

# Mercy, Peace And Love

Before the apostle enters fully into the purpose and substance of his epistle he first identifies those to whom he is writing. These are the Lord's elect people whom Jude characterises as *sanctified*, *preserved*, and *called*. Jude prays to God for the enlargement of their blessings and a deepening of their experience of grace. The apostle's desire is that the Lord will multiply mercy, peace and love to His people. By embracing all God's church in his salutation Jude also includes us in this prayer for grace.

## **More than words**

We must never take the introductory comments of the apostles' epistles as words spoken merely to fill space at the start of their message. These introductions and greetings are important and precious prayers which express both spiritual wisdom and pastoral care. We write respectfully, 'Dear Sir' and 'Dear Madam' in formal greetings often without any real feeling of affection. No so with the apostles. Their greetings are sincere expressions of care for the Lord's church and reveal a genuine apostolic burden for our good.

## **Asking in faith**

No doubt Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, remembers the Lord's words, 'Ask and it shall be given you', and His promise, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you'. Jude's words are not a blessing dispensed in his own name or by his own authority. They are a prayer to the Father in the name of Jesus whom he served. A prayer that mercy, peace and love would be granted and multiplied for the good of Christ's redeemed people.

## **All things in order**

As we have seen, Jude's purpose in writing is to warn the church of troublemakers, false prophets and self-serving teachers. He knew the church would need a large helping of grace to withstand the subtle and pernicious attacks of their enemies. It is for this grace he asks. Here we learn an important lesson. The church is indeed sanctified by the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ and called effectually to new life by the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, it requires more of the Father's mercy, more of the Son's peace, more of the Spirit's love during its journey in this world.

## **More grace, please**

Positionally, we are holy and righteous in the sight of God. This is a fact. We have been set apart for His glory and redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Eternally, we are secure in Christ because Christ is personally preserving us. No one can pluck us out of God's hand. In conversion, the Holy Spirit indwells, nourishes and comforts God's elect whom He brings to experience salvation. Yet, as we engage with this world, wrestle against spiritual wickedness and struggle with the weaknesses of our own flesh, the mercy, peace and love of the Triune God is both our daily need and His daily gift to us.

## **A fine example**

Every believer knows the privilege of returning to the Lord, time after time, like a needy child to a loving Father. We come that the blessings of free grace might be multiplied and renewed. On our behalf this is what Jude prays for. His prayer for our help is an effectual request. It also encourages us to ask for such gifts, too, both for ourselves and for one another.

## **Three graces**

Tomorrow we shall look at the nature of the mercy, peace and love God has for us. We shall try to distinguish between these blessings and the particular help each brings to the Lord's people for the needs we face. We shall consider the importance of Jude's prayer for 'multiplied' grace as we face a multiplicity of trials and persecution. We shall remember that the will of the Saviour is not to remove us from this world but to assist us in our journey through it to the world beyond and glory.

## **Burdens shared**

These apostolic epistles are not merely historical documents or doctrinal lessons. They are personal love-letters from the Lord to His Bride. They reassure us of His commitment, concern and provision for all our needs as we press towards

home. We are encouraged when a friend tells us they are praying for us; that they share a little in what we are going through. Let us make Jude's prayer our own, both as recipients and petitioners, to call down the Lord's blessings of mercy, peace and love.

Amen

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