



Ministry of the Word

*Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2018*

by Vincent Gannon

**Scripture:** Jude verse 1-2

**Subject:** Verse 1 – Part 1

I'm sure that you would agree that this epistle is small, don't underestimate it, it's absolutely packed with ministry. Before we begin this epistle, we need to ask, what precisely is its aim? The answer to that is very simple, it deals with various forms of Apostasy. I once heard a preacher saying, if the book of Acts is about the acts of the Apostles, than Jude is about the acts of the Apostates! I would say that is a pretty accurate statement!

This little book of 25 verses, is the only book in the bible which is almost totally devoted to exposing apostasy. That is not to say that other books or epistles do not examine the subject but this book is committed to it. It explains what it is, how it happened in the past and how it will happen in the future, really explaining what we are witnessing presently. Remember, Jesus even asked, who would he find faithful when he returns again! (Luke 18:8). This Book, of just one chapter, digs into doctrines that will lead the church astray and it goes into many corners of the old testament that don't get a look in very often, but it would seem that Jude presumes that his readers know the old Testament well. This epistle is just as important today as it was in the time of Jude. In fact when we examine its contents we discover that while the message is timeless, it is incredibly relevant for the church and the

Christian today. It should be given close consideration by every believer, because that's whom it is written for.

The book of Jude has close relation to Peter's letters but it has a parallel train with the book of James. While the book of James focus' on dealing with good works being evidence of saving faith and Christ centred living. Jude focus', on the other hand, is on evil works being the evidence of false faith. If we look closely we will also find that Jude's epistle has a small relationship with the book of Revelation as it sets the stage for it.

The early church was very vulnerable to false doctrine because many were not grounded in the truth of Scripture. They had a good reason, because they did not have a complete Bible. So where does that leave the individual and the church today especially in the light of every person having the ability to have access to the Scriptures? It's because many "Christians" in the authority or inerrancy of the Scriptures and many others just will not study like the Bereans did in Acts 17. They don't have a desire to know for themselves the truth. They are spiritually anaemic. The church is in crises today because we have neglected not only to know the truth, to preach the truth, but to live the truth. We need to stand up for the truth and feed it to ourselves and others, so that they won't be carried away.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 *"Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition"*

Jesus warned his disciples of this same thing in Matthew 24 verse 4 –

*"And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you."*

The book of Jude has a very clear lay out as you would expect divine order from the Holy Spirit. The underlining structure of this book is as follows –

Verses 1 & 2 and the last 2 verses, 24 & 25 open and close with assurance for the believer (Thank God!!)

Verse 3 and 20 to 23 deal with the believers in the Faith

Verse 4 and verses 17-19 – Apostates are described

Verses 5 – 8 describes Apostasy in the historical sense in the Old Testament while verses 14-16 describe apostasy in Old Testament prophecy.

Verses 9&10 describe apostasy in the supernatural realm and verses 12 and 13 deal with apostasy in the natural realm. The last part is found in verse 11 which describes a trio or trinity of apostasy.

Hopefully you will find that outline helpful and also it will be a guide line of what we will be covering in this book.

Let's begin with the first two verses, and I'll read them again to remind ourselves -

***"Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: <sup>2</sup>Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you."***

Jude. The first word! Now don't worry, it's not a word by word exposition!! It's just interesting to note that his name in Greek means Judas, (not as in Iscariot who betrayed Jesus but isn't is quite poignant though that it's Jude then who is writing this book about apostasy!)

Jude identifies himself as the bondservant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James. Mark 6:3 show us exactly who Jude and James are, lets read it –

***"Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him."***

Yes, Jude and James were the brothers of Jesus. Jesus surely knows all about family life with 4 brothers and some sisters. Please do not let any none-believer fool you into believing that this is a reference in the general sense. For two reasons. Nobody referred to everyone in Jewish society as brothers or sisters, look into the old testament if you are unsure. Secondly, we know from other scriptures that these were Jesus's family but they did not believe in his Messiahship until after the resurrection - John 7:5,

***"For even His brothers did not believe in Him."***

Matthew 12:46-50

***"While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You."***

*But He answered and said to the one who told Him, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”*

and Matthew 13:55-57

*“Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?” So they were offended at Him.”*

See also Mark 3:31 and John 2:12

1 Corinthians 9:5 – *“Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?”*

This here shows two things, the apostles, the brothers of the Lord and Peter or Cephas were married, and the second things, that his brothers were not numbered among the apostles although James was an elder of the church of Jerusalem (Acts 15). We find James also in Galatians 1:18-19

*“Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord’s brother.”*

Jude did not begin this epistle boasting that he was Jesus’s kin. He only refers to James. Instead, with complete reverence and humility, he like Paul, called himself “bond servant” or in the Greek the word is “doúlos”, as Jesus was now his Lord and his Saviour. Remember, doulos actually translates as slave to which Jude is referring to himself, as a bond slave to Jesus. Many believe that is very fitting for Jude and the rest of the apostles, but not for themselves. We have even moved from the understanding of servant who by the way was always considered far higher than a slave.

Many Christians today have entered into the mind-set of the “to be served” instead of to serve. This should make us all reflect, where do we really stand on this, do we need to change? This false notation has destroyed the church. It has crippled the mission field and left the way of truth, yes many believe God is there to work on their behalf, not them working for the glory of God. Think of all you have, it may not be much in others eyes, but it’s all you have. Would you be willing to forsake it for and in the service of Christ? Now there is a right answer and a true answer, but it is meant to be a searching question.

Jude, like many others, did not come to believe in Christ only, they came to be committed to the cause of the Gospel. They didn’t stall at the beginning, sticking there while they counted

the cost like so many today. Instead, they took up the baton and ran forward in the race to win their prize (Philippians 3:14), all for the glory of God. They had a very high view of God, because they had a strong old testament scripture foundation that was illuminated by the Holy Spirit. As the gospel was expounded and the Holy Spirit illuminated the truth of God, and the will of God, and the ways of God, their hearts found a seismic shift from sin, the flesh, their self-interests, and ways of the world to lay hold of better and bigger things, namely the glory of God. The deeper your knowledge of God is (or theology) the greater your God becomes! This puts life in true perspective, hence why these people could run the race with perseverance so that they would be counted worthy of a place in His Kingdom with the honour to serve the King directly.

There is a personal application to this, that is lost on many believers today. It is all based on our relationship with the Lord, and if you have a servant's heart, a student's mind, a soldier's tenacity and a saint's faith and willingness to be led by the Holy Spirit, this will lead to a proper relationship if maintained, that will produce beautiful fruit neither manufactured or put on for show or Sunday mornings! John 15:1-11. You know, the great saints of God had a great dependence on the Lord, but look at the contrast of many saints today that have independent of thought! You know the disciples of the Lord went on in time and did better even though they were faced with trouble, persecution, pain and death but they were not deterred from pressing on. They were in the real sense of the word "slave for Christ:" What a challenge to us in these days.

As we continue on in verse one, did you notice the blessed encouragement as Jude began his opening "salutation or greeting"?

***"To those who are the called (God's chosen ones, the elect), dearly loved by God the Father, and kept [secure and set apart] for Jesus Christ:" (AMP)***

Have you ever considered these three descriptions of the believer?

- 1) Called
- 2) Dearly Loved (or Beloved as written in the A.V.)
- 3) Kept (or preserved)

There are huge wonderful implications that they hold. So with that in mind lets go digging in the way we usually do!

## 1<sup>st</sup> - Called

For many here, it's been a blessed while, since you came to know the Lord and to love Him. However, we can get to a point consciously or unconsciously into thinking that part of our coming to saving faith was due to us. Now there is a part that we all have, it's human responsibility. We can say Yes or No. But this can and does at times eclipse the Sovereignty of God. We need to keep in our minds and hearts that it was God Himself who called us. In the Gospel of John chapter 15, Jesus in His discourse with His disciples revealed in verse 16 the Following –

*“You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and I have appointed *and* placed *and* purposefully planted you, so that you would go and bear fruit *and* keep on bearing, and that your fruit will remain *and* be lasting, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name [as My representative] He may give to you.”*

God makes the choice; just like Zerubbabel in Haggai 2:23. It begs the question, “is there anyone in God's family that placed themselves there?” The answer is No! Take for example Ananias in Acts. When Paul was made blind and God told Ananias to go to Paul and lay hands on him while praying, while some may not consider Ananias a big character in the bible, he was still non-the-less chosen by God.

*Acts 9:15 – “But the Lord said to him, “Go, for this man is a [deliberately] chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel”*

Did people think it a joke or that you were mad when you told them that God personally called you into His special family?

Let's look at 1 Corinthians 1:27.

*“But God has selected [for His purpose] the foolish things of the world to shame the wise [revealing their ignorance], and God has selected [for His purpose] the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong [revealing their frailty].”*

Now before you start getting funny thoughts as you look around, before looking in, God did not call us because we were idiots or fools, but on account of our station be it high or low, the Lord chose you for a divine purpose simply to expose the fallacies of man's wisdom and strength. The call that God made on your life and soul is no less divine than that of Abraham in Genesis 12:1 or Gideon in Judges 6:14. When Jesus reached the end of His ministry on

earth, in fact, it was in the last months, that He called Lazarus from the dead in John 11. You should read it for yourself if you can't remember, but when Jesus went up to the tomb he called out Lazarus by name to come forth. What do you think would have happened if He did not call Lazarus by name? So God has called you by your name, the God who made you. Now let's read a fantastic part of Scripture – One to run to whenever you are unsure! Romans 8:28-39

*“And we know [with great confidence] that God [who is deeply concerned about us] causes all things to work together [as a plan] for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to His plan and purpose.<sup>29</sup> For those whom He foreknew [and loved and chose beforehand], He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son [and ultimately share in His complete sanctification], so that He would be the firstborn [the most beloved and honoured] among many believers.<sup>30</sup> And those whom He predestined, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified [declared free of the guilt of sin]; and those whom He justified, He also glorified [raising them to a heavenly dignity].*

*<sup>31</sup> What then shall we say to all these things? If God is for us, who can be [successful] against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare [even] His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who will bring any charge against God's elect (His chosen ones)? It is God who justifies us [declaring us blameless and putting us in a right relationship with Himself]. <sup>34</sup> Who is the one who condemns us? Christ Jesus is the One who died [to pay our penalty], and more than that, who was raised [from the dead], and who is at the right hand of God interceding [with the Father] for us. <sup>35</sup> Who shall ever separate us from the love of [d]Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? <sup>36</sup> Just as it is written and forever remains written, “For Your sake we are put to death all day long; We are regarded as sheep for the slaughter.”*

*<sup>37</sup> Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors and gain an overwhelming victory through Him who loved us [so much that He died for us]. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced [and continue to be convinced—beyond any doubt] that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present and threatening, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the [unlimited] love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Surely this assures the believer that they are known, predestined, called, justified and one day will be glorified! Hallelujah and Amen to that!!

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Beloved

Who are loved by God? One of the places that answers this question is in John's Gospel in chapter 14:23.

*"Jesus answered, "If anyone [really] loves Me, he will keep My word (teaching); and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling place with him."*

Our love is so fickle, so incomplete, so poor and bares no comparison with the perfect love "agape" that the Lord has for His children. If that was a stand-alone verse it would be amazing but it's not, see the "pièce de résistance" John 17:20-23.

*"I do not pray for these alone [it is not for their sake only that I make this request], but also for [all] those who [will ever] believe and trust in Me through their message, <sup>21</sup> that they all may be one; just as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, so that the world may believe [without any doubt] that You sent Me. <sup>22</sup> I have given to them the glory and honour which You have given Me, that they may be one, just as We are one; <sup>23</sup> I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected and completed into one, so that the world may know [without any doubt] that You sent Me, and [that You] have loved them, just as You have loved Me." (AMP)*

This is the high priestly prayer that Jesus prayed for you and I and without doubt it is amazing. See also John 16:27 – *"for the Father Himself [tenderly] loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came from the Father."*

From the moment the Father, Son, Holy Spirit has set their love on you, will there even be a time when that love will cease? Never. Such is this union we have in Christ that Peter in 1 Peter 2:11 uses it as a title for the Christian when he advises –

*"Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers [in this world] to abstain from the sensual urges [those dishonourable desires] that wage war against the soul."*

The Lord ensures us like no other that we are loved by Him. All may change but Jesus never! Glory be to His name!!

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Kept

Finally the final part of verse one "and Kept by Jesus Christ" This is the only epistle in the Scripture that has this word in the opening greeting. The word Kept, in the Greek means: watchful care, close attention, in fact, its meaning in its core, is to be "continually kept".

It is a continual present possession, the same strength of meaning in relation to the angels in verse 6 of this book. This divine care reaches back even to the Old Testament see Deuteronomy 6:24, Psalm 31:23, Psalm 37:28, Proverbs 2:8. Thank God for his continual care of us. Where would we be without this? We often give others the impression if not ourselves that we have a handle on everything including our spiritual walk. The truth of the matter is that we are kept by the Lord Jesus Christ. We have so much to be grateful for! For God has called us, Jesus loves us and the Holy Spirit keeps us!

Verse 2 – Yes we are moving on!

*“Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you”*

A small verse but what a big punch!! This verse has a three-fold greeting – Mercy, peace and love and Jude wants it to be in abundance. So what does he actual want for us in abundance. All three are required by every believer and The position of the words are important.

**Mercy** – In most other greetings we usually find the word “Grace” but not here and its very interesting that we don’t but it makes sense in the light of what this epistle is about. Now grace and mercy are very close but different. Do you know or would you be able to verbalise the difference? This might help - Grace is getting what we don’t deserve, while Mercy is not getting what we do deserve.

Certainly mercy that comes to us is always welcomed when we think about the failures in our lives. There are many verses in relation to God’s Divine Mercy [Psalm 86:6; Lamentations 3:22; Micah 7:18; Luke 1:50; Ephesians 2:3-5; Titus 3:5]. For example Deuteronomy 4:31 –

*“For the Lord your God is a merciful and compassionate God; He will not fail you, nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them.”*

Another example of an account of God’s mercy is found in 2 Samuel 11 and 12. This account is about the sin David and Bathsheba committed. David under law, deserved death, no matter his position but the Lord showed “mercy” and allowed him to live. This account of David is quite an eye opener to another side of his character. It’s so easy to judge and criticise, but what if the things that goes on in all our own hearts and minds were to be known, would we not want to be shown mercy? The Lord goes on showing His mercy towards us time and again.

**Peace** - is not the absence of war. The peace of God is not dependant on the cessation of hostilities. God's peace comes from Him to our minds and hearts. The war can rage around us and still we can know His peace, in fact, it is often then that we are most aware of it.

An example of this, is found in the account of Joseph's story when he was traded by his brothers to Egypt. Joseph during his time in Egypt had horrible times as he rose to power and yet, he was capable of showing mercy when you would think he would naturally look for revenge, or even just a little taste of their own medicine... does that sound right, fair, familiar? When Joseph's brothers were sent to Egypt to find food, they ended up before him. The brothers were filled with fear and trembling with trepidation of the unknown that was before them. Their sin had caught up with them. Before Joseph disclosed to them who he actually was, their brother who they sold to the slave trade, in Genesis 43:23 he says, "It's all right" followed by "don't be afraid". Those words alone calmed their trouble minds. Before he revealed himself, he had displayed mercy to them and continued on in that fashion. He blessed them even though they deserved to be sent away with nothing. But what peace must Joseph have known to be able to deal with his brothers in such a fashion. Definitely not human! I wonder if we were Joseph, would have been able to show such mercy or would we be shaking from the trauma, the stress or even the anger or all of the above! God gave Joseph tremendous peace and wisdom, just like Philippians 4:7 speaks about - *"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

When Jesus spoke to His disciples in John 14:27

*"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."*

Throughout the bible the believer has this assurance of this peace and we can know this peace because of our relationship with Jesus Christ.

**Love** - There is not a mortal, sufficient in and of themselves to write, speak or show the true meaning of love and yet we see throughout history that love is the most popular subject of literature and music. It only goes to show how important love is to the human mind and heart. We see in a purely natural level, the health, hope and strength it gives to those who

are the beneficiaries of love. Those who are loved, are much more socially adjusted, caring, and loving people. Those who are loved feel secure and confident. Their life is so different from the rest that have known either little love or no love at all. Personally, I have met the latter in abundance and they are generally cold, bitter, indifferent. You can witness the trauma that their loveless lives display, it's painful to experience and they are incapable of healthy emotional responses. It either takes a lot of time and effort as well as demonstrating love or a miracle to bring about healing.

The well-known but often not appreciated in the light that it should be is John 3:16, often regarded as simple yet sublime. I have found myself many a time meditating on this verse and been filled with awe. The first 6 words of the verse is most certainly a jaw dropper, ***“For God so loved the world”***. When we consider the state of the world, the darkness, the deadness, the demonic activity that is in it as Paul powerfully described in Ephesians 2:1-3 –

***“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, <sup>3</sup> among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”***

We were part and parcel of it. The wrath of God abided on us and we were indifferent, and we were immersed in the world and its way. Then a divine miracle happened, God met with us and for many it was the love of God that took not just the clay but the granite and made it a heart of flesh. The Holy Spirit came in the power of Grace, Love, Mercy, and everything else that was good and love began to flow.

You can listen to Testimony after testimony, and each and every person that has become a believer speaks about how the love of God. For each one, God's love pours in like a mighty ocean into cold, indifferent hearts, that were riddled with pain from bitterness, disappointment, rejection, abuse and misuse, and in a moment the darkness becomes light, death becomes life and hatred to love, A miracle of God!

The motivating factor in this verse of John 3:16 is “God's love”. A love that changes everything. A love that was illustrated in the Old Testament when a substitution was made for sin. But now, we see it illuminated at Calvary. We can't fully understand it. The guiltless

one for the guilty world, the sinless for the sinners, the impure for the putrefying, the life for lifeless, yet, any-one who has been drawn to the cross by the Holy Spirit does not come to a place of execution but of exchange. Like the thief on the cross, we receive assurance that one day we will be with Him in paradise.

Just like Romans 5:8 says – *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

The cross is God’s diamond in the sense that it is multifaceted. You see no matter which way you look at it, you see amazing things and all because of the light of God’s love. I believe we can, in the light of this truth revealed to us in the New Testament, better understand verses like Deuteronomy 10:12 which says –

*“And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul,”*

and 2 Thessalonians 3:5 – *“Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.”*

We can understand why Jude wants the saints to be encouraged in the knowledge and in the scriptural truth that is unchanging in relation to the believer’s position in Christ, because of what is to come in the next verses. But there is another side to it as well as encouragement there is the exhortation to remain in the faith that is preached in the Gospel. It was for the church a perilous time, the enemy was on the attack from the word go. Jesus, Himself, assures us with the words addressed to Peter in Matthew 16:18-19 –

*“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup> And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”*

We are on the winning side so don’t be tempted to switch sides and this is again the reason why we are been encouraged don’t give in , don’t give up and don’t get down!

Romans 8:17 - *“and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”*

*Amen.*