

Jude

The Mercy & Judgement of God

“...the preservation of all four names of the brothers of Jesus in Matthew and Mark indicates that all four...were well-known figures in the early church.”

-Richard Bauckham

“The Lordship of Jesus & Christian Identity”

Introduction

- We have established that Jude bears the divine qualities of Scripture and is therefore given by God to instruct the Church. We must now ask important questions of the book in order to better understand its message:
 - Who was Jude?
 - To whom was he writing? → These are questions of _____

The Introduction & Greeting — Jude 1-2

¹ *Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ:*

² *May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.*

The Author

Jude — Judas (Greek), Judah (Hebrew)

- There are several men with this name mentioned in the NT, but the Judas most likely to be the author of the book was the brother of Jesus who is mentioned in the gospels.

Matt. 13:55—Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?

“brother of James”

- The fact that the specific “James” mentioned here is not further identified implies that his identity would have been well-known to the recipients of the letter. It is likely that this was James the Lord’s brother who had a leading role in the early Jerusalem church who is mentioned both in Acts (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18) and by Paul (Gal. 1:19).

- Like James, Jude probably had a prominent role in the early church as one of its leaders as a result of his missionary journeys.

1 Cor. 9:5— Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?

Jude’s Personal Identity:

- He was the _____ of Jesus.
- He was the brother of _____.
- He was a leader amongst the churches which were predominantly _____.

“a servant of Jesus Christ”

“servant”— δούλος (*doulos*)— A bond-servant, household servant. One who is committed wholly to another; a slave, a subject. This imagery is commonly employed by NT authors (Rom. 1:1, James 1:1, 2 Pet. 1:1). In the OT, this concept was used of national Israel (Isa 43:10) as well as individuals such as Moses (Josh 14:7) & Elijah (2 Kgs 10:10).

- To speak of himself in this way established his authority as the servant of Christ in the manner of the OT prophets and NT apostles.

Jude’s Identity in Relation to Christ:

- He had been _____ by Christ.
- He was now the _____ of Christ who was His _____ and _____.
- He was now completely under the _____ of Christ to serve Him only.

The Audience

- Jude does not specifically identify his audience in terms of their citizenship or geographic location and instead speaks of them in terms that describe their identity as believers in Jesus Christ.

“called”— Pertaining to being invited. Called (by God in the proclamation of the Gospel) to obtain eternal salvation through Christ

⇒ God’s action is _____ in how they have come to faith.

“beloved in God the Father” → The family imagery expresses the intimacy and intensity of God’s love for His children.

“kept for Jesus Christ” → Christians have been “guarded” or “preserved” through trials by God for Christ.

⇒ Both terms are in the perfect tense in the Greek, emphasizing they are completed actions with continual force in the present.

⇒ These three expressions are influenced by and perhaps derived from the passages in Isaiah known as the Servant Songs, where Israel is described in the same manner, that is, called, loved, and kept by God (for “called,” see Isa. 41:9; 42:6; 48:12; for “loved,” see 42:1; 43:4; for “kept,” see 42:6; 49:8).

The Greeting: “May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.”

- Greetings of this type are common among the letters of the NT, and the references to mercy and peace demonstrate the Jewish cultural background of the author.
- This greeting is significant given the threat that the church faces: *The presence of false teachers who disregard the moral commands of Christ.*
 - ⇒ The mercy of God would enable them to _____ the false teachers (v. 3) and would allow them to show mercy to those who had become deceived by their teaching (v. 22-23).
 - ⇒ The peace of God would guard them from the _____ caused by the false teachers (v. 19) and allow them to mend strained relationships within the church.
 - ⇒ The love of God would guard them from thinking only of _____, as did these false teachers (v. 12), and would lead them to genuinely love one another as Jesus’ people.

The Question of Identity: “Who am I?”

- The Historic Understanding → “The Porous Self” — Identity is formed and shaped by the natural world as well as the social settings in which we live (God, family, community, etc). These things exercise a degree of authority over our inner self, helping us to understand meaning and purpose.
- The Modern Understanding → “The Buffered Self” — A “buffer” is created between the inner self and the external world. True meaning is created internally, and is not derived from external forces (God, family, community). To create meaning for oneself is the ultimate expression of individualism and authenticity.

Both of these understandings of identity reflect a degree of truth and a degree of error.
It is only by finding our identity in Christ and among His people that we find the proper balance.

The Lordship of Jesus & Christian Identity

1. A truly Christian identity begins with knowledge of who Christ is and who we are in relation to Him.

- He is _____
Eph. 1:18-23—¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.
- We are His _____
1 Pet. 1:18-19—¹⁸ knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.
Hosea 3:1-2—¹And the Lord said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the Lord loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.” ² So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley.

2. A truly Christian identity knows Christ as well as His benefits.

- John 10:27-30—²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one.”
- We have been *called* →
- We have been *loved* →
- We have been *kept* →

Questions for Reflection

1. In what ways am I prone to attempt to create my own identity rather than recognizing my identity in relation to Christ?
2. Which of the benefits of knowing Christ from this passage is most meaningful to me?

¹These concepts are derived from Charles Taylor’s work, A Secular Age. For an abridged take on Taylor’s massive tome, see Our Secular Age.