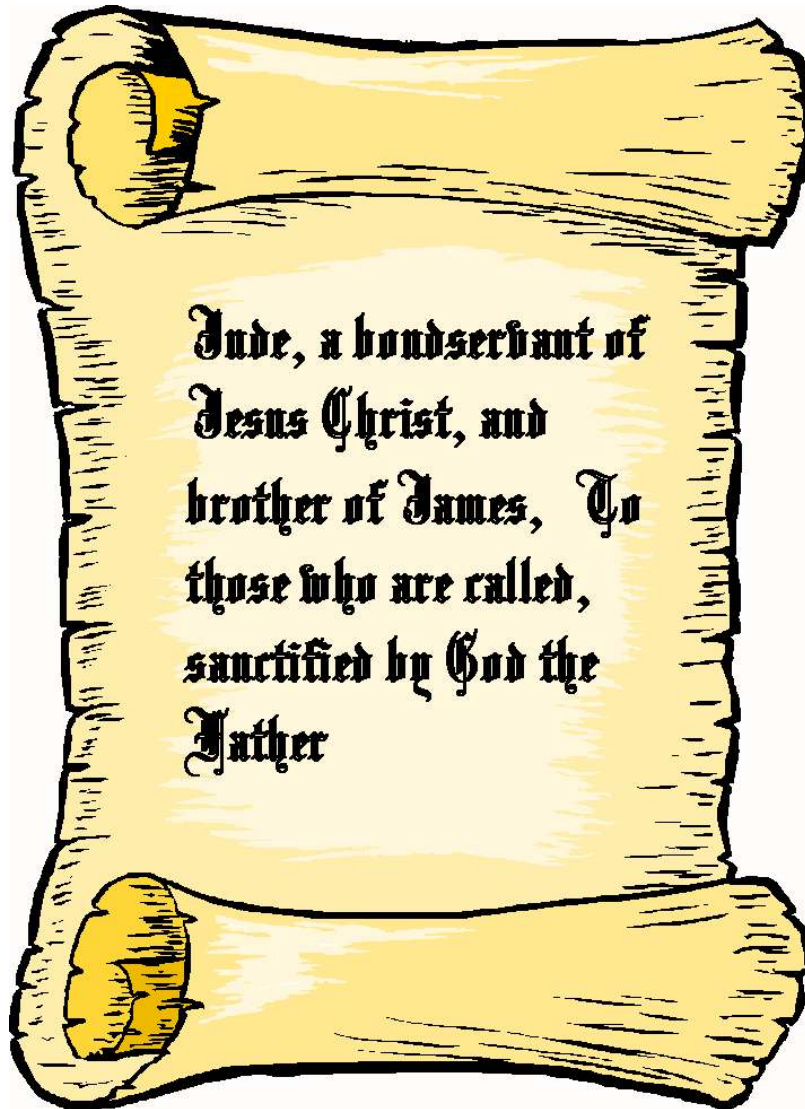


A LETTER FROM JESUS' HALF-BROTHER



A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF JUDE
BY
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INTRODUCTION

The Author

“Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.” Why his name (and the epistle) is written as “Jude” I don’t know. The Greek text has Ἰούδας (Judas), used as a proper name 22 times in the New Testament, and translated Judas, except here.

The Holman Bible Dictionary (hereafter listed as HBD) helps us identify the “brother James” which is easier to tie down than Jude (or Judas).

Paul, seeking out Peter in Jerusalem after his conversion, reported “other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother” (Gal. 1:19). In time, James assumed the leadership of the Jerusalem church, originally held by Peter. Evidently, such was achieved not through a power struggle but by James’ constancy with the church while Peter and other apostles traveled

HBD, “James”

There were two other “James” There was the brother of John but, as he was martyred in about 44AD and this epistle was written much later, Jude would not have so identified himself - why not the brother of John? There was another James who was one of the Twelve but he is never mentioned after Pentecost, thus not a suitable person for the sake of identification. This leaves us with Jude being the half brother of Jesus (same mother, different father).

The Time

The Bible Knowledge Commentary (BKC) has,

Most commentators, however, assign the date between a.d. 67 and 80. Jude was probably influenced by Peter, who wrote his second epistle about a.d. 67-68. (Peter predicted that false teachers would arise [2 Peter 2:1; 3:3], but Jude stated that they have “slipped in among you” [Jude 4].) And the antinomian Gnostic heresy (to which Jude may have been responding), was beginning to make its influence felt in the first century.

BKC, Jude Introduction

The Addresses

No one really knows what specific group of people Jude was writing to.

The Outline

There are a number of different ways to outline this one chapter epistle. I prefer that of Unger as not being too concise and not being too detailed.

Introduction ([1:1-2](#))

The occasion of the letter: Apostasy ([1:3-4](#))

Historical examples of apostasy ([1:5-7](#))

Of Israel ([1:5](#))

Of angelic beings ([1:6](#))

Of Sodom and Gomorrah ([1:7](#))

Description of false teachers ([1:8-13](#))

Authoritative declarations of God's judgment of the wicked ([1:14-19](#))

Encouragement of true believers and their full duty to Christ ([1:20-23](#))

Edification and prayer in the Holy Spirit ([1:20](#))

Preservation in the love of God and expectation of divine mercy ([1:21](#))

Exhortation to soul-winning ([1:22-23](#))

Conclusion: Benediction ([1:24-25](#))

INTRODUCTION (1:1-2)

Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

Jude 1:1-2 (NKJV)

In addition to identifying himself as the brother of James, he refers to himself as a bondservant as does Paul in many of his epistles. Bondservant is δούλος (doulos) = “one who gives himself up wholly to another’s will,”¹ is used in the more specific sense of are those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among men: used of apostles.”²

He addresses this to Christians as:

- “Those who are called”
- “Those who are sanctified by God the Father”
- “Those who are preserved in Jesus Christ.”

Concerning this “triad” of characteristics, BKC has,

*This threefold description of the people of God is one of many triads in this letter. The first expression “**to those who have been called**” reflects on the **past**—God’s sovereign call to salvation in His electing grace. The phrase “**who are loved by God the Father**” refers to the **present**. The verbal form of “loved” indicates that God’s love was manifested in the past but also continues in the present. His third description, “**kept by Jesus Christ**,” expresses the most positive assurance regarding the **future**, for He preserves those who trust Him till His coming. The calling is the active work of the Holy Spirit; the love emanates from the Father; and the keeping work is the ministry of the Son. Thus the entire Godhead is included in Jude’s salutation. The knowledge of God’s calling, loving, and keeping brings believers assurance and peace during times of apostasy.*

BKC, Jude 1:1-2

This concept is better described in the NASB translation.

*Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those **who are the called**, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ:*

Jude 1:1 (NASB)

The NASB translation recognizes that Jude is not referring to the act of being called, the Greek used the term as a **description**.

Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who by God the Father have been loved and are in a state of being the permanent objects of His love, and who for Jesus Christ have been guarded and are in a permanent state of being carefully watched, to those who are called ones.

¹THAYER, δούλος

²Ibid

I have said this in other studies but it never hurts to reiterate it. It is impossible to translate what some mind expressed in Greek 2000 years ago into English that will produce the exact same thoughts on the part of the hearer today. In most cases, the accuracy is sufficient, but a verse such as this falls short. The difficulty is the word order in the Greek is mostly immaterial as far as the grammar is concerned and so the writer was able to express his or her thoughts more precisely by placing the words in an order that would do so.

“Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.” This multiplication is also used by Peter in both of his epistles. The term πληθύνω (plethuno) means “‘be multiplied to’ one i.e.) be richly allotted to.’”³

THE OCCASION OF THE LETTER: APOSTASY (1:3-4)

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jude 1:3-4 (NKJV)

Beloved. While all of the epistles have this term, it is used more extensively in the “catholic” epistles (i.e. those not written by Paul). Perhaps the reason is that these epistles were mostly written later than Paul’s and times had gotten to where the saints needed all the more to know they were loved.

“While I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation. . .” σπουδή (spoude) is “earnestness, diligence”: universally, earnestness in accomplishing, promoting, or striving after anything”⁴ To this Jude adds “very”, as if the urgency of the situation was not already expressed by the noun. It gives great urgency to the situation. The condition he was concerned about was the “common salvation.” There is an urgency today to make out salvation sure, just as when Jude penned these words.

“I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” BKC has,

Wishing to write of the more pleasant theme of salvation, Jude was forced by his concern to write on an urgent and abhorrent theme. Circumstances had arisen that demanded immediate action, thus presenting an emergency situation. Jude addressed himself to a recognized problem, and exhorted the believers to respond with positive determination.

BKC, Jude 1:3-4

His exhortation was for them to “contend.” ἐπαγωνίζομαι (epagonizomai) (a real mouthful!) but with the simple meaning of “to contend” as with a boxer in the ring. They would have to contend

³THAYER, πληθύνω

⁴THAYER, σπουδή

“earnestly” and not just when the “spirit moved them.” It was a necessity. What was so important that they needed to do this? Their faith! What could be more important than that? Was Jude concerned that they might lose it? What does he write? “*once for all delivered to the saints*’ ἅπαξ (hapax), “once” is “used of what is so done as to be of perpetual validity and never need repetition, “once for all”⁵ If the word is not enough, the verb is an Aorist Participle. The keeping of this faith is expressed by this tense and Wuest translates this as below.

Divinely loved ones, when giving every diligence to be writing to you concerning the salvation possessed in common by all of us, I had constraint laid upon me to write to you, beseeching you to contend with intensity and determination for the Faith once for all entrusted into the safe-keeping of the saints.

WUEST, Jude 1:3-4

Jude does not say what, or who, constrained him to change his mind in what he would write. The specific problem we shall see soon, but ultimately, it was the Holy Spirit who directed him.

*for prophecy never came by the **will of man**, but holy men of God spoke as they were **moved by the Holy Spirit**.*

2 Peter 1:21 (NKJV)

Now as to the specific urgency, we have, *For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men.* He writes to warn them of “ungodly” men. ἄσεβής (asebas) “ungodly, “*destitute of reverential awe toward God, contemning God, impious.*”⁶ In reference to these ungodly men, McGee wrote,

I have been in the church for many years. I have been and am still an ordained Presbyterian preacher -- although I am in no denomination today and have no denominational connections at all. As a young person I remember that the church was by and large sound in the faith. When I went to the denominational college, I began to discover that there were ministers who denied practically every tenet of the faith. That opened up a new world to me. Then when I went to the denominational seminary, I found that the liberal element was still growing. The day came when I left that denomination and came to California. Here I entered another denomination, and when I saw it going into liberalism, I got out. I wasn't put out; I just stepped out voluntarily. During that long period I saw how these men were able to take over a church. They came in the side door. They came in by professing one thing and believing another. They did not come in the front door -- that is, they did not declare their doctrinal position. Many of our good laymen have been deceived by ministers like that. Scripture has warned about them. For instance, Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works"

McGEE, Jude 1:4

McGee's remarks about these apostates coming in the side door stems from the meaning of the

⁵THAYER, ἅπαξ

⁶THAYER, ἄσεβής

Greek word translated here “crept in unnoticed.” What would Jude say today? He was here writing about the few apostates that were beginning to creep into the church, today there is a multitude of them to watch out for!

“Who long ago were marked out for this condemnation.” The NASB version is a bit more accurate here -“whose condemnation **was written about** long ago.” Condemnation is κρίμα (krima) and I do not believe that “condemnation” is the best translation of it. It would be better to speak of those whose **judgement** has been established. The reason why “God d... it” is considered a profanity because, unless you seriously mean it, it **is** profane. I am not sure one can ever say “God damn it” in sincerity. I do know what David said,

*Plead my cause, O LORD, with those who strive with me; Fight against those who fight against me. Take hold of shield and buckler, And stand up for my help. Also draw out the spear, And stop those who pursue me. Say to my soul, "I am your salvation." Let those be put to shame and brought to dishonor Who seek after my life; Let those be turned back and brought to confusion Who plot my hurt. Let them be like chaff before the wind, And let the angel of the LORD chase them. Let their way be dark and slippery, And let the angel of the LORD pursue them. For without cause they have hidden their net for me in a pit, Which they have dug without cause for my life. **Let destruction come upon him unexpectedly, And let his net that he has hidden catch himself; Into that very destruction let him fall.***

Psalm 35:1-8 (NKJV)

David is, literally, asking God to judge (damn) his enemies. Dr McGee agrees with this;

There are folk who say that this is not the kind of prayer a Christian should pray and that the Lord Jesus did not talk like this. However, the Lord Jesus did give a parable about a widow who went to a judge saying, "Avenge me of mine adversary." That judge took a long time to do it, but he finally saw that the widow got justice. It is a parable by contrast. God is not an unfeeling, hardheaded judge. God is gracious, wonderful, and eager to help His children, and we are to turn over to Him our grievances. And Paul gives believers this admonition: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19). You and I are not to take vengeance. We are to turn that over to God -- it is His department. He will handle it better than either you or I will handle it.

McGEE, Psalm 35,1-8

Getting back to the subject, there is no need for us to ask for damnation of these people, God did it long ago to those Jude notes here..

“Who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.” This “lewdness” is ἀσελγεία (aselgeia) which refers to “unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence”: Mark 7:22 (where it is uncertain what particular vice is spoken of); of gluttony and venery, Jude 1:4; plural, 1 Peter 4:3; 2 Peter 2:2, 18; of carnality, “lasciviousness”: 2 Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:19; 2 Peter 2:7; plural “wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females, etc.”⁷ In other words, this word covers “a multitude of sins.!”

⁷THAYER, ἀσελγεία

Paul speak at length on these people.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

Romans 1:18-32 (NKJV)

Jude continues with some examples for us.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLES OF APOSTASY (1:5-7)

But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Jude 1:5-7 (NKJV)

A: Of Israel (1:5) But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. "Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: 'The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. 'Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. 'But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring

in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. 'But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. 'And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. 'According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. 'I the LORD have spoken this; I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.' "

Numbers 14:26-35 (NKJV)

HENCE

*For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? **So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.***

Hebrews 3:16-19 (NKJV)

Are you worried that you, too, will “fall in the desert?” If you have attended church all your life, been confirmed, heard the stories about heaven and all that, but have never once said, “Jesus, I want you to be my Lord and Savior!” you will fall “in the desert of unbelief.” But if you have accepted Jesus, heaven is in store for you and nothing can change that.

B: Of angelic beings (1:6) And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day

The Fall of Lucifer

"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'

Isaiah 14:12-14 (NKJV)

So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Revelation 12:9 (NKJV)

You may wonder, “What if Lucifer had not fallen, would we be free from temptation?” The world is filled with “what if’s” but Satan’s fall is a fact you have to contend with. But the great thing is that you do not have to contend with him alone, you have the Lord and all of the unfallen angels ready to come to your aid.

C: Of Sodom and Gomorrah (1:7) as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire

This is Jude's third example of apostasy in the past. He has mentioned Israel in their unbelief, the angels which kept not their first estate, and now the people of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them. These cities were so completely judged that they probably are buried beneath the Dead Sea today. Some people believe that they have located them. I am not sure whether or not this is

true, and the exact location is unimportant. The important thing to know is that God destroyed these cities because the people defiled their flesh. They were given over to homosexuality or sodomy. It is interesting that in the parlance of our day sodomy is called homosexuality, adultery is called free love, the drunkard is a respected alcoholic, and the murderer is temporarily insane. Satan is doing a good job of indoctrinating the world with a new vocabulary. Nevertheless, sodomy in God's sight is gross immorality and the vilest sin of all. The fact that God has judged men in the past for sins of sensuality ought to be a warning to our generation. God will judge any civilization that moves too far in this direction, and I wonder if we haven't done just that.

McGEE, Jude 1:7

So that you will not end up being misled and fall into the error of Sodom and Gomorrah, Jude is here ready to warn you with a description of those you do not want to follow.

DESCRIPTION OF FALSE TEACHERS (1:8-13)

Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves. Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

Jude 1:8-13 (NKJV)

Likewise also these dreamers (1) defile the flesh, (2) reject authority, and (3) speak evil of dignitaries. Jude calls these men "dreamers," ἐνυπνιάζομαι (enupniazomai) (a mouthful!) Which is used in one other passage where it is used in a good sense.

*'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men **shall dream** dreams.*

Acts 2:17 (NKJV)

It is also used in a good sense in the LXX description of Daniel's dreams. In this case, Thayer says it has the meaning of "to be beguiled with sensual images and carried away to an impious course of conduct"⁸ By so "dreaming" they (1) defile the flesh. What this means has been well covered by the citation from Romans 1 (page #8), they (2) reject authority. They "authority" they reject is that of the Lord (the Greek word is a derivative of the word for "lord." Finally, (3) they speak evil of dignitaries. The NIV has it translated better, "slander celestial beings." "Slander" could also be replaced with "blaspheme" since that is word derived from the Greek.

Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses,

⁸THAYER, ἐνυπνιάζομαι

dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, What this means depends on where you search. Barnes notes a problem with this verse.

Yet Michael the archangel, etc. This verse has given more perplexity to expositors than any other part of the epistle; and in fact the difficulties in regard to it have been so great that some have been led to regard the epistle as spurious. The difficulty has arisen from these two circumstances:

(1.) Ignorance of the origin of what is said here of Michael the archangel, nothing of this kind being found in the Old Testament; and

(2.) the improbability of the story itself, which looks like a mere Jewish fable.

BARNES, Jude 1:9

Newer commentaries (Barnes is quite old) have done a bit more research on it.

The archangel Michael was sent to bury Moses' body, but according to Jewish tradition (the pseudepigraphical book, The Assumption of Moses), the devil argued with the angel about the body, apparently claiming the right to dispose of it. But Michael, though powerful and authoritative, did not dare dispute with Satan, so he left the matter in God's hands, saying, The Lord rebuke you! The false teachers Jude spoke of had no respect for authority or for angels. The apostates' slandering of celestial beings (v. 8) stands in arrogant contrast to the chief angelic being, Michael, who would not dare slander Satan, chief of the fallen angels.

BKC, Jude 1:9

But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves. Woe to them! These people speak evil of whatever they do not know. "Know," here is ὀἶδα (oída) which is one of the two common Greek words for "know." This word refers to "head knowledge" rather than "experiential knowledge." They not only did not have any personal knowledge of what they blasphemed, they didn't even have any "head knowledge" of them.

Jude then shows a contrast, the things we can all experience as "animals" (i.e. homo-sapiens) they even corrupt. A very contemptible picture of these people. Woe to them!

For they have gone in the way of Cain

not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.

1 John 3:12 (NKJV)

People who do evil things hate those who do not. It started with Cain and will continue until the Tribulation.

Have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit

So Balaam rose in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab. Then God's anger was aroused because he went, and the Angel of the LORD took His stand in the way as an adversary against him. And he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. Now the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand, and

the donkey turned aside out of the way and went into the field. So Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back onto the road. Then the Angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on this side and a wall on that side. And when the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD, she pushed herself against the wall and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall; so he struck her again. Then the Angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. And when the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam; so Balaam's anger was aroused, and he struck the donkey with his staff. Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?" And Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have abused me. I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you!" So the donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden, ever since I became yours, to this day? Was I ever disposed to do this to you?" And he said, "No." Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face.

Numbers 22:21-31 (NKJV)

Balaam was going to "sell out" the Israelites to their enemies in return for some pay! I remember Dr. McGee's comment, "In those days it was a miracle for a jackass to speak, today it is a miracle if a jackass keeps his mouth shut."

Perished in the rebellion of Korah

Korah, one of the Levites, along with some of his fellow Levites led a rebellion against Moses and Aaron (and hence against God Himself). The result of this is found below.

And Moses said: "By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will. "If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, then the LORD has not sent me. "But if the LORD creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the LORD. ' Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly. Then all Israel who were around them fled at their cry, for they said, "Lest the earth swallow us up also!" And a fire came out from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense.

Numbers 16:28-35 (NKJV)

Dr. McGee observed,

These men had been leaders in Israel. They felt they should have had more prominence in their service. What a warning for us today! Too many people have a marvelous gift for serving God, but it would put them into some humble service, and they have the impression they should be running the church. Do you remember Dorcas who had the gift of sewing? That gift was so important to the early church that God used Peter to raise her from the dead. I think that today we need fewer voices trying to do the speaking and more people who will do the tasks such as sewing. We need people to do the humble tasks around the church today. Each and every gift is important. Jealousy and rebellion will be judged by God.

spots in your love feasts

These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves “Spots” here is derived from a Greek word for “a rock in the sea, ledge or reef”⁹ From this idea the NASB translation has “men who are hidden reefs.” These men were those who might make “shipwreck” out of the “love feasts” (i.e. the observance of the Lord’s Supper). Of this Paul wrote to Corinth,

For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.

1 Corinthians 11:18-22 (NKJV)

Paul asks (above) “*Do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing?*” Jude say the same thing, “*while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves.*”

clouds without water

They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds. The Greek words used here are interesting. “Without water,” is ἀνυδρος (anhydros) from which we derive “anhydrous,” thins lacking in water. “Winds” is ἄνεμος (anemos) from which we get *anemometer*, A device to measure the wind speed. The BKC has here,

This is the first of four vivid comparisons from nature in verses 12-13. These men had no water for thirsty souls; they only pretended that they did. And they were soon gone, unstable as wind-driven clouds

BKC, Jude 1:12

late autumn trees without fruit

Late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots. I need no commentary nor Greek Lexicon to comment on this. When we moved to our home some 32 years ago, I carefully planted twelve fruit trees of various kinds. I put wire mesh around the roots to keep the gophers away and a watering system to keep them watered. Today I have one persimmon tree that, once in a while, will grow a persimmon.

I watched the trees grow and when the begin to get to the size to bare fruit, I would look forward to the “late autumn” for them to bare fruit. At first, we got some fruit but, one by one, the trees stopped baring and turned brown. When I took hold of the tree, it would just pop up out of the ground with its

⁹THAYER, σπιλάς

roots all gone - eaten away by gophers. It is a real disappointment to wait for fruit and get none. But I have had worse disappointments - being in a church that bore no fruit. The problem was usually that there was a change in pastors and the new one **was** a fruitcake!

Dwight L. Moody who said that "*when a man is born once, he will have to die twice and that when a man is born twice, he will have to die only once*"

raging waves of the sea

raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame. We should consult Isaiah for this one.

But the wicked are like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest, Whose waters cast up mire and dirt.
Isaiah 57:20 (NKJV)

Living along the coast as we do, we are used to the great roar of the ocean waves upon the rocky shore. They seem majestic and powerful and they are powerful. But what do they usually accomplish? It seems like every time there is a big storm we read about some spot on the coast washed out to sea along with a home, etc.

They are like the wild and restless waves of the ocean. The image here seems to be, that they were noisy and bold in their professions, and were as wild and ungovernable in their passions as the billows of the sea.

BARNES, Jude 1:13

wandering stars

Wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

It may be of interest, in passing, that "wandering," is πλανήτης (planetes) from which we get, you guessed it, "planet." Barnes notes,

The proper idea is that of stars that have no regular motions, or that do not move in fixed and regular orbits. The laws of the planetary motions were not then understood, and their movements seemed to be irregular and capricious; and hence, if the reference is to them, they might be regarded as not an unapt illustration of these teachers. The sense seems to be, that the aid which we derive from the stars, as in navigation, is in the fact that they are regular in their places and movements, and thus the mariner can determine his position. If they had no regular places and movements, they would be useless to the seaman. So with false religious teachers. No dependence can be placed on them

BARNES, Jude 1:13

AUTHORITATIVE DECLARATIONS OF GOD'S JUDGMENT OF THE WICKED (1:14-19)

Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, "to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." These are grumblers, complainers,

walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.

Jude 1:14-19 (NKJV)

“Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam. . .” What do we know about Enoch? We do know the following.

Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

Genesis 5:21-24 (NKJV)

That is all we know about him. So where did this prophecy about these men come from? Wuest said,

The quotation is from the apocryphal Book of Enoch. This book, known to the Church Fathers of the second century, lost for some centuries with the exception of a few fragments, was found in its entirety in a copy of the Ethiopic Bible in 1773 by Bruce. It consists of revelations purporting to have been given to Enoch and Noah. Its object is to vindicate the ways of divine providence, to set forth the retribution reserved for sinners, and so show that the world is under the immediate government of God.

WUEST, Titus 1:14

McGee adds his two-cents worth here by noting,

Enoch prophesied regarding the false teachers of the last days, and that is a remarkable thing! God apparently did not want the Book of Enoch in the canon of Scripture or it would be there -- you may be sure of that. Godly men recognized that it was an apocryphal book, but here is one prophecy that God wanted put into His Holy Word. It is a prophecy concerning the coming of Christ with His saints.

McGEE, Jude 1:14

“Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, “to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

The phrase “ten thousand” appears some forty times in the NKJV. What is so significant about this term?

*“I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. **A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood** before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened.*

Daniel 7:9-10 (NKJV)

The answer to this is the Greek has μυριας (myrias) which would best be transliterated, “myriads.” In Jude’s day they did not have to deal with the National Debt, so they did not need numbers larger than this! The Old Testament saints also had no word larger than “myriads.” In Daniel 10:7 he was able to describe (although the text is in doubt) a larger number with “myriads or myriads.” So Jude is really saying “an uncountable number.” They would first “judge” them and then “convict” them.

Who is “they” I just mentioned? The KJV and the NKJV has “saints,” but the NASB and NIV have “holy ones.” Saints would be you and I. Holy ones could be the same or could be angels. Dr McGee thinks it would be both!

Did you notice anything unusual in this passage? Let me break it up for you.

*who are **ungodly** among them of
al their **ungodly** deeds which they have committed
in an **ungodly** way, and of all the harsh things
which **ungodly** sinners have spoken against Him.*

The “ungodly” naturally commit “ungodly” deeds in an “ungodly” way. Seems natural! It seems that, with this in view, it should be easy to spot these people - but some are blinded to them!

There is also a great contrast here, the ἅγιος (hagios) = “holy versus the ἄσεβής (asebas) = ungodly.

These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. So that you will recognize them, Jude describes them as below.

- *grumblers,*
- *complainers,*
- *walking according to their own lusts*
- *they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.*

“Grumblers” is an interesting word, γογγυστής (gongustas) which is an “nursery word,” that is a word that gets its meaning from its sound.

*As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, So is a **contentious** man to kindle strife.*

Proverbs 26:21 (NKJV)

“Complainers” is actually more than that in the Greek. μεμψίμοιρος (mempsimoiros) is a compound word which means, literally, “complaining of one’s lot, querulous, discontented”¹⁰

The last two traits need no further explanation. You certainly, unless you live a cloistered life, know of people who do what satisfies their selfish desires and weigh their words so as to give them the most advantage.

But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to

¹⁰THAYER μεμψίμοιρος

their own ungodly lusts. Here Jude must be referring to what Peter wrote (or had spoken to Jude) earlier.

knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

2 Peter 3:3-4 (NKJV)

(Actually, a lot of what Jude has to say is in 2 Peter).

These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit. “Cause divisions” is a quite precise rendering of the Greek and is also a rather precise description of men today whose spirit mindedness is dead and live according to the flesh. You and I have the Holy Spirit to guide us but these have not the Spirit and so can only walk according to what their senses direct.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF TRUE BELIEVERS AND THEIR FULL DUTY TO CHRIST (1:20-23)

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh. Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

Jude 1:20-24 (NKJV)

Unger divides these five verses according to the outline below.

Edification and prayer in the Holy Spirit (1:20)

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, Here on the Central Coast we can tune into Jack Lalanne on Channel 6 to see how to keep our old bodies fit as a fiddle. Jude also advises us to “build ourselves up.” I think you will need some “building up” to pronounce this word, ἐποικοδομέω (epoikodomeo) of which Thayer say, resting on your most holy faith as a foundation, make progress, rise like an edifice higher and higher.¹¹ Note that Jude say “praying **in** the Holy Spirit. BKC cite Lawlor who wrote, “*Praying in the Holy Spirit is not speaking in tongues, but is “praying out of hearts and souls that are indwelt, illuminated, and filled with the Holy Spirit”* (George Lawrence Lawlor, Translation and Exposition of the Epistle of Jude, p. 127)

The image shows two screenshots from a news website. The top screenshot is from KSBY - JACK LALANNE and features a segment titled "Living Longer with Jack LaLanne". The text describes local fitness expert Jack LaLanne's water workouts for pools or hot tubs. The bottom screenshot is also from KSBY - JACK LALANNE and features the same segment title. The text describes swimsuit weather and Jack LaLanne's water exercises. Both screenshots include a small photo of Jack LaLanne in a pool.

BKC, Jude 1:20

B: Preservation in the love of God and expectation of divine mercy (1:21)

keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life

¹¹THAYER, ἐποικοδομέω

Now beware,

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:35-39 (KJV)

Nothing can completely separate us from the love of God. But this is not what Jude means when he writes "keep yourselves in the love of God." McGee comments on this.

We need to recognize that God loves the believer. We have seen that Jude addresses the believers as "beloved." Let me repeat -- this does not imply that he loves them or that they love him but that they are beloved of God. Again, let me say that you cannot keep God from loving you, although you can put up an umbrella or a roof so that you will not feel the warmth of God's love. Jude is saying, "Keep yourselves out there in the sunshine of God's love." Let His love flood your heart and life

McGEE, Jude 1:21

C: Exhortation to soul-winning (1:22-23)

And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh

Jude has been speaking of heretics which were coming to lead the saints astray. Not all people are such. There are those who are "God's Elect." These people need our attention and Jude speaks of several types. But if there are God's Elect, why bother? If God chose them before they were even born to receive salvation, can anything different happen? This may surprise you, for the answer is "No!" They will be saved. But that is not the issue. Who (or what) is it that will cause this to happen? Free will enters into this picture - not their but yours! Are you going to be obedient to God's calling when He told us to . . .

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Matthew 28:19-20 (KJV)

As Christians, we will not have to stand before the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15) but we will stand before the Judgement Seat of Christ.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

2 Corinthians 5:10-11 (KJV)

Everyone who stands before this seat will be saved - they will already be in heaven! What will happen there?

Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15 (KJV)

What reward will you receive? Jesus said He was going to “prepare a place for us” (John 14:2). What kind of place will you receive? A “mansion” next door to Jesus’ mansion or an old log cabin off in the distance? The importance of soul-winning is for the one who does the work!

So, getting back to Jude, he lists three types of people (the Elect if you wish) we need to look for.

- have mercy on some, who are doubting;
- save others, snatching them out of the fire;
- on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

(Note the above classifications are from the NASB). Some will be easy to reach. They are looking but have questions, but not yet received. Be merciful to them.

The “others” that you are to “snatch out of the fire,” I would class as (for example) those who are near death and unsaved. Do you best to snatch them out of the fire while they are still with us!

Then there is a third group we are to have mercy on, but with great care! If they are stronger than you (not physically, but in arguing) they may pull you down rather than you leading them to Christ. Will they cause you to loose yours? Jude says, “hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.” You will not loose your salvation but they may pull you away from your close relationship with Christ!

Clarke writes,

On others show compassion, in a milder and gentler way; though still with a jealous fear, lest you yourselves be infected with the disease you endeavor to cure. See therefore that, while ye love the sinners, ye retain the utmost abhorrence of their sins, and of any, the least degree of or approach to them

CLARKE, Jude 1:23

CONCLUSION: BENEDICTION (1:24-25)

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.

Jude 1:24-25 (NKJV)

In as much as this is a benediction, I shall let it be just that, a benediction to close this study!

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