

JUDE



Day 342

“Hey Jude”

December 8 - Jude 1-25

O, Happy Day,
Most of us hate conflict, don't we? When tensions run high we prefer to bury our heads in the sand and not listen to the debate. For some of you the word “politics” is taboo. You cannot stand it. You would rather avoid discussions about the latest governmental scandal. Most of us would like the world to be a peaceful place; to heck with all of the strife and wars and tensions. On the other hand, most of us would admit that we enjoy the liberties that were won by those means.

Jesus lived in a world of opposition. His way was not on a rose-petaled path, nor was His journey a walk in the park. He faced opposition and misunderstanding at almost every turn. Even after the crowds had responded to Him and were enjoying the miraculously multiplied loaves and fishes, He knew that they only sought Him for what they could get, and not for the truth. People were fascinated with Him, but sometimes for all the wrong reasons. They gawked at Him in amazement, like a person would stare at a display in an art gallery. They followed Him in the hope that He would do some wonderful work, like spectators at a circus, waiting for the next act. They thought that maybe this man was a benefactor who could make life easier for them. Jesus faced all kinds of tensions.

Jude must have been a thorn in Jesus' side at one time or visa versa. You see, he was one of Jesus' brothers. Imagine growing up in a household where one of your siblings is the Son of God. Jesus wasn't like the other kids. He was much more righteous. I have often

wondered how Jesus' perfection looked when He was a kid. You know, kids will be kids, right?

Well, for whatever reason God decided to leave those details out of the Scriptural account of Jesus' life, and instead re-introduces Jesus at the age of 12. By then the Lord was very aware of His Messianic destiny. Remember when He was in the temple talking with the men about spiritual matters? Though we don't know exactly how they felt, I imagine Jude and the other kids must have thought Jesus was crazy. John says in the gospel that Jesus' siblings did not believe in Him. And if you didn't believe in Him, what other option was there except to think that He had lost His marbles?

By the time this letter is written, however, Jude is a believer. We read in Acts 1 that he was among the 120 who were waiting for the promised Holy Spirit. What brought him to that place is uncertain. That is true of most of us who now believe, isn't it? We were once, at best, skeptical about Jesus Christ. But now we love Him and believe that He is who He said He was, and so we follow where He leads with anticipation that He has good things in store. We once were doubters, full of excuses as to why a decision for Jesus would not be a good idea, but at some point we began to change. We turned to Him and found a Savior, a rescuer from our sin and—oh, happy day—the Lord became real to us. Now we have something of substance to live for and we're ready to do what it takes to make that treasure known.

Verse 3 of this little epistle is key. Jude realized that he would have to warn the church about opposition to their common salvation in Jesus. He mentions these pests at the end of his letter, describing them as dividers who are devoid of the Spirit. Whether the church liked it or not, whether we like it or not, we will have to stand in opposition to all kinds of philosophies and religious quirks that are contrary to sound doctrine. Jude asks us to “earnestly contend” for the faith, to stand up and make a statement for the true Jesus and the true gospel.

Paul said the same thing to the Corinthians: “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ,” (2 Corinthians 11: 2,3; KJV). All of the Bible writers were aware of the corruptive power of unsound doctrine. They condemned any one who brought a teaching that did not reflect the glory of Jesus. They knew that if the corrosion began it could eventually rust out the whole.

I’d be interested to know how many aberrant teachings you have been exposed to over the years. Today, as in the apostles’ day, men and women come along and tout their spiritual wares in the name of Jesus, but their motivation is not to proclaim the true

Jesus. Instead they present a Jesus whom they can use to sell themselves and get fame or money or meaning. Jude wants us to know the real gospel of Jesus and be able to tell a phony if we hear one. This salvation—that which was predicted by the prophets, heralded by John the Baptist, proclaimed and embodied by Jesus Himself and preached by the apostles—is set in stone more firmly than any earthy rock.

Jude also makes it clear that “the faith” was given in its completed form to the church from the first century. It was complete. It did not need clarification or additions. It was all there. And what’s more, this gospel was authoritative, because it was delivered by those who were eyewitnesses to the events that occurred and the words that were spoken.

At the end of Revelation it says that those who tamper with the words will receive the judgments described in the book. Those who believe in later additions to the Bible will argue that the warning in Revelation applies to Revelation alone. But here in Jude we are also warned that the salvation that leads a person into a saving faith in Jesus was once for all given to the church.

Both the believers in Jude’s day and believers today needed to know what they believe and stand firm on those truths.

God’s blessings are signed, sealed and delivered,
Pastor Steve