[The Holy Spirit said to me,] "I want your heart in the right posture before I begin to unlock scripture to you."
Matthew Hulbert

Prayer Study 483
JUDE
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GENRE: A nonfiction short epistle or letter-We know that this letter was written primarily to Jewish Christians because of Jude's several references to Hebrew history. This letter is very similar to 2nd Peter 2.

AUTHOR: Jude, brother of James [(not the disciple), the author of the book of James and the leader of the Christian church at Jerusalem] and according to Protestants, the half brother of Jesus. Jude is the English form of Judas. There are 6 people in the New Testament named Judas:

a. Judas of Damascus in whose house Paul was praying after his conversion (Acts 9:11)
b. Judas Barsabas, a prophet who with Silas took the decision of the Council of Jerusalem to Antioch that the Church was open to the Gentiles (Acts 15:22, 27-32)
c. Judas Iscariot who betrayed the Lord
d. Judas, not Iscariot, one of the twelve who may have been the son of James (John 14:22)-He was also known as Thaddeus or Lebbeus.
e. Judas of Galilee who stirred up a riot and group of followers shortly after the birth of Christ (Acts 5:37) and was killed

f. Jude the brother of James and the bond slave of Jesus Christ-Jude did not say he was the half brother of Jesus because of humility

The name Judas was popular because of Judas Maccabees, a Jewish priest, who waged war against the Hellenists or Greeks and later the Romans. He was killed in battle but a great martyr and hero to the Jewish people.

James is also a popular name in the New Testament. There was James, the elder brother of John and son of Zebedee (Acts 1:2) and Salome (thought to be a sister of the Virgin Mary) and one of the twelve; James the leader of the Jerusalem Church (Acts 15:13:21, Galatians 2:9) and half brother of Jesus (James 1:1) and brother of Jude (Jude 1:1); and James the Lesser or James the Little, the son of Alphaeus (Matthew 10:3) and one of the twelve. Perhaps he was shorter than James, the brother of John, and the term *the lesser* or more correctly translated *the little* was used to distinguish the two disciples.

Did Jesus have half brothers and sisters? Matthew 13:55-56: *"Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses* (Joseph), *Simon , and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?"*

The Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception says that Mary remained a virgin all of her life and had no other children than Jesus. It is possible that this is true because the word for brother used here is *adelphos* who can mean a biological brother, as it is translated, or an extended

relative or even a spiritual brother. The Catholics also point out that these children are never in scripture called the children of Mary, and finally, there was a position written in 150 AD called the *Protoevangelium of Jesus, which states that Joseph was an elderly widower who had had previous children but did not consummate the marriage between himself and Mary.*

Whether these were biological brothers or sisters or not, there is scriptural evidence that they did not believe in Jesus until after His resurrection. John 7:1-5 reads: *After these things Jesus walked in Galilee, for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. His brother therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." For even His brothers did not believe in Him.*

SETTING: Palestine sometime between AD 65 to AD 80

THEME: Christian believers must vigorously protect Christian truth and strongly oppose heretics who threaten the faith. James Moffett calls Jude "a fiery cross to rouse the churches."

PLOT: Jude writes to those who are "sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ and called" (Jude 1). He warns them against false teachers who had infiltrated the Church and reminds

Christians that the ungodly will be judged.

Jude Amplified Bible (AMP)

The Warnings of History to the Ungodly

1 Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, [writes this letter],
To those who are the called (God's chosen ones, the elect), dearly loved by God the Father, and kept [secure and set apart] for Jesus Christ: 2 May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you [filling your heart with the spiritual well-being and serenity experienced by those who walk closely with God].

Jude identifies himself as a *doulos* or bondslave of Jesus Christ. He reminds us that Christians are called by God, beloved in God, and kept by Christ.

3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I was compelled to write to you [urgently] appealing that you fight strenuously for [the defense of] the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints [the faith that is the sum of Christian belief that was given verbally to believers].

Here we see the hyper-grace movement working in the 1st Century. Certain people had gotten in the Church. These false teachers believed that God's grace gave them the license to practice immorality. Jude had wanted to write a treatise on salvation, much like Paul's letter to the Romans, but he had felt

compelled by the Holy Spirit to write a letter warning the people against apostasy. Apostasy is departure from the faith and from the apostle's doctrine and later a departure from canonized scripture.

The idea in this verse is to rouse Christians to contend or agonize or fight strenuously against apostasy and for genuine Christian beliefs but to do so with love and not contention. One way we can contend for the faith is to pray. Another is to teach or instruct others in the truth (2nd Timothy 2:24-26). Still another is to speak the Truth of the Word in love (Ephesians 4:15). Often these are people who say the right thing but secretly believe another so that they can get rooted in first before pushing their false doctrines.

4 *For certain people have crept in unnoticed [just as if they were sneaking in by a side door]. They are ungodly persons whose condemnation was predicted long ago, for they distort the grace of our God into decadence and immoral freedom [viewing it as an opportunity to do whatever they want], and deny and disown our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.*

Other writers have warned against apostates. Paul eloquently in Acts 20:29-31 writes: "*For I know this, that after my departure, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.*" The word translated *crept in* means *to enter alongside of* or *to come in through the side door*.

Again Paul addresses these pushers of doctrines of

demons: "*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works*" (2nd Corinthians 11:13-15).

Generally these apostates or false teachers major on two themes: 1) They distort and/or deny the grace of God, either expecting their cohorts to excuse any sin or immorality because of the grace of God or they go to the other extreme and believe the laws of the Old Covenant should be strictly enforced today, even though we are under a New Covenant. 2) They deny that Jesus Christ is the only true God.

5 *Now I want to remind you, although you are fully informed once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe [who refused to trust and obey and rely on Him].* ***6*** *And angels who did not keep their own designated place of power, but abandoned their proper dwelling place, [these] He has kept in eternal chains under [the thick gloom of utter] darkness for the judgment of the great day,* ***7*** *just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the adjacent cities, since they in the same way as these angels indulged in gross immoral freedom and unnatural vice and sensual perversity. They are exhibited [in plain sight] as an example in undergoing the punishment of everlasting fire.*

Jude next gives three examples from the Old Testament where those disobedient and apostate

were punished:

a. First, the Israelites, even though they had been brought out of Egypt, were not permitted to enter the Promised Land because of unbelief. The ten spies and all the adult generation had to wander in the wilderness for 38 more years because of their unbelief. Only Caleb and Joshua lived to see the Promised Land.
b. Secondly, the angels had free will and rebelled against God. They left heaven to come down to earth where some cohabitated with human women. One group was so rebellious that God locked them up, putting them in hell in chains of darkness, and the other group became demons under the leadership of Satan.
c. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because the people in these cities were given over to pride and to homosexuality and sodomy.

8 *Nevertheless in the same way, these dreamers [who are dreaming that God will not punish them] also defile the body, and reject [legitimate] authority, and revile and mock angelic majesties.*

Next Jude characterizes the apostate teachers:

a. They are filthy dreamers who live in an unreal world.
b. They defile the flesh.
c. They reject authority.
d. They speak evil of God's angelic hierarchy and power.

9 *But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil (Satan), and arguing about the body of Moses, did not dare bring an abusive*

condemnation against him, but [simply] said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

Michael did not directly rebuke Satan because he did not want to lower himself to Satan's tactics. Clement, one of the early church fathers speaks from an apocryphal writing dealing with the funeral of Moses. Michael was sent to bury the body of Moses, but Satan opposed the burial on the grounds that he was Prince of this World and Master over material and matter, and thus, the body was his. Michael's only reply was, "The Lord, that is the Creator, rebuke thee." Satan also brought the charge of murder against Moses. Perhaps he wanted to hinder the later appearance of Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration.

10 *But these men sneer at anything, which they do not understand; and whatever they do know by [mere] instinct, like unreasoning and irrational beasts —by these things they are destroyed.* ***11*** *Woe to them! For they have gone the [defiant] way of Cain, and for profit they have run headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of [mutinous] Korah.*

Next Jude gives three examples of individual apostates that all the Jews would have recognized:

a. Cain believe in God but did things according to his own will. He denied that he was a sinner in need of redemption and thought he could come to God in his own way.
b. Balaam was in ministry for the money. He had a gift given to him by the Holy Spirit. Yet he

tried to use it to make a buck. We see this exploitation of God's gifts so often today. Ministers are not always wanting money. Sometimes they are seeking for prominence, popularity, attention, fame, position, etc. In Numbers 22-25 we have the story of Balaam. Balak, a king who wanted to destroy Israel, asked the prophet Balaam to put a curse on Israel before the battle. God would not allow Balaam to do this. Because Balaam wanted the money more than he wanted to please God, he devised a plan that would cause Israel to fall. He counseled Balak to send beautiful Moabite women into the camp of the Israelites so that the Israeli men would fornicate with them and allow them to bring in their false religion icons, thus allowing for idolatry. God then sent a plague to Israel but later forgave Israel and allowed Israel to destroy Moab.

c. Korah led a rebellion against Moses in Numbers 16. Korah went against God's designated authority and basically said, "Who does Moses think he is? Does he think he is the only one God can speak to? In reality Moses was a very meek and humble man who did not feel qualified to lead the Israelites out of Egypt to the Promised Land, but God had called him. Korah died for his rebellion.

12 *These men are hidden reefs [elements of great danger to others] in your love feasts when they feast together with you without fear, looking after [only] themselves; [they are like] clouds without water, swept along by the winds; autumn trees without fruit,*

doubly dead, uprooted and lifeless; ***13*** *wild waves of the sea, flinging up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of deep darkness has been reserved forever.*

The hidden reefs wreck ships. Many people's faith has been shipwrecked by an apostate.

The love feasts of the early church were times when the church brought food and had a meal that culminated with a communion service. The apostates were coming to these feasts and were more interested in feeding themselves than in feeding the flock. Like clouds promising but not delivering rain, they look and speak like they are full of the Word and the Spirit but really are empty and dry.

When Jesus warned of apostate teachers, He told us we would know them by their fruits (Matthew 7:20).

Doubly dead is a phrase that Dwight L. Moody capitalized on. He said that when a man is born once, he will have to die twice, but when he is twice born, he will have to die only once.

The apostate teachers stand in the pulpit and tell stories from current events, television or movies, etc., but they don't really interpret the Word of God on any deep level. They follow no real cause. The blackness refers to hell.

14 *It was about these people that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, when he said, "Look, the Lord came with myriads of His holy ones* ***15*** *to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly deeds they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh and cruel things ungodly sinners have spoken against*

*Him.” **16** These people are [habitual] murmurers, griping and complaining, following after their own desires [controlled by passion]; they speak arrogantly, [pretending admiration and] flattering people to gain an advantage.*

This prophecy is not in the Old Testament. Obviously God did not want the book of Enoch put in the Holy Scriptures, but He did want this prophecy from Enoch regarding false teachers of the last days. The Church Fathers in the 2nd Century knew the Book of Enoch, but it was afterwards lost for several centuries. This in 1773 it was found in its entirety. Enoch walked with God and was translated to heaven without dying. He thus is s symbol of those still living believers who will be caught up to meet the Lord when He returns.

Verse 16 gives additional identifications of apostates. They are murmurers, complainers, lustful, arrogant, and men pleasing.

Keep Yourselves in the Love of God

***17** But as for you, beloved, remember the [prophetic] words spoken by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. **18** They used to say to you, “In the last days there will be scoffers, following after their own ungodly passions.” **19** These are the ones who are [agitators] causing divisions—worldly-minded [secular, unspiritual, carnal, merely sensual—unsaved], devoid of the Spirit.*

Believers are warned that apostates would come in the last days.

***20** But you, beloved, build yourselves up on [the foundation of] your most holy faith [continually*

progress, rise like an edifice higher and higher], pray in the Holy Spirit, ***21*** *and keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously and looking forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ [which will bring you] to eternal life.* ***22*** *And have mercy on some, who are doubting;* ***23*** *save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy but with fear, loathing even the clothing spotted and polluted by their shameless immoral freedom.*

Jude tells us what believers must do in the days of apostasy:

a. Build themselves up by studying the Word.
b. Pray in the Holy Spirit.
c. Keep themselves in the love of God, letting His love flood their hearts and life.
d. Expect His return because of His mercy.
e. Have compassion and patience with those who doubt.
f. Don't give up on sinners that are considered hopeless by some.
g. Hate the flesh nature.

24 *Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling or falling into sin, and to present you unblemished [blameless and faultless] in the presence of His glory with triumphant joy and unspeakable delight,* ***25*** *to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and power, before all time and now and forever. Amen.*

This is one of the most well-known and beautiful benedictions in the Bible. Only Jesus can present us to God just as if we had never sinned. He will do so with great joy and delight. To Him belong

glory, majesty, dominion, and power yesterday and today and forever.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Jude is one of the books whose position was always insecure and which was late in gaining full acceptance as part of the New Testament. It was included, however, early. The Muratorian Canon, which dates back to AD 170 included it, but for some reason did not include the books Hebrews and 1st Peter. One of the problems with Jude is Jude quotes as authoritative books which are outside the Old Testament. These books are *The Assumption of Moses* and the *Book of Enoch*. Another problem that scholars have is Jude is similar to 2nd Peter.

Having said all this, I must say that it is my strong opinion that the Holy Spirit allowed in the Canon of Scripture what He wanted in the Bible, and thus, Jude would not be in the Word if it was not God's will.

I also think it is powerful that Jude is placed next to last and next to Revelation in the order of scripture. I believe that it position in the Bible emphasizes that the message of the book is extremely important for the Last Days, and indeed it deals primarily with false teachers who teach deceptive doctrines. Derek Prince said that the greatest enemy of the Church in the Last Days would be deception.

"A leading minister in Washington, D.C., said flatly, 'In our denomination what you call the faith of our fathers' is approaching total extinction. Of course a few of the older ministers still cling to the Bible. But among the younger men, the real leaders of our denomination today, I do not know of a single one who believes in Christ, or any of the things that you classify as fundamentals."