

A Challenge from Jude

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 20 January 2008

Preacher: Octave Bourgeois

[0:00] Jude 1. Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James,! To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ,! Mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance.

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered His people out of Egypt but later destroyed those who did not believe.

And the angels, who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home, these He has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great day.

[1:20] In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority, and slander celestial beings. But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, The Lord rebuke you.

Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals.

These are the very things that destroy them. Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain. They have rushed for profit into Balaam's heir. They have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.

These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm, shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind, autumn trees without fruit, and uprooted, twice dead.

[2:49] They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame and wandering stars for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men, See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones, to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

These men are grumblers and fault finders. They follow their own evil desires. They boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.

But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.

These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts, and do not have the Spirit.

But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith, and pray in the Holy Spirit.

Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. Be merciful to those who doubt. Snatch others from the fire and save them.

[4:22] To others show mercy mixed with fear, hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh. To Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy.

To the only God, our Savior, be glory, majesty, power, and authority before all ages, now, and forevermore. Amen.

Amen. Amen. I want to again thank you for this opportunity to be with you. As you know, I'll be preaching from the book of Jude, and I see most of you have your Bible open to Jude. I would imagine that maybe you would anticipate a sermon on missions, but no, I'd prefer to preach out of the book of Jude. I've been studying it and leading a small home group for a while, and so I wanted to speak from Jude.

And although I'm not going to speak about missions, I have thought a lot about missions, in particular Turkey, while studying Jude and preparing this sermon. As you know, Turkey is biblical Asia Minor, and that the ancient cities of Turkey where Paul established churches are mentioned in the book of Acts.

[5:41] As well also, the book of Revelation has addresses to seven churches which were in cities in Turkey, and in fact, Izmir, where I'll be going, is the biblical city Smyrna.

It appears that the Lord has moved the lampstands of the churches in Turkey. That doesn't mean that there are no churches there. It means that these churches have lost their preeminence and their influence both in society and in Christianity at large.

And the reason that I've thought about Turkey while studying Jude is because the churches in Turkey did not prosper in impressive measures from their inception until today.

It doesn't appear that they continually multiplied by walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit. And in a sense, it appears that they did not hear and obey Jude's exhortation.

I'll be preaching and my thoughts are, my structure of my sermon is taken from New King James translation and I understand that you read, the majority of you read NIV.

[6:56] So, at the beginning I'd like to address five things that are related to translations that I need you to understand. If you would look first in verse 20 and 21, it reads in the NIV, but you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.

Verse 21, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. I want to point out to you that the main verb in these two verses is the verb keep. It's the imperative in the Greek. Jude is saying and commanding his recipients to keep themselves in God's love. Okay? Now, this main verb is supported by three participles and usually in English when we use a verb in its participle form we add I and G to it.

And the reason I'm pointing this out is that your translation that you're commonly used the NIV in this case is not adding the I and G to it making it a participle. What I'm referring to in verse 20 where Jude writes but you dear friends build yourselves that word build is a participle it should it would be better translated building yourselves up.

Okay? And then also if you were to continue in verse 20 when Jude says to pray in the Holy Spirit it would be a preferred translation to say praying in the Holy Spirit.

[8:30] And then in verse 21 where Jude says to keep yourselves in the love of God as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ it would be preferable to translate wait waiting.

So what's happening here is Jude is giving a command to keep yourself in God's love and these participles are telling you how to keep yourself in God's love. Building yourself up on your most holy faith is a reference to the scriptures the faith delivered to the saints praying in the Holy Spirit is another way we keep ourselves in God's love and then waiting or looking watching for the Lord Jesus' return.

So these are the supporting participles. So when I'm preaching along I'm going to use them as participles. Okay? Another point I want to bring out is that Jude translates in verse 21 to keep yourselves in God's love and that's actually a very good translation.

In some other translations it says keep yourselves in the love of God. And so you can ask yourself okay I'm going to keep myself in the love of God. Does that mean I keep myself in God's love for me or do I keep myself in my love for God?

NIV translates as well here keep yourself in God's love for you. Now the reason I want to point that out I'm going to get in my sermon I'm going to get to a point where I'm going to take a little time and maybe be a little laborious to explain that from your perception you're going to say why are you spending time?

[9:54] My translation has it right. Well good your translation does have it right. Well actually the Greek has some ambiguity you can go both ways. I will argue the way NIV has it translated.

Okay. Fourthly in verses 22 and 23 it reads be merciful to those who doubt snatch others from the fire and save them to others show mercy mixed with fear hating even the clothing stained by

corrupted flesh.

Now in your translation here you have three groups identified be merciful to those who doubt is one group verse 23 snatch others from the fire is a second group and then thirdly to others show mercy. Okay. My translation only has two groups. Okay. And the text there is complex in the Greek and it's really hard to recover the actual translation. The point we're going to use or the point we're going to get to where we're reaching or we're going to try to get to is that there are different groups in the body of Christ who have been influenced by false teachers.

One translation says there's three different groups other translation has two. I'm working with one that says two and what you need to understand is that when you get to verse 23 my translation says to save some snatching them from the fire where your translation says snatch others from the fire and save them.

[11:22] Okay. My translation simply says saving saves them saves some by snatching them from the fire and then a parallel thought is hating even the clothing stained.

So simply my translation is taking the last two groups and treating them as one. We're to have evangelistic endeavors and we're to save we're to snatch them from fire and we're to hate even the garments their garments defiled by flesh.

Okay. One more thing. Verse 3. Verse 3 is the purpose statement of the book of Jude. He tells us why he's writing. Okay.

He's writing to have these the recipients contend earnestly For the faith. Verse 4 is the historical context of the book. Why is he telling them?

Why is he writing? Well he tells them in verse 4 that certain men have crept into the church. So that's the historical background. Now in verse 4 it's also a summary statement of their nature and their condemnation and I want to point that out because the summary statement of verse 4 which is the historical setting is also the introduction for verse 5 through 16.

[12:39] Verses 5 through 16 Paul, Jude is unfolding what he means in verse 4. Okay. And all of that section has to deal with the certain judgment upon the wicked these certain ungodly men who have crept in to the church.

And in this section verses 5 through 16 the apex of it is verse 11 and I praise God the pastor emphasized it verse 11 woe to them is a pronouncement of certain judgment upon the ungodly. my objective is simple I want to direct you in your Christian duties as defined by the book of Jude and I want simply to assist you to observe and to understand the big picture found in the book of Jude so in a sense this is an introductory sermon an overview of the book of Jude which would serve well as an introductory sermon to someone who would want to come back and do several sermons in the book of Jude and I hope that by giving you the big picture that God would come in our presence and that God would help us and create in us this sense of urgency that Jude is trying to create in us or that actually Jude possesses for himself and we should have and also this motivation that Jude is trying to give to the church that they would take this motivation this biblical motivation and fulfill their Christian duties so I would appreciate that as you're listening with me and as you're reading the text that you'd be praying pray that the spirit of God comes help me in my reading

Lord help me in my hearing so I can hear the voice of Christ to the church when I am reading and preaching through the text I'm just going to refer to some verses and I'll continue to move on I won't say a certain verse and I won't stop and read it but I hope that you'll be able to look at the verse when I reference it and scan it or skim it and listen to me as I continue okay so do that prayerfully and hopefully the Lord will edify you and instruct you I've organized my thoughts into three main headings the first heading is the urgent but not unexpected situation the urgent but not unexpected situation the second heading heading is the elaboration of condemnation as motivation the elaboration of condemnation as motivation and the third heading is the nature and disciplines of contending the nature and disciplines of contending now very simply stated under my first heading I'll address the personal urgency that we're praying the Holy Spirit would create in us under the second heading I'll address the biblical motivation for which we're praying the Holy Spirit would move us and then thirdly in the third heading I'll address the disciplines of the duties which we are commanded to fulfill now as I preach I will not announce these headings I'll just continue to preach the text and hopefully you can remember them you'll be able to identify them in the text or in the sermon as I'm preaching if you listen carefully so would you join with me in prayer Father we thank you again for this hour to sit before you this hour of your people coming to hear your voice Christ

and to worship and to be instructed by you and so we're praying that you would grant unction of the Holy Spirit to the speaker that the speaker the preacher may decrease that Christ may increase that your children your church your bride would hear your voice and be conformed more to your image [16:27] Father we pray give us the Holy Spirit creating us this urgency that Jude had and this motivation that you're trying to motivate us with and Lord mostly give us understanding to know what our duties are and the empowerment of the Spirit to fulfill them we pray these things in your name amen if you were here this morning I referenced a roommate who had introduced me to the scriptures into an evangelical church well I didn't tell you that a couple of years later I learned from him personally and directly that he was not walking with the Lord also when I was a young Christian a member of my first church there was an elder there was a wife of an elder and she had a testimony which had a sad and a painful account of how she was led to Christ by the sterling testimony of a biological brother who later apostatized in her eyes for very watching well I believe that that the good shepherd has provided for us in the book of

Jude instruction to protect us from stumbling over such shocking discoveries the book of Jude is a letter to the people of God which serves as a reassuring pronouncement of certain judgment on the wicked and it also serves to protect us from disillusionment now what I mean by disillusionment I'm referring to the unsettled the misdirected in the unfocused conditions which may be associated with the observation of an acquaintance who's apostatizing so let's learn from Jude Jude's urgency is due to the present danger Jude tells us in verse 3 that an urgent situation has influenced the content of the letter which his readers have in their hands he says that he initially wanted to write about the common salvation that he shared with his readers but instead he is now writing to exhort them to take action and to fulfill their

Christian duty perhaps Jude initially wanted to inspire some Christian some glorious Christian realities as the apostle Paul did in the book of Ephesians but instead of laying out before them the glorious attainments of our salvation by the father the son and the holy spirit all to their glory Jude keeps his readers minds engaged on what is their current duty in the urgent situation that is before them as important as our words are our actions demonstrate our true loyalties and so Jude as a faithful bond servant to the Lord Jesus Christ ceased to write on his initial theme it was a theme to which he tells us that he was diligently given however necessity required him to change his theme and by doing so the loyalty of Jude is used by the good shepherd of his soul and our souls to preserve and to record to record and to preserve for us in the canon of scripture a letter that instructs us to be engaged in what is our duty in our culture and in the times in which we live in verse 4

Jude explains the reason for the urgent and the necessary change of theme in this letter certain men have crept in unnoticed into christendom they have worked their way into the warp and the woof of the christian community they feast with us in our love feast according to verse 12 they are labeled by Jude in verse 4 as ungodly men they are antinomian in spirit and libertine in practice and they have nothing to do with the authority of their creator or of his chosen son Jesus and because they are immoral rebellious and a pawn in the hand of Satan active in the dismantling of the house of God Jude begins his description of these men as long ago marked out for this condemnation the situation although urgent wasn't totally unexpected the recipients themselves had received according to verse 3 the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints this means that they were the recipients of the whole counsel of God as preached and taught to them by the apostles of the Lord

Jesus Christ and included in this instruction by the apostles we see according to verse 17 that they were informed that mockers living according to their own ungodly lust would come in the last times so as serious as the situation was and as needed was the shepherd's lifted hand his lifted staff the recipients should not have stumbled because of the presence of these men we are very similar to Jude's audience we are informed by our bible reading and by men who faithfully preach it that men will enter in and men will rise up within christendom to lead us away Jesus taught us to be bewareings of false teachers false prophets beware false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravenous wolves you will know them by their fruits Jesus also taught us by the use of the parable of the tares and the wheat that

[22:03] Christian impostors would mix and mingle with genuine Christians until they were removed at the end of the age Jesus tells us that they the angels will gather out of his kingdom all things that offend tares and those who practice lawlessness tares and will cast them tares into the

furnace of fire there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth then the righteous the wheat will shine forth in the kingdom of their father what we also learn from the apostles as they built upon and they applied the teachings of Christ Paul instructed the elders of Ephesus that after his departure savage wolves would come in among the flock not sparing them and he also said that from among yourselves men will rise up speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after themselves likewise the apostle

Peter he taught that there would be false teachers and false prophets among you who would secretly bring in destructive heresies even denying the Lord who bought them and bring on themselves swift destruction and many will follow their destructive ways because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed by covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words for a long time their judgment has not been idled therefore we should not be caught off guard by the presence of the ungodly Jesus prepared us for false prophets and for tears Paul and Peter prepared us for savage wolves and false teachers and Jude has informed us that they have arrived we certainly we can we do we acknowledge that at the time of Jude's writing these men have already arrived and there have been years of false teachings and libertine practices between Jude's time and ours and we are accustomed to their presence we consider we analyze the errors in our historical theology and our experimental religion courses and it is no longer for us an urgent thing because it is for us an old thing a familiar thing an expected thing so expected that contemporary incarnations of historical heresies at times seem to have no relevance to us but should we be more alarmed in our spirit and more urgent in fulfilling our duties or Jude thinks so in verse 23 he says but others save with fear pulling them out of the fire hating even the garment defiled by flesh the flesh or in your version in NIV snatch others from the fire and save them to others show mercy mixed with fear hating here's my emphasis hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh my emphasis again is on hating the garment even defiled by flesh we should have a proper aversion and loathing to this we should have a feeling of aversion and loathing we can never regard false doctrine and moral pollution as a matter of indifference or of little consequence now what governed what motivated

Jude why did Jude sense and carry the urgency to change his theme the necessity to exhort his readers why did Jude love the brethren and write to them about the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit well he tells us in verse 1 he is Jude a bond servant of the Lord Jesus Christ as a bond servant Jude realized that he was not his own he was bought at a price he was subservient to Christ when challenging oppositions faced him he pleased Christ not men he received the ill treatment of men which in reality were hostilities towards his Lord he worked to secure the interest and the wishes of his Lord he spoke boldly about the things of the kingdom he labored in prayer for the church and he wrote a letter to the church now are not all of us are not all

Christians little be bond servants of Christ yes we are and so is there not a place for us to stand against opposition is there not a place for us to receive ill treatment and to work to secure the interest of Christ can we pray can we speak can we write we have Jude this short book 25 verses and it appears to us not to be new information and that's sort of how we treat the book of Jude and I say that because we find the same material in 2nd Peter chapter 2 and 3 and it also appears to offer us irrelevant teachings about false teachers and the same reasons because we find basically the same material in 2nd Peter and then also though we have this sense of spiritual security we know the truth right we're well grounded we have quality teaching teaching goes bad here well we'll find another option another ministry or another church but beloved as little

B bond servants of Jesus Christ let's add an urgency to the fulfillment of our duties Paul would say it to you this way and do this knowing the time that now is the high time to awake out of sleep for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed the night is the night