

The Epistle of Jude

Lesson 4

Verse 1: Identifies writer and readers

Verse 3: Purpose of Letter – Contend for the Faith

Verse 2: Greeting/Blessing

Verse 4

For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. (ESV)

For certain individuals slipped in secretly, about whom it was written some time ago that they are condemned. They are ungodly people who turn the grace of our God into a license for sin and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. (EHV)

- This verse provides the reason for Jude’s change of plans in regard to his letter.
- **Crept in** – cf. the nature of false teaching/teachers, wolves in sheep’s clothing **Read:** Matthew 7:15
- **Designated** = “written beforehand and is still standing”
- **Condemnation** = “judgment” mostly in an unfavorable sense

God’s judgment on the type of people whom Jude goes on to describe is clear and of long-standing. Jude will give Old Testament examples in vv. 5-7. **Read:** Hebrews 10:26-31

- **ungodly** = godless, without reverence for God or regard for Him, anything He says or does. This is a theme in Jude and occurs three more times (v. 15 twice, v. 18)
- **pervert the grace of God** = literally: “move the grace of God from one place to another,” that is, change, alter. In other words, what these ungodly people are doing is changing the grace of God into something else entirely.
- **sensuality** = absence of restraint; excess. This combined with the “ungodly” presents an attitude that couldn’t care less about God and the “gas pedal” is to the floor – no limits, no boundaries, no restraint. Often this is translated with a sexual connotation because sinful flesh with no boundaries, no restraints often goes that direction; but it is not limited to sensuality. This proceeds from the heart (Mark 7:22), had been a sin of some in Corinth (2 Corinthians 12:21), is a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:19), is a sin of the regenerate with hard hearts (**Ephesians 4:18-19**; 1 Peter 4:3; 2 Peter 2:18).

False Teaching 1: Change the grace of God.

- False teachers and their destructive efforts are a reality. **Read:** 2 Peter 2:1-3, 12-22 (parallel to this passage); Matthew 13:24-30 (parable of tares and wheat); 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; Titus 1:10-16. (and more passages).
- **Read:** 1 John 4:1-3
- Grace – **Read:** Titus 2:11-15
- Grace changed – **Read:** Galatians 2:3-5; Romans 6:15-18

Grace vs. lawless disregard for God and doing whatever you want to do.

False Teaching 2: Deny Jesus.

- Jude uses four distinct names/titles for Jesus
 - Master (despot), owner
 - Lord – *kyrios/kyrie*, e.g. “Lord have mercy”

When used in sharp distinction, these two words in Greek describe authority but in different contexts. A man was a *despot* in relation to his slaves, but *lord* in relation to his wife and children. Lord implies authority, but one in which the lord takes into consideration the good of those over whom his authority is exercised. The despot exercised more unrestricted power and domination with no such limitation and restraint. The Greeks used *despot* in relation to their gods – they had complete ownership and power over them. Sinners corrupt the unrestricted power of despot and use it for selfish, sinful purposes, and evil. The Christian context of these words emphasizes God’s (in this case Jesus’) ultimate authority, we are His creatures (despot), we are owned by Him (by virtue of creation and redemption); but this is a good ultimate authority, holy, and just. He is also, at the same time, and just as fully our Lord—who wields all authority in heaven and on earth for our blessing.

- Jesus – “Savior,” the personal name
- Christ – “the Anointed One” (Messiah), the official name

Consider and discuss the significance of Jude using all four of these names/titles in identifying Jesus.

- **Denying Jesus** = this is more than just ignoring Him, or passively disagreeing, or casually and lethargically dismissing Him as myth, unimportant. This is active denial: refusing, disdain, repudiating, contradicting.
- **Read:** Matthew 10:32-33; John 5:22-33; 1 John 2:23; 4:1-3

This second false teaching is wide-sweeping. If Jesus is denied, the heart of the Gospel is gone, the Trinity is gone. This Christ denial is the foundation of Islam, Judaism, Bahaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and all non-Christian religions.

Consider

- Harvard Divinity School was founded by Trinitarian Congregationalists. It became Unitarian in 1817 and has never regained its loyalty to Scripture and Christ.
- It is one thing to deny Christ outright. It is another to claim to believe Scripture and confess Christ and then deny it by other teachings and actions.
- Denying the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture is an attack on Jesus' lordship because He rules through His Word.
- Denying virgin birth, miracles, Jesus' substitutionary death, bodily resurrection, promised return... denies Christ and His lordship
- When anyone refuses to submit to the authority of God's Word they are denying Christ's lordship.
 - "I know I'm getting an unscriptural divorce, but I'll do it now and then get forgiveness later."
 - "I know that living together with my boy/girlfriend is adultery, but I go to church to get forgiveness, and that lets me keep doing what I'm doing."
 - "God loves me and wants me to be happy, so I can do this."

Jude warns against false teachers who are promoting two very dangerous things. However, all false teaching is dangerous. Not all false teaching comes from the "ungodly" and not all false teachers actively deny Christ. Yet, *anything* that misrepresents God's truth is an attack on His truth and needs to be corrected. "*A little leaven leavens the whole lump*" (Galatians 5:9).

God calls upon us to never treat false teaching lightly but to address it with His truth.

Jude's Message: Christians wake up! This is serious! Fight for the Faith!