

Thursday, September 26, 2024 • Read Jude v1–4

Questions from the Scripture text: Who wrote this letter (v1)? In what two ways does he describe himself? What three things have happened to his readers? By Whom? In Whom? By/with what three things does he bless them (v2)? With what numerical embellishment? What does he call his readers in v3? How did he feel about writing to them? About what? Why is he writing about something else? What is he exhorting them to do? In what manner? For what faith? Who have done what (v4)? How was this not stopped? What had been determined about them long ago? What sort of men are they? What do they do to the grace of God? What/Whom does this deny? But Who is He and what is His title?

What could be more important than enriching one another in our common salvation? Jude v1–4 looks forward to the second serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these four verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **we must contend earnestly for faith in a Jesus Who is our Master, both as our God and as our King.**

Slaves of Christ. It is urgent that we know Jesus as both our Lord God and our Lord Christ (end of v4). He is our Master according to both of His natures. His Master not only by His divine nature as a divine Person, but also by His office as the Christ. Jude was His half-brother, but as he writes this letter, he emphasizes that he is writing as a bondslave (v1a). Whatever else Jesus is to us, He is Master, and we must obey Him. The grace of God doesn't remove this relationship, but establish it. So, watch out for anyone who (and your own heart which) would "turn the grace of our God into lewdness."

How we came to be so. How did Jude's audience come to be slaves together with him, so that he says, "our" Lord Jesus Christ? There is much that could be said about the divine work here, but in v1b, this New Testament prophet highlights three: called, sanctified, kept.

God the Holy Spirit has done the work of effectual calling in the heart. They became His slaves by an exchange of the character of their mind that occurred when the Spirit called them.

God the Father has consecrated ("sanctified") them. He chose them in the Son before the foundation of the world that they should be holy (cf. Eph 1:4). And, when He carried that plan out in time, He executed what is called "positional" sanctification, counting them holy and set-apart in Christ, and constituting them holy by the new character that the Spirit has given them from Christ.

God the Son has kept ("preserved") them. The Lord Jesus not only purchased them by His blood, but it is He by Whom the Father has poured His Spirit upon them. Even more than this, it is through union with Jesus Christ that they now live this new life, and through union with Him that they can never be lost.

How very important it is, then, that we live as those who have Jesus as our Master! It is by the glorious work of the triune God that we have come to be His slaves!

How we continue to function so. As the prophet begins this letter, he greets his readers with three great gifts that come by the Spirit, from the Father, in the Lord Jesus Christ: mercy, peace, and love (v1c). If we are God's slaves, then we are the blessed recipients of His mercy. Whatever they need, in whatever low condition, those who are bondslaves in Christ's household shall surely have.

And this is because they have peace with God. Their enmity has been put away. They have been reconciled, not only as slaves but as children. Indeed, with the Almighty as their ally, believers can know that the whole of Who and what God is will be exerted at every moment for everything that they need Him to be and to do. This is peace! Nothing can disrupt this condition of God's giving us all thinks for Christ's sake (cf. Rom 8:32) and God's working all things together for good according to the same will in which He has known, predestined, and called us into the state of loving Him (cf. Rom 8:28–30).

Finally, God gives us the experiential component of this peace by His love. It is especially the work of His Spirit to pour out His own love in our hearts (cf. Rom 5:5) and to produce from us the fruit of reciprocal love unto Him (cf. Gal 5:22, 1Jn 4:19).

This is not a letter telling believers to hurry up and resist false teachers in the church by their own zeal and action. Their zeal and action are dependent upon the gifts of God to us in Himself. And the prophet greets his readers with these three of them. You, too, dear reader: may the Lord multiply unto you mercy, peace, and love for your service to Him.

What threatens our relationship to the Lord. Jude's eagerness to write to them concerning our common salvation (v3a) was a good and proper eagerness. So, instead of writing an enriching letter like that, why is he writing a warning letter like this one? Because there are real dangers that threaten professing Christians. And these real dangers demand a vigorous response. The word translated "contend earnestly" (v3b) is a very strong one.

There is no Jesus except the One Who is Master and demands holiness from us. Some have derisively called this teaching, "Lordship salvation," as if we are saved by our following Him as Lord. But Jude calls this teaching, "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." For there is only one true Jesus Christ, and He is the Lord. If we are believing in some other Christ, then we are not believing in Him Who is and Him Who saves. If a professing believer just lets the Lordship of Christ, and holy obedience to Him, become a trivial or secondary issue, he is unwittingly giving up Christ Himself! This is why the Spirit here carries the prophet along to write such a strong word as the one translated "contend earnestly." We are called to vigorous defense of faith in a Jesus Christ Who is the Lord God, and Who demands holiness from us as (among other things) His bondslaves.

Of course, this is something against which our flesh will always strive. The flesh strives against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh (cf. Gal 5:17). And, to make matters worse, there are men who have continued to creep into the churches for two thousand years, turning the grace of our God into lewdness (v4). The word "lewdness" here is a strong one, indicating just what sorts of filthy sins could even end up being papered over by such a false view of who Christ is, and what Christ does. Alas! We are living in days when there are examples of such folly even in "reformed" churches.

But God is not surprised. These were "long ago marked out for this condemnation" (cf. Rom 9:22, 1Pet 2:8). So, when they arise in our own day, we are to take it as an assignment from the Lord to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." He ordained for them to creep in. They are stealthy. They would otherwise go "unnoticed"—perhaps even to themselves. But God has assigned to us to be watchful so that we might raise the alarm.

So, dear reader, do not give in to the reluctance to stand for the Lordship of Christ, and the holiness and obedience that is required in the Christian life. The Scripture here has exhorted us. We are Jesus's slaves. There has been a Triune work of calling, consecrating, and keeping to get us here. There is an abundant supply of divine mercy, peace, and love to sustain us here. Yes, we might prefer enriching one another concerning our common salvation. But when holiness-denying, and slavery-to-Christ-denying, appears, let us prioritize our assignment. Contend earnestly for this faith in this Christ, Who is our Master and our God!

What sin in your own life have you been tempted to treat as not a big deal? From where have you heard the sort of talk that says that Christians shouldn't be too concerned with obedience and holiness? In what ways have you heard grace spoken of in a way that says sinning is ok? What does it look like to contend within your heart for the Lordship of Christ? What does it look like to contend within your life? In what other relationships and interactions might you need to be contending for this faith?

Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us, for we have not been delighted to think of ourselves as Your slaves. And forgive us; for, one of the reasons that we have not so heartily contended for You is that we have forgotten just how great a work of grace has gone into making us Your slaves. Forgive us for neglecting the continual and abundant supply of Your mercy, peace, and love. Forgive us for how we have not contended earnestly against our flesh when it has resisted Christ's Lordship. And forgive us for how we have not contended earnestly against others when they have resisted Christ's Lordship. We have been too quick to take Your grace as an excuse for sinning. And thus, we have made ourselves sometimes the allies of those who are marked out for condemnation. Lord have mercy upon us! Forgive us that we might not be condemned, and cleanse us so that we will walk happily as those who are not only Your creatures, Your subjects, and Your children, but even also Your bondslaves. Grant all of this in the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, which we ask in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP24 "The Earth and the Riches" or TPH502 "All for Jesus!"

"(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Jude verses one through four. These are God's words. Jude a bond servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James. To those who are called Sanctified by God, the father and preserved in Jesus Christ. Mercy, peace and love be multiplied to you. Behold, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation.

I found it necessary to write to you exhorting, you to contend earnestly. For the faith, which was once for all delivered to the Saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed too long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men Who turned the grace of our God into lewdness?

And deny the only Lord God. And our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen, this ends this reading of Gods, inspired and inerrant word. Jude here. Who was Jesus's half-brother? And James is, of course. Full brother. Born to Joseph and Mary. Calls himself. Not a prophet of Jesus Christ. He wasn't an apostle just as his brother James was not an apostle, but was treated and counted among them being both one of the leading Elders in the church in Jerusalem.

And one of the prophets by him, the Lord, not only spoke but wrote His own letter. Which is also. the New Testament Jude does not call himself a prophet of Jesus Christ or a half-brother of Jesus Christ, he calls himself a slave of Jesus Christ. This James also does in in his letter.

But here in this letter, not only is Jude writing as a slave of Christ verse one, but he is writing especially to remind us that we too have Jesus Christ as Master. We too have Jesus Christ. Lord. And this letter, instead of being a letter to Encouraged and enri.

one another our common salvation, which he was very eager to do. Instead, as a letter, urging us, exhorting us to contend earnestly. For this. This one in whom, we believe this Jesus, there's only one Jesus who can save us. It's the Jesus who is, who is God the son from all eternity, and who became a man added Humanity to himself in the Incarnation?

Idea, Jesus can save you. And so if we go to church and we hear the name Jesus and we have a collection of ideas that are connected to or identified by that. Name trusting in our ideas will not save us. We must trust in the one who is. We must trust in God, the son.

Who became a man to live and die on the cross and rise again. To save. And so it is important that we know ourselves to be slaves of Christ. A Believer is at least that he is, of course, much more than that. He is a subject. Of Christ as King.

He is one of The Offspring, one of the children that God has promised to Christ as the servant in the book of Isaiah behold. I and the children whom God has given me The Lord Jesus says about us. He is our elder, brother. The only begotten son And Union with whom we have all Been adopted.

But he is also our master. And we are his slaves. Or Bond servant. What do you call? A servant? Who is bound to serve? It is a slave. And Christians should be delighted. To be the slaves of Christ. To not belong to ourselves to be bought with a price.

And have him as. Our Master, excuse me. And the way that we came to be his slaves, not only Places us under a duty Buzz is itself a delight. Now, he addresses his readers, those who are called, Sanctified by God, the father and preserved in Jesus Christ. Here's a trinitarian work.

Called by the Holy Spirit. It's the Holy Whom the father gives. and whom the son gives. That's the Holy Spirit who takes our heart of stone. And turns it into a heart of Flesh. It's the Holy Spirit who gives us the new mind. Is that repentance talks about?

And so we are called in this effectual calling, this is not the general call. All who have heard the gospel? No, he's talking to a specific group of people who are distinguished by having been called by the Holy Spirit consecrated. By God the Father the new King James here uses the word Sanctified that is he chose us in the Lord Jesus that we would be holy set, us apart to himself in the Lord Jesus before the world began.

That we would be holy Ephesians 1, 4, teaches us. And then, When he by his Spirit has given us Faith to join us to Jesus Christ, he has given us that Holiness that being set apart from the world. That he had chosen for us and destined for us. So, called by the Holy Spirit Sanctified by God, the Father Or called by the Holy Spirit consecrated by God, the father and kept in.

Jesus Christ here, the word preserved in Jesus Christ. It's Union with Jesus that gives us Life that gives us life that can. That can never die. It's his power and his life and his goodness applied To Us by his But it's his power. And his life and his goodness.

That. has made us righteous. Declared to be a righteous count and righteous. in him and now Conforming us to His Image. And we cannot be lost because we belong to him. A Christian cannot lose his salvation because, in order, for a Christian to lose his salvation, Jesus would have to lose the Christian and he says, they're in my hand who could take them out, they're in my father's hand and no one can take them out.

He and his father are one, of course. And so, this is the way we came to be. The slaves of Christ to have Christ as Master. By the calling of the Holy Spirit, the consecrating of the father and the keeping of the So this is It's a delightful thing to be his slave.

To become his slave in this way. And did also places a duty on us. Who can resent? Being the slave of Christ, if this is, how we came to be his slaves. And if verse 2 is how we continue, To be his slaves. How does Jesus preserve us? And the father continue.

To sanctify us. How does Jesus preserve us by giving us Mercy? By having pity upon us and supplying what we need as those who are in a low condition and who are weak and do our sinful and need help. By giving us peace. By giving us to know that, he has killed the enmity between us and God and that God is for us.

And so, his Mercy helps us. In our life and duty to live as those who have him as our master and his peace helps us to live as those who have him as our master and by giving us his love. And not just giving us mercy and peace and love.

But multiplying to us mercy and peace and love. So this continually increasing. This last, of course, being something that the Holy Spirit especially gives us pouring out the love of God. In our hearts, first two. And so this is how we continue to function. As God slaves, we know.

That he is supplying everything. That is needed. So he has made us The slaves of Christ. He is the one who sustains us as slaves of Christ. And yet. Our service to the Lord Jesus, our identifying as the slaves, our hating anything that is against him. Is something that is actually threatened and under attack, of course it's threatened by a remaining sinfulness.

The old man does not want. Obey Christ to have Christ, as As M. The remaining fleshliness. Is completely opposed. To that, it belongs to our former condition in, which sin was our master and we were in bondage to it. But then the church has unconverted people in it. People who are retrobate people who are not going to be converted.

They are marked out for condemnation, long ago verse 4. And the reason that, The prophet Jesus's half-brother has to write this letter not enriching. His dear fellow Saints in the Salvation that they have together, but exhorting them. To contend earnestly for the faith is because men creep into the church unnoticed, Notice they don't come into the church saying we are antinomians.

We are against the law of God. We are against the keeping of the Commandments. We are against Holiness. We teach that Jesus is not Master. No, they don't come in, obviously. Do not come in plainly. You know, there's no, you know, flashing red bulb above them that says wolf.

They creep in. Unnoticed. They say things like we really We really just believe in. a life of Grace and faith and not effort. And things like, If you really believe that Jesus has fulfilled, the Commandments for us, then you shouldn't try so hard. To keep the Commandments. That's Old Testament way of thinking.

But now that we're in the New Testament, we don't worry ourselves so much with Commandments anymore, we're not under law, but under grace Completely misunderstanding and abusing. what that phrase means. And so they creep in unnoticed, but how do we know? How do we know? That they that they are under condemnation.

And that if we listen to them, and if we believed like they did, we too would find ourselves condemned. Because although they're smooth talking. Goes unnoticed by many. It teaches a different Jesus. There is no Jesus, who can save except for the Jesus, who is Lord. Now, you will hear people say.

Ask things, like, Do you believe in lordship salvation and you have to say it like your mouth is full of battery acid and you're talking about an orc or something lordship salvation. You believe that you're not saved unless you really own Jesus. As your lord, they make it sound like work salvation.

When you say well, no. I believe in Salvation by. The Lord. That's the faith once delivered for all the saints. That's what we are to contend earnestly for that. If someone starts to speak about Christianity in a way that misses part of who Jesus, is this, huge part of who Jesus is that he's Lord, you need to realize Are talking about a different Jesus.

The Jesus that saves is Lord. And so when people, you know, play the word game and try to make it sound like you are, Turning Christianity into a works-based religion. You say? Christianity is a jesus-based religion. And Jesus is Lord. And no faith in any Jesus. Who is not Lord.

Can save you. Because only Jesus has righteousness. That can be our righteousness before. God only Jesus has died on the cross and paid the the penalty for the sins of all who would ever believe in him. And he is Lord. And so, any faith and any other sort of Jesus, There's no faith in the true Jesus at all.

So, watch out. Watch out for those who creep into the churches. And resist them. Stand up for your lord. Jesus stand up for your savior as the Lord stand up for the faith. That is once delivered for all the saints, this is actually A command here are implied as a command right?

To you exhorting, you to contend earnestly. And those two words are actually translating just one word, but it's so intense in the Greek that our English version is probably made a wise decision by adding the word earnestly. Though, we are not to take antinomianism laying down. Or let it go unchallenged or unanswered.

Whenever God's law is spoken against, or God's Commandments. And the Commandments of the moral law, especially the Ten Commandments are spoken against whenever Jesus being our master and we being his slaves. Is spoken against or taught against. Than we are to content. Earnestly. I guess that in the church, That threatens our relationship to the Lord.

Those men long ago are marked out for this condemnation. They are reprobate. It is. Decree that they should be judged for their sin by being left in sin and hardened In their sin. It is even God's decree. That they should creep, unnoticed into the churches. So that we take their presence as a, providential assignment from the Lord.

To contend earnestly against them. They turned the grace of God. Into lewdness. And they deny the only Lord God. And our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, They don't have a relationship, a saving relationship, a saving knowledge. Of the Lord. And, This would threaten Us of not having a relationship with him if we too were to fall into this.

And how bad is this idea that God's grace means you don't have to obey his Commandments. Well, it turns The gospel into lewdness, turns the grace of our God into lewdness. The word translated lewdness. Is referring to the most filthy or abhorrent sin. You know, at first, it might just seem They're saying don't be so hard on yourself, don't pursue righteousness.

Vigorously. Etc. But pretty soon, they're excusing all manner of Filth. And we've seen this even in the reformed churches. Pornography. Adultery. The alphabet super versions. Even in Napark, churches. Among ministers.

And so this is a danger. This is a danger and we are under Bible obligation to contend earnestly. For the faith, which was once for all. Delivered to the Saints. May the Lord give us to do. So, first and foremost in our own Hearts. Resist, any excusing of your sin?

By the idea. Oh, well God, will forgive me. Oh, it's not such a big deal. We're really just we live we live life under a Grace principle. We don't have to be So prudish about This sin or that sin? No. Don't don't let your heart make any excuse against sin.

We are Christ's slaves. And we must remember that and contend for that even in our own heart, But then also in the various offices that he gives us the various roles. That he gives us. In our family. And in his, Let's pray. Father, thank you for warning us. About those who creep in unnoticed and What they teach and why it is so bad.

Thank you for taking us to be your slaves by this marvelous trying work. Of the calling consecrating and keeping by the spirit and the father, and the son, help us to Rejoice over this. Glorious privilege that you have given us to be the objects of such work from you or Triune God.

And Do multiply unto us. We pray mercy, and peace and love. For living as those who have Christ as Master. We Praise You. Lord Jesus, who are our master, both as our God. And then As one of your offices, as our King, as the mediator. And we pray that you would continue to keep us.

Which we ask in your own name. Amen.