

# Route 66

## *Jude: Fight for Your Faith*

Part 65 – September 25, 2011

Two NT letters were written by Jesus' *half-brothers* (same mom, different dad!): James and Jude.



And just like James (1:1), Jude refuses to exploit this honor, and opens with a humble greeting.

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: Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance. – *Jude 1-2 NIV*

Jude knows what it means to be “called” out of unbelief, “loved [undeservedly] by God” and “kept [safe] by Jesus”. And, he knows the “mercy, peace and love” that pours into any who embrace it.

*Jude* is a kind of a nickname; his full name is listed in an account of the skeptical reception Jesus received when he taught and ministered in his hometown. The people said ...

“Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of **James, Joseph, Judas** and **Simon**? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. Jesus said to them, “Only in his hometown, **among his relatives** and **in his own house** is a prophet without honor.” – *Mark 6:3b-4 NIV*



Judas was a common Jewish name; but Judas-the-betrayer pretty much spoiled it for *all* the Christian Judases (like being named Adolph after WWII ... “We’ll just call you, *Ade*.”). 2000 years later, we have tons of Jameses and Josephes, and we do whatever Simon says, and Jude and Judy are just fine, but not ... *Judas*. All of Jesus’ half-brothers dishonored him during his ministry.

For even his own brothers did not believe in him. – *John 7:5 NIV*

I think it’d be *most* difficult for his brothers, who knew better than anyone, his “*snotty-potty*” humanness, to believe that the God of the universe had chosen to sleep on their top bunk. Jude lays there and prays, “God above, I pray thereof, guide and fill me with your love.” A voice from the top bunk says, “Okay”.

Well, seven weeks *after* his resurrection, his brothers are in the upper room praying and waiting for his Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:14)

Now, Jude is excited to encourage the believers regarding the salvation that's freely offered through his brother; but just as Jude begins, he feels compelled to wake them from complacency.

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. - *Jude 3 NIV*

Even though salvation is freely given, it's the duty of "the saints" (i.e. believers) to "contend [i.e. fight] for the faith". And he warns them to be extra vigilant because of traitors in their midst - an ongoing strategy of the enemy to this very day.

For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ ... - *Jude 4a NIV*



Instead of using "grace" as a motive for grateful obedience, they use it as a "license for immorality". "I can do as I please and just ask for forgiveness - like a get-out-of-Hell-free card!" When he says they "deny Jesus Christ", they don't verbally declare it, they silently demonstrate it in the way they live. This should wake us up, because Jesus said ...

Whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven. - *Matthew 10:33 NAS*

And this goes for actions as well as words! Jude says to contend with, and fight against becoming, those who are Christian in name, but deny Christ by abusing his grace. Though he's loving and patient, God is also just, which means at some point his tolerance must give way to judgment. Jude reminds them that they know this is true regarding faithlessness.

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 5 NIV*

After persistently sinning in spite of prophetic warnings, the Lord allows the Babylonians to erase Israel from the map. And Jude's people know this is true regarding rebelliousness.

And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home - these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. - *Jude 6 NIV*

Whatever kind of *divine leash* those "everlasting chains" are, I'm sure glad they have to wear them, and are limited by them!

And Jude's people know this is true regarding shamelessness.

In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire. – *Jude 7 NIV*

They traded eternal joy for a moment of perverse pleasure. And those who abuse God's grace and mock God's goodness are no different.

In the very same way, these dreamers **pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings.** [He's speaking of demonic beings] But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" – *Jude 8-9 NIV*

Jude is quoting the "Testament of Moses" which isn't in the Old Testament; and in 14-15 he quotes from the "Book of Enoch". Both were well known, but neither was part of the OT canon. People argue whether an *inspired* writer can quote an *uninspired* work. I see no problem ... if what's quoted is *true*. Remember, in Titus, Paul quotes from the works of a pagan philosopher!

Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." This testimony is true. – *Titus 1:12-13a NIV*

Jude's point is interesting. These religious fakes presented a false authority by making flippant, arrogant remarks against demonic beings (which we sometimes see with "TV preachers"). It's the old, "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread"! It makes them appear super-spiritual and invulnerable. But, one of the key characteristics of Christian humility is recognizing that we're all frail, fallible, and dependent on the Lord.

Jude calls them "unreasoning animals" (inspiring today's postcard), and "blemishes", and says they're simply repeating a sad history.

Woe to them. They have **taken the way of Cain** ...

Selfish disobedience: Cain offered God what he wanted God to have, rather than what God had asked of him. Then, instead of taking responsibility, he took the life of his obedient brother. Cain was condemned to live as a "homeless wanderer" (Genesis 4:12)

... they have **rushed for profit into Balaam's error** ...

Greedy disobedience: Balaam was a wicked prophet who was willing to distort and compromise truth in order to get what he wanted. Balaam was killed by the Israelites. (Num. 31:8)

... they have **been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.** – *Jude 11 NIV*

Defiant disobedience: Korah led 250 in revolt against Moses, so he could approach God the way he wanted. But when he tried, the earth swallowed them up, and fire consumed them. (Numbers 16:33)

Jude wants his people to open their eyes and see these men for what they are. So, he uses all sorts of word pictures.



These men are ... shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted – twice dead. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever. – *Jude 12-13 NIV*

He assures them that the ungodly will have a day of reckoning when the Lord comes with his holy ones to judge everyone ...

... and to convict all the **ungodly** of all the **ungodly** acts they have done in the **ungodly** way, and of all the harsh words **ungodly** sinners have spoken against him. – *Jude 15b NIV*

And he offers a list of “red flags” to identify the ungodly.

These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage. – *Jude 16 NIV*

And Jude reminds his people that the apostles had warned them.

They said to you, “In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.” – *Jude 18 NIV*

Whew! That’s the problem ... now, Jude ends with the prescription.



But you, dear friends, **build yourselves up in your most holy faith** ...

You can’t contend out of weakness and according to Jesus’ little brother, complacency isn’t an option. We’re required to grow stronger and sturdier in our understanding of God’s Word, and more and more practiced at applying it to our lives.

... and **pray in the Holy Spirit**. ...

Yielded, surrendered, authentic, and transparent. What *walking in the Spirit* is to actions, *praying in the Spirit* is to words.

... **Keep yourselves in God’s love** as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. – *Jude 20-21 NIV*

The thing, we’re going to fail many times along the way. But, what separates the grace contender (who gets knocked down) from the grace abuser (who Jude describes) is remorse and repentance.

It is only God's love and grace and mercy that sustains in the long run; and it requires effort – you have to fight the good fight - to keep yourself focused on it and living in it.

When my sin consistently meets his grace, I can either develop a consuming awareness of his mercy, or a false confidence that a little ungodliness doesn't really matter much to God. Jude, like no other NT letter is hard hitting on holy living!



And we must show mercy to those on the ropes.

Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear – hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh. – *Jude 22-23 NIV*

I like that line: “show mercy, mixed with fear”.

That means we should show compassion but exercise caution – error is contagious!

But he who called us out of unbelief, and loves us undeservedly, will keep us safe if we fight for our faith and focus on grace.

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy – to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen. – *Jude 24-25 NIV*

## “Hey Jude” as performed in the “Route 66: Jude” video

### Parody

Hey Jude, don't be afraid  
Few were swayed to call me their Savior  
The minute you sever ties with your sin  
Then you begin to live forever

So cast it out and ask me in, renewed, amen!  
Don't wait and put faith in your performance  
'Cause don't you know that I love you? Hey Jude, it's true  
The moment you need is now or never  
Na-na-na-na, na-na-na-na

Hey Jude, don't feel so bad  
Take your sad song and make a letter  
Remind 'em, the debtor pays in their heart  
But they can part with sin forever

And anytime you numb the pain, hey Jude, I reign  
Don't bow to the world when you're my soldier  
For well you know that it's a fool who prays untrue  
By trusting a world that's growing colder  
Na-na-na-na, na-na-na-na

Hey Jude, go write this down  
You have found grace, so now endeavor  
Remind 'em, however wicked they start  
They can depart from sin forever  
Ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, oh!

### Original<sup>1</sup>

Hey Jude, don't be afraid  
You were made to go out and get her  
The minute you let her under your skin  
Then you begin to make it better

So let it out and let it in, hey Jude begin  
You're waiting for someone to perform with  
And don't you know that it's just you? Hey Jude, you'll do  
The movement you need is on your shoulder  
Na-na-na-na, na-na-na-na

Hey Jude, don't make it bad  
Take a sad song and make it better  
Remember to let her into your heart  
Then you can start to make it better

And anytime you feel the pain, hey Jude, refrain  
Don't carry the world upon your shoulders  
For well you know that it's a fool who plays it cool  
By making his world a little colder  
Na-na-na-na, na-na-na-na

Hey Jude, don't let me down  
You have found her, now go and get her  
Remember to let her into your heart  
Then you can start to make it better  
Better, better, better, better, better, oh!

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<sup>1</sup> The order of the verses and choruses has been rearranged in the original.