

Jude #1 Ch. 1:1-4 Introduction

by Chuck Missler

The book of Jude is a timely message about apostasy, or the falling away from the faith, and its significance for the end times.

Duration: 1:18:03

Scripture: Deuteronomy 4:2, Matthew 6:33, 2 Thessalonians 2:3, Revelation 22:18, Revelation 22:20-21

Topics: "Jude"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the book of Jude and its purpose. He explains that Jude had to write this book because there were false teachers infiltrating the church. These false teachers were turning the grace of God into lasciviousness and denying the Lord Jesus Christ. The preacher also provides an outline of the book, highlighting that it begins and ends with assurance for the Christian.

Transcript

As you may have heard or may know, we're going to undertake a study of the Epistle by Jude. I have wanted to do this book for a long time, frankly, out of mischief. There is so much spooky, weird stuff in the... how in 25 verses you could cram so many mysteries and enigmas and stuff fascinates me.

But the real reason I'm taking it on, suggesting we dig into this, is because as I really understand the Epistle, it's written for us today. It's a very, very unusual book with a very, very timely message. The Acts of the Apostles was the beginning of the church.

Jude is the Acts of the Apostates. It's written for the end times, for the end of the church era. And so it's an interesting book in terms of its allusions.

We're going to go to the dawn of human history. We're going to be going all the way through Eden, through the ancient, early stages of Israel's history. We'll be talking about princes and prophets, of saints and sinners.

We'll be talking everything from the eternal fires to the everlasting darkness and strange ways that you probably have not seen in the scripture, unless you're a very diligent student, about past judgments of strange beings and future glory. We're going to travel in the unseen world and see and deal with angels that apparently got involved in some bizarre happenings. We're going to, that's going to take us, of course, into Genesis 6. It's going to take us into, well, some really creepy areas.

This is really a Halloween series, I suspect. We're also going to study a dispute between the archangel Michael and the former cherub that covereth, a guy by the name of Satan, and how they disputed of all bizarre things over the body of Moses. Jude flips that off like you all knew what he was talking about.

And I used to believe that you couldn't really deal with the book of Jude without getting into the Apocrypha. There's a book called the Book of Enoch, in fact, there's several of them, and there's the Assumption of Moses and a bunch of strange books, and we'll deal with that when we get there. So the study of Jude is going to take us into some strange traffic.

Now, the other irony of the book of Jude, fascinating as it is, it's neglected. How many of you have been to a Bible study in the book of Jude? You know, I've been a Christian for, you have, okay, good. I've been a Christian for a long time and have not been to a study per se of the folks in the book of Jude.

It's also interesting as I study the commentaries, you can get 25 volume sets of commentaries that have maybe three pages on the book of Jude. You can go through some of the most venerated commentaries, and it's amazing how little they have on this very, very unusual book. So it's, all that having been said, it's a book of some substantial neglect.

Now, you know my style, we generally go at a chapter a week, and that would, you know, so I have threatened to, yeah, I've threatened to make this a verse a week. It won't be quite that bad, but we're not going to finish. I'll give you, first you can relax, we're not going to complete the book of Jude tonight.

It's a one chapter book of 25 verses. We're not going to, we'll do more than a verse tonight, but probably not a lot better. Okay.

The epistle of Jude. First of all, why take the book of Jude? Well, I mentioned a couple of things. The beginning of the church you might call the Acts of the Apostles.

A subtitle to Jude might be the Acts of the Apostates. We're going to talk about what apostasy is, how it happened in the past, and how we can anticipate prophetically the great apostasy before the Lord, just before the Lord comes. In fact, the Lord poses the rhetorical question, when the Lord returns, will he find faith on the earth? We'll talk about that.

We're also, one reason the book seemed particularly timely, there is a specific heresy that's emerging throughout the body of Christ. It's happening in the charismatic movement. It's happening in the fundamentalist movement.

It's happening in the apologetic level and at the grassroots level. It is involving some of the most distinguished leadership in America, and secretly. Many of the leaders in the so-called Christian church in America secretly espouse a doctrine that is not only a heresy, but may be laying the very philosophical foundation for the Great Tribulation.

And we'll talk about that. The timeliness of this and what's going on is one of the motives in undertaking this book at this time. We're going to study a book that has a message for you and I personally, and a book that has a message, I believe, to the believing body, uniquely to the era that we live in right now.

And so those are assertions to challenge you. Those of you that are taking notes, I will, of course, indulge what probably is becoming my trademark. In the upper right-hand corner of your notepad, put Acts 17.11. It'll never be more important than in this series.

Acts 17.11 is essentially where Luke tells you not to believe anything Chuck Nistler tells you, but to search the scriptures daily to prove whether those things are so. Jude, by the way, is the only book that's devoted virtually entirely to the subject of apostasy. And in Luke 18.8, Jesus says, Shall the Son of Man find faith on the earth? A very interesting rhetorical question.

We might just pause here and take a look a little. We talk about apostasy. Apostasy, it's a word that gets kicked around a bit.

Let's look at a couple, not a lot, but a few of these critical passages. Turn with 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. It's very hard to hit some of these references without spending an evening on them because there's so much background that's so visible. But the particular verse I would like to focus on, there's chapter 2, 2 Thessalonians 2 is a classic chapter among students of prophecy because it's full of all kinds of insights.

Some of them quite technical. I'll try to sidestep those for tonight and just focus on verse 3 where Paul tells the Thessalonians, Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come except there come a falling away, an apostasy first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition. And then he goes on and talks about the Antichrist in a lot of ways.

And I'm using the term Antichrist in a colloquial sense. You sophisticated students know that that's not one of his titles. He has 50 titles.

That ain't one of them, but it's the one everybody uses, so you know who I mean. But the main point is, an apostasy precedes the end times. It sets the stage for this leader to emerge.

So 2 Thessalonians 2 is a key passage. I won't derail our study in Jude to get into that more tonight, but for those of you that are diligent, you can dig out your notes and background on 2 Thessalonians 2 and both the preceding and subsequent events that surround the lie and the man of sin and so on. Let's take some more practical focus on this.

Turn to 1 Timothy 4. Just turn to your right a little bit, a few pages, and you'll come to 1 Timothy chapter 4. Paul is writing a practical letter to his buddy, equipping him for the ministry. And 1 Timothy 4, And from here, you can go on and do a whole study of false doctrine. False doctrine is not just superstition.

It is not just deviations from the truth. It's not just any of a lot of things. It's engineered deception by the host of darkness himself.

Doctrines of demons. That phrase comes out of 1 Timothy 4. One, you can go on from there. I won't take that.

I'm just trying to give you just some high points to get a flavor of this. Turn to 2 Timothy 4, verse 3, And what's really fascinating is when someone rejects the truth of Jesus Christ, the stuff they turn to, the most bizarre things. But again, I don't want to derail here.

The unwillingness to endure sound doctrine is another characteristic of what this whole area of apostasy, and let's also turn, and I just sort of highlight, quick survey. Some of this is really by way of review. 2 Peter 2. Let's first of all take 2 Peter 2, chapter 2, verse 1. Apostle Peter says, but there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you.

Who secretly shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. Bringing in damnable heresies. Let's talk about some of those that go on.

Chapter 3 of that same letter. 2 Peter chapter 3. Let's pick verses 3 and 4. Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation. Now by the way, this may seem strange, because on the one hand, the characteristic of these false teachers is they're going to cast doubt about the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Part of the viewpoint or doctrine of this is saying, where is the promise of his coming? It's a skeptical rhetorical question about denying the second coming. Their argument here doesn't seem linked at first blush at all. He says, for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.

What's not obvious by the sentence is there's a link here in a doubt of creation with the second coming. What does the second coming got to do with evolution and so forth? And it's this whole idea, this disparagement of the idea that there is a God, who on the one hand created the universe in the first place, and secondly intervenes in its history by returning and involving himself. And one of the fascinating links, it's not obvious, but it's worth your consideration, is to recognize that a faith in the creation is linked to a faith in prophecy.

And it has to do with uniformitarianism. It has to do with the recognition that there is a creator who has a purpose and an involvement in your life as well as mine. And that's the whole idea behind God's purpose in the first place and his willingness and interest and involvement in interfering in man's history, in intervening and in fact intruding, none other than his son, on a very special mission.

And one in which he will again intrude upon history by returning and so forth. So the whole idea of second coming is related to the Genesis 1 is related to Revelation 22. It's all linked.

Okay, so Jude, by the way, we've just seen Peter here. We're going to discover the epistle of Jude has a close relationship to the Peter's letters in several ways, and we'll come to that when the time comes. But it's probably most of all parallel to James.

The epistle of James, the epistle of Jude have some very bizarre parallels. James essentially deals with good works as evidence of faith. James is often misunderstood.

James emphasizes works, not a faith by works, but an evidence of your faith by your work. So James emphasizes good works as an evidence of saving faith. Jude structures this letter to point out that evil works are evidence of apostasy or false faith.

And so there's an interesting parallel. One reason it's also parallel, which may have nothing to do with anything, is that they were brothers. So we'll get to that in a minute too.

Jude is in many respects the vestibule of the book of Revelation. Jude comes just before the Revelation, and it turns out for lots of reasons. Structurally, that's very handy.

It sets the stage, if you will, for the book of Revelation. Jude will be fun for us as we get into it, is because it gives us an excuse to peek in the dark corners of the book of the Old Testament. Jude makes all kinds of offhand references to things he assumes you know, and that causes us to scramble for our concordances

and what have you to find out what on earth he's talking about.

So that'll be kind of fun. One other thing before we get into the book itself, I'd like to give you an outline. And this is one of those times that I almost wish I was using a viewgraph, but I got away from that years ago because it forces me to put more on the tape.

So I want to give you an outline. I'm going to try to describe how to do this, is I'm going to give you about six indentations and then come back out. So you'll go, in other words, we're going to go, we're going to have 11 lines.

There's 11 parts to the book of Jude, but structurally, it's quite interesting. If you can make 11 lines, the first and the last line is the assurance for the Christian. It opens with assurance for the Christian and it closes with assurance for the Christian.

That's no surprise. He's going to talk about apostasy, but he's going to talk to you people, not the apostates. So one thing he wants to do is give you assurance, both up front at the end.

The second section, from the beginning, is the same idea as the second from the end, the believer and the faith. So your second and tenth, in other words, the second one from the front and the second one from the back, the title would be the believer and the faith. The third from the front end is apostates described, and the third from the back end is apostates described.

The fourth subject, so to speak, and I'll go over this again and give you verses, is apostasy in Old Testament history. The fourth from the end is apostasy in Old Testament prophecy. The fifth section or part is apostasy in the supernatural realm, and the fifth from the end is apostasy in the natural realm, and the middle section is a trio, a very select trio of apostates that he focuses on.

So to go once again, we're going to go six down and then back in. The first one is assurance for the Christian. That's verses one and two.

The second section is the believer and the faith, verse three. The third part is apostates described, verse four. The next section is apostasy in Old Testament history, and that's verses five through eight.

That'll be quite an interesting survey. The next section is apostasy in the supernatural realm, verses nine and ten. That's the spooky stuff.

Then we have verse eleven, which is sort of the fulcrum for the whole structure here, an ancient trio of apostates. The next section, apostasy in the natural realm, verses twelve and thirteen. Apostasy in Old Testament prophecy, verses fourteen through sixteen.

Apostates described, verses seventeen through nineteen. The believer and the faith, verses twenty through twenty-three. And assurance for the Christian, verses twenty-four and twenty-five.

What fascinates me about that, there's lots of outlines. You can take any book and find, you know, seven authors will have seven different outlines. But this one kind of intrigues me because it shows that there's an underlying structure to this book that's really quite provocative.

Okay, so so much for that. That gives us our twenty-five verse thing. So at this point, we're ready to jump in the book.

So usually I spend the first eighty minutes or the first ninety minutes in ancient history and diagrams, old kings and stuff. We never get into the verse. We have to, we've got, this is pretty good.

And just in hardly any time at all, we're in verse one. The first word is the word Jude. Okay? Did you notice that? Why are you laughing, right? The name Jude in the Greek is Judas.

Here's a book about apostasy whose name happens to be synonymous with traitor. It's interesting, you know, we call our kids Samuel, Paul, Peter, John, Matthew. How many of you named your kids Judas? That's a little, you know, Jude and Judas was a very common name in Christ's day.

There's four or five of them in the New Testament alone. And yet because of one, by the name of Iscariot, the name has gotten sort of tainted. It's not a popular thing.

You know, you name your dog, you name your kids Peter, Paul, and so on. You can name your dog Nero, Caesar. You don't even name your dog Judas, I don't think.

The only pet that I know whose name is Judas, I happen to have the opportunity in my consulting days to survey the largest meatpacking operation in South Dakota, John Morrell Meat Company. I was fascinated to discover there really is a goat when they get ready to, they have these cattle to go up the ramp into the slaughterhouse. There's a goat that leads them up.

The goat turns right, they turn left. It's a Judas goat. And you hear that expression.

There really is, in today's modern culture, part of the operation of a slaughter operation, meatpacking plant, is a Judas goat. But other than that, I don't think we use the name normally, except as an idiom for being a traitor. So it's interesting that the book of Jude, I'm not trying to disparage the particular writer, don't misunderstand me.

But I think the Holy Spirit does in fact, more often than not, indulge in puns. Not for humor, but for a message. When we, in the Old Testament, read the book of Joshua, the name Yehoshua is the Hebrew for Jesus.

And when you realize that there's a name in the Old Testament, a book of the Old Testament whose name, in effect, is a namesake of our Lord, it causes our attention. And all kinds of things surface from that as we look at that sort of thing. And so on.

So the fact that here's a book about apostasy, which happens to carry the name Judas, is provocative. Jude, the bondservant of Jesus Christ. Now, most of you as students of Scripture understand that what a doulos is in the Greek, a bonds slave, a slave for life.

Now incidentally, we're going to discover shortly, well I'll get ahead, we believe that Jude here was the brother of James, both of which were the brothers of the Lord. I'll come to that in a minute, we'll get into that. But it's interesting, he does not use that link as an identity.

He's not that presumptuous. If we understand it right, the four brothers of Jesus Christ didn't believe in him until after the resurrection. This is, we don't believe this is the Jude that's listed in the Apostles.

Different Jude. Different James. James was the head of the church in Jerusalem.

James and Jude were brothers. They were linked to the family of Jesus Christ. Some feel they were actual brothers.

Some feel they may have been stepbrothers from a former marriage. There's all kinds of, I won't get into that here because the language isn't that clear, but we do, he links himself obviously then thus to James. It's interesting that Jude says, Jude, the bondservant of Jesus Christ, and this book sits just before the book of Revelation, and to get what I'm after, turn the page, and let's refresh our memories as to the first verse of the book of Revelation.

First of all, let me reemphasize, it's a singular word. It's amazing how many ministers I even hear on the radio speak of revelations, plural. It's not, it's a singular.

It's not a collection of revelations. It's a singular revelation. The first sentence, the revelation of Jesus Christ.

That's it. The singular revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him. Unto whom? To Jesus Christ.

Revelation seems a little strange in its style. It's because the father talking to the son, but which God gave unto him. For what purpose? To show unto his dualos, his servants, things which must shortly come to pass.

So the revelation is written to whom? To the Judes, to you and I, to the extent that we're in his shoes. Jude, the servant, the dualos, the bond slave of Jesus Christ. And that's what the book of Revelation is all about, is a very, very final, climactic appendage to the scripture to inform the servants.

Okay. Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, the brother of James. Now, this is a great departure to go from here.

We go into 17 hours of background on the four different Jameses we find in the gospel, so I'll spare you all that. The brother of James, who is the head of the church in Jerusalem. Remember that he shows up prominently when they have this dispute that gets resolved, and you can chase that down on your leisure.

He's also the author of the epistle of James, also in the scripture, and there are some interesting structural parallels between James and Jude. And he is recorded in Galatians chapter 1, verse 19, as the Lord's brother. Now, I personally think he was the Lord's brother, but I should share with you candidly, there are some scholars who believe that the term is broader than a direct brother, as you and I would use it.

And so it's not tightly conclusive. But for lots of reasons, not the least of which, you might want to take a look at either Matthew 13, 55, or Mark 6, 3. They're pretty much similar. Let's take Mark 6, 3, because it does include one other interesting little thing.

Mark chapter 6, verse 3, it says, verse 2, it says, from where hath this man these things? And what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that giveth such mighty works as are wrought by his hand? This is the crowd sort of responding here. And verse 3, is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joseph and of Judas and of Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him. That was the response.

Now, I won't get into Mark and the whole situation here, but incidental to this passage, it lists four brothers and some sisters. And some people, especially of Catholic background, have a real hang-up with that.

Well, I'm not here to beat it to death.

And there are some, you know, competent scholars who, and Jesus goes on and says, a prophet is not without honor, except in his own country and among his own kindred. In any case, though, we believe that, well, first of all, this James was the head of the church in Jerusalem. And there was a brother by the name of Judas, or Jude.

This Jude is the writer who identifies himself as the brother of James. And to the readership, who is James, the head of the church in Jerusalem, the Lord's brother? Okay, so that's why I don't think there's a big mystery. We don't need to beat it to death.

We'll just keep moving on. And if you study John chapter 7, verse 5, you'll come to the conclusion that the brothers did not believe in him until after the resurrection. And so it was after the resurrection of Jesus Christ that they seemed to grasp who he really was.

And certainly, James and Jude, at least, became active for his gospel. James very distinguished, and Jude, obviously, the author of this epistle, and so on. So it's interesting that neither one of them were numbered among the twelve.

That James, James the last, all of those are different cast of characters, to the best of our understanding. Next, we're going to check our equipment before we plunge into the book. Let's finish verse 1. It says, in the King James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ and called.

This is verse 1, okay? There are three concepts here, and the order depends on your translation. They're called, beloved, and kept, okay? Incidentally, there's a trinity there. There's a calling, there's a loving, and there's a keeping.

Who calls you? The Father. Through whose love are you? For God so loved the world that he, etc., gave his only Son. So the love you associate with Jesus Christ, you can.

And who preserves, keeps you? The Holy Spirit. So it's interesting, and you can look at that several different ways, but basically there is a trinity of ideas there. Let's first of all take this word, called.

I'm assuming all of you in this room, I'm going to operate on the presumption that all of you are diligent students of the word, and I'm assuming that the very fact that you're hearing my voice, whether it's on tape or here in the room, says that God is calling you. But Jesus says, I have chosen you, you have not chosen me. That's John 15, 16, and John 6, 65, to mention but a couple of the places that idea shows up.

You don't choose him, he chooses you. 2 Thessalonians, again in chapter 2, the chapter we just looked at, we won't take the time now, but verses 13 and 14 points out that God hath from the beginning chosen you. When were you, you were chosen by God, you didn't choose him, he chose you.

When did he choose you? There's so many places to deal with this, I'm going to pick my favorite one, rather than all these others, I'll allude to those, but I'll pick the one that I'll enjoy the best, which is Romans 8. So make pause here, and you'll discover five verbs in Romans 8. Romans chapter 8 is a chapter you should have tabbed, if your life is as hectic as mine, you refer to it frequently to see that it's still there. We all know verse 28, if you don't, you should memorize it, it'll see you through a lot of difficulties. For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are thee called according to his purpose.

There's that concept of calling. But Paul goes on in verse 29 on to elaborate a structure. For whom he did foreknow, he did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called. Whom he called, them he also justified. Whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Five steps. Foreknown, predestined, called, justified, glorified. That happens to be the structure of the book of Genesis.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. I missed one. Joseph.

Abraham was, anyway, foreknown and predestinated. Isaac, his seed was called. If he can justify Jacob, he can justify anybody.

And of course in Joseph comes the glorification as a type of Christ. So Paul has in mind here a structure, if you will, apparently of the book of Genesis as an aside. Now, if you're foreknown and predestinated and called, is he faithful and just to finish what he starts? You bet.

So justification, glorification are the steps that continue. So having said that, let's get back to notice what Jude is saying here is that, okay, you're called. We've talked about that.

Also, you're beloved. And I'm dealing here from the authorized rather than the King James, but the word is beloved. And who are they beloved? The church.

You can find John 14, 23, John 16, 27, John 17, 20, and 23. Who are they beloved? Let's take a look. Well, let's just, this is too important.

Let's hold our finger here and turn to John 14 and understand who, to whom Jude is writing and what we mean by the beloved. John 14, verse 23. If a man loved me, he will keep my words and my father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.

Turn over to John 16. A couple of pages. We'll just hit a couple of these to get the flavor of it.

John 16, verse 27. For the father himself loveth you because ye have loved me and have believed that I came out from God. Interesting ideas that are linked there.

God loves you, right? Because you have loved me. See, it's ellipsical. It's reflexive.

Okay, turn with me to John 17. This is the high, this is the high, the high ground. John 17.

Intimate prayer between the father, between the son to the father. He's praying for his disciples. It's awfully hard just to select a piece of this, but let's pick over verse 20.

Jesus saying to the father, neither pray I for these alone, but for them who also who shall believe on me through their word. So Jesus here, John 17, this intimate prayer between Jesus and the father. It's the most intimate prayer that you'll find between Jesus and the father in the scripture.

John 17. And he's praying for you. Your name is in verse 20.

And skipping on down here, or just keeping on verse 20, verse 21, that they all may be one as thou father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me in the glory which thou gavest me. I have given them that they may be one even as we are one. And I in them and thou in me that they may be made perfect in one.

And that the world may know that thou has sent me and hast loved them as thou hast loved me. That's a lot of love. The love that you and I share is the love that the father has for the son.

By the time you're through with this, you get the sense that they're very, very inseparable. This whole chapter is worth your reading. If you're ever in a meditative mood and don't know where else to go, plunge into John 17 and read the prayer, this dialogue, if you will, between the father and the son.

Or primarily it's Jesus' words to the father, but it's clearly a reflexive, fabulous area. Beloved. We're going to see shortly that the letter of Jude is written not to the unbeliever, but to you and I, and the beloved.

Okay, called beloved, the third verb or category or attribute here is kept. And this is strange because this is the only salutation in any epistle in the New Testament that has this word in the salutation. Kept.

The word in the Greek implies watchful care, close attention. It's a present possession. It actually means continually kept.

Okay, the same word is used in Acts 12 and 25 of Peter and Paul's imprisonment. The verb in the structure is that they were kept, they're confined, they're preserved. The same word is used in 1 Peter 1 of our heavenly inheritance.

I don't think our heavenly inheritance is very vulnerable. That's the term that's used here. Okay, we're kept.

Now, the same word we're going to find out in verse 6 in this epistle is used of the fallen angels who are kept, who kept not their first estate. So whatever is binding them, you know, they are kept. Okay, and the same word is used in the book of Revelation to the church in Philadelphia.

He will keep us from the hour of trial, right? That word keep, preserve, so forth. Now, we're also, by the way, now that's his side of it. He keeps us, right? Before we're through with this epistle, we're going to discover we have to keep ourselves.

Verse 21, we're going to discover we have to keep ourselves in the love of God, whatever that means. We'll talk about that when we get to verse 21. We are to be kept blameless unto the coming of our Lord and Savior.

That's in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. So those are all ideas that are embodied here in this word kept. So we've done really well so far. We've gotten through verse 1, okay? Okay, so we're called, loved, and kept.

That's the category. Then he goes on to give his benediction or his salutation. He says, mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied.

Now, you students of the Pauline letters are probably surprised. We're so used to what? Grace and peace, right? This is mercy, right? It's interesting that this letter on apostasy speaks of mercy rather than grace. They're very close cousins.

We want both. We desperately need both. What's the difference between grace and mercy? Most of you know grace is getting something that you don't deserve, right? Mercy is not getting that which you do.

Mercy is not getting that which you do deserve. Grace is getting that which you don't deserve. So they're both very desirable.

Mercy implies failure on the part of its object. You and I need God's mercy because of our failure. We welcome his grace because that gives us that to which we're not entitled.

Unmerited favor is one glib definition. Mercy is not getting that which we do deserve. Now, why is it mercy rather than grace? Because it suits the message.

It's interesting how the Holy Spirit in the very subtleties of the styling of the letter anticipates the central message of the epistle. The epistle is written by a guy who changed his mind. We're going to discover in the next verse that he sat down to write something quite straightforward and was constrained, was pressured, was forced to write something totally different.

Jude is taken over, but the subtleties are already showing up earlier of the messages coming. Mercy rather than grace. Now, here we could get into an easy digression about the law and grace and between works and faith and so forth.

Wherever we have the law, we have death. Numbers 15 verses 32 through 36 is an example. A guy collects some in the Sabbath day and he's put to death.

God commands that under Moses. He was teaching them that you break the law, the answer comes crisply. The law speaks of death.

The law speaks of failure. James 2.10 and lots of other verses that we've talked about. Okay.

Works trips leads to the same chambers of horrors. Galatians chapter 5 details the results of works. Verses 5, 19 through 21.

And again, in the interest of time, we won't digress with all of these things. God's grace is the antithesis of that. Rather than digress too much on that, let's take the second word.

Mercy we've talked about. Peace. We talk a lot about peace.

How do we have peace? Romans 5.1. We have peace with God through whom? Lord Jesus Christ. Exactly. There is no peace for the wicked, Isaiah 57 tells us.

The whole ideal is to worry about nothing, pray about everything, and give thanks for anything. That's Philippians 4.6, crudely summarized. Worry about nothing, pray about everything, and give thanks for anything.

Authority for that is Philippians 4, verses 6 and 7. Be anxious for nothing. Do you know to worry is a sin? I worry a lot. I'm a big sinner.

I got a lot of anxiety. It's all unbelief. My wife and I pray a lot about that.

I'm worrying less and less because he's just taking over more and more, and I wish I'd learned that a long time ago. They don't pay me by the hour, they pay me by the ulcer. But he sees us through, and what's

interesting, he sees us through never early, always at the last minute, because he's got to get us to the point where we finally give up and realize it's all in his hands.

And when we do that, he comes through and fixes things, and you'd wonder why don't we ever learn and just stop worrying, and we pray about everything, and then whatever happens, we give thanks and so forth. So that's what it's all about. Philippians 4, 6. Okay.

Mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied. Now love shows up in the first three verses of this epistle, so I assume it's important. It's our badge of identity.

John 13 tells us that that's how men are to recognize us as Christians, that we love one another. It's also interesting that it's the lack of love that goes from Philadelphia to Laodicea and the seven churches. Those of you that are students of the seven letters, seven churches, and understand that's a chronology of church history, understand that Philadelphia, brotherly love, gives rise to, what's the next one? Anyway, it's when Laodicea comes down, we've got problems.

Okay. Something else that's worth studying is Ephesians of the seven letters, seven churches. The church at Ephesus was commended that they were very rigorous and straightforward on their doctrine.

However, what did they lose? Their first love. Very good. Right.

And we study what happened to the church at Ephesus. Paul, John both warned them what was coming. They obviously didn't hear because their lampstand was removed.

How many of you visited the church at Ephesus? Okay. Incidentally, these elements here also show up in verses 20 and 21. So the structure of the epistle will be preserved, but we'll take that on when we get there.

But that's interesting. Okay. So we've got mercy, peace, and love.

Mercy is upward. Peace is inward. And love is outward.

So there's something very structurally fundamental going on here. In the interest of getting at least another verse or two, we'll keep moving. We could spend more time on this, but with an experienced, sophisticated group like yourselves, I'm covering very, very familiar ground.

So we'll move on. We get to verse 3 and we discover a strange thing. First question is, to whom is the epistle written? It's very important when you read these epistles to try to understand who is the audience and why was it written, that sort of thing.

This is being written to beloved believers. This is not written to unbelievers. This is not an evangelical piece.

This epistle will have very little meaning to you unless you're born again and abide in Jesus Christ. If you're not in that position, this epistle is going to be strange and boring and unrelated and not mean much. Have very little meaning to those who are not born into the family of God.

First Corinthians 2.14. The natural man receiveth not the things, right, and so forth. Okay. And obviously the word here comes from the verb agapeo, which means to be totally given over to.

Now the structure here is a little hard to unravel. He says, Jude says, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation it was needful for me to write unto you and to exhort you, and he goes on. What the language in the English doesn't get across is what he's really trying to say here.

When I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, that's what he started to do. What he's really saying is, I sat down with all straightforwardness to write you a letter about our common salvation. In other words, we're believers and I was about to write you, I infer that it's probably a letter like Paul used to write.

He'd be away on a trip and he'd write his churches to encourage them and pray for them and, you know, just write about our commons, sometimes include some theological tidbits, but basically one of just encouragement. When I was going to, Jude's saying, beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, in other words, that salvation is common to you and I. That's what he started to do. It was needful for me, that language in the English doesn't carry the intensity of the Greek.

There was a divine compulsion. Something changed Jude's mind as he started to write and he was forced to write what he wrote. The word in the Greek means to compress or to put pressure on.

The word is used in Acts, let me show you how strong a word in the Greek it is. Turn to Acts 17.3. Paul is preaching here, he says, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead. That word must needs is the same compulsion.

How urgent was it for Christ to suffer and die and be born, raised again? Pretty urgent. The word in the Greek is pretty intense. That's the same word used here.

Another place, 1 Corinthians 9.16. Paul is talking about his calling to preach the gospel. Paul says, for though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe unto me if I preach not the gospel. The drive, the compulsion, the pressure for Paul to preach the gospel, something he couldn't do anything else.

That's what he was driven to do. That was the word, you see, that necessity is laid upon me. That's the King James English.

What Jude is saying is, getting back to Jude here, when I gave all diligence to write unto you the common salvation, I was divinely forced, pressured to write to you and exhort you, and then he goes on. This whole letter is one of exhortation. Okay.

Now, I'm going to suggest, obviously, that the use of words is very precise. And my authority on that is 2 Peter 1.21. Shall we hit that? If you haven't marked it, let's turn to 2 Peter. Knowing this first, that the prophecy of the scriptures is, most prophecies of any private interpretation, verse 21, for the prophecy came not at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

And as you know from my own, from the background of these other studies, my own prejudices and other things, that I really believe that every word, every number, every place name in the original is there by engineering of the Holy Spirit, has relevance. If there is such a thing as a New Testament equivalent to the Kabbalah of the old, then that's at least the leaning that I have. So I really believe that these words are not accidental.

They're very, very important. That's the only reason I try to, I'm hitting that hard. In any case, Jude started to write a nice little letter of encouragement, but was compelled to shift gears.

And he says, to exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. And that phrase is going to be the theme that the whole letter deals with. First the word exhort.

Exhort in the Greek is a verb. Do you know what the noun is? Paraclete. Okay.

The noun of that same word, the noun form is the word we use, paraclete, which you all recognize as the comforter, the one that's called alongside to help. The verb of that is the word that's translated exhort. Okay.

Now, to exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith. That's the key to this whole epistle. That's the challenge that you and I are being given by the Holy Spirit, tonight and in this letter.

Now this word contend for the faith, that Greek word means to agonize upon, to contend strenuously in defense of. How are you and I doing that? I appreciate the crowd here tonight. I know that time is just as urgent in your life as it is mine, so you don't give your evening casually.

So coming to these Bible studies is a non-trivial commitment on behalf of your Lord. That's neat. But it's one thing for us to sit comfortably.

It's easy for me to comfortably go and my librarians collect some notes to amaze and confound you on a Monday night. That's one thing. It's quite another for you to, whether you're listening to a tape or on the radio or sitting here to, you know, knock off for a couple hours and take some notes and sort of feel good about it.

That's neat. I'm not knocking that. But is that contending for the faith? See, what the Holy Spirit asks us to do is to contend for the faith.

The word contend there is an active military word. It doesn't say be contentious. That's a different issue.

Now, how can you faithfully follow this exhortation? Well, let me give you some ideas of what I'm getting at. You have to draw a sword and go find a hill to conquer. That's the easy part.

Let me give you some examples. Do you strengthen the hand of the faithful pastors you know? Here in this congregation, we're uniquely blessed in the country. Anything you do to strengthen his hand, and I don't mean whether it's an offering or other kinds of support or personal support, that's contending for the faith.

Supporting those that are faithful. Revelation chapter 3, verse 2, strengthen the things, etc., which remain. The other thing you can do, the obvious thing you do, is an unflinching witness.

You got an opportunity to witness, but you witness not just by guts and strength, but by preparation. The very fact you're here tonight is preparing you for a witness. And as you find issues that the Holy Spirit leads you to dig into, dig into some books, some background, being equipped to give reason to every man that asketh you of the hope that is within you, but with all meekness and fear.

Something else you can do, and that's withhold support from those who are off track, who compromise or deny the whole counsel of God. There are a lot of ministries around that should be shut down. The Lord

would love to shut them down, but there's people that get in the way.

You need to be discriminating. You need to understand when you support something, what are the doctrines that are central to that? And are they ones that are biblically supported? Do you speak out against the preaching of another gospel? Proverbs 19, 27, Galatians, lots of things about that. It's interesting if we, you might turn with me to Nehemiah, Nehemiah chapter four.

Did you know that Nehemiah had something to say to you tonight? Okay. Yeah. The first question is, where's Nehemiah? The way you find out is go in front of the book, find the table of contents quickly.

And that's why you need Pharisees, Pharisee tabs in your Bible. I didn't have to go to Nehemiah, but the bookstore asked me to see. No, I'm kidding.

Okay. Nehemiah, and I want, let's see, chapter four. And we're talking here about building the wall.

Remember after the regathering after Babylon, they're coming back, they're rebuilding the wall. But verses 17 and 18 are kind of interesting. And I'm going to infer that that's the way we should live.

It says, and they who built the wall and who bore burdens, burdened themselves, every one of his hands wrought in the work. And with the other hand did what? Held a weapon. They were building this wall under conditions of adversity.

So they had a tool in one hand and a weapon in the other. Verse 18, for the builders, every one had a sword girded by his side and so built it. And he who sounded the trumpet was by me and so forth.

I'm going to suggest to you, that's the job you and I have. There's no work that we can do. And I don't care whether you're trading international securities or doing mergers and acquisitions or engineering high technology stuff or something more prosaic.

I'm just drawing upon my own horizon at the moment. Whatever you're doing, I'm going to suggest to you that there's appropriate to have a sword girded by your side. What sword am I talking about? The word of God.

Right. If General David Jones, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is a believer and can have a sword by his side, he's General of the Air Force. I don't know many General Air Force have a sword girded on them, but he does.

And so it's kind of interesting. So anyway, the point is, you have a weapon along with whatever other tools God has put in your hands to fight the battle with. Okay, that's the first exhortation, is to contend earnestly.

For what? The gospel? Salvation? That's not the word he uses. Faith. And boy, here we could have an exam with 20 questions on it and we'd be lucky to answer two right.

I thought I knew what the faith was until I started digging into this. The word faith is a more inclusive term than salvation or gospel. And the Holy Spirit didn't use the term salvation or gospel here.

He used a much broader term. And I'm going to just mention a few things to you to sort of suggest a few things. But there's actually 18 references that you could quickly come up with with things.

What's all the faith about? You can get your own concordance and do that. But let's just look at a couple of places. Let's look at 2 Corinthians 13.5. 2 Corinthians chapter 13.

And this is when these neat little passages would scare you when you think about it. Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 13 verse 5, examine yourselves whether you are in the faith. Oh boy.

Examine yourselves. Are you in the faith? Gee, I thought so. Prove yourselves.

Know ye not yourselves how Jesus Christ is in you unless you're discredited. And he goes on and talks about that. What about this faith? We are to examine ourselves to be sure we're in the faith.

What do we know about the faith? First of all, it's a mystery. What faith really was was not revealed prior to the New Testament. What are we getting at? 1 Timothy 3.9. We just pop back quickly into 1 Timothy chapter 3. In his discussions of qualifications and so forth through the ministry, he says to Timothy in chapter 3 verse 9, he says, holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.

The word mystery there is *mysterion* in the Greek. It means something was hidden up till now but I'm now revealing. So there's something about faith that's not really obvious.

It's not a glib, easy thing. Faith is more than belief. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved in your house.

Great. I can believe that that chair will hold my weight. I don't have faith in it until I rely on it.

Faith has to do with not just believing but relying on that belief. We just read in 1 Timothy 4.1, since we're on this page, I'll call your attention to it again just a little over. Now the Spirit speak expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith and give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons.

Faith is something that is going to depart from the earth in the last days in some broad way. That's why the epistle to Jude is such a last days issue. Apostasy is going to be not something that just happens the last days.

It's going to characterize the last days. As long as 1 Timothy, turn to 1 Timothy 5 verse 8. Faith involves duty to others. 1 Timothy 5.8. But if any provide not for his own, especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith which is worse than an infidel.

Hey guys, did you know that you had an obligation to provide for your families? You sort of knew that. I mean you read the book of Proverbs and your wife reminds you of that. But 1 Timothy 5.8 is kind of heavy.

If any provide not for his own, especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith. That's kind of heavy. Remember that girls when your husband's worried about trying to put bread on the table.

That's not materialism. It's his compliance with 1 Timothy 5.8. It's an act of faith. He needs to provide for his own.

That's an injunction from God himself. It shows up lots of places, but this is perhaps the heavy one. Because if you don't do it, you're worse than an infidel.

Faithful teaching establishes the church in faith. We know that from Acts 16.5. And all believers are instructed to stand fast and continue in faith. 1 Corinthians 16.13, Acts 14.22. I don't think we need to take

the time to chase those down.

Those are pretty self-evident instructions in the epistles. Okay. A couple of other things though about this issue of apostasy.

Any claim of additional revelation outside the Bible is evidence of apostasy. What's my authority? Deuteronomy 4.2 and Revelation 22.18. Just to give you a couple. Let's turn to the Torah.

I like this because we're familiar with this in Revelation. Let's look at that in a minute. Those are the bracketing ones.

There's dozens of verses like this, but I'll take the earlier one and the last one. Deuteronomy, the Torah, the Pentateuch. Chapter 4, verse 2. God says, He shall not add to the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish anything from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

That's typical of many, many passages in Scripture. It occurs obviously in the Torah, as I've mentioned just here. And let's go to the other end of the book.

Revelation chapter 22. Verse 18 of 22 speaks specifically of the book of Revelation, but I don't think it's, I think it'd be pretty argumentative to try to argue that it doesn't apply to the Bible as a whole. Let's read verse 18 of chapter 22 in the book of Revelation.

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of this prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and out of the holy city and from the things which are written in this book. You want to add anything or subtract anything? I don't think so.

I don't think so. Now, what that really says is that somebody that tries to add to the truths of God, or subtract from them, has got a heavy problem. But in the generic that we're dealing with, we're talking about apostasy.

Now, all this gives rise to an issue that, for lack of a better word, I'll call combat faith. Hal Lindsey just published a book called Combat Faith, which deals with this issue too. But the whole idea is that your faith is not just a passive, private, invisible thing that you that's neat around the dining room table when you have a family night with your family.

Faith isn't just something in the quiet hours of the morning when you read your allotted three chapters a day or whatever program you've set for yourself. Faith is a combatant thing, and your passage for that is Ephesians 6. You know, it's interesting, in our home we have kind of a large entrance and a library, and right between it, the styling lends itself to a suit of armor. And because of the house we some time ago acquired a suit of armor, it stands there by the door.

And people come to our house and, what's that thing, you know, and well, that's Ephesians 6. And if they're a Christian, they know right away what we mean. If they're not, it gives us an excuse to go and say, you know, put on the whole armor of God, and feet shod to the preparation of the gospel of peace, and so forth. So Ephesians says, in the interest of time I won't get into the details, but those of you that are familiar with it, it'd be well to review Ephesians 6, that you put on the whole armor of God.

And that's both defensive and offensive. That's so that you can withstand the combat that is destined for you, and at the same time you can be an active warrior for the faith. And so that's not bad.

We got through three verses, and to set a record, we'll, we got one more. We'll go through verse four. I think we can make it, and that way we won't be lagging around here for, okay.

Now the question I'm going to ask then, getting back to Jude, verse four, is why did Jude have to write the book? We know to whom it's written. We know the Holy Spirit diverted his original purpose to another purpose. What is the purpose? Why is this necessary? Because of verse four, there are tares among the wheat.

That's what verse four says. Verse four, 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. Three marks of an apostate that we'll get into.

But the first thing, this is the reason, it's because of verse four that the letter had to be written. It's because of verse four that the Holy Spirit admonishes us, exhorts us, to contend earnestly for the faith. Why? Because there are subversives in our midst.

Now you all know the story of the tares and the wheat. If you don't, you can refresh your memory in Matthew 13, verses 24 through 30. We won't take the time tonight.

In the kingdom parables of Matthew 13, we have the same symbols used in several of the parables. The sower goes to sow seed. What is a seed? The word of God.

In one of those parables, second parable, at night when no one is around, an enemy came and sowed tares, or weeds if you will. Among the thing. So when they sprouted up, they found out not only the good wheat, but there's also weeds, and what do you do? You let them grow until the time of the end.

Then they'll be separated. That's the gist of it. Matthew 13, verses 24 through 30.

So that's the reason, is that there are false brethren that have stolen into the church. Let's turn to Galatians chapter two. There are many, many passages.

You just pick a few here. But Galatians chapter two, verses four and five. Paul writing to Galatians says, and that because of false brethren, unawares brought in, who came in secretly to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.

To whom we give place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. And he goes on. Okay, now as saints, are you in peril? Apparently.

Let's take a look at 2 Corinthians chapter 11. Paul is here talking about perils. And he lists a bunch of these for a purpose in his argument here, which I won't get into right now.

But he just says, in journeyings often, verse 26, in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils of the city, in perils of the wilderness, in perils in the sea. You know, Paul's life, he was accident prone, you know. I'm saying that facetiously, of course.

But he was indeed a man that was buffeted by many things. But you notice the last one he lists here. In perils among false brethren.

Okay, so perils come from all shapes and sizes. And he goes on to talk about this, and I won't belabor it. Okay, saints can be in peril.

And particularly in the latter times. And this is, again, my references there would include things like the 1 Timothy 4.1 passage, doctrines of demons and so forth. That's going to get increasingly relevant.

Now, the warnings of this were written as early as the earliest dawn of history. None other than the earliest prophet you probably can imagine, Enoch, who was the father of Methuselah. Whose child was a prophecy of the flood.

Warns of these things. And Jude is going to take that up. I won't take it up tonight because we're going to get into that stuff.

It's going to be kind of fun. Verses 14 and 15 in the book of Jude. Okay, so the next question is, what is an apostate? As we get into all this, and here we can go to another parable, the peril of the sower and the seed.

We don't know the sower and the seed where he has good ground and rocky ground and so forth. What most people don't do is study the words there. It's interesting that the rocky ground, in Luke 8.13, the rocky ground receives the word.

The word is dekomai, receives the word, but it has no root. The seed that falls on the good ground, the Greek word is paradekomai, it not just receives it, it welcomes it. There's a different kind of reception going on.

The one leads to roots and fruit and good results. The others don't understand the word. It does not bring forth fruit.

This is all in Matthew 13, verse 23 is an example. We're going to discover that those, and later on we get verse 12 of the epistle, we're going to discover that they were without fruit, they're twice dead, and they're plucked up by the roots. And we're going to get into that.

What do you mean twice dead? We'll talk about that when we get to verse 12. That's a little bit ahead of us here. Now this concept of apostasy that we're dealing with is not simply indifference or error or even getting tangled up with a heresy.

The concept of apostasy is actually a rejection of the truth of God. People that received light but not life. People that have the written word but not the living word in them.

And the examples we're going to discover obviously include Judas Iscariot. We don't have, it's not mentioned in the epistle, but that's an obvious example of the extreme apostate. But the three that are going to be mentioned, this thing climaxes up in verse 11, will be Cain, Balaam, and Korah.

And we'll deal with that when we get there. But those, the earliest apostate is Cain, Cain and Abel. What's really going on there? We're going to start there.

And what is Balaam all about? This strange character that surfaced in the book of Numbers that is featured so prominently in the book of Revelation. We'll talk about Balaam a bit. And of course Korah, which, you know, discovers what, how God enforces his authority in some interesting ways.

Now what manner of men are these? These are men that creep in privately, privately, secretly. They settle down alongside false teachers that bring indomitable heresies. And we saw that in 2 Peter 2, 1 earlier.

There are three identifiers of these apostates. They're ungodly, whatever that means. They pervert the grace of God into lasciviousness.

And they deny our Lord and Savior. Those are the three identifiers. And by the way, those three identifiers fit the three that are going to climax the epistle in verse 11.

Cain of ungodliness, Balaam in perverting the grace of God, and Korah denying God's appointed leader at that time. So there's a parallelism of the three that are chosen with these three identifying characteristics that the Holy Spirit lays out for us. We use the term ungodly.

What do we really mean? Someone's destitute of a reverential awe of God. That's what being ungodly means. It doesn't have to be a militant atheist to be ungodly.

It's just somebody who does not have a reverential attitude of awe toward God. Look around at our society. You don't have to be guilty of pornographic films on cable TV to be ungodly.

All you have to do is be a secular humanist who doesn't really acknowledge or recognize the existence of God operative in our lives. We're ungodly. It can be someone, according to 2 Timothy 3.5, who has the form but denies the power of God.

It's Romans 1.16. It's someone who denies the gospel of Christ. That's easy. Someone in Philippians 3.10, someone that denies the transforming power of new life.

In other words, someone could be ungodly if he isn't embracing the essential truths of God. Now, the interesting thing from several Old Testament references is the heart, not the outward appearances, that's the key. It's not the appearance of Godliness.

It's where are they at, really? Now, let me give you an example of something that appears pleasant and rational. We hear a lot about the brotherhood of man. All men are brothers.

Isn't that a pleasant, easy idea? Very comfortable, very popular. The brotherhood of man. How many apparently worthwhile charities and efforts are under that manner? The only problem with that is, well, there's several problems with it.

In John chapter 8, verse 44, Jesus Christ speaks, speaking to part of the crowd, the pharisaical part of the crowd, ye are of your father the devil, and the works of your father ye will do. Remember that? Turn with me to John 8. I love John 8, because it's so tactful. And it's so tactful.

John 8 is kind of fun, because when you get down to about verse 19, there's a little dialogue going on with Jesus Christ and the Pharisees, and in the politeness of the King James, you miss it. In verse 18, Jesus said, I am the one that beareth witness of myself, the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. And then they say to him, where is thy father? Now, what you miss is the implied snide crack.

They're calling him a bastard. They're alluding to his illegitimate, illegitimacy vis-a-vis Joseph and Mary. Jesus just answers, you know neither me nor my father, and he goes on.

And this builds up, so that before the chapter is over, he gives them, he doesn't defend his legitimacy, but he comments on theirs. And this all builds up pretty neat, because it gets to verse 44, where it says, ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning.

And who did he murder? Adam, you bet. The first murder wasn't Cain and Abel. The first murder was Satan's murdering of Adam by getting Adam to become mortal, in effect.

Well, not in truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it. And he goes on here, and so forth.

And I love the way it ends, where he claims to be the voice in the burning bush. He says, you know, Abraham rejoiced to see my day. Verse 56, your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.

The Jew said unto him, well, you're not yet fifty years old. How can you say you've seen Abraham? Jesus said, verily I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am. And he's using the very structure that the voice in the burning bush said to Moses.

And that's really the I am statement. The Gospel of John is built around seven I am statements by Jesus Christ. Now, you and I missed that, but they didn't, because in verse 59 they tried to stone him.

They understood that that was what he was saying. Anyway, universal brotherhood of man. It's interesting to me that, first of all, we need to understand that all men are not brothers.

There are members in the family of God, and there are members that are not. And that sounds bigoted, it sounds narrow, but that's what God tells us. And that's, the brotherhood of man sounds appealing, but it denies the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It's very interesting to me that in Europe there's a confederation of nations. We call it the Common Market, more properly called the European Community. You may know they have a parliament, they have a budget, they have things.

Did you know they have a national anthem? You didn't know that. Did you know what the national anthem of the European Community is? Schiller's Ode to Joy, under Beethoven's Ninth. The next time you get a chance to read a libretto of Beethoven's, it's that fabulous music.

We sometimes, we have a hymn that goes to the same music, you know. All the mentioned brooder. All men are brothers.

Schiller's Ode to Joy. It's an eloquent exclamation of the brotherhood of man. How interesting it is that this federation of nations that comprise the original Roman Empire are emerging as a confederation, built on world trade, as Revelation 17 and 18 suggest, and may be a precursor to a lot of other interesting things.

It's interesting that their national anthem is the brotherhood of man. So I thought I'd share it that way. Moving on.

Ungodly is the first part of apostasy. The second is it perverts the grace of God and lasciviousness. It's not hard for us to visualize how someone can pervert Ephesians 2, 8, and 9. By the grace of God we are saved, so therefore we have liberty in Christ, therefore it's anything we do is all right.

And how easy it is to use the liberty of Christ to be turned into lasciviousness. What does the grace of Jesus Christ call the Christian to really do? Turn to Titus 2. Nothing else will break open your Bibles and turn to pages you may not even turn to yet. Titus chapter 2. Let's talk about the grace of God.

You know we talked a lot in our studies about the difference between grace and works and so forth. Great. Grace is our liberty in Christ.

But what should that lead to? What should that freedom in Christ lead to? Freedom from the law. Freedom from works. Reliance entirely on Jesus Christ completed work on the cross.

What does that lead to? Titus tells us in chapter 2 verse 11 and 12. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts. We should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age, and looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

And he goes on. What do we mean by perverting the grace of God? Well, number one, a Christian walk is constructive, but also I might suggest that the rejection of the word of God occurs whenever it's displaced by tradition, custom, loyalty to some other organization. Very worthwhile things.

Very attractive things. When they displace the primacy of the word of God in your life, that's perverting the grace of God. Interesting, isn't it? Tradition, custom, creed, loyalty to an organization, you name it.

Anything that gets in the way, anything that yields your loyalty to something other than his word is dangerous. I know. I've been loyal to a lot of things that cause me a lot of introspection now.

There's only one thing you and I want to be primarily loyal to, and that's his word. Ungodly perverts the grace of God. The third thing, the obvious thing, is that the apostate denies our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ.

There are four ideas embodied in this denial, our only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. And if you redissect that, you discover there's four items in there. One is his sovereignty, pre-existent creator of all things.

We'll go into Colossians and elsewhere to establish that. Secondly, he is the Lord of all true believers. The name Jesus refers to Jehovah the Savior, our martyr substitute, he who died for us.

His role as our Savior. That's different than being our Lord. He can be your Savior, but is he really the Lord of your life? That's the whole thing I'll leave you with.

And of course, Christ is a title, the Mashiach of Israel, the Messiah, the appointed one of the Old Testament prophecy. And obviously, if we deny him, he'll deny us, and there's plenty of verses on that. Matthew 10, 33, 2 Timothy 2, 12, 1 John 2, 22 and 23, to name a few, where if we deny him, he will in fact deny us.

First four verses of Jude we've completed. Next time, we'll obviously pick it up at verse five. Let me give you your homework assignments.

It'll be a quiz. Numbers 14. You might find it interesting to look at Numbers 14 and find the answered prayer.

What happened to Israel in the wilderness is extremely important. We know that from the amount of New Testament epistles who focus on it. So in addition to Numbers 14, which you might find fruitful to read before next time, you might turn to 1 Corinthians 10, the first 12 verses, which deals with all of this.

And if you've still got some time to dig Hebrews chapter 3 and chapter 4, deal with this. The lessons of Israel in the wilderness as they pertain to you and I, in terms of our faithfulness. Those of you that are really ambitious and want to prepare for what probably won't occur next time, but might, but more than likely maybe the time following, would be, I suggest when we get to Jude 6, you'll want to read Genesis chapter 6. First few verses.

Second Peter chapter 2. You might also want to review the origin and career and ambitions and destiny of Satan in terms of Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. Because we're going to get into the creepy stuff as we go into that stuff. Let's stand for a closing word of prayer.

Jude's going to be fun. A lot of stuff in it. But the central issue, the central issue is apostasy.

The central issue for you and I is are we contending earnestly for the faith? Are you contending earnestly for the faith? When you find a ministry you find responsive, do you support it? With a letter of encouragement or an offering, if the Lord leads you that way. Whether it's a church you attend, a fellowship that has a need, a broadcast, whatever. That's one of the ways.

Can you support the ministries that are true to the whole counsel of God? You speak out when you see a challenge to God's truth or the role and ministry and completed work of Jesus Christ. The challenge that the Lord would have for all of us tonight and as we go through this epistle is are we and how are we faithfully, agonizingly, contending for the faith? Let's bow our hearts. Father, we praise you that you have indeed called us to be your own.

We thank you, Father, that you have loved us so much as to give us our Lord and Savior. We also thank you, Father, that you have pledged to keep us in your forever family. We would ask you, Father, to just help us to grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We would ask you, Father, to make us more sensitive, more aware of the ways that we should indeed be earnestly contending for the faith. We would ask you, Father, to help us prepare for those unique ministries you have for each and every one of us forthcoming. We'd ask you, Father, to increase in us a hunger for your word and increasing sensitivity to those things that will equip us for the warfare ahead.

In all these things, Father, we would ask that you would feed us, encourage us, strengthen us, that we indeed might be more effective monslaves of Jesus Christ, that we might be more pleasing in thy sight. O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer.

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