

DIGGING DEEPER
JUDE



Digging Deeper Jude

Study Guide

Acknowledgments

Many of the basic thoughts used in this study of Jude comes from the *Life Application Bible Commentary* published by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. We have used their ideas liberally with their permission. We alone assume responsibility for the contents here, but we appreciate Tyndale giving us permission to use their materials.

The lesson outlines and notes in this booklet were prepared and edited by Tim McManigle of FBC Missions. Special thanks to Lisa Grams and Lane Martin for editing.

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Chapter 1

A. Introduction

- Half-truths, statements taken out of context, misleading descriptions, words changed in meaning and outright fabrications are designed to deceive, to hide the truth. Liars have many motives: to make a sale, to win an election, to hide wrongdoing, to enhance an image, to beat a rival, to cheat someone, to gain the favor of a coach, teacher, friend, parent, employer or spouse. Whatever the reason, the real character of the liar is exposed when truth is revealed.
- In the early years of the church, liars arose, truth-twisters who rejected God's Word as well as Jesus Christ and designed instead their own theology. The motive for these men was to gain power, prestige, and money. Responding to this threat to the church, the apostles and other church leaders published warnings, urging Christians to be alert, to know the truth, and to reject the liars and their lies. That is apparently what motivated Jude to pen his short letter.
- It is interesting to consider the similarities between 2 Peter and Jude's epistle. Consider these common phrases and similar passages (all from the NIV):
 - ***"There will be false teachers among you"*** (2 Peter 2:1).
 - ***"For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you"*** (Jude 4).
 - ***"For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people..."*** (2 Peter 2:4-5).

- *“The Lord delivered His people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these He has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day” (Jude 5-6).*
- *“This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings” (2 Peter 2:10).*
- *“In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings” (Jude 8).*
- *“But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish” (2 Peter 2:12).*
- *“Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals—these are the very things that destroy them” (Jude 10).*
- *“They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you” (2 Peter 2:13).*
- *“These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves” (Jude 12).*
- *“These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them” (2 Peter 2:17).*
- *“They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind...They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever” (Jude 12-13).*
- *“In the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires” (2 Peter 3:3).*

- *“In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires” (Jude 18).*
- Some think that Jude was writing to the same audience for whom 2 Peter was intended, because of the heresy addressed by both letters. But there is no evidence for this. Evidently these false teachers were becoming a problem for most of the churches. Paul addressed a similar problem in his letter to the Colossians (**Colossians 2:18-19**).

B. Jude’s Intended Recipients: All Believers

Read Jude 1:1.

- Immediately the writer of this short letter identifies himself as “***Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ and brother of James,***” so the question is which James and which Jude? The most widely accepted answer is that Jude and James are the sons of Joseph mentioned in **Matthew 13:55** and **Mark 6:3** and thus, the half brothers of Jesus. Eventually, James had become the head of the church in Jerusalem (**Acts 12:17; 15:13-21; Galatians 1:18-19; 2:11-13**), and also wrote the epistle bearing his name (approximately A.D. 47-49). The renown of James would explain why Jude described himself as “***a brother of James.***” This is an unusual description since at this time a person would normally describe himself as someone’s son rather than someone’s brother.
- In the days of Jesus’ ministry on earth, His brothers did not believe in Him (**John 7:3-10**). However, Paul recorded that Jesus, after His resurrection, made a personal appearance to James (**1 Corinthians 15:7**). Jesus’ time with James must have affected him profoundly because he became a believer; at some point, Jude also was converted (**Acts 1:14**).

- Oddly enough, Jude did not refer to himself as a brother of Jesus Christ. It seems that this would have carried even more authority. Like James (**James 1:1**), Jude simply identified himself as a “*bondservant of Jesus Christ*,” not a brother. Jesus’ half brothers did not focus on their family relationship with Jesus but rather focused on their spiritual relationship with their Lord and considered themselves privileged to be called His servants. They had been bought (or redeemed) from slavery to sin with the price of Christ’s blood (**1 Corinthians 7:23**). Paul also referred to himself as Christ’s servant (**Romans 1:1; Galatians 1:10; Philippians 1:1**).
- The word translated “*servant*” means “slave,” one who is subject to the will and wholly at the disposal of a master, expressing absolute devotion and subjection to Christ.
- Imagine what childhood memories Jude and James would have had. Surely Jesus must have been an exceptional older brother. Perhaps they flinched at some of their words of mockery (as recorded in **John 7:3-5**). But they became believers, contenders for the faith, and true servants of their Savior.
- Jude did not specify any destination for his letter. Instead, he addressed it to believers whom he described in three phrases:
 - “*Those who have been called*.” This phrase pictured what happened in the past—believers have been “*called*” to salvation (**Romans 1:6-7**). Being “*called*” also is referred to as “elected,” “chosen,” or “predestined” (**Ephesians 1:4**). God’s Spirit calls people out of darkness into the light of Christ, convicts and convinces them of their sinfulness, reveals to them what Christ has done for them, and then draws them to Christ **John 6:44**). This occurs by God’s grace and love alone. (See **Romans 8:28-**

30; 11:29; 1 Corinthians 1:24; Ephesians 4:4; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:3, 10-11).

- **“Loved by God the Father.”** The verb form of ***“loved”*** refers to a past action that continues on into the present; His love will continue now and forever, and never changes. ***“God is love”*** (1 John 4:8). Love is God’s very essence; it is not merely one of His many activities. Instead, all of God’s activities are filled with love. For example, when He disciplines, He does so out of love. Conversely, because He loves, He disciplines. Because He is love, He can do nothing without love (**Ephesians 3:18-19**). Notice the paradox here. Paul wants us to **know** personally the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, or is **beyond intellectually knowing**. He is praying that we will know what cannot be humanly known, but can be spiritually understood. Notice the four dimensions in verse 18: breadth, length, depth, and height. How can we, who live in a three dimensional world understand the four dimensional love of Christ?
 - It is broad enough to encompass all of mankind, even Jews and Gentiles.
 - It is long enough to last for an eternity.
 - It is deep enough to reach the most despicable sinner.
 - It is high enough to take us all to heaven.
- Characteristics of Christ’s love (**1 Corinthians 13:4-7**):
 - Patient – slow to be offended
 - Kind – positive and pleasant
 - Not jealous – no fear of being replaced
 - Not boastful
 - Not arrogant or inflated with self-importance
 - Does not act unbecomingly or discourteous, impolite, lacking manners
 - Doesn’t seek its own – no rights

- Not provoked or stirred to anger
- Does not take into account a wrong suffered – looks for the best
- Does not rejoice in unrighteousness – never glad to see the wrong in others
- Bears all things – silently and sweetly puts up with everything
- Believes all things – no doubts
- Hopes all things – confident expectation
- Endures all things – doesn't quit or give up, rides out the storms of life
- Love never fails
- The believers across the ancient world, often facing persecution, could count on the fact that they were and always would be enfolded by God's love.
- **"Preserved IN Jesus Christ" (KJV) "Kept BY Jesus Christ" (NIV) "Kept FOR Jesus Christ" (NASB).** Believers are "kept" (or guarded) "for," "by," and "in" Jesus Christ. Peter explained that believers could be assured of ***"an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven"*** (1 Peter 1:4). Also, believers have security in their salvation: ***"through faith [believers] are kept by God unto salvation to be revealed in the last time"*** (1 Peter 1:5). Believers are kept safe by, for, and in Christ, guarded as His property to be claimed upon His return (**Romans 8:18-39; 2 Timothy 1:12; John 10:28**).

Read Jude 1:2.

- Jude's desire was for believers to have an abundance or overflowing measure of mercy, peace, and love.
 - **"Mercy"** can be defined as not getting what we deserve, and the Old Testament picture of God's mercy, loving-kindness, or compassion is seen in **Lamentations 3:22-23**. The most often used phrase

in the Old Testament is seen repeatedly in **Psalm 136: “His mercy endures forever.”** Jude knew the believers were facing difficult situations in the world—a society, ready to persecute believers, with false teachers looking to tear the churches apart. However, “*His mercy endures forever*”; we undeserving believers have mercy in abundance (**Hebrews 4:16**).

- “**Peace.**” The Bible speaks of three kinds of peace. Peace with God (**Romans 5:1**); peace from God (**Philippians 1:2**); and the peace of God (**Colossians 3:15**). True and lasting peace comes only from God. Peter referred to the peace of Christ (**2 Peter 3:14**). Jesus said, “*Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not let your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*” (**John 14:27**). The believers needed an abundance of inner peace and quiet confidence as they faced the turmoil in their world as well as the false teachers (**Isaiah 26:3**).
- “**Love.**” From **2 Corinthians 5:14**, we learn that the love of God compels us, controls us. Therefore, believers who know how much God loves them and are grounded in God’s love are just naturally compelled or controlled by Him. His love for us will be a tremendous comfort as well as a motivation factor in us as we are being molded into the image of Christ.

C. The Purpose for Writing: To Expose False Teachers

Read Jude 1:3.

- Although Jude’s brief letter does not mention his intended readers, it addresses specific concerns about false teaching that was obviously threatening the

churches. It would appear an urgent concern about false teaching caused him to write this letter denouncing the false teachers and making an appeal for Christians to contend for the faith. Jude may have wanted this letter to be circulated because false teaching was a serious problem for all the churches. Thus, he specified no particular church or area.

- The believers were addressed as “*beloved*” also translated “*dear friends*,” a term often used by those who wrote with authority to the Christians. Paul used the term in **1 Corinthians 10:14**; Peter, in **1 Peter 2:11** and **2 Peter 3:1**; John, in **1 John 2:7** and **3:2**. Jude may have wanted to write a joyous letter to believers about the salvation we share. A letter about the Christian faith that he and all believers had in common. Instead, he set that idea aside because a much more urgent topic needed to be addressed. False teachers were threatening the churches, endangering the believers’ faith.
- The word “*contend*” (*epagonizesthai*), occurs only here in the New Testament. Often it is used in secular literature to describe the intense struggle in an athletic contest. Jude encouraged the believers to contend for the faith. “Contending” would not be easy; it called for willingness to stand against society’s desire to water down the gospel, speaking up for truth, and bearing the burden of explaining timeless truth to a changing society. The believers could not sit back and idly enjoy the mercy, peace, and love of their faith (v. 2). Rather, their Christian faith, by God’s grace, must be defended against the onslaught of false teaching. (**Note 1 Corinthians 15:10; Colossians 1:29**).
- “*The faith*” refers to the entire body of beliefs taught by the apostles and held by the Christians (**Acts 2:42**). The teachings of Christ and His apostles had been entrusted to the saints. All Christians have been entrusted with “*the faith*” to keep it pure and not to twist or manipulate or compromise and to teach it to others. Therefore, all

Christians stand ready to defend “*the faith*” as they would defend any prized possession.

Read Jude 1:4.

- Jude explained the reason for his compulsion to write this letter of appeal: certain intruders, false teachers, had entered the church, “*crept in*” among the believers. How could this happen? These may have been traveling teachers who had come and established themselves in communities and churches with the sole aim of perverting the Christian gospel. An example may be found in **Galatians 2:4**. Paul talked about the Judaizers who had infiltrated Christian groups. Their teaching didn’t sound so “false” in the beginning; it was subtle and easy to follow, and it had lulled some believers away from the truth. The false teachers knowingly sought to destroy the church from within by very carefully introducing their perverted teaching. Peter explained it this way: “*[They] will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them*” (2 Peter 2:1). Both Peter and Jude used the same Greek word meaning “to smuggle” or “to worm their way in.”
- The phrase “*were marked out for*” means “*to write down beforehand*.” The NIV translates it in this way “*whose condemnation was written about long ago*”—the condemnation of anyone who is a false teacher **Galatians 1:8-9**).
- God’s true prophets had warned against false prophets (**Isaiah 44:25; Jeremiah 50:36**). Jesus had warned His disciples that false teachers would come (**Matthew 7:15; 24:11, 24; Luke 6:26**). The apostles often denounced false teachers in their letters (**2 Corinthians 11:5; Galatians 1:6-9; Philippians 3:2; Colossians 2:8, 16-19; 1 Timothy 1:3; 2 Timothy 3:6; 2 Peter 2; 1 John 4:1**). These false teachers long ago were

designated for this condemnation as ungodly. “**Ungodly**” means unrighteous, lawless, those people whose sinful conduct stems from the total lack of respect for God. Jude explained that no matter how long it might take, and no matter how successful these teachers might appear to be, they would eventually be condemned by God Himself as explained in the remainder of this letter (**Psalm 73**).

- “[**They**] **turn the grace of our God into lewdness.**” This refers to the moral side of their heresy. True grace teaches that Christians are freed from sin by our co-crucifixion with Christ (**Romans 6:1-14**). This happens by God’s grace alone. Christ went to the cross alone to pay the penalty for sin, and He took us with Him to free us from the power of sin. This “grace” gives Christians freedom from sin and from the law, and the purpose of this freedom is to move people to holy living.
- “**Lewdness**” or “**licentiousness**” has the idea of a license to sin and is an open and excessive indulgence in sexual sins. Licentious people have no sense of shame or restraint. The false teachers “perverted” or twisted God’s grace, saying that freedom from sin means people can live any way they please, fulfilling their sinful pleasures without inhibition. In their arrogance, these false teachers claimed that their privileged status within God’s grace put them above moral law. Paul refuted this same kind of false teaching in **Romans 6:1, 15**. Some Christians tend to minimize sin, believing that how they live has little to do with their faith. But what a person truly believes will be revealed by how he or she acts. “**I will show you my faith by my works**” (**James 2:18b**). Twisting God’s grace to allow for flagrant sexual sin is a horrible perversion of the grace of God.
- “[**They**] **deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.**” This refers to the doctrinal side of their heresy. With their flagrant sexual sinning in the name of God’s

grace, these false teachers were denying Christ by replacing Him with themselves. While claiming to know God, their actions denied Him (**Titus 1:16**). They taught lies, and in so doing they denied the basics of the Christian faith (**1 John 2:22**). Jesus had told his disciples, “*Whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven*” (**Matthew 10:33**).

- So how are believers today to discern false teaching? Here are some rather probing questions to consider:
 1. Is Jesus Christ being exalted or is man being exalted?
 2. Does it stress law rather than God’s grace?
 3. Does it elevate self-righteousness, honoring those who keep the rules rather than elevating Christ?
 4. Does it foster a critical spirit toward others, or does it exercise loving compassion for others?
 5. Does it stress formulas, secret knowledge, or special visions more than the Word of God?
 6. Does it neglect Christ’s universal church, claiming to be an elite group?

D. Their Condemnation Is Sure

Read Jude 1:5.

- To prove that the “*designated [marked out] condemnation*” (v. 4) was certain to come upon the false teachers and all unbelievers, Jude cited three examples which the believers knew well, of God’s punishment (vv. 5-7). Jude wanted to remind them of how God had judged sin and rebellion when God’s people Israel, who although they were delivered from Egypt, refused to trust God and enter the Promised Land (**Numbers 14**). God’s people had been recipients of God’s deliverance, seeing His incredible miracles in

accomplishing their exodus out of Egypt. But when they arrived at the entrance to the Promised Land, many refused to believe that He could or would protect them. Their unbelief resulted in destruction. From the original group, only Caleb and Joshua (and their families) were allowed to enter Canaan. The writer to the Hebrews explained it this way: ***“For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief” (Hebrews 3:16-19).*** Such judgment awaited the sin and rebellion of the false teachers.

Read Jude 1:6.

- This second example of God’s punishment describes certain angels, not those who live in heaven and glorify God, but those who did not keep their own position before God. They were once pure, holy, and living in God’s presence but gave in to pride and joined Lucifer to rebel against God. They left their positions of authority and their dwelling with God, resulting in eventual doom. Peter explained that God ***“did not spare the angels when they sinned” (2 Peter 2:4).***
- Jude’s readers apparently understood his meaning, as well as the implication that if God did not spare His angels, neither would He spare the false teachers. Pride and lust had led to civil war and to the angels’ fall, and now the false teachers’ pride and lust would lead to their judgment and destruction. God did not spare his angels; neither would he spare them. As for these disobedient angels, God has ***“kept them in eternal chains in deepest darkness for the judgment of the great Day.” (2 Peter 2:4, 17).*** These sinful angels will be ***“kept”*** in a place

of punishment until the great Day of Judgment when they will face their final doom (**Matthew 25:41**).

Read Jude 1:7.

- Finally, as a third example of God's judgment of disobedience, Jude pointed out that God had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah along with the surrounding cities. The inhabitants were so wretched that God wiped the cities off the face of the earth. The people were following their own sinful natures, indulging in sexual immorality and pursuing unnatural lust (**Ezekiel 16:48-49**). So complete was God's judgment and destruction that the cities no longer exist today. Archaeologists believe they may be under the waters of the Dead Sea (**Genesis 19**).

E. The Telltale Attributes and Conduct of False Teachers

Read Jude 1:8.

- Jude called the false teachers dreamers, referring to their use of dreams and visions for sources of their prophecy. Drawing from his three previous analogies, Jude indicted the false teachers in three areas:
 - They “***defile the flesh.***” Like the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah, they follow wherever their sinful desires lead them, even into homosexuality (**Genesis 19:4-5**). These people that Jude refers to taught that Christian freedom placed believers above moral rules. By doing so, these false teachers brought great judgment on themselves.
 - They “***reject authority.***” This “authority” could refer to church leaders or the Lord Himself. Most likely, the false teachers rejected the authority of

all of these. They lived to please themselves and dismissed the prospect of a Second Coming and judgment by God. Keep in mind that the false teachers were operating in the flesh, the flesh has its root and origin in Satan, and Satan's/Lucifer's original rejection of God's authority is seen in **Isaiah 14:14** where he boasts that he would be his own god. (Rejecting God's authority)

- They “*slander celestial beings*” or “*speak evil of dignitaries*.” In light of the comparable verse in **2 Peter 2:11**, the celestial beings mentioned here most likely are the fallen angels—the guilty celestial beings who deserve condemnation. The false teachers “slandered” the spiritual realities they did not understand, perhaps by taking their power too lightly. Thus, the statement in verse 9 that the archangel Michael did not dare to slander Satan himself shows the arrogance of these false teachers. Jude was emphasizing that the false teachers were immoral, insubordinate, and irreverent. Jude hardly needed to say more. The believers had no reason for listening to or following such people.

Read Jude 1:9.

- Michael's title, archangel, a term found only here and in **1 Thessalonians 4:16**, reflects the ranking of angels that was part of Jewish tradition. The Bible regards an archangel as a high or holy angel appointed to a special task. In **Daniel 10:13, 21 and 12:1**, Michael is referred to as a mighty angel. The incident mentioned in Jude 9 is not recorded in Scripture, but it can be found in an ancient book titled *The Assumption of Moses*. The story, obviously known to the early believers, explains that the archangel Michael had been sent to bury Moses' body. Deuteronomy states that “*Moses the servant of the*

Lord died there in Moab, as the Lord had said. He buried him in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is” (Deuteronomy 34:5-6); however, there is no mention of this struggle for Moses’ body. According to *The Assumption of Moses*, when Michael prepared to do his task, he began disputing with the devil over Moses’ body. Satan is a fallen angel. He is real, not symbolic, and is constantly fighting against those who follow God. The story explains that Satan said Moses’ body rightfully belonged to him because Moses had committed murder (**Exodus 2:12**). He said he had rights over all the earth and that Moses’ body fell under that category as well. While Michael had every reason to expose Satan’s lies, he did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him. Instead of using his own authority, Michael left the matter in his Master’s hands, saying simply, “***The Lord rebuke you!***” He did not rely on his own power and authority. Jude wanted the believers to understand that if archangels are careful about how they address other powers, even evil ones, how much more should mere people watch their words when speaking of celestial powers, good or evil. If even a powerful angel of God did not dare to speak a judgment on God’s behalf, then neither should the false teachers claim to speak for God when they knew nothing about him.

Read Jude 1:10.

- In contrast to the archangel Michael’s refusal to slander even Satan himself (v. 9), the false teachers slandered celestial beings (v. 8) and spoke abusively against whatever they did not understand. Many of these false teachers claimed to possess a superior, secret knowledge that gave them authority. They considered themselves to be the only ones to truly “understand”

God; yet by their slander, they revealed not superior knowledge but profound ignorance. They were no better than unreasoning animals for their only understanding was by instinct—how to fulfill their sexual desires. While claiming superior knowledge and status, the only things these men truly understood were the passions and lusts that enslaved them. Eventually they would be destroyed by their sins.

Read Jude 1:11.

- Jude reminded his readers of three classic examples of men who had lived as they pleased and had been punished for doing so. These stories illustrate attitudes that are typical of false teachers—pride, selfishness, jealousy, greed, lust for power, and disregard of God’s will. No wonder Jude exclaimed “***Woe to them!***” Their grave errors would result in destruction.
 - “***Way of Cain.***” Cain murdered his brother out of vengeful jealousy (**Genesis 4:1-16**). There are various interpretations of the way of Cain. Jude may have been referring to Cain’s desire to devise another way of worship rather than the way God intended (**Hebrews 11:4**), to Cain’s intense envy of his brother, or to Cain’s selfish, evil heart that led him to murder. The apostle John wrote, “***[Do not be] as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother’s [were] righteous***” (**1 John 3:12**). Just as Cain murdered his brother, so the false teachers “murder” people’s souls. Just as Cain did not care about his brother, murdering him out of envy, so the false teachers did not care about their followers, willingly leading them along the pathway to destruction. Like Cain, the false teachers were

defying God's authority and acting out of sinful passion.

- ***“Error of Balaam.”*** Balaam prophesied out of greed, not out of obedience to God's command (**Numbers 22-24; 2 Peter 2:15-16**). The false teachers were following in the steps of Balaam, a man who had led many astray. A pagan king had hired the prophet Balaam to curse Israel. At first, Balaam obeyed God; eventually, however, his evil motives and desire for money won out. Like Balaam, the false teachers were not interested in serving God; they rushed for profit into Balaam's error, using religion only for financial gain and personal advancement. What was this “error”? Scripture explains that Balaam led the Israelites into immorality and idolatry (**Numbers 25:1-3; 31:16**). He may have told the Israelites that God's favor rested upon them so they could live as they pleased without fear of retribution. Such teaching was popular but wrong. Balaam had tried three times to curse Israel but had been unable to do so. The false teachers, like Balaam, cared nothing about the God for whom they presumed to speak. They were consumed by the love of money. Like Balaam, they would perish (**Numbers 31:8**).
- ***“Rebellion of Korah.”*** Korah rebelled against God's divinely appointed leaders, wanting the power for himself (**Numbers 16:1-35**). Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and 250 leaders of Israel ***“gathered together against Moses and Aaron and said to them, ‘You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?’”*** (**Numbers 16:3**). By leading this revolt against God's divinely appointed leaders, Korah was actually revolting against God. The punishment

was literally earthshaking: ***“The ground split apart under them, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly”*** (Numbers 16:31-33 NIV). Like Korah, the false teachers had revolted against the divinely appointed leadership of the apostles and church leaders, setting themselves up in opposition.

- Through these three Old Testament pictures, Jude painted the false teachers. They were without love (like Cain), greedy for money (like Balaam), and insubordinate to God-appointed authorities (like Korah). So certain was the end of these false teachers that Jude wrote about it in the past tense—they have been destroyed.

Read Jude 1:12.

- When the Lord’s Supper was celebrated in the early church, believers would eat a full meal before sharing the bread and wine of Communion. The meal was called a love feast and was designed to be a sacred time of fellowship to prepare one’s heart for the Lord’s Supper. However, the false teachers were joining these ***“love feasts,”*** becoming ***“blemishes”*** or ***“spots”*** in what should have been a time of rejoicing in the Lord. They were ruining the Christians’ gatherings by their very presence. Jude spared no words in describing the danger of these false teachers’ involvement with the believers. In the worst sort of hypocrisy, these intruders who had stolen in among the believers (v. 4) were participating in the love feast while at the same time living and speaking in opposition to Christ.

- Not only this, but they may have been acting immorally as well, for Peter wrote that the false teachers “***feast with you without fear, serving only themselves.***” They did this without the slightest fear.
- In four vivid word pictures taken from nature, Jude further described the false teachers.
 - “***They are clouds without water carried about by the winds.***” The false teachers were all show but no substance. Like waterless clouds, they promised rain but floated on by without a drop for thirsty soil. While they might claim superior knowledge, the false teachers had nothing of substance to satisfy anyone’s spiritual thirst.
 - The false teachers are “***late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots.***” Jude compared the false teachers to autumn trees promising fruit but giving none. They had never borne “***spiritual***” fruit. Twice dead may refer to fruitless trees being uprooted and burned, so the false teachers would face eternal punishment.
 - The false teachers were “***raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame.***” Like the wild waves that make lots of noise as they restlessly thrash about, the false teachers were restlessly and loudly spewing their teaching. Jude used the image recorded in Isaiah, “***But the wicked are like the tossing sea that cannot keep still; its waters toss up mire and mud***” (Isaiah 57:20). As debris and filth caught in the foam are cast up on the shore, so the false teachers’ shameful actions would be “***cast up***” for all to see.
 - The false teachers were “***wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.***” For centuries, the fixed stars in the heavens have guided seafarers and navigators in travels around the earth. But wandering (or shooting) stars offer no guidance and no light.

They appear bright for a few moments but shoot across the sky and disappear into darkness. The false teachers were as useless as wandering stars because they offered no direction and no light. Their teachings might seem “bright” for a while, but these teachers would find that for them the deepest darkness has been reserved forever. Their eternal judgment and punishment are certain; they have reservations that cannot be changed or canceled.

Read Jude 1:14-15.

- We know only a little about Enoch from the Old Testament: ***“Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him”*** (Genesis 5:21-24). Enoch was in the lineage of Jesus Christ (Luke 3:37). The apocryphal book called Enoch describes Enoch as in the seventh generation from Adam. He was the seventh in order because Adam was counted as the “first” in the Jewish way of recording generations. During the period between the writing of the Old and New Testaments, Enoch had become a popular figure in Jewish writing. He was thought to be a figure of the Messiah and was considered to have had expert knowledge about the heavens. The writer of Hebrews said, ***“By faith Enoch was taken so that he did not see death, ‘and was not found, because God has taken him’; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God”*** (Hebrews 11:5). Jude was quoting from a prophecy in the book of Enoch (1 Enoch 1:9), written in the time between the Testaments (second century BC) and familiar to the

early Christians. While this book did not become a part of the canon of Scripture, Jude considered this prophecy to be correct and authoritative, and he quoted words that were familiar to his readers and affirmed by other Scriptures. This prophecy cinched Jude's argument of future judgment. Enoch had prophesied that the Lord would return in great glory, bringing with him ***"ten thousands"*** of His holy ones. Scripture also describes Jesus returning to earth with many angels ("holy ones") (**Deuteronomy 33:2; Daniel 7:10; Zechariah 14:5; Matthew 16:27; 24:30-31; 25:31; Hebrews 12:22**). Jude continued to quote from Enoch's prophecy, saying that the Lord would return to earth ***"to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."*** The word "ungodly" appears four times in this sentence, underlining the true character of the false teachers. "Ungodly" means unrighteous, lawless, the sinful conduct of people who have no respect for God (v. 4). Their character, actions, and words will result in a guilty conviction on the day when the Lord returns to judge everyone. Those "ungodly" people who have not believed will be convicted of their "ungodly" actions that were committed in the "ungodly" way, especially speaking against Jesus Christ. Jude wanted to show the certainty of the false teachers' doom.

Read Jude 1:16.

- After denouncing the false teachers by calling them "ungodly" four times in the previous verse, Jude next explained four areas of ungodliness:

- First, as “***grumblers and complainers***” they constantly found fault in everyone and everything, except in themselves; they probably also grumbled against God. They were habitual complainers, unable to see God or the good in anything (**1 Corinthians 10:10**).
- They were also “***walking according to their own lusts***” (verses 4, 8, 10-13, and 15), acting on their passions and desires. Their only god was self, and they worshiped that god wholeheartedly.
- Third, they “***mouth great swelling words***” meaning they were boastful men, swollen with pride, and inflated with self-importance. They had denied Christ and spoken against Him (v. 15).
- Fourth, these false teachers were “***flattering people to gain advantage***.” Flattery is phony, and the false teachers used it as a cover-up for their real intentions. Instead of loving people, they used them, flattering if necessary to get what they wanted. Sparing no words for these false teachers, Jude laid their attitudes, words, and actions out for all to see.

F. How to Safeguard Against the Influence of False Teachers

Read Jude 1:17-18.

- In addition to examples from the Old Testament of God’s punishment of sin (vv. 5-7) and citations from prophecy about the Second Coming (vv. 14-15), Jude appealed to the believers to remember what the apostles had said. The words of the apostles were already being considered authoritative and on the level with Scripture. Jude’s wording indicates he was not himself one of the apostles, for he referred to the

apostles as *they*. Jude encouraged the Christians to remember the apostles' warnings against false teachers.

- Verse 18 parallels **2 Peter 3:3**: “*First of all you must understand this, that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and indulging their own lusts.*” The “*last days*” began with Christ’s resurrection and will continue until His return when He will set up His kingdom. Jesus and the apostles forewarned all believers that during the interim, including the time period in which we live, “*scoffers will come.*” To “*scoff*” means to mock. These false teachers scoffed at the truth and taught their own lies while living immoral lives. Jesus had warned against the deception of false teachers (**Mark 13:21-23**), as had Paul (**Acts 20:28-31; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-5**), Peter (**2 Peter 2:1-3:7**), and John (**1 John 2:22; 4:1-3; 2 John**).

Read Jude 1:19.

- These false teachers should have been easy to spot; they were not godly ministers and were living to please themselves and their sinful desires. They loved money and attention and were devoid of the Spirit. They never believed in Christ nor received the Holy Spirit. Paul had written, “*therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, ‘Jesus be cursed,’ and no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit*” (**1 Corinthians 12:3; John 14:17; 16:13**). The false teachers claimed to speak for God, but they would be unable to confess Jesus because they did not have the Holy Spirit. Thus they mocked Scripture and lived shamelessly without godly fear (v. 12). They set themselves above all other Christians because of their assumed superior knowledge and understanding. Thus, Jude condemned the false

teachers for causing divisions. The very presence of false teachers who scoffed at the apostles' teachings and at the prophecies of the Second Coming was a fulfillment of prophecy. The apostles had indicated that these false teachers would be abundant in "the last days" (**1 Timothy 4:1-2; I John 2:18-26**).

Read Jude 1:20.

- Even as the false teachers attempted to cause divisions (v. 19), the believers could stand against them by following Jude's advice in four areas:
 - First, by building on the firm foundation of their faith. (**1 Corinthians 3:10-11; 2 Peter 1:5-9; Ephesians 2:20-22**). Believers "***build themselves up***" in faith by knowing God through the Scriptures (**Romans 10:17; Ephesians 4:12-16**). It was "***Your most holy faith***" because it came from the most holy God.
 - Second, Jude encouraged the believers to "***pray in the Holy Spirit***," meaning to pray influenced and controlled by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit prays on behalf of believers (**Romans 8:26-27; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 6:18**), opens their minds to Jesus (**John 14:26; John 15:26**). Because the false teachers were "***devoid of the Spirit***" (v. 19), they could not pray in the spirit.
- Christians talk a lot about walking in the Spirit, which basically could be defined as being influenced and controlled by the Spirit (**Galatians 5:16**); but what is "***praying in the Holy Spirit***"? Again in **Romans 8:26-27**, we are taught that the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us. He is the author of every true and right desire in our hearts, and it's only by the Spirit that we can pray as we ought (**John 16:13-14**). It's interesting to consider that we are unable to walk in the Spirit and walk in the flesh at the same time (**Galatians**

5:16-17). Neither can we pray in the Spirit and pray in the flesh simultaneously. When we pray in the Spirit, we must be free from the flesh, free from our own desires (**James 4:3**), which can only take place at the cross. We can only know His will at the cross where our will and desires are crucified. Ponder these thoughts from G. Watson:

“It will save years of frustration and effort for one to understand that prayer can never be learned or developed. Prayer is the outflow of the new life; as one grows, as the cross frees the new from the old, there is the growth of effective prayer. Without the cross, prayer becomes a mere religious formality. As the cross works in us, keeping in the place of death every assertion of the old man, and everything in our old natures that is against God, our spirit finds a clear way up to fellowship at the throne. Away from the cross, prayer becomes nothing more than an ecclesiastical ordinance or a religious exercise expressed in devotional phrases. I beg of you, when you read a book on prayer, find out the place in it which the author gives to the cross, and you will be able to estimate its value.”

When we are praying in the Spirit, He will always bring us back to this one point: we are not heard because of our goodness or because of our diligence in prayer. We are heard only because of the blood of Christ (**Hebrews 10:19**). Again, we see the importance of the cross where Christ shed His blood. It is so necessary that we understand the importance of the blood of Christ. The blood deals with what we have done. When sin occurs, it brings death (separation—**Romans 6:23**). But God has given us a remedy for this death and that is the blood—the blood

satisfies God (**Leviticus 17:11**). In order for us to keep approaching God in prayer, we must have a clear conscience and that means knowing the value of the blood (**Hebrews 10:22**). Our basis of approach to God must always be the blood of Christ. God's acceptance of that blood is the ground upon which we may enter; there is no other. God is totally satisfied with the blood; therefore, we must also be satisfied with it.

- One last thought to ponder—prayer is to be offered in His name, which links it to the person of Christ (**John 14:14; 16:23-24**). Keep in mind that if we ask in someone's name, then we have their approval. It's interesting to note that in **John 14:13** the sole condition for prayer to be answered is praying "*in My Name*"; we can only pray in His name if we know what His will is. As we discovered earlier, we can only know His will at the cross where our desires are crucified. The words "*in My Name*" signify Christ Himself is actually making the petition. It is as though He signed the petition along with us (**1 John 5:14-15**).

Read Jude 1:21.

- Jude described a third way for the believers to stand strong against false teachers: "*Keep yourselves in the love of God*" by remembering that God first loved us (**1 John 4:19**). It's interesting that some of the earlier manuscripts do not include this word "Him" and so some of the translations actually read, "*We love because He first loved us.*" The thought here is that a believer's love, whether it be for God or for others, is based on God's love for us. God's love is the source, the initiator, and the motivator. People cannot love on their own. When we believers abide in God who is love and thus abide in love, then God's love fills us and overflows from us. This love which comes from God then becomes the characteristic of God's people, and we

can love as He loves. His love in us overflows to others, who then experience God's love as well.

- Fourth, the believers were to “***look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.***” The promise will come true; Christ will return and bring His people into eternal glory with Him. While believers have already received His “mercy,” they will wait for the consummation of that mercy when Christ returns. Peter wrote, “***[You ought] to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God [...] Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless***” (2 Peter 3:11-12, 14). Believers wait in confident expectation. God's promises are not “ifs” but “whens.” We know, beyond any doubt, that our Savior will soon return for us.

Read Jude 1:22-23.

- Although the false teachers were hopelessly entrenched in their sin and Satan's grip, the believers had a responsibility to those who had fallen prey to false teaching. Scholars differ in their interpretations of these verses because the various ancient manuscripts have different readings. According to some manuscripts there are only two groups (as in the NKJV, which says “***And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh***”), while other manuscripts note three groups:
 - The first group consists of those believers who have listened to the false teachers and have begun to doubt God's truth; they have not yet joined the false teachers. These people are to be shown mercy and lovingly drawn back by explaining the false teachers' error and reminding them of the truth they had originally received.

- The second group has gone beyond doubting. Agreeing with the false teachers, they are on the road to destruction, and are in need of someone to literally step in their path snatching them from the fire. The “*fire*” refers to the eternal punishment awaiting the false teachers (v. 4). Godly people who know how to rescue the misinformed.
- The third group refers to those already in the false teachers’ camp; these people also need mercy, but believers are to mix their mercy with fear. To “*hate even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh*” could be a reference to hating the sin but loving the sinner—never compromising on the truth but attempting to rescue those deceived people without becoming contaminated by the false teaching.

Read Jude 1:24.

- As the letter began, so it ends with assurance. In this great doxology, Jude stressed the mighty power of God to keep us securely in Him. “*God is able*” (Matthew 9:28; Romans 4:21; 2 Corinthians 9:8; Ephesians 3:20; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25) to keep us from falling prey to false teachers. Believers should not retreat or be afraid, but rather they are to trust God and remain rooted and grounded in Him.
- In **Ephesians 6**, Paul repeatedly uses the term “*stand*” which has the idea that the ground is already taken and our part is to hold our ground, *by faith*. The psalmist wrote, “*For you have delivered me from death and my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before God in the light of life*” (Psalm 56:13). God can be trusted to present all believers before His glorious presence.
- To be “*faultless*” and with great joy, to be sinless and perfect (“without fault”) will be the ultimate condition of the believer when he or she finally sees Christ face to

face. Presently we are positionally without fault” **Romans 8:1**–“*No condemnation*”; **Colossians 2:10**–“*Complete in Him.*” Coming into Christ’s presence will be a time of “*great joy.*”

Read Jude 1:25.

- Contemplating the great joy awaiting all believers and the fulfillment of God’s promises of eternal glory, Jude praised God with a beautiful doxology. Jude had originally intended to write about the salvation all believers shared (v. 3); he got his chance here. This one final verse captures the focus and goal of believers’ salvation and faith. Christianity is not a series of make-up ideas or free-floating thoughts; it is faith in a person, the only God who became our Savior through Jesus Christ. To this God alone believers ascribe. . .
 - Glory – God’s powerful radiance, His greatness, His complete moral superiority and splendor
 - Majesty – God’s transcendent greatness
 - Power – God’s self-contained might and control over all creation
 - Authority – God is sovereign over all
- These qualities reside in God alone. This was true before the ages began; it is true in the present day, and it will continue to be true forevermore. The prophet Isaiah wrote, “***Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand and I will do My pleasure’***” (Isaiah 46:9-10).



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