

# JUDE

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**JUDE**

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ISBN: 9798655667105

## DEDICATION

TO THE SPIRITUAL FIREFIGHTERS ALL OVER THE CHURCH,  
THE FIRST RESPONDERS WHO SEE EVIL AMONGST THE  
PEOPLE OF GOD AND SERIOUSLY ATTEMPT TO DO AWAY  
WITH IT. THE COMPANY OF JUDE.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Jude the Man

**Authorship:** It is thought that many first century Judean mothers named their child *Iouda*. Some perhaps recalled the fourth son of Jacob who had given his name to the land in which they lived. Many more had a more recent reason: Judas Maccabeus, the “hammer” who continually thwarted the plans of Antiochus Epiphanes to destroy the Jews of the second century before Christ. Perhaps their son would lead a revolt against the prevailing powers of their own day, mighty Rome.

It is for this reason that we must choose from among at least nine men mentioned in the New Testament as bearing this noble name, to settle upon the author of the little treatise before us that English translators chose to name *Jude*. It was hoped by this alteration of the oft-repeated *Judah* or *Judas*, that this brother would not be mistaken for one of them.

Let’s use the process of elimination to narrow down our choices. Right away we can discard three men in the genealogy of Jesus recorded in Luke 3:26, 30, and 33. These “Judahs” lived 15 to 40 plus generations from the time in question.

It is clear that the Lord’s betrayer is not the Judas we seek.

Gamaliel tells us in Acts 5:37 that a certain “Judas of Galilee” had risen up with a following intent on defying Rome. But he had died some time ago.

There was a Judas who lived in Damascus, Syria, during the days of

Paul's conversion (Acts 9:11). The apostle-to-be was staying there when God sent Ananias with his commission. Nothing more is known of him. Certainly not a leader in the church, a writer of Scripture.

Then there was the Judas known as "Barsabbas", the partner disciple of Silas, sent to confirm Syrian Christians in Acts 15, then sent back to Jerusalem. One would think that the very fact that he is known by another name by the church of that day, is a clue that he is not to be confused with the author of this epistle.

That leaves us with two men named Judas, or Jude. For the identification we need, we can now go to the text itself.

A principle we must remember when approaching Biblical texts is that men who are mentioned were known to a good portion of the readers of the originals. For example, Luke 6:16 tells us that a disciple/apostle named Judas who was called Thaddeus or Lebbaeus, was the son of one *James*. The Judas there is differentiated from the other Judas of ill fame. But who is the "James" of that passage? The readers knew.

Likewise the "James" of Jude verse 1 was known. And Jude/Judas was his brother. By this time, this James had come to prominence in the church, though at one time he and all his brothers had rejected their elder half-brother, Jesus. Evidently at least these two, James and Judas, had come to faith following Jesus' resurrection.

Note that both James and Judas, mentioned together in Matthew 13:55 as sons of Mary and Joseph, begin their letters as self-described "bondservants."

Based on these considerations, it has long been the tradition of the Christian church that the Jude we are seeking was indeed a half-brother of Jesus, an elder in the early church of Jerusalem, a voice for righteousness pointing first century believers to the apostles' teachings, and away from the wolves already in the process of invading the church.

If it had not been for John the apostle still being alive, we might have seen Jude as the first of the church fathers... pointing people back to the Old Testament Scriptures, and the apostles.

*For more on Jude the man, see commentary on verse 1, p. 25*

### **Jude's descendants**

Hegesippus, a 2nd-century Christian writer, mentions descendants of Jude living in the reign of Domitian (81-96). Eusebius relates in his *Historia Ecclesiae* (Book III, ch. 19–20):

“But when this same Domitian had commanded that the descendants of David should be slain, an ancient tradition says that some of the heretics brought accusation against the descendants of Jude (said to have been a brother of the Saviour according to the flesh), on the ground that they were of the lineage of David and were related to Christ himself. Hegesippus relates these facts in the following words.

“ ‘Of the family of the Lord there were still living the grandchildren of Jude, who is said to have been the Lord's brother according to the flesh.

“ ‘Information was given that they belonged to the family of David, and they were brought to the Emperor Domitian by the Evocatus. For Domitian feared the coming of Christ as Herod also had feared



it. And he asked them if they were descendants of David, and they confessed that they were.

“ ‘...And when they were asked concerning Christ and his kingdom, of what sort it was and where and when it was to appear, they answered that it was not a temporal nor an earthly kingdom, but a heavenly and angelic one, which would appear at the end of the world, when he should come in glory to judge the quick and the dead, and to give unto every one according to his works. Upon hearing this, Domitian did not pass judgment against them, but, despising them as of no account, he let them go, and by a decree put a stop to the persecution of the Church.

“ ‘But when they were released they ruled the churches because they were witnesses and were also relatives of the Lord. And peace being established, they lived until the time of Trajan. These things are related by Hegesippus.’

“Epiphanius of Salamis, in his Panarion, mentions a Judah Kyriakos, great grandson of Jude, as last Jewish Bishop of Jerusalem, who was still living after the Bar Kokhba's revolt.”

### **Jude the Book**

***Acts of the Apostates*** is a 1958 book by S. Maxwell Coder. Whether or not he originated the title or picked it up somewhere else, it is an apt description of the words to follow, and others have borrowed the terminology.

The letter of Jude is the only one devoted *exclusively* to apostasy. A falling away from faith is predicted by Peter and dealt with by Paul, in Scriptures such as 2 Thessalonians 2:10, Hebrews 10:29, 2 Peter 2:1-22, and I John 2:18-23. But in Jude we see a passionate desire with which the author is obsessed.

His epistle condemns apostates, urges believers to contend for faith, and calls for discernment on their part. No particular false doctrine is mentioned in the letter. Nor is that necessary. Jude says, Look at their degenerate lives! By their fruit you will know them, and here is their fruit.

### **To whom**

We assume that James' brother wrote to the same audience as James, namely believing Jews, but in this case, a people now being inundated with false teachers.

### **Date/background**

Commonly scholars place the letter some time between A.D. 66 and 80. It is assumed by many that it was composed before the destruction of Jerusalem (66-69), since no mention is made of that catastrophe.

Was Jude or 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter written first? We ask the question to resolve the issue of who "borrowed" from whom, in those look-alike passages of Peter and Jude.

MacArthur points out that, in Peter, false teachers are *anticipated*, while in Jude they have *arrived*.

Consider: 2 Peter 2:1-3. "... there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them... many will follow their sensuality, and... the way of truth will be blasphemed... they will exploit you with false words..."

Peter then launches into a present-tense description of false teachers in general, but his introduction to that description is future. Not so, Jude:

Jude 1:4. "... certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ... You must remember the predictions of the apostles... they said to you, 'In the last times there will be scoffers... who cause divisions... devoid of the Spirit...'"

The latter portion of this quote is actually from 2 Peter 3:3. Peter predicted, Jude affirms: It has happened!

Thus Peter wrote first, and Jude, years later, affirms the apostle's words.

### **One-chapter "books"**

The church has persisted in labeling the smallest of Biblical writings as "books" even though they are a page long and might be considered a medium-sized letter in our own time. Obadiah in the Old Testament, along with Philemon, 2 John, and 3 John in the New, all have one chapter. Jude is the longest of the five, with its twenty-five verses.

### **One of the "General" epistles**

"General" refers to the fact that the letter is addressed to no individual or church or group of churches. Rather, the audience is general, and the author is named in the title. The general epistles have also been known as "catholic" epistles, since the audience was universal, or *catholic*. The obvious confusion such a term could cause has brought many to drop it in favor of *general*.

There are eight such epistles if one includes the book of Hebrews, which many do not. The reason that Hebrews does not make the cut for some is that it is indeed addressed to a specific audience by virtue of the title itself. To which Hebrew believers, and where, we

are not told, but the fact that Hebrews are singled out, and not Gentiles, leads many to eliminate it from the “general” category.

The other seven letters, which follow the very specifically addressed letters of Paul in the New Testament listing are: James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Jude.

It should be noted that 2 and 3 John do indeed have a specific person in mind, and therefore could suggest that the above definition of “general” epistles may be mistaken. Some have felt that all non-Pauline letters were lumped together as general.

But enough of that...

### **Inspiration**

The most important question about a book of the Bible is: By what standard do we assume that this book is apostolic, and therefore, inspired of God, and to be read by the people of God without question?

The book is definitely not inspired by virtue of its having been written by an apostle. Jude makes it clear to us that the apostles and he are of two separate groups (verse 17). Peter makes a similar statement but seems to include himself in the apostolic band, which of course is true (2 Peter 3:2).

Galatians 2:9 informs us that Jude’s brother, James, had become a pillar in the church. He is given a place of prominence in the controversy over circumcision in Acts 15. There is a sense in which James has become a part of the “apostolic” group, and perhaps Jude is in there with him. But the Scriptures stop short at calling him an apostle. Jude, himself, likewise.

The teaching has been that if one is not an apostle, his work can still

be considered apostolic if he has a direct association with one of these specially called men. Mark is usually associated with Peter, and Luke with Paul. Only Hebrews, James, and Jude are unaccounted for.

Hebrews is a study of its own. But James and Jude clearly can qualify based on the association principle. Jude is apostolic, not only because Jude and his brother had associated with the apostolic leadership in Jerusalem, but because the concepts and many of the actual words of Jude are borrowed from apostles, especially Peter! Consider the following:

**The letter of JUDE compared to apostolic/prophetic writings:**

JUDE	Apostolic Writing
v. 1. "A servant of Christ Jesus."	Romans 1:1. "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus."
v. 2. "May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you."	1 Peter 1:2. "... may grace and peace be multiplied to you."
v. 3. "...common salvation..."	Titus 1:4. "... common faith..."
v. 3. "...contend for the faith..."	1 Timothy 1:12. "...fight the good fight of faith..."
v. 4. "Certain people have crept in... who pervert the grace of our God."	2 Peter 2:1. "... there will be false teachers among you..."
v. 4. "[they] deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."	2 Peter 2:1. "[they will be] denying the Master who bought

	them...”
v.5. “Jesus... afterwards destroyed those [ escaping Egypt] who did not believe.”	Hebrews 3:16-19. “...those who left Egypt... were unable to enter because of unbelief.”
v. 6. “... the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority...”	2 Peter 2:4. “... angels when they sinned...”
v. 6. “...He has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day.”	2 Peter 2:4. “... and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment.”
v. 7. “Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities... a punishment of eternal fire.”	2 Peter 2:6. “... the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah... condemned them to extinction.”
v. 7. “... serve as an example...”	2 Peter 2:6. “...making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly
v. 8. “These people... defile the flesh, reject authority...”	2 Peter 2:10. “... those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.”
v. 9. “Michael... did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment...”	2 Peter 2:11. “... angels do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment...”
v. 9. The dispute between Michael and the devil.	From non-apostolic work.

v. 10. "These people blaspheme all that they do not understand and they are destroyed... like unreasoning animals..."	2 Peter 2:12. "These, like irrational animals... blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed..."
v. 11. "They... abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error..."	2 Peter 2:15. "They have followed the way of Balaam who loved gain from wrongdoing..."
v. 12. "These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear..."	2 Peter 2:13. "They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you."
v.12. "... shepherds feeding themselves..."	Ezekiel 34:2. "Ah, shepherds of Israel... feeding yourselves!"
V. 12. "...waterless clouds, swept along by winds..."	2 Peter 2:17. "These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm."
V. 12. "... fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted."	Matthew 15:13. "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up."
v. 13. "... wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame..."	Isaiah 57:20. "But the wicked are like the tossing sea; for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up mire and dirt."
v. 13. "wandering stars for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved"	2 Peter 2:17. "For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved."

forever.”	
v. 14. “... the seventh from Adam.”	Genesis 5:1-18. “Adam... Seth... Enosh... Kenan... Mahahlalel... Jared... Enoch...”
v. 14, v. 15. The coming judgment.	From the book of Enoch, non-apostolic.
v. 16. “They are loud-mouthed boasters...”	2 Peter 2:18. “For, speaking loud boasts of folly...”
v. 16. “... showing favoritism to gain advantage.”	Leviticus 19:15. “You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great...”
v. 17. “You must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.”	2 Peter 3:2. “...remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord ... through your apostles...”
v. 18. “They said to you, ‘In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.’”	2 Peter 3:3. “... scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.”
v. 19. “It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.”	Romans 16:17. “... watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught... such persons do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own appetites...”
v. 20. “... building yourselves up	Colossians 2:7. “... built up in



in your most holy faith..."	Him... established in the faith..."
v. 20. "... praying in the Holy Spirit..."	Ephesians 6:18. "... praying at all times in the Spirit..."
v. 21. "... waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life..."	2 Peter 3:12. "... waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God..."
v. 22. "And have mercy on those who doubt;"	James 5:19. "... if anyone among you wanders from the truth... whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save a soul from death..."
v. 23. "... save others by snatching them out of the fire..."	Zechariah 3:2. "Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?"
v. 23. "... hating even the garment stained by the flesh."	Zechariah 3:4. "... I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments."
v. 24. "Now to Him who is able..."	Ephesians 3:20. "Now to him who is able..."
v. 24. "... able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory..."	2 Timothy 3:18. "The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom."
v. 25. "... to the only God... be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and	1 Timothy 1:17. "To the King of the ages... the only God, be honor and glory forever and

now and forever. Amen.”	ever. Amen.”
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Jude knew his place. He was not originating truth, but presenting truth that had already been delivered to the saints via apostles, (v. 3).

It is true that Jude was the half-brother of the Lord, and that his conversion was a thing of great joy in that early church, but Jude, calling himself as he does, a bondservant, and making no mention of his physical association with Jesus, lets us know that neither he nor his brother tried to “pull rank” in the early church. God had given him the faith to believe, and he believed in that same resurrection that saves us all.

### **Muratorian Canon**

In the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, an Italian historian named Ludovico Muratori discovered and published an ancient list of New Testament books, believed to have been drawn up only 150 years after Jesus ascended to Heaven.

Early on, the church was involved in verifying which writings should be passed on as apostolic and therefore authoritative. It took decades more of discussions before the final list was authorized by the church, but this early list contains at least 22 of our present 27 books.

Omitted from that early listing are Hebrews, James, and the two letters of Peter. One of the small letters of John also is in question. And two books that were later found not to be in the canon were a part of that document.

Interestingly for our purposes, Jude was in the original catalogue. Nevertheless, this little letter did have to fight for its life a bit later.

### **Inspiration question 1:**

*Uninspired sources.*

Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Augustine, and Jerome, saying Jude referenced the apocrypha, books of doubtful origin, questioned Jude's letter, even though earlier fathers had evidently been in favor of it, as witnessed by Jude's listing in the Muratorian Canon.

There are at least two instances of such quotations:

1. *The Assumption of Moses*. Verse 9 (ESV):

“But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you.’”

The point Jude was making was a valid one, and could have been enforced by an appeal to Zechariah 3:1-2, where the Lord Himself rebukes Satan, the implication being that only the Lord has the right to be rebuking the Devil.

Instead, Jude seems to be appealing to a book not accepted by Jew or Christian as inspired of God, at least in the beginning, namely, *The Assumption of Moses*.

Wikipedia: “*The Assumption of Moses* (otherwise called the *Testament of Moses*) is a 1st century Jewish apocryphal pseudepigraphical work. [This word means that the actual author is not the one named in the title.] It purports to

contain secret prophecies Moses revealed to Joshua before passing leadership of the Israelites to him. It contains apocalyptic themes, but is characterized as a 'testament', meaning it has the final speech of a dying person, Moses."

*See more under verse 9 of commentary below.*

## 2. 1 Enoch. Verses 14-15

Wikipedia: "The Book of Enoch (also 1 Enoch...) is an ancient Hebrew apocalyptic religious text, ascribed by tradition to Enoch, the great-grandfather of Noah. Enoch contains unique material on the origins of demons and giants, why some angels fell from heaven, an explanation of why the Great Flood was morally necessary, and prophetic exposition of the thousand-year reign of the Messiah."

The first book of Enoch is another pseudepigraphal, and therefore uncanonical, book being quoted directly by Jude. Jude believed that at least the portion he quoted was absolute truth, and he incorporated it into his work on that basis.

How valid is such a practice?

There are elements of the apocryphal books of Maccabees that are true history. Joshua and the prophet who wrote 2 Samuel both quote from a book called "Jasher" which is either an extinct work, or a reference to the Pentateuch.

The apostle Paul quoted from a Greek poet, Epimenides, in addressing the philosophers at Mars Hill, and probably mentions him again when speaking of Cretan immorality to Titus (Titus 1:2). He also borrows a line from a known Greek play of the day in 1 Corinthians 15:33.

So, for an inspired Bible writer to find truth in an “uninspired” work is not to be looked upon as unusual or defiling of the text. Truth is available in a number of places. But its discovery in the middle of something secular or profane does not bring inspiration to that whole text, only to the portion chosen by the inspired writer.

*See under verse 14 commentary the actual quote used by Jude.*

**Inspiration question 2:**

*Jude was not an apostle or prophet, merely an elder, in the church.*

Early on, the church knew that it was direct apostolic influence that was the standard for an inspired text. Thus, Luke’s association with the apostle Paul qualified him to write an account of the Christ and the early Church. James and Jude were in fellowship with the original 12, James actually being chosen as a leader in that group, and his brother Jude, it would seem, thrived spiritually from that connection.

Jude’s fellowship with the apostles resulted in a letter that is nearly void of any original thoughts, as shown by the chart above. As a non-apostle he could not and did not add to the body of truth given by them. Even the two questionable sources – *The Assumption of Moses* and *1 Enoch* – confirm Biblical truths: the proper attitude toward the supernatural found in Zechariah, and the coming of Jesus with His saints, recorded in numerous New testament passages. His other allusions to Biblical truth include the wilderness wanderings of Exodus, the angels issue of Genesis, and the Genesis account of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Thus, Jude’s character and his very words bring him into alignment for being an inspired writer of the Christian Bible.

Church fathers Polycarp, Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch,

Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius, all affirm the authenticity/authority of this little letter. In fact, there is more convincing evidence early on for Jude than for 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter.

### **The Text**

Translations. Manuscripts. Variants. Bible scholars have wrestled with these issues over the centuries in such a way as to prepare for us a Biblical text that is as accurate as possible. When accuracy has not been the aim, but rather readability or cultural sensitivity, another set of translations has appeared.

For this work, I will refer only to that first group, the word for word translations of the Bible, such as the *King James Version* (KJV), and the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB).

Unfortunately for some, this division of Biblical translation groups is not sufficient. They will point out that there are differences in the texts of these Bibles. We must divide further. And here is where the study of manuscripts is important.

Manuscript study is a science in and of itself. From what Greek manuscript did the KJV arise? Was it not the same as the NASB?

Cynical observers ask, Are the various differences in the texts not just translator preferences? Were there not these devious men who entered into the translation business to pervert and corrupt the pure Scriptures and give us translations that would destroy our spiritual lives?

Such is the thinking of many. The simple truth is quite different. That truth is that, through investigation, scholars discovered that there were older manuscripts, that is, ones closer to the time of the apostles, that ought to be given precedence.

Scholars have come up with two major groups of texts from which translations have come to us. They are the *Byzantine* texts and the *Alexandrian* texts.

The *Byzantine* collection, resulting in the *Textus Receptus* (“received” text) has been for centuries the standard from which Bibles came forth. There are Byzantine manuscripts dating as far back as 400 A.D., though the majority are later than this.

Notable in the translations coming out of the Byzantine manuscripts are the King James and the New King James. The New King updated archaic language, yet stayed true to the “majority” text, the manuscripts that far out-numbered all the rest.

But a much smaller group of texts, the *Alexandrian*, began to surface in recent years (A major one came to light in the 19<sup>th</sup> century). Though a “minority” text, it was clear that these manuscripts were written closer to the apostolic period, as early as 300 A.D., and thus should be given their due in terms of authority.

Bibles like the ESV and the NASB follow these Alexandrian manuscripts and account for the minor variations in the readings between them and the KJV.

Two obvious but necessary points to add: There are no original texts of Holy Scripture. All the manuscripts are copies of copies. And secondly, none of the variations between manuscripts have ever affected a serious doctrine of the Word of God. The Scriptures are what they say they are, able to make the man of God perfect in every way. They point to Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Gospel. They explain church origins and government, family, personal holiness. It’s all there. No one has ever been kept from salvation or perfect holiness by reading one or the other of these Bibles.

There are among us men who will nearly die in the defense of the KJV. Other men who have gained prominence among us for their scholarship and clarity of faith and holiness of life, such as John MacArthur, will tell you that the NASB is hands down the most accurate Bible of all times. He is presently – 2020 – working with a group of scholars to make it even more accurate.

I will leave it there. The book of Jude, like all the Scripture, suffers no damage by the fact that two groups of manuscripts are behind it. I will give both variations when they occur, and let you take it from there.

**An Outline of Jude:**

- I. Greeting, 1-2
- II. Purpose, 3-4
- III. Examples of past apostasy, 5-7
- IV. Description of present apostasy, 8-16
- V. Exhortation to remain true, 17-23
- VI. Doxology, closing prayer, 24-25

**Credits:**

1. *The New American Standard Bible*. (NASB)
2. *The King James Version* (KJV)
3. *Unger's Bible Dictionary*. Moody Press, 1988
4. *MacArthur Study Bible notes*, Crossway, 2010
5. *The Interlinear KJV*, Zondervan, Berry (1897)
6. *Novum Testamentum*, Nestle-Aland, 25<sup>th</sup> edition
7. *Strong's Concordance*, James Strong
8. *Wikipedia*



## THE LETTER of JUDE with commentary

(From NASB translation, with references to KJV.)

### I. GREETINGS

#### 1 Jude

Little can be written about a man we do not know. For sure, the Roman myth about the perpetual virginity of Mary is given the lie in Matthew 1:24, 25, where the writer tells us that Mary and Joseph had a family born of the natural means, after Jesus was born of the virgin and Jesus' heavenly Father.

From there we go to Matthew 13:55, 56 and the parallel passage in Mark 6:3, where Judas is listed among the brothers born to Mary and Joseph. Sisters are mentioned also, without name.

*See Introduction for further comments, identifying the various ones named "Judas" in Scripture, and giving the evidence for this Judas, of Mary and Joseph, being the writer of Jude.*

We assume Judas was in the group of family members wanting to talk to Jesus in Matthew 12:46-50. The family, including His own mother, is placed by Jesus on an even par with all believers in the Son of God. Perhaps it was perceived slights like this one, or the popularity of their older brother, or any number of family related issues that caused Jesus' siblings to turn against Him in the early days.

John 7:1-10 gives us the insight into the unbelief festering in the hearts of those closest to Jesus in the natural. In this passage His siblings challenge Him to demonstrate before His disciples the supposed miracle power they had heard of. The brothers had evidently not gone to see the things that were being reported everywhere. They knew their brother. Perhaps a bit eccentric, separate from the ordinary man, for sure. But no miracle worker. For thirty years at home Jesus had not distinguished Himself in the miraculous. Why now?

Jealousy no doubt entered in. David's brothers had similar feelings toward the future king. Joseph's brothers believed their little kinsman was just a dreamer and nothing else. But he had stolen their father's heart.

Judas – Jude – grew in his thinking to a place of rejection. Until something happened that could not be denied.

Two apostles, Matthew and John, tell us that Jesus, after His resurrection, explicitly told Mary Magdalene to announce to His "brothers" that He was alive from the grave. It is clear that the disciples were the primary group meant, but one can wonder if His physical brothers were alerted also on that 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week.

After the forty days of appearances by Jesus, the apostles left from the mountain of His ascension, as they had been directed, to go to Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father. Somewhere in that waiting period they were joined by over one hundred others, among whom were Jesus' mother, and her sons. James, who was to become a leader in the church, and his brother Jude, were present at Pentecost.

Though Jude is not considered an official apostle, his ministry and life were interwoven with the beginnings of the church in such a way that a word from him was considered important. These twenty-five verses need to be read with that in mind.

### **a bond-servant of Jesus Christ**

Of the Greek words that are translated into English as "servant", the *doulos* of this passage is by far the most employed. A slave. Willing or unwilling. The word is from the Greek *dio*, which means "to bind." A bond-servant. Lowly.

Three apostles are so designated in New Testament letters. Paul styles himself a slave to the Romans, the Philippians, and Titus. Peter is *doulos* in his second letter. And John, appointed to deliver the Lord's letters to seven churches, calls himself the same.

James and Jude, brothers, are the other authors that describe themselves in this lowly manner.

Jesus had told them all that a *doulos* is not greater than his Master. If Jesus Himself, the Master, took the form of a slave, per Paul in Philippians 2:7, His disciples could follow Him into that lowliness.

Several passages include the rest of us in this nomenclature, even though Jesus told the first followers and by extension the rest of us, that He does not call us slaves, but friends. True, and thankfully so, but the child of God instinctively knows that he has been saved from a horrible pit. His gratefulness to the One Who saved him is ongoing and humbling. Better to be a slave of Jesus than to the passions which once ruled. Better this bondage than the bondage of this world and eternal hell.

**and brother of James,**

There was only one James that was well-known to the readers of this epistle. James the brother of John and one with the close-knit group that walked with Jesus, had been martyred, the first of the apostles to suffer in this way. Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great, rounded up and killed some Christians – Acts 12 – in a ploy to make himself more acceptable to the Jews. James was one of these.

From that point on in the New Testament, another man is meant when that name is employed, namely the half-brother of Jesus and full brother of Jude (Judas). He is first mentioned in that same Acts 12, as Peter instructs his friends to report his escape from prison to “James and to the brothers.” James has become a trusted member of the apostolic group, seemingly in fact, its leader.

Though Peter speaks first at the Jerusalem Council, reported in Acts 15, it is this non-apostle James whose wisdom and instruction carries the day. Peter may have been the recognized leader, but he was also itinerant. It seems that James had the administrative skills

needed to organize and direct the Jerusalem assembly of apostles and their followers in Peter's many absences.

As it is "apostles and elders" who gathered together to consider the issue of Acts 15, I believe it is proper to label James, and by association Jude, as an elder in the Lord's church. This title seems to be confirmed later in Acts (21:18) as Paul once more reports to James and receives directions from him.

And so, for Jude to identify himself here as "brother of James" was to make it clear that his words represented all that was apostolic and therefore authoritative in the early church.

Jude's brother wrote the book with his name attached, no more than ten to fifteen years after the Lord ascended. After his term of leadership, he was martyred, per Josephus, in the year 62. If indeed Jude did not write until well into the 70's, his work serves as a book-end (minus Revelation) of the books of the New Testament, for all the apostles except John had probably been martyred by now.

So, mentioning James in the salutation of his letter was necessary for some new believers who did not have a recollection of his more significant brother of years past.

#### **To those who are the called,**

Paul, to the Romans (1:6) and Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:2), as well as Peter (2 Peter 1:3), address letters to the called of God.

The Scriptures speak of two callings. One is general: "many are called but few are chosen." The second is referenced in Romans 8, among other places, as a very specific invitation. Paul with Jesus says that there was a group of people that were predestined to salvation, and God called them, and they responded and they will never perish for they are in the hands of Christ and His Father. This is known as "effective" calling, that is, what God causes to happen will have its desired effect.

It is to these latter that Jude addresses his letter. His words would make no sense to those myriads of earth's population who have merely heard the message, but rejected it. Those who have heard and received and are therefore God's called and chosen, will delight in this little letter, as it defines for them the boundaries of the Kingdom and puts on the outside of those boundaries all wicked liars and their lies.

### **beloved in God the Father,**

The Received Text, from which comes the King James and the New King James, has the word for "sanctified" here, and with some weight of authority.

The standard Greek for "beloved" is used three times in the body of Jude (3, 17, 20), and is so translated. A different word for "beloved" is used in verse one in some texts, whereas a word unrelated to love is used in the Received Text, namely *hagiosmenois*, "sanctified."

The Received Text reads, word for word transliterated into English: *In God the Father sanctified and in Jesus Christ kept, called [ones].*

The church leaders all demanded holiness of the people of God. Holiness in connection with the Word was a factor at stake in Jude's mind. They had been set aside – made holy – by the Word of God, and there were people among them now threatening to vulgarize, carnalize that word with their false additions.

Jude certainly knew the admonition that states that without holiness no one will see the Lord. Thus he reminds them in the very greeting that they have been made holy.

If indeed the love of God is the theme intended,

It was the love of the Father, after all, that gave us to Jesus (John 10:30). The Father's love for the Son is to be in us as Christ is in us (John 17:26). John also tells us in his epistle of the manner of

love the Father has given to us that we should be called His sons (1 John 3:1).

The promise that the Father will love us is also in the farewell address of Jesus (John 14:27). In that same discourse, Jesus states plainly that the Father loves us because we have loved His Son and believed in Him.

Paul would add that the Father (God) “shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

Loved by God or set apart to God as a special people? Of course, both are true, and there is overlapping in the ideas. Paul uses one of each – beloved and sanctified – in his greetings to Rome and Corinth. The idea of being loved and being holy is sprinkled throughout the epistles of all the letter-writers.

#### **and kept for Jesus Christ:**

The word for kept here is used often in Scripture and carries with it the idea of guarding from loss or injury. It is translated “kept”, as here, and “preserved”, interchangeably.

Paul prays that our spirit, soul and body will all be preserved complete (1 Thessalonians 5:23). He tells Timothy that he is convinced that the one whom he believes is able to guard, or keep, or preserve whatever Paul has entrusted to Him (2 Timothy 1:12).

Jesus prays in John 17:11-12 that the Father will keep (guard, preserve) the disciples in the Father’s name. He states to the Father that He – Jesus – was indeed already keeping them in this way.

Jude himself will use the term again at the end of his letter (v. 24), declaring that God is able to keep us from stumbling. Same word.

It is of the security of God’s people that Jude speaks. Jesus promised us that those who are called to Him will never perish, but have everlasting life. No exceptions are offered by Jesus or any apostle. He saves. He keeps. He finishes the work.

Though the Greek in all manuscripts is the same, some translators want to say we are kept *in* Jesus, others *for* Jesus. Still others prefer *by*. Since there is no preposition in the Greek, we are dependent on the case of the noun and the context, for the actual word.

Other uses of “kept” in Scripture would seem to point to “by”. Jesus kept the disciples and prayed the Father would keep them and us. That sounds like a preposition of agency to me. “Kept by” God and Christ until that day.

But grammatically and even contextually, all three words could fit here. Bottom line: we are kept! Preserved! Guarded! By the greatest of all Guards. We are going to arrive intact and on time!

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

The traditional greeting from Paul involved “grace and peace.” Twice, to Timothy, he adds “mercy.” Peter also follows the grace and peace formula, while 2 John enjoins grace, mercy, and peace, as does Paul to the young minister.

Jude alone uses the combination of words before us. Though it is probably unwise to attach great significance to a mere greeting, I believe the writers of Scripture were indeed led to place a blessing on those who would read their writings through the centuries.

God’s *mercy* on Jude’s audience is demonstrated in the letter itself, in that it warns God’s people of false ones among them. Churches without a warning of the false will be led to think that all is true. Whatever is, is. Or as we hear often, “It is what it is.” Deal with it. We are all different. We are all equal before God. Live and let live. On and on go similar sentiments of false congregations. Left unchecked, such philosophies will destroy the church and the individuals within.

But Jude pleads for mercy on his hearers. Mercy to be kept from the wolves who will devour mercilessly.

When the wolf is exposed and expelled that same church can now experience the *peace* of God. Those who stir into the mix of a work of God, their own ideas and the concepts of the world, bring agitation and discomfort. There is an uneasy response to the world's emissaries among us. Then responses, sometimes angry, sometimes as worldly as the wolf's. Confusion arises. Warfare. Divisions.

But Jude wishes for peace. And when the "prophet" or "teacher" is forced to move on, what a calm spirit descends on the people of God again!

Jude also desires the *love* of God to be manifest. Evil men have agendas that point away from love and direct men to controversy, argument, anger, hatred. What even feels like love at first turns out to be a counterfeit love a self-love that parades itself as agape.

Jude prays for the real thing to descend on the churches where evil ones have crept in, a hatred of those things which God hates, and thus a love for that which God loves.

And Jude wants all three of these things to be multiplied. The meaning is clear. More and more and more of the mercy and peace and love of God. More of God Himself.



## II. PURPOSE

**3Beloved, while I was making every effort to write to you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.**

Most commentaries say that Jude had one intention in mind, then changed his intent. "I was going to write nice things, but I've changed my mind: now I must write negative things."

But the Greek – in all the manuscripts – simply states that "all diligence" was being given to write about the faith they all shared. That diligence demanded a response to the current attacks on the faith. Hence: "The current crisis of the churches, being invaded by wolves, grabbed my attention, drained my energy, and forced me to call us to unite against the enemy."

There is no necessity in the text to assume that Jude had had a change of plans. Being in his position of leadership with his brother, and having been associated with apostles and apostolic writings, he knew the church was in trouble. With all diligence he had to address that trouble. Now let us break apart that statement into smaller components. First,

### **our common salvation:**

The true unity of the Christian church can be expressed in things outward and inward. One thing every child of God possesses is salvation. Whether looked at as something Jesus did for us or Jesus does in us, all true believers can tell of a Savior Who died in their place. This is where it all began and begins in us. Jesus died for those who would believe in Him. When those foreknown saints make contact with the blood of Jesus Christ they are ushered into the Kingdom of God and suddenly become united to the invisibly-boundaried church of God.

The false teachers threaten this unity with their add-ons to and subtractions from the message. Jude wanted to make His friends aware of this as soon as possible. Next we look at

**contend earnestly:**

Struggle. Fight. Words not too common among us in this new generation, but words of God that need to be heeded regardless. In the context of the epistle, Jude would first have us to be aware of the fight and the warriors on the other side, verses 4-16. Those believers in our midst today who try to enlighten us along these lines are often referred to as “heresy-hunters” and phrases even more derogatory. They are written off as negative and unneeded in the light of the love of God. They need to read Jude.

But awareness of evil is not enough. Jude points his readers to the apostles, and encourages us to listen also to them (17-19). Then he tells us to build ourselves in the faith, become aware of it, let it become a part of us (20), to pray in the Holy Spirit so as to discern what is good and evil in the church (20), keep ourselves in God’s love, not allowing our hatred of evil to become a hatred of people (21), to keep our eyes on the coming of Jesus so that we not lose sight of the purpose of our fight (21).

Further, he specifies how individuals within the church, having been attacked by a wolf, will have to be dealt with (22-23). Some will be in the doubting stage. Others, half-swallowed. Still others, nearly digested by these monsters of iniquity that have waged warfare on God’s people.

This is our struggle. It is ongoing and fierce. But it is not a fleshly war. Jude talks not about swords and Crusades and Inquisitions and imprisonments. Rome could have used Jude’s wisdom.

Side note. The single word normally used for “struggle” in the Greek has had a Greek preposition added to it, accounting for the word “earnestly” being added in the English. This is no ordinary struggle. Peace-mongers, take note. Now, what about that expression,

## **the faith**

Jude speaks not here of faith, but of “the faith.” Not of believing, but of that which is to be believed among us. Over thirty times in the writings of Paul and scattered elsewhere in the New Testament one will find reference to “the faith.” What exactly is **the faith** of which Jude speaks?

It will become clear as we peruse these quotations that **the faith**, at least at first, cannot refer to the completed canon of Scripture, that is, the 66 books of the Bible, and especially not the 27 books of the New Testament. The early writers of New Testament Scripture spoke of **the faith** as an accomplished present-day fact. There is no question that the further writings of the apostles and their associates enhanced that faith, but its essence was not initially a book.

Jesus talks about how in the end times many will turn away from **the faith** (Matthew 24:10).

Luke speaks of priests obedient to **the faith**, of a false prophet trying to turn people from **the faith**, and of apostles strengthening disciples, encouraging them to continue in **the faith** (Acts 6:7, 13:8, 14:22).

So far, **the faith** is a system of belief from which one can turn and in which one can be strong.

By far, Paul uses the term more than any Bible writer:

In Romans Paul talks of “obedience to **the faith**” of Abraham (1:5, 4:16, 16:26).

The Corinthians are admonished to stand firm in **the faith** and to examine themselves as to whether they are even in **the faith** (I, 16:13; II, 13:5).

Galatians mentions **the faith** of Jesus preached by Paul, a faith revealed after the law came (1:23, 2:16, 3:23).

Ephesians makes the promise that one day we will all come into the unity of **the faith** (4:13).

In Philippians is **the faith** of the gospel and **the faith** of Christ (1:27, 3:9).

In Colossians we are to continue in **the faith** and be established in it (1:23, 2:7).

And in the pastoral epistles, letters addressed to fellow ministers of the Word of God, the phrase is used no less than ten times. Timothy is Paul's son in **the faith**. He is told of the mystery of **the faith, the faith** that is in Christ Jesus. He points out again the possibility of denying **the faith**, fighting the good fight of **the faith** and much more (1 Timothy 1:2, 1:19, 3:9, 3:13, 4:1, 4:6, 5:8, 6:10, 6:12, 6:21).

This unique entity is mentioned by an angel in John's revelation, a group of people who "keep the commandments of God and **the faith** of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).

We gather from all of this that there is a heavenly substance, a collection of ideas, a package of blessings, a system of thought, a series of mysteries. Say it however you must, it deals with the Gospel, Jesus, the plan of God, the ways of God, our salvation, known as "the faith." It is worth fighting for, and it is further described here:

**which was once for all handed down to the saints**

The word for "once" here is what you would expect. It means "one time." The words "for all" were added without authority in the more modern versions. There is no Greek evidence that those words should have been added. The translator was simply trying to emphasize the fact of a one-time handing-down by using our common expression, "once and for all." Better to keep with the original here. Once. One time. In the past, in context here, and usually when that word is used.

Paul: I was beaten with rods, and once I was stoned.

Hebrews: Jesus entered once, one time, into the holy place.

And also in Hebrews, a future usage: God shook the earth, but He's going to shake it once more. One time.

Jude himself uses the word again in verse 5. The translators had to be consistent here, and the text looks a bit stretched to handle their consistency: "... I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all..." The simple KJV rendering, "You once knew...", i.e., "At one point, you knew what I am talking about here..."

Anyway, this body of knowledge, this system of thought, this very mind of God was at one time "delivered" to the saints.

That word "delivered" also is perfect for this context. The Greek means "to surrender," and by implication, to "transmit." The modern translations say "handed down", and that idea can be included, but there is no necessity of leaving the "delivery" idea. I surrender this information to you, I surrender this package to you, I deliver it.

Paul echoes this, or perhaps we should say Jude echoes Paul in 1 Corinthians 15. Inconsistently, even the modern translations use the word "deliver" to tell us how Paul got the gospel message into the ears of the Corinthian church. "I delivered to you what I also received."

That passage also gives us a clue as to Jude's meaning here. The faith we preach has been delivered.

The first package in the delivery process came as a little baby in a little town called Bethlehem. When that baby grew and did what he was ordained to do, just before He left, He promised someone else would be sent. Another package, part two of the delivery was to arrive. That's what happened at Pentecost. The Spirit entered the apostles, and with Him came all the truth we would ever need to lead this life. The faith.

Another apostle, Paul, was called alongside by Jesus Himself, and to him was delivered the rest of the story, the fullness of the Gospel. That Gospel, as Paul says, was delivered to him, and through him to others, and through those others to us. The saints have received the delivered packages. The faith has been given to us: The written word of these apostolic witnesses, and the Author of that word to help us understand what they said.

By the way, we can't have one without the other. Oh, anyone can own a Bible. Anyone can learn how to do things that look like the Holy Spirit. But until the Spirit and the Word work together in a man's life, the man is not born again, and will never see the Kingdom of God. And Jesus will say to that man, I never knew you. Bible scholars and miracle workers alike will be so severely disappointed on that day. Be sure that both are working.

Be sure that our religion is not just Jesus and me. Be sure our religion is not just cramming our head full of knowledge. Stay connected to the Word, yes, and through the church stay connected to the ministration of the Spirit as ordained through God's chosen leadership in each congregation.

### **The saints**

This is a term used throughout the New Testament to refer to the church of Jesus Christ. The holy ones. The ones made holy by the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, by the way, there can be no holy people.

Fourteen of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament make this reference to "saints", holy ones. And in Revelation, from chapter 5 to 20, there are no less than thirteen references to them.

I contend that the term saints used by Matthew and Luke and Paul, and here in Jude, is the same group of people seen by John at the end of history.

Some have claimed that there is no church from Revelation 5 to the end. In fact, the saints are the church, and they are all over that

book. Some have further claimed that there is no Holy Spirit in those chapters. Yet even those people admit that there is a group of people that they have aptly named “tribulation saints.” Saints. Holy ones. Again I ask, how can there be a holy person without the Holy Spirit?

There is no phrase “tribulation saints” in your Bible, just for the record. Just like there is no phrase “Roman saints” or “famine saints” or “Pauline” saints or any other kind of saints. Saints are saints. To imagine that sainthood changes in the book of Revelation is to claim a Gnostic-like enlightenment that I for one have never received.

Also be aware: just as the book of Revelation does not mention the term “church” in the chapters in question, so Jude does not mention it. But we all know that Jude is referring here in verse three to the people of God we know of as the church.

But to the matter before us. The saints of God are under attack, and Jude wants passionately to tell us about it.

#### **4For certain persons have crept in unnoticed,**

There is a Greek word related to the one before us here that has to do with how false people or ideas sneak in. This word goes beyond that and lets us know that the entry has already taken place and these false ones are sitting there beside you. The word means to “settle in alongside”, to set down or lodge, or be in place, stealthily. They’re here, says Jude. They are among us, sitting in our pew, as it were.

The modern translations, in their constant desire not to be insensitive to gender, use the word “persons”, although it is probably certain that the Greek will do fine here, thank you. The word is “men.” As the true prophets of the first centuries were men, so the false prophets and teachers were men.

Now begins the long description of these men. They existed in Jude’s day and could easily be identified, using Jude as a guide. They

exist in our day, also using Jude as a guide. As you hear the long description, certain names will come to light, and hopefully you will decide in your heart never to listen to or support such men again. They are all over the air waves, and they sit in your churches. Avoid them. Expose them. Get them out of your assemblies!

**those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation,**

Jude tells us that not only is he going to “mark them out” for us, but that they were already “marked out.” Marked out? The KJV uses “ordained” here. Same word in Greek. It is used in Romans 15:4 about passages of Scripture that were written “aforetime”, before, regarding the privileges of our salvation.

“Ordained” does not give the full strength of the word here, nor does “marked out”, in my opinion. The literal writing of the prophecies is what is in Jude’s minds. Someone warned us about this in writing a long time ago. Someone pronounced judgment and condemnation on these imposters. Jude is not bringing a new case before your virtual tribunal. These men have already been tried and found guilty and their sentence has been announced.

What prophecies did Jude have in mind? Jude will tell us what he means in verses 5-7. He will give Old Testament examples of people who did similar things and suffered the judgment of God. He may even have reference to statements of Jesus and Paul and Peter, who also warned of these evil men (Matthew 7, Acts 20, 2 Peter 3), though their warnings were not “long beforehand.”

What kind of people are they?

**ungodly persons**

The opposite of pious or righteous or reverent. Wicked. He begins by using one of the worst words possible to describe another human being. We shy away from words like these today because we are afraid of being accused of judging. We need to get over this pronto. Jesus warned about hypocritical judging, that is,



condemning others when you are guilty of the same things yourself. But we see from the example of Jude and Peter and Paul and Jesus Himself that to judge/discern evil and the ones who are committing it, is no sin, but is in fact required of the church, especially its leaders, so that the false ones among us do not get the upper hand.

Today's church is unfortunately saturated with false teachers for this very reason. Everyone wants to live and let live. Where that motto came from, I know not, but it smells like something hellish. What! Let the murderer live and kill my family members? What! Let the adulterer live and steal my wife? What! Let the abuser of Scripture live and deny the person and work of the Savior?

No! Expose! Warn! These are life and death issues.

The men ravaging the church already in the first century were wicked men, and Jude says so.

### **who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness**

It was only a matter of time before men would come along and interpret Paul's Gospel this way. Hey, Paul says we are not under the law, but under grace! We're free! Live it up! God will forgive anything. No more rules. No more bondage. No more legalism. Get out and enjoy life!

It's the "anything goes" mentality so prevalent among us. Don't judge me. Jesus has set me free! My personal life is my personal life. Go share your Mosaic Gospel with someone else. I'm liberated.

"Licentious" of the NASB is probably to be preferred over the KJV "lascivious." The latter is included in the former, but it is the former that is given by Strong as the better meaning. The false teachers proclaimed that the Gospel gave license to sin.

Anti-Romanists have rightly decried the traffic in indulgences that Catholicism promoted over the centuries. Buying grace, purchasing the right to do as one pleases with no consequences. But these same Protestants take it a step further. No purchase necessary.

God's grace is so free that whatever comes into my mind to do, I can do, now that the law has been nailed to Christ's cross.

Jude makes it plain here. There is the grace of God. And there is another entity called "license." One is not the other, but a fast-talking false teacher can make one believe it is. Run from such men.

The grace of God says that all sins one has committed will be forgiven. It also says, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid!" To presume upon the grace of God is to prove that one has never truly received that grace, but rather is trying to capitalize on it. One who has been forgiven does not demand the opportunity to keep on sinning. Sin has become an awful thing to him. Sin killed His Lord. Sin brought Heaven to Earth to a cross to a grave. Sin must be avoided, because I love Him Who first loved me.

**and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.**

There is a clear textual difference here. The more modern translations, based on the older texts (as discussed above) have omitted "God". The KJV has "Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ." Using two words for "Lord", Jude, in that translation, differentiates here between Father and Son. There is the sovereign (Lord) God, the Father, and then the honorable (Lord) Jesus Christ. One could read this as two separate Lords or Gods.

The NASB which we are following, properly uses two English words to translate two Greek words, to speak of the same Person of the Trinity, the one under attack, Jesus Christ.

Far from attacking the Deity of Jesus by removing "God", the NASB and others affirm that Christ is Sovereign *and* Honorable Lord. Jude, who once rejected this Jesus as a fraud, is claiming Jesus to be our only Master and Lord. Jude as a good Jew, believed in the one God of Israel and now He says there is still only one God, and that He came to us as the Lord Jesus Christ.

How it was that the false teachers were denying Jesus will be brought out throughout the letter. Twisting the teaching about grace, giving people a license to sin, encouraging gross immorality, rejecting authority, are just a few of the indictments. It is not necessary for a false teacher to come out and say, "I don't believe in Jesus," or "I don't believe Jesus is the Son of God," to deny Jesus. These men denied Jesus by opposing His teachings and ways.

Now we visit the examples of people in older times who did the very thing these men are doing in the church, and who received the judgment that these men will also receive. Of course, the discussion includes any among us today who have departed from the life, holiness, and very words of Jesus Christ.

### III. EXAMPLES of PAST APOSTASY

#### **5Now I desire to remind you,**

Hear the heart of the man of God. They don't sweep things under the rug. They are not "live and let live" people. They are fully in touch with what God has said, and able to contrast it with what man is saying. They remember history, and learn from it. They care about your soul enough to take you aside and warn you of danger. They take no chances, even if their audience has heard this before, as Jude next suggests:

#### **though you know all things once for all,**

"All things" is merely "this" in the Majority Text. But the word for "once" is the same and as I indicated above, does not need "for all" to make the idea complete. The KJV's "ye once knew this" seems sufficient to carry the idea. "I'm going to tell you some things you probably already know..."

The letter of Jude thus becomes an affirmation of already revealed warnings of Jesus, Paul and Peter, who had warned the brothers of savage wolves that would enter the flock. This repetition of apostolic truths seems to be one of the reasons the early church could accept this letter as authentic and authoritative.

#### **that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt,**

This long and incredible tale is recounted in the book of Exodus, chapters 1 to 14. Here is recounted the situation of the Israelites after a king arose who did not know of, or perhaps, acknowledge the work of, Joseph. The subsequent enslavement of the Jews follows and a cry to God for help. The Savior-to-be Moses is then born and raised and called. He is sent to Pharaoh and through a series of horrific events in the land of Egypt, the Jews are brought out to freedom. They are exhilarated and grateful and filled with praises to the great I Am.

For awhile.

The falling away begins early and continues often.

**subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.**

Just a few chapters after the great deliverance, in Exodus 32, we read of the impatient idolatry of God's people in connection with the Golden Calf created by Aaron. Moses is dead. God must be seen. All the great miracle has been erased in their thinking, along with its God and its human channel. Three thousand will die on this most awful of days in the wilderness. Unbelief. Destruction.

In Numbers 11, another account of complaining, and the Lord's fire burns to consume. In that same chapter is the story of the demanded quail and a severe plague that kills many more. Unbelief. Destruction.

The ultimate in unbelief and the resultant judgment is told in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of Numbers. Spies are sent into the land of promise. Two of the twelve sent come back with a challenging but faith-filled report. Yes, there is trouble, but we are greater than the trouble. We will overcome. Not so, the ten. Their evil report stops the hand of God to save and turns that hand into a hand of forty years of judgment, as one by one, every Israelite who left Egypt, twenty years old or older, will die in the wilderness, because of unbelief. Only the youth will enter into Canaan and conquer, and that will not take place until four decades have passed!

God subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.

And mark it well, says Jude, those among the people of God in this generation of so-called believers, so-called people of God, those among us who are led astray by false teachers who are trying even now to devour your faith and your very life, will also perish. It is no small thing to depart from the living God, to listen to voices that are not God's voices, to grumble and complain at God's provision of grace, and desire to go back to the law of Sinai or the fleshpots of Egypt. You will die in this wilderness without hope and without God.

Example number two:

**6And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode,**

Peter also mentions these angels who sinned (2 Peter 2:4). The sin, described in Genesis 6:1-3, seems to be the entering of fallen angels, or demons, into men, possessing them, and using them to cohabit with women in order, perhaps, to create a super race that could take over the world in defiance of Yahweh. Soon after this incident we are introduced to the “Nephilim”, the giants of old.

This was the last straw in that evil world of yore. Soon after these happenings came the worldwide judgmental flood. And Jude uses this as an example of what can happen in the church when demon-influenced men are allowed to spread their corruption among us. Judgment must come upon those who come from the Satanic domain into the Lord’s domain.

We learn here and elsewhere that there is a proper location for “the sons of God”, that is, the fallen angels of Genesis 6 and Job 1-2. When they leave their assigned place in the heavens and come to earth, only trouble follows. These pests, occasionally released into the atmosphere around us have been a continual source of disruption since Eden. But their fate is sure, says Jude, following Peter, who affirms that they are even now “committed to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment.”

In Jude it is worded thus:

**He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,**

Jesus speaks of “eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). But He also indicates that “those on His left”, evil men who would not help Him in His distress, who would not serve or follow Him, will also be in that place.

The disobedient angelic spirits are not in that fire now. But they are in prison, as Peter mentions in 1 Peter 3, unless permitted from time to time to come out and help Satan with his work here. Most

are bound, waiting for that day when the public judgment of God will be pronounced upon them and they will be sent to their doom. That doom is mentioned in Revelation 20, coinciding with the doom of anyone not found in the Book of Life:

“(verses 10 and 15) And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever... and if anyone was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

And among those, intimates Jude, are certain persons who have crept in unnoticed among the believers, “marked out for this condemnation.” Wake up church! Are you sure you know the person sitting in the pew with you, or looking down on you from the pulpit?

There is yet another story from Mosaic history to demonstrate what will happen to the unrepentant:

**7just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them,**

This story begins in Genesis 18:22 and continues through 19:29. The focus of that episode is Sodom, where Lot’s house stood. But early on we learn that Gomorrah is somewhat of a “twin city” with Sodom, also slated for destruction. Jude picks up on the language of 19:29 and includes the surrounding towns that were decimated in the Heavenly blast.

No less than six prophets of God, and the Son of God Himself, refer to this singular tale in warning people of their day. Jude joins them, and compares the incident to the judgment awaiting false prophets who attempt to create Sodom-like characteristics in the church of God.

**since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality**

The lure of the flesh had captivated Lot’s family. Getting them to leave under the threat of judgment proved difficult even for angels.

The wife in particular was in love with the carnal lifestyle of Sodom and the suburbs thereof. The daughters, saturated with their culture, had no compunction later in the story with laying with their own father to bring forth a seed on the earth. How utterly displeased God was with this arrangement is shown in the fruit of their sin. Their sons Moab and Ammon grew to produce a family that would forever be at war with Israel.

The expressions “indulged” (NASB) and “giving themselves over to” (KJV) are not in any Greek text, but are an attempt to translate only one word, *ekporneuo*, “to be utterly unchaste.” It is a concept that is ever growing in Western civilization and loosely means “anything goes” sexually. My body is my own, I can do with it what I will.

Homosexuality was not the only practice in view. Recall that Lot offered his daughter to these monsters that appeared at his door, knowing that some of them might be interested.

The Canaanite curse had taken strong effect already in this land one day to belong to the seed of Abraham.

Note again that whatever Jude is saying, and the Scriptures have said, about the “they” of Sodom, refers equally to the “these” of Jude’s church, and our own.

**and went after strange flesh,**

Strange? The word simply means “other.” Other forms of sexual pleasure. Other than the norm. Other than the allowed. Other than one would expect. Other than the natural. Not satisfied with what God had provided for them as a means of procreation and pleasure and the resultant family, they had broken the bonds of legalism, as they might have put it. They were liberated. Lot would not tell them that only one form of sexual expression was ordained of God. Who was Lot but a rich hypocrite whose wife and daughters loved our way better than his? How dare he sit in judgment on us. Down with bondage. We are free men.



More and more they remind me of my own sickening nation that needs a repentance greater than theirs, since it has lived in the light of God's word for centuries now!

But at least the church is free from all of this corruption? Not at all! It is to decadent church members that Jude addresses this fiery warning! Homosexuality and perversion of all sorts in the church you say? Oh yes, and in some bodies called churches, a man or woman of such perversion is called pastor. People of this evil persuasion are united in a mock ceremony called marriage by some frightened pastors who do not want to lose members of their flock with the resultant loss of income, due to being straight-laced about sex. May they read the story of Sodom intensely, and the prophets who bring them up incessantly, and Jude who gives us a final warning to rid our churches of evil.

For, says Jude, Sodom and Gomorrah and their suburbs

**are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.**

We know that the fires that destroyed these evil cities are long extinguished. But their history reminds us that more fire is coming. This fire will be eternal. Jesus, the Truth from God, says in Mark 9, that hell is a place of unquenchable fire. He says it several times. Will we believe Him? The fire will not go out. So if the fires of lust continue to burn in one's soul, he must be made aware that the unquenchable fires of God await him.

#### IV. DESCRIPTION of PRESENT APOSTASY

##### **8Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming,**

So it reads in the NASB, but though there is no difference in the Greek texts they follow, the translators have come up with different interpretations of what Jude was saying.

The KJV rightly talks here about “these dreamers” albeit with no authority it adds the word “filthy.” A closer look at the word for “dream” gives us no help. So we have only the context to guide us.

Nothing is mentioned about dreaming in the story of Israel leaving Egypt, the angels who cohabited with men, or the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. So why does Jude use this concept?

We look in vain throughout the New Testament for another use of this word. We see nothing in the rest of Jude that points to a night dream.

We are forced then into an interpretation that is less than literal. Though it is possible that these men we are to discuss were/are so evil, so saturated with Satan’s plans, that they dreamed about their wickedness at night, it seems more probable that Macarthur has hit on the truth when he comments,

“... this refers to a confused state of soul or abnormal imagination, producing delusions and sensual confusion... Perhaps they falsely claimed these were dreams/visions from God.”

Now we see why the KJV people wanted to put the word “filthy” in that place. That which is not from God, yet purports to be from God, is indeed dirty and unacceptable to a child of God.

Yet look at the landscape of the Western church today. By “Western” I mean the un-persecuted church. The church that is free to do and believe and imagine what it wants. The church that has reminded many of the days of Judges when everyone did what was right in his own eyes. But if the eyes of men are blinded by false visions and dreams, their fruit will be filth. And so it is.

Three outcomes of such eyesight, the false teachers

**defile the flesh,**

Recall that he is comparing the Old testament stories to these New Testament apostates. When thinking of defiling the flesh, think Sodom and Gomorrah. Or even the angels in their new sexual roles. Sexual sin is defilement. Dirty. Filthy. Nothing in our changed attitudes in this modern culture has changed that. Jude's false people were evidently people of false and immoral lifestyles. Perhaps this was the result of the liberation movement of that day to free people from the bondage of Paul's teachings. Or the result of their expanding Paul's grace doctrine to license. The virus let loose in that early church has been with us ever since. Liberty but no responsibility. Liberty but no love except self-love. A new bondage to sin after being set free from it.

These false dreamers of dreams imagined that one could walk in the flesh,

**and reject authority,**

"Despise dominion" (KJV) says the same thing. Literally, "and lordship, set aside."

As the sinning angels of Genesis these men leave their proper place of submission to Christ and His ordained leaders, and propel themselves into new roles, some even calling themselves apostles when they are apostates. Some considered themselves personally anointed to teach when in fact they were appointed by Satan to deceive. What they dreamed in their bed or easy chair, whatever imaginations filled their heart, whatever ideas entered their heads, they were quick to say, God spoke to me! And it didn't matter what God was truly speaking through the official church, guided by the Bible. These men had heard from God after all!

So it has been. So it will always be. We must keep our noses in the Book, or we will be led by those noses into chains of darkness with the false.

Among us in the church today and in Jude's time, are those who live lives of flesh, call their beliefs words from God,

**and revile angelic majesties.**

"Speak evil of dignities" (KJV). Here again, this time in the NASB, a word is added that is more interpretation than translation. "Angelic" is not in the Greek, but the explanation of Jude that follows, regarding Michael the archangel, probably justifies the addition.

2 Peter 2:10 uses this same phrase. "Revile" or "speak evil of" is from the word from which we derive "blaspheme." Jude is calling the false teachers blasphemers of holy things. He will use the same word in verse ten, and add that the false teacher has no clue about the worth of the one he is blaspheming.

The word for "dignities" or "majesties" is the common word *doxa* which simply means "glory". Used in the plural in a context like these, it would mean someone who is worthy of honor or dignity.

Jude will give an example now of one who knew exactly who Satan is, but did not "blaspheme." Compare this to the men among us today who have such familiarity with angelic beings. The good ones come around and are palsy-walsy with them. The bad ones, including the prince of the power of the air, are regularly rebuked by these power-hungry ministers of unrighteousness.

They "bind Satan." They "cast out Satan." They speak to all the evil things in the world and make them go away. But not really. You've seen it, heard of it. Pure imagination. Pure visionary. "In your dreams" theology.

**9But Michael the archangel,**

So, the false teachers are rebels against authority, all authority, even the angelic sort. They have no clue as to the true majesty of beings in the spirit world, yet they go on and on about them as though they had been born in the heavenlies themselves. They

even feel they have the power to rebuke and revile and trash the highest authorities of the enemy camp.

Jude shows them now how foolish is such thinking by giving them an example of true angelic conversations. He refers to the dialogue between one Michael, a chief of the angels, and the prince of the underworld, called here simply the devil.

Michael is only mentioned in two other books of the Bible. In the twin prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. He is called “one of the chief princes”, “your [Daniel’s] prince”, “the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people,” all in Daniel. In Revelation he is at the head of an army of angels waging war with the dragon, or serpent, “called the devil and Satan.”

We glean from these few passages that Michael is the heavenly captain that has been assigned to deal with the matters that concern Israel. He has an army under him. He will wage the final battle against Satan, as Satan will be invading Michael’s own province and striving for world domination.

As to the term “archangel”, used only once by Paul, it is impossible to tell in that Thessalonians passage whether the “voice of the archangel” is Michael’s voice, or the voice of that of another equally authoritative voice in heaven.

That’s all we have of him or need to have. Digging deep into angelic matters has never been safe or expected of us. One can see how the cults have tried to take things a little farther with this special being. He has been called everything from the angel of the Lord to Jesus Himself. There is no shred of evidence that Michael is anything or anyone other than the facts have led us so far. At least, in the Bible.

**when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses,**

Here is where the book of Jude takes us into some uncharted territory. In perusing uninspired documents available to him in the

first century, our author believed that certain portions of them could be taken as truth.

This is not the only case of such thinking. The books of Maccabees, included still in Catholic Bibles, do contain historical facts, and are actually very important history. But much of the church, and the entire Jewish community, have not accepted Maccabees as inspired revelation.

So it is with *The Assumption of Moses* from which the present story is taken.

*See under inspiration question 1 in introductory matters above for the nature of the quoted book.*

**did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"**

From the *Interactive Bible* website:

"The dispute referred to by Jude was recorded in the now lost ending of an apocryphal Jewish work called the Assumption of Moses. But the tradition can be reconstructed from references to that account in a number of early Christian writings (see Bauckham, pp. 65–76). Satan laid claim to the corpse of Moses for his kingdom of darkness because Moses had killed an Egyptian (Exod. 2:12). He was therefore a murderer, however virtuous his subsequent achievements, and so was unworthy of honorable burial. Satan, in his ancient role of accuser of God's people (Rev. 12:10), was seeking to prove Moses' guilt. In response to the charge, Michael did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against Satan. Barclay (DSB, p. 188) expresses the opinion of most commentators that Jude means: 'If the greatest of the good angels refused to speak evil of the greatest of the evil angels, even in circumstances like that, surely no human being may speak evil of any angel.' (UBCS 1-2 Pe/Jud, Jude 9, 1992 AD)"

Those who may have trouble with Jude's use of a writing that was ultimately rejected as inspired Scripture, can say that Jude is merely using the text as an example, as we might quote a story out of Dickens merely to illustrate our point, knowing that Dickens was a fiction writer and his story is not true factually.

Some might want to offer Jude a piece of advice, and say, for example, that it might have been safer for him to quote from Zechariah, an established prophet of the Jews. In Zechariah's prophecy, chapter 3, Satan is attempting to accuse Joshua the high priest. Immediately the Lord Himself interrupts, and says, "The Lord rebuke you, Satan!" The implication here is that only the Lord has the right to rebuke an angelic being as high as Satan. We must resist and flee, but never rebuke.

But offering a writer of Scripture advice is probably not the best of ideas.

"The Lord rebuke you!", and not "I rebuke you!" as the false teachers were proudly proclaiming, is the correction Jude is trying to enforce here. Would that many among us today could hear him. From Jude's day to ours,

**10But these men revile the things which they do not understand;**

As in verse 8, the word for "revile," or "speak against," is the Greek word from which we derive "blaspheme." The specific object of their blasphemy, or verbal opposition, is given as high-ranking angels. What does miniscule man know of the powers around us in the heavens? What of the wars alluded to by Daniel between forces for and against Israel? What does he know of angelic assignments? Which angel has been assigned to which person or groups of persons for which project?

We have men in the church today who claim to have inside information on such things. We highly doubt their revelations.

The mysteries about the angels are many, and should remain mysteries. How do they interact with humans? Why must women have a head covering because of angels? How is it that we will judge angels one day? What languages do angels speak?

Yet the false teachers, then and now, not only blaspheme the evil angels, but ask people to worship the good ones, claiming as their authority a dream they had, “inflated without cause by their fleshly mind (Colossians 2:18).” Filthy dreamers indeed!

But then, it is not just the things they don’t know that condemn them...

**and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed.**

Jude descends now from the atmosphere above us to the natural earthly ways of men. The false ones in your midst, says the man of God, are only human after all. No need to fear or follow them. They speak about a lot of things they know nothing about, and about a lot of other things that everyone knows about.

But those natural, carnal, topics, are as deadly as the supernatural. By the example of their lives, they lead others to believe that the Christian life is no different than their old fleshly life. They have animal instincts like all of us. But they have no inner life from the Spirit to keep that natural life intact. In that sense they are no higher than the animals, who also live by instinct, or nature. “I am what I am” they will tell you. “Don’t judge me,” they will proclaim, “you are no better than me.”

Now, three examples of what he means by this pronouncement:



Cain, Balaam, Korah.

### **11 Woe to them!**

In the New Testament writings, only Jude's illustrious half-brother applied this sort of warning to the false around him. *Woe* is an expression of God's grief against a person or group of people. Jude is distressed to his core about these infiltrators. We must be also.

### **For they have gone the way of Cain,**

Indeed a great picture of animal instinct. One sees it in sets of two children all the time. One wins a game or a sporting event, the other not. The teacher approves one assignment, not the other. Mother likes this behavior, but not that. The slighted one, because of nature, cannot hear the inner voice or the Voice from heaven that says, "Just do the right thing next time, and you'll be fine." Or "Just choose a sport you can excel in."

What they hear is rejection which often turns into jealousy and anger and worse.

The way of Cain also has to do with lukewarmness in things that matter. Sacrifices that are no sacrifices at all. Keeping outward observances properly with no attention to the heart. Surely the false prophet or teacher is in this realm. He does what he has to do to look like one of the crowd, but his heart is not with the program of the church, only his own program.

One like him in the New Testament would be Simon the magician of Acts 8. He did all the right things to become a part of the Christian church, including water baptism, and a measure of belief in the power of God and the message of Jesus. But when he offered money for the gift of the Holy Spirit, to further his own agenda in Samaria, Peter let him know that he had no part in Christ, for his

heart was not right. He was commanded to repent.

The false teachers could easily have been a part of the Christian church visibly. Confessing belief. Baptized. But secretly waiting for the time when they could be elevated to influential positions and pervert the body with their message.

**and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam,**

The worker is worthy of his hire, reasons even the false teacher. The plan of Balaam was their own plan. What was Balaam's error? We know that later he enticed Moabite women to come among the Israelite men and cause them to fall away from their God, bringing a curse finally upon these people that King Balak had long sought.

But I believe the error Jude references, tied as it is to "pay", goes back to the main story regarding this man, found in Numbers 22-24.

Balaam was offered huge sums of money by the king of neighboring Moab, to curse Israel, and his greedy heart accepted the invitation immediately. Though he went through the form of going to God about it, and receiving a negative answer, he later asked God for a second opinion. His mind could think of nothing but the overnight success of mountains of cash and worldwide recognition.

We get insights here as to how God "allows" things He does not love. The prophet was given the green light, then stopped by an angel from Heaven on the way to the assignment! Then once more allowed to proceed, with the strict warning that he must speak only what God said over His people.

It seems to me that the error of Balaam is the allowing of the possibility of being rich and famous, by becoming a prophet of God. Oh, Balaam is now famous among us. And the prophets, the true ones, sent by God to Israel, were every one of them harassed and

killed, including Christ the Prophet and Son of God.

When you see a greedy and rich prophet/apostle in our own day, claiming to be God's messenger, you can believe he has rushed headlong (run greedily, KJV) into the way of Balaam.

The word for "ran greedily" is one in the Greek, and means to "pour forth," to "gush out." "Rush" is probably a good choice. Balaam was in a hurry to have his life's dream of riches and fame come to pass by any means necessary, even cursing Israel, if God would allow it of course.

Balaam, like Cain, had a right-sounding, right-looking way about him. Externally he was approved. Inside, pure carnality. And men among us in Jude's day and our own, are no better.

**and perished in the rebellion of Korah.**

Jude's use of the past tense here is troubling, or should be. It sounds like some of the false teachers have already received their judgment.

Bible students surely recognize the name Korah. He and others put together a rebellion against the man of God, Moses, during the arduous journey of Israel through the deserts of Sinai (Numbers 16).

As Cain and Balaam, Korah felt he had certain "rights." Cain was the firstborn ever, son. Balaam, a man who could speak God's very words.

And Korah, a Levite, with all the privileges that attended thereto. Though not a priest, he was the sort of man who believed that a person "has to do what he has to do," regardless of the position he has been assigned. Moses was obviously a bad leader. So, "Let's get rid of him. God speaks to me and all Israelites as much as to Moses,

and in this case, even more. Down with Moses. Up with me and the council of 250 others that are with me.”

So he has a cause. A platform. A following. Some logic. Leadership skills. Turn him loose! Let’s see what he can do. Moses has had this job long enough. Let the young have a shot at it. Here we are entangled in the wilderness, and being told we have to stay here indefinitely because of some supposed fault of ours. Moses is all negative. Look on the bright side. I have better plans for you than that old man. Let’s update to the times.

These are the arguments that every false teacher and leader has brought before the people of God in every generation. Time for a new start. Question your elders and their teachings. There’s more to life than we are being told. This present system we are under is nothing but bondage and tradition. Let’s break free. Follow me. I’ll lead you to the real Promised Land.

Some of these Messiahs, if I understand Jude properly, have already been swallowed up in death. All the others will be. Watch out church, says Jude, when men stand before you and criticize true leaders and men of God. Watch out when strong personalities arise and make promises of immediate deliverance from troubles, financial success, your best life here and now, but make no mention of the cross of Jesus Christ, and persecution, and death to self and personal ambition.

These guys are still here. They haven’t all died yet. And if you don’t see who I am talking about yet, says Jude, let me tell you a little more about them... I don’t need to tell you their names. Look at their pictures, and you’ll recognize them:

**12These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts**

Love feasts. It is probably best that we know the fuller meaning of *agapais*, a plural form of *agape*, “love.” Many loves together, a feast of loves.

The *agape*, according to Unger, was “a simple meal of brotherly love celebrated daily in the apostolic times in connection with the Eucharist [communion service], the two being spoken of together as the Lord’s Supper. At this meal the Christians, in connection with their common Redeemer, ignored all distinctions of rank, wealth, and culture, and met as members of one family. At the feast the bishop (or presbyter [elder]) presided... Before eating, the guests washed their hands, prayer was offered, and the Scriptures were read. After the meal a collection was taken for widows and orphans, the kiss of charity was given, and communications from other congregations were read and answered.”

Unger goes on to relate how the simplicity of this meal was soon complicated by abuses from individuals. It could be that Jude is referencing some of them in our text. Certainly the apostle Paul was addressing them in Corinthians (1 Corinthians 11:20-34). People who brought their own food would eat alone and ahead of others, without sharing. Some were actually getting drunk. Paul cautions them about such behavior, that made it impossible to capture the spirit of what Jesus had in mind, a remembrance of His death. He tells them to eat at home if they must. If they are to come together and eat, they must wait on one another, and share.

This great advice was evidently not heeded through the decades that followed, and the beauty of sharing a simple meal with the people of God, in connection with remembering Jesus’ death, had to be abandoned.

Later, there came commands from “above” to fast before eating

the Lord's Supper, and a new era of church history began.

Neither extreme was commanded by the Lord. Men followed their own inclinations through the centuries. There is a wide divergence of opinion today as to whether meals and Communion should be one, but for the most part, the separation continues.

It would be good for some pastors to take a look at what is developing in the kitchen these days. More and more sumptuous meals are being created, costing many of the women to lose their church time altogether, worrying over the feast to follow. Much better, in my opinion, to do the cooking at home, and stress only over the worship and Word that takes place during that one time per week. It is so easy for God's people to lose their focus.

True fellowship has very little to do with food. And may the church not become the means of encouraging the obesity of its members.

But to Jude's comments. There were men hanging out at these love feasts who did not belong there. He calls them *spilades*. Two very closely-related (in spelling) Greek words have been referenced here by the translators. Though this word does seem to be the plural of the word that means "reef", the KJV translators seem to have confused it with the word meaning "spot" or "stain." Either word will serve to describe these men, but the NASB and a few other modern translations seem to have identified the correct meaning.

Strong's Greek dictionary informs us that *spilas* (reef) is translated *spot* in the KJV by confusion with the Greek *spilos* (spot).

And Berry's interlinear based on the Greek *Textus Receptus* from which the KJV is translated, reads here, "These are in your love feasts *sunken rocks...*"

With that sort of evidence, let us follow the imagery Jude brings

before us. A fellowship dinner of the early church. The emblems of the Lord's body and blood soon to be served, or maybe already served. And here are men, as dangerous as a reef of rocks sticking out into the water, ready to sink your boat if at all possible, sitting there like they belong with you.

These men are treacherous! Beware of them!

**when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves;**

Again, the Greek texts are in harmony. The English, at variance. The KJV has it, "they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear." Roughly the same. But is it merely that they are unashamed to be with you, or are they unashamed at how they take care of themselves first? The actual Greek reads: "feasting together fearlessly, themselves pasturing."

"Pasturing?" Even that doesn't get at the real truth. The word "feeding" or "pasturing" here is *poimaheeno* and it is the feeding being done by a shepherd, not by a sheep. It means to "tend" the sheep, to feed them.

These are men who claim boldly that they are leaders, even shepherds of the flock, but when they sit down at the table, watch them taking care of number one. They are among the ones Paul mentions in Corinthians, bringing their own food, eating at their own pace with their own people, and caring not one whit for you.

Beyond that, they have no shame in their selfishness, no "fear" that they are somehow out of place. They expect the church to accept them as they are, greedy and selfish and demanding of your favor.

**clouds without water, carried along by winds;**

Rain clouds in the sky are promises. You see them rolling in from a

distance, the sky grows dark with them, and you know a refreshing rain is coming. Water will soon be showering on your plants, your crops, your dry lawn. Animals will rush to the brooks and ponds and take their fill of life-giving H<sub>2</sub>O.

These men who have wormed their way into your church are like clouds, rain-clouds. But with no rain. They make great promises. Some give predictions of things to come. Some tell you that you will be rich and powerful if you will follow them. They promise liberty if you will just lay down the bondages of the past and look at the Scriptures in their new way.

The winds of false spirits blow these clouds in, and after they have done their damage, they blow them out. But the rain never falls. The promises cannot be kept. These men have nothing in them to keep the promises they have made. As deceitful as a rain-cloud with no rain. Maybe some thunder and lightning. Lots of excitement while they are speaking. But when the meeting is over, the earth below them is as parched as before.

**autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted;**

Jude is full of picturesque language. Look at this photo. A tree that is supposed to be full of fruit, because it is the season for that fruit. Instead, dead. Lifeless. No fruit at all.

Not just dead. Doubly dead. How can a tree die twice? The answer is before us. First, a season comes with no fruit, showing that there is no life-sap flowing through its branches. A disease has struck it, or it has not been nourished properly. The tree is dead.

So take it down. "Why does it encumber the earth." Let its death be made public. Do not just cut it down, but pull it out from the roots. It is never going to live again. It shall disappear from this plot of



earth that it has wasted long enough.

Jude is bold here. There are those who seemed to walk among us as believers. But they bore not the fruit of a believer. Their lives never measured up. They were spiritually dead from the beginning. They were never one of us. Now they show their death by coming against the life of the orchard, the forest. Their former life will disappear altogether as God will manifest to the Body their true character. They were dead in sin. Now they are dead to the church. Their future is certain.

Oh how we ought to guard our thinking and guard our company, knowing the “terror of the Lord” when it comes to the false ones who sit around us and perhaps lurk within.

But he is not done with his portrayals...

**13wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam;**

Jude cannot seem to speak forcefully enough about these men. Now we are taken to Galilee or the Mediterranean, where ferocious storms can erupt. You are asked to look at the waves in the middle of one of those storms, and at the foam caused by the turbulence of those waves.

I read that foam on a wave is often caused by decaying algae. That makes the picture perfect. What better image of a false teaching than decay of living matter. A truth that has been killed by a teacher and left to rot upon the surface of the minds of men. Imagine an impassioned speaker before you, energetic, passionate, spewing out to you lie after lie.

**wandering stars,**

We get the word “planet” from the Greek for “wandering”. *Planetes*

is actually a noun and not an adjective, as you would expect from the English. It means a “rover” or “wanderer.” The ancients noticed that the planets aren’t fixed, as the stars. So they called them the “wanderers,” *planetes*. These two words together give us something to behold for sure. That which seems to be fixed but that is in fact constantly moving. “Erratic” is the word we use in English. And if you follow these teachers long enough, just as their counterparts in the political world, you will see that their positions change on a regular basis. They play to the crowd. They say what needs to be said to get a hearing and an offering.

Not only do their teachings wander, they too wander. Though Jude seems to be speaking of men who have crept into a local church, it is also true that these men have a circuit, and a network, and they go from place to place, preaching their sermons, and moving on to whatever other gullible people will listen to them in the next town. Wandering stars.

The term stars has taken on a new meaning among us in the West, as so many of the worst of the teachers have become Hollywood-like celebrities, with their private planes, huge bankrolls, exquisite clothing, huge mansions, etc etc And they got all that elevation from God’s people, some of them the poorest on the planet.

So these bright lights feast among us, shining brilliantly, fleecing the flock on their way. On their way where?

Jude sees their future here.

**for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.**

A star in black darkness? The light gone out? Oh it happens all the time in the universe around us. They call it a supernova.

*When a massive star runs out of fuel, it cools off. This causes the*

*pressure to drop. Gravity wins out, and the star suddenly collapses. Imagine something one million times the mass of Earth collapsing in 15 seconds! The collapse happens so quickly that it creates enormous shock waves that cause the outer part of the star to explode!*

(From spaceplace.nasa.gov)

Millions of supernovae occur every minute in the universe. Stars are constantly running out of fuel and burning out.

Jude tells the church, "Fear not." The false teachers will one day run out of fuel. They will tell their last lie. They will explode and collapse and be forgotten. Forever. Black darkness. How does he know?

He has already assured us that angels who stepped out of line are bound in darkness now, waiting for judgment. The false prophets and teachers will go to the same prison. The same dark, black prison. Called the pit often in Scripture. A parallel verse in 2 Peter 2:4 help a little by telling of the pits of darkness where angels wait for their judgments. The idea of a reservation is there as here in Jude 13.

The "spirits in prison" of 1 Peter 3 come back to mind as we discuss the fate of the angels and false teachers.

So based on Peter's revelation, Jude by the Spirit confirms that evil men among us are only among us temporarily. Their doom is sealed. They will be held in prison until the end of all things, then judged with a horrible judgment, which John informs us also involves a lake of fire.

Jude has another source of authority. In a relentless hold on the fate of these men, he tells us that a voice from the book of Genesis

speaks to us through the ages.

**14It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam,**

One of two Scripture men who never died, Enoch was indeed seven generations from Adam, though the word for “generation” is not in the Greek. Just as the KJV says, the “seventh.” The seventh name mentioned in the genealogy of Genesis 5. Enoch was the son of Jared, who was the son of Mahalel, who was the son of Kenan, who was the son of Enosh, who was the son of Seth, who was the (third) son of Adam (Genesis 5:3-19).

Now, the Genesis account gives us no words that Enoch ever spoke. It merely says that Enoch walked with God. He certainly must have had great conversations with the Lord, but we are privy to none of them. As to what he might have prophesied, and the Scripture does not even call him a prophet until now, we are clueless.

Still, Jude is convinced that some of his words have survived. His source, the Book of Enoch.

*See introductory materials for a discussion of the using of extra-canonical books in Scriptural writings.*

The passage in question, from 1 Enoch 1:9, and, translated from the Ethiopic text, reads:

“And behold! He cometh with ten thousands of His Saints To execute judgment upon all, And to destroy all the ungodly: And to convict all flesh Of all the works of their ungodliness which they have ungodly committed, And of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

Note that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church truly believes that the

entire book of 1 Enoch is inspired of God. Other groups assign a later author to the book, but then have to deal with Jude's comment that these words are Enoch's actual words.

Still others will claim inspiration for that part of Enoch that is quoted by Jude, simply because Jude quoted it, but not adhere slavishly to everything taught in the rest of Enoch.

Here is how Enoch's words were translated into the Greek. Note especially the tense of the verb "come." The NASB has the correct Greek translation. The KJV seems to favor the Ethiopic.

**prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones,**

It is worthy of mention that even in this short quotation, the man of God omitted a portion he considered to be inappropriate, namely the clause, "and to destroy all the ungodly."

Did Enoch actually write these words? MacArthur is of the opinion that what is important, is that a truth is affirmed here. "Enoch's" statement as quoted, is able to be corroborated by other Scripture. Surely the Lord is coming back to earth (Revelation 22:20). Surely He will gather His elect from the four winds and return with them (Matthew 24:31). Surely He comes to judge the earth (Psalm 96:13 and 98:9). So, the possibility that this quote was not from the man Enoch, should not trouble us as long as there is no error in the quote.

I would have no trouble with that if Jude had not specifically said that *it was Enoch*, the seventh from Adam, a man, not a book, that was talking here. There can be no such specific error in Scripture. Either Enoch said it or he did not. Jude says he did.

That does not mean that Enoch, the book, should be included in the

canon. There are issues within the book that do not line up with their counterparts in inspired Scripture. But here, Enoch was said to be speaking the truth. If the Ethiopians can believe that the entire book is inspired and authentically from Enoch, I should have no problem believing that Jude's excerpt is a faithful word from God.

Let's look more closely at what he said.

Why the Greek went to the past tense of come, I am not sure. There is no other record in history of Jesus having come to earth with thousands of saints, so we take this as prophecy even though it sounds like a past event. It would be akin, in my judgment, to Paul saying, "... and those he justified he also glorified..." Well, certainly God has not glorified all of His saints at this time, but the text flows more smoothly as one tense.

"I saw Satan fall from heaven" is another possibility of this means of communication. Was Jesus talking about a past event or something that is yet to come, as recorded in Revelation 12? Isaiah speaks of how the Savior was wounded for our transgressions, seven hundred years before the crucifixion. In prophecy, when God is speaking, even future events are done deals.

**15to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way,**

So He came or is to come with judgment. The object of that judgment is the ungodly. Three separate forms of the Greek word here are used four times to make a serious point: ungodliness will be judged!

We've seen the word ungodly in verse 4, where we noted that the Greek means impious. Opposite of pious or righteous or holy. Wicked. The "god" idea is not in the Greek, but the translators

assume that anything that is the opposite of holy is the opposite of God.

We will meet this word one more time in verse 18, where it describes the lusts of the men in question.

Ungodly people. Ungodly deeds. Ungodly way. Ungodly sinners. The NASB makes the third mention of the word an adverbial phrase, “they have done in an ungodly way” rather than trying to make an adverb sound like an adjective, as in the KJV, “they have ungodly committed.”

The ungodly are a group of people, aka “sinners”. “Ungodly” describes their deeds. “Ungodly” describes the way they commit those deeds.

Unholiness starts in the heart. The heart is deceitful above all things, (Jeremiah 17:9.) These men bringing false things into the church are first of all, without God. They are sinners by birth. They may have gone through a form of conversion, but their hearts have not changed. People who are unholy can only do unholy things. The things they are doing may seem good.

They will tell you they are reforming the church. Actually they are looking for a position, a place of power and influence and cash. These men are so depraved of anything good that they must do their unholy things in an unholy way. They will use vulgar language. They will demonstrate their liberty before all and talk even of sexual exploits, as much as the audience will allow in a given congregation.

**and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”**

Jesus will come to convict of ungodliness. This is not the gentle conviction of the Spirit of God in the hearts of His people. It is, as

the KJV has it, a convincing. A final conviction as in a court of law. They have been marked out as guilty in Heaven for a long time. Now Earth shall hear about it. They shall stand before the church and their crimes shall be enumerated, including this one: harsh things spoken against the Lord.

“Hard speeches” in the KJV (though “speeches” is not in the Greek.) The Greek is the same word used by Paul when he said that a certain teaching was a “hard” saying. Difficult to understand. Twisted meanings. High-sounding words, arguments meant to convince of some new revelation. Perhaps, Jesus is not really God. Perhaps, not all the writings of the prophets and apostles can be trusted. Maybe, Jesus wasn’t really born of a virgin. Or He didn’t rise from the dead. Or He wants us to continue following Moses along with Jesus. Or, Jesus is nice, and would never send anyone to Hell. Or, we can’t really know if we are saved. Any number of heresies have entered the church and destroyed its members. Harsh, fierce attacks on the very person of Jesus Christ have undermined the faith of many.

These ungodly talkers will be judged.

Don’t yet know who these men are? Keep listening.

### **16These are grumblers, finding fault,**

Murmurers. Complainers. Jude doesn’t have to tell us where to look for murmurers in the Bible. Israel in the wilderness. Those who think that human nature or even God’s nature has changed since the cross, since we entered New Testament times, need to understand that it’s not so! The law and the priesthood are of a different nature outwardly, but God has not changed, and people haven’t changed and God still hates this sin as much as He did when Israel grumbled about water, and Israel grumbled about food, and



Israel grumbled about its leaders, and Israel grumbled about its enemies. And He hates it when we do it too.

Have you noticed every once in a while that Jude's description of false teachers sometimes overlaps with the description of the flesh we all have to deal with? The difference for us is that we do have help available from within. Those who have given themselves over to the Devil's agenda to destroy the church from within, have no such resources.

Mark it down. The false teachers will publicly and privately complain about the established church. They will criticize the old hymns, the old ways of doing things, the old-style expository preaching, the way we are not keeping up with the culture. Their first objective, in fact, is to make us dissatisfied where we are. Now there is room for change and growth in many places, but these men can only see the unpleasant parts of the church. They will moan and groan about how things are, then offer themselves as a solution, a man with a plan, a new program, a new agenda. Soon many in the flock will stop looking to their old but faithful pastor and look to this man with the fresh ideas.

Watch out for the complainer. If we see a need for the church to grow in a particular area, we should take our idea privately to the pastor, not fish around for a following. If the pastor says no, we must take it as a no and move on to another idea.

**following after their own lusts;**

These men are after something. It may vary from place to place, but their complaining has a method to it, a purpose. The idea is to do away with the old so they can bring in the new. The new will be under them.

In the New Apostolic Reformation, a worldwide phenomenon that every church should study, men are rising up and calling themselves apostles. They are calling upon what they consider to be “dead” churches to abandon their present structure, and submit to their leadership. They desire to form networks of churches and individuals who will serve the Lord under them.

Their tentacles have reached to the Roman Catholic system. Rome is looking with interest at these network builders, hoping to have some of those networks attach to Rome, broadening their base, and their control over the church at large.

You may recall, or have read, that Rome, grudgingly at first, then enthusiastically, joined the charismatic renewal of the 1960’s and was able to hold on to a lot of its people who would otherwise have gone to this more exciting form of worship.

The NAR is an example of a group of men who have a desire for power, as Jude suggests here, and are causing unrest and dissatisfaction among otherwise contented church members.

We all need to be revived from time to time. But we watch out in these end times as the enemy will indeed restructure the visible church and exclude those who do not go along with their program. A worldwide religious organization seems to be the goal expected as we read Revelation’s story of a false prophet ruling over a false church to support a false political leader. That leader will slaughter the true Christians as Hitler slaughtered Jews. That’s how they will get to heaven... not by rapture. Read it all, folks.

**they speak arrogantly,**

Jude does not give us examples in most of these latter descriptions, but examples today abound. I’m thinking of one so-called

prophet/teacher, a multi billionaire who circles the earth in private planes (plural), who recently, with all the arrogance with which he could muster, came against COVID-19 and proudly proclaimed to the world that it was finished. In March of 2020. We who have lived through the rest of that awful flu know that it wasn't over in March, 2020. This man is clearly the type of man Jude had in mind. Not privately humbly and mistakenly coming up with some mistaken ideas and hashing it out with a pastor and submitting to correction.

Oh no, like so many, with this preacher, it's Jesus and me. God talks to me and what He says I'll do. We all believe God talks to us in His Word. He quickens ideas and principles as we read and listen in church and talk with our brothers and sisters in Christ. But that's not what these men mean. Whether falsely interpreting a passage to their own benefit or getting a "word" that has nothing to do with Scripture, these men boldly proclaim as Gospel truth whatever they conjure up in their own spirit, much as the prophets of Jeremiah's day.

God forbids it. It's not just Jesus and me. We are to stay connected to a church that teaches the Bible because it believes the Bible. Lone Ranger Christians are the most arrogant folks on the planet. You can't talk to them. They just know God told them this or that.

Not only that, these false teachers are forever

**flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.**

Whoever said "flattery will get you nowhere" has never met one of the church's false teachers and false prophets. They love everything about your church and your pastor and your pianist and the flowers and you personally.

Wise people know that if they are not normally complimented in a

certain area, and then are suddenly showered with compliments, there's something fishy going on. Somebody wants something from you. Run, baby, run. You are about to lose your shirt, if not your soul. They want our money. They want our position. They want our acceptance and endorsement to go to other brothers and peddle their wares. They want even more sinister things at times. It is better not to listen to the flatterer at all. Most of the flattering is lies. The part that is true is dangerous. We should show our gratefulness to someone if they have truly imparted something to us, but also be oh so careful not to pour on the flattery. It can destroy.

At least that is what Jude thought, and I believe he had the Spirit of God!

## V. EXHORTATION to REMAIN TRUE

**17But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

Though Jude is going to quote verbatim only one of the apostles, the warning message certainly came from others. The apostle Matthew quotes Jesus (Matthew 24:11-12) as saying that false prophets will arise and mislead many, in connection with a growing lawlessness.

The apostle Paul will be quoted by Luke (Acts 20:28-31) in his farewell address to the Ephesian elders, in which he warns them that vicious wolves will be attacking the flock.

Paul's letters to Timothy carry similar alarms: Timothy is told that some in his congregation will pay attention to "deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Timothy 4:1), and that men will come who will "oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith," (2 Timothy 3:8).

The apostle John (1 John 2:18-19) will warn of antichrists, many of them, appearing throughout the church's history, men who "went out from us, but [who] were not really of us."

**18that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts."**

This is 2 Peter 3:3. In the chapter before, Peter alerts his people to the fact that "there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them..." (2 Peter 2:1-3).

Jude separates himself from the body of apostles by referring to them in the third person. He is not an apostle. And as stated above, all but one of that class, namely John, has probably already gone on to His reward by martyrdom.

Jude here establishes the policy of referring to the apostles as the foundation stones, the source of truth for the New Testament

people. He is able to say what he says, and we are able to say what we say, only because the apostles before us laid down what is true and what is not.

Three more depictions of these mockers before his final encouragement to the saints.

**19These are the ones who cause divisions,**

Division has been a standard quality of the Christian Church since its inception. The church fathers were in disagreement about things in those early centuries. And even through the Roman Emperor Constantine tried to demand unity of the church under his and subsequent reigns, church unity was merely external. We have always fought. Reformers fought Rome and each other. Thousands of denominations dot the surface of the church topography to this day, testifying to our divisive ways.

Our divisions have always seemed proper to us, necessary. And did not Jesus say, an idea we love to quote, that He would cause division and a sword? So it has been.

But in the case of Jesus' promise, He spoke of the fact that when some family members choose Christ, and the others don't, division occurs. When some business partners come to Christ, and some do not, division. When some citizens of a totalitarian government choose Christ and others don't, the sword is for those who will not conform.

As to our own petty differences and the formation of new groups over them, we say nothing but, "Shame on us!" Thankfully, persecution from the world has been shown to be a cure for such ills. Groups that could not speak to each other before, when undergoing severe hardship suddenly find a way to communicate and even reunite. I'm thinking of Communist Romania in the 80's as an example.

But none of that discussion has anything to do with the verse before us. Jude has in mind persons who come into the church with

a teaching that is near the truth, but off-center. The leaders eventually may rein this man in, but often it is too late. Watchers were not being diligent, and a small group of disciples have formed who are suddenly dissatisfied with the way things are going. The faction often makes demands, and not able to receive what they ask, moves on to another location.

Yes, Jesus causes divisions when we get saved, and immature saints cause divisions over trivia, but these men cut serious gashes in the Body and leave it wounded and bleeding for time to heal.

**worldly-minded,**

Their aims and goals for the church have to do with this world. They want the church to be rich. They want the church to be more relevant, more influential in the neighborhood, more ornate and attractive, more modern. These are desires that Satan has placed in the people of this world. To want, and fervently want, people to come to Christ, is one thing. A good thing indeed! But to be into church growth, for the sake of church growth, is quite another.

Consider the constant migration of the Christian church that is visible among us in this day. A new mega-church begins to form. And like Wal-Mart shutting down all the small businesses in that neighborhood, so this church slowly sucks the life out of the small faithful groups in town.

Granted, some of the little ones have died long ago and need to shutter their windows. But not all. Sometimes those new churches are built after the spirit of the world and attract the people of the world with their new agenda. A dynamic – they would call it – youth program. A stellar music department with professional sounding music. Music that rocks. A preacher that will tickle the ears and become a force in the area. A multi-million-dollar edifice with all the modern bells and whistles. The huge foyer. Soft pews. Modern design.

How can even a faithful church survive the coming of such an entity?

The worldly teachers eventually build worldly churches, places where people feel comfortable but not necessarily convicted. Safe but not saved. Larger and larger they grow, success being the magnet that draws the curious to see what is going on. The greatest show on earth, is the goal in some of these places. The entire church effort is poured into having one incredible service every week.

Not so the spiritual church. A true Gospel is preached. Maybe only a few are saved. If by God's grace many begin coming, the wise leaders begin to send people out to form fellowships elsewhere, knowing that in every fellowship there are men who will be able to rise to the occasion and lead a flock. The superstar mega-pastor is unheard of.

Exceptions to this concept are easily available. I think of Spurgeon's huge group, and MacArthur's in our own day. Certainly there are faithful men who merely draw a crowd by being faithful, a rarity in every generation. But we all know that most mega-church leaders work very hard at being the best and the biggest and the coolest, as opposed to being the most faithful to God's Word.

God keep us from the worldly teachers with their worldly goals.

### **devoid of the Spirit.**

Bottom line, last but definitely not least, these men creeping into the church of Jude's generation and ours, do not have the Holy Ghost. Here is the greatest indictment of all. How awful will it be when powerful influential men, and women too, are told on that day, "I never knew you." Men who dabbled in the gifts of the Spirit, or what appeared to be so, who proclaimed to all that they were the ones who had a corner on the Spirit market as it were, yet never had the Spirit themselves.

These were the men who were always saying, "The Lord told me," "I have a word for the church" – yet not from Scripture – "Thus saith the Lord," when God never said any such thing. Messages that came from their own spirits, as described by God through Jeremiah:



“They speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the Lord...I did not send these prophets, but they ran. I did not speak to them, but they prophesied. But if they had stood in My council, then they would have announced My words to My people” (Jeremiah 23:16-22).

How can we identify men who do not have the Spirit? Jesus told us we can know by the fruit of their lives. The Holy Spirit produces holy living. And we can know, says God in Jeremiah, by whether His words come out of their mouths.

How can we be in a place spiritually where we will be able to identify these awful men, and women, readily? Jude’s following exhortation is very meaningful. Thus far he has told us the problem. Now we can move to the solution. Part of it he has mentioned in verse 17: Remember the words of the apostles. For us that means, *Read your Bible!*

In connection with that,

### **20But you, beloved, building yourselves up**

The Greek here is the word you would use if you were talking about building a house. It’s a construction term. We know that God is building. The apostles who taught the truths of God said they were building. But here Jude says we are to be building also. We are a part of this huge building project. A house is being erected to the glory of God, and God has given us the privilege and the responsibility to be out there pounding nails and sawing wood and measuring boards and putting them in place.

We are to take the tools and materials God has given us, individually, and build. Prayer. The Scriptures. The church. Our gifts.

The doctrines of grace do not excuse believers from participating in the building. Our own building activity, with these tools and materials, is the means by which we will know we are among the elect.

We are to work out our own salvation, the very salvation that God has worked in to our heart.

We must be assured that God is in every hammer blow, every cut of the wood, but be equally assured that God expects us to work, and work hard, at building ourselves up. Passivity will not work. "I know I'm saved, so I can just float on into the pearly gates one day." Surprises, sad ones, await people with this mentality.

We are saved by the grace of God, and the grace of God gives us a series of works we are to perform. And with the assignment, an allotment of grace to go with it.

Now Jude tells us where to plant this house, and the foundation we are to use.

**on your most holy faith,**

The faith, remember verse 3, "once handed down to the saints." For you to combat the false, you must be grounded on the true. These days of Jude did not yet see the fullness of truth in written form. The most holy faith of these first century men was recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures that had been handed down century after century. By telling of the sacrifices that pointed to Christ, and the grace and forgiveness available to all who would repent, and the coming of a suffering Savior, and all the other Christ-centered truths in the Hebrew Scriptures, and by tying that in to the recent events of Calvary and the empty tomb and the coming of the Spirit, the early church had a body of knowledge and experience that was most holy indeed.

And we have that same faith. It continues to be handed down, generation after generation. Jude says, build on that. And don't forget to be

**praying in the Holy Spirit,**

Did you catch it? He had just told them that the false teachers do not even have the Holy Spirit. To identify and defeat them, we are

to pray in that Holy Spirit. Build our life on His Word, this faith that has come to us, but don't leave behind the source of that Word, the Holy Spirit.

What does it mean to pray "in the Holy Spirit"? Is it possible to pray outside of the Holy Spirit? Obviously, or this command would not have come down to us. How can we pray outside the Spirit? Well, we can imagine easily that the false teachers did this quite well. They didn't have the Spirit, yet they most probably prayed publicly. At least today, all the false ones pray. Prayer is just talk. You can talk into the air whether you have God in you or not.

Praying with vain repetitions is one way Jesus taught us not to pray. Repeating key words over and over, thinking God is impressed somehow and bound to answer. This is often hypnotic if not demonic. The Hindus would call this a mantra. A formula. Something you memorize and recite constantly until you are in a hypnotic state. It's not prayer in the Spirit, though it makes you feel good.

We are told by James not to pray selfishly. When your whole prayer is about you and your needs, you have not prayed in the Spirit. You have prayed only in the flesh.

I mentioned above, memorization. Memorizing a prayer and saying it by rote every morning, even the Lord's prayer, can be a fleshly prayer. Roman Catholics are taught to say so many "Our Father's" and so many "Hail Mary's" in their trip around the rosary. Those prayers are not in the Spirit.

It is possible to pray the memorized Lord's prayer in the Spirit, but only if done slowly and meaningfully, listening to yourself and not just rattling off a memory verse. Jesus did not give us this prayer as a performance, but rather He said, "after this manner, pray." That is, pray like this. Start your prayer with praise and worship. Then petition can be added. Then dealing with sin in our life. The prayer is a model. Those who use it as a part of a list of things to do will find it becomes a ritual with no meaning.

The prayer of pride is also not in the Spirit. Standing before men to let them know how good we can pray or how much we know, or how holy we are, was soundly condemned by the Lord. His favorite kind of public prayer is simple and short and meaningful, like “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Pharisaical long-winded self-serving prayers are not prayers in the Spirit.

Prayers that try to inform God about what is going on in the world are obviously not Spirit-led prayers either. God knows what’s happening.

Using prayer time to preach a sermon or hurt a brother or communicate in any way to any one except God... these are not prayers in the Spirit.

Today there are those among us who believe that praying in the Spirit means losing total control of your mind and just uttering syllables that God can take and make into words on His own, hear your prayers, answer them. You personally will never know what you prayed and therefore you will not know when the answer comes. But you prayed “in the Spirit” and the rest is in God’s hands.

This unusual teaching is supposed to be based on Paul’s exhortations in 1 Corinthians 14. Let’s take a look at it.

The context of this chapter is public worship. The section in question starts with verse 13. Let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. In order for this to make sense, there must be available a gift of tongues, and the person in question must know his message in tongues before he speaks out, and know the interpretation also. If he speaks tongues, and there is no interpretation he has violated Paul’s instruction. In the church there is to be no confusion.

He goes on to say that when tongues do come forth, only the person’s spirit prays, not his mind. Notice, we are talking about the human spirit. When tongues came forth, the human spirit, touched by the Holy Spirit, was praying things that did not register with the

mind. Paul says, in the church, better to have both your spirit and your mind united in understanding.

Paul simply says, "I will pray with the Spirit and with the understanding." *With*. Not *in* here.

There are no regulations given for praying *in the Spirit*, that is, in the Holy Ghost. But only when a gift of the Spirit is used alongside your public praying, then you must be aware of people around you, and seek to build them up, not confuse them.

That's all this passage is about. It is not about our private prayer life.

The passage most quoted when talking about prayer in the Spirit is Ephesians 6:18, where Paul encourages the people at Ephesus, and all Christians, to use *all kinds* of prayer and petition at *all times* in the Spirit. Any kind of prayer we do, wherever we do it, must be in the Spirit.

But we still have not defined the term.

We have seen prayer in the flesh easily enough. How can we now see prayer in the Spirit? Is there someone who did it?

Would you accept Jesus as a man full of the Holy Ghost? Would you accept His prayer as prayer in the Spirit? Not just the outline He gave us, but a full-length prayer surrounded by His disciples? You know I am talking about His prayer in John 17.

He begins that prayer asking for God to glorify Him. Was He not speaking truth from His Spirit when He asked that? Then he started interceding for His disciples. Was that not Spirit-led? When a man full of the Holy Ghost, walking in the Holy Ghost, drinking in the things of God daily, begins to pray out of the depths of His heart, that man is praying in the Spirit.

All the examples I gave above of fleshly prayer are examples of men who do not walk with God, or at least not very close. They've

learned the mechanics of prayer, but the Spirit within them (or not), is not engaged in that prayer.

When a man walks with God, God puts His own desires in that man, and when he prays, he cannot help but pray in the Spirit. The Spirit within him is going to come out of him. Praying in the Spirit means you are so close to God and God is so close to you that the very words of your mouth are His words.

Romans 8:26-27. The Spirit helps our weakness. We do not know how to pray as we should. The Spirit intercedes. We can even feel that struggle of *God with God* inside us at times. This is not about tongues here. The groanings in our belly are too deep for any sounds to come out of our mouths sometimes. God the Spirit is doing the work inside of us. God the Father hears God the Spirit when the Spirit intercedes through us for saints in need of help.

We will be praying, and suddenly a burden. Then words begin to form, after the Spirit has communicated with God. We will agree with that deep desire we are feeling, to pray. And someone somewhere is being touched through our cooperation with the Spirit inside of us.

Praying in the Spirit is cooperating with the One Who lives in us and prays through us. It is not spooky or confusing. It is God in us.

One more quote, and then we must really move on. The 17<sup>th</sup> century Puritan preacher Thomas Goodwin, commenting on Psalm 27:8, "When You said, 'Seek My face,' my heart said to You, 'Your face, O Lord, I shall seek.'"

"...God's speaking to pray is such as His speech at first was, when He made the world, when He said, 'Let there be light, and there was light.' So he says, let there be a prayer, and there is a prayer; that is, he pours upon a man a spirit of grace and supplication, a praying disposition; He puts in motives, suggests arguments and pleas to God; all which you shall find come in readily, and of themselves, and that likewise with a quickening heat and enlargement of affection, and with a lingering, and longing, and restlessness of

spirit to be alone, to pour out the soul to God, and to vent and form those motions and suggestions into a prayer, till you have laid them together, and made a prayer of them... observe such times when God does thus, and neglect them not, then to strike whilst the iron is hot; thou hast then His ear..."

I believe that is what is meant by Jude here. But there is more good advice for dealing with false people who come into the assembly:

**21keep yourselves in the love of God,**

Ah, but are God's people not the "kept" as in verse 1? "To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and *kept* for Jesus Christ." Did not the Father give to the Son a selected people and will not the Father keep them true to the end, His very own? If God is "keeping" me, how is it that I am now to "keep" myself?

Here the NASB scores a point over the KJV, (if we are keeping score). The same word in the Greek, whatever Greek manuscript one uses, is used in verse 1 as in verse 21. It means keep. Guard. Be watchful. The KJV gives the idea that the words are different by using "preserve" in verse 1, and "keep" here. NASB uses "keep" both times for consistency.

And yet, where are we theologically if God is keeping and we are keeping at the same time? The resolution is that God is keeping us by means of our obedience to His Word. He is giving us grace to obey, grace to keep ourselves. True, we cannot climb the pathway to heaven on our own, but we must do the climbing. And we do it enabled by His grace. Every time we make a decision to love someone, we are experiencing God's working within us. As we keep responding to His promptings we discover that the keeping really is His keeping, but He has allowed us to participate in it.

Why mention the love of God in a letter given over to defending the church against the false ones? God's love will be essential in this situation:

1. False teachers, once they are exposed as Jude has done quite well, produce an anger and even a hatred within us. We realize we have been duped, that the wolf is here, and we didn't know it. Jude says, just keep loving with God's love through it all. God's love does not mean accept the false teacher, but it does mean be sure we are motivated by a perfect love for God that motivates our perfect hatred of evil. Be sure not to enter Satan's trap of using carnal means to combat these men. We put our plan for eviction together in love.
2. The church must be loved during this time. Love for the church which God has given us motivates our swift action against these men. We cannot allow the church to suffer even more by rash movements at this time. Jude even says how to love various categories of church members in his closing remarks.

So, when we spot false teachers, we are to remember the words of the apostles who warned they would come, build ourselves up in the faith, pray in the Holy Spirit, keep ourselves in God's love, and also

**waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.**

There's something about expecting the return of Christ and our eternal reward that puts a person in the right frame of mind spiritually, and makes him able to deal with issues in the church like the one Jude is discussing.

Do we love His appearing? (2 Timothy 4:8)

Do we have this hope in ourselves, that one day we shall see Him, be like Him? John says this anticipation is purifying (1 John 3:3).

The false teachers have come among us and given us other expectations: Happy life here (our best life now), wealth, no persecution, etc. Or some have tried to put us under the law of



Moses again, robbing us of any hope whatever, since we know that we cannot keep that law.

But we must fix our eyes on the promises God Himself has made, and the false promises of these evil men will disintegrate.

We've got the apostles' warnings, our most holy faith, the Holy Spirit working in us, the love of God working through us, and the hope of eternal life. We're now ready to minister to those being ravaged by these evil imposters. Here's what we do:

**22And have mercy on some, who are doubting;**

Category one is the doubters. They've been listening to the enticement of the false prophet. He sounds good. But they're not sure. And because they are entertaining ideas from him, they're also not sure about the truths they have heard for years. They're double-minded. On the fence. What should be our attitude toward them?

Some would shout in their ears and try to knock them off that fence very quickly! "Stop, stop, don't listen to that guy! Read your Bible! What, are you crazy? The guy's a heretic for goodness' sake." Ranting and raving is not the method Jude recommends. Rather, pity.

The same word for "mercy" is used in all Greek texts. The NASB has chosen to use "mercy" here. I think the KJV's "compassion" or "pity", as in the interlinear, is more appropriate. "Mercy" seems to indicate that a wrong was done to me and I am being kind in spite of it. "Pity" means I see one in trouble and want to help him, regardless of the situation.

What would pity look like in a serious situation like this? It means we don't write a brother off if he has honest questions, if somehow the false one's words make sense. Of course they make sense. It means that any conversations are low-key. "Brother, I can see you are concerned about some issues you've been taught in the past

and you're being taught now. Could I help you understand things from my point of view?"

Questions. Offers. No demands. No shouting. Mercy. Realize we have been confused at times too. If he wants our help, we give it. If he doesn't, we walk away and pray. Keep monitoring. Often, the fever will pass. We've kept a friend who respects us even more, and he has learned how to fight through falseness.

But what if he doesn't self-correct? Jude's got the answer for that too. Depending on the Bible version you have, there may be two possible answers. Two groups beyond the doubters, that is.

**23 save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear,**

Here is perhaps the most serious textual difference in the book of Jude. The Nestle-Aland group of texts comes out like this in the interlinear Greek:

"Save from fire, snatching, some have pity in fear, hating etc."

Whereas the Textus Receptus interlinear would say:

"others in fear save from the fire snatching, hating etc"

So the older manuscripts seem to add a third category, though there are variants to the variant. That is, there's no decisive wording here. MacArthur favors this three-fold advice because Jude tends to say things in three's (See v. 1, 2, 5-7, 8, 11, 19).

This is a tempting solution, but I believe the text flows more smoothly by simply dividing things two ways.

Note that no advice is given regarding the false teachers. I mean to say, in Jude's mind they are already condemned. No one is to come to them with pity or urgency. These remarks in verses 22 and 23 are for the benefit of the victims about to be swallowed whole by a vicious wolf. Wolves cannot become sheep. But sheep can be spared.

Doubting sheep can be treated with the utmost of pity and gentleness, as described above.

But there's another group, (and here we must yield to the KJV, I believe) that needs a little more shaking. Though the NASB seems to say there are those in the fire already and a third group too, here's how the KJV says it:

**“and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire”**

Save with fear. A chilling command, yes? Brothers, sisters, enamored by the enticing talk of a wolf. As in the “Three Pigs” tale, the wolf knows how to flatter. The wolf knows how to intimidate. The wolf often has a lot of energy and physical strength and attractiveness. The wolf is sly and careful.

Here is one of our own, listening to the wolf. More than listening. Believing. Participating. Joining the rebellion. Leaving good morals behind. Changing the testimony. Seeing things the way the world sees them. Are we to stand still and let such a one be caught up in hell's fire?

Pull them out. The word in the Greek, *harpadzo* is the same used as when people in Scripture are “caught up” to heaven, as was Paul. It's a seizing, a snatching, as the NASB says. It's more violent a word than just “pull.” It's a sudden definite determined grab. Get that person out of there.

Here's where we can be more emotional. We gave them every opportunity to think it through, to see both sides. They needed time. We gave them time. We were patient. But patience does not apply when our child is in a burning building. If we do not go in and rescue that child, he will be consumed by the fire.

That's the sense of urgency Jude has handed down to us.

**hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.**

All texts and translations come back into agreement here. Even the smell of smoke on the clothes is something we must be trained to hate.

When believers have been around the false teachers long enough they begin to send forth an aroma. Their life looks different. Their habits are changing, for the worse. Their priorities are out of order. That's the work of the flesh, the carnal nature. Some of these folks, surely, were never saved to begin with. But even some saved people get caught up in the fantasies of the false. When there's a strong smell of smoke on our dear friend, we must tell him what we are smelling.

Some among us have a very good sense of smell in the Spirit. They know when a brother or sister is caught up in something evil. They know what to do when they smell that odor. In all fairness we must add here that there are some among us whose sense of smell is a bit exaggerated. These are the for-real heresy hunters, the conspiracy theorists, the hatemongers, the Pharisees who can smell wrong everywhere, even when it doesn't exist, except in their own nose. These folks need to clean out their nose and see what they smell then.

## VI. DOXOLOGY and CLOSING PRAYER

### **24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,**

A “doxology” is merely an expression of praise. You’ll find outbursts of worship like this in Paul’s letters. 1 Timothy 1:17, for example, “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Another praise in the same letter to Timothy (6:15-16). “He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of Kings and Lord of lords, who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.”

Romans ends with a lengthy doxology: “Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.”

Then there is Ephesians 3:20-21: “Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”

Hebrews 13:20-21 says, “Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with

everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” [ESV]

Revelation 1:5-6, has yet another praise, “To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” [ESV]

Whether these were created by the author or circulating words being used by the author, I am not sure. But they are used to this day to conclude prayers, or church meetings. Good memory verses.

Here in Jude’s final prayer, we return to the idea of God being the one who keeps. At the beginning and ending of Jude’s letter, thus it is. God is the keeper. Sandwiched in between is the notion that I am to keep myself. We discussed this above. For now, a reminder that what God has chosen He has chosen forever. We’ll be doing a lot of work toward sanctification and perfection. To the point where we may think some days that we are the one ultimately responsible for our entrance into the City. We are never to forget that all we have done is His doing. “It is God Who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).

There is one textual variation in the verse. Who is God keeping from stumbling? One Greek text says it is them. Others say it is you. Of course, both answers can be verified elsewhere, so we don’t worry about the minor difference. Jude has been talking about victims of false teachers. He is able to keep them from stumbling. Maybe you have been a victim of a false teacher. He is able to keep you from stumbling, too.

And is it “stumbling” or “falling” as in the KJV? Here it is not the Greek, but the translator, that has caused a difference. The word in Greek means to “trip.” Not necessarily to fall. We walk along, something gets in our way that we didn’t see, we trip over it. It stops our forward progress a while, but we don’t fall. Obviously, the One Who keeps us from tripping will therefore keep us also from falling, but no need to talk about falling here.

We keep our eyes open. We walk with God. God will show us where there is a rock in the road, and lead us around it. He’s able to do that. When the false teacher shows up at our church, on in our neighborhood, or on our screen, we’ll recognize him in a minute! We’ll say, “I know you! I’m not falling for your lies!”

### **and to make you stand**

Obviously, the opposite of tripping and maybe even falling, is standing. God makes His people stand straight and tall in the presence of liars. Thus one day they will be standing

### **in the presence of His glory**

I’m not sure there is a need to speak of the glory that we experience in Him now, using this verse. It seems to be talking about that future state. Those that He justified, He glorified. There is a day of extreme glory coming to the people of God. The way teachers today speak so much of “the glory” now, God’s children have lost sight of the greater glory.

Peter spoke of the glory that is coming. 1 Peter 1:6-7 talks about the difficult times of our present life that one day will give way to “praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 5:1

speaks to elders who suffer, but who then partake of His glory when He comes. 5:4 tells us that a “crown of glory” awaits us. 5:10 encourages the flock to suffer for just a little while, knowing that God has called them into His eternal glory.

There is no question that to Christ belongs all the glory. Nor is there a problem with the idea of experiencing that Christ-glory now. But Jude here speaks of the glory we shall experience one day upon His return in His glory, a glory we shall personally experience since we have stood with Him here.

### **blameless**

There is no other way into the Throne Room of God but via absolute perfection. You will be perfect, because I am perfect, says God. I do not believe that is a command, but rather a promise. Those who live under the old law see it as a death sentence. Perfect? I can't do that. And you can't. But God can, and God is the One working in us to complete what He started. He's not a quitter. He keeps on until the job is done. He is able, says Jude, to keep us from those imperfections that the many voices around us would lead us into if we listen to them. He's able to make us stop listening to them, and to listen only to His Voice. We'll be perfect when it's all over.

### **with great joy,**

This thought needs no further comment. Joy unspeakable, full of glory; part of the fruit of the Spirit; one day even our sorrow will be turned into joy.

The doxology continues in the final verse, one upon which there seem to be some confusion in its origins.



## **25to the only God,**

The KJV, using the Textus Receptus, sees in the Greek the word “wise” and so translates it. That word is not in the older texts used by the NASB. We know God is wise from other Scriptures, so this is not an issue.

Paul uses the words “God only wise” in two of his letters. Jude, if the NASB is correct, is letting us know that not only is He the only *wise* God, but He is the only God, period.

Notice that God

## **our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord,**

Here we have the opposite issue. This phrase is in the oldest manuscripts, but not in the Textus Receptus, therefore not in the KJV. But again, who doesn’t know that God is the one Who saved us by becoming a man, Jesus Christ? Whether these words are in the text or not, the truth taught here is taught elsewhere. So many of the textual variations are of this nature: they don’t matter. How they came to be different, we don’t know, and God has not seen fit to tell us, which means it’s a non-issue and we don’t need to fight over this word or that, like so many Pharisees.

But we of course draw the line when those who deny the Lord altogether, create a Bible that favors their false teachings with questionable scholarship. Such is the history of the Watchtower. And of course the supposed angelic revelations of the Mormons and Muslims. Here is where Paul’s warning about how a different Gospel, though it be from an angel, is to be cursed.

But the infighting that we do, the knit-picking... probably unnecessary. We are all on the same team looking for the best way to hear from God in the Scriptures. Putting each other down in that search only leads to division, unnecessary division.

Now let's finish that sentence begun in verse 24, and finish the letter of Jude. To HIM

**be glory,**

Dignity. Honor. Worship. Praise. From a word family that has to do with thinking, seeming, appearing. The fact that God is, is reason enough to give Him honor. He seems good because He is good. He appears wonderful because He is wonderful. We give Him what is His when we worship Him. Not to worship Him is to attempt to rob Him of His glory.

And, to Him be

**majesty,**

The KJV interlinear has "greatness" here. It's from the Greek *megas* which just means "big." We use the prefix *mega* all the time. Megabyte. Megaphone. Megalopolis. Some of us have a god that is small. He can't answer prayer. He can't guide and provide. He can't hold on to you once He's saved you. Our God is BIG.

And to Him be

**dominion**

This is not the same "dominion" we saw earlier in the letter, where

false teachers despise “dominions” or governments of any kind. This is simply a word that means vigor, or strength. Our God is not only BIG, He is strong. Little boys are taught, rightfully so, that if they eat right and exercise right, they’ll grow up one day to be big and strong. That’s the ideal. A person who can handle anything that comes his way because he’s bigger than all the problems, stronger than all the weapons forged against him.

That’s our God. To Him belongs strength.

**and authority,**

This has to do with the right our God has to do what he does. There are big and strong angels, but they have no right to exercise their strength and greatness. The one who tried to exercise authority but wasn’t our God, was kicked out. His rights are granted by permission from the true authority. One day he will have all his rights denied and he will be in a lake of fire forever.

Our God is big. Strong. And He has the full right to use that bigness and strength to do whatever he wants whenever He needs to do it.

**before all time**

Again we are faced here with a phrase that is not in the KJV because it was not in the Textus Receptus. But does anyone deny that our God has existed from before all time? Again, there is no conflict with truth here.

Before there was a universe, and a sun and moon to determine days and seasons, before time, God was there. Here is where our mind gets a little pained trying to imagine a non-material existence.

All that we can see is temporary, relatively new. It is held in place by the will and power of this great God of ours, Who existed in an eternity before all of this appeared.

**and now**

No comment needed here, for sure. God is. He is the One who was and is

**and forever. Amen.**

“Forever” is usually translated in the New Testament from three Greek words *pantas* (all) *tous* (the) *aionas* (ages).

We live in the age of the church now. The age between the comings of the Lord. The next age will be the Millennial Age. One thousand years of the reign of Jesus Christ on the Earth. After that, we are not told. Another Age begins.

Our God will exist and rule and reign for all the ages. His Kingdom knows no end. Name the Age. Jesus will still be reigning. Remember what Gabriel told Mary: “of His Kingdom there shall be no end.” That covers it all.

So Jude brings to a happy conclusion a letter that is not so happy in its content. The lambs of God are being attacked by ferocious wolves who want nothing more than to devour the sheep, live off their skins and meat, grow fatter, and move on to other pastures to do it all over. A uniquely awful time in church history? No, it has been happening since the beginning. It is happening now. Fat preachers getting fatter at the expense of poor Christians. Prosperity for the guys at the top of the Ponzi scheme, poverty for

the rest.

But it shall not ever be so. Jude tells us what we are to do about this treachery, and how God Himself will rise and be powerful and big and ultimately victorious.

*Jude* is an incredibly power-packed letter from the Holy Spirit through a man that at one time ridiculed Jesus, the Jesus that lived in his own house for thirty years! This is an underlying message in the letter that ought to give us all hope. No matter what we have done in the past, God is able to forgive, to give us His eyes to see , to make us defenders of the faith we once tore down.

Thank you God, for brother Jude.

