

Jude

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Jude

Introduction

- 1) *The letter of Jude is one of the shortest in the New Testament. It is called a general epistle for it is not written to any particular church, people or region.*
- 2) *The letter is very similar to II Peter chapter 2 and deals primarily with false teachers. It consists of a condemnation of these false teachers in the strongest of language.*
- 3) *There is disagreement as to what letter was written first, II Peter or Jude. One of the authors was very familiar with the other letter and borrowed from it freely. Did Peter expound in more detail upon Jude's thoughts or was it Jude that summarized Peter's ideas?*
- 4) *The other controversy surrounds who exactly is the author of this letter who identifies himself as Jude, the brother of James?*
 - a) *One possibility is that Jude, along with his brother James, were members of the twelve apostles. (Acts 1:13) Being the sons of Alphaeus, which is a form of Cleophas, they were also the first cousins of Jesus. (John 19:25)*
 - b) *Another possibility is that Jude, along with his brother James, were the half brothers of Jesus. (Mark 6:3)*
 - c) *It is pretty much agreed that James, the leader of the church at Jerusalem and the writer of the epistle of James, is the brother of the author of the epistle of Jude, but, are they apostles and cousins, or the half brothers of Jesus?*
 - d) *Paul calls James, the leader of the Jerusalem church, both an apostle and the Lord's brother. This is impossible, so Paul is using either the word "apostle" or the word "brother" in its broader sense. The controversy remains. (Gal. 1:19)*
- 5) *Of importance is that this man called Jude, brother of James, is an inspired writer of scripture. As with all of the men used by the Holy Spirit to pen the word of God it is the message that is of infinite more importance than the identity of the man or the specifics of his life.*

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v.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:

Whether an apostle or the half brother of Jesus, Jude chooses the road of humility and identifies himself first and foremost as a servant of Jesus Christ. He further identifies himself by deferring to his more prominent brother, James.

- a) *He is a servant. One of the lowest in rank in view of his Lord. In this role he joins himself with the likes of Paul, Peter and his brother James, who all recognized and referred to themselves as the servants of their Master. (Rom. 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; James 1:1)*
- b) *Jude writes to Christians whom he first describes as being sanctified by God the Father. Believers are indeed set apart by God, from before the foundations of the world, to be His people. As Peter wrote, believers "are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people."*
- c) *Furthermore, they were set apart to be saved and preserved in Jesus Christ. The word shows that their salvation and their being kept in this favored position is in the hands of Jesus Christ. He is their Savior and Preserver. (1 Peter 1:5; John 10:27-29)*
- d) *Finally, they are called. Called by the agency of the Holy Spirit out of the world. As Matthew Henry wrote, "... called from sin to Christ, from vanity to seriousness, from uncleanness to holiness; and this in pursuance of divine purpose and grace." (Rom 8:30)*

v.2. Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

Jude's salutation or benediction is a prayer to God on the behalf of his readers that God's favor upon them would not only continue but would be multiplied.

- a) *One of these favors of God is mercy, which being believers, they had already experienced in all its abundance. He prays however that they would continue in His forgiveness, being excused from the consequences of their sin both known and unknown. Also implied is that they in turn would extend this mercy to others.*
- b) *Peace is the result of God's mercy. It comes from knowing that one stands righteous before his God and is kept or preserved by His power. He desires them to be at peace with God, with themselves, and with the world.*
- c) *The third favor mentioned is love. Not God's love for them, but their love for God and for each other. May they be multiplied in it and their understanding of this greatest of virtues be perfected. (Eph. 3:17-19)*

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v.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 explains to his readers that he purposed to write them a letter. Addressing them as beloved indicates that he enjoyed some type of relationship with these individuals. Had he recently ministered to them and desired to keep in touch or to affirm the things he had recently told them?

- a) The language suggests that he set aside time to write them a letter and had put much thought into exactly what he wanted to say. He had decided to write to them concerning the mutual salvation they shared, but upon further thought he had felt compelled to write to them a letter of exhortation and warning.*
- b) False teachers were a true and present danger. The truth was under attack and so, Jude's exhortation to them is to contend for the truth. The word comes from the Grecian games and refers to the dedication, effort and tenacity of an athlete contending for the prize.*
- c) They are to contend for the truth of the gospel message which he simply calls "the faith". It was once delivered to the saints of God, that is, delivered by God to those who would believe and accept it. It was the unalterable word of life to which nothing could be added or taken away. It provided the source of new life as well as the governing principles of that life. (Gal. 1:8-9)*

"The delivering of this faith to the saints here referred to is evidently that made by revelation, or the system of truth which God has made known in his word. Everything which he has revealed, we are to defend as true. We are to surrender no part if it whatever, for every part of that system is of value to mankind. By a careful study of the Bible we are to ascertain what that system is, and then in all places, at all times, in all circumstances, and at every sacrifice, we are to maintain it." Albert Barnes

v.4 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.

The danger was from within. They must contend for the faith within their own ranks. Not everyone was whom they appeared to be. The church at this early date had already been infiltrated.

- a) They came into the church and were accepted as believers under false pretences. They claimed to be of Christ, but were not. They claimed to espouse a holy lifestyle, but did not. They came in secretly managing to avoid scrutiny.*
- b) This should not come as a surprise to Jude's readers, but should be expected. The word translated "ordained" means "written about before".*

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The idea presented is that the existence of men such as these was predicted. They were written about since times of old. Peter, in a parallel passage, indicates these men have always been present, opposing the truth wherever and whenever it is proclaimed. (2 Peter 2:1; 1 Cor. 11:19)

- c) It was not only written that these men would be present, but that they would be judged by God and condemned. Jude will in the upcoming verses provide examples as what he refers to as “this condemnation.”*
- d) These are ungodly men, that is, men of the world who are ruled by their lusts; men who seek license for their sin by perverting the precious truth of the grace of God. (Rom. 6:1, 3:8)*
- e) It is in turning the grace of God into something that promotes evil that they deny Jesus Christ. Their doctrines oppose the very purpose and intent of the work of Christ whom they profess. By their evil works they discount the doctrine of the holiness of God and His desire to bring to Himself a people zealous of good works. (Titus 1:16, 2:14)*

v.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 expounds upon the condemnation or judgment that will come upon the false teachers and their followers. Just as the existence of these men was “written about before” so also was their end predicted as well as demonstrated.

- a) He reminds them of past judgments of God that they were once familiar with. Had they forgotten, or possibly, had they not taken the present threat seriously enough to apply such past demonstrations of God’s judgment to current situations?*
- b) The first example, taken from Israel’s history, best parallels their situation. God had saved His people from the bondage of slavery in Egypt, but this did not prevent God from destroying them when in their actions and murmurings they were proven to be men of unbelief. (Num. 14:27-33)*
- c) With how much more certainty will God purge His church of infiltrators and imposters who by their actions and doctrines deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 4:17-18)*

v.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.

In Jude’s second example, he reminds them of the judgment of God pronounced upon the angels that had sinned. These magnificent creatures, created by God to serve him within the spiritual realm, were dealt with severely for their rebellion.

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- a) *Jude sheds some light on a topic the scriptures tell us little about, namely, the fall of a portion of the angels. The word translated "estate" means "the rank and honor attributed to a position." The angels abandoned their home or dwelling place in the heavens and so lost the position they were created to fill.*
- b) *The words suggest that their departure was somewhat voluntary. They left their position in rebellion against God. To put it simply, they quit.*
- c) *God gave them over to their folly and bound them in spiritual darkness. God keeps them in the spirit of rebellion which they had chosen. The idea presented by the chain is that there is no escape. They are kept in darkness awaiting the great day of judgment.*
- d) *They either left their positions before or after the creation of man, we know that these malcontent angels took up residence on and around the earth. Here they enticed men to rebel against God's authority. God, in turn purposed to recover man. His plan, which He authored, accomplished and administers is "the faith once delivered unto the saints."*
- e) *Jude, in his example, goes from their voluntary departure to their being reserved unto judgment. However, there is more to the story which he does not include. Inducing man to sin, Satan became the prince of this world. (Luke 4:5-6; John 14:30)*
- f) *Satan continued to have access to heaven contending with God over the souls of men as well as God's intervention in the earth which He had in effect chosen him to rule. (Job 2:1-2)*
- g) *Satan, it seems, was cast out of heaven with the fulfillment of God's plan for man's recovery in Jesus Christ. (Rev. 12:7-10; John 12:31) Before this, Satan had a case. With Christ's death he was judicially cast out, that is, there was no more argument. (Rom. 3:25-26, 8:33-34)*

(Based upon the apocryphal book of 1 Enoch and some Jewish traditions many tie this verse to the very difficult verses of Genesis 6:2-4. They believe that angels left their habitation in heaven to dwell with men in a physical sense. The words of Jesus in Matthew 22:30 seem to refute such interpretations. Was there some group or race of angel that did enter the realm of man and were literally and physically chained in darkness after the flood? I tend to go with the less sensational. The less sensational explanation of the Genesis passages is that "sons of God" refer to those of the line of Seth who honored God. As were the Israelites much later, they were probably instructed to marry God fearing women. Being enticed by the worldly women, they married them and also adopted their practices of polygamy. The offspring of these relationships hit new heights of evil.)

v.7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after

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strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Finally, Jude puts before his readers the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha, which were representative of an entire region that boldly rebelled against God in their sin and was subjected to his righteous wrath.

- a) The inhabitants of this region rebelled against the natural order that God had established. They gave themselves over to or were completely dominated by sexual perversity as evidenced by their homosexuality. (Gen. 19:4-10; Rom. 1:26-28)*
- b) This region was totally destroyed by God. (Gen. 19:24-25) This action was meant by God to be an example for all time of His judgment of the ungodly. It is mentioned by no less than eight of the writers of scripture.*
- c) God's vengeance in this case was in the form of fire. It is probably called eternal in that it is a representation of the fire of hell which will be the fate of all the ungodly both men as well as angels.*

"The meaning is that the case was one which furnished a demonstration of the fact that God will punish sin; that this was an example of the punishment which God sometimes inflicts on sinners in this world, and a type of that eternal punishment which will be inflicted in the next." Albert Barnes

v.8. Likewise also these [filthy] dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

The word "likewise" connects the false teachers of Jude's day with the rebellious men and angels of the past in accordance with his examples. Even though these historical examples stand sure, demonstrating behaviors that are worthy of God's judgment, these men take the same path.

- a) They are filthy or sinful dreamers, meaning they are delusional in their opinion of themselves as teachers. The word "dreamers" is connected to each of the three phrases that follow in the verse. So they would not see the truth of Jude's accusations against them thinking themselves as being the very opposite. Dreams are unrealistic and fragmented, words that further describe these men and their doctrines.*
- b) As those of Sodom and Gomorrah they defile or pollute the flesh by turning the grace of God into lasciviousness or evil. They treat the grace of God as a license to sin and indulge in sexual lusts that will bring God's judgment upon them. (2 Peter 2:14)*
- c) As did the unbelieving Israelites they hate authority. They are disposed to follow their own ways straying from the faith that was once delivered unto the saints just as those in the desert came to despise the direction of Moses.*
- d) What was true of the Israelites was before true of the angels as they also rebelled against God and went their own way. The false teachers, as their*

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counterparts of the past, slander those representative of the authority they despise.

- e) The word "dignities" is translated from a word which means "glories". Jude can be referring to anyone in a position of authority whether in heaven or on earth. He could be specifically referring to the apostles along with the true pastors and teachers of the Christian faith, or he could be referring to the spiritual authority, figures such as God, the angels or Satan.
- f) The idea is that these false teachers speak evil of anyone who would challenge them or get in their way regardless of the authority, rank or position they might hold. They are proud and irreverent. (2 Peter 2:10)

v.9 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.

Jude presents an example to show the bold arrogance of the false teachers and the gravity of this sin to which they were predisposed. The believer is commanded to speak evil of no man, yet the slander of these individuals knew no bounds. (Titus 3:1-2)

- a) The example is that of Michael the archangel arguing with Satan. Michael, a powerful angel and representative of God, would not bring a railing accusation even against Satan, who would be the most deserving of such slander. If Michael would not slander Satan, how do these individuals suppose that they have free reign to rail against anyone who might get in their way?
- b) Satan is the accuser; the father of all the bold, stubborn and arrogant. Implied is that he is also the father of these false teachers who outwardly display his character. (Rev. 12:10)
- c) This dispute between Michael and Satan over the body of Moses appears nowhere in the scriptures. It does however appear in some Jewish writings. Jude, as an inspired writer of scripture, affirms that this confrontation did take place but verifies none of the details. (Deut. 34:5-6)

What exactly could this dispute have been about? Some of the old writings suggest that the Devil wanted the body of Moses to be found so that the Jews could be induced to idolize it in some way. Another theory is that the dispute had to do with the taking of the body of Moses sometime after his burial. (Moses appeared in bodily form at the transfiguration of Christ) Under this theory, the Devil's argument would be that Moses was a sinner and so there was no grounds for his body to be taken and resurrected. The Devil protested against Joshua on the same grounds, namely, that he was a sinner and was rebuked in the same fashion. (Zech. 3:1-10) If this is the case then three men were present in heaven in bodily form each representing a different dispensation, but more importantly represented the pledge of God for the forgiveness of sin, a future resurrection and eternal life. Enoch represented

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the patriarchal dispensation, Elijah the prophetic and Moses the Levitical. Jesus Christ, the firstfruits, was the reason the Devil's protests were invalid.

v.10 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.

With the word "but", Jude draws a comparison between these "filthy dreamers" and Michael the archangel. It is a comparison that proves their folly. Michael, an angel of great power and knowledge did not speak evil of Satan, yet these men who have no knowledge readily speak evil of all in authority.

- a) *The first word translated "know" implies a deep knowledge and here refers to spiritual knowledge or insight. Lacking spiritual discernment they have no understanding of the concepts, doctrines and individuals they are speaking against.*
- b) *The second word translated "know" refers to the instinctive knowledge or so called "animal instincts". Barnes describes it as, "the impulses of appetite, and passion, and sensual pleasure." They live by their natural instincts; thinking, judging and evaluation everything by this base knowledge.*
- c) *The idea is that they choose not to increase in knowledge and insight. Their answer for the things they do not understand is railing and evil speaking. They choose to be ruled by their instincts as animals and this will be their undoing.*

"He means that persons without spiritual discernment are abysmally ignorant of reality and depend on instinct. That is, they have lowered themselves to the level of animals and in their sexual pursuits are guided by instinct. Yet, unlike the animals which abide by the laws of nature, these godless men are destroyed by the very things they fail to understand. When men live by instinct, they abandon even natural law and consequently perish." Simon Kistemaker

v.11 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.

The phrase "Woe unto them!" is a reflection by the author as to the judgment and misery that will come upon these individuals as a direct result of the behavior they exhibit. It is a prophecy of the terrible end to which the path they are on will lead them. The phrase was used by the Old Testament prophets and by Jesus Christ. (Matt. 23:13-16)

- a) *Jude presents three more examples comparing the false teachers to figures of the past who walked the same road on which these false teachers were currently traveling. Implied is that they would come to the same end as those individuals.*

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- b) *The first comparison is to Cain, simply saying that the false teachers followed his way or path. Cain rejected the form of worship that God had commanded and went about to establish his own system. When he was rejected he killed his brother out of envy, his brother representing the truth of God. (Gen. 4:3-8)*
- c) *In like manner these false teachers reject the truth of the "faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and go about to establish their own system which "turns the grace of our God into lasciviousness."*
- d) *With the example of Balaam he focuses upon the motivation of these individuals which is greed. Like Cain, Balaam knew the truth for he consulted with God. (Num. 22:10-12) Blinded by greed, he contended with God over the Israelites so he could obtain earthly gain. He simply refused to accept God's truth.*
- e) *The phrase "ran greedily" means to "pour out". The idea is that just like water released from the confinement of a dam rushes to the lower ground, so these men take any path that will lead them to personal gain. They see an opportunity for gain and rush over anything to obtain it; even if that "anything" happens to be the truth of God.*
- f) *Finally, he compares these individuals to Korah who rebelled against the authority of Moses and was destroyed. The word "gainsaying" means "speaking against". These false teachers spoke against God's apostles and the authority He had established. Jude uses the past tense of "perish" to show that the judgment of these individuals had already been rendered and would surely come about. (Num. 16:2-3, 32-35)*
- g) *With his examples, Jude shows that men have always been bent on seeking to destroy God's truth as well as His people. He wants his readers to know that this danger still exists in the false teachers and their doctrine. They are the modern day counterparts to Cain, Balaam and Korah.*

v.12 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;

Jude turns to nature to further describe the false teachers. His examples paint vivid pictures portraying to his readers both the danger and the emptiness of these men and their doctrines. His words are pointed and harsh as he upholds the zero tolerance policy of scripture concerning false teachers and their doctrines.

- a) *The word translated "spots" in the original Greek is "rocks or reefs". It is a different word than that used by Peter in his second letter which is rightly interpreted "spots". (2 Peter 2:13) Was a mistake made in translation? As Kistemaker puts it, "The choice between these two translations is difficult."*

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- b) *Going with the original Greek text, the picture painted is that of a rock in or by the sea on which boats, upon contact, may be wrecked. The idea is that they present a danger within. They are present in services and social functions as a rock among boats. They present a constant threat of shipwreck to those who come into contact with them.*
- c) *The word “feasts” suggests that these were social events among themselves when their guard may have been down. They were there to worship and enjoy the company of their brothers, however, the “rocks” were there to “defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.”*
- d) *Some equate “feasts of charity” with the celebration or partaking in the Lord’s table, but this cannot be proven by the text. At any rate, the term “feeding or tending” to themselves brings to mind Ezekiel’s condemnation of the spiritual leaders of Israel. (Ezek. 34:2) These individuals used the true believers to satisfy their own lusts. They did so without conscience, totally comfortable in their sins to a degree that they had no fear of retribution.*
- e) *Jude next compares these individuals to clouds without water to show the utter emptiness of their character as well as their doctrine. Just as the storm that blows over depriving the earth of the life-giving rain, so these individuals are not what they seem. Their words and doctrines are empty, void of truth and life. (2 Peter 2:17; Prov. 25:14)*
- f) *He compares them to a bad fruit tree. Just as a tree bears fruit that is not properly connected to the branch and as a result fails to grow, withers and falls off, so these false teachers whom Peter describes as “having escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord,” are not connected to Christ in the proper way. Their apparent fruit fails to grow, withers, and falls off. (2 Peter 2:20-22)*
- g) *The idea of twice dead probably refers to a tree which has not bore good fruit for two seasons. Such a tree is pulled out by the roots so another will not sprout from the same corrupt root system. These individuals were dead in unbelief, supposed to have taken on a new life in Christ, but now proved to be dead once again in their apostasy. They will be judged.*

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

Jude continues to use examples from nature to properly portray these individuals to his readers. He compares them to the waves of the sea and then to wandering stars before pronouncing God’s judgment upon them.

- a) *In comparing them to the waves of the sea Jude was probably referring to the fact that these men were wild, untamed, unpredictable and dangerous. Matthew Henry said, “boisterous, noisy, and clamorous; full of talk and turbulence, but with little (if any) sense or meaning.”*

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- b) *The foam is the result of the impurities and debris picked up by the waves. In the same way the sin and impurities of their self-serving doctrines float all around them to their shame. (Is. 57:20)*
- c) *Wandering stars are the planets. In the sky they appear as stars but seem to be erratic in their course, and so, useless for navigational purposes. The true stars were predictable as to their positioning and movements and could be relied upon. The idea presented is that the false teachers were wanderers, unpredictable, and unreliable. They were useless in the "navigation" of ones life.*
- d) *The fate of these false teachers who would lead others astray for personal gain is "the blackness of darkness for ever." Utter and complete darkness from which they can never be recovered. It is a terrible phrase that attempts to depict the hopelessness of hell. It is reserved for them which means their judgment is sure and final.*

v.14-15 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, 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 quotes a prophecy of Enoch concerning false teachers which Jude applies to those of his day. The point seems to be that from the time of Enoch or from the earliest of times false teachers were present, leading men astray, as God's judgment has been pronounced upon them in every generation. (2 Peter 2:1)

- a) *Enoch was the seventh generation from Adam of the line of Seth. Enoch pleased God and was taken to be with God bodily. (Gen. 5:18-24; Heb. 11:5)*
- b) *Jude, as an inspired writer of scripture attributes this prophecy to Enoch. Whether this was a tradition among the Jews that Jude here verifies or whether it was given to him by direct revelation as he penned this letter is not known.*
- c) *There exists a Book of Enoch which is considered to be an apocryphal writing that contains this quote. Whether the book was written before or after Jude's letter is debatable. It certainly was not the work of Enoch who lived before the flood.*
- d) *The prophecy is of the final judgment when God will come with His angels and perfected saints to convince the ungodly. The word "convince" means that they will be enlightened as to their sin, to the ungodly deeds they had committed and to the error which they had proclaimed as truth. They will be made to bend the knee and proclaim the majesty of the God they had mocked. (Rom. 14:11-12)*

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- e) *The doctrine of the final judgment was revealed to man back at least to the seventh generation from Adam! It was confirmed by the prophets, spoken of by Jesus Christ, and declared by the writers of the New Testament. As John wrote in the Book of Revelation, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."*

v.16 *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 continues to expose the false teachers of his day whom he considers to be representative of the ancient prophecy of Enoch. Having described them metaphorically with examples taken from nature, Jude now plainly identifies them by their ungodly practices and character traits.

- a) *The word interpreted "murmurers" is only used here in the New Testament. Barnes defines it as, "finding fault with God's plans, and purposes, and doings." Since these men professed to be Christians, but at the same time denied the faith once delivered unto the saints, it seems that they murmured against the truth of God and those who adhered to it; against those who would not accept their liberal expanded gospel that turned the grace of God into evil and was based upon their self proclaimed enlightenment.*
- b) *They are also described as complainers, that is, those not content with their lot in life or in their ministries. They probably complained that they were not respected, not appreciated, and not compensated enough as supposed teachers.*
- c) *The reason for their utter state of discontentment was that they lived according to their lusts. This was their motivation, to fulfill the insatiable desires of their flesh for power, wealth, and sensual delights. (2 Peter 2:14, 18)*
- d) *They boasted of themselves in their great orations. They probably claimed some type of greater knowledge or spiritual enlightenment at the expense of those who were of the truth. In reality they were fast talkers and salesmen. Their true "gift" was their tongue.*
- e) *Finally, they were flatterers. They targeted the wealthy and powerful. Holding them up over others and esteeming them more highly simply to gain an advantage.*

"The idea is, that they were not just in the esteem which they had for others, or that they did not appreciate them according to their real worth, but paid special attention to one class in order to promote their selfish ends." Albert Barnes

v.17-18 *But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told*

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you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

Jude calls his readers to remember. The apostles had warned of false teachers and false doctrine. They had warned that these men would come against the church. This was not new information, but had been prophesied.

- a) *This fact in itself should bring them some comfort. These men and their activities are not a surprise to God, but were known. It was revealed by God to the apostles who in turn warned the church to expect it, and so, to be prepared. (2 Peter 3:17, 3:1-3)*
- b) *The promise of Jesus Christ stands. The gates of hell will not prevail against his church. (Matt. 16:18) It is easy in the heat of battle to lose sight of the “big picture” and despair as did Timothy, however, Paul reminded him that the professing church would be infiltrated by evil men. (2 Tim. 2:19-21)*
- c) *Specifically, Jude warns them of the mockers (the word is interpreted “scoffers” in 2nd Peter), that is, those who would make light of the truth. It is their lusts and passions that dictate their doctrines. They have a form of godliness, but blinded by their lusts they deny the power of the gospel to change their lives. (2 Tim. 3:1-5)*

“The more religion is ridiculed and persecuted the faster hold we should take and keep of it; being forewarned, we should show that we are fore-armed; under such trials we should stand firm, and not be soon shaken in mind.” Matthew Henry

v.19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

Jude offers his final comments on the false teachers. Without any explanation or detail he offers a behavior, a character trait and then an observation concerning these individuals.

- a) *They make boundaries between themselves and others or simply separate themselves. The basis of this separation was probably that some claimed enlightenment; a greater knowledge, understanding or wisdom that separated them and made them superior to other Christian teachers as well as to the common believer.*
- b) *Ideas and teachings such as these would cause divisions in the church. How directly opposed to the mindset of Peter, who although an apostle describes himself simply as an elder among elders who led by example. (1 Peter 5:1-3)*
- c) *They are sensual, meaning they follow and are driven by their own natural instincts. It is in their lusts and passions of which their teachings are born. (Rom. 16:17-18)*
- d) *Finally, they do not have the Spirit. In other words they are not*

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Christians, but imposters and pretenders. They are deceiving others while they themselves are deceived as to their own spiritual condition. (2 Tim. 3:13)

v.20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

Addressing his readers as “beloved,” Jude begins a final exhortation by instructing them to do the exact opposite of the false teachers. While their opponents separate themselves from the tenets of the most holy faith, they are to build up themselves on the truths of the faith. While the false teachers do not possess the Spirit, they are to pray in the Holy Spirit that dwells within them.

- a) The picture painted is of one building a structure or a house upon a foundation. Their foundation is their “most holy faith,” that is the truth of the gospel message on which they had first believed. It is the “faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” (v.3)*
- b) The fact that they “are to build” shows that it is a responsibility which they have and for which they will be held accountable. The same metaphor was used by both Peter and Paul. (1 Peter 2:5; 1 Cor. 3:10-13)*
- c) Jude reminds them of the importance of prayer and of the Comforter who dwells within them interceding on their behalf. It is the Holy Ghost who knows the will of God and directs their prayers. (Rom. 8:26-27)*

“Prayer is the nurse of faith; the way to build up ourselves in our most holy faith is to continue instant in prayer. Our prayers are then most likely to prevail when we pray in the Holy Ghost, that is, under his guidance and influence, according to the rule of his word, with faith, fervency, and constant persevering importunity; this is praying in the Holy Ghost.” Matthew Henry

v.21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

When Jude exhorts his readers “keep yourselves in the love of God,” he is not referring to God’s love for the believer, but to their love for God. Nothing can separate the believer from the love of God that saves them, sanctifies them, secures them, and which never fails. (Rom. 8:35-39)

- a) They are, in turn, to make certain that they do not become complacent in their love for God, that is, going through the motions of service, but having left their first love. (Rev. 2:2-4) They are to keep their love “stirred up” and vibrant; fresh and alive. It is to be the motivation behind their every good work.*
- b) This love will keep them in His truth, keep them in His will, keep them from false doctrine, and keep them from disobedience. To grow in the love of God is a common exhortation in the New Testament and the command Jude here has in mind.*

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- c) *Jude literally tells them to wait with great anticipation, or to eagerly be awaiting the completion of God's mercy and the fulfillment of their redemption which is eternal life. This hope should be ever before them for it will strengthen their love. (2 Peter 3:13-14)*

*"Eternal life is to only be looked for through mercy; mercy is our only plea, not merit; or if merit, not our own, but another's, who has merited for us what otherwise we could have laid no claim to, nor have entertained any well-grounded hope of."
Matthew Henry*

v.22 And of some have compassion, making a difference:

Jude informs his readers of the responsibility that they have regarding their weak and/or erring brothers. He offers them instruction as to their recovery. Although Jude probably had erring believers in mind the same advice could be applied to their dealings with non-believers.

- a) *Believers are called to be their brother's keeper. They are to watch over, pray for, and encourage one another. They are to instruct, reprove and if need be rebuke one another. The church is a corporate institution; a body made up of interrelated parts.*
- b) *Jude states that some, that is, probably those who are weak, wavering, and entertaining the doctrines of the false teachers, are to be treated with compassion. They should be approached with a gentle and meek spirit with all patience. As Matthew Henry puts it, we are "not to be needlessly harsh and severe in our censures of them and their actions, not proud and haughty in our conduct towards them."*
- c) *But, Jude goes on to say that we are to make a difference or a distinction between erring individuals. The above approach may not always be the best. A discerning spirit is necessary, for different approaches are to be taken in view of the degree to which a brother has fallen or possibly even in view of his personal makeup and personality.*

v.23 And others save with fear, pulling [them] out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

The other approach offered by Jude that is sometimes necessary is to save the erring brother with fear. The word "save" refers to believers as ministers of salvation, as those God has chosen to use in a search and rescue operation. Only God is the author of salvation, the only one who can truly save.

- a) *The believer is called to put the "fear of God" into these individuals. Their sin is to be directly pointed out and the consequences to be plainly laid out before them. Turning again to Matthew Henry, he states, "Endeavor to frighten them out of their sins; preach hell and damnation to them."*
- b) *The phrase "pulling them out of the fire" suggests that he is referring to those who had accepted the doctrine of false teachers and as a result had*

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plunged into all sorts of destructive habits and sin. These individuals are already being "scorched" by the consequences of their sin and are in danger of being engulfed by the flames. Time is of the essence. They must be pulled away. (Amos 4:11)

- c) *Jude issues a warning in dealing with this latter group of individuals. The reference to the spotted garment probably refers to contagious diseases such as leprosy where one would not even come in contact with the clothes of an infected person. The idea is that the sins of these individuals should be regarded as the clothes of a leper and to be avoided at all costs.*
- d) *There are sins that the believer should not even come close to or to educate himself of. They present a very real danger. Although it was their duty to attempt to save their erring brothers, every precaution was to be taken to protect themselves from temptation.*

"There is much wisdom in this counsel. While we endeavor to save the sinner, we cannot too deeply loathe his sins; and in approaching some classes of sinners there is need of as much care to avoid being defiled by them, as there would be to escape the plague if we had any transaction with one who had it. Not a few have been deeply corrupted in their attempts to reform the polluted." Albert Barnes

- e) *As for unbelievers the same principles apply. Some are to be approached in humility and meekness. They are to be told the truth, but it is to be tempered with love. Others, whose sin and lifestyle dictate a sense of urgency should be confronted more strongly. Christ handled the self-righteous leaders much more strongly than the common sinner.*

v.24-25 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, To the only wise God our Saviour, [be] glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Jude closes his letter with what can be called a doxology or a prayer. He begins by describing in various ways the God he praises, setting God before them as the sole source of their strength and hope.

- a) *In light of the content of his letter, God is their preserver; the one that can keep them from falling into the error of the false teachers, and so, into sin. This is the same idea with which Jude opened his letter (v.1)*
- b) *As pointed out in Peter's "blueprint for Christian living," God demands effort on the part of the Christian while energizing him to walk in His preserving graces. (2 Peter 1:5-10)*
- c) *The end of preserving is presenting. In Jesus Christ we will stand blameless in the presence of God. We will see His glory and be filled with joy, that is, an abundant and never ending joy that will never fade in the least. (Eph. 5:27)*

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d) He is the only God and the author of salvation. His wisdom is made manifest in the plan of salvation which He authored, accomplished and administers. He is God and He continues in the fullness of all of His attributes forever. Jude concludes in union with all believers "so let it be" or Amen!