

# **EXPOSITORY NOTES**

## **JUDE**

**Gordon Lyons**



# Expository Notes

*Jude*

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### **Jude**

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# Introduction and Background

## **Author**

There is some difficulty in identifying the writer of this epistle. Older commentators believed that the writer of this letter was Jude or Judas, one of the Twelve disciples of the Lord Jesus. This Jude or Judas, of course, was not the same person as Judas Iscariot. Jude was known more commonly as Lebbaeus (surnamed, Thaddaeus).

However, in older versions of the Bible, some confusion of identity arises from passages such as Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13 which refer to 'Judas the brother of James'. This appears to identify Judas and James the apostles as brothers. Hence, it was believed that this was the Jude who wrote this letter and that James the apostle was the brother to whom this Jude was referring. However, the literal rendering of Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13 is not '*Judas the brother of James*' but '*Judas of James*'. Generally, this expression is understood to mean '*Judas the son of James*', and this is the rendering given in modern translations.

The Jude who wrote this letter, opens by calling himself 'the brother of James'. We have seen already that the apostles Jude and James were not brothers. Furthermore, at the time this letter was written, James the apostle had been dead for some time. Thus, we believe that the Jude who wrote this letter was not Jude the apostle. We believe, also, that this Jude was not referring to either of the apostles named James but to another James—a James who was living at the time Jude wrote. However, by using the name James without qualification, Jude must have been referring to a James who was very well known in the church. At the time of writing, this was most likely to have been James, the Lord's (half) brother, and one of the 'pillars' of the church at Jerusalem. (Acts 12:17; 15:13; Gal. 1:19; 2:9)

If Jude is this James' brother, then Jude also was a half brother of the Lord Jesus. As far as is known, none of the Lord's brothers believed on him until after his resurrection. If this is so, then neither James the son of Zebedee or James the son of Alphaeus could have been the same person as James the Lord's brother. (Cf. Matt. 13:55) Legally, James the Lord's brother would have been known as James the son of Joseph or of Mary. (Matt. 27:56)

(If the Alphaeus mentioned above was the person known otherwise as Cleopas, then his son James would have been the Lord's cousin. (Luke 24:18; John 19:25))

Therefore, it would seem that the writer of this short epistle was Judas who—with James, Joses and Simon—was one of the half brothers of the Lord Jesus. (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3)

## **Purpose**

As with 2 Peter, with which this letter has much in common, Jude was writing to encourage believers in the faith, and to warn them in the strongest possible terms against deceivers and false teachers. Jude makes it abundantly plain that God judges false teachers most severely, together with those who willingly practise their evil doctrines, and he cites several examples. Thus, the children of God are warned of their great danger from the insidious inroads of error and perverse doctrine. In 2 Peter, this evil teaching arose from people within the local churches. Jude, however, seems to be referring to those who would infiltrate the church from outside, or perhaps from other churches from which they had been expelled.

Jude quotes from, or alludes to, extra-canonical books such as *1 Enoch* and the *Assumption of Moses*. This does not mean that he was endorsing these books as inspired of God. Jude was merely making use of contemporary or familiar sources and quoting or alluding to those parts of them which accorded with his Spirit-inspired teaching. The same principle is employed by the apostle Paul when he quotes from or alludes to the pagan writers and poets.

# Jude Chapter 1

## Greetings

### Jude 1:1

Jude claims to be a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, unlike other servants of the Lord, Jude does not say that he is an apostle. This may imply that the writer of this letter is not Jude or Judas the apostle, the son of James, (not to be confused with Judas Iscariot). (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13) Indeed, from Jude's remarks in verses 17 and 18 below, where he alludes to the apostles in the third person, it would seem that he is excluding himself from that group.

John Calvin and John Gill, however, believed that the writer of this epistle was indeed the apostle Judas, the brother of James and the son of Alphaeus. (Luke 6:16) However, other commentators remain unconvinced of this. Furthermore, Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13 supplies the rendering, 'Judas *the brother* of James'. However, modern translations render this phrase as 'Judas *the son* of James' (The Greek transliteration is '*Judas of James*')

Jude says that he is the brother of James. In addition to the two apostles named James, other men with the same name were active in the early church, including James the Lord's brother. Indeed, James the Lord's brother seemed to hold the position of leadership and authority in the mother church of Jerusalem. Possibly, then, Jude may have been referring to James the Lord's half-brother, and a 'pillar' of the early church. If so, Jude too would have been the Lord's half-brother. (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3; Gal. 2:9)

Jude continues:

*...To those who have been called... (v.1b NIV)*

To those who have been sanctified (KJV/NKJV): That is, God had sanctified or set them apart in the sense that he had predestined them from eternity and effectually called them to himself through faith in his Son (cf. Jer. 1:5; see also Ex. 13:2,12). Or, with the NIV, to those whom God has called effectually by his Holy Spirit and invited to take part in the blessings and benefits of eternal salvation, Jude addresses this general or catholic epistle. (Rom. 6:22,23; 2 Pet. 1:1)

*...who are loved by God the Father... (v.1c NIV)*

Jude assures his readers or hearers that, beyond doubt, they are their heavenly Father's children. Moreover, they are children greatly beloved. Because of his eternal love for them, the Father is keeping—or guarding—they in their salvation until the last day. By the sovereign and effectual power of his Holy Spirit, God has called them to himself through faith in his Son. Now, by his almighty power, the Lord is keeping them safe in his love and grace. (John 10:28; Rom. 8:30; 1 Pet. 1:5)

### Jude 1:2

Jude bestows the Lord's blessing of abundant mercy, peace and love upon these dear believers. Already, they had experienced the goodness of God toward them. By his grace, God had reconciled them to himself through repentance and faith in his Son. Out of his intense love for them, God had bestowed upon them his never-ending mercies.

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God's *mercies* are ever faithful, ever sure. Before their conversion, and in his great mercy, the Lord had borne with these people with exceeding patience. Then, by his grace, he had brought them to know his Son. Still, in his mercy, the Lord continued to bear with them when they sinned against him—as he does with all his redeemed children. In mercy, and upon their repentance, he forgives their sin and cleanses them from every trace of iniquity. (Ps. 103:17; 1 John 1:9)

These dear saints had known also the *peace* of God. This is the peace that transcends all human understanding; the peace that descends from heaven above, filling our souls with the knowledge and assurance of sins forgiven. This is God's peace. Jude prays that this peace from heaven above will remain with his readers forever. Indeed, God guarantees his peace to them, as long as unconfessed sin does not interrupt their ongoing fellowship with God or with their fellow-believers. (Ps. 29:11; Isa. 26:3-4; John 14:27; 16:33; Phil. 4:7)

Jude comes now to the gift and blessing of God's *love*. These believers had experienced something of God's abundant love for them in Christ Jesus. Jude's prayer for them is that they will continue to experience this love in their hearts. This is the love that is pure in the sight of God. This is spiritual love. This is emotional love of the highest order.

This is the type of love that God himself exhibited for a lost world. It is the type of love that Jesus exhibited for his disciples and for all his own. It is the type of love that he commanded us to show to one another. It is pure, rich, deep, emotional and—above all—spiritual love. The Spirit of grace and the Spirit of holiness sanctifies this love.

Jude prays that God may grant an abundance of this love to these dear saints. Additionally, Jude prays that the believers may share this love with their brothers and sisters in Christ—in purity, and in the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. (John 3:16; John 13:34-35; Rom. 5:5; 1 Cor. 13:1-13; Gal. 5:6,22)

## Godless Infiltrators

### **Jude 3-4**

#### **Jude 1:3**

Jude explains that, initially, his earnest desire was to write to these believers further about this glorious salvation—the salvation that all of God's redeemed children share together. However, in view of the prevailing circumstances, Jude felt compelled to write to these saints primarily about other matters that were of great importance.

Consequently, Jude urges these children of God to stand resolutely by the faith that was once-for-all delivered to them by the apostles. These inspired men of God had entrusted to the saints the teachings of the Lord Jesus. This included those to whom Jude was writing; and it includes all of God's people in all ages of the church. Thus, they—and we—must guard the Lord's teachings from all forms of error or false teaching, and from wilful distortions or perversions of the infallible and eternal Word of God.

Jude exhorts these believers to strive vigorously for the faith. They were not to permit anyone to deceive them or lead them astray with empty words or plausible arguments. They were to hold fast to the gospel, and to the unchanging Word of the living and eternal God. They were to proclaim this Word in the power of the Holy Spirit and in accordance with its unfailling and unchanging truths. (Phil. 1:27-28; 2 Tim. 1:13-14; 1 Pet. 5:12)



**Jude 1:4**

It had become necessary for Jude to say these things to these believers because certain individuals had been making their presence felt among them. These deceitful men had slipped into their midst secretly, or with great cunning or stealth.

Of course, these were not men of God. On the contrary, they were godless and irreligious men. They used—or abused and misused—religion as a cloak to further their own evil schemes and devious ambitions. These impostors twisted God's grace to make it possible for a person to practise all kinds of vile deeds, especially those of an immoral or licentious nature. Furthermore, and contrary to the truth, these evil individuals asserted that God would forgive people, even while they continued to indulge in obscene and depraved practises. (Rom. 6:1-2)

As if this were not bad enough, they even tried to imply that such degenerate deeds were not sinful, but that they were the natural expressions of human needs and desires. Thus, they condoned and encouraged the very things that God had explicitly condemned and forbidden. (Rom. 1:32)

These false teachers had turned the grace of God into a licence for gross immorality. Regrettably, a number of God's people were in danger of being drawn into the trap that these corrupt false teachers were setting for the unwary. (2 Tim. 3:6-7; 2 Pet. 2:1-3)

By their actions, however, these fraudulent 'apostles' were denying any association with the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In fact, their debased teaching and deeds had marked them out as the children of the evil one. Thus, says Jude, these are the type of individuals whose condemnation and utter destruction was long ago foretold and foreordained.

**Examples of God's Punishments****Jude 5-7****Jude 1:5**

Jude acknowledges that these believers were aware already of the very real dangers to them and to their faith from false teachers. Nevertheless, the writer pens these remarks by way of reminder. False teachers would employ all sorts of devious and deceptive approaches to achieve their own evil ends. Thus, God's redeemed and holy children must remain ever vigilant. Only by remaining constantly alert to this danger, could they guard the truth from error and from wilful misinterpretation and misapplication of the Holy Scriptures.

Jude alludes to an example from Israel's history. He counsels his readers to call to mind what had happened to the Hebrew people after the Lord had delivered them from their slavery in Egypt.

Not everyone who was numbered among the Israelites belonged to God's believing people; for not everyone had faith. Despite the miraculous demonstrations of his power and glory, many Hebrews refused to believe that the LORD could or would bring them safely into the Promised Land. Indeed, because of their persistent and wilful unbelief and unfaithfulness, that entire adult generation perished in the wilderness, with two exceptions—Joshua and Caleb. These men alone received God's commendation for their faithfulness and obedience to him. Only these two men of that generation entered the Promised Land. All others who entered Canaan were the descendants of the generation whom God judged and who perished in the wilderness. (Num. 14:21-23; 1 Cor. 10:1-12; Heb. 3:16-19)

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Jude implies that the same truth can be applied in principle today. Not everyone who professes the name of the Lord, and who worships among God's people, belongs to the Lord. (Matt. 7:22-23; Rom. 8:9)

Teachers and preachers (especially) must be tested. The quality and accuracy of their teaching must be closely examined and compared with the Scriptures of Truth. However, where God's people fail to scrutinise their teachers and their works, it is only a matter of time before false professors and false teachers will establish themselves in their midst. (1 John 4:1) These same false messengers soon introduce destructive heresies into the church; and, as in the case before us, they may encourage the practice of vile and immoral deeds.

Ultimately, God will separate these evil apostles from his people and will judge them for their sin. In the meantime, God's holy people must not become involved in any activity or teaching that does not accord fully with the whole counsel and will of God. (Isaiah 8:20-22; Acts 20:27-31)

### Jude 1:6

Jude urges these believers to recollect what had happened to the rebellious angels. Because of their sin and their unfaithfulness to God—especially in things most sacred—God had expelled them from his holy presence. These mighty celestial beings had abandoned the positions of responsibility to which God had appointed them. For their wilful rebellion, God had cast them aside irrecoverably to the punishment and consequences of their sin.

These illustrious creatures that once had worshipped at the throne of everlasting light—the throne of absolute righteousness, holiness, and purity—God had condemned to everlasting darkness. That is, the LORD had condemned them to total moral and spiritual ruin, and to everlasting separation from the light of his holy and righteous presence. Again, for these demonic spirits, this 'darkness' consists in their having to endure the miseries and torments resulting from their own unpardonable wickedness—a wickedness that is beyond any hope of forgiveness, recovery or amelioration.

Jude says that these fallen angelic beings are being kept bound with everlasting 'chains'. Since angels are spirits, the idea of literal chains or other physical means of restraint would be meaningless. Thus, we may understand the expression *'bound with everlasting chains'* as perhaps representing the intolerable burden and permanency of the punishment that God has imposed upon them because of their sins, together with all its limitations.

These punitive chains 'bind' them eternally. Like the immense drag chains that restrain and arrest a large ship's movements at its launch, these everlasting chains restrict the free movements of these evil spirits. Furthermore, these 'unbreakable chains' cause them endless distress and wretchedness while they await their final and everlasting doom.

Again, we may consider that these 'chains' represent the means by which God—through his almighty and sovereign power—restrains these evil spirits until the day of final and eternal judgment. (Matt. 25:41; 2 Pet. 2:4; Rev. 20:10)

### Jude 1:7

Jude then beseeches these saints to remember the cataclysmic and righteous judgment that God inflicted on Sodom, Gomorrah, and the surrounding towns of Admah and Zeboiim (Zoar being spared). These cities had abandoned the ways and laws of God. Instead of following righteousness, they practised the vilest forms of iniquity imaginable. Instead of using God's gifts to his honour and glory—and with thanksgiving for the wonder

of natural sexual relations—they had abused and perverted this sacred gift. (Gen. 2:18-25; Mark 10:6-9; 2 Cor. 7:1-5; Heb. 13:4)

The people of Sodom and Gomorrah lived openly immoral, or brazenly perverse and wicked lives. Wilfully and inexcusably, they refused to recognise the sanctity and exclusivity of the husband-wife relationship. Blatantly and shamelessly, they indulged freely in sexual immorality with other partners.

Even more wickedly, the greater part of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah indulged in homosexual practises and other warped and unnatural forms of sexual activity. Perverting the gift of God, individuals of the same sex vilely abused and misused one another's bodies. (Gen. 13:13; 18:20; 19:4-5)

God never intended anyone to engage in such unnatural and vile practises. Such depraved and despicable practices can never carry his approval or blessing. These degenerate pursuits always stand condemned by God's Word. Upon true repentance and genuine faith, homosexual sinners can, and will, be forgiven—but *never to continue practising their former vile sins*. (Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11)

It was because of Sodom and Gomorrah's outright and persistent refusal to repent and renounce their sexually immoral and perverted way of life, that God inflicted such horrendous judgment upon them. This was to serve as a continuing example of the judgment of fire yet to come upon all the ungodly. Again, it was intended to warn people of the folly of remaining impenitent to the end, and of despising God's mercies in common grace. (Gen. 19:24-26; 2 Pet. 2:6; cf. 1 Cor. 10:6,11)

## Arrogant Slanderers

### Jude 8-10

#### Jude 1:8

Yet, in spite of this glaring warning and example from history, such practices continued when Jude wrote his letter—just as they do today. The very people against whom Jude had been warning these believers had wormed their way into the believer's midst. Unlike repentant sinners who had repudiated their former sinful lifestyle, these individuals continued to practise their vile sins. As if this were not bad enough, they condoned these immoral and perverted practises in others and encouraged other people to participate with them in their loathsomeness and licentiousness. (Cf. Rom. 1:32)

Such depravity exhibits itself only in the minds and lives of those people who remain totally alienated from God, and among those nations that have repudiated God. Thus, Jude appeals to his readers to shun these evil men utterly. Rather than tolerating these evildoers and their wicked practices, the believers were to expel them from their midst. Unless these immoral individuals repented and renounced their sin totally and finally, they could never find any place in God's church or among his sanctified ones.

Without doubt, formerly immoral people—including practising homosexuals—can be forgiven, cleansed, and welcomed into the church of God. However, anyone who continues actively in a sexually immoral or homosexual relationship—or any other sinful relationship—after professing faith in Christ, has no part in God's kingdom or God's church. (Cf. 1 Cor. 3:17; 5:1-13)

In addition to their detestable immorality and perversity, writes Jude, these same people despise lawful authority. They refuse to hear or to heed anyone who addresses them in an official capacity, either in the civil or the religious realm. By doing so, however, they are

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fighting against God, and against the lawful authority instituted by God. (Cf. 1 Thess. 4:3-8; Heb. 13:17)

Moreover, they even take it upon themselves to utter all kinds of abusive and slanderous remarks against celestial beings. In their folly, they fail to perceive that these beings are far more powerful than mere human beings. By bringing railing accusations against these mighty powers, they leave themselves wide open to retaliation by Satan and his emissaries. Since these immoral individuals are devoid of God's Holy Spirit, they are totally helpless against the immense powers of evil. Yet, they persist in their mad folly. (2 Pet. 2:10)

### Jude 1:9

Some commentators believe that Michael—whose name means, '*who is like God*'—may in fact be a synonym for the Lord Jesus Christ. Others believe that Michael may have been the guardian angel of the Israelites.

Whatever his true identity or position in the highest heavens, even the very archangel Michael refused to dispute with Satan, the chief of fallen angels. Although one of the most exalted, glorious and powerful of all God's created beings, Michael did not presume to slander Satan. Rather, the holy archangel committed his case to the Lord concerning the whereabouts of Moses' body, saying to the devil, "*The Lord rebuke you!*" (2 Pet. 2:11)

Probably, God had not wanted the location of Moses' burial site to become known. This may have been to prevent superstitious people from turning his grave into a place of pilgrimage and idol worship.

Some older expositors understood the expression, '*the body of Moses*' figuratively. According to this view, Jude was not speaking of the literal body of Moses, but of his metaphorical 'body'—i.e., the Mosaic law, together with all its institutions and ordinances. This was a form of expression sometimes adhered to among the Jewish rabbis. '*The body of Moses*', then, would stand in contradistinction to '*the body of Christ*', the church, with its ordinances of grace. Those contending for the 'body of Moses' were understood to be contending for the works of the law, and for righteousness by works, as did the Jews. From this, it was argued that Satan contended for the works of the law—which could never lead to salvation. Michael, however, contended for salvation by God's grace.

This, however, is purely an allegorical interpretation. Nevertheless, it was supported in whole or in part by John Gill and by Adam Clarke.

## Followers of Cain

### Jude 10-11

#### Jude 1:10

In the midst of these believers, however, certain foolish and ungodly men presumed to be wiser than Michael, the holy and highly intelligent and powerful archangel of God. In their folly, they verbally abused evil dignitaries, showing gross contempt toward these wicked supernatural beings. In their rashness and recklessness, these men engaged in matters of which they had no knowledge and even less understanding.

Lacking the sanctifying influence and power of God's Holy Spirit in their lives, these degenerate men reviled the sound teachings of God's Word, together with its demands for holiness of life. Instead, they promoted and encouraged only those things that appealed to their lower sensual appetites and desires. Like irrational brute beasts responding to their natural animal instincts, these individuals ensnared themselves—and others—in the very things that would lead to their certain destruction.

Such men remained under the wrath and judgment of God, even although they professed to belong to Christ. Ultimately, their evil doctrines and practises would result in their total ruination and final expulsion from among the people of God, destined to share the fate of the devil and his angels. (2 Pet 2:12)

### **Jude 1:11**

Alas for these men! Like Cain who murdered his brother Abel, they had been following the way of gross unrighteousness. Their degenerate character and conduct produced within them the vilest forms of sexual immorality imaginable, together with haughty pride, selfishness, out and out greediness, hatred, and other forms of impiety or ungodliness. (Cf. Rev. 2:14)

These men had been conducting their lives according to their basic animal instincts—gratifying only the desires of their sinful nature. Hatred against God had permeated their soul, eating away at their inner being like a consuming cancer. (Gen. 4:3-16; 1 John 3:12)

Like Balaam, the sorcerer and false prophet, these men had been pursuing greedily the way of gain. For their own profit, they had profited from others. While pretending to be the Lord's servants, these hypocritical individuals had been deceiving some weak-willed and unstable people. They had been leading—or had been attempting to lead—gullible believers into the ways of error. With great subtlety, deceit and cunning, these false teachers had done all in their power to lead God's people astray from the paths of truth and righteousness. (Num. 22:1 - 24:25; 31:16; 2 Pet. 2:15-16; Rev. 2:14)

Again, like Korah, these evil men had been guilty of rebelling against the Lord and against his appointed leaders. Like Korah, too, these hypocrites had been guilty of leading certain other people away with them in their wicked rebellion against God and against the truths of his Word. Like Korah, however, God would destroy them, and that without remedy. (Num. 16:1-50; 26:9-10)

## **Shepherds Feeding Themselves**

### **Jude 12-13**

#### **Jude 1:12**

The word, blemish (KJV, *spots*) is a word meaning a rock in the sea, or a ledge or reef. These false professors of the Christian faith had been bringing to moral shipwreck the lives of those people who had landed upon this reef. Yet, these evil men had been eating with God's people. They had been sharing in the church's love feasts without the slightest qualms of conscience. So depraved and insensitive had their consciences become that they acknowledged no impropriety in their duplicitous actions. (1 Cor. 11:20-21; Phil. 3:18-19)

Like worthless shepherds who cared nothing for the flock, these false teachers had been feeding only their own appetites. They had been gorging themselves on the pleasures of the sinful nature, and had been showing no concern for the sheep that were perishing with hunger. It was of no interest to them that the Lord's flock were hungering and thirsting after righteousness—for the way of true righteousness and holiness was far from these men's depraved minds. (Isa. 56:10-12; Ezek. 34:1-10; Luke 12:45-46; 2 Pet. 2:13)

Like clouds without rain, these wicked impostors were devoid of spiritual refreshment. Instead of imploring the Lord to pour down showers of blessing on his people, they were hanging over God's children like dark threatening thunderclouds. By their teaching and example, they were in danger of raining down death and destruction, upon the beloved

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children of God. Though some of these believers may have been deceived by these hypocrites and led into sin and wickedness for a time, yet God would preserve their souls for eternity. (2 Pet. 2:17-20)

These evil teachers were totally unstable in all that they did. Like clouds blown here and there by the winds, so these individuals moved around without any sure sense of direction or stability. Sometimes, they held to one opinion; at other times, however, they held to a different opinion. They had no settled viewpoint, for their teaching had no sure and unchanging foundation: It was not from God. (2 Tim. 3:1-9)

Like autumn trees, their lives and works were found to be leafless and fruitless. Yet, the Lord told us that, by a person's fruits they shall be known. These men, however, were completely lifeless and totally worthless. They were twice dead—spiritually and morally. They were like dried up trees or bad seeds that rotted when planted in the ground. (Matt. 7:15-23)

### Jude 1:13

Like the wild ocean billows, these servants of the evil one were constantly being overwhelmed by their raging passions. Out of this restless, vile sea, they foamed up the shame of their depraved natures. Corruption and uncleanness spewed from their mouths.

Almost everything they said became polluted by their vile mode of thinking. Practically every word they uttered carried with it undertones of impurity and debauchery. Such was the mark of a carnal or reprobate mind; devilish in thought and intent, and totally alienated from the things of God. (Isa. 57:20-21)

Like erratic shooting stars or comets, these pseudo-teachers followed an unpredictable course through life. They wandered from here to there, still spewing out their abominable filth. When one local church expelled them from their midst, they had infiltrated another. And, in this new situation, they had started seeking out gullible and vulnerable victims as their prey. (2 Tim. 3:13)

Yet, implied Jude, their end was certain. For such wicked individuals, the Lord had reserved the blackest darkness for all eternity. In this place, their torments will be unimaginably more severe than for other impenitent sinners. These individuals had absolutely no excuse for their actions. They had sinned against greater light, better knowledge, and in the very midst of God's people and sanctuary. (2 Pet. 2:17; Heb. 6:4-8; 10:26-31)

## Enoch's Prophecy

### Jude 14-16

#### Jude 1:14

The Enoch to whom Jude refers is Enoch the descendent of Seth, the son of Jared, the father of Methuselah, and the seventh in line from Adam. This distinguishes him from Enoch the son of Cain, who was the third in line from Adam. (1 Chron. 1:1)

The Enoch mentioned by Jude is the same Enoch who walked with God, and whom God translated and received into heaven without passing through death. (Gen. 5:18-24; Heb. 11:5) According to Jude, this godly Enoch prophesied about wicked individuals who would infiltrate and corrupt the congregation of God's people. This prophecy, however, is not recorded in the Old Testament, but in the *Book of Enoch* (or *1 Enoch*).

Although Enoch's pronouncements are not included within the canonical books of Scripture, Jude quotes from them. This does not imply that he considers Enoch's prophecies

on the same level as the inspired Word of God. He merely quotes a relevant ancient writing or oral tradition to illustrate his point. In the same way, the apostle Paul quoted secular writers in his arguments, without intending the sources to be considered on an equal footing with the inspired and infallible Word of God. (Acts 17:28; 1 Cor. 15:33; Titus 1:12)

In quoting the prophecy of Enoch, Jude is making use of an uninspired pronouncement, probably handed down by tradition, to illustrate inspired truth. From other passages of God's Word, it is certain that the Lord will come; and that he will come with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones. This fact is beyond dispute; for the Son of God himself proclaimed this truth. Again, the Old Testament prophets of God, and the apostles of the Lord Jesus, proclaimed this truth. (Gen. 5:18,24; cf. Deut. 33:2; Matt. 16:27; 24:30-31; 25:31; 1 Thess. 3:13; Rev. 1:7)

### **Jude 1:15**

It appears that these words formed part of Enoch's prophetic warning of God's future judgment on all corrupt, perverse and iniquitous people. We should bear in mind, of course, that Enoch lived and prophesied at a time when the world was becoming increasingly irreligious and degenerate. Indeed, for their unbridled wickedness and corruption, the LORD would soon destroy mankind with a cataclysmic deluge. (Gen. 6:5-8)

However, in verse 14 above, Enoch had spoken of the Lord's coming with all his holy ones. We are now considering his prophecy in this particular context. The purpose of the Lord's coming (or appearing) is to gather his elect and to judge everyone. The Lord is coming in his Father's glory, with his holy angels, to separate the just from the unjust, and to convict the ungodly.

In the Scriptures, the word 'ungodly' is not confined to the most outrageously wicked sinners. It applies indiscriminately to all kinds of sinners. Thus, the ungodly includes both the most irreligious and iniquitous sinners and any other people who have not lived especially wicked lives, but who nonetheless have lived without experiencing in their lives the mercy and forgiveness of God.

This will include many people who—in the eyes of the world—have lived upright and honourable lives. In God's eyes, however, such people remained under his wrath and condemnation because of their unconfessed and unforgiven sins. Their righteous acts will be to no avail before God. Rather, these 'deeds of righteousness' will appear to the Lord as filthy rags. (Isaiah 64:6)

This is because their good works proceeded from a heart and life that had not been forgiven and reconciled to God, or sanctified by his Holy Spirit. Indeed, in spite of their best attempts and endeavours at living a good and upright life, these people remained at enmity with God because of their evil behaviour. (Col. 1:21) Thus—unless they experience God's abundant grace and mercy—these people, too, will be classed among the ungodly.

Thus, according to Enoch's solemn warning, for every ungodly act, the Lord will condemn them—together with all other unrighteous and finally impenitent people. For every ungodly mode of thought and practice, he will denounce them. For every hard and ungodly word spoken by them against the Son of God, they will stand convicted and condemned.

Fearful indeed will be the outcome of those who live ungodly and unrighteous lives. This will be especially true of the kind of false and immoral teachers of whom Jude is speaking in this letter. (Ps. 98:9; Eccl. 12:14; Rom. 2:16; 2 Thess. 1:6-10)

### Jude 1:16

The future of these evil individuals is certain: Final judgment and eternal condemnation await them. In the meantime, they are found as inveterate grumblers and faultfinders. They murmur constantly about their lot. They complain discontentedly and persistently against God—the very God who judges and condemns them for their evil deeds.

With great zeal, these malcontents pursue the evil desires of their sinful nature. They crave—i.e., they desire passionately—to satisfy their vile lusts. By their vile lusts, however, such people will be consumed. Ultimately, God hands over such people to the punishment and misery of their own sinful ways. (Rom. 1:24-32; 1 Cor. 10:10)

In verse 16b, Jude says that these men boast arrogantly about themselves to others. They were completely void of any sense of sincerity or humility. Rather, haughtily and brazenly they asserted themselves over other people. They poured false and flattering remarks on others, seeking to gain advantage over them. (Ps. 17:10; 73:3-19; Rom. 1:29-30; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; 2 Pet. 2:18)

These pernicious teachers ('pastors' 'elders' or 'bishops' so-called) fostered no desire for the things of God or for the welfare of God's people or church. Like weeds or tares among the wheat, such people have no rightful place in the field of God. Certain it is that—at his coming—the Lord will root them out of his kingdom and consign them to the place of eternal torments. (Matt. 13:24-30; 36-43)

## Men without the Spirit

### Jude 17-19

#### Jude 1:17

*But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold.*  
(NIV)

In verse 17, Jude enjoins God's redeemed children to remember what they had heard already about these things. Remember, says Jude, that the apostles of Jesus told you about such false teachers. The Lord's apostles declared that evil men would arise from within your own fellowships, or that they would infiltrate your church fellowships and your homes from outside.

Jude also exhorts his readers to recall that the Lord Jesus himself warned his followers that false prophets and false 'christs' would appear among them. If it were possible—the Lord Jesus continued, (which it is not)—these false prophets would deceive the very elect. (Matt. 7:15-16; 24:11,24-27; 2 Pet. 3:1-3; 1 John 4:1)

#### Jude 1:18

*They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires."* (NIV)

God's Word tells the true believer that the characteristic mark of these false teachers would be their ungodly manner of life. Instead of holding fast to God's inerrant Word, they would scoff or mock at the promises of God. This would be especially true of the promise of the Lord's Second Coming, including his coming to judge the world in righteousness.

These diabolical 'antichrists' would despise the sacred and imperishable Word of God, and would wickedly repudiate the teachings of God's one and only Son. They would de-



ride the principles of religion and morality, living without fear of God or of his coming judgment. They would encourage men and women to practise all the desires of their corrupt nature, living as they pleased in sinful pleasures and gross iniquity.

From their brazenly shameful and vile conduct, the very fact that these iniquitous individuals had no part in God's kingdom should have been patently obvious to Jude's readers. In disregarding the teachings of God's Word, they had effectively repudiated the moral and spiritual standards that God had set forth in that Word. Consequently, these men lived unholy, ungodly and depraved lives. (2 Pet. 3:3; see also Acts 20:29; 2 Tim. 4:3-4; cf. Ps. 14:1-7)

### **Jude 1:19**

*These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. (NIV)*

Jude points out to his readers that these were the very individuals who—even then—were setting themselves apart from others. By their pernicious teaching and despicable behaviour, they were causing destructive dissensions and divisions among God's people.

In attempting to draw away disciples after them, these apostles of darkness had driven a wedge between some of God's people. Thus, the Scripture reminds us that these men were doing this because they were following their own natural drives and carnal instincts. Moreover, they were using ungodly and unrighteous human methods, and were applying profane human principles in their attempts to win followers to their evil way of life.

These apostles of wickedness were completely destitute of any life-changing experience of God's Holy Spirit. Manifestly, they had never experienced regeneration or sanctification. The Scriptures tell us, however, that anyone not possessing the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Christ. Indeed, such people remain utterly and completely under the wrath and condemnation of the most high and holy God. Ultimately, they face eternal torments in the place prepared for the devil and his angels. (John 3:18-20,36; 1 Cor. 11:19; Gal. 5:19-21; Jas. 3:15-16; Rom. 8:9)

## **Pray in the Holy Spirit**

### **Jude 20-21**

#### **Jude 1:20**

Jude urges the saints of God to build upon the sure foundation—the foundation already laid by the Lord and proclaimed by his apostles. Essentially, Jude was declaring that Jesus Christ is the believers' only sure foundation. He alone is their Rock, their fountain or source of truth, and their only wellspring of salvation and eternal life. Similarly, the Lord's apostles, whom the Holy Spirit had called and sent forth, were the believers' instructors and guides in spiritual matters. They, themselves, of course, could only speak, write, and teach as the Holy Spirit enabled and directed them.

As with the holy prophets of old, the inspired teaching of the Lord's apostles was to be received, not as the fallible word of men, but as it really was—the infallible word of the living God and of his Son, Jesus Christ. (1 Thess. 2:13)

The apostolic office, with its associated gift of plenary inspiration, applied only to the apostles whom Christ called and appointed personally to his service. So-called 'apostolic succession' has no foundation in, or support from, the Bible. Thus, since the death of the

original apostles, no-one has had the right to be called an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor does any person possess a God-given prerogative to claim apostolic authority, inspiration or infallibility in regard to his teaching or office. Such a claim would be presumptuous and arrogant, and would class that person as yet another false teacher.

Rather than be sidetracked from the truth, Jude encourages God's people to build upon the solid foundation of Christ and his apostles. He exhorts these dearly beloved children of God to rest their faith and confidence in that teaching alone. All other 'foundations'—all other teachings, doctrines or philosophies—reflect the teaching or opinions of fallen and fallible mankind. Thus, these human teachings are established on nothing more substantial than unstable sinking sand or quicksand.

Unlike these insubstantial, contradictory and unreliable teachings, Christ's truths are eternal and unerring. His gospel is everlasting. The Word of God, as declared by the apostles and other true servants of the Lord, remains infallible and unchanging throughout the endless ages. Thus, Jude encourages these dear saints to build their faith upon the Rock of Ages. He alone is the Rock Eternal. His truth alone is forever sure and certain of fulfillment. (Rom. 15:2; 1 Cor. 3:9-12; Eph. 4:11-16,29; Col. 2:6-10)

Next, Jude calls on his readers to pray always, and to pray under all circumstances. However, Jude tells these children of God to pray *in the Holy Spirit*. Thus, they were to pray in accordance with the will of God, just as the Spirit of God revealed the knowledge of his will to them from his Word.

We derive this principle from the fact that the Lord told his apostles that—when he came—the Spirit of Truth would guide his true followers into all truth. Moreover, the Lord declared that the Spirit of God would not speak of himself, but that he would take of the things of Christ and reveal them to his people. Thus, when God's people pray in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit leads them into a fuller, deeper and richer experience of the living Christ and of his eternal truths. (John 14:25; 16:13-15)

In addition to the above perhaps, Jude was exhorting his readers not to pray in the arm of flesh or by human effort but in the power of the Spirit. He was encouraging them to pray with that sense of love, joy and peace in their hearts that God's Spirit had imparted to them. They were to pray with thanksgiving in their hearts to God. They were to pray in the Spirit; remembering always that the Spirit of God is holy. (Rom. 8:26-27; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 6:18; see also Dan. 6:10; Luke 18:1; Phil. 4:6-7)

### Jude 1:21

Where does the believer find safety and security from temptation, and from the trials and difficulties of life? Only in the grace, mercy, and love of God, as shown to us through Christ Jesus our Lord. Thus, Jude exhorts these believers to keep themselves always in the love of God. He warns them against anything that might enter their lives, cutting them off from God's eternal love and manifold blessings.

From this, we see the folly of harbouring unconfessed sin. Each one of us ought to confess our sins to God and—where appropriate—to our fellow-believers. (1 John 1:9; Matt. 5:23-24)

From this, too, we learn that we ought to let God's love flood our hearts and souls. Out of the deep gratitude to God for the love he has shown us, we—his redeemed people—should love God with all our hearts. Furthermore, we should show love to one another. This is love—this is *spiritual, caring, and practical* love. God demonstrated this love toward us when he gave his Son to die for our sins. Again, this is the love—*spiritual, caring, and practical* love—that the Lord Jesus commanded us to show to one another. (Rom. 5:5; John 3:16; 13:34-35; Rom. 13:8; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 John 3:23)

Involved in this thought of spiritual love is purity of heart and mind. Thus, to keep ourselves in God's love, we must keep our hearts pure. We must keep ourselves clean for the presence of the indwelling and sanctifying Holy Spirit. If we do these things, we will certainly be able to express our love to God and to each another, in sincerity and humility. (1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 6:16 - 7:1; 1 Tim. 1:5; Heb. 10:22)

Thus, too, we learn from this verse that we must keep on loving God. We must keep on loving each other. We must let the Holy Spirit bind us together in love and truth, as we anticipate eagerly the abundant mercy of the Lord Jesus toward us. This will happen when the Lord appears in his glory, to bring his ransomed people into his eternal kingdom. (John 14:21; 1 John 4:16)

## **Show Mercy, Mixed with Fear**

### ***Jude 22-23***

#### **Jude 1:22**

As he nears the conclusion of his short letter, Jude exhorts his readers to show compassion toward those who are being thrown into doubt and confusion because of these false teachers. It is necessary that God's people reaffirm their love to those in Christ Jesus who have been led astray from truth and righteousness.

Jude encourages God's people to show mercy on those who have strayed into sin or error, or perhaps who have been enticed by these evil apostles to doubt some of the fundamental truths of God's inerrant Word. Thus, in our own day, we should instruct from God's Holy Word those who stray from the truth—in love, and in deep humility. We should remember that, but for God's grace, we too might be deceived and fall into sin or error.

Thus, we learn to show such believers the error of their ways. We learn to remind them again of the unchanging and eternal truths of God's Word. With love, mercy, and compassion, we must endeavour to lead them in the way everlasting. Thus, they may be reassured of the love and faithfulness of God toward his own redeemed and holy people. (Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:19-20; 1 John 5:16; Ps. 139:24)

#### **Jude 1:23**

In the next part of this passage, Jude exhorts his readers to hold out hope of forgiveness to all who have been led astray into false teaching or sinful practices. His readers were not to consider anyone too far removed from the truth or from righteousness as to be beyond recovery and restoration. Let us remember always the parable of the prodigal—or lost—son.

To this end, Jude urges his readers to do all in their power—short of risking entanglement themselves—to rescue those who had erred and sinned. Thus, Jude encourages God's beloved children to snatch others from the 'flames' of destruction; i.e. those believers who, to some extent, had become involved in pernicious false teaching.

Jude continues by declaring that if these erring believers cannot be persuaded gently, then they were to be dragged by force (as it were) out of the paths of sin and danger. They were to be warned severely of the great risk to their spiritual lives and to their moral and physical well being. Nevertheless, these erring believers were to be warned in a spirit of love, humility and compassion. (1 Cor. 15:33)

Show mercy to them, Jude had urged, but let it be mercy accompanied by fear. Let it be mercy coupled with the fear of God's awesome justice and righteousness. Let it be mercy,

## Expository Notes

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associated with the realisation that a holy God will by no means clear the guilty. (Exodus 34:7)

Thus, Jude exhorts God's people to care for those who have strayed from the good and right paths. The church was expected to extend love and mercy toward wayward believers; yet, they were to hate even the garments polluted by sin. Jude was exhorting them to love the person, but to detest those things by which they had defiled the temple of God (i.e., their bodies).

Jude continues in this verse by encouraging his readers to show unending compassion to those deceived by false teaching and sin. However, in doing so, God's children were to despise the slightest trace of moral and spiritual corruption in the lives of these misguided people. (Cf. Rev. 3:4, 18-20)

Thus, Jude exhorts his readers to stand; to stand in fear; to stand in holy reverence of God, realising that God's wrath would consume the adversary. (Heb. 9:26-31; cf. Ps. 97:3)

Again, they were to stand firm in their faith; and they were to fear the consequences of straying from the faith that God had delivered to the saints once-for-all. God's children were to fear the defilement that error or false teaching brings to the temple of the Holy Spirit, i.e., our bodies (including our minds).

From this, we learn to stand in fear; i.e., in a holy reverence for God and for his unchanging and unchangeable Word of Truth. Yet, to those who have strayed into the paths of false teaching and sin, we are to reach out in love. We must always remember that those who stand today may stumble into sin tomorrow. (Acts 9:31; 2 Cor. 5:11; Phil. 2:12; Heb. 11:7; 1 Pet. 2:17)

## Doxology

### **Jude 24-25**

God's grace alone guarantees the believer's eternal security. To this end, Jude concludes his epistle with this magnificent doxology:

### **Jude 1:24**

*To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— (NIV)*

One there is above all others who is able to make us stand. The Lord God Almighty has the power to keep us from falling. He is able to deliver us from temptation and from falling into sin. Yet, we must abide in the secret of his presence. We must walk with his Son in the light, as he is in the light. (Rom. 8:31; 14:4; Ps. 91:1; 1 John 1:7)

One day, the Lord Jesus will present us faultless and blameless before the glory of his Father. In that day, there will be exceeding great rejoicing. In that day, the Lord will finally release us from this sinful body. Then, he will change us; he will complete our sanctification, and he will glorify us. He will deliver us forever from all possibility of temptation and sin, and from all sorrow, sickness, pain, grief and death.

The blessings of the Lord will rest upon our lives for all the ages of eternity. Then, together with all of God's redeemed, sanctified and glorified children, we will live and reign with our Saviour and Lord for ever and ever. (2 Tim. 4:18; 2 Cor. 4:14,17; 1 Pet. 4:13)

**Jude 1:25**

*to the only<sup>1</sup> God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and for evermore! Amen. (NIV)*

There is one only true and living God; there is one only Saviour of men and women. This God is the LORD God Almighty—the 'I AM.' This is the same God who manifested himself on earth in the person of his one and only Son, Jesus Christ. He alone is the object of our worship and adoration. He alone is the source of our life and salvation. We must follow him, and follow him alone. (Exodus 3:14-15; John 8:58; 10:30; see also John 1:1-18)

To him belongs all glory; or the praise, honour and worship due to his transcendent name. To him belongs all majesty, for he rules over all creation and he is the Sovereign Lord of everything that exists throughout the universe. To him belongs all power, for his alone is the right or prerogative to exercise complete jurisdiction over all created beings, both mankind and angels. To him belongs all authority, for he is King of kings and Lord of lords; he is the one to whom all created beings in heaven above and on earth beneath must submit, and ultimately will acknowledge as Lord and God. (Phil. 2:10-11; Rev. 19:16)

Let us then, praise his great, holy and majestic name. Let us worship him in the beauty of holiness. Let us approach our Father in heaven at the throne of grace, through his risen and glorified Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

To Father, Son and Holy Spirit belong all the glory of the eternal Godhead. All the excellencies of perfection live eternally in the Trinity. All majesty in heaven and on earth belongs to them. All power in heaven and on earth is theirs. All authority in heaven and on earth lives in, and is exercised by, the Godhead alone.

To the Son, the Father has committed his power and authority. He must reign until he has subdued every enemy under his feet. (Ps. 29:2; Matt. 24:30; 1 Pet. 4:11; Rev. 4:11; 5:12-13)

*All hail the power of Jesus' name,  
Let angels prostrate fall!  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown him Lord of All!*

(From a hymn by Edward Perronet)

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<sup>1</sup> only: KJV, *only wise* (God)