

Jude, a Bond-Slave of Jesus Christ

Jude 1-2

DIG: What do you know about **Jude**? How does he describe himself and his fellow believers? From his description, what does it mean to be one who loves the **God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**? What comprises **the first triad**? What words are prominent in **the second triad**? How does the Lord preserve us?

REFLECT: How are you a bond-slave of Jesus Christ? What does it mean to be a servant? In what ways are you loved by God the Father and kept by Yeshua Messiah? In the first triad, which of the three words means the most to you right now? Why?

Jude, a bond-slave of Yeshua Messiah and a brother of James, to those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: mercy, shalom and love be yours in abundance (Jude 1-2).

Jude, a bonds slave of Yeshua Messiah (Jude 1a). He does not call himself an apostle, as Paul and Peter did in their introductions. A bonds slave of Yeshua Messiah, is probably not meant to convey that **Jude** was a bonds slave in the sense that all believers are servants of **Christ**, but in that special sense in which those were bound to **His** service who were employed in the preaching and spreading of **His** Word.⁹

And a brother of James (Jude 1b). **Jude** was a man who was comfortable being in second place. He was not as well known as **James**, but he was content to be known as the brother of **James**. No ego trip there. In this, he was the same as Andrew, who was Simon Peter's brother (John 6:8). He, too, was described by his relationship to a more famous brother. **Jude** and Andrew could have been jealous or resentful, but they had the great gift of gladly taking a back seat to **brothers** in whose shadow they both had to live.

The only title of honor that **Jude** would allow himself to be called was **the bond-slave of Jesus Christ**, rather than **the brother of Jesus** (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ Fj - Isn't This the Carpenter's Son? Aren't His Brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judah?**). That is to say, **Jude** regarded himself as having only one purpose and one distinction in life - to be forever at the disposal of **Jesus** for service in **His** cause. The greatest glory that any of us can attain is to be of use to **Yeshua the Messiah**.¹⁰

Jude presents **the first triad**, which spells out what it means to be saved. Before we plunge into the terrible contents of **Jude**, where we read about the judgment of **ADONAI** upon all who turn away from the truth of **His Word**, we are comforted and encouraged with some of the sweetest words of assurance to be found anywhere in the Bible. In case we might fear that the apostasy and false teaching of the last days may sweep us away, **the Holy Spirit assures** our hearts that **God** has called us, that **He** loves us, and the **He** is keeping us for **His Son**, no matter what happens around us.¹¹

First, to those who have been called reflects the past (**Jude 1c**). Called translates the adjective pronoun *kletos*, which is related to the familiar verb *kaleo*, meaning *to call*. It is the main word in the sentence with two perfect participles describing believers. In the Greek text it is placed at the end of the sentence for emphasis. It is an adjective used to describe those who are **called** in the sense of being invited, for instance, to a banquet. Even as the English translation suggests, the word conveys the idea of being personally chosen or selected. It is the effectual call of **the Ruach HaKodesh**, where **the LORD** calls believers to **Himself**. **He** sets them apart and chooses them as **His** children.

Jude here is not writing about **ADONAI's** general invitation to sinners (**Isaiah 45:22; Matthew 11:28; Luke 14:16-24; John 7:37**), a call that often times is rejected (**Matthew 12:14; Luke 4:16-19, 28-30; Acts 4:13-18**). More accurately, **he** is speaking of **God's** special, internal call through which **He** awakens the human will and provides spiritual life - enabling once-dead sinners to embrace the Gospel by **faith** (**John 5:21; Acts 16:14; Ephesians 2:5**). It is what **the Messiah** referred to when **He** said: **No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws them** (**John 6:44**). Therefore, this calling is apart from works (**Second Timothy 1:8-9; Romans 1:6-7, 8:30; First Corinthians 1:1-2, 9, 24; First Timothy 6:12; First Peter 3:9; Revelation 17:14**).¹²

Second, who are loved by **God the Father** refers to the present (**Jude 1d**), which is the result of being elected by **God the Father**. The participle is in the perfect tense, speaking of a past completed act having present and permanent results (**Ephesians 1:4-5**). We are permanent objects of **the LORD's** love, not merely through the brief span of this life, but for all eternity. As Paul told the church at Rome: **But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us** (**Romans 5:8**; also see **John 3:16, 13:1; First John 4:10, 19**).

John wrote this about **ADONAI's** love for believers: **See how great the love of the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God. And that is what**

we are (First John 3:1). The phrase **how great** is from *potapos*, which originally meant, "From what country?" It describes divine love as something that is foreign to us and outside the sphere of our understanding - the **love** of a different world - as if it were alien culture. We usually do not **love** strangers, especially our enemies (**Matthew 5:43-48**), yet **the LORD** chose to **love** us even when we were defiant sinners (**Ephesians 2:1-10; John 15:13, 16; First Timothy 1:12-16; First John 4:19**).

Third, and kept for Jesus Christ, expresses the most positive assurance regarding our future (**Jude 1e**). Here again, **Jude** uses the perfect tense, meaning *continually kept*. **Yeshua** preserves those who trust in **Him** till **His Second Coming (First Thessalonians 5:23b; Second Timothy 1:12; First Peter 1:5; Jude 24)**. The word kept here is the Greek word *tereo* and means *to guard, to hold firmly, to watch or keep*. Our Lord prayed: **I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I AM coming to You. Holy Father, keep (tereo) them by the power of Your name - the name You gave Me - so that they may be one as We are one (John 17:11b)**. Believers are kept!

The trinity is in view here. We have been called by the Holy Spirit, loved by God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ. Consequently, the knowledge of God's calling, loving and keeping brings us assurance and **shalom** during times of apostasy.

Jude loves to group what he has to say into "threes." In the first triad he described believers as being called, loved and kept. Now in **the second triad** he prays for his readers: **mercy, shalom and love be yours in abundance (Jude 2)**. **Jude's** prayer is that we would continually enjoy **ADONAI's** blessing, no matter how tough the spiritual battle might become (**First Peter 1:2; Second Peter 1:2**).

The salvation the LORD provides for His children is one that is rich with blessings (**Psalm 92:12-14; Matthew 6:31-33; John 10:10; Acts 20:32; Romans 9:23; Second Corinthians 9:8-10; Philippians 4:19**), three of which are **mercy, shalom** and **love**. This threefold declaration occurs only here in the New Covenant.

First, **ADONAI's** blessing consists of a generous supply of His **mercy (Jude 2a)**. Whenever we commit a sin, we will always find a generous supply of **God's mercy (Mark 5:19; Luke 1:50)** at His throne of grace (**Hebrews 4:16**). Rabbi Sha'ul wrote to the church at Rome that **the LORD** revealed the riches of His glory known to the objects of His mercy, whom He prepared in advance for glory (**Romans 9:23**). The objects of His

mercy are believers who continually receive the outpourings of His mercy, like cups or bowls that are constantly refilled with water.

Second, to meet the needs of every situation, ADONAI also multiples His shalom to believers (2b). This is a peace that stems from knowing that they are forgiven. Yeshua comforted His apostles with these words: **What I am leaving with you is shalom - I am giving you My shalom. I don't give the way the world gives. Don't let yourselves be upset or frightened** (John 14:17 CJB, also see Psalm 29:11; Isaiah 9:7; Jeremiah 33:6; Luke 2:14; Romans 5:1; First Corinthians 14:33; Galatians 5:22; Philippians 4:7; Colossians 3:15; First Thessalonians 5:23).

Third, God further blesses us with a constant outpouring of His love, and He wants us to have it in abundance (2c). Rabbi Sha'ul said: **God's love for us has already been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us** (Romans 5:5b; also see John 16:27; Ephesians 2:4; Second Thessalonians 2:16; First John 4:7-10). Without a doubt, the Lord pours out His blessings on those whom He calls, loves, and keeps. But those blessings come with great responsibility, a sobering subject to which Jude now turns in the next two verses.

For us today, being kept for Jesus Christ is a very comforting thought in the midst of our troubled world. What Jude declares is true of believers is exactly what Yeshua himself prayed for (John 17:11). We naturally pay great attention to the grace of ADONAI at conversion when we are saved from our sins, and we joyfully anticipate the day when God's grace will be displayed again at the return of Yeshua Messiah. But it is easy for us to forget about the LORD's grace of preservation, as He is powerfully at work daily in and among us.

We read about this work of preservation in many places in the New Covenant. Peter assures believers who are being persecuted that they **through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last day** (1 Peter 1:5). And writing to believers who were disturbed by false teachers and apprehensive about their relationship with ADONAI, John writes: **We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin continually as a pattern of their life. The one who was born of God (Jesus) keeps them safe, and the evil one cannot harm them** (First John 5:18).

Believers have many reasons to be anxious today. **Yeshua** said: **In this world you will have trouble.** But one thing we do not need to worry about is **God's** faithfulness in maintaining us in our **faith.** **But take heart, I have overcome the world (John 16:33).** This does not mean that we have no responsibility in the matter. **Jude** makes it clear that we do: **Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life (Jude 21).** And take notice what **Peter** says in the verse quoted above, that it is **through faith** that **we are shielded by God's power.** But we begin, as we always should in our walk with **the LORD,** with **God** and **His** grace. **He** protects us from both human persecution and satanic destruction. Nothing in the physical or spiritual world **can separate us from the love of God that is in Yeshua Messiah our Lord (Romans 8:39).**

Such reminders are important because it is easy, in the midst of depression, temptation, or crisis, for us to forget about **ADONAI's** preserving grace. Yet, it is this amazing grace, as we sing in the famous hymn, that "has brought us this far, and . . . will lead me home."¹³