**JUDE (2)**

**September 30, 2020**

**Theological Emphasis**

Jude writes this urgent letter to counter the false teachers that denied the Lordship of Jesus Christ and made a mockery of the grace of God. Jude exhorts the believers to defend the apostolic faith and to recognize that God will ultimately judge the false teachers.

Eschatology

(Study of Last Things or the End of the World)

Jude’s eschatology centers around two points: eschatological judgment and eschatological salvation.

The theme of eschatological salvation is most clearly stated in the appeal in verse 21, in which Jude exhorts his readers to be “looking forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

The term “mercy” was frequently used to identify the hope of eschatological salvation, and the verb “to look forward” is used to express anticipation of that hope.

Jude’s eschatological judgment is a future event similar to the one described in Revelation 6:10: “How long, O Master, the Holy and True One, will you not judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?”

Although it is Christ that is the provider of humanity’s salvation, John Christopher Thomas asserts this verse is referring to Jesus as the one who will open the seal of the judgment referred to in Revelation six. He states, “it appears that the term is used with reference to Jesus in two other NT books (2 Pet. 2.1; Jude 4).”

Amos Yong describes the future fate of those judged and found guilty much like Jude does in verse six when he states: “The traditional doctrine of everlasting punishment is based in part both on Jesus’ reference to hell, ‘where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched’ and on the vision of the Apocalypse that the torments associated with the lake of fire will persist ‘day and night for ever and ever.’”

Jude’s eschatological judgment is also a present event that involves God judging the ungodly that had slipped into the Church at that time.

Soteriology

(The Doctrine of Salvation)

Salvation in Jude is the call to eternal life that can only be found in a relationship with Jesus Christ. Jude gives no other options for the salvation of individuals and, ultimately, the Church.

Dan Wiley states, “Jude’s soteriology…provides the counterbalance to Jude’s proclamation of judgment upon the apostates. All of Jude’s soteriological references, as with most of the NT’s soteriological propositions, are not simply academic fodder for theological debate, but provide comfort and assurance to suffering and persecuted believers. Essentially, Jude’s soteriology is twofold: (1) Jude proclaims the salvation of his readers, and (2) Jude proclaims the doom of the false gospel propagated by the apostates.”

Ecclesiology

(The Study of the Church)

Jude does not address any specific doctrinal issues. The word “church” is never used in Jude. However, Jude makes two important contributions: (1) Jude commissions the church to fight for the faith, and (2) Jude commissions the church to enact specific discipline upon apostates and succumbing church members.”

Worship

(Praise, Adoration, Thanksgiving, and Petition)

Jude’s doxology contained in verses twenty-four and twenty-five is perhaps one of the most beautiful in Scripture. In it, Jude expresses the security the believers have in Christ while at the same time lifting them above the earthly conflict that is invading the church and into the heavenly realm.

Richard Foster states, “If the Lord is to be Lord, worship must have priority in our lives. The first commandment of Jesus is, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength’ (Mark 12:30). The divine priority is worship first, service second.”

Keeping

Throughout his epistle, Jude weaves in the fundamental biblical notion of “keeping.” God has the power to keep—to keep ‘us’ for salvation and to keep “sinners” for punishment.

**Canonical Context**

(The OT and NT books are considered authoritative by the Christian church. “Canon” means “rule”)

Jude is situated between Third John and the Apocalypse. Jude was written to Christians, warning them of both the present and future apostasy that would infiltrate the Church.

Brevard Childs has argued that the canonical role of Jude is to address heresy, “not simply as an historical danger confronting a particular congregation,” but as a theological referent, a phenomenon. But perhaps Jude has a further function, as well as that of an abrasive grain of sand that calls us to preaching that is biblically literate, rhetorically vibrant, and courageously engaged.

**Original Context**

Date

It is difficult to provide an exact date for the book of Jude. Some scholars assert it was written in the mid to late 60’s while modern scholarship dates the book at around 100 CE, noting how verse 17 refers to the teaching of the apostles of Jesus, so as to suggest that the generation of original apostles has passed away.

Authorship

“Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James…” (Jude 1). There has been much scholarly debate over the centuries regarding the authorship of the book of Jude. It is helpful to know that Jude is the English form of the name Judas. Jude states he is the brother of James.

Recipients

Jude does not identify his audience as a specific church or as Jewish or Gentile Christians. We do know the author is writing to those that have been called by God that are under his protection and are awaiting his return.

Earl Richard states, “The letter is written for the faithful readers as warning against treacherous members, as exhortation to adhere to traditional Christian teaching and behavior, and an appeal to help those who are wavering. The addressees are, like the author, fellow combatants for the faith who acknowledge the only God’s assistance as father and savior in this battle for the hearts and minds of their fellow believers.”

**Church Context**

There has been much debate about the placement of Jude in the New Testament Canon throughout Church history.

Part of the difficultly the early church fathers such as Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Eusebius had with Jude was how dependent it was on 1 Enoch and how much of its content came from non-canonical sources. Jude’s inclusion in the canon most likely depended on the assumption in the early church that Jude, the brother of James (and Jesus), really was the author.

**Pentecostal Context**

When one thinks of Pentecostal theology, the book of Jude is most likely not the first place they look for it in the New Testament. However, Jude does have a history of being referred to by Pentecostals—especially the early Pentecostals.

John Christopher Thomas states, “Another example of Pentecostal contextualization may be offered from the book of Jude. In the first place, the importance of Jude is testified to by the fact that Jude 3 (“Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”) was used on the masthead of a publication no less important to Pentecostalism than The Apostolic Faith published by William Seymour in the heyday of the Azusa Street revival. Furthermore, few within the tradition would deny that Jude’s hard-hitting words about false teachers (and their characteristics) find application within a movement that has had to contend with false teachers from the beginning.”

Writing about that time Steve Land states, “Seymour, a humble one-eyed black Holiness preacher who had been Parham’s student, published the first issue of The Apostolic Faith newspaper in 1906. The motto on the masthead of every issue read, ‘Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints—Jude 3.’ The first article announced that Pentecost had come to Los Angeles and that there was a ‘revival of Bible salvation…as in the Book of Acts.’”

Even though Jude mentions the Holy Spirit twice in his epistle, it is often overlooked. Galvin Estrada argues from a Pentecostal perspective:

“The Spirit language within Jude reveals that the community had an impoverished pneumatology. Not only did the community fail to identify that the false teachers were void of the Spirit, but they themselves failed to develop healthy charismatic practices within the community. In total, the letter provides a warning, not solely for those who fail to remember and uphold the apostolic faith, but to those who neglect an active life in the Spirit.”

**Conclusion**

Jude is a book with unanswered questions about its date, recipients, and even its authorship. However, what cannot be questioned is the necessity of being aware of individuals that seek to deceive and lead the people of God astray in the name of God. Jude encourages believers to contend—fight for our faith at the same time they are trying to rescue people from the fires of hell.