfur (19:24). This incident highlights God's awful punishment for sexual immorality and social injustice.

Through Jude's three examples, he reminds his readers that sin and judgment go hand in hand.

### QUESTION 1

Why did Jude write his letter (Jude 3)?

## II. JUDE DESCRIBES THESE FALSE TEACHERS (Jude 19-21)

Three final descriptions of the heretics of Jude's day are included in verse 19: they created factions and split communities, they followed "sensual" instincts, and they lacked the Spirit of God. In other words, these false teachers did not follow or walk in the Word of God themselves, but walked as though they were above the Word and expected everyone else to submit to them and their doctrine. God tolerates no one's disobedience to His authoritative Word. He even holds His leaders to a higher standard. Leaders are to be examples (walking and living letters or epistles) of righteousness for those they are leading.

### Qualities of Goodness (verses 19-21)

*19-21. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

Not only were these immoral men preaching falsehoods trying to lead others astray, they thought they were in an elite class and were above moral laws. According to their viewpoint the common people needed to obey moral laws, but they did not. They thought they were the truly spiritual ones, but Jude says that in reality, they were the ones who did not have God's Spirit in them (verse 19). We can see this same egotistical spirit in many who have

achieved great power. They think they are above the law, but the consequences of their misdeeds will someday come crashing down upon them.

In the previous verses, Jude had been describing the characteristics of error, but starting with verse 20 he described the characteristics of goodness. Truly spiritual people have a firm faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jude called it our "most holy faith" (verse 20), because "holy" (Greek, *hagios*, HAG-ee- os) by definition means "set apart" or different. Our faith distinguishes the way we live because of God's divine influence on us.

The second characteristic is a deep prayer relationship with God. Our human prayers can be quite selfish, so we need the Holy Spirit to purify our hearts, our motives, and our desires and bring them in accord with His desires. God alone can teach us how to pray and what to pray for.

The third characteristic is living close to God's love. Of course, nothing can take us out of His love and care, but if we are to have true fellowship with Him, we must give Him our complete love and obedience. And finally, we need to live ready for the return of Christ. We have experienced the forgiveness of our sins and God is now helping us to live victoriously, but when He returns, we shall receive the completion of our salvation—we shall be in His presence.

### QUESTION 2

According to Jude, why do these false teachers follow their natural instincts (verse 19)?

## III. JUDE GIVES ALL GLORY TO GOD (Jude 24-25)

Our lesson closes with the most well-known verses of the book of Jude. We often hear a preacher utter these words of benediction at the end of the church service, because these are really wonderful words. They should bless, comfort, and assure us that God is Sovereign (in control and never out of control of His universe); He keeps His promises.

### **Giving God Praises (verses 24-25)**

*24-25. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless be-fore the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.*

Throughout his brief book, Jude warned us against deceitful people that are right in our churches. They may be quite charismatic and very intellectual, so it may be very difficult to recognize that they are trying to lead us astray. But these verses assure us that God is able to keep us from falling. When we walk alongside our God, He will keep us from slipping into sin, whether it is moral sin or the sin of unbelief.

The Old Testament tells us that only a blameless sacrifice is acceptable to God, and God, through His grace, can make us acceptable to Him (Genesis 4:3-7; Malachi 1:6-8). And Jude tells us we will come into His presence with "great joy" (Jude 24, NLT). Whenever we read about anyone in the presence of God, they become terribly aware of their own sinfulness, which happened to Isaiah (6:5) and Peter (Luke 5:8). But because of the work of Jesus on the Cross for us, we will be filled with joy in His presence. Jude ends with glory-filled praise to God, our Savior. We praise Him for His glory, majesty, and power, for He has existed from before all time and will continue forever.

### **QUESTION 3**

In dealing with false teachers, what is God able to do for believers (Jude 24)?

### **BIBLE APPLICATION**

**AIM:** That you will study God's Word daily and live by it.

### **Believers Should Defend the Faith**

In some Scriptures, people in the church are urged to reconcile with one another, but this is not what Jude is advocating in today's lesson. Instead Jude tells believers to defend the faith against some of the people within the church, who are causing problem in the Faith Community because of their false doctrine and teaching. In our key verses (Jude 22, 23), Jude tells believers to show mercy to some and to rescue them. By being a daily student of God's Word and letting His Holy Spirit lead and guide us, we should be able to tell the difference between the people who are infiltrating the church and those who are merely wavering in their faith. In verse 24, Jude reassures all believers that our God is One who can keep us from falling under false doctrine and teaching and can present us faultless (sinless) before the presence of His own glory with exceeding joy. Not only is Jesus our Savior, but He is wise and because He is who He is, we should declare in our praises that He will have, "glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever" (verse 25).

### **STUDENTS' RESPONSES**

**AIM:** That you will always stand against false teachings.

Some people, for whatever reason, cause problems within their communities. What can

be done to resolve community problems? Jude reminds readers to contend for the faith entrusted to them, and to hold tight to their belief in Jesus Christ. Thus, believers should always stand against false teachings by knowing God's inerrant Word and standing on His inerrant Word.

### **Prayer**

Lord, thank You for Your Son, Jesus Christ and Your inerrant Word. Please send us teachers who know Your Word, live by Your Word, and teach it correctly. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.