

The Letter of Jude:-

Verses 1 – 4 - Identification, Greeting and Purpose:-

The Epistle is declared to be written by “*Jude the servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James*”, see Matthew chapter 13, verse 55 and Mark chapter 6, verse 3. It was a general letter to members of the Christian churches – “*the called who are beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ*”. A beautiful description of Christian Believers which in itself is a great encouragement, giving an assurance of the love and protection given to them by God the Father; see the Gospel of John chapter 10, verses 27 – 30.

Notice that it is “*the faith once for all delivered to the saints*”. The salvation which we share is that preached by the first apostles and recorded in scripture. The difficulty is that changes to belief and doctrine are most easily done by those already in positions of influence. (See also the warning of Paul in 2 Corinthians chapter 11, verses 13 – 14).

Verses 5 – 16 – Warnings against false teachers:-

A reminder that some of those rescued from slavery in Egypt did not reach the Promised Land. They were disobedient and were cut off from the promise held out to them. The same warning can be found in other Letters to individuals and churches – for example see 2 Timothy chapter 3, verses 1 – 9; fallen angels also await the inevitable judgement. Jude uses the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah as examples of “*unrestricted and unnatural sexual vice*” (literal translation from the Greek), which were punished by total destruction. This rejection of authority was both earthly (of the flesh) and spiritual. There is a complete lack of understanding of spiritual realities (“*the glorious ones*” = ‘the angelic host’ both good and evil?). The quote about the archangel Michael comes from the Apocrypha and confirms that it is the angelic host which is referred to. The troublemakers revile things which they do not understand and boast of things that are common to “irrational animals”.

In all that the troublemakers do there is no fruit of the Gospel.

The list of unfruitful conditions in verses 12 – 13 are important. Remember our Lord Jesus Christ said “*by their fruits you shall know them*” - Matthew chapter 7, verses 15 – 20.

Jude verses 14 – 15 are also from apocryphal literature. These quotes from non-canonical sources led to this Letter of Jude being left out of some early collections of the New Testament. However these verses can be affirmed from other New Testament sources – e.g. Matthew 24, verses 29 – 31.

Verses 17 – 23 – encouragement for Believers:-

Another brief warning that there will be mockers and scoffers making fun of the faithful. Notice that the ultimate reason for wanting to ignore sound doctrine is that they will be “*following their own desires for ungodly things*” (verse 18). Even in the early days of Christianity there were those who caused divisions by wanting to embrace worldly culture, those who did not have the Holy Spirit.

In contrast the true believers are encouraged to “*pray in the Holy Spirit*” (verse 20), “*keeping in the love of God and waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ with a view to eternal life*” (verse 21).

We are exhorted to “*convince doubters*” and to deal very carefully with hardened sinners taking care that we too do not fall away.

Verses 24 – 25- Benediction:-

We are reminded of the infinite resource of God Himself. He will perfect the work of sanctification in the believer so that we will be able to stand before Him in glory. The final words are testimony to the gracious character of God who wrought our salvation through Christ our Lord.