

THE BOOK OF  
JUDE

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BOOK

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# COMMENTARY ON JUDE

## LESSON NUMBER 1

***“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.”*** (Jude 1:1)

### **THE SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST TO THE SANCTIFIED**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

There are times when the people of God are not precise enough in their spiritual posture: a time when they are more vulnerable to the ploys of the devil and the influences of the flesh. During such times, glaring sins may not be found in them, but they are not sensitive enough, not serious enough, not zealous enough in their efforts to *“lay hold on eternal life”* (1 Tim 6:12). Their doctrine may be precise enough, and they may be repulsed by obvious false doctrine. Yet, they are not alert enough for the unseen enemies that are active in opposing them: the devil (1 Pet 5:8), the demonic world (1 Tim 4:1), wicked principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph 6:12). There are *“the flesh”* that constantly lusts against the Spirit (Gal 5:17), and *“evil communications”* that *“corrupt good manners”* (1 Cor 15:33). There can be the *“first love”* that is unwittingly *“left”* (Rev 2:4) due to a kind of spiritual neurosis in which there is a lesser perception of reality, and, consequently a corresponding relaxation of pressing toward the mark and fighting the good fight (1 Tim 6:12).

This is the kind of situation Jude addresses in his brief, but pungent, epistle. The relaxed posture of those to whom he writes has led them to allow damning influences among them. Those who are aggressive against the Lord, but cunning in their opposition, had been allowed in their feasts, even though they offered nothing whatsoever that was productive. They were like beautiful but waterless clouds, and trees that are lovely, but have no fruit. So, Jude wrote to awaken them from their slumber, and alert them to the danger they were courting. He will not beat around the bush, but remind them of major defections that have taken place in the past, and how they led to no good. With the expertise that comes with godly wisdom and a fervent love for the Lord Jesus Christ, he chips away the lethargic crust that is forming on their souls, the scales that are forming on their eyes, and the growth of flesh that is enveloping their hearts.

#### **A SERVANT AND A BROTHER**

Jude 1:1a ***“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James . . .”***

**JUDE.** The Greek word translated *“Jude”* is *“ioudas,”* and is, in the KJV, translated into the English words *“Judas”* (Matt 1:2-3; 10:4), *“Juda”* (Matt 2:6; Heb 7:14), *“Judah”* (Heb 8:8), and *“Jude”* (Jude 1:1). Later versions consistently translate the word as *“Judah.”* Strong’s Greek dictionary gives the use of the above word as *“Judas, Jehudah, Juda, Judah, and Jude.”* It is generally agreed that this was done to distinguish between the personalities bearing that name: a son of Jacob the patriarch, one faithful apostle, Judas who betrayed Jesus, the brother of James and half-brother of Jesus. The distinctions between these men were so significant that earlier translators of Scripture sought to distinguish them from one another.

**THE HALF BROTHER OF JESUS.** Most conservative theologians agree that this was the half-brother of our Lord, mentioned in Matthew 13:55. There Jesus’ four half-brothers are cited: *“James and Joses, and Simon, and Judas.”* I also accept this half-brother as the identity of the writer of this letter.

By using *“half-brother,”* it is pointed out that this was one of the children Joseph had through Mary after she had given birth to Jesus. The Scriptures also mention that He had *“sisters”* (Matt

13:56; Mk 6:3). The presence of these children through Joseph caused people in the area where He was raised to be “*offended at Him:*” “*Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and of Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him*” (Mark 6:3). They considered this circumstance to justify their opinion that the Lord Jesus was more like them than God, of whom Jesus was “the express image of His Person” (Heb 1:3).

There have been translators who considered their theology to be more significant than their etymological and linguistic expertise. They therefore labored to make more clear the distinction of people having some identity with Jesus.

Early in the ministry of Jesus, and evidently prior to that as well, His half-brothers did not believe on Him (John 7:3-5). After Jesus wrought His first miracle, turning water into wine, He went down to Capernaum with “*His mother, His brethren, and His disciples*” (John 2:12).

These half-brothers should have been among the first to become His disciples. They should have perceived His uniqueness, inquired from their mother concerning Him, and believed on Him – but they did not. **Jesus’ Divinity was not clearly seen in His perfect humanity, as is apparent in His brethren.**

At some point, Jesus’ brethren did come to believe on Him, although the precise time is not specified. After Jesus rose from the dead, He met the women who had come to the tomb and been commissioned by an angel to “*bring His disciples word*” (Matt 28:7), and told them, “*Be not afraid: go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me*” (Matt 28:10). The words “**His brethren**” occur eight times in Scripture (Matt 12:46; 13:55; Mk 3:31; Lk 8:19; John 2:12; 7:3,5,10). They are never applied to His disciples, or the apostles. Jesus made a special post-resurrection appearance to His half-brother James (1 Cor 15:7), who was a key person in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13; 21:18). This half-brother wrote the book of James, and now another brother, Jude, wrote the epistle before us.

**THE SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST.** In his letter Jude, like James (James 1:1) makes no claim of being Christ’s brother. He rather refers to himself as “*The servant of Jesus Christ.*” One’s relationship to Christ Jesus trumps all other relationships! **Even then, in strict sequence, true identity with Jesus came AFTER any fleshly identity with Him.** Valid spiritual kinship is always the latter one, and yet it is the preeminent one – like Isaac was to Ishmael (Gen 21:10), Jacob was to Esau (Rom 9:13), Jesus was to Adam (1 Cor 15:45-48), the New Covenant was to the old covenant (Heb 8:13), the new man is to the old man (Eph 4:22-24), and the resurrection body is to the natural body (1 Cor 15:44; 2 Cor 5:1-5). The new creation takes the precedence over the natural order. Professing believers should be able to correlate this with their manner of life. It is always wrong to defer to the lesser, and be dominated by the inferior.

**THE BROTHER OF JAMES.** This appears to recognize the prominence that James had in the Jerusalem church. It is interesting to note that both James and Jude, among Jesus’ “*brethren,*” were vitally concerned about the state of the church of their time. James saw the twelve scattered tribes as reverting to a love for the world (James 4). Jude saw the Jewish church as having unlawful relationships, and being headed in the wrong direction. James wrote in 62 A.D. Jude is thought to have been written shortly after that, possibly 64-66 A.D.

This means that a major defection was already beginning, shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.). Paul dealt with apostasy in Corinth and Galatia (52-58 A.D.). In the Revelation, Jesus dealt with major departures of some of the churches during the close of the first century. A backward spiritual stance was viewed with the great sobriety and concern. No holy or inspired man consented to excuse spiritual retardation in any form.

## **SANCTIFIED BY GOD THE FATHER**

1:1b “ . . . **to them that are sanctified by God the Father . . .**”

**TO THEM.** Other versions read, “*to those,*” <sup>NASB</sup> “*to all who have been*” <sup>NLT</sup> “*Christians everywhere,*” <sup>LIVING</sup> and “*To the people.*” <sup>IE</sup> Scripture was not written to be embalmed in a library. It was written to specific people, and for a specific purpose. If you want to know the primary people with whom God is concerned, then become familiar with Scripture. That is addressed to those with whom He is, for want of another term, preoccupied. Prior to Moses, there was no inspired writing to anyone. Anything God had to say was through prophets, and there were precious few of them – Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Jacob, and Joseph. There were no inspired writings to Egypt,

Babylonia, Greece, Asia, etc.

It certainly makes sense that those to whom God has inspired a word to be written, ought to be familiar with that word. Yet, one gets the sense that most people around us are living just as though God has had nothing to say to them.

We understand Jude to be a general epistle – like Hebrews, First and Second Peter, and James. These were particular people—i.e. believers, but were in a scattered stated, as compared with a localized one, like other churches (Rome, Galatia, Philippi, Colossae, Thessalonica, etc.

**THAT ARE SANCTIFIED.** Other versions read, “*beloved of God,*”<sup>NASB</sup> “*who are loved by God,*”<sup>NIV</sup> “*who are beloved in God,*”<sup>NRSV</sup> “*those of God's selection,*”<sup>BBE</sup> “*sanctified of God,*”<sup>GENEVA</sup> “*wrapped in the love of God the Father,*”<sup>NET</sup> “*those who are dear to God the Father,*”<sup>NJB</sup> and *dearly loved by God the Father and separated (set apart).*”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Owing to a variance in the Greek manuscripts, some versions do not read “*sanctified,*” but rather read “*beloved of God,*” “*loved by God,*” and “*are dear to God.*” There is significant difference in these representations. “*Sanctified*” has to do with setting apart for the purpose of dedication and holy use.<sup>THAYER</sup> The word employed in other manuscripts means “to have an affection for, love and cherish.”<sup>THAYER</sup> This, however, does not comport with apostolic doctrine.

The language is “*ARE sanctified*” – a state that existed, in this case, prior to their calling and preservation. The epistle to Hebrew believers affirms that in Jesus’ death He sanctified the people—i.e. the sanctification occurred at that time. “*By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*” (Heb 10:10). “*For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*” (Heb 10:14). “*Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate*” (Heb 13:12).

When that sanctification is actually realized, it is through faith in Christ (Acts 26:18). That sanctification is obtained through experience. As it is written, “*For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication*” (1 Thess 4:3). **This practical sanctification is possible only because of the sanctification that occurred at the cross of Christ.** This latter sense of sanctification involves cleansing ourselves of all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Cor 7:1).

Were it not for what was accomplished at the cross of Christ, all efforts to purify ourselves, or know how to possess our vessels in sanctification and honor, would be in vain. This is the sanctification that moves God to draw those He has given to Christ (John 6:44,65). Those who are sanctified are the ones God gave to Jesus (John 6:37; 17:2,9,11,24; Heb 2:13). Jude’s writing confirms that this doctrine was generally known at that time.

Doctrinally, the sanctification accomplished at the cross and leading us to experience sanctification is stated this way. “*And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again*” (2 Cor 5:15).

It is in this sense that sanctification is said to be already accomplished in the saints. They “*ARE sanctified*” (1 Cor 1:2; 6:11; Heb 2:11). In this regard, the glorious proclamation is, “*Then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*” (Heb 10:10). That is, all of the variables are with men, not with God. So far as being set apart for God is concerned, that has already been done. It is confirmed when our faith takes hold of it, and we enter into a life that brings redemptive benefits to us, and pleasure to God.

**BY GOD THE FATHER.** The whole of salvation is of God. He is the One who put us into Christ, making Him to be to us “*wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*” (1 Cor 1:30). He is the One who placed us in the body of Christ where it pleased Him (1 Cor 12:18). He is the One who has dealt to us the “*measure of faith*” that is adapted to contribute to the other members of Christ’s body (Rom 12:3). He is the One who has qualified us, delivering us from the power of darkness, and translating us into the Kingdom of His dear Son (Col 1:13). These wonderful works have been because of the sanctification that took place when Christ died on the cross. Nothing further needs to be done by Christ Himself to qualify us! No further atonement is required. No further reconciliation is required. Faith, then, will make us adequate for everything we are required to do.

### **PRESERVED AND CALLED**

<sup>1c</sup> “ . . . . *and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.*” Other versions read, “*called . . . and*

preserved in Jesus Christ,"<sup>NKJV</sup> "who are called . . . and kept for Jesus Christ,"<sup>NASB</sup> "have been called . . . and kept by Jesus Christ,"<sup>NIV</sup> "who are called . . . and kept safe for Jesus Christ,"<sup>NRSV</sup> "are called . . . and kept for Jesus Christ,"<sup>ASV</sup> "are kept safe for Jesus Christ,"<sup>BBE</sup> "which are called and sanctified of God the Father, and returned to Jesus Christ"<sup>GENEVA</sup> "called, wrapped in the love of God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ,"<sup>NET</sup> "keeps you safe in the care of Jesus Christ,"<sup>NLT</sup> "beloved of God and chosen by Him,"<sup>LIVING</sup> "kept for Jesus Christ, and called,"<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> "To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ."<sup>ESV</sup> and "having been kept to Jesus Christ."<sup>LITV</sup>

The sequence is represented in differing ways by the various versions. Most later versions have the calling taking place before the preservation. However, this does not blend well with the rest of this verse. Jude has lifted our vision into the counsel chambers of God, so to speak. He is bringing us to see salvation from God's point of view rather than our own. We are not BEING sanctified, but ARE sanctified by God the Father. It is what God has already done that is the basis for the coming exhortation. He will show that the ones to whom he has written have not done well. There is too much going on among them that is uncomely, and he certainly will not base his exhortation on their present status. That is the thing that he will found lacking.

Purported scholars have differed greatly in the perception of the phrase "preserved in Christ Jesus." Does this refer to the fact that Jesus keeps those who come to Him (John 10:28-29)? I do not believe this is the case. If it was, their present standing would not be questioned. No further exhortation would be required. He would simply proceed, knowing that everything would turn out all right. However, as the remainder of this epistle will confirm, this is not at all how Jude proceeds. He will issue stirring exhortations, and warn them of the possibility of being renounced by the Lord. This expression, therefore, does not refer to Jesus presently preserving the people. That kind of keeping, we are apprised, is done through faith:—i.e. "kept by the power of God through faith" (1 Pet 1:5).

**PRESERVED IN JESUS CHRIST.** The literal rendering of this text is "having been kept to Jesus Christ."<sup>LITV</sup> The word "to" properly means "in order to," or "for." The keeping was in order to the future ministry of Jesus, and not the present experience of the ministry. While Jesus is, indeed, preserving those who come to Him, that is not the point of this text. As I have already mentioned, this would contradict the state in which his readers were found at that time.

The meaning of the word "preserved" is properly "having been preserved," something that has already taken place. This fits in well with the rest of the verse which speaks of things that have already taken place, as compared with things that are in the process of taking place—i.e. "ARE sanctified by God the Father," "having been preserved," and "called."

Several versions do read "preserved for Jesus Christ," or "kept for Jesus Christ."<sup>NASB, NIV footnote, RSV, ASV, ERV, NAS, NAU, NET, WEYMOUTH, MONTGOMERY</sup> "kept safe for Jesus Christ,"<sup>NRSV, BBE, CJB, GWN, NAB, NJB</sup> | only show these texts to confirm that this is not a private or a strange view.

**AND CALLED.** What, then, does the text mean? In this case, out of necessity, the calling came after the preserving. The preserving, or keeping, was in order that the call might be answered. This affirmation accounts for the safety of the saints from their birth until their new birth. It explains how those living by faith prior to Christ were preserved until their sins were remitted through the blood of Christ (Heb 9:15). This is why God, at the proper time, drew people to Christ (John 6:44). It is why the apostles doctrine could explain the salvation of the saints by saying they were "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4). It is why Saul of Tarsus was able to survive until He was called. It is why you remained in the world until you were called. Our salvation was in the hand of God all along, even though we did not know it.

# COMMENTARY ON JUDE

## LESSON NUMBER 2

***“Mercy unto you, and peace and love, be multiplied.”*** .....(Jude 1:2)

### A FITTING SALUTATION

### INTRODUCTION

Jude, like Paul, Peter, Luke, and James, wrote to believers. Most epistles were written to churches (clusters of believers in a specific region), or dispersed believers that were separated from one another. What kind of things did these men write to *“the household of faith”* (Gal 6:10)? Did they challenge them to increase their number? Did they commend them for being large in number, or chasten them for being small? Did they urge them to pray for their country, or make a valiant effort to change the trend of society? Were their efforts directed toward stabilizing the families, and how to be excellent in parenting? Did they engage in lengthy discourses about ministering to the youth? Or perhaps to the aged? It is not that any of these things are wrong – unless we are approaching them as an emphasis. Then they are wrong. Every valid ministry has historically been approached this way. The main Person is God. The only access we have to God is through Christ. Lives are to be lived for Christ. Preparations are to be made for dying and standing before the judge seat of Christ. Investments are to be made in eternity. It is totally wrong to live to ultimately please anyone but God. Salvation in its fulness is the fundamental experience. Seeking the Lord is the primary vocation. All of the epistles underscore these core values. The strengthening of faith and hope are always the aim, and wherever there has been some kind of defection or distraction, correction is the objective. This is all done because of one’s fundamental love for God (1 John 5:2), Christ (1 Cor 16:22), the Spirit (Rom 15:30), and the people of God (1 Pet 1:22).

As we would expect, such things are found in the epistle of Jude. A condition was developing in those addressed by Jude that had to be corrected. They were headed in the wrong direction, and if they were not turned from it, it would conclude in their condemnation. There is an obvious fervency in Jude’s writing that reflects a profound concern for the welfare of God’s people. He begins by reminding them of the involvement of Deity in their spiritual life (verse 1). Now, he will call for the resources that are needed to make the necessary correction. These resources will also enable them to take the required action against who those have caused defilement and retrogression.

### MERCY UNTO YOU

Jude 1:2a ***“Mercy unto you . . . be multiplied.”***

**MERCY TO YOU.** Other versions read, *“may mercy,”*<sup>NASB</sup> *“May you have,”*<sup>CEB</sup> *“May God give you . . . mercy,”*<sup>NLT</sup> *“kindness to you,”*<sup>YLT</sup> *“May you be given . . . God’s kindness,”*<sup>LIVING</sup> *“I pray that God will greatly bless you with kindness,”*<sup>CEV</sup> *“Relax, everything’s going to be all right.”*<sup>MESSAGE</sup>

“Mercy” is mentioned in the Gospels twenty-one times – mostly contained in the words of Jesus. It is not mentioned in the book of Acts. It is mentioned 38 times in the epistles, and not at all in the Revelation. From Acts through Colossians, “mercies” is mentioned five times – twice in reference to a virtue found in believers. The word “mercy” is mentioned two hundred and seventeen times from Genesis through Zechariah. The ark of the covenant was covered with a “mercy seat” (Ex 25:21), which depicted mercy being of a higher order than Law.

**WHAT IS MERCY.** Lexically “mercy” is defined as “compassion,”<sup>STRONG’S</sup> “kindness, pity,”

McCLINTOK & STRONG'S "lovingkindness, gracious," ISBE "compassion for the miserable," EASTON "a development of benevolence, a feeling of kindness or compassion toward the needy and helpless." SMITH'S

The conferment of "mercy" presumes the presence of a condition that is contrary to the nature of God – a condition that has been brought about by the presence of sin in the world. The condition can range from illness, a deficiency in character, a backward spiritual posture, or even enslavement to sin. Mercy is related to grace, but is not synonymous with it. **Mercy accents the condition, while grace accents the solution.** To say it another way, mercy has to do with NOT punishing the individual who is lacking, while grace has to do with the conferment of benefit. Mercy delivers from judgment and condemnation, while grace delivers forgiveness, reconciliation, and Divine strength. Some apostolic writings refer to "grace" and "mercy" being given (1 Tim 1:2; Tit 1:4; Heb 4:6; 2 John 1:3). A salient expression is found in Hebrews 4:16 that accents the fact that both mercy and grace are needed: "*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may **obtain mercy**, and **find grace to help in time of need***" (Heb 4:16). Mercy addresses the condition, grace ministers help, recovery, and strength.

**THE NEED FOR MERCY.** Mercy is needed as a sort of buffer between the Divine nature and fallen human nature. God is holy, and His fiery nature, unless there is some tempering factor, will consume what and who is unlike Him. It is a Divine virtue that must be "*obtained*" in order that those with ungodlike qualities, whatever they may be, will not be consumed by God. It is for this reason that we are told, "*Keep yourselves in the love of God, **looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life***" (Jude 1:21). That is, walk before God as "*dear children*" (Eph 5:1) which will summon forth the mercy of God, even though there may be a thousand unwanted propensities in you that irritate you, to say nothing of their impact upon the Living God.

Ponder the things that are either present in you, or occur in you – things that are antithetical to God, and have the potential of angering Him. There is "*another law*" resident in your members, that wars against your new mind (Rom 7:23). There are imaginations and thoughts that are to be cast down (2 Cor 7:3-4). There are ungodliness and worldly lusts that are to be denied, or rejected (Tit 2:11-13). There is the very real condition of being "weak in the faith" (Rom 14:1), and possessing a "weak conscience" (1 Cor 8:12).

None of these are comely traits. They are unlike God in every sense. How is it that God can care for us, deliver us, make us stand, and keep us from falling – such weak creatures we are. **It is His mercy!** His mercy enables Him to endure us, be patient with us, hold us up, and deal gently with us. This is Divine compassion that sustains us while the Lord works with us.

Those to whom Jude writes sorely needed mercy! Because of contaminating influences among them, they had to be strongly admonished to "*contend for the faith*," or fight to keep it. God had to be near to strengthen them, and His mercy, [praise God], would enable Him to do so.

**MERCY IS EXPERIENCED BY DIVINE DISCRETION.** It is written, "*I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion*" (Ex 33:19; Rom 9:15,18). There is not a time when the mercy of God automatically kicks in, so to speak. There is not a sort of spiritual thermostat where the expression of God reflexively switches from anger to mercy. Mercy is dispensed with holy discretion. God declared that He would have mercy upon whomever He willed to have it. It may be a blinded Samson, chained up in an idol temple, who had betrayed his trust. But that eventful day Samson called out, "*O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes*" (Judg 16:28). God willed to have mercy on him that day! There were at least two people who pled with Jesus to "*Have mercy*" on them: the "*woman of Canaan*" (Matt 15:22), and blind Bartimaeus" (Mk 10:47). Jesus willed to have mercy on them both.

**BE MULTIPLIED.** Other versions read, "*be your in abundance*," NIV "*be increased*," BBE "*in full measure*," CJB and "*fill your lives*." GWN The recovery that was required in those to whom Jude wrote would require a lot of mercy – multiplied mercy! This involved a lot of compassion, a lot of pity, a lot of tenderness, and a lot of Divine benevolence. It would be possible because of Jesus!

## PEACE BE UNTO YOU

1:2b " . . . **peace**" **be unto you** . . . "**be multiplied** . . ."

Remember, we are being exposed to benefits that will give the saints the advantage in what they are required to do – whether it is recovery from a fallen condition, or advancement to a mature

state. The things here mentioned are not spiritual luxuries that are beneficial and pleasant, but not necessary. I will tell you that there is a religious spirit in our time that treats these things as fundamentally not essential or necessary. That is precisely why they are neglected.

**PEACE BE UNTO YOU.** Other versions read, “to you,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “be yours,”<sup>NIV</sup> “may you have,”<sup>CEB</sup> “on you,”<sup>NET</sup> “may God give you,”<sup>NLT</sup> “in you,”<sup>BBE</sup> and “be granted you.”<sup>Goodspeed</sup>

This is not something **you** do, but is what God does. **It is not something in your that is activated, but something that is sent to, or granted to you, from God.** This is also an experience that is being helped along by one who is laboring together with God (1 Cor 3:9). The Holy Spirit is also involved in this, for “peace” is part of His fruit within (Gal 5:22). In this case, Jude sought peace for those to whom he wrote, God would send it, and the Spirit would apply it.

When godly virtues or graces become idle and unproductive in a person, that individual cannot simply will or work his way out of the situation. There must be the involvement of someone else in the recovery. In this case, Jude, having seen the situation, stepped up, seeking for God to work through His inspired ministry.

Foreshadowing this redemptive experience, Jesus said to His disciples, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” (John 14:27a).

**WHAT IS PEACE.** Academically, peace is defined as “quietness, rest,”<sup>STRONG’S</sup> “peace, harmony, tranquillity,”<sup>GINGRICH</sup> “peace between individuals, I. e. harmony, concord . . . security, safety, prosperity, felicity.”<sup>THAYER</sup> Jesus defined it this way, “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27b).

This is dispensed from the reservoir of peace that was “made” by Jesus on the cross (Col 1:20). That peace addressed the alienation and enmity that had been created by sin (Rom 5:10; Eph 4:18). Nothing more needs to be done for God to be more thoroughly “satisfied” than He was when Jesus experienced “the travail of His soul” (Isa 53:11). However, just as the “atonement” (Rom 5:11) and “reconciliation” (Heb 2:17) Jesus wrought on the cross cannot be made more effective or extensive, so it is with the “peace” that was made there (Col 1:20). Jesus cannot “take away the sins of the world” more extensively or effectively than He did when He “died for us” on the tree (John 1:29; Rom 5:8).

**However, the experience and benefit of that peace must be appropriated by faith.** Even then, it must be allowed to work within us: “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful” (Col 3:15). This is done by mortifying the deeds of the body (Rom 8:13) and crucifying the flesh (Gal 5:24) – both the “deeds” and the “flesh” which disturb the peace that God gives, bring disruption, inner turmoil, fear, and unrest.

Peace is like Noah’s dove, which returned to the place from which it was sent when it could find no place to settle down (Gen 8:9). There are many souls who have lost their peace, but are so caught up in the cares of the world that they do not know it.

**THE NEED FOR PEACE.** Spiritual life cannot be lived out in an environment of unrest. Let us take a moment and define what we mean by “unrest.” By that I mean when a person is knowledgeable in the presence of the Lord, or is made more aware of God than anything else, it is troubling, disconcerting, and uncomfortable. Should that circumstance arise, the individual is occupying dangerous ground, and is in imminent jeopardy.

**Every assembly of the saints should be a time and place when the people are made more acutely conscious of God and Christ.** Their desires should be focused upon the Lord and the benefits that are realized in Christ Jesus. The objective must be for the people to be made more comfortable and joyous in the presence of the Lord, as opposed to Israel trembling and fearing at the foot of Sinai.

**THE MULTIPLICATION OF PEACE.** Other versions read, “in abundance,”<sup>NIV</sup> and “in full measure.”<sup>CJB</sup> Peace can be like a small ripple, or a gigantic cleansing wave. A person can have a small and fleeting experience of it, or experience a lasting settling of the soul. The two on the road to Emmaus experienced burning hearts while Jesus talked with them by the way (Lk 24:32). However, when their eyes “were opened, and they knew Him” (Lk 24:31), they were able to assess their experience on the road, and their peace became more stable.

It is this kind of experience that makes the multiplication of peace necessary. Just as trouble can increase, so peace must increase. Isaiah prophesied, “Of the increase of His government **and peace there shall be no end**” (Isa 9:7). Just as peace expanded its borders in Canaan, so the multiplication of peace can expand its borders in those to whom it is given. Also, when there has been a spiritual depletion, such as in those to whom Jude wrote, peace multiplied is an absolute essentiality, else the required recovery and growth will not be realized.

## LOVE BE UNTO YOU

1:2c " . . . and love be unto you . . . be multiplied . . . "

**LOVE UNTO YOU.** Like all gifts from God, love is not automatically dispensed. Jesus said to the Jews – members of a nation God loved [Deut 7:7] – “*ye have not the love of God IN you*” (John 5:42). John wrote this of the one who kept God’s word, “*in him verily is the love of God perfected*” (1 John 2:15). He also warned, “*if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*” (1 John 2:15). Again John asked, “*But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*” (1 John 3:17). Paul wrote of the love of God being “*with you all*” (2 Cor 13:14). Paul’s desire for the Thessalonians was stated this way, “*And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God*” (2 Thess 3:5).

This is God’s love for us, and not merely the capacity to love Him. Sometimes it appears as though men assume the love of God is in or with a person. However, this is emphatically not to be assumed. Salvation is being administered within a working Kingdom, over which Jesus presides (2 Pet 1:11). His is a “*government*” that is being managed by Himself (Isa 9:6-7). Nothing in this kingdom takes place independently of God and His Christ. **Nothing in this Kingdom is done spontaneously, impulsively, instinctively, involuntarily, or in an unmediated manner.** In this economy, there is no automatic mode. It is rightly said of God the Father, “*One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all*” (Eph 4:6). Any and every spiritual gift, aptitude, or ability can be traced back to God, of whom it is written, “*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*” (James 1:17).

Various spiritual traits and aptitudes are dispensed, and sometimes recalled, by the King of this kingdom. No man or group of men can develop a program or procedure through which the gifts of God can be obtained or maintained. Those who claim such an ability have not told the truth, and are in the grip of delusion.

**WHAT IS LOVE?** What is “*love*” – this grace that is “*unto us.*” Lexically, it is “*affection or benevolence, good will,*”<sup>THAYER</sup> “*an attitude of appreciation resulting from a conscious evaluation and choice,*”<sup>FRIBERG</sup> “*a love that is shown or demonstrated.*”<sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup> Placing all of the academic definitions in a hopper and boiling it down to its spiritual meaning, **Scriptural “love” seeks the welfare of the one who is loved, because the one doing the loving has an affection for and interest in the one who is loved.** When God or Christ is loved, their glory is sought.

This love is primarily the love God has for the saved. That is the love that is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The person grasping this love is said to “*know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God*” (Eph 3:19). That is, this kind of love births, so to speak, all manner of godly traits in the believer, causing him to be “*filled with all the fulness of God.*”

Spiritual life will advance no further than the border of one’s knowledge of the love of God – and that border is determined by the amount of God’s love that is knowledgeably experienced. The message that delineates this love is the Gospel, and the means of its appropriation is faith.

The nominal church has not done well in its exposition of the love of God. John revealed the means through which this marvelous love is “*perceived.*” “*Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*” (1 John 3:16). It takes some extensive musing to even begin to see what was involved in Jesus laying down His life for us. It involved Him humbling Himself (Phil 2:8); becoming a servant (Phil 2:7); being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil 2:8); divesting Himself of the prerogatives of Deity, and having to face the devil as a Man (Phil 2:6-7); being tempted (Heb 2:18; 4:15); having all the iniquities of the world laid upon Him, and feeling the weight and contamination of them (Isa 53:6); bearing our sins in His body on the tree (1 Pet 2:24); having to taste death (Heb 2:9); required to go into the region of the dead, spending three days there (Acts 2:27; Eph 4:9); and having to wait for His bride (John 3:29; 2 Cor 11:2).

Once this love is comprehended, the next statement will be fulfilled in the discerning one: “*and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*” (1 John 3:16). The extent to which you are willing to lay down your life for Jesus’ brethren, inconvenience yourself for them, and submit to what they have been given to distribute to the saints, is the extent to which you have perceived the love of God. It also is the means by which the degree of your love for God is made known.

**LOVE MULTIPLIED.** Paul referred to this multiplication in this way: "*And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is **shed abroad in our hearts** by the Holy Ghost which is give unto us*" (Rom 5:5). Those to whom Jude is writing will need a lot of love from God. They will have to see Divine love more clearly, and thus be impelled to seek the betterment of His people instead of allowing charlatans and opportunists to creep in among them. You see what a great work the Spirit did in Jude, to enable Him to say so much in such few words.

# COMMENTARY ON JUDE

## LESSON NUMBER 3

***“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” .....(Jude 1:3)***

### **I CHANGED MY MIND**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Those who serve the Lord in the capacity of evangelists, prophets, and pastor/teachers must approach their ministry with several things in mind. First, the pivotal roles of the Gospel of Christ and the salvation of God must be comprehended and embraced. Second the proper assessment of those to whom they minister must be possessed. Chiefly, the ability of the people to embrace the Gospel and experience the salvation of God must be discerned. Those who are truly living unto the Lord and growing in their understanding, can hear more of the Gospel expounded, and benefit from insightful expositions of the salvation of God, The Roman and Ephesian letters are examples of the kind of teaching delivered to such people. Sometimes there are hindering circumstances and manners among those being taught, and that cannot be overlooked. The Corinthian and Galatian letters are sterling examples of how this is accomplished, as well as the letter to Hebrew believers, simply called “Hebrews.”

Now we will find that those to whom Jude is writing have some hindering influences among them, but are obviously not aware of them – at least, not as they should be. Being inspired by God, and having an understanding of the purpose of God as made known in the Gospel, and experienced in His great salvation, Jude knows what to write. He is not what men call a “clergyman,” or, as Jesus described such people, an “hireling” (John 10:12-13). His purpose is not to carve out a career for himself, or to please the people. Jude will not appeal to his relationship to Jesus in the flesh, or use his brother James as a kind of intellectual leverage. He will deal with what he has observed, and how it contradicts what God is doing in Christ.

#### **THE COMMON SALVATION**

Jude 1:3a ***“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation . . .”***

**BELOVED.** Other versions read, “*dear friends,*”<sup>NIV</sup> “*My loved ones,*”<sup>BBE</sup> and “*My beloved.*”<sup>MRD</sup> Nearly every modern version reads “*dear friends.*” I do not care for that interpretation of the word used here (agapetos). The lexical meaning of the word is “beloved, esteemed, dear, favorite,”<sup>THAYER</sup> “beloved, dear, very much loved,”<sup>FRIBERG</sup> “object of one’s affection, one who is loved, beloved, dear.”<sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup> There is a Greek word for “*friends*” (‘philos’), which means “associate, he who associates familiarly with one, a companion”<sup>THAYER</sup> (John 15:14-15; 3 John 1:14). That is not an appropriate word here. It lacks the depth reflected in this text. Jude is not writing to them as associates, but as the children of God and the brethren of Jesus. He loves them because of this, not because they are his associates. It is knowing their identity with God and Jesus that has provoked him to write. He is not attempting to bring them closer to himself, but closer to the Lord.

**I GAVE ALL DILIGENCE TO WRITE.** Other versions read, “*I was very diligent to write,*”<sup>NKJV</sup> “*I was making every effort to write you,*”<sup>NASB</sup> “*very eager to write,*”<sup>NIV</sup> “*eagerly preparing to write,*”<sup>NRSV</sup> “*my thoughts were full of a letter which I was going to send you,*”<sup>BBE</sup> “*I was busily at work writing*

to you," <sup>CJB</sup> *"I had been planning to write you,"* <sup>LIVING</sup> and *"my whole concern was to write to you."*  
<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Right here, we learn much about Jude. It is generally assumed that he was writing to Jewish brethren in their homeland. However, the tone of the letter strongly suggests that it was to be considered a universal letter. The examples he cites would be well known to Jewish believers. However, the thing to see is that Jude knew about the condition of the churches, was deeply concerned about it, and determined to do something about it. Such venerable souls have always been rare. They are noble souls used by God to maintain order in the body of Christ.

Jude had already determined to write to these brethren, whom he loved, and was, perhaps already engaged in that writing. Whatever news he had received, and however he received it, his plans were altered. There were some things to be corrected before what he had determined to write would be effective. Historically, there have been relatively few souls who have been profitably sensitive to the condition of the churches, and determined to provide needed correction.

**THE COMMON SALVATION.** Other versions read, *"the salvation we share,"* <sup>NIV</sup> and *"the salvation God has given us."* <sup>LIVING</sup> **This is the default theme concerning which God's ministers preach, teach, and write.** It is what Paul expounded in Romans (Rom 3:1-8:33), Second Corinthians (2 Cor 3:1-5:20), Ephesians (Eph 1:1-4:20), Philippians (Phil 2:1-3:21), Colossians (Col 1:9-3:4), and Thessalonians (1 Thess ). It is what Peter expounded in his epistles(), as well as John in his first epistle (). Epistles like First Corinthians, Galatians, Hebrews, Jude, and James were corrective in nature. **Whenever inspired writers had to deal with difficulties or departures in the church, it was always in order that the people might be brought to a place where they would be able to comprehend the deeper things associated with the salvation of God.**

I do not believe there is any indication that God ordained a gift within the body of Christ that was primarily corrective. Even when the holy prophets upbraided Israel and corrected them, the heart of their message was not the correction with which they dealt, but the God who had chosen them in order that they might be His own and walk with Him. I personally question the validity of professed ministries that are **primarily** corrective.

Problems are not to be *"common,"* but the salvation of God IS *"common."* That is why it yields the greater benefit. However, when that salvation is *"neglected"* (Heb 2:3), it cannot be declared as it is intended to be until the things that caused that neglect are dealt with wisely and effectively. As difficult as it may be to receive, there are some people within the church who have no right to hear of the *"common salvation"* until they are in a position to profit from it. It was no doubt disappointing to Jude that this was the case, but he was a faithful servant.

## THE COMMON SALVATION

1:3b *" . . . it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith . . . "*

Here was a godly and inspired man who had in mind to write to these brethren concerning *"the common salvation."* That is certainly something that was needful, and much profit could come from it. However, the condition of the people required a changing of the agenda. It requires a certain kind of heart and mindset to profit from hearing about God's *"so great salvation"* (Heb 2:3). Jesus referred to such people as those who possess *"an honest and good heart"* (Lk 8:15).

**IT WAS NEEDFUL.** Other versions read, *"I found it necessary,"* <sup>NKJV</sup> *"I felt the necessity,"* <sup>NASB</sup> *"I felt I had to write,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"I was constrained,"* <sup>ASV</sup> *"instead, I must write,"* <sup>CEB</sup> *"I have been obliged,"* <sup>DARBY</sup> *"But something has come up"* <sup>GWN</sup> *"I now feel compelled"* <sup>81</sup> *instead,"* <sup>NET</sup> *"But now I find that I must write about something else,"* <sup>NLT</sup> *"I felt forced to write you,"* <sup>LIVING</sup> *"[But] I found it necessary and was impelled to write you"*

There are conditions that require a change in the content of the writing of holy men. This is an excellent example. The reason is that the exposition of the Gospel and God's great salvation requires a certain posture in the listeners. If they are being adversely impacted by other influence within their gathering, then that is an issue that has to be addressed before real benefit can be realized. That is the reason Jesus warned His disciples to *"Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees"* (Matt 16:6). Therefore, Jude changes his writing.

**AND EXHORT YOU.** Other versions read, *"appealing,"* <sup>NASB</sup> *"urge you,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"requesting you with all my heart,"* <sup>BEBE</sup> *"encourage you,"* <sup>GWN</sup> and *"and urgently appeal to."* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

This is an appeal to the heart and mind – a strong entreaty to think about what he is writing. This means that the problem he is addressing is one that is fundamentally unreasonable, and will not hold up under honest and diligent examination. **All error, and all carnal motivation and conduct are unreasonable, illogical, and nonsensical.** It only requires that the true nature of the error be seen, and this is at once glaringly apparent. Therefore Jude will throw some light on the matter that has caused this profound concern.

**EARNESTLY CONTEND.** Other versions read, "fighting strongly," <sup>BBE</sup> "continue your fight" <sup>GWN</sup> "maintain a conflict," <sup>MRD</sup> "fight hard," <sup>NJB</sup> "continually labor," <sup>TNT</sup> "agonize for," <sup>YLT</sup> and "the vigorous defense." <sup>LIVING</sup>

This is a military stance, The picture is of an enemy trying to take something from the people, and being faced with powerful and consistent resistance. What the enemy wants to do, he will not be allowed to do. Jude is writing to encourage an overcoming stance.

**FOR THE FAITH.** And what is it that the people are to contend for? It is "the faith which as once delivered to the saints." The Amplified Bible interprets this to mean, "[the faith which is that sum of Christian belief which was delivered verbally to the holy people of God." Some Greek lexicons acknowledge that this is a view of some, but do not state it is the root meaning of the word. As in all Scriptural texts "faith" academically means persuasion, conviction of anything, and trust in.

Earnestly contending for the faith equates to fighting the good fight of faith (1 Tim 6:12). That is, fighting to "keep the faith" (2 Tim 4:7). Because faith "is the victory that overcomes the world" (1 John 5:4-5), Satan employs strategies designed to cause men to cease believing, stop trusting, and doubt rather than being persuaded. While I would not say it is wrong to contend for the purity of the Gospel message, I do not believe that is what is meant by this text. That sort of thing is embodied in the words "hold fast the faithful word" (Tit 2:9), "speak thou the things that become sound doctrine" (Tit 2:1), "charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (1 Tim 1:3), and "hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim 1:13). Luke opened his gospel by referring to "those things which are most surely believed among us" (Lk 1:1). However, "faith" is never clearly said to be, nor is there a doctrine that teaches it is, the embodiment of Christian doctrine.

### ONCE DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS

<sup>1:3c</sup> "which was once delivered unto the saints."

**ONCE.** Other versions read "once and forever," <sup>BBE</sup> "once and for all," <sup>CJB</sup> and "once for all." <sup>NAB</sup> The word "once" does have the lexical meaning of "one time." <sup>THAYER</sup> and "something done uniquely only once." <sup>FRIBERG</sup> It is used several times in this sense—i.e. Heb 6:4; 9:7,26,7,28; 10:2).

**DELIVERED.** Other versions read, "entrusted," <sup>NIV</sup> "given," "passed on" <sup>CJB</sup> "handed down," <sup>NAB</sup> and "which was delivered verbally." <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

This is an amplification of "the faith" for which the people of God are to contend. In this text, is it the doctrine, or the trust and reliance? The teaching, or the persuasion? The sum of teaching, or substance of things hoped for?

This is the faith that "comes" by hearing (Rom 10:17), and through which men are "saved by grace" (Eph 2:8). It does not come once into the world, but "once" to the saints. There is nothing in Scripture that indicates faith is given to the saints twice. It is true that it can be increased (2 Cor 10:15), and can grow (2 Thess 1:3). But it is given "once for all" [time]. That is why men must contend for it, or fight to keep it. There are some hopeless people described in Scripture. This is a most difficult thing to address, but it must be done. There are those who "make shipwreck of the faith" (1 Tim 1:19). There are those who "depart from the faith" (1 Tim 4:1). Still others only "believe for a while" (Lk 8:13). Doctrinally, this is supported by the solemn warning of Hebrews 6:1-6, in which a point of no return is vividly described. It is also held up by another sober warning: "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (Heb 10:26). There is also such a thing as people who are "reprobate concerning the faith," or "rejected as far as the faith is concerned" <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> (2 Tim 3:8).

The word "reprobate" means "not standing the test, not approved . . . that which does not prove itself such as it ought . . . unfit for, unproved, spurious" <sup>THAYER</sup> It speaks of one who has the appearance of being genuine, but is not. The fact that a professing "Christian" can, in fact, be a "reprobate" is confirmed by the exhortation, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, **except ye be**

**reprobates?"** (2 Cor 13:5).

Without making the slightest effort to identify any particular person in this category, I will affirm that faith is delivered to an individual one time – no more. As I have already indicated, that faith can increase and it can grow, but it cannot, and will not, be given again.

**UNTO THE SAINTS.** Other versions read, "to God's people," <sup>CJB</sup> "to the holy ones," <sup>NAB</sup> and "to the holy people of God." <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

**From the practical point of view,** these are those who receive the Gospel as the absolute truth of God (1 Thess 2:13), fleeing to Jesus for refuge to lay hold on the hope affirmed by that Gospel (Heb 6:18). No person is granted faith that is repelled by the Gospel, or settles for "another gospel." Once faith comes to such people, they are no longer under the schoolmaster (Gal 3:24-25). Now the fundamental thing is not abstaining, but obtaining – and that is done through faith (Heb 11:33). Recovery from sin perfectly parallels the healing of the crippled man at the gate Beautiful: "And His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith **which is by him** [hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all" (Acts 3:16). The NIV reads "It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through Him." The faith possessed by these people was "delivered" to them!

**From the Divine point of view,** the "saints" are the ones chosen in Christ "before the foundation of the world," that they should be "holy and without blame before Him in love" (Eph 1:4). These are the ones God foreknew, predestinated, called, justified, and will glorify (Rom 8:29-30). No person can be justified in assuming he is one of these people. Certain evidences are given that enable the individual to identify whether or not he is one of them. Some of those evidences are: the Law of God is put in their hearts and written in their minds (Heb 10:16), God will be consciously and thankfully their God, and they will all know the Lord (Heb 8:8-12). Their hope will be that the Lord will come again, and they will go about to purify themselves even as He is pure (1 John 3:2-3). They will work out their own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12). They crucify the flesh (Gal 3:24). They worship God the Spirit rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh (Phil 3:3). There is no compromise on these things. They are the inviolable evidences of faith – faith that has been given "once for all," or "once for all time." <sup>GWN</sup>

Now, it is a matter of keeping that faith (2 Tim 4:7), standing fast in it (1 Cor 16:13), being established in the faith (Acts 16:5), continuing grounded in the faith (Coll 1:23), being "sound in the faith" (Tit 1:13), and steadfastly resisting the devil "in the faith" (1 Pet 5:9). You must not depart from it or make shipwreck of it. It was given once, it will not be given again, anymore than the men given one talent, and one pound were given another one after they had spurned and neglected the one they were given. This is, indeed, a most serious matter.

# COMMENTARY ON JUDE

## LESSON NUMBER 6

***“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”*** (Jude 1:4)

### **CERTAIN MEN CREPT IN UNAWARES INTRODUCTION**

Where there has been a deterioration or an attempt to mingle truth with error, someone has been among the people who has presented teaching that is **not** “*sound doctrine*” (1 Tim 1:10; 2 Tim 4:3; Tit 1:9; 2:1). Paul warned the elders from Ephesus that this would happen among them (Acts 20:29-30). Paul told the Corinthians they had willingly subjected themselves to the proclamation of “*another Jesus,*” “*another gospel,*” and “*another Spirit*” (2 Cor 11:4). He wrote to the Galatians that had left Him who called them into the grace of Christ to embrace “*another gospel*” (Gal 1:6). Peter wrote to scattered believers about a time when there would be “*false teachers*” among them (2 Pet 2:1). In his old age, John wrote to believers that there were “*many antichrists*” at that time, and that there were teachers that went out from them, but were really not of them (1 John 2:18-19). There is a note of utmost sobriety and stern warning in every one of these texts. None of them are treated casually, and all of them carry the danger of damnation.

With the proliferation of sectarianism (Scriptures refers to such as “*heresies*”), and the propagation of the spirit of toleration, erroneous doctrines are not viewed as seriously as they were during the days of the apostles. However, if the Gospel is, indeed, “*the power of God unto salvation*” (Rom 1:16), if “*sound doctrine*” is essential in exhorting and convincing “*the gainsayers*” (Tit 1:9), and if “*the truth*” is the appointed means sanctifying the people (John 7:17), then what is preached and taught is of critical importance. It appears to me that in our time a religious environment has been developed that leaves the door wide open for the entrance of false teachers, and doctrines that lead to damnation – just like the ones Jude describes.

### **THEY CREPT IN**

Jude 1:4a ***“For there are certain men crept in unawares . . .”***

**THERE ARE.** Paul warned about defections that were coming (Acts 20:29-30; 2 Thess 2:3; 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 3:1). Peter did also (2 Pet 2:1). However, Jude is writing about a **current** situation – something that has already taken place. This will call for an immediate response.

**CERTAIN MEN.** Other versions read, “*certain persons,*” <sup>NASB</sup> “*certain intruders,*” <sup>NIV</sup> “*some,*” <sup>RSV</sup> “*Godless people,*” <sup>CEB</sup> “*certain individuals,*” <sup>CJB</sup> “*godless teachers.*” <sup>LIVING</sup>

This is not a matter Jude addresses in general. There were specific, or particular, men who had perpetrated erroneous doctrine. False doctrines are not merely words that come floating through the air into the churches. They are carried by men, who are the vassals of the devil. If they come to men through books, or through video media, they still are delivered by men – deceived men. Paul told the Ephesian elders that such men would come from their own number. Peter said there would be “*false teachers*” among the people. That is, teachers who were not placed in that office by God (Eph 4:11; 1 Cor 12:28), and did not bring a message from God.

Paul named some of these people: Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Tim 1:20; Philetus (2 Tim 2:7), and Phygellus and Hermogenes (2 Tim 1:15).

**CREPT IN.** Other versions read, “*slipped in,*” <sup>NIV</sup> “*stolen in,*” <sup>NRSV</sup> “*admission has been ...gained,*” <sup>RSV</sup> “*wormed their way in,*” <sup>CJB</sup> “*come in by stealth,*” <sup>CSB</sup> “*got in,*” <sup>DARBY</sup> “*infiltrated,*” <sup>NJB</sup>

and *"craftily crept in."*<sup>PNT</sup>

These men did not announce what they really were, nor did they divulge their intentions. It seems to me that they did not have much difficulty getting in. The love of the truth does not appear to have been prominent, and this its declaration was, at the very best, very weak. Those who settle for watered-down preaching and teaching fail to consider what kind of people can take advantage of such an environment. First of all, the people come across as being very naive and simple, and thus are easy targets for the charlatans and exploiters.

When. For example, the gathering of the saints is seen primarily as a place for the conversion of sinners, side doors all around the assembly are left ajar for the entrance of the kind of people mentioned in this text. The gathering of the saints is fundamentally for the saints, where the flock is fed, and the various members have opportunity to express their faith. However, when all that people notice is numbers, Satan can bring in some of his choice promoters who will spread spiritually damaging doctrines and introduce perspectives that cause a plummet to occur.

**UNAWARES.** Other versions read, *"unnoticed,"*<sup>NKJV</sup> *"privily,"*<sup>ASV</sup> *"unobserved,"*<sup>YLT</sup> *"secretly,"* and *"gaining entrance secretly by a side door."*<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

What kind of environment is found where false teachers can come in undetected and spread their venom? How is it that a people can be unaware of such entrances? This is the same kind of unawareness that will be found when Jesus comes again. Therefore He said, *"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares"* (Luke 21:34).

The word *"unawares"* means, *"to enter secretly, slip in stealthily; to steal in."*<sup>THAYER</sup> These men did not fit in with the body of Christ, and had not been placed there by God (1 Cor 12:18). They were not holding to the Head (Col 2:19), and had not presented their bodies a living sacrifice unto God (Rom 12:1). They did not hold to the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42), and they were not living by faith (Rom 1:17). They were not looking for the blessed hope, and purifying themselves even as He is pure (1 John 3:2-3). Yet, they crept in unawares, with no one detecting who they really were.

How could such things be? What is there about salvation that leaves a person insensitive to the entrance of this kind of men? The answer is that there is nothing about salvation that produces such a state. In the very best view, only those who are children in their understanding are *"tossed to and from by every wind of doctrine"* (Eph 4:14).

The people to whom Jude wrote had not been earnestly contending for the faith (Jude 1:3). They had not been *"fighting the good fight of faith"* (1 Tim 6:12), and they had not been walking in the Spirit (Gal 6:16,25 (so could hardly hear the teaching Jesus). They had relaxed their spiritual stance, and, like the Hebrews, had become *"dull of hearing,"* (Heb 5:11; Eph 4:20-21). These false teachers had not only crept in undetected, they were spreading their teachings and bringing the people into the danger of being castaways.

This kind of situation is even more easily introduced when a congregation does not meet together often, allowing for the expressions of the various members of the body. It is also helped along by spiritual immaturity, simple and shallow thinking, and weak appetites for the things of God. If the people become more like the world, worldly preachers and teachers will be attracted to them all the more. Now, because the people are lacking in faith, and there is an absence of eager and pressing spirits, they are standing on the edge of Divine rejection. They did not even see their situation – but Jude did, and he sets out to awaken them to righteousness and safety.

## THEY WERE ORDAINED TO THIS CONDEMNATION

1:4b *" . . . who were before of old ordained to this condemnation . . . "*

These are the *"certain men"* who have crept in among them, without the brethren being aware of it. Jude will no accent the seriousness of this circumstance.

**BEFORE OF OLD.** Other versions read, *"long ago,"*<sup>NKJV</sup> *"long beforehand,"*<sup>NASB</sup> *"written about long ago,"*<sup>NIV</sup> *"of old written of beforehand,"*<sup>ASV</sup> *"before in the holy Writings,"*<sup>BBE</sup> *"a long time ago,"*<sup>CEB</sup> *"Not long ago,"*<sup>GWN</sup> *"from the beginning,"*<sup>MRD</sup> and *"from beforehand."*<sup>JUB</sup>

The word translated *"before"* has this lexical meaning, *"to write before."*<sup>THAYER</sup> Some have taken this to mean it was something written in the Scriptures. In this case, that would be the writings of Moses and the prophets. **The difficulty with that view is that we do not have an example of such condemnation in the writings of Moses and the Prophets.** The word *"condemn,"* in all of

its forms, occurs 19 times from Exodus through Amos (Ex 22:9; Deut 25:1; 1 Kgs 8:32; 2 Chron 36:3; Job 9:20; 10:2; 15:6; 32:3; 34:17; 40:8; 37:33; 94:21; 109:7,31; Prov 12:2; 17:15; Isa 50:9; 54:17; Amos 2:8). None of them are used to describe the circumstance to which Jude refers. In my judgment, this cannot be Jude's meaning.

There is another kind of writing with which the Lord has acquainted us. The grand purpose of God is depicted as a book, or scroll, that is **written** "*within and on the backside.*" That book could be read by none other than the exalted Christ – who did take the book and reveal its contents (Rev 5:1-9). This is also the book of which Daniel was apprised. An angel said to him, "*But I will show thee that which is noted in **the scripture of truth**: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince*" (Dan 10:21). Other versions read "*the Book of Truth,*"<sup>NIV</sup> and "*the writing of truth.*"<sup>NASB</sup> This is the writing to which our text refers. It is in the book that contains all that God will do upon the earth – a book that is in heaven.

**ORDAINED TO.** Other versions read, "*marked out,*"<sup>NKJV</sup> "*written about,*"<sup>NIV</sup> "*designated for,*"<sup>NRSV</sup> "*judgment was passed,*"<sup>CEB</sup> "*registered,*"<sup>MRD</sup> "*marked down for,*"<sup>NJB</sup> "*recorded,*"<sup>NLT</sup> "*write aforetime,*"<sup>TNT</sup> "*pre-destined to,*"<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> "*predestined,*"<sup>MONTGOMERY</sup> and "*predicted.*"<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

If the writing of reference is the "*Book of truth,*" or the scroll mentioned in the Revelation, then this word refers to God's pre-determination, or predestination. With the absence of any "*before of old*" Scripture announcing the end that is here declared, it seems to me we are shut up to the conclusion that this is Divine determination that was written in heaven before Moses and the Prophets.

We have several examples of such men – men God raised up for a purpose He determined.

**PHARAOH.** "*For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.*" (Rom 9:17)

**JUDAS.** "*Jesus answered them, **Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?** He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that **should betray Him**, being one of the twelve*" (John 6:70-71). "*That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to **his own place***" (Acts 1:25).

**SPREADERS OF HERESIES.** "*For there **must be** also heresies among you, **that they which are approved may be made manifest among you***" (1 Cor 11:19)

**SPREADERS OF STRONG DELUSION.** "*And for this cause **God shall send them** strong delusion, that they should believe a lie*" (2 Thess 2:11).

**VESSELS FITTED FOR DESTRUCTION.** "*But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and **some to honor, and some to dishonor.***" (2 Tim 2:20).

These dishonorable vessels, therefore, are those raised up by God for ignoble purposes. They are the appointed means of making known within the professed church those who have not received the love of the truth. The church, if it is pressing toward the mark, and growing up into Christ in all things, will detect these spiritual blotches. If they do not, then God will raise up men to identify their dilemma for them, and call them into a proper spiritual stance. This is a very difficult truth for some to receive.

**THIS CONDEMNATION.** Other versions read, "*for this condemnation,*"<sup>NKJV</sup> "*for this evil fate,*"<sup>BBE</sup> "*to this sentence,*"<sup>DARBY</sup> "*for condemnation,*"<sup>NIB</sup> "*such judgment,*"<sup>TNT</sup> "*this judgment,*"<sup>YLT</sup> and "*doom.*"<sup>WILLIAMS</sup>

That is, these men will be condemned for what they are doing. Paul put it this way, "*For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: **Whose end is destruction**, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things*" (Phil 3:18-19). Peter said of them, "*These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; **to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever***" (2 Pet 2:17). It ought to be obvious that a very serious matter is being addressed.

## THEY ARE UNGODLY MEN

<sup>1:4c</sup> . . . **ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.**"

Jude will now describe the men who have crept in among them unawares. They were

obviously not being seen as such by those to whom he wrote. I will again emphasize that this is one of the penalties of remaining in a spiritually juvenile state. Such are like baby lambs among whom ravenous wolves are creeping in.

**UNGODLY MEN.** Other versions read, "godless men,"<sup>NIV</sup> "men without the fear of God,"<sup>BBE</sup> "people to whom God means nothing,"<sup>GWN</sup> "wicked men,"<sup>MRD</sup> "impious,"<sup>YLT</sup> "don't want God,"<sup>LIVING</sup> "against God,"<sup>ERV</sup> "without fear or reverence of God,"<sup>JUB</sup> and "impious, profane."<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

The words "ungodly men" are translated from a single Greek word that means, "destitute of reverential awe toward God, contemning God, impious,"<sup>THAYER</sup> "godless."<sup>GINGRICH</sup> The meaning of the English word "godless" is, "not acknowledging a deity or divine law; denying or disobeying God."<sup>MERRIAM-WEBSTER</sup>

Mind you, these are men that have crept into the church "unawares," or undetected. According to the word used to describe them, they did not even believe in or acknowledge God, much less submit to Him. They did not fear God, and certainly did not serve Him.

These men fell into the following category of people: "*They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate*" (Titus 1:16).

I doubt that any of these wicked men would have acknowledged they did not believe in God, fear Him, or serve Him. If someone charged them with not acknowledging Deity, they would probably have strenuously objected. But the truth of the matter was that they were doing what they wanted, as opposed to what the Lord required. Furthermore, they felt quite at home among the people Jude is addressing. It was easy to come in privily, pretending to be "Christians," and even to be teachers of the truth. That tells you the condition of the people Jude is addressing. Peter said they "*bring in damnable heresies*" (2 Pet 2:1).

**TURNING THE GRACE OF GOD INTO LASCIVIOUSNESS.** Other versions read, "into lewdness,"<sup>NKJV</sup> "into licentiousness,"<sup>NASB</sup> "into a license for immorality,"<sup>NIV</sup> "pervert the grace of God,"<sup>NRSV</sup> "turning His grace into an unclean thing,"<sup>BBE</sup> "into unrestrained immorality,"<sup>CEB</sup> "a license for debauchery,"<sup>CJB</sup> "into sensuality"<sup>ESV</sup> "into wantonness"<sup>GENEVA</sup> "excuse for sexual freedom,"<sup>GWN</sup> and "into lawlessness and wantonness and immorality."<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

The fornicator in Corinth (1 Cor 5:1-5) had somehow received the impression that he could live with his father's wife, and still be part of the church. Someone had crept into that church delivering a message that led to that kind of perverted conclusion. This is the kind of woman that was in Thyatira, who taught the servants of Christ to commit fornication (Rev 2:20).

Let it be clear, that when preachers, teachers, and ministers are dominated by lust, it is because they are "ungodly," refusing to acknowledge God in their lives, or to yield themselves to Him. The same is true of the most insignificant member who stoops to such sin.

What can we say of those who teach the church they can do nothing to cause God to love them less? Or that no believer can ever fall away? Or that you can come back to God, no matter what you do? Those teachers who belch out such nonsense are the kind of people Jude is describing. Those who believe them are the ones he is admonishing to contend for the faith.

**DENYING THE ONLY LORD GOD, AND OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.** Other versions read, "deny Jesus Christ, our only Sovereign and Lord,"<sup>NIV</sup> "our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ,"<sup>NRSV</sup> "false to our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ,"<sup>BBE</sup> "deny God the only Lord, and our Lord Jesus Christ,"<sup>GENEVA</sup> "the only master God, and our Lord Jesus Christ denying,"<sup>ABP</sup> "They refuse to follow Jesus Christ, our only Master and Lord,"<sup>ERV</sup> and "disown our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."<sup>GOODSPEED</sup>

Some versions limit the Object of denial to the Lord Jesus Christ. While there may be a sense in which that is true, the context of Scripture does not leave the Father out of such denials. John, for example, writes, "*Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also*" (1 John 2:22-23). Jesus did say, "*He that hateth Me hateth My Father also*" (John 15:23). And again, "*That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him*" (John 5:23). I take the text as it reads in the KJV.

These men would not have announced to the people they did not acknowledge God or Jesus Christ. But they taught things that did not require God and Christ. They lived as though there were no God and Christ. They subtly and deceptively taught people to live without God and Christ in mind. If they needed help to be godly, they could seek it from men. If they needed peace, or

strength, or happiness, they offered alternatives to God and Jesus Christ.

# COMMENTARY ON JUDE

## LESSON NUMBER 5

***“I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.” (Jude 1:5)***

### **THERE IS NO NEED FOR CONFUSION**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

By nature, there is a certain propensity in men that gravitates to ease and minimal involvement. When this spills over into the spiritual realm, danger rises to prominence, and a further distance begins to form between the individual and God – in other words, regression and fixation move in. Those snared by this trap tend to rely on former responses to God, and past obedience. Salvation is no longer seen as a process from being children to being mature spiritual men. In such a case, salvation is considered as though it was nothing more than a decree. However, true salvation sometimes requires the participant to sit in a lions den, or walk about in a furnace of fire. Further, it has to be *“worked out”* (Phil 2:12) in a hostile environment, with competing influences, a fierce adversary, and personal deficiencies. There is no *“coasting”* in spiritual life. Rather, it is like swimming upstream, climbing a mountain, or running a lengthy and demanding race. It is the *“end of your faith”* (1 Pet 1:9) that is the ultimate point, not its beginning. These considerations, and more, prompted Jude to write this brief but pungent epistle. The brethren he is addressing have, by their sloppy spiritual posture, allowed *“certain men”* to creep in undetected, and critical spiritual misconceptions and manners are in the wake they have caused. The people are tottering on the brink of eternal ruin, and do not even know it. Because the Kingdom of God is everlasting (Dan 7:27; 2 Pet 1:11), and because God does not change (Mal 3:6; 1 Sam 15:29; James 1:17; Heb 13:8), Jude will point the people to Divine reactions in the past – reactions that have been written *“for our admonition”* (1 Cor 10:11), and *“learning”* (Rom 15:4). No person or group of persons can live ignoring these examples and survive. It simply is not possible. Further, correction can only be achieved by appealing to realities that are unchangeable – standards that cannot be altered, and facts that cannot be modified.

#### **THE FLESH IS NOT DEPENDABLE**

Jude 1:5a ***“I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this. . .”***

**I WILL THEREFORE.** Other versions read, *“but I want to,”*<sup>NKJV</sup> *“now I desire to,”*<sup>NASB</sup> *“Now it is my purpose,”*<sup>BEB</sup> *“my purpose is,”*<sup>CJB</sup> *“I should like to”*<sup>NJB</sup> *“My answer to them is,”*<sup>LIVING</sup> *“Don’t forget,”*<sup>CEV</sup> and *“I want to help you remember some things.”*<sup>ERV</sup>

Peter would say, *“stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance”* (2 Pet 3:1). Jude is going to start with what they once knew, but had forgotten. The truth has a great power in it, even though it has been placed in closet of forgetfulness. Someone has to bring it out and declare it again. This is what Paul did for the Corinthians, he preached the Gospel to them **again** (1 Cor 15:1). There is a moral and spiritual condition in which the Gospel must be re-established.

We are being exposed to a man who was placed as a teacher within the body of Christ (1 Cor 1 2:18; Eph 4:11). He is able to properly diagnose the needs of the people, and he knows what to do to address those needs. Their condition was that they were vulnerable. They had no spiritual fortress about them. Some of their teachers had removed their protection.

**PUT YOU IN REMEMBRANCE.** First, Jude will work with what he has, for no person can be

brought to higher truth if they have neglected the truth to which they have been exposed. He does not have to ask them what they have forgotten, he already knows because of what they allowed to happen among them. Wicked men, destined for destruction, had wormed their way into their presence without being detected. In order for this to take place, some things they had once known had been forgotten. They did not have proper leaders, if they had any at all. If they did, they were little more than hirelings, who did not care for the sheep (John 10:12-13). Either they also were unaware of the intrusion that had taken place, or knew it and fled away.

**AN INDEX TO THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM.** Once a person has heard and ingested the truth, it does not automatically remain alive in their memory nor is it continually accessible to them. The proper remembrance of the truth requires one to be "*spiritually minded*" (Rom 8:6). Spiritual-mindedness is a condition where the affection has been set on things above (Col 3:1-2), and the individual looks primarily on the unseen things rather than the seen ones (2 Cor 4:18). The world to come, in such people, has the priority over this present evil world. They are in quest of a "*better country*" (Heb 11:16), and of a "*continuing city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God*" (Heb 13:14).

**THOUGH YE ONCE KNEW THIS.** In order for this to be said, it should be obvious the people had forgotten what Jude is about to say. Their attention had become diverted. This did not happen during a time of night-time reveling. Rather, it happened as a result of what was said during their assemblies, in which "*certain men*" had "*crept in unawares*" among them. The effect of what these men said and did was that things that needed to be remembered were forgotten. The manner and substance of what they taught militated against the truth of God, making them vulnerable to the wicked one, and placing them in eternal jeopardy.

For a professed believer to forget what he once knew does not require that something be taught that is obviously seeking to overthrow that truth. Teachers who openly do this cannot creep in unawares. The distraction takes place by a different emphasis, or core-teaching. For example, in the Galatian churches men came in who emphasized circumcision rather than faith (Gal 5:2,3,6,11; 6:12,13,15). However sincere they may have appeared, and however inconsequential their doctrine may have seemed, it compelled the Galatians to be "*removed from Him that called them, into the grace of Christ unto another gospel*" (Gal 1:6).

There are theological emphases and divers doctrines that cause the hearers to forget things that must be remembered. They come under the category of other things that are "*contrary to sound doctrine*" (1 Tim 1:10). They are the teachings that cause and support religious sects, and are referred to as "heresies" (1 Cor 11:19; Gal 5:20). Peter called them "*damnable heresies*" (2 Pet 2:1). Other versions use the milder expression, "*destructive heresies.*"<sup>NKJV/NASB</sup> Paul wrote to the Corinthians about "*schism in the body*" (1 Cor 12:25).

Here is how a heresy or schism works. In order to maintain the part line, a special teaching or doctrine must be developed, for the truth itself will not produce a heresy, or be the foundation for a sect. Further, the thing that makes such teaching "*divers and strange doctrines*" (Heb 13:9), is that they have a different focus, a different thrust, that is not in concert with "*the truth*" which makes men free when it is known (John 8:32).

This is precisely what led to the people, to whom Jude writes, once knowing certain essential matters, yet now being in a position in which they had to be reminded of those things again. What these men, who were "*ungodly men*" (Jude 1:4), were teaching made no place for these teachings. They did not fit in with what they were saying, so they simply omitted them from their teaching. They did not necessarily say they were not in the Scriptures, and, if faced with their presence, would no doubt have conceded their inclusion in Scripture. However, their teaching did not require them, and so those who accepted what they said soon forgot those critical affirmations now mentioned.

### **HAVING SAVED THE PEOPLE**

<sup>1:5b</sup> " . . . *how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt . . .* "

**THE LORD.** Notice, this is something that the Lord did. Critical and central doctrine always revolves around the Lord and what He has done. False doctrine has another center – generally what men do, or are intending to do.

On the day of Pentecost, before Peter commenced peaching, the audience had heard other disciples speaking in languages they themselves did not know – but the hearers knew those

languages. Upon hearing them, they exclaimed, "we do hear them speak in our tongues **the wonderful works of God**" (Acts 2:11). When Peter took over the speaking, he continued telling the people of the works of God: **God** would "pour out" of His Spirit "upon all flesh . . . Jesus . . . a Man approved of **God** . . . **God** did by Him . . . Whom **God** raised up . . . **God** hath sworn . . . **He** would raise up Christ . . . this Jesus hath **God** raised up . . . having received of the **Father** . . . **He** hath shed forth this . . . **God** hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:17,22,24,30,32,33,36). If the hearts of people are going to be properly effected, they must be told what the Lord has done. Therefore, Jude begins by rehearsing one of the great works of God.

**HAVING SAVED THE PEOPLE.** Other versions read, "delivered," <sup>NIV</sup> "taken a people safely out," <sup>BBE</sup> "rescuing," <sup>MRD</sup> "brought the people safely out." <sup>Goodspeed</sup>

The word translated "saved" has the following lexical meaning: "to save, keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction one (from injury or peril); to save a suffering one (from perishing), <sup>STRONG'S</sup> "to save, to keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction." <sup>THAYER</sup>

The people of reference were the Jews, and they were saved according to the promise made to Abraham about five hundred years earlier: "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and **afterward shall they come out with great substance**" (Gen 15:1-14).

**OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT.** The people were delivered from Egypt after having been oppressed for four hundred years. They were actually in Egypt four hundred and thirty years, with the first thirty years being free from oppression under the administration of Joseph, whom God had exalted to be "governor of Egypt" (Gen 42:6).

Four hundred grievous years confirmed Israel could not deliver itself from Egypt. **Furthermore, the deliverance itself was wholly of the Lord.**

1. The Pharaoh and the nation were weakened by ten unparalleled judgments, until they finally wanted the people to leave (Ex 9:14-15; 12:33).
2. The people of Egypt loaded the Israelites with things required for their journey (Ex 12:36).
3. The people left in perfect unity in a single evening, at midnight (Ex 11:4; 12:29).
4. Not even a dog barked at them as they left (Ex 11:7).
5. They took all of their herds and flocks without a hoof being let behind (Ex 10:26).
6. They crossed the Red Sea on dry ground (Ex 14:16,22).
7. When Pharaoh and his armies assayed to cross the Sea, they were summarily drowned before the eyes of all Israel (Ex 15:4).
8. God directed Israel with a pillar cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night (Ex 13:21-22).
9. He led them around militant nations, as they were not yet ready to fight (Ex 13:17-18).

**The heathen heard about this unparalleled deliverance.** This included Balak, king of the Moabites (Num 22:2-4), and the city of Jericho (Josh 2:10-11).

The prophets kept this deliverance before the people for hundreds of years: Jer 2:8; 7:22; 11:4,7; 16:14; 23:7; 32:21; 34:13; Ezek 20:10; Hos 12:13; Amos 2:10; 3:1; 9:7; Mic 6:4. In his valedictory address to Israel, Moses mentioned this deliverance no less than seventeen times (Deut 7:8; 8:14; 9:12,26; 13:5,10; 16:1; 20:1; 26:8; 29:26). How could anyone forget that deliverance? Yet, Jude writes to a group of confessed disciples who had forgotten things associated with, and implied by, that deliverance.

O, the power of a flawed doctrine – doctrine in which God and Christ are not absolutely central and foundational. Some have taken the very words of Jesus concerning being kept safe, and have so presented them as to induce the forgetting of the words that Jude is bringing to the forefront of thought.

This was not a feigned deliverance. It was not metaphorical. This was a very real Divine deliverance that was beyond any question. No one who saw it thought it was a vision, or was in any sense unreal, or surreal. Everyone who heard of it trembled in fear, knowing these people were the people of God, delivered by God, protected by God, and directed by Him. They were a preferred people (Ex 19:5; Deut 4:20), and a loved people (Deut 7:7). In the fullest and most exact sense of the words, God "saved" this "people out of the land of Egypt," against Egypt's will.

# COMMENTARY ON JUDE

## LESSON NUMBER 6

*“And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.”*

.....  
(Jude 1:6)

### **THE ANGELS WHO KEPT NOT THE FIRST ESTATE INTRODUCTION**

Jude will now reason with the saints, and he is doing so because they are in jeopardy. They are in a backward stance, and there is no such thing as a salvation for those who remain in that condition. With supernatural aggression, Satan has worked to convince the saints that God does not require consistent advancement from them. That is why they are not growing up into Christ in all things. They have been deceived into thinking such things are really not necessary. They might concede that such spiritual aggression is in order for some, but certainly not for the ordinary folk – whoever they are. Some are making a casual effort to advance to glory in a sleepy and unresponsive state – but they will not make it. They, like the fallen angels, have to leave their appointed habitation to do so. The efforts of Satan and his diabolical hordes do not rise and fall according to the involvements of men. If people are not active for the Lord, Satan is more on the move against them. If they are casual, he is aggressive. If their efforts are less consistent, his are more uniform. If they are indifferent, he is more concerned. If they are weak, he attacks them with even greater ferocity and tenacity.

Great masses of professing believers appear to be blind to, and ignorant of, these “*devices*” of the devil (2 Cor 2:11). They, like those to whom Jude writes, are sliding backward and do not know it. Gradually their interest is waning, and therefore their involvement in the good fight of faith is lessening at a regular pace. Spiritual growth and advancement postulate a compelling and unflagging interest, and commitment to the Lord. Either everything centers in Christ, or nothing centers in Him. Jesus will not accept partial involvement, or remain with the one who does not listen to Him or pay any attention to Him. We run the race “*looking unto Him*” (Heb 12:1-2). We are changed from glory unto glory as we are “*beholding . . . the glory of the Lord*” (2 Cor 3:18). We purify ourselves as we are “*looking*” for Him to return (Tit 2:13; 1 John 3:1-2). Being placed by God into Jesus (1 Cor 1:30), we are to “*abide in Him*” (John 15:4,7; 1 John 2:26-27). We have learned that institutionalism, like the traditions of the scribes and Pharisees, blinds men to such things, and thus causes them to increasingly “*come short of the glory of God*” (Rom 3:23). Great care must be taken not to assume that those who return to such a state are in any way safe, or that God is somehow obligated to rescue them from their free-fall.

### **THE ANGELS WHO KEPT NOT THEIR FIRST ESTATE**

Jude 1:6a ***“And the angels which kept not their first estate . . .”***

Up to this point, Jude has been talking about men – descendants of Adam – “*them that are sanctified by God the Father*” – those who were “*preserved for Jesus Christ*” – those to whom it was “*needful*” to write (1:1) – those to whom “*grace, mercy, and peace*” are to be conferred – those with a “*common salvation*” – those who had to “*earnestly contend for the faith*” – those among whom certain wicked men had crept in unawares (1:2-4). These people had to be reminded of a nation that were, by Divine appointment, all delivered from Egypt, yet with some God was “*not well pleased,*” and “*destroyed*” them (1:5). This means that being delivered is really not the main thing, and must not be addressed as though it was. **The real issue has proved to be maintaining the state into which God has delivered men in Christ Jesus.** Speaking from the percentile point of view, this

has proved to be a very difficult thing for professing Christians to receive. Corrupt and uninformed teachers have failed to communicate the true nature of spiritual life. The accent has been placed on getting out of spiritual bondage, but not **staying out** – of being forgiven, but not **maintaining** that forgiven state (1 John 1:7,9).

Saving sinners is generally viewed as initial conversion, not continuing the race, looking to Jesus, keeping in a pure state, and running the race with endurance. “*Salvation*,” or being “*saved*,” is almost universally considered to have been completed once we are in Christ. Of course, if that postulate was true, there would be no need for the Intercession (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25), and Mediation of Jesus (1 Tim 2:5; Heb 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). There would be no necessity of running the race with patience (Heb 12:1-2), setting our affection on things above (Col 3:1-2), or being taught by the grace of God (Tit 2:11-13).

**THE ANGELS.** Other versions read, “*the messengers.*”<sup>YLT</sup> So far as created beings are concerned, these are among the highest order of personalities. There is a vast number of them including Satan himself, who has transformed himself into “*an angel of light*” (2 11:14). There are “*principalities*,” “*powers*,” “*the rulers of the darkness of this world*,” and “*spiritual wickedness in high places*” (Eph 6:12; Col 2:15). There are also Satan’s “*angels*” (Matt 25:41). There are “*devils*,” or “*demons*” that carry out assaults against individuals (Matt 12:22; Matt 17:15; Lk 13:11), originate “*doctrines*” (1 Tim 4:1), and are the recipients of things offered to idols (1 Cor 10:20). Thousands of these corrupt spirits can be in a single individual (Matt 5:9).

**WHICH KEPT NOT THEIR FIRST ESTATE.** This diabolical host, however, have not always been in this state. Jude says they “*kept not their first estate*,” and “*left their own habitation.*” Other versions read, “*did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode*,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “*abandoned their proper abode*,”<sup>NASB</sup> “*did not keep their positions of authority*,”<sup>NIV</sup> “*who did not keep to their kingdom but went out from the place which was theirs*,”<sup>BBE</sup> “*didn't keep their position of authority but abandoned their assigned place*,”<sup>GWN</sup> and “*did not stay within the limits of authority.*”<sup>NLT</sup>

John was also given a picture of this fall, and what caused it: “*And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and beheld a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born*” (Rev 12:4).

Not keeping their “*first estate*,” therefore, was the result of the influence of Satan, who had aspired to exalt his throne above the stars, and be “*like the Most High*” (Isa 14:13-14). He was “*full of wisdom and the perfection of beauty*” (Ezek 28:12). He was “*in Eden, the Garden of God*” (Ezek 28:13), “*the anointed cherub*” (Ezek 28:14), “*perfect in all his ways from the day he was created*” (Ezek 28:15). His heart was “*lifted up because of his beauty*,” and he “*corrupted his wisdom*” (Ezek 28:17). With his iniquities, he corrupted his sanctuaries (Ezek 28:18). There came a time when “*iniquity was found in him*” (Ezek 28:15). The angels that left their first estate – the place where God had put them – did so under Satan’s leadership.

Does anyone imagine that Satan was not really “*the anointed cherub*,” or that the angels that left with him were not really in a God-assigned place and stewardship? Can a personality created by God really trust where they are rather than the God who put them there? Can someone who is given beauty and wisdom from God corrupt it? Can they defile the sanctuaries where they have been placed?

Is it not clear what God gives is intended to be “*kept*,” and that judgment will be ministered if they do not do so? How many professing Christians been given gifts and insights that have **not** been kept? What led such poor souls to imagine they were not responsible for the things they had been given – to keep them in an unsullied and undefiled state? If angels in heaven did not automatically keep what was given to them, who is so foolish as to imagine that feeble men can do so? Everything that is given to men by grace must also be kept by grace. There is no phase of discipleship where men are relieved of this obligation. There is a fact that will never change: “*For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things*” (Rom 11:36). Learn that well!

### **THEY LEFT THEIR OWN HABITATION**

1:6b “*... but left their own habitation ...*” Other versions read, “*left their own abode*,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “*abandoned their proper abode*,”<sup>NASB</sup> “*but went out from the place which was theirs*,”<sup>BBE</sup> “*deserted their own home*,”<sup>CEB</sup> “*abandoned their proper sphere*,”<sup>CJB</sup> “*didn't keep their position of authority*,”<sup>GWN</sup>

and "left the place where they belonged." <sup>NLT</sup>

**LET THIS BE CLEAR.** What is here declared must be seen. He is not speaking of a believer becoming a drunkard, or someone who is holy becoming a harlot or a murderer. This is speaking of not staying within the limits of assignment. Other versions bring some clarity to the expression, "*left their own habitation.*" "*Did not keep their positions of authority,*" <sup>NIV</sup> "*did not keep their own position,*" <sup>NRSV</sup> "*kept not their own principality,*" <sup>ASV</sup> "*did not keep to their kingdom,*" <sup>BBE</sup> "*kept not their own original state,*" <sup>DARBY</sup> "*did not keep to their own domain,*" <sup>NAB</sup> "*did not keep the position originally assigned to them,*" <sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> "*did not preserve their original rank,*" <sup>WILLIAMS</sup> and "*did not keep (care for, guard, and hold to) their own first place of power.*" <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

**WHAT IT MEANS TO LEAVE ONE'S HABITATION.** This would be equivalent to a professed believer leaving the heavenly places in which he had been seated with Christ (Eph 2:6). It would be like abandoning the place where God placed us – in Christ, who was then made to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor 1:30). Once this departure takes place, all spiritual utility is lost. Satan could not remain the "*anointed cherub*" when he left the place and ministry into which he had been placed. Divine dispensations cannot be used in worldly pursuits. It is not simply that it is wrong to so use them, . They **cannot** be used for such ignoble purposes. **When a person leaves the habitation, they become spiritually useless.** When they choose not to walk in the Spirit, God has nothing profitable for them to do. Leaving where God has placed you is like Satan falling from heaven.

**SATAN IS THE CHIEF EXHIBIT; THEN THE ANGELS WHO LEFT WITH HIM.** Satan is chief among the angels who left their first estate – "*the anointed cherub*" (Ezek 28:14), and "*the angel of the bottomless pit*" (Rev 9:11). Even now, he comes masquerading as "*as angel of light*" (2 Cor 11:14), parading his distorted wisdom, and promoting his wicked agenda. Not only did Satan fall, he induced a third part of the angels to join him in leaving where God had placed them. He drew them away from their ministry, their kingdom, their responsibility, and their stewardship. Because of the devil's influence, they became dissatisfied with where God had placed them. They no longer wanted what He had given them.

They were not created this way. They did not go astray because they were wicked, but because they were deceived, and that is what made them wicked. Although there had apparently been no previous falling witnessed by them, they should have known by being in the presence of God Almighty, seeing Him create the worlds (Job 38:4-7), and beholding Him hold court (Dan 7:10), that you could not reject His placement and get by with it. However, that is the power of delusion. It leads people to forget what is to be remembered, to embrace what is to cast down, and to do what is unlawful.

This is what was taking place among those to whom Jude was writing. The fallen cherub was at work among them, transforming himself into an angel of light. They had suddenly become dissatisfied with where they were –where God had placed them. They had become enamored of some false teaching, another Jesus, another gospel, and another spirit (2 Cor 11:4). Earnestly contending for the faith no longer seemed necessary. Running the race set before them, keeping the faith, and fighting the good fight of faith were not seen as essential anymore. Now, keeping a few easy rules, and having a minimal amount of interest in the things of God seemed sufficient. They appear to have been blissfully unaware of the fact that when you leave the domain in which you have been placed, and attempt to use your God-given gifts and abilities, heaven considers you to have "*fallen from heaven,*" just as Satan did (Luke 10:18).

Men – fundamentally unspiritual men – have invented doctrines that say men cannot fall from grace, even though Satan and his angels fell from heaven! Adam and Eve were driven from the very Garden in which God had placed them. Israel was expelled from the land in which they were placed. Judas fell from being a chosen apostle. The teaching that states men cannot fall from grace tempts men to become disinterested and lackadaisical. It leads them to pretend they are interested in the Lord while their own person is their primary interest. O, I understand they have been deceived into thinking in this manner—just like the third part of the angels who were motivated to leave their habitation. To cease being faithful, stop fighting the good fight of faith, no longer run the race with patience that has been set before them, and quit pressing toward the mark, they had to turn their eyes and ears away from Jesus to Satan. They had to spend time with the devil under the forbidden tree. They had to take a few steps backward, where Jesus cannot be heard readily, and spiritual vision begins to dim. In all of this, such people are no more innocent than Satan was in his prideful quest to be preeminent, or the angels were who followed him in his rebellion. Going backward is far

more serious than the average “churchman” believes.

### **HE HATH RESERVED IN EVERLASTING CHAINS UNDER DARKNESS**

<sup>1:6c</sup> . . . *He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.*”

Now Jude reveals the judgment rendered against those who “*kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation.*” **The severity of this judgment reveals the asperity of their sin.** It was a sin from which, by Divine appointment, recovery was not possible.

**HE HATH RESERVED.** Other versions read, “*He has kept,*” <sup>NASB</sup> “*have been kept,*” <sup>RSV</sup> “*He has put,*” <sup>BBE</sup> “*He keeps,*” <sup>DARBY</sup> “*they were held,*” <sup>GWN</sup> “*are held by him,*” <sup>MONTGOMERY</sup> and “*He has reserved in custody.*” <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

The lexical meaning of the word translated “*reserved*” is, “*to keep: i.e. not to leave,*” <sup>THAYER</sup> “*keep, hold in reserve, preserve for a purpose or until a suitable time,*” <sup>FRIBERG</sup> “*to cause a state to continue,*” <sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup> “*keep watch over, guard*” <sup>GINGRICH</sup> Matt 27:36, 54; 28:4; Ac 12:5; 24:23.— *keep, hold, reserve, preserve.*”

**This is the imposition of the Divine will upon moral and rational personalities.** They are in no way able to modify this judgment themselves, nor can any other personality. Their’s is a condition of imposed confinement, where they cannot change, repent, or from which they can be rescued. By creation, these are of a higher order than mankind, who was created “*a little lower than the angels*” (Psa 8:4-5; Heb 2:7). I do not know how a person could justify the notion that men, who are lower than the angels, have some sort of freedom that transcends that of those who by nature are higher. That means this is a relevant argument.

**EVERLASTING CHAINS OF DARKNESS.** Other versions read, “*everlasting chains under darkness,*” <sup>NKJV</sup> “*eternal bonds,*” <sup>NASB</sup> “*eternal chains,*” <sup>NRSV</sup> and “*securely chained in prisons of darkness.*” <sup>NLT</sup>

The point here is not confinement to a geographical area. These fallen spirits are not held in some secret and secluded parts. This is rather a condition of ignorance and misery that is imposed upon them. They must drag their chains wherever they go, and wherever there are informed and spiritually intelligent souls, they know that these angels and their leader are not invincible. Certain effective limitations have been bound upon them, and they cannot break loose from them. Every time they face an enlightened soul, they find it impossible to counteract their resistance, and have to flee. This suggests that they are in a state of misery, with no joy, happiness, comfort, and relief in any form. The things about the Lord that bring delight to us cannot be seen by them. They have no hope of anything good before them, or any relief, or some cessation of the curse that is upon them. This is something God has done to them. It is their reward for not keeping their first estate, but leaving their own habitation.

**UNTO THE JUDGMENT OF THE GREAT DAY.** These fallen spirits will be present on the day of judgment, and they will be judged. Paul informs us they will be judged by the saints who, by nature, were of a slightly lower order (1 Cor 6:2-3). Every personality, whether fallen or raised out of death in trespasses and sins, will clearly see that God is true, and every contradicting person is a liar (Rom 3:4). The assembled universe will know that God is righteous, and every competing personality is unrighteous. Every detail of their defection will be made known, and how they chose to ignore God, imagining they could have their own way without paying the price of rebellion. We do not know when these spirits left their own habitation, but whenever it was, they have been bound with chains of darkness since that time. Wherever there is moral and spiritual darkness, obscurity, and ignorance, these spirits are present – and possibly in large and unimaginable numbers.

**THE RELEVANCE OF THIS RECORD.** The judgment that is here chronicled was necessitated by the location from which the transgressors fell. They occupied the highest realm – where God was. They had been given a stewardship from God **in** heaven. Their sin was such that nothing better could be held before them as an incentive. They fell from the highest place, so there was nothing that could draw them back.

This is why Jude is so fervent in admonishing his readers. They have been raised up in Christ to sit in heavenly places (Eph 2:6). They have been forgiven of all their trespasses, and have been reconciled to God. They have received the Spirit of God, the grace of God, and gifts from God. They have been placed in the body of Christ, and given gifts that bring profit to the household of faith. Can such gifts really be neglected, and finally spurned, with impunity? Are

hardness of heart, dulness of hearing, and a lack of ability to “*see afar*” really benign? One might think so when viewing the miserable condition of the professing church. How long can disinterest, lukewarmness, casualness, and dulness be tolerated by God? These are questions that cannot be satisfactorily answered. The solution to their encroaching presence is to immediately commence earnestly contending for the faith. It is in order to seek forgiveness for slighting the God who saved you, and when forgiveness is realized to enter into an uninterrupted quest to know Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil 3:10). No other kind of life is acceptable. No other kind of person will be received by the Lord.

# COMMENTARY ON JUDE

## LESSON NUMBER 7

***“Even as Sodom and GOMORRAH, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. <sup>8</sup> Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.”*** (Jude 1:7-8)

### **EVEN AS SODOM AND GOMORRAH**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Jude, like Moses, the prophets, Jesus, and the apostles, is merciless in dealing with false prophets. No inspired man ever admonished the people of God to pray for false prophets, that they might see the light. They were never to be tolerated or countenanced among the saints of the Lord. Moses warned of them, and affirmed that if what they declared did not come to pass, that prophet was to die (Deut 18:10-22). Paul warned of them (2Cor 11:13). Peter warned of them (2 Pet 2:1). John also warned the brethren concerning them (1 John 4:1). Those who caused divisions by their teachings were to be marked and avoided (Rom 16:17). I understand there are some who are conscientiously wrong— like Apollos (Acts 18:24-26). However, he was corrected by Aquila and Priscilla, confirming that his heart was right.

The reason for the danger of false prophets is that their teachings defile, corrupt, and lead to a falling away, regardless of how pleasing they may sound. Paul said of certain pretentious teachers, *“their word WILL eat as a canker”* 2 Tim 2:17). It is a word that the devil uses, as the Spirit uses the Word of God. Satan has gospels and teachings through which he gains control of the souls of men, and false prophets are his emissaries through whom that word is sent. This is why Jude was so alarmed at the unwitting tolerance of false prophets by those to whom he wrote. Owing to the presence of these false teachers, a certain deterioration had set in that, if not arrested, would lead to the condemnation of the people. You cannot get more serious than that!

### **EVEN AS SODOM AND GOMORRAH**

Jude 1:7a ***“Even as Sodom and GOMORRAH, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh . . .”***

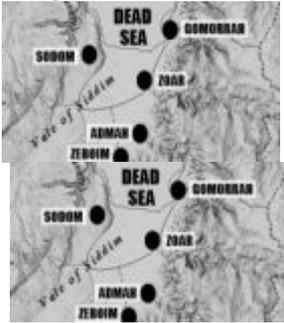
This is the third example Jude cites of a falling away. First, the Jews who were saved out of Egypt, and afterward destroyed. Second, the angels that left their first estate, and are reserved in a state of darkness until the day of judgment.

Jude will now show that the condition of these false prophets cannot be corrected. This will be difficult for some to receive, but that difficulty is owing to a failure to see the seriousness of their situation, and why they are in that condition.

**EVEN AS.** Other versions read, *“as,”* NKJV *“just as,”* NASB *“in a similar way,”* NIV *“Likewise,”* NRSV *“so also,”* NET *“and don’t forget,”* NLT *“We should also be warned by,”* CEV and *“Also, remember.”* ERV  
As with the Jews and the angels that fell, the condition of Sodom and Gomorrah was the result of retrogression, a fall, and moral deterioration.

**SODOM AND GOMORRAH.** The view of false prophets is heightened as they are likened to two irretrievable cities: Sodom and Gomorrah. Nothing good is said about the citizens of these two cities, and there is no record of any attempt to salvage them. Long before their destruction it was said of Sodom, *“But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly”*

(Gen 13:13). When Abraham interceded concerning them shortly before their destruction, it was in the interest of Lot, not the general citizenry (Gen 18:23-33). They had reached the point of no return. If Lot's wife was judged for looking at their destruction, you can only imagine the lot of those who delighted in the ways of those condemned cities.



**AND THE CITIES ABOUT THEM.** There were five cities slated for destruction: Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar (Gen 14:2). Zoar was spared in order that Lot might have a temporarily safe haven (Gen 19:20-24).

These cities had been defiled by Sodom primarily, and Sodom and Gomorrah generally. The gross immorality of these cities had spread throughout that general territory. A little leaven had leavened the entire region, until five cities were consigned to destruction, with only one being spared for the sake of a righteous man. This is a precise reflection of the effect false teachers have. Their corruption will spread until, many are destroyed because of them. These are those whom Paul said *"defile the temple of God"* (1 Cor 3:17). This may not fit well into the theological systems of men, but it is the truth.

**GIVING THEMSELVES OVER TO FORNICATION.** The defection of which Jude speaks is not accidental, or the result of mere ignorance, like that in which Apollos found himself. This is the kind of corruption seen in Sodom and Gomorrah. It is the result of willingly yielding to sinful tendencies. Other versions read, *"gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"indulged in gross immorality."* <sup>NAS</sup> This is the opposite of presenting one's body to the Lord as a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1). It is not that Satan overpowered them, but that they willingly gave themselves over to this kind of conduct. It was not the result of their genetical makeup, but of their moral degeneracy. They were expressing what they really are.

**GOING AFTER STRANGE FLESH.** Other versions read, *"perversion,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"unnatural lust,"* <sup>NRSV</sup> *"pursued unnatural desire,"* <sup>ESV</sup> *"homosexual activities,"* <sup>GWN</sup> *"practiced unnatural vice,"* <sup>NAB</sup> *"including lust of men for other men."* <sup>LIVING</sup> The sin of reference crosses a natural boundary line that ought to be apparent enough never to be violated. God never intended for such activities to go on, and did not embed such a desire in man's natural constitution. This is why the sin of sodomy is so corrupt. It is not only wrong from the standpoint of one's relation to God, but of their relation to humanity as well.

The false prophets to whom Jude refers bear a marked resemblance to those who have conducted themselves contrary to nature, stubbornly pursuing unnatural relations that are not only condemned by the Word of God (Lev 18:22; 20:13; Rom 1:24-27), but by human nature itself. So it is with these false prophets. They were teaching things that could never be deduced from the Gospel of Christ. They were proclaiming teachings that flagrantly contradict the nature of God, the ministry of Christ, and the intent of the Gospel. It is something to which they had given themselves, like Balaam, who prophesied for wages (2 Pet 2:15).

An approach to life in Christ that allows for the rise of such false teachers, whether willingly or not, cannot possibly be from God. Rather than contending for the faith, those to whom Jude wrote had embraced a view of Christ and the Gospel that left the door wide open for the entrance of false teachers. No matter how zealously people try and defend teaching that leads away from God, it simply cannot be done. What people teach, and the manner in which they teach has a direct bearing upon how people think and act. I do not believe this is generally known or acknowledged.

### **SET FORTH AS AN EXAMPLE**

1:7b " . . . are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

We must not forget that Jude is delineating the nature of false prophets, and how God will deal with them. Jude does not leave it up to the people to discern these things, for they have already demonstrated their ineptitude in spiritual matters. The false prophets that had caused the cessation of contending for the faith, and the commencement of a decline had *“crept in unawares”* while they were blissfully sleep and in a state of carnality. Now, he must jar them awake from the slumber, lest they fall into an irremediable state (Heb 6:1-6).

**SET FORTH AN EXAMPLE.** Other versions read *“exhibited,”* <sup>NASB</sup> *“serve as,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“have been made,”* <sup>BBE</sup> *“lie exposed,”* <sup>CJB</sup> *“are placed”* <sup>MRD</sup> *“now displayed,”* <sup>NET</sup> *“continue to be a warning to us,”* <sup>LIVING</sup> *“stand as a perpetual warning,”* <sup>WILLIAMS</sup> and *“laid out [in plain sight] as an exhibit.”* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

We learn a lot about the purpose of Scripture in this expression. Scripture is not a mere chronology of historical events. It has not been given to us as interesting reading. Strictly speaking, Scripture is the discretionary thoughts of God embalmed in print. In it the intentions of God are made known, as well as the natural depravity of man. The love, mercy, kindness, and grace of God are made known, as well as individuals and circumstances to which they do not apply. Men are not free to theorize about how God thinks, even though some imagine they can do so. God does not reveal Himself by mere statement, but makes His nature known through various responses to, and judgments of humanity. Men may speculate about how God feels about *“all men,”* and make phenomenally ignorant statements about God, even though He has made known His character by actions as well as words. Scripture contains a plethora of Divine responses to men, and to groups of men, that ought to dispel a lot of ignorance about Him. Ponder His response to the disobedience of Adam and Eve (Gen 3), Cain murdering Abel (Gen 4), and the world of Noah’s day (Gen 6:13). What about His response to the independence of the people in Shinar (Gen 11), the faith of Abraham (Gen 15:6), and the presumption of Abimelech (Gen 10:3). What of his rejection of certain family members like Ishmael (Gen 21:10), and Esau (Mal 1:3)? What of Him raising up people to make His name great at their expense, like Pharaoh (Ex 9:16; Rom 9:17). Then there is His reaction to Moses, who struck a rock instead of speaking to it (Num 20:11-12). We have the example Israel, who, as a group, refused to believe God (Num 14:27-30; Heb 3:19). There is the theft of Achan, who ignored the word of the Lord (Josh 7:1,24-26). There is God’s response to a man after His own heart, when he lay with another man’s wife (2 Sam 12:10-12). We have His response to the pretentious worship of Israel (Isa 1:13; Amos 5:23). In the New Covenant Scriptures we have the response of God to Jerusalem rejecting Christ (Lk 13:34-35), the lying of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5), and the judgment of the Corinthians for improper conduct at the Lord’s Table (1 Cor 11:29-30). There are solemn warnings about who *“cannot inherit the Kingdom of God”* (1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-21).

There is no need for anyone to hypothesize about the reaction of God to men, or who He accepts and rejects. In the Scriptures, God is making Himself known by actual examples, as well as pointed declarations—i.e. *“the Lord is”* (1 Thess 4:6; 2 Thess 3:3; Heb 13:6; James 5:11; 1 Pet 3:12; 2 Pet 3:9), and the personal tutelage of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 John 5:20). An ignorance of God within the professed church is still as inexcusable as it was in the Corinthian church (1 Cor 15:34).

**THE VENGEANCE OF ETERNAL FIRE.** Other versions read, *“the punishment of eternal life,”* <sup>NASB</sup> *“the pain of eternal fire,”* <sup>PNT</sup> *“fire age-during, justice suffering,”* <sup>NLT</sup> *“there is a hell in which sinners are punished,”* <sup>LIVING</sup> *“a specimen of the fire of the Ages,”* <sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> and *“an exhibit of perpetual punishment [to warn] of everlasting fire.”* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Jude is warning the people of the effects of false prophets. Their wicked influences spread among people and churches like Sodom and Gomorrah caused surrounding cities to be defiled. The judgment of God shall fall upon such men, and make no mistake about it. Because the very notion of *“hell”* and *“eternal fire”* are beyond the scope of human knowledge, he cites the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as an example of what he is saying about the end of false teachers. Their destruction shall be thorough, like those of their twin cities of corruption. There shall be no recovery. Nothing shall be salvaged of their persons or their dogmas. The wrath of God shall break forth upon them, and upon those who have accepted their corruption. With this in mind, you must see why those who cause offences and divisions must be marked and avoided (Rom 16:17). We are to *“turn away”* from those who embrace a form of godliness that denies the power thereof (2 Tim 3:5). Concerning Babylon the Great which is the city that welcomes these pretenders, the saints are told by a voice from heaven, *“Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues”* (Rev 18:4).

Let no one imagine for a moment that there is toleration in heaven for those who corrupt, add to, and take from, the Word of God. Let all believers heed the solemn warning of Jude and determine

to abhor and God abhors and love what He loves!

### **LIKewise ALSO, THESE FILTHY DREAMERS**

**1:8 "Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities."**

Jude will now describe these false teachers, identifying their character. His words will be strong, for the lives and eternal destiny of his readers are at stake.

**LIKewise.** Other versions read, "Yet, in the same manner,"<sup>NASB</sup> "in the very same way,"<sup>NIV</sup> "in like manner,"<sup>RSV</sup> "in a similar way,"<sup>GWN</sup> "The men are like that, too,"<sup>IE</sup> "It is the same way with these people who have entered your group,"<sup>ERV</sup> "This is exactly the same program of these latest infiltrators."<sup>MESSAGE</sup>

These men have the kind of traits that were found in Sodom and Gomorrah. They are centered in self, characterized by living in the flesh, and rejecting all forms of God-ordained authority. Their teachings are designed to pacify the flesh, are adapted to this present evil world, and do not have eternity in view. Their doctrines distort the Gospel, promote the ignoring of God, and do not place a proper value on the Lord Jesus Christ!

**THESE FILTHY DREAMERS.** Other versions read, "in their dreamings,"<sup>NRSV</sup> "with their visions,"<sup>CJB</sup> "in their delusions,"<sup>NJB</sup> "claim authority from their dreams,"<sup>NLT</sup> and "They have visions."<sup>IE</sup> This identical circumstance surfaced in Israel, where false prophets were directed by their own dreams (Jer23:25,27). Dreams, in that case, were likened to "chaff" (Jer 23:28). God declared, "I am against them that prophesy false dreams" (Jer 23:32).

In other words, these false teachers were being directed by their own imaginations (which should have been cast down—2 Cor 10:3-4) and doctrines that had their source in demonic activity (1 Tim 4:1). A contemporary evidence of such direction is found in some who say, "The Lord told me," "the Lord showed me," etc.

They are called "filthy dreams" because what they said defiled, polluted, and contaminated. Make no mistake about this, there are teachings that defile and corrupt the people – that bring in among God's people "the pollutions of the world" (2 Pet 2:20).

**DEFILE THE FLESH.** Other versions read, "pollute their own bodies,"<sup>NIV</sup> "make the flesh unclean,"<sup>BEBE</sup> and "contaminate their bodies with sin."<sup>GWN</sup> This is the opposite of presenting the body as a living sacrifice to God (Rom 12:2). Their teaching moves people to forget that "the body is for the Lord" (1 Cor 6:13). The body therefore becomes the vehicle for self-gratification, with no regard for the Lord at all. Peter says of them, "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness" (2 Pet 2:10).

**DESPISE DOMINION.** Other versions read, "reject authority,"<sup>NKJV</sup> "set at nought dominion,"<sup>ASV</sup> "having no respect for authorities,"<sup>BEBE</sup> "despise godly authority,"<sup>CJB</sup> "despise lordship,"<sup>DARBY</sup> "despise government,"<sup>GENEVA</sup> and "defy authority."<sup>NLT</sup>

Even though the Lord declares, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God," (Rom 13:1), these refuse to do so. This is not speaking of Peter and John subjecting themselves to the Jewish authorities (Acts 5:29), or Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego submitting to Nebuchadnezzar in all of his decrees, or Daniel to Darius in all of his mandates. This is speaking of governmental authorities in their ordained role. God's people are not to be anarchists and political reactionaries.

Peter says they "despise government" (2 Pet 2:10). He states the proper stance of believers: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme, or governors" (1 Pet 2:13-14). Paul writes, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1).

God's people must heartily endeavor to do what God says to do, and to avoid what God says is not to be done. If some people are confused about the matter, they are to seek wisdom from the Lord. No person can afford for their conduct to contradict the revealed will of God.

**SPEAK EVIL OF DIGNITIES.** Other versions read, "revile angelic majesties,"<sup>NASB</sup> "slander celestial beings,"<sup>NIV</sup> "slander the glorious ones,"<sup>NRSV</sup> "say evil of rulers,"<sup>BEBE</sup> "slander the angels,"<sup>CEB</sup> "speak railing against dignities,"<sup>DARBY</sup> "speak evil of them that are in authority,"<sup>GENEVA</sup> "scoff at supernatural beings."<sup>NLT</sup>

I am persuaded that many of the translations completely miss the point of this statement. That

Jude is not speaking of holy angels and dignitaries alone is clear from the incident that is rehearsed following this text. This will be covered in our next lesson.

Suffice it to say at this point, men are not to scoff at, or rail against, anyone who has received their power from God. This includes the devil himself who has been given certain authority from God (Luke 4:6). There are also civil rulers who have been given their power by God (Rom 13:1). This does not mean we are to submit to them when they issue laws and requirements that necessitate disobeying God. It does mean we are not to scoff and rail at them.

This is a touchy subject with many because they think of themselves as political reformers sent from God., But this is not the case at all. If Jesus did not rail on Nero, what would lead any person to imagine they have been freed to rail on political dignitaries.

## COMMENTARY ON JUDE

### LESSON NUMBER 8

***“<sup>9</sup> Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. <sup>10</sup> But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.” .....(Jude 1:9-10)***

#### **THE EXAMPLE OF MICHAEL**

##### **INTRODUCTION**

Jude has detected a slight defection in those to whom he writes, and has associated it with failing to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. That is, he is addressing the need for fighting the good fight of faith, and not allowing anything or anyone to cause the loss of a focus on the Lord Jesus Christ and the Gospel. He is moved to delineate the true character of those who influence believers to lose their focus. It is important to note that he is not speaking of those who are overly simple in the things of God, and have certain blind spots that require the shedding of further light – like the disciples Paul encountered at Ephesus (Acts 19:1-5), and Apollos, who was taught more perfectly *“the way of God”* (Acts 18:25-26). Jude is speaking about teachers – feigned teachers. These were the kind of men that God has already consigned to condemnation, and are fundamentally *“ungodly,”* unholy, and unlike the Lord. They themselves turn the *“grace of God into lasciviousness,”* using it to condone their deviate manner of life. Further, what they teach also leads men to live in the same manner. They also *deny “the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ”*—i.e. they refuse to be governed by God and Christ. They are self-governed teachers (1:4). The people should have picked up on this, but they were already in the initial grasp of delusion, and needed to have these things shouted in their ears, so to speak. There comes a time when more must be said than simply what is right and wrong. Because salvation changes the nature of those who receive it, it cannot produce teachers that exploit it, and live in stark contradiction of it. Therefore Jude is exposing the works of darkness (Eph 5:11).

##### **WHEN MICHAEL CONTENDED WITH SATAN**

Jude 1:9a ***“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses . . .”***

To this point, Jude is reasoning concerning the dangers of falling away, or being brought to the point where a return is not possible. It all begins with embracing a lie, or delusion. He has reminded them of the Israelites who experienced a very real deliverance, and then a very real exclusion from the land of promise (1:5). He then sets before their minds the angels who did not keep their first estate, or stewardship, but *“left their own habitation”* (1:6). Now that he is going to point out the ungodliness of these false teachers, he brings before their consideration Sodom and Gomorrah to confirm that gross ungodliness is something that must be embraced with both hands eagerly – *“giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh”* (1:7). Men are not “ungodly” because they simply made a mistake. A descent into immorality is not an intellectual blunder, or something that is in any way innocent or unintentional.

Now Jude has pointed out that these false teachers, who had crept in among them undetected, *“despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities”* (1:8). There is no doubt that this includes worldly dignities that God has set up. As it is written, *“Honor the king”* (1 Pet 2:17). And again, *“fear*

*thou the Lord and the king*" (Prov 24:21). When David prepared to pass the government to Solomon, he commanded the people, "Now bless the Lord your God, " it is written, "And all the congregation blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshiped the LORD, **and the king**" (1 Chron 29:20). That is, God had given them their king, and they were to give him due honor. Daniel said of God to Nebuchadnezzar, "And He changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings" (Dan 2:21). So this text does take that into consideration.

However, Jude now rises to dignities of an even higher order, and provides an example of what he has said. This is the only place in Scripture where this occasion is mentioned.

**MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL.** To make his point, Jude does not provide the example of a man – even a holy man. He does not refer to an ordinary angel, but to a high-ranking angel: "*Michael the archangel.*" Other versions read, "*one of the chief angels,*"<sup>BBE</sup> "*one of the ruling angels,*"<sup>CJB</sup> "*one of the mightiest of the angels,*"<sup>NLT</sup> and "*the chief messenger.*"<sup>YLT</sup> Michael is one of, and possibly THE, leading angel. The word "*arch*" literally means, "to designate the one who is placed over the rest that hold the office."<sup>THAYER</sup> Here, there is an angel placed over other angels, who are all of a slightly higher order than mankind. In Daniel "*Michael*" is referred to as "*one of the chief princes*" (Dan 10:13). He is also referred to as Israel's "*prince*" (Dan 10:21), the "*great prince which standeth for the children*" of Israel (Dan 12:1). He, together with "*his angels*" successfully expelled Satan and his angels from heaven, which is identified as the time when "*salvation*" came (Rev 12:7-10). Here is a lofty and authoritative, and superior angel. How does he regard speaking against dignities?

**WHEN CONTENDING WITH THE DEVIL.** This is the sole reference to this occasion, when Michael and Satan disputed, or argued about "*the body of Moses.*" This was doubtless occasioned by the Lord's secret burial of Moses, when God Himself "*buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day*" (Deut 34:6). No man was ever able to find where God buried Moses.

Why would Michael and Satan have a dispute about the body of Moses? Some have conjectured that Michael had charge of the place where Moses was buried, so that no one would be able to find it. This seems to me untenable, for God could keep men from finding the place simply by "willing" that to be the case. Satan may have disputed with Michael about this because Michael was a chief angel, and perhaps Satan thought he knew where it was. Again, such speculations are useless. I am inclined to think Satan did want to know where Moses was buried so he could promote the worship of Moses, similar to Israel worshiping the brazen serpent through which many dying Israelites were healed from the bite of the serpents God had sent among them. Satan could subtly neutralize the intended influence of Moses by promoting the worship of him. This tendency was in some of the Jewish leaders during Jesus' ministry on earth. They said to a blind man Jesus had healed, "*we are Moses' disciples*" (John 9:28).

Another time he moved people to react to Paul and Barnabas in a manner that neutralized their proper influence. Having heard their persuasive speech they said, "*The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.*" They named them Jupiter and Mercurius, and were going to make sacrifice to them until Paul and Barnabas restrained them (Acts 14:11-14). Another time, in Macedonia, Satan moved a woman with a spirit of divination to say of Paul and those with him, "*These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation*" (Acts 16:17). Thus Satan sought to link them with his own kingdom of darkness.

Satan's argument with Michael about the body of Moses doubtless had to do with some shrewd scheme he had concocted to neutralize the proper ministry of Moses, the servant of God. He is still attempting to move men to view Jesus and His servants in the wrong way.

### **SOMETHING MICHAEL DID NOT DARE TO DO**

<sup>1:9b</sup> " . . . **durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, *The Lord rebuke thee.***"

Here Jude is showing the unacceptability of despising dominion and speaking evil of dignities—i.e. dominion that God has dispensed, and dignities that received their role from God. While men may think themselves at liberty to have a disdain for dominion, and feel they are free to speak evil of those whom God has placed over something or someone, Jude is taking that right from them. This would include children despising their parents (Eph 6:1-2), wives their husbands (Eph 5:23), servants their masters (Col 3:22), members of Christ's body their ordained leaders (Heb 13:7,17), and administrators of government (Rom 13:1; 1 Pet 2:17).

This does not mean we are to submit to such authorities when they require us to disobey God, as confirmed in Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Peter, John, and others. This has to do with despising dominion and speaking evil of dignities.

**DURST NOT.** Other versions read, “dared not,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “did not dare,”<sup>NASB</sup> “did not presume,”<sup>RSV</sup> “fearing to”<sup>BBE</sup> “did not venture.”<sup>NAB</sup> It is not that Michael was intimidated by the devil. After all, together with his angels, he fought against the devil and his angels and overcame them, causing their expulsion from heaven (Rev 12:7-9). However, there was something he did not dare to do – even to the devil himself!

**BRING A RAILING ACCUSATION.** Other versions read, “a reviling accusation,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “a railing judgment,”<sup>NASB</sup> “a slanderous accusation,”<sup>NIV</sup> “a condemnation of slander,”<sup>NRSV</sup> “a reviling judgment,”<sup>RSV</sup> “make use of violent words,”<sup>BBE</sup> “an insulting charge,”<sup>CJB</sup> “the language of abuse,”<sup>NJB</sup> “accuse the devil of blasphemy,”<sup>NLT</sup> “railing sentence,”<sup>PNT</sup> and “accuse even Satan, or jeer at him.”<sup>LIVING</sup>

A “railing accusation” is a word delivered as though the speaker was the judge. It is loose speech that can neither be confirmed nor carried out by the speaker. It is blasphemy, or the language of reproach. Peter says of this circumstance, “Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord” (2 Pet 2:10-11).

Railing is a sin that disqualifies a professed believer from fellowship with other believers (1 Cor 5:11). It is a manifestation of pride and a lack of true knowledge (1 Tim 6:4). Those in Christ are forbidden from returning railing for railing (1 Pet 3:9).

Paul reminded Titus, “Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, **To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.**” (Titus 3:1-2).

In our time it has become fashionable to rail on people – to speak evil of people with intemperate speech. Many well-intentioned people have been caught in this forbidden trap – but Michael the archangel was not. He refused to speak in such a manner to the devil himself.

It ought to be noted that no man can out-argue the devil. No matter how advanced in the faith one may suppose themselves to be, they cannot speak to the devil with derogatory speech. By so doing, they have fallen into his snare, and descended into his arena of darkness. He is. After all, “the accuser of the brethren” – the ultimate slanderer!

**THE LORD REBUKE THEE.** Other versions read, “May the Lord be your judge,”<sup>BBE</sup> “The Lord command thee,”<sup>DOUAY</sup> “The Lord will rebuke you!”<sup>IE</sup> “May [reproach you the Lord],”<sup>ABP</sup> “The Lord will punish you!”<sup>CEV</sup> “May the Lord reprimand you!”<sup>GWN</sup> and “God will take care of you!”<sup>MESSAGE</sup>

The devil has an assigned position as “The **PRINCE** of the power of the air” (Eph 2:2), “the **GOD** of this world” (2 Cor 4:4), “the **ANGEL** of the bottomless pit” (Rev 9:11), “the **FATHER** of lies” (John 8:44), “the **PRINCE** of devils” [demons] (Matt 12:24). The devil is a spiritual dignitary in charge of wicked powers, the administrator of the world’s manners, the messenger who is over the bottomless pit, the perpetrator of lies, and the ruler over the demonic world. His power is derived, and it is secondary – but it is very real. Men commit evil, but they are not in charge of it. Satan cannot be effectively neutralized by defaming speech or mere disrespect.

Only the Lord can rebuke the devil, for it is the Lord against whom Satan is aligned, and to whom he is responsible. For him, faithfulness to his mission is really unfaithfulness to God. He was placed over evil as a secondary rule because he was proved unfit for his original role.

Therefore, Michael, knowing that Satan was ultimately answerable to God alone, and not to Michael himself, said to him, “the Lord rebuke thee!” He is a steward of God, even though it is a stewardship of evil, and he does well in it from his point of view. Satan’s administration of evil, however, is not done out of obedience to God, but in rebellion against, and the hatred of, Him. Because God is righteous, He would not place a holy angel over “the bottomless pit.” The “strong delusion” that is sent by God, and delivered by Satan is done in a vain attempt to overthrow God. Satan has not learned from his expulsion from heaven. He is the antithesis of God, being fundamentally and totally evil, and God will rebuke him for maintaining that status.

## **IN THESE THINGS THEY CORRUPT THEMSELVES**

<sup>1:10</sup> ***“But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.”***

**THESE.** These are the false teachers Jude's readers did not detect. They had been "*long beforehand marked out for this condemnation*" (1:4<sup>NASB</sup>). They were "*ungodly men,*" guilty of "*turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness,*" and rejecting "*the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*" And yet, they had been received as though they were men of God!

Jude has compared the way these people had responded to the presumptuous false teachers who had crept in unawares among them, to Michael who spoke to the ultimate deceiver in the correct way – because he knew who Satan was.

**THEY SPEAK EVIL OF THINGS THEY DO NOT KNOW.** Other versions read, "*revile the things they do not understand,*"<sup>NASB</sup> "*speak abusively against,*"<sup>NIV</sup> and "*slander.*"<sup>NRSV</sup>

The idea here is that the truth of God was actually beyond their reach. Owing to their own carnality, and their rejection of the love of the truth, they could not comprehend the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. When confronting it, they wrested it, and spoke disparagingly of it.

When it comes to deception, there are two categories of people: "*the deceived and the deceiver*" (Job 12:16). This text is about "*the deceiver*" – the ones who are doing the deceiving - not "*the deceived.*"

These "*deceivers*" deride or twist things they do not understand. The reason they do not understand is because they have not received the love of the truth (2 Thess 2:10-11). As a result, they "*wrest the Scriptures*" in order to their personal "*destruction*" (2 Pet 3:16). This is not an innocent transgression, and is committed by those who are "*ministers of Satan,*" and have transformed themselves "*as the ministers of righteousness*" (2 Cor 11:4). These are the men through whom "*doctrines of demons are perpetrated.*"

The falsity of their teaching cannot be discovered by a study of the Scriptures. On the purely intellectual level, Satan's ministers are superior to men. Ultimately, it is the impact of their teachings upon those who receive them that reveals their falseness. For those of full age, whose senses have been "*exercised to discern both good and evil,*" the teachings will clash with their understanding, and will be seen to contradict clear statements of truth.

When people do not "*earnestly contend for the faith,*" lapsing into a non-productive spiritual state, they will not be able to detect the entrance of such teachers.

**WHAT THEY KNOW NATURALLY.** Other versions read, "*things they know by instinct,*"<sup>NASB</sup> "*natural knowledge,*"<sup>BBE</sup> and "*they understand by mere nature,*"<sup>DARBY</sup> They cannot draw from the wells of salvation. Apart from the doctrines brought to them by demons, the only thinking capacity they have is by nature – "*the wisdom of men*" (1 Cor 2:5) – and the things of God cannot be processed with such wisdom.

**AS BRUTE BEASTS.** Other versions read, "*like unreasoning animals,*"<sup>NASB</sup> "*like irrational animals,*"<sup>NRSV</sup> "*like the creatures without reason,*"<sup>ASV</sup> "*without thinking, like animals,*"<sup>CJB</sup> "*they do whatever they feel like.*"<sup>LIVING</sup>

In Christ Jesus, there is a different mode of thinking – one that is in synch with the thoughts and ways of God (Isa 55:8-9). This is the result of having the laws of God written upon the mind (Heb 10:16). It is being "*spiritually minded*" (Rom 8:6). These false teachers had no such mindset, and thus corrupted the truth to accommodate their own natures and preferences. In other words, they lived and taught without due thought. Because of Satan's direction, they were motivated by their own earthly wills and preferences. Satan gave them their theology, and he worked freely through it as well.

**THEY CORRUPT THEMSELVES.** Other versions read, "*by these things they are destroyed,*"<sup>NASB</sup> "*will turn out to be fatal to them,*"<sup>NJB</sup> and "*by these they corrupt themselves and are destroyed (perish).*"<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Not only do the teachings of these men cause the confusion and falling of those who receive them, they are the very means by which they themselves will be destroyed. This is something of what is involved in these words: "*to be carnally minded is death*" (Rom 8:6), and "*if the live after the flesh, ye shall die*" (Rom 8:13). There are words and teachings that lead men into death and alienation from God – both to the teachers that bring them, and the people who receive them. Paul said of those "**Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things**" (Phil 3:19) = and minding earthly things is equated with knowing things "*by nature.*"

You can see the sternness with which Jude approaches the subject of false teachers – those perpetrators of things that spring forth from nature, and the carnal mind. These are men who exploit religion, making a name and getting riches for themselves by their worldly mindedness. The

only way to void the effect of their presence and teaching is to earnestly contend for the faith, choosing edification over entertainment and a form of godliness that denies, or rejects, the power thereof (2 Tim 3:5). The strengthening of the saints is imperative.

# COMMENTARY ON JUDE

## LESSON NUMBER 9

***“Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.”*** .....(Jude 1:11)

### **CAIN, BALAAM, AND CORE**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The church is given many warnings about false teachers and false apostles. These are not addressed to the world. In our time, many are speaking to the world – those outside of Christ – about the Antichrist (1 John 2:18; 4:3) and false Christs (Matt 24:24). All such speech is completely misdirected. The world is already in the grip of Satan. It is the church that is warned about erroneous messages and messengers. These are men who draw away disciples after themselves (Acts 20:30). They cause divisions and offences (Rom 16:17). They “*corrupt the word of God*” (2 Cor 2:17), deceitfully “*transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ*” (2 Cor 11:13). They are “*unruly and vain talkers*” (Tit 1:10). They are “*enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, who glory in their shame, and mind earthly things*” (Phil3:18-19). They “*bring in damnable heresies, even denying [rejecting] the Lord who bought them*” (2 Pet 2:1). Some of them have been subtle enough to lead Christ’s “*servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols*” (Rev 2:20). You would think those so described could not be hidden, but they are because of those who give heed to them “*cannot see afar off*” (2 Pet 1:9), and are spiritually unstable (Eph 4:14). The thing that makes these false teachers known is, when it is perceived, the **effect** of their message. When one is delivered from this present evil world (Gal 1:4), they must not remain in a juvenile state. The Word of God is clear on this (Eph 4:11-16). However, there is a gospel being preached that, when it is embraced, leaves the people in a perpetual state of spiritual infancy. This condition exists all about us, but precious few have any inkling it is there. These teachers offer all manner of methods, workshops, books, and the likes to correct human behavior, when it is their teaching that has led the people into spiritual jeopardy. Jude has assessed the people, and knows why they are in an unacceptable condition. It is the preached message they have embraced that has caused this dilemma. Because the Gospel of Christ is God’s power unto salvation, it cannot possibly produce a people who remain in a backward posture. Some of us have come to realize this, and have done our best to reject an erroneous message that presents a fictitious Jesus, and promises a worthless salvation. Understanding this enables one to see why Jude writes as he does.

#### **WOE UNTO THEM**

Jude 1:11a ***“Woe unto them! . . .”*** Other versions read, “A curse on them,”<sup>BBE</sup> “They are damned,”<sup>CEB</sup> “Alas for them,”<sup>NJB</sup> “What sorrow awaits them!”<sup>NLT</sup> “How terrible it will be for them!”<sup>IE</sup> “Now they are in for real trouble.”<sup>CEV</sup> “It will be bad for them,”<sup>ERV</sup> “How horrible it will be for them!”<sup>GW</sup> “I’m fed up with them!”<sup>MESSAGE</sup>

The word translated “woe” has the following meaning: “an interjection of grief or of denunciation . . . woe, calamity”<sup>THAYER</sup> “expressing extreme displeasure and calling for retributive pain on someone or something woe! alas!”<sup>FRIBERG</sup>

This is an announcement of what God has already determined. The teachers of whom Jude is writing had come to an irretrievable point. They were committing the transgression of which Paul wrote, “*If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are*” (1 Cor 3:17). They had produced “*wood, hay, and stubble*” people, as

compared to the Gospel results of “gold silver, and precious stones” (1 Cor 3:12).

There are people who have infiltrated believers “whose end is destruction” (Phil 3:19) – people who are likened to a field “which beareth thorns and briers [and] is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.” (Heb 6:8).

Admittedly, this is too much for some to handle, but that is only because they do not comprehend the Lord as much as the Gospel, allows. God has never spoken accommodatingly of false prophets – the deceivers, as compared to those who are deceived. Jesus affirmed that although their appearance does not properly identify them, **their fruits do:** “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” (Matt 7:15-6). He said of them, “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire” (Matt 7:19). Not bringing forth good fruit equates to the non-masterful builder who produces “wood, hay, and stubble” (1 Cor 3:12).

Through Isaiah God said of false prophets, “Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that prophesy in My name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed” (Jer 14:15). Through Jeremiah He said, “Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal My words every one from his neighbor. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD” (Jer 23:30-32). Through Ezekiel He said, “Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!” (Ezek 13:2-3).

The “day of salvation” did not change the stance of Deity against the false prophets.

**WOE TO THEM!** This is an announcement of the destiny of false prophets – those who fabricate a message, then say it came from God – all the while rejecting the message God DID give – the record of His Son (1 John 5:10-11). **If we cannot decipher the message itself, then we must look at what it produces.** What kind of people are in the wake of these waves of delusion? How acceptably do they live (2 Cor 6:15-7:2)? What is their spiritual intelligence quotient (Col 1:9)? Are they growing up into Christ in all things (Eph 4:15)? Are they being changed from glory to glory (2 Cor 3:18). Is the grace of God teaching them to reject “*ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and Savior Jesus Christ*” (Tit 2:11-13)?

I understand there are some people who sit under erroneous teaching and a misplaced emphasis regularly, yet are making some advancement in the faith. That is because they are actually being fed by someone else. No one can dictate what such people are to do, but it ought to be clear to them that they ought to chose to be listening to those who help them grow.

It ought to be noted that God does give people with an erroneous message – even when it is borrowed – “*space to repent:*” a period of time to adjust their priorities and deliver a proper message (Rev 2:21). The fact that we have no example of someone actually rejecting a message they themselves concocted confirms that, at the very best, this is very difficult thing to do. To trample on the Gospel, rejecting its declaration and focus in favor of their own false dreams and visions requires a phenomenal degree of obstinance and hard-heartedness. This accounts for the sternness of Jude’s words. There is a moral and spiritual line that, once crossed, solidifies a person’s state. God does not identify when this line is crossed, and it is foolish for anyone to attempt to do so. It is enough to say that playing with erroneous ideas about God and Christ, is playing with fire. The human intellect is not capable of probing these matters and arriving at a proper conclusion. Only faith and an undefiled mind and conscience are suited for such a work. Too, this is another reason for a continual renewing of the mind (Rom 12:2; Eph 4:23).

### **THE WAY OF CAIN**

1:11b “ . . . for they have gone in the way of Cain . . . ”

**GONE THE WAY.** Other versions read, “went the way,” <sup>ASV</sup> “taken the way,” <sup>NIV</sup> “go the way,”

NRSV "walk in the way," RSV "follow in the footsteps," CEB "have walked the road" CJB "traveled in the way," CSB "traveled down," NET "follow the example," LIVING "run riotously in the way." AMPLIFIED

This is descriptive of a certain manner of life – a way in which life is addressed, and how a person so living regards the people of God.

**OF CAIN.** The facts revealed about Cain are as follows: He was the eldest son of Adam and Eve – the first person "born of woman;" a tiller of the soil (Gen 4:2); in a fit of jealousy, roused by the rejection of himself and his sacrifice, and the acceptance of his brother Abel and his sacrifice, he committed murder (Gen 4:3-8), for which he was expelled from the presence of the lord (Gen 4:14-16), and led the life of an exile; he settled in the land of Nod (Gen 4:16), and built a city, which he named after his son Enoch (Gen 4:17); his descendants are enumerated, together with the inventions for which they were remarkable (Gen 4:17–22). Occasional references to Cain are made in Hebrews 11:4, 1 John 3:12, and Jude 1:11.

There nothing commendable said about Cain. He was "of the wicked one," is an example of a transgressor, a hater, and a murderer.

Among other things, this shows the value of being familiar with the book of Genesis. There are principles and examples established in this writing of Moses that apply to all ages. You can see how serious it is to suggest that this part of the Scripture has minimal or no value to those in Christ Jesus. Here is a person living before the Law, and yet assists us in understanding the nature of false prophets, and what they are actually doing.

**THE WAY OF CAIN.** There are a number of things that characterized the life of Cain. These are "*the way of Cain,*" and they are found in the false teachers of reference. Cain's "*way*" is said to be "*followed*" by these teachers. That is the "*way*" they preferred. They were inclined to this manner of living. It probably was not perceived as "*the way of Cain,*" but that is what it was. Because Cain is specifically referred to as being "*of the wicked one,*" these teachers were attracted to, and embraced, a way maintained by the devil himself – the arch-foe of God.

**Basically Self Centered.** Cain himself was the center of his own attention. This is why he was repulsed by the acceptance of Abel and his sacrifice, while He and his sacrifice were rejected. If he had been properly focused, he would have repented and sought forgiveness.

**Religious Posture Is Feigned.** The first sacrifice of record, that was offered by a man, was that of Cain (Gen 4:3). The offering, however, was pretentious, and not from the heart, else the rejection of it would have caused Cain to fear and tremble. He had been reared with an awareness of the expulsion of his parents from Eden because of a single sin. Yet, this man was not truly conscious of God. That is precisely why he lived as he did.

**Denies What He Knows.** Cain knew where Abel was, for he had slain him. We do not know if he buried him, or left him to decay in the open field. But Cain knew about Abel. Yet he hurled a challenge in the face of the Almighty: "Am I my brother's keeper?"

**Refused To Acknowledge Sin.** Cain never did acknowledge that he had sinned in killing Abel. He made no attempt to offer an acceptable sacrifice.

**Dead Toward God.** One would think that being confronted with the God of heaven would induce fear – but it did not with Cain. He was dead toward God– incapable of responding properly to Him, even though he had extensive exposure to personal words from God before he slew his brother (Gen 4:6-7), and afterward as well (Gen 4:9-15). This is one of the penalties of having a hard heart. It is impervious to Divine warnings.

**Not Repentant.** Even though he was faced with his sin, and told that Abel's blood cried out to God from the ground, Cain did not repent.

**Hostile Toward Those Accepted By God.** Even though the righteous man he killed was his own brother, Cain's nature moved him to be hostile against Abel – a man whom God had accepted. Jesus referred to Abel as "*righteous Abel,*" telling the scribes and Pharisees they were guilty of shedding his blood (Matt 23:35). That is, they were also of the generation of Cain, having chosen to follow his way. That is why they were against Jesus, the apostles, and all who believed.

**Seeks To Take The Life Of The Accepted Ones.** Those who follow the way of Cain also seek to take the lives of the righteous. The laws of the land keep them from murdering them, but they seek to take their lives by wrongfully accusing them, seeking to malign them, misrepresenting them, and destroying their influence. That is what false teachers sought to do to Paul, affirming that he taught "*Let us do evil that good may come*" (Rom 3:8). Those who "*falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ*" (1 Pet 3:16) are, in a very real sense, seeking to take your life. They are attempting to rid themselves and the world of you by false accusations and hateful malignment.

## LIKE BALAAM AND CORE (KORAH)

1:11c *"and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core."*

**RAN GREEDILY.** Other versions read, "rushed headlong,"<sup>NASB</sup> "abandon themselves,"<sup>NRSV</sup> "ran riotously,"<sup>ASV</sup> "running uncontrolled,"<sup>BBE</sup> "give themselves over to,"<sup>CEB</sup> "are cast away,"<sup>GENEVA</sup> "thrown themselves into,"<sup>NJB</sup> "are utterly given to,"<sup>PNT</sup> and "They have hurried."<sup>IE</sup>

The idea here is that of zealously pursuing something at all cost. This is a proper attitude when seeking "first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt 6:33). It is good when one approaches the Kingdom of God as Jesus described: "violent men seize it by force [as a precious prize—a share in the heavenly kingdom is sought with most ardent zeal and intense exertion]" (Matt 11:12, <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>). But these men are not doing such a comely thing!

**THE ERROR OF BALAAM FOR REWARD.** Other versions read, "for profit,"<sup>NKJV</sup> "for pay,"<sup>NASB</sup> "for the sake of gain,"<sup>NRSV</sup> "for hire,"<sup>ASV</sup> "for money,"<sup>CJB</sup> and "because of greed."<sup>NET</sup>

Peter says of these false teachers, "Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, **who loved the wages of unrighteousness**" (2 Pet 2:15). Moses referred to them as "the wages of divination" (Num 22:7). Both Moses and Nehemiah say Balaam was "hired" against Israel (Deut 23:4; Neh 13:2). Num 31:16). The church in Pergamos had some who held "to the doctrine of Balaam" (Rev 2:14).

Balak hired Balaam to curse the children of Israel, but God would not let him do it. He was so eager to obtain the wages offered by Balak, that he came up with a way Israel would be cursed by God. He counseled the people to mingle with Israel by inviting them to a feast (Num 25:1-3). The outcome was that Israel committed whoredom with the women of Moab, thus incurring the curse of God. Balaam obtained the wages he loved, and death as well (Num 31:8).

So these false teachers will declare what the people want to hear, if they will pay them enough. In our day it is staggering to hear of the exorbitant salaries that some preachers receive. Preaching is now considered a legitimate career – one for which professional training is offered, and as well as an elevated status. Few, if any, of these high-paid professionals are actually feeding the flock. At the best, they are glorified psychologists, trying to solve the self-diagnosed problems of the people. There are "churches" that are actually religious empires with campuses, businesses, entertainment centers, etc. Is this condition serious? Moses, the prophets, Peter, and Jude say it is!

**THE GAINSAING OF CORE.** The name "Core" is an alternative transliteration of the Hebrew word "Koreh." Other versions read, "rebellion of Korah,"<sup>NKJV</sup> "by saying evil against the Lord, like Korah,"<sup>BBE</sup> "the uprising of Korah,"<sup>CEB</sup> "the contradiction of Core,"<sup>DOUAY</sup> "They have rebelled like Korah,"<sup>GWN</sup> "ruined by the same rebellion as Korah -and share the same fate,"<sup>NJB</sup> "they will be destroyed like Korah's rebellion,"<sup>LIVING</sup> "destroyed themselves in Korah's rebellion,"<sup>ISV</sup> and "have perished in rebellion [like that] of Korah!"<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Korah was a Levite, of the Koathites" (Num 16:1). They were in charge of carrying the Tabernacle from place to place (Num 10:21). In doing this, they could not use carts, but had to carry the disassembled Tabernacle on their shoulders (Num 7:8-9). Not content with their assignment, Korah rose up against Moses, with 250 famous and renown men of the assembly. They said to Moses and Aaron, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?" (Num 16:3). Moses answered that God would make known who He had chosen the next day. All of them were to be there with their censers, fire, and incense. The outcome was that "the ground clave asunder that was under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods" (Num 16:31-32). Then "there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense" (Num 16:35).

The false prophets of whom Jude speaks were not content with a secondary position, if, indeed, they had any at all. They coveted power and recognition, and were contentious against those who were appointed by God. Thus, some were not afraid to speak against Paul (Rom 3:8; 2 Cor 10:10). In order to promote themselves these men affirm there is a kind of equality in the body of Christ that allows for self-promotion and even usurpation.

It ought to be said at this point that none of these things had apparently been detected by those to whom Jude wrote – people following the way of Cain, running greedily for reward after the

error of Balaam, and perishing in the gainsaying of Korah. One might wonder how such blatant contradictions could be hidden. They were effectively obscured because the people were not earnestly contending for the faith. There were wolves among them in sheep's clothing, and they did not know it. There were fake ministers in their assembly, and they were unaware of it. They were being robbed, and they were ignorant of it. If there was no other reason for a call to spiritual maturity than this, that should be enough. This is accented by the fact that spiritual freedom, good hope, and everlasting consolation cannot be maintained in an environment of delusion.

# COMMENTARY ON JUDE

## LESSON NUMBER 10

***“These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; <sup>13</sup> Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.”*** .....(Jude 1:12-13)

### A DESCRIPTION OF FALSE TEACHERS

#### INTRODUCTION

False teachers have a defiling effect upon those around them. They are infinitely more than mere men giving their opinions of Scripture. Because they traffic in lies, they are totally without profit for the saints of God. They are a distraction that robs and contaminates. The irony is that this is not how they appear – that is why they had *“crept in unawares”* among those to whom Jude writes. Of course, that situation was made all the worse because the people were not earnestly contending for the faith. Somehow the Son of God had been relegated to the background of life, which opened the door for the entrance of the men Jude describes. Jude will now provide an extensive description of the men the people had not recognized for what they were. He will leave no doubt about where they have been assigned by the Living God. That assignment causes them to have a defiling effect on anyone that is around them, or among whom they have taken up occupancy. The manner in which Jude writes confirms the seriousness of the dilemma in which his readers were living, and it was an assembly situation. In Scripture, the assembly of the saints is always a serious matter. There were certain things that were intended to take place in these gatherings – edifying (1 Cor 14:26), exhortation (Rom 12:8), comfort (1 Thess 5:11), admonition (Rom 15:14), teaching (Col 3:16), etc. Something *“mutual,”* or common was to take place (Rom 1:12). Jude now tells the people the false teachers were not bringing anything of substance to them. These teachers were in every sense of the word *“worthless.”*

#### SPOTS IN YOUR FEASTS OF CHARITY

Jude 1:12a ***“These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear . . .”***

**THESE ARE SPOTS.** Other versions read *“hidden reefs,”*<sup>NASB</sup> *“blemishes,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“hidden rocks,”*<sup>ASV</sup> *“are dangerous,”*<sup>CEB</sup> *“filthy spots”*<sup>CJB</sup> *“dangerous reefs,”*<sup>CSB</sup> *“a disgrace,”*<sup>GWN</sup> *“a dangerous hazard,”*<sup>NJB</sup> *“dangerous reefs that can shipwreck you,”*<sup>NLT</sup> *“craggy rocks,”*<sup>YLT</sup> *“evil smears,”*<sup>LIVING</sup> *“ugly spots,”*<sup>IE</sup> *“stains,”*<sup>ISV</sup> *“blots,”*<sup>WILLIAMS</sup> and *“hidden reefs (elements of danger).”*<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

This is not speaking of what these men taught, but of who they were. They were carriers of contamination, and just having them around was spiritually dangerous.

Some versions use the term *“spots,”* while others refer to *“rocks”* that are beneath the surface of the water. The term *“spots”* refers to their rottenness which tends to spread. The term *“rocks”* refers to the damage they cause, like tearing a shipping vessel apart. In them the saying is fulfilled, *“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners”* (1 Cor 15:33). Peter writes of them, *“And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you”* (2 Pet 2:13).

There is something else to be seen here. Those who are not earnestly contending for the faith actually silently invite defiling and unsuitable people to be with them. That is because they are living

in the flesh, and the Holy Spirit has been quenched in their lives.

**YOUR FEASTS OF CHARITY.** Other versions read, “love feasts,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “festive gatherings meant to foster love,”<sup>CJB</sup> “the special meals you share with other believers,”<sup>GWN</sup> “your community meals,”<sup>NJB</sup> “your fellowship meals commemorating the Lord’s love,”<sup>NLT</sup> “kindness feast.”<sup>TNT</sup>

It is generally understood that these were meals served before the Lord’s Supper during which the love of the brethren was intended to be promoted. John Wesley promoted special meals in which the brethren would eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.<sup>McCLINTOK & STRONG’S</sup>

It appears that the church in Corinth also practiced having this meal before the Lord’s Supper. It proved to be a problem in that assembly also – so much so that Paul admonished them to eat at home (1 Cor 11:20-22). This practice, in my opinion, represented a departure from proper observance of the Lord’s Table. The church at Corinth, and the practitioners to whom Jude wrote, seem to me to support that opinion. Mind you, it is not that the practice itself is sinful. However, it tends to be distracting – so much so, that Paul told the church at Corinth they were not actually eating the Lord’s Supper when they came together (1 Cor 11;20).

These false teachers apparently felt more at home during these feasts, when it required more discipline to remain properly focused. I have also noted over the years, that those who did not meet frequently in the assembly would never think of missing a “church supper.”

**FEEDING THEMSELVES WITHOUT FEAR.** Other versions read, “they feast with you without fear,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “eating with you without the slightest qualm,”<sup>NIV</sup> “they boldly carouse together,”<sup>RSV</sup> “who without fear take the food of the sheep,”<sup>BBE</sup> “without reverence,”<sup>CEB</sup> “[carousing together in your midst], without scruples providing for themselves [alone].”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

These false and defiling teachers were not intimidated by the brethren to whom Jude wrote. They were not like the outsiders during the early days of the church of whom, it is said, “No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people”<sup>NIV</sup> (Acts 5:13). When Ananias was struck dead by God, “great fear came on all that heard these things” (Acts 5:5).

Also, Paul wrote of a certain condition when an outsider would come into the assembly and suddenly realize the Lord was in the people. “But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, **he is judged of all:** And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth” (1 Cor 14:24-25). When the people did not quench the Spirit, God would speak to the stranger who came among them. The people did not know it, but the stranger did. However, among the people to whom, Jude wrote, no such awareness was experienced – the false teachers “crept in unawares,” apparently without any awareness of the presence of God among the people. That is why they indulged themselves among that very people without any fear.

Here, a word is in order concerning the orderly and insightful participation of the brethren in the assembly. There is a certain protection that takes place in an environment of edification. It is not at all appealing to the carnal mind. The person with erroneous theological persuasions will be less likely to speak, and will not see such an assembly as a place where he can disseminate his false teaching. When the truth of God is embraced and expressed by the godly it has a restraining power about it. But when this is not the case, and the people are reduced to casual observers, lethargic professors of the faith are not convicted, and carriers of dangerous and “damnable heresies” (2 Pet 2:1) are emboldened. The protection of the assembly, then, is not perpetually left to one person, or a small nucleus of believers. As sheep protect one another by staying together, so believers who edify one another in assembly protect one another.

### **THEY ARE TOTALLY UNPROFITABLE**

1:12b “ . . . **clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots.**”

The profitlessness of these teachers will now be shown by Jude. It is Divine inspiration and their fruitage that has led inspired Jude to these conclusions. He presents no defense for these men, nor does he offer a single shred of hope for them. They have defiled the temple of God (1 Cor 3:17).

**CLOUDS WITHOUT WATER.** Other versions read, “clouds without rain,”<sup>NIV</sup> and “waterless clouds.”<sup>NRSV</sup>

By definition, a cloud is, “a visible mass of particles of condensed vapor (as water or ice) suspended in the atmosphere of a planet.”<sup>MERRIAM-WEBSTER</sup> Just as clouds without water are not possible, so it is not

possible that these false teachers can deliver any true benefit to the people of God. They have the appearance of being genuine, but are totally false. Peter likens them to “wells without water” (2 Pet 2:17).

Whereas real prophets speak “unto men to edification, exhortation, and comfort” (1 Cor 14:3), these men leave arid deserts in their wake. Those to whom they supposedly minister remain ungrounded, infantile in their thinking, and vulnerable to the defiling effects of “every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness” (Eph 4:14).

Most discerning people know that the modern church is woefully deficient, being in an emaciated state. Yet, precious few are able to trace it to the teaching to which the people are being exposed, and which they have embraced. However, that is precisely what Jude is doing.

**CARRIED ABOUT OF WINDS.** Other versions read, “carried along by winds,”<sup>NASB</sup> “blown along by the wind.”<sup>NIV</sup> These men are carried along by changing theological winds, and new carnal ideas. They are not godly thinking men, but emulators of others. If men decide to change the way they speak, these men will change their Bibles to fit into the new ways of expression. If new ways of analyzing men are being employed, they will adopt them. If some choose to rethink established doctrines of Scripture, these men will approach those texts with the new trends and preferences in mind. They are not moved by the Spirit, but by the times, and those who are governed by them.

Peter says they are “carried with a tempest,” or are “mists driven by a storm”<sup>NIV</sup> (2 Pet 2:17). That is, their teachings cause disruption, division, and offences. These are the kind of men that “cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine” delivered by Jesus and the apostles (Rom 16:17). Rather than avoiding them as Paul enjoins, Jude’s readers had welcomed them into their number, completely oblivious to what they really were.

The people of God need to beware of religious fads and trends – whether it is in music, teaching, or making disciples. In the Kingdom of God there are no trends or fads – winds of theological change. Truth is never upgraded or reshaped, and the church is “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15). False teachers are always associated with shifting sand.

**TREES WHOSE FRUIT WITHERETH.** Other versions read, “autumn trees without fruit,”<sup>NASB</sup> “fruitless trees of late autumn,”<sup>RSV</sup> “autumn leaves without fruit,”<sup>ASV</sup> “wasted trees without fruit,”<sup>BEB</sup> and “without fruit at the late autumn gathering time.”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

The idea is of fruit that was not brought to maturity before the blast of cool autumn air. It withered because the summer-time for maturity has past.

So it is with these false teachers. What they present, and what they produce, withers and passes away. That is why these pretenders are blown about by fads and trends. However, the fruit the Lord intends does not wither, but is brought to maturity, being fruitful.

**TREES THAT ARE TWICE DEAD.** Other versions read, “doubly dead”<sup>NASB</sup> They are like a tree that has no sap within, or fruit without – “twice dead.” But it seems to me that more is meant here. These were once dead in trespasses and sins, as all men, and now they have died spiritually – doubly dead. Like the false prophetess in Thyatira the Lord had no doubt given them “space to repent” – but they did not (Rev 2:21). They are totally profitless, and can be nothing else.

**PLUCKED UP BY THE ROOTS.** It is written of Jesus, “But He answered and said, “Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, **shall be rooted up**” (Matt 15:13). He said this of the Pharisees, telling His disciples “Let them alone” (Matt 15:14).

These false teachers had been removed from Kingdom utility – “uprooted.”<sup>NASB</sup> Every religious activity in which they engaged was without the Lord, without power, and without spiritual advantage. They were not recognized in heaven, and Jude is affirming they are not to be recognized as associated with the Lord by those in the earth.

The reason why these men never edified but only defiled is traceable to these conditions. They did not give anything because they really had nothing to give: “clouds without water.” They could not contribute to spiritual life because the fruit they offered was not nourishing: “whose fruit withereth.” They could not bring life-giving power because they themselves were “twice dead,” and “plucked up by the roots.” This accounts for all lifeless and unproductive churches.

## **RECKLESS AND WANDERING**

**1:13 “Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.”**

Jude now paints a picture of ultimate religious instability. The false teachers are a contradiction of true spiritual life, and the kind of men who leave vulnerability in their wake. Any imagined likeness to those who are born again is nothing more than a delusion, for God never authors an ineffective salvation, and never sends forth untrustworthy laborers.

**RAGING WAVES OF THE SEA.** Other versions read, “wild waves,”<sup>NASB</sup> “violent waves,”<sup>BBE</sup> “savage sea-waves.”<sup>CJB</sup> These are not the majestic rolling waves of the sea upon which ships navigate. They are the destructive crashing waves like those of the sea-storm Euroclydon, which drove the uncontrollable ship on which Paul was riding, and finally dashed it to pieces on the island of Melita (Acts 27:14-41).

These false prophets were destructive, ruining churches like Corinth, Galatia, Thyatira, and others. Immorality, ignorance, and lethargy broke out where they taught. Peter wrote of them, “For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.” (2 Pet 2:18-19).

**FOAMING OUT THEIR OWN SHAME.** Other versions read, “casting up their own shame as foam,”<sup>NASB</sup> “heaving forth their shameful deeds like foam”<sup>CJB</sup> “Their ministry brought out their own filth.”<sup>CJB</sup> “casting up the foam of their own shame,”<sup>ESV</sup> “Their shame is like the foam on the wild waves of the sea”<sup>GWN</sup> “churning up the foam of their shameful deeds,”<sup>NLT</sup> “what they leave behind them is shame and disgrace like the dirty foam left along the beach by the wild waves,”<sup>LIVING</sup> and “flinging up the foam of their own shame and disgrace.”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Isaiah wrote, “But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt” (Isa 57:20). The raging waves draw filth and refuse from the floor of the sea, and finally cast it upon the shore in a bed of fading foam.

The teaching of these pretenders appealed to the flesh, and drew out some of the baser things associated with it. It even did this in the teachers themselves. This explains why some very well known and public ministers of our day have been caught in fornication, adultery, sodomy, attaining exorbitant wealth, etc. Their teaching being at variance with the truth itself, is not used by God, but by the devil, to awaken lusts that are to be put away (Col 3:5).

Men are very hesitant to acknowledge this is the case. They prefer to say such men were preaching the truth, but were just overcome by temptation. However, Jude will not leave men with that erroneous notion. He will trace their immoral behavior to the doctrine they purveyed in the name of the Lord. Both truth and error draw out what is in the individual embracing them.

**WANDERING STARS.** Other versions read, “shooting-stars,”<sup>MRD</sup> “wayward stars,”<sup>NET</sup> “stars going astray,”<sup>YLT</sup> “wander around looking as bright as stars.”<sup>LIVING</sup>

Most versions read “wandering stars.” These are stars traveling in an irregular manner –like “shooting stars,” “falling stars,” or “comets.” **They are stars by which navigation is not possible.** They can be beheld, but they cannot be trusted. They may be brilliant and attention-getting, but they will cause destruction if they are followed as though they were in a fixed pattern. The Scriptures mention the stars being in “their courses” (Judges 5:20). Other versions read, “their highway,”<sup>BBE</sup> “their orbits,”<sup>CEB</sup> “their order and courses,”<sup>DOUAY</sup> and “their heavenly paths.”<sup>GWN</sup> The stars are intended to follow an orderly and consistent course. They do not move about sporadically, or in a manner that cannot be trusted. “Wandering stars” have left their course, and no longer serve a consistent purpose.

So are these false teachers. They have veered from their paths, and strayed from the way. They are no longer serving the Lord, but are rather serving themselves. Any reference to God, Christ, or the Scriptures is for their own purpose, and has nothing whatsoever to do with the revealed will of God. That any body of believers could be infiltrated by such people is a cause for great concern – which is why Jude wrote this epistle. This kind of concern is rare in our time.

**THE RESERVATION OF BLACKNESS OF DARKNESS.** The stars of heaven are for light (Jer 31:35). But for these “wandering stars,” there is a “reservation of blackness of darkness.” Peter says, “the mist of darkness,”<sup>KJV</sup> or “the black darkness”<sup>NASB</sup> (2 Pet 2:17). **This is an imposed darkness,** as described when Elymas the sorcerer was cursed by Paul: “And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand” (Acts 13:11).

This is the “outer darkness” where the damned will be cast (Matt 8:12; Matt 22:13; 25:30). It is an aspect of Hell, the lake of fire. It is related to the “chains of darkness” that have been imposed

on the fallen angels (2 Pet 2:4). This is descriptive of the eternally hopeless state for which these are being reserved. It has already been assigned to them, and it can be said of them as Jesus said of the scribes and Pharisees, *“How can you escape the damnation of hell?”* (Matt 23:33).

# COMMENTARY ON JUDE

## LESSON NUMBER 11

***“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,<sup>14</sup> To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”*** .....(Jude 1:14-15)

### THE PROPHECY OF ENOCH

#### INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of time, man has had a difficult time comprehending the Divine response to doubt, giving heed to contradicting voices, and realizing the impact of rebellion upon God Himself. After listening to the devil, Eve did not think properly about God. Adam proceeded to partake of the forbidden fruit, thinking more of Eve than of God. Cain did not have a proper respect for God when he made his offering, feeling at liberty to lie to God, and even become angry when he found out Abel and his sacrifice were accepted by God, while himself and his offering were rejected. Although personally warned by God, he ignored the Divine warning. That took place at the threshold of human history. Sin immediately gathered momentum in humanity with bigamy and murder being committed by Lamech. Soon violence covered the face of the earth, calling for its destruction. No sooner had the race again multiplied, than unprecedented pride surfaced in the plain of Shinar. By the time of Abraham whole bodies of people had stooped beneath nature, and sodomy was openly and blatantly practiced in Sodom. Sin continued to increase until the time of Jude, when believers allowed charlatans and opportunists to enter in among them bringing defilement and potential destruction. Jude apparently stood alone in that area, and like Shammah, who stood alone in the midst of a field and defeated the Philistines (2 Sam 23:11), he takes on these false teachers. He summons up an appropriate prophesy, and speaks with no uncertainty or ambiguity. O, how his words are still needed!

#### ENOCH PROPHESED OF THESE

Jude 1:14 ***“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these . . .”***

Since *“all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable”* (2 Tim 3:6), this is how the Holy Spirit directed Jude to write. To arrive at any other conclusion requires a lot of presumption, and reveals an unacceptable view of the God of Scripture, or inspired writing.

**ENOCH, THE SEVENTH FROM ADAM.** That is, the seventh generation from Adam: <sup>1</sup>Adam, <sup>2</sup>Seth, <sup>3</sup>Enos, <sup>4</sup>Cainan, <sup>5</sup>Mahalaleel, <sup>6</sup>Jared, and <sup>7</sup>Enoch (Gen 4:25:5:18). These are generations in the Messianic lineage, and were picked out by God who orchestrated that lineage. All of the fathers of the generations leading up to Noah had many more children than the ones in the specified lineage: Adam *“begat “sons and daughters”* over a period of 800 years after Seth was born (Gen 5:4). Seth *“begat “sons and daughters”* for a period of 807 years after Enos was born (Gen 5:7). Enos begat sons and daughters over a period of 815 years after the birth of Cainan (Gen 5:10). Cainan *“begat “sons and daughters”* over a period of 840 after the birth of Mahalaleel (Gen 5:13). Mahalaleel *“begat “sons and daughters”* over a period of 830 years after the birth of Jared (Gen5:16). Jared *“begat “sons and daughters”* over a period of 800 years after the birth of Enoch (Gen 5:19). Those periods during which the pre-flood fathers begat children add up to cumulative 4,892 years of productive childbearing.

Out of all of the thousands, and perhaps millions, of children born in those periods, God

counted only seven of them! Who is the person of sound mind who chooses to doubt God's election or predestination? If such doubts do exist, and they certainly should not, then those doubters have to explain Enoch being "the seventh from Adam."

This same genealogy is reflected in First Chronicles: "<sup>1</sup>Adam, <sup>2</sup>Sheth, <sup>3</sup>Enosh, <sup>4</sup>Kenan, <sup>5</sup>Mahalaleel, <sup>6</sup>Jered, <sup>7</sup>Enoch," (1 Chron 1:1-3). Luke also gives a record of these generations leading up to Jesus: "<sup>7</sup>Enoch, which was the son of <sup>6</sup>Jared, which was the son of <sup>5</sup>Maleleel, which was the son of <sup>4</sup>Cainan, which was the son of <sup>3</sup>Enos, which was the son of <sup>2</sup>Seth, which was the son of <sup>1</sup>Adam, which was the son of God" (Luke 3:38). Thus God has given us a record written before the Law (Genesis), during the Law (First Chronicles), and after the Law (Luke), which is said to have been "until John" (Matt 11:13) – and the records reflect the precise order.

**PROPHESIED.** Here, some men have chosen to proceed as though Luke is copying from a record rather than being moved along by the Holy Spirit. The following quote reflects the consistent views of purported Bible scholars: "The book of Enoch is an ancient Jewish religious work, ascribed by tradition to Enoch, the great-grandfather of Noah, although modern scholars estimate the older sections (mainly in the Book of the Watchers) to date from about 300 BC, and the latest part (Book of Parables) probably to the end of the first century BC." <sup>WIKIPEDIA</sup> It is stated that this prophesy was written in the book of Enoch, which is not included in the canon of Scripture. Then it is alleged that Jude "quoted" from that book. This view is to be rejected because it conflicts with the revealed source of "all Scripture" – it was "given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim 3:16), and was in no way the result of study and research. I do not doubt the existence of a volume called "the book of Enoch," but that really has nothing to do with Jude's writings. He, like other writers of Scripture, was being "moved" along by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:21).

The prophesy of Enoch is especially noteworthy, for he was noted for walking with God, and is a man who did not die as normal men, but was "translated, that he should not see death" (Heb 11:5). Moses wrote of him, "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Gen 5:24). This very prophesy was no doubt immediately applied to the flood, which was to occur in the third generation after Enoch – Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah).

**OF THESE.** Jude, who knows how to "handle accurately" <sup>NASB</sup> Scripture (2 Tim 2:15), states that Enoch prophesied of the false teachers to whom he has made reference. Other versions read that Jude prophesied, "about these men." <sup>NKJV</sup> The words Enoch affirmed, applied to the teachers who had crept in unawares among those to whom Jude is writing.

This deals a decisive blow against those who say the immediate context of Scripture is what dictates its true and applicable meaning. The context in which Enoch spoke was that of a rapidly deteriorating humanity that was headed for the flood, and the pouring out of God's wrath. The context in which Jude was writing was the day of salvation (of which Enoch is not reported as saying anything), and the failure of professed believers to earnestly contend for the faith.

**The thing that makes the text relevant is that there are only two generations of men:** those who are "the children of the kingdom," and those who are "the children of the wicked one" (Matt 13:38). Evil generations are linked together as though there was no time between them. Therefore Jesus said to His critics that they would be judged: "That upon you may come **all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar**" (Matt 23:35). The death of Zacharias is recorded in Second Chronicles 24:20-21, hundreds of years before Jesus spoke those words. Therefore Enoch did, in fact, speak of teachers of Jude's reference.

## THE LORD COMES TO JUDGE

1:14b " . . . saying, **Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all . . .**"

Jude will take the statement of Enoch, doubtless with an immediate application to the flood of Noah's day, and apply it to the circumstance he is addressing. Among other considerations, this confirms that God always acts in strict accordance with His character. **His responses are not strictly governed by the circumstances themselves.** This is why what He says and does can be applied to many appropriate situations.

**BEHOLD.** Other versions read, "See," <sup>NIV</sup> This is a common word in Scripture, being used as an exhortation nearly six hundred times. **It accents the necessity of discerning and**

**understanding what is said or done by the Lord.** This is an essential posture in spiritual life. No one can afford to be disinterested or casual about what the Lord says and does. This is because men will be judged by God for how they considered his words and deeds. There will be no allowance for indifference or disinterest. When light is beamed from heaven into a certain time, area, or person, **attention is mandatory.** The current status of the professed church confirms that this is not generally acknowledged, and often is not even known.

**THE LORD COMETH.** Other versions read, *"the Lord came,"*<sup>NASB</sup> *"the Lord is coming,"*<sup>NRSV</sup> *"the Lord comes,"*<sup>CEB</sup> *"the Lord has come,"*<sup>DARBY</sup> *"the Lord will come,"*<sup>NJB</sup> and *"the Lord did come."*<sup>YLT</sup>

It seems inappropriate to represent Enoch as saying *"the Lord came."* Assuming Enoch's prophecy concerned the flood, he prophesied nearly 600 years before the flood occurred, so would hardly have spoken of it in the past tense. If someone imagines this is a general statement affirming that God does, in fact, come to judge, it is doubtful that He always does so *"with ten thousands of His saints."* Even when God judged Sodom and the cities of the plain, He did so with two angels (Gen 19:1,13-14). Enoch's words speak of an epochal judgment, which can appropriately be compared to the day of the world's destruction and final judgment.

**WITH TEN THOUSANDS OF HIS SAINTS.** Other versions read, *"many thousands of His holy ones,"*<sup>NASB</sup> *"thousands upon thousands of His holy ones,"*<sup>NIV</sup> *"holy myriads,"*<sup>RSV</sup> *"tens of thousands of his saints,"*<sup>BBE</sup> *"countless holy ones,"*<sup>CEB</sup> *"amidst His holy myriads,"*<sup>DOUAY</sup> *"countless thousands of his holy angels,"*<sup>GWN</sup> *"saintly myriads,"*<sup>YLT</sup> and *"millions of His holy ones."*<sup>LIVING</sup>

Elsewhere this impressive mass of spiritual hosts is called *"the army of heaven"* (Dan 4:35), *"the armies that were in heaven"* (Rev 19:14), and *"His armies"* (Job 25:3; Joel 2:11). They are the Lord's *"hosts"* (Psa 103:21)—i.e. *"His hosts . . . all His hosts"* (Psa 148:2). This multitude of spirits is elsewhere referred to as *"an innumerable company of angels"* (Heb 12:22), *"thousand thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand"* (Dan 7:10), and *"ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands"* (Rev 5:11). They are depicted as coming to Sinai at the giving of the Law (Deut 33:2; Psa 68:17).

When coming in judgment, these are hosts with which men cannot contend, either in word or deed. As in the flood, when they come all human wisdom and strength is simply crushed and ground to powder.

Jude's reference to this multitude is descriptive of the coming of Christ. *"When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory"* (Matt 25:31). They will be seen, for they will come in their glory (Matt 16:27).

**TO EXECUTE JUDGMENT UPON ALL.** The coming of these heavenly hosts with the Lord, is the prelude to judgment — *"to execute judgment upon all."* From times of old, God has warned men of this time. *"He cometh to judge the earth"* (1 Chron 16:33; Psa 96:13; 98:9). Paul declared this to the Athenian philosophers: *"Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead"* (Acts 17:31). So far as the wicked are concerned (with which the false teachers are associated), this will be the *"day of wrath"* (Rom 2:5).

There is a certain Divine objective relating to false teachers and disobedient people. Paul states it in a most telling manner: *"For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That Thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings, and mightest overcome when Thou art judged"* (Rom 3:3-4). Is it really of no eternal consequence when men choose to ignore what God has said, or twist it, or invent another message and speak it in the name of the Lord? It looks as though such people are getting by with what they do. Some even have the appearance of being very successful. However, moved by the Holy Spirit, Jude assures us that not a syllable of wrong teaching will be overlooked. The choice of contradicting doctrines will not be overlooked, and substitute messages that vaunt men and give license to the flesh will not lie buried in the dirt of neglect. God is coming with a vast and insurmountable army to end all spiritual tyranny, expose all lies, and dispense with every wicked person by casting them into the lake of fire.

## **TO CONVINCe ALL THAT ARE UNGODLY**

1:15 " . . . and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds

**which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."**

Jude will now expose the nature and extent of Divine judgment in a rather concise, but very provocative, manner. This is a marvelous compression of truth – truth that the Holy Spirit can unpack, so to speak, and enlarge within the hearts of the humble and contrite ones.

**TO CONVINCe.** Other versions read "*convict,*"<sup>NKJV</sup> "*give a decision against,*"<sup>BBE</sup> "*reprove,*"<sup>DOUAY</sup> "*rebuke,*"<sup>GENEVA</sup> "*to sentence,*"<sup>NJB</sup> "*to prove,*"<sup>LIVING</sup> "*condemn,*"<sup>IE</sup> and "*punish.*"<sup>CEV</sup>

As used here, the word "*convince*" means "to prove to be in the wrong, convict . . . by punishment."<sup>THAYER</sup> The word "*convince*" or "*convict*" does not refer to a mental process in which the person is convinced of the truth of a thing. That is involved to be sure. Here, "*convict*" is more like the pronouncement of a judge in a courtroom, when due punishment is meted out. This will be done before the assembled universe of human personalities; all the heavenly personalities – the four living creatures (Rev 5:6-8), cherubim (Ezek 10:1), seraphim (Isa 6:2,6), principalities and powers (Eph 3:10), the archangels and angels (1 Thess 4:16; Rev 14:10). For this grand event, the devil himself, and all of his army will be there: principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph 6:12), his angels (Matt 25:41), and demons (Matt 12:24).

At that time it will be clarified to all, and all will acknowledge that God is, indeed, "*above all*" (Eph 4:6), and Jesus Christ is "*over all*" (Rom 9:5), being "*the one and only Potentate*" (1 Tim 6:15). Everyone will bow before God, and "*every tongue shall confess to God*" (Rom 14:11). As it is written, "*at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*" (Phil 2:10-11). No one will be confused about it, doubt it, or dispute it. Everything that has been declared about the Father and the Son will be acknowledged to be the truth, and nothing but the truth.

**ALL THAT ARE UNGODLY AMONG THEM.** Now the attention is turned to everyone who is unlike God –the "*UNgodly.*" There are some particular points that will be covered – thoroughly and effectively. They will be matters concerning which extensive revelation and warnings were given to the sons of men.

**THE UNGODLY DEEDS THEY HAVE UNGODLY COMMITTED.** Other versions read, "*which they have done in an ungodly way,*"<sup>NASB</sup> "*committed in such an ungodly way,*"<sup>NRSV</sup> "*committed in their ungodliness.*"<sup>CEB</sup> **Their deeds were the expression of their ungodly character.** Their contradiction of God had been lived out openly and blatantly. God had made clear that men would be called into account for their "*deeds*" – what they did. He said He would "*render to every man according to his deeds*" (Rom 2:6). He plainly said He was going to judge every man "*according to their works*" (Rev 20:12). But they did not believe Him. Instead, they charted their own course, wrested His Word, and lived in violation of His revealed will. In that day, to which Enoch of old made allusion, all false ministers will find that their "*end shall be according to their works*" (2 Cor 11:5) – and they will be speechless as they are cast from the Lord's presence.

**HARD SPEECHES UNGODLY SINNERS HAVE SPOKEN AGAINST HIM.** Now Jude reminds the people that the vain speeches these teachers have declared to them, were actually spoken against God Himself! Other versions read, "*harsh things they have said about Him,*"<sup>GN</sup> "*uttered against him.*"<sup>NAB</sup> The majority of the various versions read "*against Him,*" That is, they have spoken against His being: His perfections, His providence, His purposes, His word, and His Son. They have misrepresented God in these and other similar areas. Their doctrine maligned His character, obscured His nature, clouded His will, and distorted His great salvation – and it had all been done willingly and aggressively. Their sermons, homilies, and learned disquisitions were viewed as diatribes against God Himself. In the name of God, they were spoken against God.

We know this is true because of the wake of sin that followed the embrace of their teaching. The more attention was paid to them, the further from God the hearers drifted, and the more unlike Him they became. Evil fruit cannot come from a good tree – it cannot, no matter how aggressively men assert that it can. No moral being can conscientiously hold to a proper doctrine and yet live in an ungodly manner. To be ungodly in deed or conduct men must either twist the true doctrine to suit their fancy, or invent new doctrines and ascribe them to God.

The modern church world obstinately refuses to acknowledge these things. When sin breaks out among those who embrace their doctrine, they insist their doctrine is true, and they set about to train their people to manage sin and iniquity. Rather than worshiping God, they actually worship theological systems they have constructed. How can they abandon their teaching after

investing so much in buildings, programs, activities, education, schools, and the likes? They are like the surgeon who abandons surgery in favor of applying colored band-aides. However, this prophecy of Enoch, and confirmation by Jude, cannot possibly fail to be fulfilled.

## COMMENTARY ON JUDE

### LESDBSON NUMBER 12

***“These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.” .....(Jude 1:16)***

### **THE CHARACTER OF THE FALSE TEACHERS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Because man is a living creature, and was made to be a servant, primarily of God Himself, he can be adversely or positively influenced. No man can influence a rock, or cloud, or a star. They are not personalities that can be influenced, or have their behavior modified by men. However, with man being made in the image of God, yet corrupt in nature, there is the distinct possibility of being influenced adversely or in a positive way. In other words, man by nature, is vulnerable, tender, and fraught with liabilities. If a person is a believer and does not fall, it is more owing to him being *“kept by the power of God through faith”* than by discipline (1 Pet 1:5). If he stands in the gale of temptation, it is more because the Lord made him stand (Rom 14:4) than because of his natural efforts. It is this propensity of man to be unduly impressed that calls for an epistle like Jude. Satan has a large number of wicked beguilers in his kingdom of darkness. If the saints are alert, they can stop their entrance. If they are not aware, this host will not only enter the presence of professed believers, but they will turn their hearts and steps toward the broad road that leads to destruction. All of the things Jude is writing should have been detected and avoided. Being complete in Christ, everything required to confront this circumstance was available – even in large measures. Understand that what Jude is writing is not a warning, it is a rebuke for doing something that should have been avoided. He is telling the people about something he could see at a distance, but they could not see close up. Whatever path they were taking, the light of God was not shining upon it, and they were stumbling along, not even aware they were doing so. I cannot help but think that this is a far more common situation than many would have us think. Further, Jude is not dealing with something that is to be tolerated.

#### **MURMURERS AND COMPLAINERS**

Jude 1:16a ***“These are murmurers, complainers . . .”***

These false teachers were not simply wrong, they were wicked; they had not merely made a mistake, they were promoting a manner of life that put one at enmity with God. These were Satan’s soldiers, carrying with them *“doctrines of devils”* [demons] (1 Tim 4:1) that dulled spiritual senses, and moved men to walk in the flesh rather than in the spirit. These men, although they were like *“clouds without water”* (Jude 1:12), no doubt had a certain attractiveness about them. That, coupled with the obtuseness of the people, allowed them to creep in among the brethren unawares. But Jude will tell the people what they really were.

**MURMURERS.** Other versions read, *“grumblers,”* <sup>NKJV</sup> *“men who make trouble,”* <sup>BBE</sup> *“discontented grumblers,”* <sup>CSB</sup> *“These people complain,”* <sup>GWN</sup> and *“constant gripers.”* <sup>LIVING</sup>

The word *“murmurers,”* as used here, means: *“one who discontentedly complains (against God).”* <sup>THAYER</sup> This term must, in my opinion, be considered with the ancient Israelites in mind. Although they were delivered from Egypt in a mighty way, passed through the Red sea on dry ground, ate miraculous bread, and drank miraculous water, yet they continually murmured. When they were thirsty, they *“murmured against Moses”* (Ex 15:24). When they began their

trek through the desert, they *"murmured against Moses and Aaron"* (Ex 16:2). When they thirsted for water, they *"murmured against Moses"* (Ex 17:3). When the spies gave them an evil report of the promised land, *"the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron"* (Num 14:2). When Korah and his rebels were slain by the Lord, the people *"murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD"* (Num 16:41). In his valedictory address Moses told the people, *"ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the LORD hated us, He hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us"* (Deut 1:27). The Psalmist also drew attention to them murmuring in their tents (Psa 106:25). In the days of Joshua, *"all the congregation murmured against the princes"* (Josh 9:18).

When Mary poured a bottle of precious ointment on Jesus' head, some of the people *"murmured against her"* (Mk 14:3-6). The Pharisees *"murmured against the disciples"* of Jesus (Lk 5:30). The Pharisees and scribes *"murmured against Jesus"* when the publicans and sinners drew near *"for to hear"* Jesus (Lk 15:2). When our Lord went to the house of Zaccheus, the people *"all murmured"* (Lk 19:7). When Jesus said He was the Bread that came down from heaven, *"the Jews murmured at Him"* (John 6:41). There was *"much murmuring among the people"* about Jesus, some saying that He was deceiving the people (John 7:12).

Throughout history, murmuring has existed among the professed followers of Jesus. As in Jude's day, it has been because of false teachers. Thinking that the life of faith is easy, some have murmured because of the hardness of the way. Some, like Israel, have murmured at the kind of nourishment the Lord supplies. They had rather have spiritual food that suited their corrupted appetites. All of this has occurred because of teachers who have mislead the people concerning Divine provisions and expectations. The teachers themselves are often chronic, murmurers, always griping about the government, the taxes, the prices, etc. Because of their own deception, they are unable to perceive that God is the *"Governor among the nations"* (Psa 22:28).

**COMPLAINERS.** Other versions read, *"finding fault,"* NASB *"faultfinders,"* NIV *"malcontents,"* NRSV *"ever desiring change,"* BBE *"discontented,"* CSB *"full of complaints,"* DOUAY *"complain of every thing,"* MRD *"disgruntled,"* NAB *"repiners,"* YLT *"never satisfied,"* LIVING *"blaming others,"* IE *"bemoaning their lot"* WEYMOUTH

As used here, the word *"complainers"* means *"complaining of one's lot, querulous (whining), discontented."* THAYER It appears that the word *"murmurers"* is more general – a continual state of mind. While *"complainers"* is more focused—i.e. (Num 21:5). Again, *"And there we saw the giants . . . we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."* (Num 13:33). And again, *"We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic. But now our soul is dried away"* (Num 11:5).

These teachers, if they ever knew it, had forgotten what was said of Israel: *"And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD"* (Num 11:1). In a prayer of David, He spoke of the blessing of the Lord, and declared his desire to experience it – a time when there would be *"no complaining in our streets"* (Psa 144:14).

These complaining teachers were obviously not heralding the Gospel with any kind of consistency. They had also failed to associate living with God, *"with whom we have to do"* (Heb 4:13). We are taught to conduct our lives so that, instead of being *"complainers,"* we will be *"content with such things as we have"* (Heb 13:5), for *"godliness with contentment is great gain"* (1 Tim 6:6).

In a nutshell, so to speak, these false teachers were nailing people's minds to the earth – teaching them to be discontent when things were not meeting their fleshly expectations, and murmuring when it seemed as though the Lord was expecting too much from them, or had treated them unfairly. This kind of mindset is still very real, and needs to be crucified.

## **WALKING AFTER THEIR OWN LUSTS**

1:16b ***"...walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words..."***

We must always view this text with a recollection that these men did not appear to be what Jude says they were. The traits that he mentions were not apparent – in fact, that is why he mentions them. These men could never have been able to creep in “unawares” if what they really were was obvious to the people. Of course, the inability of the people to detect them was because they had not been earnestly contending for the faith. They were simply too casual about living, and that is a condition that is always exploited by the devil. It is also a circumstance that gives the scepter to the flesh, and license to operate freely to “*the old man.*” This does not necessarily mean the people were really never born again. Assuming that they were really “*baptized into Christ*” (Gal 3:27), they came into the “*house*” (Heb 3:6), and straightway went to sleep. It ought to be noted that there is an approach to religion that promotes sleeping.

**WALKING.** This term comes from a word meaning “to take one's way, betake oneself, set out, depart . . . to pursue the journey on which one has entered, continue one's journey . . . to enter upon a journey . . . to seek . . . to lead or order one's life . . . to follow one's moral preference.”<sup>THAYER</sup> This refers to how a person chooses to live. From a more narrow perspective, it has to do with making progress to a certain eternal destination – one of only two ways: the way that is “*narrow,*” and the other “*broad.*” The “*narrow*” way leads to, and concludes in “*life,*” while the “*broad*” way leads to, and concludes in, “*destruction*” (Matt 7:13-14). One of these two roads has been the main course for every person who has ever lived. One of them is presently occupied by every person who is living. One of them will be the fundamental course for every one who will ever live in the future. Every person must, and will, travel one of these two roads, and the road they are on when they leave the world will determine their eternal destiny.

**AFTER THEIR OWN LUSTS.** The false teachers to whom Jude refers were living in a manner that was not obvious to the undiscerning. They were wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt 7:15), who were taking life from the people. How does Jude say they were living? It was “*after their own lusts,*” or “*their own evil desires,*”<sup>NIV</sup> or “*their own passions.*”<sup>NRSV</sup> They were not living to “*please God*” (1 Thess 4:1), but to please themselves. They were not “*doing the will of God from the heart*” (Eph 6:6), but doing their own will. Like the Pharisees they were like “*whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness*” (Matt 23:27).

They were not following God's revealed agenda, but their own. They considered themselves to be the king, not Jesus. For them, their will was the predominate will, and their purpose was the principle purpose. How can such men rise to prominence in the Christian world, whether during the time of Jude, or during our own time? It is not government that causes the jeopardy, but those whose love waxes “*cold*” (Matt 24:12), who “*depart from the faith*” (1 Tim 4:1), “*mind earthly things*” (Phil 3:19), and set their gaze on “*things that are seen,*” which “*are temporal*” (2 Cor 4:18). Every casual and uncommitted “*Christian*” is a living invitation to false religious teachers, charlatans, and those who live according to their own lusts.

Here were teachers that imposed their fleshly mind upon a lazy and unsuspecting church. They promoted themselves and their programs because that is the way they were. That is their nature, and they will be condemned for it.

**THEIR MOUTH SPEAKETH GREAT SWELLING WORDS.** Other versions read, “*arrogantly,*”<sup>NASB</sup> “*boast about themselves,*”<sup>NIV</sup> “*bombastic [pompous, rhetorical, flowery] in speech,*”<sup>NRSV</sup> “*high sounding,*”<sup>BEBE</sup> “*brag loudly about themselves,*”<sup>NLT</sup> and “*loud-mouthed showoffs.*”<sup>LIVING</sup>

This is exactly the opposite of the manner in which Paul spoke: “*not with excellency of speech or wisdom*” (1 Cor 2:1), and “*not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect,*” (1 Cor 1:17). Flowery speech and the wisdom of men throw an obscuring cloak over the truth of God – whether it is philosophical, humorous, trendy, or accommodating the carnal bias of men. The truth cannot be riveted more firmly in the minds by employing the wisdom of men, trendy terms, humorous anecdotes, and sectarian phrases. This is because effective preaching and teaching is more owing to Divine influence than to human methodology. However, false teachers do not present a message that God can us, for He is a “*God of truth*” (Deut 32:4; Isa 65:16), and does not empower lies, or use them to persuade men of the truth.

The teachers to whom Jude refers were religious showman. Their speeches were

nothing more than performances, calculated to accomplish what they desired, and contribute to their fleshly satisfaction. There still remains a significant body of people who are described in this manner, *"they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears"* (2 Tim 4:3). That is what men will do when they do not earnestly contend for the faith. They will finally demand that their own desires are met.

### **HAVING MEN'S PERSONS IN ADMIRATION**

1:16C " . . . *having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.*"

Jude shows no mercy on these teachers. It is assumed that many, if not all of them, were exposed to Jude's letter. That is a circumstance that attended the writing of the epistles, as well as the messages of Jesus to the seven churches in Asia. That is why phrases such as the following are found in those written messages: *"among you"* (1 Cor 1:11; 3:3; 5:1; 11:18; 15:12; 2 Thess 3:11; James 4:1); *"thou hast them that hold"* (Rev 2:14,15). Sometimes there were specific people who were admonished in a general letter—i.e. *"I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord"* (Phil 4:2). It is not wise for those in Christ to be overly sensitive about what is said to and of them. We are to be considerate and kind to one another (Eph 4:32; Heb 10:24), but when danger rears its ugly head, forthright speech is demanded.

**HAVING MEN'S PERSONS IN ADMIRATION.** Other versions read, *"flattering people,"*<sup>NKJV</sup> *"showing respect of persons,"*<sup>ASV</sup> *"respecting men's position,"*<sup>BBE</sup> *"show partiality to people,"*<sup>CEB</sup> *"admiring persons,"*<sup>DARBY</sup> *"showing favoritism,"*<sup>ESV</sup> *"enchanting folks"*<sup>NET</sup> *"have men in great reverence,"*<sup>PNT</sup> *"they cultivate people."*<sup>GOODSPEED</sup>

Unfortunately, modern Christianity has proved to be an area where exploitation is very common. Through the first three centuries of the church, little was known of Christian careers and everything that goes with them. Shortly after Pentecost, there had been such displays of power in the church that those without a genuine interest in the Lord did not dare to join them, even though the people highly regarded the believers (Acts 5:12).

Having *"men's persons in admiration"* speaks of flattery, cajolery (influencing with pleasing words), wheedling (entice with soft words), and praising excessively.

Whereas in the service of God, praise is to be ascribed to Christ Jesus, and He is the One who is to be declared and pleased, those who have *"men's persons in admiration"* heap praise upon men, influencing them by appealing to the self-will that is resident in the flesh. Rather than appealing to humble people, they appeal to proud people, who tend to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. Sometimes these people have a voluntary humility, seeing themselves as very lowly, yet sorely wanting the praise of men. In a society where sports icons and entertainment wizards are held in high regard, more and more of these kind of people are surfacing. The world sees them as having "low self esteem." But that is not really what they want, and those who *"make merchandise"* of people (2 Pet 3:2) know it. They brag on them,. Tell them their rights, that God wants them to have their dreams fulfilled, and that they can really be somebody. It all sounds good enough, and some naive souls may really think this is a good work. But it is not, and Jude will tell his readers why. It is the MOTIVE behind this pretense.

**BECAUSE OF ADVANTAGE.** Other versions read, *"to gain advantage,"*<sup>NKJV</sup> *"for their own advantage,"*<sup>NIV</sup> *"in the hope of reward,"*<sup>BBE</sup> *"when they want a favor in return,"*<sup>CEB</sup> *"for the sake of profit,"*<sup>DARBY</sup> and *"so that they can get ahead."*<sup>IE</sup>

The Pharisees no doubt practiced this kind of thing when they devoured *"widows houses"* (Matt 23:14). Within the professed church there have been leaders who have sweet-talked young women, making them vulnerable, and then seducing them. In the world, this is a taught and practiced art. The same thing is being found in the church, but it is infinitely worse, because it is associated with the name of the Lord.

Peter says of these men, *"And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you"* (2 Pet 2:3). Preying on the weak and vulnerable is particularly reprehensible to the Lord. Therefore Peter adds, *"whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."* There are men who are unlawfully famous because of their supposed Christian work. They have vast religious empires, sell millions of books, and are independently wealthy. It is not because they have fed Christ's sheep, or

affirmed sound doctrine. Rather, they have furthered their career by human exploitation – making merchandise of the people.

Now, it has come to the point foretold by Paul. *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."* (2 Tim 4:3-4). The people who were themselves seduced by opportunists developed an appetite for the lie, thinking that God intended them to have their lusts gratified. So they hire and pay men who are expert in making them feel good about themselves, and that will assist them in sanctifying their desires, which have solely to do with life in this present evil world.

These men, having exploited people, had bought into *"supposing that gain is godliness."* Sound doctrine teaches us that this is not true. In fact, those who entertain this notion are described as *"men of corrupt minds, and **destitute of the truth**, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."* (1 Tim 6:5). They have no truth, being *"destitute, or "deprived"<sup>NASB</sup> and "bereft"<sup>NRSV</sup>* of it. That is, God will not allow men of this caliber to even have the truth. It is not that they are simply wrong about a few things, but have a good basic message. They have no truth. They are Satan's ministers (2 Cor 11:5). This is serious business!

# COMMENTARY ON JUDE

## LESSON NUMBER 13

***“But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; <sup>18</sup> How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. <sup>19</sup> These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.” .....(Jude 1:17-19)***

### REMEMBER THE WORDS OF THE APOSTLES

#### INTRODUCTION

Jude writes as one who has an intense interest in the welfare of the saints. He had given all diligence, because of a burning desire, to write to them of *“the common salvation,”* delineating its magnitude, many aspects, and effectuality. However, he was also interested enough in them to know of their spiritual status – the kind of awareness that is exceedingly rare in these days of a great falling away. It is difficult, if not impossible, to have an effective sustained ministry among a people of whom the teacher has little comprehension. When Paul, Peter, John, and James wrote to people. They were always keenly aware of their spiritual status. They knew what had to be accented, buttressed, and even exposed. They were aware of any other dangerous teachings to which the people had been exposed, and they would deal with those teachings, and those who taught them, exposing them with accuracy and certainty. It is apparent that those were different days, with differing values, and significantly different objectives. Institutionalism, because of its weakness and effects, has changed the playing field, and the change was already commencing in Jude’s day, long before the end of the first century. This is something that those who seek to restore the 1<sup>st</sup> century church do not perceive as they should. Long before the second century commenced, significant inroads had been made in some churches: Corinth (2 Cor 11:4), Galatia (Gal 1:6), Jewish Christians (Hebrews [Heb 5:12] and James [James 4:4]), Ephesus (Rev 2:4-5), Pergamos (Rev 2:14–16), Thyatira (Rev 2:20-23), Sardis (Rev 3:1-2), and Laodicea (Rev 3:15-18). The church in Colossae was encountering corrupting influences (Col 2:8). During those early days, holy men saw the circumstances and addressed them, making impersonal conditions their business because of their care for the churches. Today, there is a need for such people!

### REMEMBER THE WORDS OF THE APOSTLES

Jude 1:17 ***“But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.”***

**BELOVED.** Other versions read, *“dear friends,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“my loved ones,”*<sup>BBE</sup> *“dearly beloved”*<sup>DOUAY</sup> and *“my dear friends.”*<sup>NLT</sup>

I do not care for the translation *“friends.”* There is a Greek word for “friend” (philos), and it means “associate, neighbor, or friend”<sup>THAYER</sup> (Lk 11:5; John 15:13-14; Acts 10:34; James 2:23). However, that is not the word used here. Here the Greek word is “agapetos,” meaning “beloved, esteemed, dear, favorite.”<sup>THAYER</sup> Jude is not addressing mere acquaintances, or even associates, but those who are in Christ, and he loves them as Jesus’ brethren. He does not write to them as a critic, but as one who prefers them. He is not writing as a judge, but as a *“nurse,”* as Paul would put it (1 Thess 2:7). He does not write as a mere neighbor, but as a member of the same family.

**REMEMBER.** The *“remember”* factor of preaching is fading in our time. Preachers and teachers have learned to accent the present, with a near-total lack of recollection of the past. However, when there is a decline, we must reach back into the past, when the decline was not

present. Present times must be compared to former times, people, and places that were better. If we are riding on the spiritual crest of a wave of blessing, we must reach back into the past and recall those who fell, like Adam, Eve, Cain, and even Israel. Not a few religious people equate the past with archaic, antiquated, and obsolete. But that is only because men estimate that change is always upward. The shout must ring out over the Christian world: **“REMEMBER!”** Men must not, like the rich man, be ushered into eternity before they hear that word – *“remember!”* (Lk 16:25).

**THE WORDS WHICH WERE SPOKEN.** Note: Jude does not admonish the people to remember a time, but to remember words that were spoken. He does not refer to a sight, but the sound of words. He does not accent the eyes, but the ears. How often the saints are awakened by the remembrance of words, and stirred to renewed devotion and fervor! Joshua admonished Israel, *“Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you”* (Josh 1:13). Jesus said to His disciples, *“Remember the word I said unto you”* (John 15:20). Paul told the elders of Ephesus, *“Remember the words of the Lord Jesus”* (Acts 20:35).

There are some words that carry more weight by virtue of the ones who spoke them. For example, the words of Jesus and the apostles outweigh the words of our contemporaries. Others have especial significance because of the light they shed on the present situation. For example, a Psalm of praise is not appropriate for someone who has been lured back into sin. And, a word of judgment is not appropriate for one who soaring on the wings of faith, and has the keen eye of an eagle concerning spiritual things.

There is such a thing as *“words fitly spoken,” “in right circumstances,”* <sup>NASB</sup> *“aptly spoken,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“at the right time,”* <sup>BEBE</sup> *“appropriately spoken,”* <sup>CJB</sup> or *“skillfully spoken.”* <sup>NET</sup> The more foundational or certain the words are, the broader the range of their applicability.

**THE APOSTLES OF OUR LORD JESUS.** The words to which Jude calls their attention are those sent out personally by Jesus to represent Him –men to whom the Holy Spirit would recall and illuminate the words of the Savior. These men would be used by God to establish the doctrine, or core-teaching, relating to the eternal purpose of God as realized in Christ Jesus. Their teaching was the body of truth in which the early church *“continued”* (Acts 2:42). Their words did not obviate the words of Moses and the Prophets, but opened up and expounded what they said and saw. The apostles’ words are the proper context in which the rest of the Scriptures are seen. That is because the fulness of God’s intentions was not revealed to the Prophets. They were given an introduction, so to speak, to what would take place after their lives had been completed. They were given enough to enable the people of God to recognize the Messiah, but not enough to understand as God intended, what He was going to accomplish and mediate.

Notice that Jude does not say, *“Remember what Solomon said.”* Or, *“Remember what Gamaliel said.”* Understand, it is not that these, and others, spoke no truth at all. However, none of them in the past foretold what Jude is now going to bring to their attention. The falling away of the Gentiles, and the rise of false prophets in the church were not foretold by Moses, Samuel, or any of the prophets. In fact, they provided no explicit exposition of the church, or body of Christ. They only were given limited allusions to the body of the saved.

The situation that had arisen could not be adequately addressed by the message of the Prophets. They needed the words of the apostles who were given special insights concerning the circumstances that would arise after the Seed of David took the throne.

It seems to me that the nominal church does not have a high regard for *“the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Jude will focus on something particular that was spoken by the apostles. However, none of their teaching was only to a particular area or time. Their teaching is intended for all of the church during all of time. What they declared about Jesus and the life that is in Him is to be declared throughout history.

## **THEY TOLD YOU THERE SHOULD BE MOCKERS**

<sup>1:18</sup> *“How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.”*

It is my persuasion that the apostles, chosen and empowered by Christ to be His unique messengers, proclaimed every essential doctrine, and addressed every legitimate concern. As the foundation-layers, this is essential. It also means that they addressed and clarified everything regarding salvation and all that is entailed from its initial experience until it is completed. That is

required for an apostle. Further, the value and extent of participation in legitimate preaching and teaching is directly proportionate to a person's comprehension and persuasion of these realities. This is the role in which Jude is writing this epistle.

**THEY TOLD YOU.** Other versions read, "*were saying*,"<sup>NASB</sup> and "*said*."<sup>NIV</sup> The words "*were saying*" and "*said*" are too weak. As used here, the word translated "*told*" means "equivalent to, to asseverate [assert], affirm, aver [swear], maintains."<sup>THAYER</sup> What the apostles spoke involved more than merely saying something, although something was said. This was the relating of a prophecy, something that had been revealed to them, and was fixed in the future. They were not giving their opinion, or what they thought might happen. Further, they were conducting themselves as faithful stewards and servants of the Lord in declaring what follows. Men, in using words that are of lesser weight, gradually cause men's minds to think in a more shallow and unprofitable way. Neither the Lord Jesus nor the apostles spoke in this way.

**THERE SHOULD BE.** Other versions read, "*shall be*,"<sup>NASB</sup> "*will be*,"<sup>NIV</sup> "*will come*."<sup>CEB</sup> This is not a form of reasoning like saying, "If things continue the way there are, here is what will happen." This is a prophecy, something that would surely happen. It can mean it would be a judgment for the lethargic manner of the church, but that is not the point Jude is making. Jude is saying the people to whom he is writing had already taken a direction leading to that end.

**This exposes the fallaciousness of modern views of contemporary relevance.** Deluded people think that everything should revolve around the "now," which is destined to pass away. Godly people are persuaded everything should revolve around the future, and the past words that have been spoken about it. Jude tells the people to think of something said in the past, to assist them in living in the present.

**MOCKERS.** Other versions read, "*scoffers*,"<sup>NIV</sup> "*make sport*,"<sup>BBE</sup> "*ridicule*,"<sup>GWN</sup> "*beguilers*,"<sup>PNT</sup> "*make fun of you*,"<sup>IE</sup> "*making fun of God*,"<sup>CEV</sup> "*laugh at God*,"<sup>ERV</sup> and "*who don't take these things seriously anymore. They'll treat them like a joke*."<sup>MESSAGE</sup>

The word "*mock*" means "to treat with contempt or ridicule."<sup>MERRIAM-WEBSTER</sup> Think of it as ridiculing those who insist on holiness, or who depict God as intolerant of sin, or who easily excuse sin, and scoff at those who do not look, act, and speak as the world. There is, within the professing church, an alarming absence of sobriety and sound thought in our day. Crassness and shady humor are altogether too common, and there is too much jesting about holy things.

**IN THE LAST TIME.** Other versions read, "*last times*,"<sup>NIV</sup> "*last days*,"<sup>BBE</sup> "*end time*,"<sup>CEB</sup> "*end of the time*,"<sup>DARBY</sup> "*final point of time*,"<sup>NJB</sup> and "*the last days (in the end time)*."<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

There are only three references to "*last days*" or "*last times*" in the Prophets (Is 2:2; Hos 3:5; Micah 4:1). None of them are used as Jude and the apostles use the term. In the Prophets it had to do with the induction of the New Covenant, and the salvation of the Jews. Joel used the word "afterward" (Joel 2:28), which prophecy Peter, in keeping with the Prophet's usage, referred to as "*the last days*" of the Jewish economy, and the commencement of the day of salvation.

As Jude uses the term, the "*last days*" refers to the closing period of time and "*the day of salvation*." He is telling his readers that there were men among them who had the damning kind of influence that would be prominent in the closing period of time. In other words, by listening to such men, they were in the process of going backward – retreating from the Lord, and distancing themselves from the blessing. Just as "the antichrist" is preceded by "*many antichrists*" (1 John 2:18), so the great deceivers of the end time are preceded by men like those Jude is exposing. Corruption crept in slowly and unobtrusively: first Judas (Acts 1:25), then Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5), then Judaizers (Acts 15:1; Gal 6:12), then those who left the apostles and elders (1 John 2:19), then men like Diotrephes (3 John 1:9), etc.

**WHO SHOULD WALK AFTER THEIR OWN UNGODLY LUSTS.** Other versions read, "*ungodly desires*,"<sup>NIV</sup> "*ungodly passions*,"<sup>RSV</sup> "*evil desires*,"<sup>BBE</sup> "*godless passions*,"<sup>CJB</sup> and "*desires of impieties*."<sup>YLT</sup> These are desires and ambitions in which the Divine nature are not found. They are desires that are unlike God, and that do not blend with His purpose. They center in the individual rather than in the Lord Jesus Christ. Rather than pursuing Jesus, they are engaging in their own preferences and aspirations.

If you were to combine and add up health and wealth, fulfilling your dreams, and answering one's problems, they would sum up to one's "*own lusts*." "Self-life" is the contemporary summation of "*ungodly lusts*." Godliness, at its expressive root, is the denial of self (Matt 16:24).

## THE TRUE CHARACTER OF FALSE TEACHERS

1:19 ***"These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit."***

Moved along by the Holy Spirit, Jude is identifying the character of the men who had "crept in unawares" among the people. Thus far he has said:

They "were of old ordained to condemnation.  
Were ungodly.  
Turned the grace of God into lasciviousness.  
Denied the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.  
Were filthy dreamers defiling the flesh.  
Despise dominion.  
Speak evil of things they do not know.  
Corrupt themselves in the things they know naturally.  
Speak evil of dignities.  
Spoke evil of things they did not understand.  
Gone in the way of Cain.  
Ran greedily after the error of Balaam.  
Perished in the gainsaying of Core.  
Were spots in their feasts.  
Feeding themselves with fear.  
Were clouds without water.  
Trees whose fruit withereth.  
Without fruit.  
Twice dead, plucked up by the roots.  
Raging waves of the sea.  
Foaming out their own shame.  
Were wandering stars.  
Were murmurers.  
Were complainers.  
Walking after their own lusts.  
Speaking great swelling words.  
Having men's persons in admiration.

**THESE BE THEY.** Already Jude has mentioned twenty-seven traits of these men, who crept in among the people "*unawares*" – and yet, he has more to say. This is not a mere rant, but is a revelation of the kind of people his readers had not detected, and were allowing among them.

**WHO SEPARATE THEMSELVES.** Other versions read, "*who cause divisions,*" <sup>NKJV</sup> "*who divide you,*" <sup>NIV</sup> "*set up divisions,*" <sup>RSV</sup> "*make separations,*" <sup>ASV</sup> "*create divisions,*" <sup>CJB</sup> "*set themselves apart,*" <sup>DARBY</sup> and "*makers of sects.*" <sup>PNT</sup>

This was the same problem that arose in Corinth, and Paul severely chastised them for it (1 Cor 1:10-11; 3:3; 11:18). In Corinth, their divisions had even voided their participation in the Lord's Table (1 Cor 11:20). Paul exhorted the brethren in Rome to "*mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them*" (Rom 16:17). The brethren to whom Jude had not done this, so Jude is "*marking*" these men for them.

**SENSUAL.** Other versions read, "*worldly-minded,*" <sup>NASB</sup> "*follow natural instincts,*" <sup>NIV</sup> "*worldly people,*" <sup>NRSV</sup> "*natural men,*" <sup>BBE</sup> "*controlled by their impulses,*" <sup>CJB</sup> "*unbelievers,*" <sup>CSB</sup> "*live on the natural plane,*" <sup>NAB</sup> "*fleshly,*" <sup>TNT</sup> "*mere animals,*" <sup>WILLIAMS</sup> and "*merely sensual [creatures, carnal, worldly-minded people].*" <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

"*Sensual*" is the antithesis of spiritual. It is living "*after the flesh,*" without any recourse to the things of the Spirit. Their sole reason for living is what can only be experienced in "*this present evil world*" (Gal 1:4). All of their desires have to do with things and experiences pertaining to the body of flesh and blood. Instead of ruling their body (1 Cor 9:27), their body rules them. Instead of subduing "*fleshly lusts that war against the soul*" (1 Pet 2:11), they nurture and culture those lusts. I am astounded at how much professed Christianity is "*sensual*" – pertaining only to life in this world, and totality without regard for heaven, glory, Divine approval, the day of judgment, an eternal inheritance, reigning with Jesus, etc.

**HAVING NOT THE SPIRIT.** Other versions read, “devoid of the Spirit,”<sup>NASB</sup> “do not have the Spirit,”<sup>NIV</sup> “controlled by their impulses, because they don’t have the Spirit,”<sup>CJB</sup> “do not possess the Spirit,”<sup>NJB</sup> “do not have God’s Spirit in them,”<sup>NLT</sup> “do not have the Holy Spirit living in them,”<sup>LIVING</sup> “wholly unspiritual,”<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> “destitute of any spiritual nature,”<sup>WILLIAMS</sup> and “devoid of the [Holy] Spirit and destitute of any higher spiritual life.”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

These teachers were not without the Spirit because they are sensual, or carnal, but they were sensual because they did not have the Holy Spirit. Some would be afraid of making such a statement, but Jude was not. He knew that the Holy Spirit would never lead any person into the area these teachers occupied. The Spirit would never cause what they had caused. He would never lead a person to exalt themselves, follow their fleshly desires, or cause divisions in the church. There is a person who does cause these things, and those who implement his intentions are his servants and ministers (2 Cor 11:15).

It is imperative that the churches have zero-tolerance for the kind of persons Jude has described. Such people are known by their fruit, and by the effect of their preaching and teaching on those who accept and embrace it. Jude represents the kind of person Jesus, the Head of the church, sends with a message to churches that are in a backward stance. Those He sends will have a burden for the churches, a hatred for iniquity, a love for the truth, and spiritual insight.

# COMMENTARY ON JUDE

## LESSON NUMBER 14

***“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.”***

.....(Jude 1:20)

### **BUT YE, BELOVED ...**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Paul said part of the afflictions, or sufferings, that he endured was *“the care of all the churches”* – not the care of all the lost, but the care of all the churches (2 Cor 11:28). It is not that the apostle did not have any concern for those outside of Christ, for *“his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city of Athens] wholly given to idolatry”* (Acts 17:16). However, to my knowledge, he never expressed unusual concern for heathen cities and nations. Although Rome was filled with all manner of immorality, vice, and even idolatry, he longed to go there in preach the Gospel among the saints (Rom 1:15). When Paul began extensive traveling he said to Barnabas, *“Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do”* (Acts 15:36). A point of significance in those early times was when *“the churches had rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied”* (Acts 9:31). A significant effort was put forth in *“confirming the churches”* (Acts 15:41), and when the churches were *“established in the faith, and increased in number daily”* (Acts 16:5). This priority is also reflected in all of the apostolic writings. Why was this so? This mindset is almost totally absent in the activity (what little there is) in the “church-world” of our day.

While it is important to exercise some caution here, I do believe I know why this difference existed. The apostles and other inspired men who wrote knew the power of the Gospel (Rom 1:16) – power to both sinner and saint. They also knew that its power is accented by lives that *“adorn the doctrine”* (Tit 2:10) – how that Christ works powerfully through sanctified lives. Paul stated it this way, *“Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you”* (1 Cor 1:6) – not just that it was confirmed to the people in whom He dwelt, but also those who witnessed the evidence of it by what the people said (1 Cor 14:25). An unholy church will never be able to do the work of God, or to effectively influence the world. Further, the church’s objective is not to reach the world for Christ, but to walk before God as *“dear children”* (Eph 5:1). Only then will it have influence with men.

#### **BUT ...**

Jude 1:20A *“But . . .”* <sup>YLT</sup> *“Other versions read, “and,”* <sup>INTERLINEAR</sup> *and “Yet.”* Grammatically speaking, the word translated *“but”* is “a primary particle (adversative [expressing antithesis, opposition] or continuative [expressing continuity or continuation]).” As a unit of speech, a “particle” is “a preposition, or conjunction) expressing some general aspect of meaning or some connective or limiting relation.” <sup>MERRIAM-WEBSTER</sup>

This small word, in a nutshell, is saying that while these false teachers were conducting themselves in full accord with their depraved nature, the people of God, **by marked contrast**, were to be found absolutely faithful to the Lord, maintaining their faith, growing up into Christ, and living in a state of total yieldedness to the Lord. **Their thinking and their lives must NOT be evil-affected by the off-centeredness of these ungodly men.** They themselves are to be a living and stark contrast.

The truth of the matter is that spiritual growth and advance is always maintained in an

environment of hostility and opposition. This is expected while we walk among men in general. However, when that hostility is brought into the church, especially in the form of doctrine, or aberrant theological positions, the determination of the saints must be accelerated, and all forms of mediocrity and indifference thrown down to the ground. If this is not done, faith will cease, and the truth will be *"fallen in the street,"* and will *"fail"* (Isa 59:14-15).

The effects of indifference and dulness cannot be overstated. They disarm the soul, and open the door of the mind to considerations that are spawned in hell and perpetrated by demons. The loins of the mind must be *"girded up"* for sober, centered, and extended godly thought (1 Pet 1:13).

This had not taken place among those to whom Jude wrote – and there are still people like this today. As a result, these false teachers had crept in among them *"unawares"* (Jude 1:4), exerting the kind of influence that makes for retrogression instead of progress, and forgetfulness rather than remembrance. **That is a tragic circumstance, and where it exists, we must be cognizant of it.**

The same thing happened when Paul went up to Jerusalem. There were some *"false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out"* the *"liberty we have in Christ Jesus"* (Gal 2:4-5). By way of contrast, Paul did what Jude is admonishing these brethren to do: *"To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you"* (Gal 2:5).

Thus, Jude admonishes the saints to conduct themselves in contradiction to these false teachers. This is not a mere suggestion, or identifying a kind of higher form of discipleship that is not attainable to everyone in Christ Jesus. This has to do with maintaining our status in Christ, and not having faith, or confidence, in our beginnings rather than in Christ Jesus Himself.

Unusual defection must be matched by an unusual advance among the saints. When iniquity is abounding, rather than our love *"waxing cold,"* as it does with *"many"* (Matt 24:12), the saints are to *"abound more and more"* in walking and pleasing God (1 Thess 4:1). Their love must *"abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment"* (Phil 1:9). When Satan and the powers of darkness are launching aggressive initiatives, the people of God are to *"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil"* (Eph 5:15-16). Walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:25) is all the more critical; when we are exposed to flawed views of God and His will, and the improper assessments provided by religious men.

If, in the face of corrupt teaching, moral decline, and religious exploitation, there is not a consistent and evident advance in the people of God, there really is nothing else among men that can stem the tide of spreading iniquity. Many people have noted the wickedness of our times, but few have been able to trace it to the ineffectiveness of the modern church.

In Ephesus, we witness the sharp contrast between those who came in the name of Paul, and Paul himself. Seven who attempted to exorcize a demon. in the name of Paul, were overcome by the demon-possessed man, and they *"they fled out of that house naked and wounded"* (Acts 19:16). When this was *"known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus . . . fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified"* (Acts 19:17). They had made a comparison with the weakness of the sons of Sceva and the strength of the apostle Paul. As a result, *"many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed"* (Acts 19:19-20). While there were initiatives by those who did not believe, those initiatives were matched by the spiritual commitment and aggression of those who did believe.

This is the intention of Jude's admonition – to provide the kind of contrast God intends in this world. Salvation brings what the world cannot possibly give. The resources made available to the saints are vastly superior to anything the world has to offer. This is not simply something we talk about, for the Kingdom of God is not in mere words (1 Cor 4:20). O, that this was more evident to all who are in Christ Jesus! I am persuaded that we are beginning to see the magnitude of what is found in Christ Jesus. The maintenance of this indispensable view must be accompanied by a break with all mediocrity, and a attitude of pressing and obtaining.

## YE, BELOVED

1:20b " . . . ye, beloved . . ." Other versions read, "dear friends," NIV "my loved ones," BBE "dearly beloved," TNT and "dearly-loved friends." WEYMOUTH

The translation “*friends*” is wholly inappropriate, and reflects a lack of spiritual understanding that is far more serious than some imagine. Most of the later versions employ this term, which is nothing more than an accommodation to the flesh. In Scripture the word “*friend*” means “associate, companion, neighbor.” It describes an acquaintance by proximity. When Abraham is called “*the friend of God*” (2 Chron 20:7; James 2:23), it was because he (like Moses) was close to God and God spoke to him (Ex 33:11). It is important to note that God is not called Abraham’s friend, but Abraham is called His friend.

**THE DISTINCTION OF BROTHER LOVE.** By nature, men have the capacity to make friends, have close associates, and people whom they prefer. Judah had a friend who was an Adullamite (Gen 38:20). Certain Jews had made Blastus, “*the king’s chamberlain their friend*” in order to get close to Herod (Acts 12:20). This, however, is not the manner of brotherly love.

Within the body of Christ “*brotherly love*” involves “*preferring one another*” – forfeiting personal interests in order to bring benefit to the brethren (Rom 12:10). “*By love,*” we serve one another (Gal 5:13). The love of the brethren is necessarily preceded by having “*purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren,*” and is to be followed by “*loving one another with a pure heart fervently*” (1 Pet 1:22). Such a process by no means describes mere friendship.

Brotherly love is also the evidence that one has “*passed from death unto life*” – “*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death*” (1 John 3:14). Reasoning upon this magnificent love John writes, “*Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*” (1 John 3:16).

**GOD TEACHES US TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.** Establishing that loving the children of God is by no means an inclination springing from nature, Paul wrote to those who possessed this love, “*But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for **ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another***” (1 Thess 4:9). Other versions read, “*taught by God,*” <sup>NKJV</sup> “*have the teaching of God,*” <sup>BBE</sup> “*God has already taught you,*” <sup>CEB</sup> “*are taught by God,*” <sup>CSB</sup> “*have learned of God,*” <sup>DOUAY</sup> “*learnt from God*” <sup>NJB</sup> “*God himself has taught you*” <sup>NLT</sup> “*ye yourselves are God-taught*” <sup>YLT</sup> and “*you yourselves have been [personally] taught by God.*” <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

This teaching is marked by Divine discretion and effectiveness. Not everyone is so taught – only those who have “*ears to hear.*” **A person has to be in Christ to be so taught.** This is also one who is not quenching or grieving the Spirit (Eph 4:18; 1 Thess 5:9). It is a person who is walking and pleasing God (1 Thess 4:1). It is one who is not carnally minded (Rom 8:6), and is mortifying the deeds of the body (Rom 8:13-14). It is the person who is being effectively taught by the grace of God (Tit 2:11-13), has the commandments of Jesus and is keeping, or maintaining a hold on them (John 14:21-23), and is walking “*in the light*” (1 John 1:7). The person who is being “*taught by God*” is the one He has been “*received,*” who is not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, is “*separate,*” and not touching “*the unclean thing*” (2 Cor 6:17).

If all of that appears too difficult, exactly how would you go about substantiating that God would personally teach a person to love His people who cannot be so described? I will tell you that wherever the love of the brethren – Christ’s brethren (Matt 25:40) – is not found, God has not taught them to do so. Their proximity to Him is not close enough, and thus they must be taught extensively about loving the brethren – how that it is required, and is reasonable, and doable in Jesus. All of this is necessary because they are deficient in the categories mentioned above. Their lives cannot be summarized in the words “*living by faith*” (Heb 10:38), and “*walking in the Spirit*” (Gal 5:16,25), and therefore they are not growing up into Christ in all things (Eph 4:15). I am careful to say that we are not talking about damnation here – not unless these issues remain unresolved. There is, in my judgment, a monumental need for this understanding within the modern church. There simply is not enough evidence of God working in the people.

When, therefore, Jude says “*beloved,*” he is confessing that he has been taught by God to love these brethren. He has been living by faith and walking in the Spirit, and has therefore been able to be directed by God. He has a genuine interest in these brethren, forgoing his own preference of speaking of “*the common salvation*” in order to address their dangerous situation. It was not easy for him to write as he did, but it was necessary to do so.

His profound love for them is also revealed in the words he now addresses to them. He reasons the same way as Paul did in his letter to the Hebrews: “*But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak*” (Heb 6:9). It is as

though there was a faint flicker of life in his readers – like a smoking flax (Matt 12:20) that must be fanned into a flame. Blessed is the person who can receive such tender care.

## BUILDING AND PRAYING

1:20c " . . . **building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.**"

Jude now writes words that only the people of God can comprehend. In speaking in such a manner he is forcing a division in his readers (John 10:19). Some will have ears to hear (Rev 13:9), and some will not (Deut 29:4). Some will be able to believe, and some will not (Acts 28:24). Like a faithful steward, Jude will speak words that will make the necessary division. He will admonish the people to do something that only "*the children of God*" can do (1 John 3:10).

This is the manner of the Lord in addressing people. He will admonish or command them to do what only faith enables them, to do – like telling an impotent man to pick up his bed and walk (John 5:8). Inspired admonitions are not goals to be achieved, but things that must be done – and faith will respond appropriately. We must also take into account that in salvation the Holy Spirit is continually changing us into the image of Christ, from one increasing stage of glory to another (2 Cor 3:18) – and He will continue doing it if we do not quench Him (1 Thess 5:19).

**BUILDING UP YOURSELVES.** Other versions read, "*build yourselves up,*"<sup>NIV</sup> "*build each other*"<sup>CEB</sup> "*edify yourselves,*"<sup>GENEVA</sup> "*grow,*"<sup>GWN</sup> "*build up your lives ever more strongly,*"<sup>LIVING</sup> "*keep building,*"<sup>CEV</sup> "*build yourselves up even stronger,*"<sup>ERV</sup> "*continue to build,*"<sup>ISV</sup> "*carefully build yourselves,*"<sup>MESSAGE</sup> and *build yourselves up [founded] on your most holy faith [make progress, rise like an edifice higher and higher].*"<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Is this an admonition to individuals, or to brethren gathered together? The answer is, "both." Brethren cannot build up one another if they are not individually built up. Each believer is to build himself up so that he may be capable of building up other believers. I have noted over the years that too many people come in a weakened state to the assembly. However men seek to explain that circumstance, gathering together is to be preceded by proper preparation.

The word "*building*" is certainly a proper one. It speaks of a spiritual structure that is not yet finished, but is a work-in-progress. This applies both to the individual and to the "*body*" that meets together. The individual who is not engaged in the process of personal "*building*," perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Cor 7:1), adding to their faith (2 Pet 1:5-8), and growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet 3:18), will certainly not be able to build up anyone else. And, where this is not done as a body, there is no legitimate reason for meeting together. Every facet of spiritual life, individual and collective, is to contribute to spiritual progress – building up and growing up.

**ON YOUR MOST HOLY FAITH.** The experiential foundation on which we build is our faith – our "*most holy faith.*" Every version (48) I have reads "*most holy faith,*" with the following exceptions: "*our holy faith,*"<sup>LIVING</sup> "*your holy faith,*"<sup>IE</sup> "*most holy belief,*"<sup>ABP</sup> "*your most sacred faith.*"<sup>GNB</sup> A literal reading of the text is "*to the holiest of your belief on home-building.*"<sup>INTERLINEAR</sup>

The faith is "*most holy*" because of its origin. It "*came*" to us (Gal 3:23) through "*hearing*" (Rom 10:17). We "*obtained*" it from God (2 Pet 1:1), and was "*given*" to us (Gal 3:22; Phil 1:29).

This "*faith*" is not a body of doctrine, for it is said to be "*your most holy faith*" – and the doctrine is not said to be ours. Because he preached the doctrine, Paul referred to the Gospel as "*my doctrine*" (2 Tim 3:10). He did not own the doctrine. However, in this text, the "*faith*" is the faith we possess, and that is referred to as our own personal faith (Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 2:5; Eph 1:15; Col 1:4; 1 Thess 1:8; 1 Pet 1:7).

**What is built upon faith is compatible with it, strengthens it, and matures it.** The wisdom of this world is antithetical to faith, and therefore cannot strengthen or mature it. It is most unfortunate that many believers regularly hear things in the assembly that actually militates against and contradicts their faith. The unseen realities upon which they have fixed their gaze (2 Cor 4:18) are hidden beneath the fog of carnality when they gather together with professing believers. The end-result is that instead of being strengthened they are weakened; instead of being edified, they become more vulnerable to the devices of the wicked one (2 Cor 2:11).

**PRAYING IN THE HOLY GHOST.** Other versions read, "*pray in the Holy Spirit,*"<sup>NIV</sup> "*making prayers in the Holy Spirit*"<sup>BBE</sup> "*pray in union with the*"<sup>CJB</sup> "*with the Holy Spirit's help*"<sup>GWN</sup> "*through the Holy Spirit,*"<sup>MRD</sup> "*in the power of the Holy Spirit,*"<sup>NLT</sup> "*in the power and strength of the Holy Spirit,*"

LIVING “*with the Holy Spirit,*”<sup>IE</sup> and “*as the Holy Spirit helps you to pray.*”<sup>CEV</sup>

Some think that praying in the Spirit is praying in an unknown tongue. This cannot be so, because building up, or edification, comes through the understanding (1 Cor 14:14-16,19,20). Although understanding is critical in spiritual life (Eph 1:18; 5:17; Col 1:9; 2:2; 2 Tim 2:7; 1 John 5:20), speaking or hearing a message that is not understood can contribute nothing to the understanding.

Praying “*in the Holy Ghost*” is praying as He moves us, or praying in accord with what He has made known, or praying in harmony with the “*mind of the Spirit*” as it has been made known to us (Rom 8:27). It is not contradicting the Spirit, or seeking something with which the Spirit cannot join. It is a facet of walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:25). It is praying that can truly be prefaced by “*Abba, Father*” (Gal 4:6), and “*praying with all praying with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit*” (Eph 6:18). Such prayers must be comprehended, for they could not otherwise be distinguished from praise and thanks.

# COMMENTARY ON JUDE

## LESSON NUMBER 15

***“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” .....Jude 1:21)***

### **KEEPING YOURSELVES INTRODUCTION**

Having exposed the men who had crept in unawares among those to whom Jude writes, he now challenges them concerning the maintenance of the benefits they have received in Christ Jesus. Throughout history, this has proved to be rather difficult, for there has hardly been two consecutive generations of strong believers in the history of the world. Even though the resources delivered to the saints, or, perhaps, I should say made available to them, are fully adequate for them to remain faithful, and in a state of constant growth, such a phenomenon is exceedingly rare. It is as though the gravitational pull of the earth is too much for the kind of religion that is hawked and received by the masses. It appears as though professing Christians need all manner of spiritual crutches, canes, and walkers to keep them on their feet, and out of the pit. Of course, the modern clerics are quick to develop and market their aids, which are billed as capable of doing what needs to be done. In today's Christendom, Proverbs outranks Romans, and Jesus is not really seen as *“greater than Solomon”* (Matt 12:42). Yet, we must not despair. Jude is showing us the way out of the morass of spiritual lethargy and deadness. He speaks as one who knows the proper remedy. He had found the *“balm”* in Gilead, so to speak. What he will now require of these people is equivalent to rising from the dead, and taking up your bed and walking. He will not tell them to try do to this or that, or to make an attempt to follow a casual and friendly suggestion. This is about survival – about getting ready for the day of judgment – about preparing for eternity. What he will admonish the people to do **must** be done, because it **can** be done. This is part and parcel of God's *“so great salvation,”* and it must not be neglected (Heb 2:3). The people have to once again get on the strait and narrow way that leads to life (Matt 7:13-14). They have to get on *“the way of holiness”* that has been placed by God, and upon which men do not *“err”* (Isa 35:8). It will require all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength – and that is only our part. It will also involve the Spirit, who must not be grieved, and God, from whom we must not depart, and Jesus Christ, to whom we must cling with purpose of heart.

### **KEEP YOURSELVES**

Jude 1:21A ***“Keep yourselves in the love of God . . .”***

You can tell by the spiritual tone of this admonition that it is infinitely more than a suggestion or good advice. This is something that must be done.

**KEEP.** Other versions read, *“remain in,”* <sup>GWN</sup> *“keep yourselves safe,”* <sup>NLT</sup> *“Stay always within the boundaries,”* <sup>LIVING</sup> *“staying right at the center,”* <sup>MESSAGE</sup> and *“Guard and keep.”* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

As used here, the word *“keep”* means *“to attend to carefully, take care of, to guard; metaphor: to keep, one in the state in which he is, to observe, to reserve: to undergo something.”* <sup>THAYER</sup> It is like saying *“keep on the road,”* as compared with *“keep the book.”*

Keeping involves attentiveness, personal effort, alertness to danger, and a perception of where we should be. It has to do with maintaining a certain state or condition, sustaining, preserving it. Having been translated into the Kingdom of God's dear son (Col 1:13), **we are to stay there.** Having been raised up and made to sit together with Christ in heavenly places, **we are to stay there.** Jesus put it this way, *“abide in Me, and I in you”* (John 15:4). John wrote, *“abide in Him”* (1 John 2:28). That is the meaning of the keeping to which Jude refers.

**YOURSELVES.** Under the Law, men were admonished to *“keep all the words of this law and*

*these statutes, to do them*" (Deut 17:19). That has not become obsolete, but there is a higher form of keeping that is like a canopy over keeping the Law. How we are to *"keep ourselves!"* God has put us into Christ (1 Cor 1:30), **we are to stay there**. When we came into Christ, we also came into the domain of grace. Now we are to *"continue in the grace of God"* (Acts 13:43).

We do have an indispensable ministry to ourselves. We are to reckon ourselves to be dead to sin (Rom 6:11). We are to yield ourselves to God (Rom 6:13), and yield ourselves as obedient servants (Rom 6:16). We are to examine ourselves (2 Cor 13:5). When attempting to restore a person who has been overtaken in a fault, we are to consider ourselves, lest we be tempted (Gal 6:1). We are to submit ourselves to one another in the fear of the Lord (Eph 5:21). We are to know how to behave ourselves in the house of God (1 Tim 3:15), and exercise ourselves to godliness (1 Tim 4:7). It is necessary to keep ourselves pure (1 Tim 5:22), and humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord (James 4:10). We are to also keep ourselves from idols (1 John 5:21). **Thus, it is clear, that in Christ Jesus we have a solemn obligation to ourselves.**

**IN.** In this text, we are to keep ourselves IN something – to stay within the perimeter of a particular location. It is one in which God has placed us, but we must keep ourselves there, doing whatever is necessary to remain where we have been placed to the grace of God.

**THE LOVE OF GOD.** Here, the place in which we are to keep ourselves is *"the love of God."* We are not to assume we will always be remaining there, which means **there is a sense in which the experience of this love is conditional**. Other versions read, *"where God's love can reach and bless you,"* <sup>LIVING</sup> *"inside God's love,"* <sup>IE</sup> *"at the center of God's love,"* <sup>MESSAGE</sup> *keep in step with God's love."* <sup>CEV</sup> This is God's love **for us**, and involves being conscious of God's love, living in a lively awareness of it, and not allowing anything of self to overshadow it.

This is the love that is *"shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit"* (Rom 5:5). This may appear to contradict the statement that there is nothing that *"shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Rom 8:39). However, that is speaking about outside influence. Our text is speaking about within our persons. The longer a person is in Christ, the more fully he is to be immersed in the love of God, being more conscience of it, and enjoying more of its benefits. This is why Paul prayed for the Thessalonians, *"And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ"* (2 Thess 3:5). It is why Jesus said to His disciples, *"If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love"* (John 15:10). Presenting Himself as the pattern, the Lord Jesus said of Himself, *"I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love"* (John 15:10). That contradicts a considerable amount of modern teaching on the love of God. There is not a different rule for us!

Keeping ourselves in the love of God involves being *"followers of God as dear children"* (Eph 5:1). It includes knowing how we *"ought to walk and to please God"* (1 Thess 4:1). Paul put it this way to the Colossian brethren: *"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto **all pleasing**, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God"* (Col 1:10).

In our time, there has been an approach to the love of God that significantly contradicts this admonition. I do not doubt that a similar condition was found among those to whom Jude writes. If, for example, God's love for us is really unconditional, and no one can do anything to lessen that love, then exactly what is the meaning of this exhortation. Is it merely a matter of trying our best to reach this "goal?" **Does this not suggest there is jeopardy in not keeping ourselves in the love of God?** In fact, that is the whole reason for Jude leaving his original intent and addressing the impact of false teachers who had unawares crept in among them. Their presence had impacted the way they were living, which was anything but pleasing to the Lord. Does it really make no difference to God how we live, and whether or not we keep ourselves in His love? May the Lord deliver us from the temptation to imagine such a thing is true!

### **THE MERCY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**

1:21b " . . . **looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .** "

There is something to be done while we are keeping ourselves in the love of God. While we are *"in the love of God,"* we are not maintaining a sleeping or inactive posture. While we are safe from the wiles of the devil, and cannot by any external influence be separated from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, there is more to spiritual life than safety. Actually, our safety and protection frees us up to engage in higher pursuits that include fellowship with Jesus (1 Cor 1:9), growing up into Christ (Eph 4:15), and perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Cor 7:1). Now Jude reminds

us that our anticipation is to be strengthened, and expectancy honed to a fine edge. We are still in the world, although we are not of it (John 15:19). The reason for salvation, ultimately speaking, is not in order that we might have the good life here, being victorious and enjoying blessings from the Lord. The ultimate objectives will be fulfilled **after** the passing of the heavens and the earth, **after** the resurrection of the dead, and **after** the day of judgment. That is the reason for the words that follow.

**LOOKING FOR.** Other versions read, “*waiting anxiously for,*”<sup>NASB</sup> “*look forward to,*”<sup>NRSV</sup> “*while anticipating,*”<sup>NET</sup> “*await,*”<sup>NLT</sup> “*waiting patiently,*”<sup>LIVING</sup> “*looking forward to,*”<sup>LEB</sup> “*keeping your arms open and outstretched, ready,*”<sup>MESSAGE</sup> and “*expect and patiently wait for.*”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Right here we are confronted with something that is rarely found among professing believers – an earnest expectation of better things. It only takes something that diverts your emphasis to something on the earth to cause the fire of expectation to go out. Let us say a person is caught up in national reform, or focusing on some situation that needs correction. It is possible for such a thing to pin your head to the earth, so that you cease looking forward in joyful hope. We do need to know what is going on around us, but it is even more necessary to know what is ahead for us. But we will find that this word has some rather profound implications.

**THE MERCY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.** We are often told to look for the coming of the Lord (Phil 3:20; Tit 2:13; Heb 9:28; 2 Pet 3:12-14). But here, we are admonished to look for “*mercy.*” Ultimately, this relates to the coming of the Lord and “*the grace that is to be brought to us*” at that time (1 Pet 1:13). However, I am not sure that is the particular focus of this text. It rather appears to me that “*the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ*” is needed to keep ourselves in the love of God. This is mercy that is revealed through His intercession (Heb 7:25), mediation of the New Covenant (Heb 12:24), shepherding (He 13:20), and teaching (1 John 5:20).

If we will look with penetrating faith at the circumstances around us, as gloomy as they may appear, the “*mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ*” can be seen. It will be seen in the fact that we have not been consumed (Lam 3:22). It can be seen in those who have not bowed the knee to the idols of this world (Rom 11:4). It can be seen in those souls who fear the Lord and speak often with one another (Mal 3:16-17). Look hard, and you will see that the saints are being “*kept by the power of God through faith*” (1 Pet 1:5). See that “*no man*” has been able to pluck you out of the hand of Jesus, and the hand of His Father (John 10:28-29). Know that by mercy iniquity is purged (Prov 16:6), and by it truth preserves us (Prov 20:28). The preservation of His remnant is according to His mercy (Mic 7:18).

Here, however, mercy is associated with “*our Lord Jesus Christ.*” That is because He is the Administrator of the Kingdom. The dispensing of mercy is His prerogative, and He sends it where He wills, without any effective opposition. We are categorically told that mercy is sent to us “*from God and Father AND Jesus Christ our Lord*” (1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2; Tit 1:4; 2 John 1:3). God sends this mercy through Jesus Christ. Even the Psalmist knew about the sending of mercy: “*God shall send forth His mercy and His truth*” (Psa 57:3).

Now Jude admonishes us to “*look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Look for mercy like some in Jerusalem “*looked for redemption*” (Lk 2:38). Those people knew the times were bad. There was not a lot of faith among the Jews, and the traditions of men had upstaged the word of the Lord. Holy people have always lamented such conditions (Ezek 9:4). But over and above the lamentations, they “*looked for mercy.*” God had promised it, and revealed that He was disposed to give it, and they looked for it.

Today, in the midst of a great falling away, national moral decline, political corruption, threats of war, and growing violence, there is a choice to be made. Will we focus our attention on these things which God hates, or will we “*look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” This is wholly relevant to our text, for if we are to keep ourselves in the love God we will have to do more than lament. We will have to look also – looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. We look for it in expectation of finding it – both now and when our Lord comes again. We believers cannot afford to be pessimistic about this, or just shout about corruption. We must keep ourselves in the love of God in the midst of all of this corruption. Look, brethren, look! Look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. Look for plenteous measures of it now, and in supra-abundance when the Lord descends to conclude the reign of corruption and take us to glory.

1:21C " . . . **unto eternal life.**" Other versions read, "to eternal life,"<sup>NASB</sup> "looking for life eternal through the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ,"<sup>BBE</sup> "who will give you eternal life,"<sup>CEB</sup> "the mercy that leads to eternal life,"<sup>CJB</sup> "for eternal life"<sup>CSB</sup> "to give you eternal life"<sup>GWN</sup> "that brings eternal life,"<sup>NET</sup> "to life age-during,"<sup>YLT</sup> "which will result in the Life of the Ages,"<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> "which ends in life eternal,"<sup>MONTGOMERY</sup> and "which will bring you] unto life eternal."<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

**UNTO.** As used in Scripture, this word means "into, towards, or for."<sup>THAYER</sup> This is the objective that will be met by "the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ," for which we are to look.

We believers are to be noted for strength and soundness of thought. Our text provides a sterling example of this necessity. It tells us WHY we look for mercy. The Spirit does not leave it up to us to establish the purpose for mercy, or to decipher by human understanding the particular utility of Divine mercy. He will tell us how to think about this matter.

**ETERNAL LIFE.** This is the intent for which mercy is given – it is to move us toward, and bring us into, "eternal life." That is the ONLY way we can keep ourselves in the love of God. The New Living Translation does well with this text: "and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God's love." The insightful diagnosis of evil will not do this for you. It is not that such a diagnosis is wrong, but that more is needed than that if you are to survive. It is possible to live with a compelling desire to get out of this world, and out of this "vile body." However, as a child of God, that is not enough, for both of those will eventually happen to everyone. The thing that must drive us is the desire to inhabit our house from heaven, the resurrection body (2 Cor 5:1), and be "ever with the Lord" (1 Thess 4:17-18). Then, and only then, will the fulness of eternal life be experienced.

**WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE?** Jesus defined it this way: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3). John wrote much the same thing: "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, **that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life**" (1 John 5:20).

Eternal life, then, is not simply living forever, or never dying. Longevity is not the point of eternal life, even though it is an aspect of it. Eternal life actually has more to do with what a person is experiencing. It begins now – in time – where it is emphatically declared that we have eternal life, and can know it (1 John 5:13). However, as long as we are in this world, we require "the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ" to enjoy the firstfruits of eternal life now, and the fullness of it in the world to come.

Knowing God involves understanding Him and His ways. That is the purpose for the tutelage of Jesus – to give us "an understanding that we may know Him." When Paul indicted the Corinthians for having some among them that did not know God, or "have not the knowledge of God" (1 Cor 15:34), he was showing them the root of all of the moral failures, divisions, and their condemning manners at the Table of the Lord. Sin is always the result of not understanding God – lacking a cognition of His manners. This is not merely academic understanding, or knowing what the Bible says about God. There certainly is nothing wrong with that, but you can be a scribe, Pharisee, or Sadducee and possess that kind of knowledge.

Knowing God means you can walk with Him, for you will be in agreement with Him (Amos 3:3) – no doubt, no questioning of His Word, and no disagreement with Him. This will mean that our lives are not at variance with Him. We will not accent the wrong things, or be forgetful of the main things. The man or woman of God not only knows what is wrong, they know why it is wrong, and avoid doing what is wrong. More than that, they know what is right, and why it is right, and live in the truth they know.

The point that Jude is making – and it is a most powerful one – is that **nothing is more important that keeping oneself in the love of God** –not keeping others in that love, but keeping oneself in it. If that is not done, all other knowledge and accomplishments count for nothing. However, in order to keep ourselves in the love of God, we must "look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ." We must not assume it will simply come to us, we must look for it, anticipate it, and expect it, so that when it is sent, we will know it. Once we recognize the mercy, we will confess with Jacob, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant" (Gen 32:10). But the recognition of that mercy will spark a thankful spirit, a dependence upon God, and a firm resolve to remain in His favor – walking as a dear child. You will readily confess with Paul, "I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I

*press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"* (Phil 3:13-14). In so doing, you will be keeping yourself in the love of God, continuing to look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus, and progressing to the fulness of eternal life that will be experienced in *"the world to come"* (Mk 10:30). Know that the exhortation with which we have dealt is intended to be our ongoing posture in life.

# COMMENTARY ON JUDE

## LESSON NUMBER 16

***“And of some have compassion, making a difference: <sup>22</sup> And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.”***

.....Jude 1:22-23)

### **MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Having admonished us to keep ourselves in the Love of God, looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, Jude now addresses the matter of our involvement with other people – particularly those who are living in sin and headed for sure condemnation. Most professing Christians are aware of this kind of activity, but Jude will add a dimension of instruction that is not at all common – in fact, it is largely unknown in the professing church. Jude will teach us that as long as we are in this world, we cannot be reckless or thoughtless in our involvements with sinners. We have been gloriously “*delivered from the Law*” (Rom 7:6), “*this present evil world*” (Gal 1:4), “*the power of darkness*” (Col 1:13), and “*the wrath to come*” (1 Thess 1:10). The Son of God has made us “*free indeed*” (John 8:36), and God has “*quicken*ed,” or made alive, we who were “*dead in trespasses and sins*” (Eph 2:1-5). He that is in us is greater than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4). A “*way of escape*” accompanies every temptation that reaches us (1 Cor 12:13). The naive may imagine that we are impervious to any and all danger, and therefore they may live recklessly, exposing themselves to danger with which they cannot cope. Jude will show us that this is a way of thinking that must be avoided. We are not wholly saved yet! We have a body that is nailed solidly to the earth, having dangerous appetites. We also have “*the old man*,” which cries out for our attention. There is also “*another law*” in our members, or resident in our bodies, that is warring against the law of our minds (Rom 7:23). There are “*fleshly lusts which war against the soul*” (1 Pet 2:11), and “*ungodliness and worldly lusts that must be rejected*” (Tit 2:11). We cannot afford to ignore these liabilities as though they did not exist. This calls for vigilance (1 Pet 5:8), watchfulness (Rev 3:2), and soberness (1 Pet 1:13). When we interface with other people, especially with sinners, we must do so with the greatest degree of sobriety – especially when we are attempting to pull them out of the fire. That is the matter that Jude now addresses, and it is important that we see how he is doing this.

#### **ON SOME HAVE COMPASSION**

Jude 1:22 ***“And of some have compassion, making a difference.”***

Having established the necessity of keeping ourselves in the love of God, Jude now assumes that we will not be content to behold others living in a lost condition, and outside of the will of God. Just as Jesus was concerned about the condition of men, so those who are in fellowship with Him are also. No one who has seen the light is content for others to walk in darkness. However, there are some serious matters to be considered.

**OF SOME.** Other versions read, “*on some*,” NKJV “*on those*,” CSB “*some people*,” WILLIAMS “*those who doubt*,” NIV “*some who are wavering*,” NRSV “*some who are disputing*,” CJB “*those who have doubts*,” GWN “*those whose faith is wavering*,” NLT “*those who argue against you . . . who doubt*,” LIVING “*continue to waver through doubts*,” WILLIAMS “*in their uncertainty*,” GOODSPEED “*who hesitate in the faith*,” MESSAGE and “*who waver and doubt*.” AMPLIFIED

These are people who have not fallen into the depths of sin, who do not thrust the Word of God from themselves, and are not wholly given to depravity. Some versions depict them as having doubts, or being argumentative. I do not see that as being the meaning. These are rather people who are teachable, and do not argue against the truth, even though they are unlearned and ignorant. It is people like the Philippian jailor, who was thoroughly unlearned, but most attentive to Paul and Silas (Acts 16:26-31). They are people like Agrippa, who was willing to listen to Paul, and was almost persuaded to become a Christian (Acts 26:26-28). Perhaps they are convicted of their own sin, like the sinners on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:37). Their sins are often of a lesser nature, which have not produced hardness of heart and stubbornness.

**HAVE COMPASSION.** Other versions read, “*have mercy,*”<sup>NASB</sup> “*be merciful,*”<sup>NIV</sup> “*convince,*”<sup>RSV</sup> “*have pity,*”<sup>BEB</sup> “*Rebuke,*”<sup>CJB</sup> “*indeed reprove,*”<sup>DOUAY</sup> “*endeavor to convince,*”<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> “*Be helpful,*”<sup>CEV</sup> “*be easy on,*”<sup>MESSAGE</sup> and “*be kind.*”<sup>YLT</sup>

Such people must not be dealt with harshly or crudely. They are bruised reeds which must not be broken (Matt 12:20). These are in some of the categories Jesus came to liberate: “*the brokenhearted*” and “*the bruised*” (Luke 4:18).

Some of the versions are seriously in error here, saying such people ought to be rebuked<sup>CJB</sup> or reprovved.<sup>DOUAY</sup> Such people have already been smitten in their conscience, and reprovved by the Holy Spirit (John 16:8).

Jude says we are to “*have compassion*” on such people – like the good Samaritan had on the poor soul who “*fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead*” (Luke 10:30). He did not need to be rebuked for traveling down that dangerous road. He needed compassion, and was apparently ready to receive it.

Having compassion involves being gentle, which is to be the default mode of those in Christ Jesus, (2 Tim 2:24; Tit 3:2), and having our speech being always with grace (Col 4:6). When Paul was with new converts in Thessalonica, he said himself and those with him “*we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children*” (1 Thess 2:7). James says that the wisdom that is from above “*is first pure, then peaceable, gentle*” (James 3:17). In view of the religious corruption that is so rampant in the world, this word is particularly important.

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE.** Other versions read, “*making a distinction,*”<sup>NKJV</sup> “*being judged,*”<sup>DOUAY</sup> “*separating them*”<sup>PNT</sup> and “*judging thoroughly.*”<sup>YLT</sup> Most modern versions omit this phrase.

This is more than a commandment. It is something that requires discernment, perceiving distinctions, and recognizing differences. There is not a standard way of recovering a soul – a procedural manual, so to speak. Those who cannot make these distinctions are not to engage in this activity – and, as we will see, that is for their own protection.

Keep in mind that this is not confined to reaching the lost. It also includes, and perhaps even preeminently, efforts to restore those “*overtaken in a fault*” (Gen 6:1). Wherever anyone is under the control of sin, whether it is one who has never obeyed the Gospel, or someone who has, this word must be heeded. In my opinion, the believers overtaken in a fault is even more important than reaching those who are not in Christ. I base this on Paul’s reaction to the Corinthian disorder. Because of his burden for them he did not enter into a door that was opened to him when he came to Troas to “*preach Christ’s Gospel,*” but went to Macedonia, having no rest in his spirit because Titus had not yet returned with his report of the Corinthians. He wrote to the Corinthians saying “*when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you*” (2 Cor 10:15-16). I do not suggest that this is a rule for everyone to follow. Rather, my point is that a greater emphasis is placed upon the stabilization of the saints, as evidenced in the epistles to the Corinthians, the Galatians, the Colossians, and the seven churches of Asia.

When, therefore, dealing with others, we must be able to “*make a difference,*” distinguishing between those who can be graciously corrected, and those who are in a more hardened condition. This does require that the individual doing the work has his senses exercised to discern good and evil (Heb 5:14), as well as those who are tender and those who are not.

## OTHERS SAVE WITH FEAR

1:23a “***And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; . . .***”

**OTHERS.** Other versions read, “*some,*”<sup>RSV</sup> “*any who need to be saved.*”<sup>CEV</sup> These are

compared to those who are receptive, and can be reached by my compassion. They are more hardened, more calloused, and deeper in sin and transgression.

**SAVE.** Other versions read, "rescue,"<sup>CEV</sup> "give salvation,"<sup>BBE</sup> and "strive to save."<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> There are other texts that affirm there is a sense in which those in Christ save others. "If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might SAVE SOME of them" (Rom 11:14). "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means SAVE SOME" (1 Cor 9:22).

**WITH FEAR.** Other versions read, "have mercy with fear,"<sup>NASB</sup> "mixed with fear,"<sup>NIV</sup> "Fearing God,"<sup>CEB</sup> "but with fear,"<sup>CJB</sup> "in fear,"<sup>ERV</sup> "be careful that you yourselves aren't pulled along into their sins,"<sup>LIVING</sup> "with pity mingled with fear,"<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> "pity with dread,"<sup>WILLIAMS</sup> and "even though you are afraid."<sup>GW</sup>

Here "fear" is not what is found in the one being saved, but rather in the one who is doing the saving. There are some people so defiled, that even one who is attempting and even laboring to save them can be contaminated by them. That is why Paul wrote in his letter to the Galatians, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal 6:1). Other versions read, "watch yourself, or you may be tempted,"<sup>NIV</sup> and "keeping an attentive eye on yourself, lest you should be tempted also."<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

The perception of the malignancy of iniquity has been greatly neutralized by the "Christianity" of our times. The professed church is so close to the world that it no longer sees the danger of spiritual contamination. The Word of the Lord is clear on this matter: "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners," or "Evil companionships (communion, associations) corrupt and deprave good manners and morals and character" (1 Cor 15:33). And again, "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Cor 5:6).

While the work of restoring souls is a precious one, and must continue, I know of few people who have been given this warning from Jude. It is an insightful one that warns us not to have the kind of supposed mercy that imagines friendship and tenderness appeals to everyone. **Every time we are close to iniquity in any form, we are subject to danger, and most be alert and sober.** Not many professing believers acknowledge this truth, or, perhaps, are not even aware of it. This particularly has to do with relatives and close friends. Jesus, for example, refused to go out to His mother and brothers who wanted to speak with Him, choosing to remain with those who were hearing His Word (Matt 12:47-48).

Of old time, when Sanballot and Geshem sent a message to Nehemiah to meet them in one of the villages in the plain of Ono, he sent messengers to them saying, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" (Neh 6:3). Four times they sent the same message to Nehemiah, and four times he articulated his refusal. When Sanballot came to him the fifth time saying there was an evil report about them, Nehemiah sent a message back saying the report was totally false. Then he cried out to the Lord, "Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands" (Neh 6:2-9). He knew the truth stated by Jude. Anytime you are called to be in close proximity to the wicked, weigh your options. If it is a matter of business, do your business and leave.

This is particularly true of those who are spiritually corrupt, and deliver corrupt messages. John was very specific in his instruction to the elect lady: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 1:10-11). This is also why Jesus warned His disciples of the "leaven," or doctrine, of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt 16:6).

**PULLING THEM OUT OF THE FIRE.** Other versions read, "snatching them out of the fire,"<sup>NASB</sup> "plucking them out,"<sup>IE</sup> "deliver from."<sup>ABP</sup>

The idea is that such a person is not approached with gentle speech and appeals to receive the mercy of God. Such people must be apprised of where they are. Take, for example, this word of Jesus. It is like snatching men out of the fire. "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but **is in danger of eternal damnation**" (Mark 3:29). And again, "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, **shall be in danger of hell fire**" (Matt 5:22). And yet again, "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, **it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.**"

(Mat 18:6). This is a snatching word – one that requires immediate action. It is like the word delivered by Peter to Simon the sorcerer: “*Repent of this thy wickedness*” (Acts 8:21).

### **HATING EVEN THE GARMENT SPOTTED BY THE FLESH**

1:23b “ . . . *hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.*”

**HATING.** Other versions read “*abhorring,*”<sup>NAB</sup> “*loathing,*”<sup>WILLIAMS</sup> “*detesting.*”<sup>ABP</sup> As used here, the word “*hating*” means “hate, detest.”<sup>THAYER</sup> One of the traits of Jesus – one that commended Him to God the Father – was that He “*hated iniquity*” (Heb 1:9).

The people of God are to develop an absolute hatred for sin, which resides in “*the flesh,*” or sinful nature. In this perspective, “*the flesh*” in all of its varied expressions is to be strongly hated. In the English language “*hate*” has the following synonyms: “abhorrence, abominate, aversion, detestation, hatred, horror, loathing, repugnance, repulsion, revulsion.”<sup>MERRIAM-WEBSTER</sup>

I provide these meanings to confirm the strength of this word. No person can rescue a soul from hell fire to whom sin – all sin – is not obnoxious. This attitude is one that requires a new heart and a new spirit (Ezek 36:26). The person must be a “*new creation*” (2 Cor 5:17), and be walking “*in newness of life.*” It is in order to remember the words of the psalmist: “*Ye that love the LORD, hate evil*” (Psa 97:10).

Abounding iniquity often tempers the love of many, so that they fall into a deep sleep, and no longer have a strong aversion to sin. Jesus foretold this condition when He told His disciples, “*And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold*” (Matt 24:12). This confirms the relevancy of our text. The deterioration of morality carries with it an undeniable Satanic influence. If believers are not strong in the faith, they will be brought down by the very culture in which they reside. The relevancy of this to our text is simply this: in a decaying society there will be many whose love for Christ waxes cold, whose definition of right and wrong are mitigated, and whose defenses are neutralized. These are invariably people who have not grown up into Christ in all things (Eph 4:15), are not pressing toward the mark (Phil 3:14), and are not perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Cor 7:1).

**EVEN THE GARMENT.** Other versions read, “*clothing,*”<sup>NIV</sup> “*tunic,*”<sup>NRSV</sup> “*clothes,*”<sup>CJB</sup> “*outer garment,*”<sup>NAB</sup> “*the coat,*”<sup>YLT</sup> and “*inner garment.*”<sup>ABP</sup>

There is spiritual application regarding “*garments*” that is addressed to the church in Sardis: “*Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy*” (Rev 3:4). However, the word used there is not the same as the one used here in Jude. In Revelation, it is obvious that the Lord is speaking of spiritual attire, for He adds, “*they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy*” (Rev 3:4).

The text in Jude is speaking about physical attire, and is mentioned to show the level of sensitivity that is required in the saints who are seeking to restore someone.

**SPOTTED BY THE FLESH.** Other versions read, “*defiled by the flesh,*”<sup>NKJV</sup> “*polluted,*”<sup>NASB</sup> “*corrupted,*”<sup>NIV</sup> “*made unclean,*”<sup>BEBE</sup> “*contaminated,*”<sup>CEB</sup> “*stained,*”<sup>CJB</sup> “*soiled,*”<sup>WILLIAMS</sup> “*made dirty,*”<sup>CEV</sup> and “*spotted by the flesh and polluted by their sensuality.*”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Solomon mentioned “*the attire of an harlot,*” confirming that there was clothing by which debased people were known (Prov 7:10). When Tamar deliberately sat in the way Judah was going, she was apparently dressed after the manner of an harlot, which Judah supposed she was (Gen 38:14).

For the child of God, garments that are “*spotted by the flesh*” are the opposite of “*modest apparel*” ( 1 Tim 2:9). It would be clothing that allowed for the display of the flesh, being designed to awaken unlawful desires. The first provision for sinners was the replacement of scanty clothing – coats of skin for aprons of fig leaves (Gen 3:7,21). Of course, we are living in a time when this kind of attire is seen everywhere. I remember during the latter 1970's when I was holding a Bible Study in the home of new believers. They had invited some of their friends whom they desired to see converted. During that hot summer evening, one woman came in a bikini. I told her she could not sit with us in that way, and explained why, sharing this text from Jude concerning hating the garment spotted by the flesh. She was given a bath robe to wear while there, and did so without objection.

I realize that this, for some, is a sensitive subject, but something must be said about it. Whatever accents and displays the flesh, whether it is a garment, a word, a manner, or a deed, is to be hated by the child of God. This is not merely a law, but is a means of protection – not being lured

into sin. Anything that awakens “*the flesh,*” or “*fleshly lusts*” is an assault upon the soul of the believer: “*fleshly lusts that **war** against the soul*” (1 Pet 2:11). The grace of God teaches us to reject “*worldly lusts*” (Tit 2:11), but we are expected not to be found where such lusts are needlessly placed before us.

The Lord reveals that “*The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate*” (Prov 8:13). That is a hatred that must be cultured, and mingled with wisdom and godly determination. No person can “*depart from evil*” (Psa 34:14), if evil is not first hated. The wicked are described as those who “*abhorreth **not** evil*” (Psa 36:4). David confessed, “*I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me*” (Psa 101:3). Such a disdain for transgression and sin in any form will serve as a protection to us.

# COMMENTARY ON JUDE

## LESSON NUMBER 17

***“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.”***

.....Jude 1:24)

### **HE IS ABLE TO KEEP YOU FROM FALLING**

#### INTRODUCTION

The challenge through the past twenty centuries has been to convince the redeemed individually and collectively of the reality and extensive benefits of God's great salvation. This objective is reflected in the earliest writings of the apostles. The Corinthians failed to see the significance of being purchased by God, and having the marvelous benefits of love. The Colossians were being tempted with the intrusion of philosophers who were clouding the all-sufficiency of Christ. The Galatians did not see the significance of faith, and were being pulled back into a system of Law. Hebrew believers had failed to see the nature and greatness of the New Covenant, and the great High Priesthood of Christ. Those to whom Jude wrote did not have a clear understanding of faith, and the necessity of maintaining it. Now, in our time, there has been a near-total obliteration of a good understanding of Christ, the New Covenant, and faith. Religious Higher education, institutionalism, and professionalism have been added to further obscure the glory of the things related to salvation. The result has been the absence of a consciousness of God, and therefore, the absence of Divine power. The modern church is like a car without an engine, and an apparent majority of professing Christians are like lifeless mannequins that clutter the landscape of religion. All of this accents the absolute greatness of the salvation of God. It is so far above natural men that if they are close to the earth in their thinking they simply cannot discern its height, and length, and depth, and breadth (Eph 3:18). If they insist on remaining religious, they have no alternative but to invent their own approach to God and His salvation, for God will not let them see the truth while they are friends with the world. What Jude wrote in his closing remarks is so high above the flesh, it will make no sense at all to the carnally minded. But to those who are living by faith, it will be a joyful and invigorating sound.

#### **HE IS ABLE...**

Jude 1:24A ***“Now unto Him that is able . . .”***

**NOW.** Other versions read, “*But,*”<sup>DARBY</sup> “*and,*”<sup>MRD</sup> “*and now.*”<sup>LIVING</sup> Most modern versions omit this word. However, it is in the original text, and the older versions correctly translate it “*now.*” This is a word that speaks of extending the thought, especially by drawing a conclusion. I understand this to be a characteristic of the Hebrew language, and the manner of inspired writers. Moved along by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:21), they were doing more than transmitting information. In order to comprehend what they wrote, you had to do some thinking – reasoning upon what they had said or written. Your experience will confirm to you that until you engage in serious thought concerning what is written in Scripture, you will not be able to comprehend what it has said. I understand this to be by Divine intention. Having “*ears to hear*” (Matt 13:9), boils down to being provoked to sober thought by what you hear. Those without ears to hear will simply dismiss what has been said, thinking it to be irrelevant to them.

Therefore, Jude is now himself doing what he expects his readers to do: summing up what he has written in words, or thoughts, that will yield the intended benefit to them. This is not something to be done later, when they have more time, so to speak. It must be done while the words he has

written are fresh in their minds.

**UNTO HIM.** Other versions read, “to Him,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “God,”<sup>GWN</sup> “to the One,”<sup>NAB</sup> “all glory to Him who alone is God, who saves us through Jesus Christ our Lord; yes, splendor and majesty, all power and authority are His from the beginning; His they are and His they evermore shall be,”<sup>LIVING</sup> “Offer praise to God our Savior because of our Lord Jesus Christ,”<sup>CEV</sup> and “God.”<sup>ERV</sup>

You can detect from the various versions that a large consideration is involved in this text – a consideration that cannot be held in an academic bag. Think of the centrality of God in what Jude has written to this point.

1. He wrote to those who “are sanctified by **God the Father**” (1:1).
2. Ungodly men were “turning the grace of **God** into lasciviousness” (1:4a).
3. These men were “denying the only Lord **God**, and our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:4b).
4. The **Lord** “saved the people out of the land of Egypt” (1:5)
5. The **Lord** “afterward destroyed them that believed not” (1:5).
6. It was **God** who reserved the angels that kept not their first estate, “reserving them in everlasting chains of darkness unto the judgement of the great day” (1:6).
7. It was **God** who set forth Sodom and Gomorrah “for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (1:7).
8. The angel Gabriel called upon **God** to rebuke with devil, with whom had disputed (1:9).
9. Enoch had prophesied the “the **Lord** comes with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment upon all” (1:14-15).
10. Jude has admonished the saints, “keep yourselves in the love of **God**, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (1:21).

This is the God to whom Jude now refers. It is the God to whom all men, and even angels, have always been accountable. They are living in His world, which is upheld by His mighty power.

**THAT IS ABLE.** Other versions read, “who can,”<sup>CJB</sup> “God can,”<sup>GWN</sup> and “who has power to.”<sup>MONTGOMERY</sup> The word translated “able” means, to be able to **do** something; “to be capable, strong and powerful.”<sup>THAYER</sup> There are several things inherent in this word that are not necessarily found in its etymological meaning.

1. The ability is in the nature of God Himself. It is not an acquired trait, but is inherent in Him.
2. He must have the authority to employ this power at will, or when He desires to do so.
3. The ability cannot be successfully negated by any foe or imagined competitor.
4. The power can be used only at His discretion.
5. There is no circumstance that can successfully negate the power.
- 6 There is no law that is superior to the power, and can therefore shut it down.

Therefore the questions can be asked, “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” (Gen 18:14). “Is the Lord’s hand waxed short?” (Num 11:23). “Who is a God like unto Thee?” (Mic 7:18).

Think of the affirmations that have been made concerning God. “There is no restraint with the Lord, to same with many or few” (1 Sam 14:8). “He is mighty in strength and wisdom,” (Job 36:5). “I know Thou canst do every thing” (Job 42:2). “The Lord reigneth” (Psa 93:1). “For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods” (Psa 95:3). “Who is a God like unto Thee?” (Mic 7:18). “With God, all things are possible” (Matt 19:26). God is “able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph 3:20). “He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself” (Phil 3:21).

It is time for professing believers everywhere to think of God as One who is “able” – One with whom “all things are possible.” If we are going to be doubtful about something, let it be concerning men, their aptitudes, and their answers. But when it comes to our consideration of the living God and His Christ, let no limitations be considered that God Himself has not imposed.

## **TO KEEP YOU FROM FALLING**

1:24B “ . . . to keep you from falling . . . ”

**This is an affirmation that is boldly denied by a vast number of professing Christians.** They have become so acclimated to sin that they actually think it is unavoidable. It is good to remember that the acknowledgment or confession of sin is not a statement of its inevitability or being unavoidable. The salvation of God is thorough, and we are actually “complete” in Christ (Col 2:10). The degree to which we partake of this by faith may well be measured, but it is not owing to any

deficiency in the salvation itself. If this was not the case, there would be no ground for *“the hope of righteousness”* (Gal 5:5). There would be exhortations that would fall with a hollow sound upon our hearts – like, *“go on unto perfection”* (Heb 6:1), *“cleanse ourselves of all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord”* (2 Cor 7:1), *“let not sin reign in your mortal body”* (Rom 6:12), *“keep thyself pure”* (1 Tim 5:22), *“sin not”* (1 Cor 15:34; Eph 4:26; 1 John 2:1), etc.

Whenever sin surfaces in our lives, we must not seek to excuse it, or assume a stance that allows for such expressions. No one has sinned because of the insufficiency of Christ (Phil 4:13), or His great salvation (Heb 2:3). It is not owing to any weakness in grace (Tit 2:11-12), or inability of Divine leadership through the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:14).

**KEEP YOU.** Other versions read, *“preserve you,”*<sup>DOUAY</sup> *“guard you,”*<sup>ERV</sup> *“keep them steady,”*<sup>ABP</sup> and *“protect you.”*<sup>LEB</sup>

As used here, the word *“keep”* has a rather extensive meaning: “To guard; to watch, keep watch; to guard a person (or thing) that he may remain safe, lest he suffer violence, be despoiled, etc. to protect, to protect one from a person or thing; to keep from being snatched away, preserve safe and unimpaired; to guard from being lost or perishing; to guard one's self from a thing; to guard i.e. care for, take care not to violate; to observe.”<sup>THAYER</sup>

It is to be understood that this is accomplished through Christ Jesus acting in the roles of *“Captain”* (Heb 2:10), *“High Priest”* (Heb 10:21), *“Intercessor”* (Heb 7:25), *“Great Shepherd”* (Heb 13:20), *“Author and Finisher”* (Heb 12:2), etc.

Admittedly, this is done through means – but it is God who uses the means, not us. As it is written of the saved, *“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”* (1 Pet 1:5).

The statement being made is not an appeal to the intellect, but to faith. It is not posing mere possibilities, but a very real circumstance that is to be trusted. *“Able”* is not a philosophical word, or a mere statement of theoretic possibilities. The Spirit is casting a fact into the arena of human thought, and it is intended to produce unvarying results that are the outcome of faith.

**FROM FALLING.** And, what is it that God is *“able”* to do? The words *“from falling”* are translated from a single Greek word. The meaning of the word is “not stumbling, standing firm, exempt from falling.”<sup>THAYER</sup>

Other versions read, *“from stumbling,”*<sup>NKJV</sup> *“preserve you without sin,”*<sup>DOUAY</sup> *“so that you don't fall,”*<sup>GWN</sup> *“free from sin”*<sup>PNT</sup> *“that ye fall not,”*<sup>TNT</sup> *“from slipping and falling away,”*<sup>LIVING</sup> *“steady,”*<sup>ABP</sup> *“without sin,”*<sup>JUB</sup> *“keep you on your feet,”*<sup>MESSAGE</sup> and *“without stumbling or slipping or falling.”*<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

In other words, God is able to keep you where He placed you – *“in Christ”* (1 Cor 1:30) – and the Lord Jesus is not an environment in which you can *“fall,”* go backward, or *“stumble.”* Jesus plainly said, *“If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.”* (John 11:9-10). This is why Jesus said, *“Abide in Me, and I in you”* (John 15:4). It is why John wrote, *“abide in Him”* (1 John 2:28). This will be done by means of your faith, through which God keeps you by His power (1 Pet 1:5). From another perspective, this involves walking in the light (1 John 1:7), or within the circumference of Jesus Himself, who is the Light.

As long as we are walking in the light, and abiding in Christ, God will keep us from falling – going backward, stumbling into sin, or in any way retrogressing. We are not to look at our experience and conclude, *“I am vulnerable.”* Rather, we are to look to Jesus, abide in Him, and conclude, *“He is able to keep me from falling.”* This teaching is designed to encourage and strengthen faith – the faith by which the people of God *“live”* (Heb 10:38).

What has happened in our time is much like, if not identical, to the situation Jude addressed. Teaching has been introduced that has caused spiritual defection and retrogression. Falling away (Heb 6:1-6), as well as perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Cor 7:2), when they are addressed, are approached philosophically, The potency and effectiveness of faith is rarely expounded, and hardly ever are professing believers *“nourished up in the words of faith and good doctrine”* (1 Tim 4:6). The misconceptions and errors that have been birthed in this meager spiritual environment are staggering. The circumstance of which Isaiah wrote exists again: *“Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey”* (Isa 59:15).

## PRESENT YOU FAULTLESS

1:24C " . . . **and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. . .**"

When you are traversing in the domain of faith, you become aware of the remarkable expressions that have been vouchsafed to the elect. Jude is affirming one such word.

**AND.** God is able to keep us from falling – but there is a reason for such keeping. It is a Divine cause that is joined to a Divine effect. Not sinning, or being holy, is not an end of itself. When we are kept, and are holy, that is in order to cause something even greater.

**PRESENT YOU.** Other versions read, "to make you stand,"<sup>NASB</sup> "to set you,"<sup>ASV</sup> and "to give you a place,"<sup>BBE</sup> "bring you safe to."<sup>NJB</sup>

Paul wrote to the Corinthians that his aim was "that I may **present** you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor 11:2). Apostolic doctrine affirms that, in Christ, God reconciled us to "present" us "in His sight" (Col 1:22a). Jesus did not die, was raised from the dead, and seated at God's right hand with all power in heaven and earth given to Him, to merely get people "saved" in this world. That means that, what is called "the great commission", is really not the fundamental mission. That only has to do with the commencement of what God has determined. This is a matter of revelation, and there is no intellectual latitude for varying views of the matter.

God is keeping us in order to a scheduled presentation. If that appointed presentation is not favorable, all of the religious labor has been pointless and vain. In such a case, all profession has been vain. Believing has been in vain (1 Cor 15:2), and the grace of God will have been in vain (2 Cor 6:1). Running has been in vain (Gal 2:2). Labor has been in vain (Gal 4:11). O, that men were convinced of the truth of this text – this neglected text!

**FAULTLESS.** This is the objective – to be presented "faultless." Other versions read "blameless,"<sup>NASB</sup> "without fault,"<sup>NIV</sup> "without blemish,"<sup>NRSV</sup> "free from all evil,"<sup>BBE</sup> "without defect,"<sup>CJB</sup> "spotless,"<sup>DOUAY</sup> "innocent,"<sup>NJB</sup> "without a single fault."<sup>NLT</sup>

Now, this is a revelation of some of the involvements of the purpose of God. I do not see how any thinking person could fail to see that such an objective, seeing it is made known ahead of time, would not involve extensive activity in this world – both IN as well as FOR those who are to be presented. How could a favorable presentation possibly take place if at sometime, in this world, they did not become harmonious with that objective in their hearts and minds? Any professed believer who is **not** living with a lively awareness of, and commitment to, this purpose has, by that very stance, admitted they are not believers at all. Further, unless they do not acclimate themselves to this objective, they will be viewed as unbelievers and disobedient on the day of judgment. This matter is that serious, and that is why Jude has addressed it.

**BEFORE THE PRESENCE OF HIS GLORY.** The presentation will be made before the Lord Himself, who will be seen in all of His majesty and glory. Men will not be able to shrink back as they did at Sinai. They will not be able to hide. When all of God is seen, all of them will also be seen. Only those who survive that confrontation will remain forever with the Lord.

If, in this world, people cannot bear more than a brief exposure to the Word of God, and are satisfied to have a limited exposure to the people of God, how can they possibly survive facing the Lord in all of His glory? There will no cleft of the rock in which to be hidden. The fulness of that glory will either validate salvation or damnation. Everyone – excluding not a single person – who does not welcome that glory, will have to welcome fire and brimstone. That is not pleasant to say, but it is necessary.

**WITH EXCEEDING JOY.** This is the Divine objective: To present us faultless before His presence "with exceeding joy." That is what salvation is calculated to do, and if that is not accomplished, there will be no salvation for the individual – none t all. Those who had glibly taught that God loves everyone alike, and that nothing can be done to diminish that love, will have to stand before "the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev 6:16), which shall never be poured out upon those whom God loves.

The day of judgment will bring the joy of the saints to its maximum. In fact, their entrance into glory is described as entering "into the joy of the Lord" (Matt 25:21,23). This joy postulates the increasing joyfulness the saints experienced in this world. They rejoiced "in the truth" (1 Cor 13:6), "in the Lord" (Phil 3:1), "in God" (Rom 5:11), had "Joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom 14:17), and were said to "rejoice in hope" (Rom 12:12; Heb 3:6).

The salvation of God comes loaded with everything that is necessary to prepare for standing before the Lord in the fulness of His glory. Eternal life is knowing God – having a profitable and joyful acquaintance and involvement with Him now. As we gaze upon the glory of the

Lord now, the Holy Spirit changes us from one increasing stage of glory to another, conforming in us to the image of Christ, which is found in the Gospel. Because God is good, and blesses us abundantly in His Son, we experience *“the joy of the Lord”* now, which is the necessary prelude to the *“exceeding joy”* we will experience when we stand before Him. Now is the ONLY time we have to prepare for the appointed confrontation of the glorious God.

## COMMENTARY ON JUDE

### LESSON NUMBER 18 (FINAL)

***“To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.”***

.....Jude 1:25)

### **TO THE ONLY WISE GOD**

#### INTRODUCTION

This is a continuation of the benediction that began in verse twenty-four. Jude is identifying the One who is the Center of everything that he has written in this brief epistle. The salvation concerning which he had desired to write is *“the salvation of God”* (Psa 50:23). Isaiah spoke of a time when the glory of God would be revealed (Isa 40:4). John the Baptist quoted that text, adding some light to it: *“Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see **the salvation of God**”* (Luke 3:5-6). This is the root of the matter that Jude was addressing – erroneous teaching that did not accent that *“salvation is of the Lord”* (Jonah 2:9). This is the Achilles’ heel of all false doctrine. At the root of an erroneous emphasis, and the misrepresentation of salvation, is this a minimization of God, and a false emphasis upon men, works, a particular theology, or even an institution. It is not merely that men are not properly told what to do to be saved. The flaw has taken place before that. Whatever is associated with God never places the **emphasis** upon men and what they do. When men see the supremacy of God, as revealed in Christ Jesus, in all of His dealings with men – particularly, in salvation – they will earnestly desire to do what He demands. If, in such an instance, the person hands them a neatly compiled list of things to do, he has not done what is right. God does not open hearts to respond to a message, in which He and His Son have not been properly presented (Acts 16:14). That is why the Gospel is identified as *“the power of God.”* It is there that a righteousness from God is revealed (Rom 1:17-18). It is there that the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men is also revealed (Rom 1:18). Because of its centrality, the Gospel is a wondrous announcement of the wisdom of God which found a way to remit sins without God having to compromise His integrity, or depart from His righteousness.

### **THE ONLY WISE GOD OUR SAVIOR**

Jude 1:25A ***“To the only wise God our Savior . . .”***

**THE ONLY.** Other versions read, *“who alone,”* NKJV *“God alone,”* CJB *“the one God,”* GOODSPEED and *“one God.”* MESSAGE The greater number of the various versions reads *“only.”* As used here, the word *“only”* is translated from a word (monos) described as *“an adjective . . . it is joined with its noun to other verbs also, so that what is predicated may be declared to apply to some one person alone,”* THAYER *“the only entity in a class - ‘only one, alone.’”* LOUW-NIDA

The absolute uniqueness of God is frequently affirmed in Scripture. *“I, even I, am the LORD; and beside Me there is no savior”* (Isa 43:11). *“I am the First, and I am the Last; and beside Me there is no God”* (Isa 44:6), *“I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me: I girded thee”* (Isa 45:5), *“. . . I the LORD . . . and there is no God else beside Me; a just God and a Savior; there is none beside me”* (Isa 45:21). One of the realities around which the saints of God unite is this: *“One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all”* (Eph 4:6).

This is something that is easy to say, but to live in accord with this reality is another matter. Those to whom Jude wrote had been allured into a place of jeopardy, because they were not serving

the one true God. This is the real bottom-line issue in religion. It is not “Which church is the true church? Or, “Who has the most practical message?” It is rather, “Who is the only God?” – standing alone and apart from all others who claim to be God, or are represented as being God. Heresies, or divisions that are caused by false doctrine, always shift the emphasis from God to something or someone else. Today, religion has become so academic that people rarely think in terms of the One who is “*God alone.*”

**WISE GOD.** But Jude takes the matter further: “*the only wise God.*” No other god is “*wise.*” No other god is a thinking, purposing, revealing god. Only the God, concerning whom Jesus is currently teaching the redeemed (1 John 5:20) is the “*wise*” God. In the creation, He established, or ordered, the world “*by wisdom*” (Jer 10:12; 51:15). Paul also refers to God as “*God only wise*” (Rom 16:27). And again, “*the only wise God*” (1 Tim 1:17). The matter that is presently being taught to principalities and powers “*by the church,*” or through God’s working within the churches, is “*the manifold wisdom of God*” (Eph 3:10).

So far as men are concerned, God’s wisdom is embodied, or localized, in Jesus Christ, who Himself is “*the wisdom of God*” (1 Cor 1:24). That is, the “*wisdom of God*” is employed in the deliverance of men from the powers of darkness, the remission of their sins, and conforming them to the image of Christ. That is a work requiring transcendent wisdom. Men could not correct their own condition, but continued a descent into gross darkness. Personal deliverances, provisions, or dreams and visions, could not lift man out of the pit into which sin had hurled him. Not even a spiritual, holy, and righteous Law could get the job done – nor, indeed, was it intended to do so. Rather, the Law was designed to confirm to men that they were in a hopeless state. And could not do anything about it. Its primary work was that of a “*schoolmaster,*” to bring us to Christ fully persuaded of our need of Him, and willing to do anything He commanded us. The wisdom of God devised a flawless way to correct the human condition through a vicarious sacrifice that atoned for sin, and a miraculous transformation that brought men into satisfying harmony with the very God whom they had offended.

**OUR SAVIOR.** David said of God, “*He is . . . my Savior*” (2 Sam 22:3). God Himself said to Israel, “*For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, Thy Savior: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee*” (Isa 43:3). He affirmed through Isaiah, “*I am the Lord, and beside Me there is no Savior*” (Isa 43:11). He is called “*the Savior*” (Isa 45:15), and “*a just God and a Savior*” (Isa 45:21). He said to Israel “*I the Lord am thy Savior*” (Isa 49:26).

Paul referred to God as “*God our Savior*” (1 Tim 2:3), and “*the living God who is the Savior of all men*” (1 Tim 4:10). He said God had been given a message to proclaim, “*according to the commandment of God our Savior*” (Tit 1:3).

The purpose of salvation belonged to God Himself, and the Lord Jesus Christ, by Divine assignment, was the One who carried it out foundationally, and is completing it in those who believe. Thus, Jesus Himself is referred to as “*the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ*” (Tit 2:13). This is because it was God Himself who was, “*in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself*” (2 Cor 5:19). This is part of “*the mystery of godliness,*” which includes the fact that He was “*manifest in the flesh*” (1 Tim 3:16). When Jesus came to earth, it was to “*do the will*” of God (Heb 10:7; John 5:30). This must be seen by those who are reconciled to God. They must see God Himself in their salvation, for Jesus has reconciled them “*to God.*” I do not believe this is clear in the minds of most professing Christians, else they would live differently than they do.

However, all of that is missed when erroneous teaching is received by the church. To embrace a lie, or any form of misrepresentation in matters pertaining to salvation, you must forfeit the truth, together with the freedom that it brings. That is precisely why Jude wrote with such a sense of urgency. He saw what was happening, and why it was happening, and immediately got to the matter of the source and purpose of this great salvation.

## GLORY AND MAJESTY

1:25B “ . . . *be glory and majesty . . .*”

**BE.** This is a supplied word to make for easier reading. The Basic Bible English version supplies the words “*let us give.*” Other versions read, “*belong,*”<sup>CEB</sup> “*be ascribed,*”<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> and “*is.*”<sup>YLT</sup> The point here is not that these qualities exist in God – there is no question about that. **The point Jude is making is that they are to be recognized, trusted in, and chronicled among believers.** When cold theology takes the place of discerning trust, the church has fallen upon hard times. What is true must be trusted, and what is foundational must be built upon.

It is good and necessary that men hold to correct positions about God and His great salvation – but that is not the stress here. It is essential that correct positions become practical persuasions – that life is lived with these things being predominate in our thinking. That is something of what is involved in living by faith.

**GLORY.** Other versions read, “praise,”<sup>MRD</sup> “splendor,”<sup>LIVING</sup> “all glory,”<sup>NLT</sup> and “great glory.”<sup>IE</sup> All other versions that I have (48) read “glory.” But, as used here, what is meant by the word “glory?” **Lexically**, the word means, “view; magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, grace; magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, grace.”<sup>THAYER</sup> **Academically** the Biblical word “glory” is described as follows: “abundance, wealth, treasure; honor, glory, dignity; splendor, brightness, glory, majesty, of internal character, infinite perfection, divine majesty and holiness; exalted state of blissful perfection of those who will dwell with God.”<sup>McCLINTOK & STRONG’S</sup>

Doctrinally, the glory of God refers to what He has revealed of Himself – what can be seen of Him. The written revelation of Him is found in the Scriptures. The embodiment, or fulness, of God is made known in Jesus Christ, in whom “*the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily*” (Col 2:9). But what did Jude mean when he wrote “*to Him . . . be glory?*” I will tell you.

The primary display of the glory of God is seen in Jesus Christ. The secondary mans of displaying that glory is in the church, in which the “fulness” of Jesus dwells (Eph 1:23). This is involved in the exhortation, “*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*” (1 Cor 10:31). Technically, that glory is not WHY we do what we do, but is the RESULT of what we do. Jude is saying that NOW God is to be glorified in the church – not a church that is lumbering like an ox in the field of confusion, but one that is living by faith, walking in the Spirit, and walking in the truth. False teachers, with their stilted doctrines, stop the glory of God from exuding from the church. They obscure God and Christ by their teachings, which are intended to bring glory to themselves.

Religious men have learned to live with erroneous gospels and misrepresentations of God. Such things do not grieve them. But this is not at all the case in heaven. The whole purpose for this great salvation is that God may be known as He is. His wrath will be focused on any and all who inhibit or compete against that purpose.

**MAJESTY.** Other versions read, “honor,”<sup>BBE</sup> “magnificence,”<sup>DOUAY</sup> “greatness.”<sup>YLT</sup> Most of the versions read “majesty.” **Lexical definitions** are “divinity,”<sup>STRONG’S</sup> “majesty: of the majesty of God,”<sup>THAYER</sup> “literally prominence, greatness, importance; used only of God,”<sup>FRIBERG</sup> “a state of greatness or importance - 'prominence, greatness, importance,’”<sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup> and “as a periphrasis for God Majesty.”<sup>GINGRICH</sup>

Summed up, “majesty” refers to the revelation of what makes God, GOD. That majesty is the summation of His uniquely Divine qualities, or characteristics. It is the sum total of His Divinity, or Godhood. For this to be ascribed to God, it must be known to some degree by those from whom the ascription come, which is, in this case, the church of the living God. That church, which is the body of Christ, is the vehicle of Divine glory. The people in whom Christ dwells by faith are the only ones in whom Divine qualities are quantified, made visible, and can be perused and diagnosed. Thus we read that the opponents of the apostles “*took knowledge of them, that thuey had been with Jesus*” (Acts 4:13). This is why believers are “*the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart*” (2 Cor 3:3). Paul used this expression, “*Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body*” (2 Cor 4:10). And again, “*For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh*” (2 Cor 4:11).

That is nothing less than “majesty” being ascribed to Almighty God. This is made known in a people who are wholly devoted to the Lord, and live solely for Him. The Divinity of God is obscured by those who do not do so. Even principalities and powers in heavenly places are being shown the “*manifold wisdom of God*” through the church (Eph 3:10).

You see, then, what a serious condition Jude was addressing. Those to whom he wrote were in jeopardy because of their lack of alertness, and they had put everyone who saw them in jeopardy as well, because they were not reflecting the glory of God, or manifesting Christ.

## **DOMINION AND POWER**

1:25C " . . . *dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.* "

Jude continues to express things that have to do with God Himself being made known through His people. He knows very well that if this is not happening, there is no reason for having any identity with God. If God is not in some way receiving glory in the salvation of a person or a group of persons, there really is no reason for them to be identified with Him. People must come to see this. Again, these are traits that belong to God, but are to be made known through the church – the people with whom He has been identified through Christ Jesus.

**DOMINION.** Other versions read, “power,”<sup>NIV</sup> “authority,”<sup>BBE</sup> “empire,”<sup>DOUAY</sup> and “rule.”<sup>MESSAGE</sup> Most versions read “dominion.” The lexical meaning of the word is, “force, strength; power, might: mighty with great power; a mighty deed, a work of power; dominion,”<sup>STRONG’S</sup> “Force, strength. power, might, dominion.”<sup>THAYER</sup> The ENGLISH word “dominion” means “supreme authority: sovereignty.”<sup>MERRIAM-WEBSTER</sup> That is actually what the word means in this text. The lexicons are too ambiguous on this.

The absolute Sovereignty of God is repeatedly declared in Scripture. He does what He pleases, all of the time, and everywhere. *"It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in. That bringeth the princes to nothing; He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity" (Isa 40:22-23). "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things." (Isa 45:7). "The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will" (Dan 4:25). "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan 4:35). "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph 4:6).*

Those are the facts! But this is intended to be made known to men through the church. If we have a professing “Christian” or a “church” that is not subject to God, ignores the will of God, and does not live solely for Him, we have a living contradiction to the unvarnished facts. The lives of such people are clouding who God is, making it more difficult for the Gospel to be preached, and depriving principalities and powers in heavenly places of insight into God’s wisdom. Is there any person of sound mind who imagines God will simply overlook such things? It is said of such people, *"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:16).*

**POWER.** Other versions read, “authority,”<sup>NIV</sup> and “might.”<sup>DARBY</sup> Here, the word translated “power” is not the same as, say Romans 1:16. The Greek word here is “exousia,” where as the word in Romans 1:16 is “dunamis.” The word used in our text is found 103 times in Matthew through Revelation, and is generally translated “authority.” One of the times it is translated “power” is found in Matthew 9:6 – a test which aptly displays what the word means here: *"But that ye may know that the Son of man hath **POWER on earth** to forgive sins, (then saith He to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house" (Matt 9:6).* Now, with this in mind, I will give you the lexical definition of the word: “power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases; the power of authority (influence) and of right (privilege); the power of rule or government (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed); authority over mankind.”<sup>THAYER</sup> **In other words, God can, and does, do what He wills.** He is the only one who, in the truest sense of the word, has “free will.” When we speak of the power of choice, it belongs to God. Any ability we have to choose is a derived ability, and must be used for the glory of God, else it will be removed and enslavement to Satan will occur.

**NOW.** The point of this text is that God’s power of choice and judgment are to be made known – in this world, and at this time. One witness to this fact is Scripture – but another witness is needed, and that by God’s own standard (Deut 19:15; John 18:17; 2 Cor 13:1; 1 Tim 5:19). That additional witness is the church – the redeemed of the Lord. They are to exhibit by word and deed what it means for God to have power – the right to make the choice how they are to live, and what they are to believe. Where this is not being done, men are fighting against God, whether wittingly or unwittingly. The fact that He allows them to continue in this manner does not mean He is lenient. He will confirm on the day of judgment the truth of what He has affirmed when He publicly invalidates their claims, banishing them from His presence.

**AND FOR EVER.** When the wicked one, the false prophet and all who followed them, are cast into the lake of fire, God will not relinquish His power. His choices will still remain the primary ones, and the saved will acquiesce to His word, carrying it out with joy and swift dispatch. This is indicated by the redeemed being said to *"follow the Lamb whethersoever He goeth" (Rev 14:4).* They will be God’s “kings and priests,” carrying out His will. This is the reason for the statement: *"Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."*

(Eph 3:21). It all begins now – in this world. Here and now we have been *“joined to the Lord”* (1 Cor 6:17) in order to *“show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:”* (1 Pet 2:9)