

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning
Week 40 (September 28-October 4, 2014)

This week we will use the short letter of Jesus' earthly brother, Jude, to continue to show the necessity of living daily under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Sunday, September 28 (read Jude 1:1-2)

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, to those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ. (Jude 1:1)

I want you to focus on the **security** we have as believers in Jesus Christ before you see the warnings to those who refuse to live under the teachings of the gospel. Even though Jude is an earthly brother of Jesus, he sees himself as a **servant**. His letter is written to all of us who are **called** by God to salvation and who are **loved** by the Father and **kept** secure by the Son (v. 1). The knowledge proclaimed in v. 1 will lead to the mercy, peace and love declared in v. 2. When you understand God's **mercy** that does not give us what our actions deserve (spiritual death), you can experience **peace** with God as well as with your fellow man, and you can operate on the law of **love** instead of the law of justice. Won't some people abuse this mercy and grace from our Lord? That will be the topic of tomorrow's devotion.

Monday, September 29 (read Jude 1:3-4)

They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. (Jude 1:4b)

For years, I rejected eternal security because I observed those "who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality (v. 4)." As a result, I spent years teaching on the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Since God opened my eyes to the fact that we are **called** and "**loved** by the Father and **kept** by Jesus Christ" (v. 1, emphasis mine), I am now proclaiming His **mercy** and **grace** and the **peace** He offers through our **faith** in His finished work (v. 3). Like Jude, I enjoy teaching about those positive qualities, but I feel that it is time to remind my readers and listeners that a true Christian will **repent** of known sins and begin to live for the glory of Jesus. True salvation is indeed secure, but there are many who join the church and are baptized who have no desire to live under the Lordship of Jesus. They deceive other members and they deceive themselves into thinking their church activities will determine their salvation. We will see Jude's warnings to this group as we continue in the devotions from this short letter.

Tuesday, September 30 (read Jude 1:5-7)

Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered His people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. (Jude 1:5)

Although God offers deliverance to all who are living in the slavery of sin, He still separates those who truly accept His deliverance from those who refuse to live under His standards (v. 5). Jude gives an illustration of God's judgment on the created angels who chose to misuse their authority and the power God allocated to them (v. 6). He also reminds us of God's judgment on the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah who "**gave themselves up** to sexual immorality and perversion" (v. 7, emphasis mine). Notice that God makes no mention that they were "born that way." We will soon see the day when preachers will be required to perform gay weddings under the penalty of law. It is already happening to Christian businesses involved in the wedding ceremony. Are you ready to stand on God's Word no matter what the personal cost may be? In eternity, you'll be glad you did!

Wednesday, October 1 (read Jude 1:8-10)*In the same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings. (Jude 1:8, emphasis mine)*

Wednesday

As I am writing this devotion, Ferguson, Missouri is being ransacked due to anger stemming from the shooting of a young black teenager who was unlawfully walking in the middle of the street. A confrontation ensued when he refused to move to the sidewalk. All the facts are not available yet, but one of the major problems stems from the **rejection of authority**. I know there are a few bad policemen, but most of them place their lives on the line daily to keep us safe. Today's youth seem to have a general distrust of authority; therefore, they subject themselves to situations that should be avoided. This overflows into the church too. Some ministers have abused their calling, but most are sacrificially giving their time to enhance the lives of their members. God's Word says, "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established" (Romans 13:1a). Follow the blueprint for authority as established by God's Word for family, church, community, school, state, etc. and you will avoid the consequences of disobedience (see Romans 13:1-7).

Thursday, October 2 (read Jude 1:8-11)

*Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed **for profit** into Balaam's error, they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion. (Jude 1:11, emphasis mine)*

I added only one verse to yesterday's reading because I want to make a few additional comments. God warns us to let **Him** deal with Satan when we are confronted, just as the archangel Michael did. I believe Moses will be one of the two witnesses who return during the tribulation; therefore, Satan thinks if he can destroy his body, he can prevent this from happening (v. 9; see also Revelation 11:1-12). Why do these false teachers "speak abusively against whatever they do not understand" (v. 10)? Just look at the highlighted words in our printed verse! They have figured out that they can obtain more worldly wealth by telling people what they want to hear! Balaam's sad story is written in Numbers 22-24 & 31:16 while Korah's rebellion is featured in Numbers 16. You may want to review those stories now.

Friday, October 3 (read Jude 1:12-16)

These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. (Jude 1:12a)

Jude continues to warn us of false teachers in today's text. They have no problem with taking communion at our services, although **greed** dominates their thinking (v. 12). He uses strong language to describe these men, but the word "ungodly" is his favorite, using it five times (v. 15 & v. 18). You can identify them by their grumbling and faultfinding. They love to brag about themselves and to flatter others to get them to do their dastardly deeds (v. 16). Have you known leaders like that? Watch out for anyone who is the hero in all his stories!

Saturday, October 4 (read Jude 1:17-24)

But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. (Jude 1:20)

Jude concludes his warnings about the false teachers by saying you can expect them "in the last days" (v. 18). They deceive themselves and divide congregations because they are not teaching under the power and **authority** of the Spirit of God (v. 19). He then commands: "build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit" as you "keep yourselves in God's love" (v. 20-21a). Wait patiently for God's mercy "to bring you to eternal life" (v. 21b). We are reminded to show **mercy** to those who oppose us (v. 22-23), hating their sin while loving them. Jude closes with a beautiful doxology including "glory, majesty, power and **authority** through Jesus Christ our Lord" (v. 24, emphasis mine). These qualities that are rejected by false teachers, should dominate our ministry as we lead others to true salvation.