

Identifying False Teachers

An Expository Look
At
The Gospel of Jude

The Book of Jude

The Background of Jude

Introduction: *This little epistle is an incredibly passionate letter, which is known for its fervent plea to church leaders to watch out for false teachers. Jude's message burns with fire in its pronouncement of judgment on these apostate teachers who have secretly crept into the Christian assemblies. The book of Jude will be sure to renew zeal within our hearts to continue to be watchmen over God's entrusted flock.*

The author of Jude: *The author of the book of Jude was Jude himself. This is made clear from verse 1 when he refers to himself saying, "Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James" (vs. 1). Jude was a common name in New Testament times so there are many people who fit this description. Nevertheless, Jude refers to himself as the "brother of James." Therefore, this reference limits Jude's identity possibilities to two. Either it was Judas (not Iscariot), one of the 12 apostles, who is also called Lebbaeus or Thaddaeus (which is mentioned in Matt. 10:3; Mk. 3:18 with Lk. 6:16; Acts 1:13) or it was Jude who was the half-brother of Jesus Christ (for proof of Jesus having a brother named James, see: Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3).¹ Jude makes reference to himself as the brother of James (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13) to bring about his authoritative credentials. Therefore, the James of verse one must have been a person of influence and renown. Since James, the half-brother of Jesus is known to have been a man of great influence and Jude, the apostle's brother is not known for his leadership, the author of this book is believed to be Jude, the half-brother of Jesus. Jude's brother, James actually was the most well-known James among the Christian community within the first century.² He is known for his strong leadership within the church of Jerusalem (Gal. 1:19; Acts 12:17; 15:13-21; 21:18). Scholars conclusively believe that Jude, the half-brother of Jesus, is the man who wrote this letter.*

Jude, the half-brother of James was probably either the youngest or next to youngest brother within Jesus' family. According to John 7:1-9, in Jude's early years he rejected Jesus as the Messiah, and was not converted until after Jesus Christ's resurrection (Acts 1:14). Although Jude knew Jesus Christ very well, he was not considered an apostle (vs. 17), but he did have a major leadership role within the early Jerusalem church (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Galatians 1:19). According to 1 Corinthians 9:5, Jude was married and served God in his later years as an evangelist.³ From the letter of Jude we see that Jude was a man of great conviction and courage for God's truth. Jude was a very clear communicator and had a great ability to illustrate his points. Jude also reveals himself to be a man of great tenderness and love ((v.3, 17, 20).

¹ Heiebert An introduction to the New Testament pg 165

² Heiebert 167

³ MacArthur 328

Recipients of the letter: *Jude is addressing a certain church, in a certain location, which needs to combat a particular group of heretics. However, the church, the location, and the group of heretics are never revealed specifically in Jude's letter. Therefore, the book of Jude is recognized to be a general epistle. A general letter is a letter that was written in a broad fashion in order for that letter to be passed on to various congregations. Even though Jude had a specific group of people in mind, he does not mention this congregation specifically. However, Jude still gives a threefold explanation of his intended audience. He calls his readers "the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ" (vs. 1). From this description, Jude is addressing all Christians. Whether these believers were primarily Jewish or Gentile is not clear, and there is support for both options. The support for a Jewish audience is the fact that there are so many Jewish illustrations. The support for a Gentile audience is related to the fact this book is very similar to Peter's second epistle, which was written to a Gentile audience. Regardless, the letter was most likely written to both Jewish and Gentile congregations.*

The date of Jude: *There is no external evidence to help us determine the exact date when Jude was written. However, according to the internal evidence (or the evidence shown in the book of Jude) it is clear that this book was not written early within the New Testament period. According to Jude, the warnings of the apostles have had time to be circulated and proved true (vs. 3,4,17,18). The faith has had time to be established and to be corrupted. The author Jude was able to refer to established apostolic teaching and not oral tradition for his authority.⁴ These facts all support Jude's date of writing later within the first century. Most scholars suggest that it was written sometime around 68-70 AD.⁵*

Tone of Jude: *Jude writes his epistle in a hurry to deal with an outbreak of false teaching of which he has just heard (vs. 3,4).⁶ He is straight to the point as he exposes the false believers and their scandalous misconduct.⁷ There is a serious, urgent tone throughout the letter. It is like Jude is crying out to his loved ones saying, "Watch out! There is a murderer in your home, and he is about to kill you!" As Jude writes in a hurry, his readers can almost hear his heart beating with intensity.*

Purpose of the letter: *The purpose of the book of Jude is clearly stated in verses 3 and 4. Jude wrote to these believers so that they will earnestly contend for the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jude's exhortation is needed because he realizes that evil false teachers had crept into the Church of God and began spreading their condemning lies (vs. 4). Therefore, Jude feels the need to point out these false teachers, so that the church can identify these heretics and remove them from among their midst. The charges made against these troublemakers are both doctrinal and moral. Their primary error is that they believe they are entitled to behave in unrestrained ways because they are participants in God's grace (vs. 4).⁸ Jude, with great articulation, brings forth his purpose, a purpose that is still needed today.*

⁴ Green 46,47

⁵ MacArthur 328

⁶ Green 46

⁷ Kelly 228

⁸ Kelly 229,230

The need of the letter: *The main reason for why Jude wrote this letter was so that God's children would not be lead into confusion and immorality. Jude clearly wanted to write about their common salvation (v.3), but instead he was obligated to protect God's people from Satan's agents of error. It was necessary for Jude to write and expose the false teachers to stop them from creating factions within the church that had already begun (vs. 19).⁹ At this point, it should be noted that exposing false doctrine is one of the most loving things that a pastor can do for his congregation. Since the church is the pillar of the truth, the church must passionately fight to protect that truth by contending for its purity.*

The Outline of Jude:

- I. Introduction (1:1-2)
 1. Author introduced (1:1a)
 - a) Servant of Jesus Christ (v.1a)
 - b) Brother of James (v.1a)
 2. Recipients introduced (1:1b)
 - a) Those called out by God (v.1)
 - b) Those being continuously loved by God (v.1)
 - c) Those being continuously kept for Jesus Christ (v.1)
 3. Introductory blessings (1:2)
- II. The purpose of the book of Jude (1:3-4)
 1. Jude's desired purpose: a common salvation (1:3a)
 2. Jude's ultimate purpose: To appeal for the contending of the faith (1:3b)
 3. Jude purposes explained: Certain polluting men who have crept in unnoticed (1:4a)
- III. Jude's first description of these men (1:4-7)
 1. Men marked for condemnation (1:4a)
 2. Men living ungodly lives (1:4b)
 3. Men turning the grace of God into a sinful license (1:4b)
 4. Men who deny the Lord Jesus Christ (1:4b)
 - a) Jude's reminder of God's wrath on such polluting and rebellious men (1:5-7)
 1. God's wrath on unbelieving Israel (1:5)
 2. God's wrath on disobedient angels (1:6)
 3. God's wrath on rebellious Sodom and Gomorrah (1:7)
- IV. Jude's second description of these men (1:8-11)
 1. Men who defile the flesh (1:8)
 2. Men who reject God's Lordship (1:8)
 3. Men who slander angelic majesties (1:8)
 - a) Jude exemplifies the foolishness of these men slandering angelic majesties: Michael the arch-angel's confrontation with Satan (1:9)
 - b) Jude's explanation of the foolishness of these men slandering angelic majesties (1:10)
 1. They slander things they don't understand (1:10a)
 2. They are destroyed (like animals) by things they know by instinct (1:10b)
 - c) Jude's proclamation of the condemnation of these men because of their foolishness (1:11)
 1. These men who act like Cain (1:11a)

⁹ Kelly 230

2. These men who for money fall into the error of Balaam (1:11b)
 3. These men who have perished like Korah (1:11c)
- V. Jude's third description of these men (1:12-16)
1. Men who are hidden reefs (1:12a)
 - a) Present within love feasts (1:12a)
 - b) Without fear (1:12a)
 - c) Shepherding themselves (1:12a)
 1. As clouds without water carried along by the wind (1:12b)
 2. As autumn trees without fruit (1:12c)
 - a. Totally Dead (1:12c)
 - b. Uprooted (1:12c)
 3. As wild waves of the sea, casting up shame (1:13)
 4. As wandering stars (1:13)
 5. Whose ultimate destiny is hell forever (1:13)
 2. Men who are prophesied negatively (1:14-15)
 3. Men who are grumblers (1:16a)
 4. Men who are critical of others (1:16a)
 5. Men who are following after their own lust (1:16a)
 6. Men who are arrogant (1:16b)
 7. Men who are full of flattery (1:16b)
- VI. Jude's advice on how to content for the faith (1:17-23)
1. Remember the words of Christ's Apostles (1:17-19)
 - a) In the last days there will be mockers (1:18a)
 1. Following their own ungodly lusts (1:18b)
 - b) In the last days there will be men who cause divisions (1:19)
 1. Because they are worldly-minded (1:19)
 2. Because they are devoid of the Spirit (1:19)
 2. Build yourselves up continuously in the most holy faith (1:20)
 3. Pray continuously (1:20)
 4. Keep yourselves constantly in the flow of God's love (1:21)
 5. Wait anxiously for heaven (1:21)
 6. Have mercy on those who are struggling in their faith (1:22-23)
 7. Have fearful mercy on those who are carried away by the false teachers (1:23)
- VII. Jude's closing doxology (1:24-25)
1. To Him who is able
 - a) To keep you from stumbling (1:24)
 - b) To make you stand in His glory (1:24)
 1. Blameless (1:24)
 2. With Great Joy (1:24)
 2. To the only God our Savior (1:25)
 - a) Be now and forever glory (1:25)
 - b) Be now and forever majesty (1:25)
 - c) Be now and forever power (1:25)
 - d) Be now and forever authority (1:25)

The Bible Study of Jude

Jude 1:1-4 ~ Jude starts his letter, as most writers of the New Testament Canon, in normal Greek fashion. He first provides an introduction of himself as the writer (1:1a). Then, he introduces the recipients (1:1b) and lastly, he gives a formal statement of greeting (1:2). Nevertheless, the content of Jude's introduction is much different. Rather than Jude claiming great apostolic authority he claims relational authority. Since Jude was not an apostle he made his credibility his brother James. As was stated earlier, James was one of the most prominent leaders within the Jerusalem church. Jude's recipients are uniquely described but never identified. In verse 3, Jude begins to discuss the purpose for which he is writing. Jude clearly explains his feeling of urgency in needing to encourage these churches to fight fervently for the faith, which was given to them by the apostles. In verse 4, Jude gives his readers the reason for why he felt compelled to address them in this way. The reason is because these false teachers have secretly wormed their way into the church and are distorting and eroding this holy faith.

Outline:

- I. Introduction (1:1-2)
 1. Author introduced (1:1a)
 - a) Servant of Jesus Christ (v.1)
 - b) Brother of James (v.1)
 2. Recipients introduced (1:1b)
 - a) Those called out by God (v.1)
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- III. Jude's first description of these men (1:4-7)
 1. Men marked for condemnation (1:4a)
 2. Men living ungodly lives (1:4b)
 3. Men turning the grace of God into a sinful license (1:4b)
 4. Men who deny the Lord Jesus Christ (1:4b)

Bible Study:

1. In verse 1, what two descriptions does Jude give for himself?
2. What do you think Jude is saying when he says that he is a "servant of Jesus Christ?"
3. According to the introduction above, what is the importance of Jude being the brother of James?
4. What do you think Jude is saying when he refers to his audience as being called?

5. How do you think Jude's description of his readers being loved and kept by God relate to them being called by God?
6. What three things does Jude wish for his readers in verse 2?
7. What name does Jude use to address his audience in verse 3?
8. According to verse 3, what does Jude say he was first planning on writing about?
9. About what did Jude urgently find important to write?
10. How does Jude want his readers to contend for the faith, according to verse 3?
11. How does Jude describe the faith for which they are to contend (end of verse 3)?
12. What do you think Jude means by "contend for the faith"?
13. What do you think is meant by Jude when he says that this faith is "once for all"?
14. According to verse 4, what compels Jude to exhort his readers to fight for the faith?
15. What does verse 4 say as to how these people got into the church?
16. What four descriptions does Jude give of these men in verse 4 (not including crept in)?
17. For what are these false teachers marked, according to verse 4?
18. According to verse 4, what do these false teachers do with the grace of God?
19. What do these false teachers do with the person of Jesus Christ?

20. At the end of verse 4, how does Jude describe the Lord Jesus Christ?

Meditation:

1. In what ways do these truths in this section change my way of thinking?
2. How should I live differently from this section?

Comments:

Why does Jude call himself a slave? This is a term that is very commonly used among the early New Testament Church. The New Testament believers looked at themselves as free slaves of Jesus Christ. Jude looks at himself no as longer his own, but as belonging to God. Therefore, he is saying he is God's, to be used in any way possible.

What is this faith that Jude is exhorting his readers to earnestly defend? This is a very important question! According to verse 3, it was a faith that was handed down to all those who are called saints or holy ones. In verse 17, Paul makes mention of the importance of these believers remembering the words spoken by the apostles. Therefore, this faith is not a belief in some man's response to Christ, but is a belief in the message or body of saving beliefs accepted as orthodoxy in the church. This faith is described as "once for all." This is suggesting that this system of revealed teaching is unchangeable and permanent in its content.

According to verse 3, is Jude telling Christians today to defend their historical traditions? The statement "to fight for the faith which was handed down to you" must be understood in its proper context. The faith or message that this church had received was a message spoken by the apostles directly. Therefore, this message was handed down in a special way, differing from the way in which God's message is being handed down to believers of the 21st century. This faith that is being referred to by Jude, which was handed down to the church by the apostles, is canonized in the pages of scripture for us today. Therefore, for believers of the 21st century to apply these truths today, they must hold on to the once for all truths of the Bible. This is very important because the Catholic Church believes that their organization holds the embodiment of the truth and any person not holding to their teaching is apostate. Nevertheless, this faith is the message of Jesus Christ, which was handed down to Jude's church through the apostles and was given to the 21st century church in the New Testament. Consequently, Jude is telling us to fight for the truth that God has handed down to us in the written pages of the New Testament.

Jude 1:5-7 ~ Jude, having revealed how these false teachers reject God and live sinfully despite God's goodness, now seeks to make known the seriousness of this issue by showing how God has dealt with such people in the past. He gives three illustrations of how God has intolerably punished those who have used God's gracious kindness as an opportunity to abandon themselves to sinful rebellion. In verse 5, Jude gives the first example of God's destruction of the faithless Israelites in the desert who God had earlier rescued from captivity. In verse 6, a second illustration is given of angels who did not keep their God-given positions of authority, but abandoned their homes. They are now suffering in eternal chains in darkness till God's future

2. How should I live differently from this section?

Comments:

Who are these angels that are referred to in verse 6? There is a lot of controversy over this question. Many believe that these are the Sons of God and the daughters of men that are mentioned in Genesis 6:1-4. These commentators believe this because they give prominence to Jewish and Gentile traditions, namely the book of Enoch.¹⁰ However, I believe that this interpretation does not do justice to the truth that Moses is seeking to communicate in Genesis. I believe it is better to take this passage at face value and understand these angels to be rebellious angels who did not want to maintain their God-given places of authority. Therefore, they rebelled and left their positions for judgment. The Bible is not clear as to where their place of authority and home was specifically.

What does the story of Sodom and Gomorrah exemplify? This story should be a reminder to each one of us of hell, the eternal fire. Throughout Scripture, the Bible clearly speaks of this place called hell. Therefore, may each one of us evaluate to confirm that we belong to God.

Jude 1:8-11 ~ *After Jude gives three terrifying illustrations of God's judgment, he returns once again to portray the wickedness of which these false teachers are guilty. Once again, Jude brings three descriptions of these false teachers, which are a result of their dreams or ecstatic visionary experiences. The first description of wickedness is how they pollute their bodies like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah (1:8a). The second description of wickedness is how they reject the Lordship of Jesus Christ, so that they can rule their own lives (8b). The third description of wickedness is how these men slander angelic magistrates (8c). This slander was so foolish to Jude that he felt the need to illustrate its stupidity with the story of how Michael the archangel would not rebuke Satan (1:9). Jude's point of this example is to show how even the mighty archangel did not dare to rebuke the devil, so how stupid is it to think that sinful man should slander in such ways? Having through example shown the absurdity of these false teachers' thinking, Jude, in verse 10, explains the foolishness of these men's prideful slanders. He makes it clear that these men don't even know what they are doing (10a), but that they are only experts in the field of physical experience,¹¹ which leads to their destruction (10b). It is this destruction that leads Jude in verse 11 to lament to his readers by saying, "woe to them!" This expression of grief is a typical phrase that the Old Testament prophets uttered repeatedly to condemn persons or nations.¹² Jude follows up his expression of grief by providing an explanation of his remorse. Jude hurts because these men have gone the way of three wicked men of the Old Testament: Cain (11a), Balaam (11b), and Korah (11c).*

Outline:

IV. Jude's second description of these men (1:8-11)

1. Men who defile the flesh (1:8)

¹⁰ Kistemaker 378

¹¹ Kelly 266

¹² Kistemaker 389

2. Men who reject God's Lordship (1:8)
3. Men who slander angelic majesties (1:8)
 - a) Jude exemplifies the foolishness of these men slandering angelic majesties: Michael the archangel's confrontation with Satan (1:9)
 - b) Jude's explanation of the foolishness of these men slandering angelic majesties (1:10)
 1. They slander things they don't understand (1:10a)
 2. They are destroyed (like animals) by things they know by instinct (1:10b)
 - c) Jude's proclamation of the condemnation of these men because of their foolishness (1:11)
 1. These men who act like Cain (1:11a)
 2. These men who for money fall into the error of Balaam (1:11b)
 3. These men who have perished like Korah (1:11c)

Bible Study:

1. According to verse 8, what three descriptions does Jude give of these false teachers?
2. What do verses 7 and 8 say about how these false teachers corrupt their flesh?
3. What do you think Jude means when he says that these men reject authority?
4. What do you think Jude means when he calls these men "dreaming ones" (literal meaning)?
5. Based on verse 9, what do you think Jude means these men slander angelic majesties?
6. According to verse 9, what did Michael and Satan dispute over?
7. What would Michael definitely not do to Satan?
8. How do you think that this example relates to verse 8 and these false teachers?
9. What does verse 10 say about these teachers 'slandering'?
10. In what way are these false teachers like unreasonable animals?
11. Where are the instincts of these false teachers leading them?

12. According to verse 11, for what reason does Jude lament over these false teachers?

13. What was the motivation behind why these men went the way of Balaam?

14. What do you think Jude is trying to do within the hearts of his readers in verse 11?

Meditation:

1. In what ways do these truths in this section change my way of thinking?

2. How should I live differently from this section?

Comments:

How does this dreaming relate to these men being false teachers? One name for these men according to Jude is that they are men who dream. It is really important for us to recognize the fact that these men are dreamers, because Jude is giving his readers insight into the source of their teaching. It is not that these men are wishfully thinking, but that these men claim to have ecstatic visionary experiences, which they use to bring authority to their life and doctrine. It is for this reason that Jude will call his readers back to the authority of God's Word (v.17). Nevertheless, history has proven the fact that dreamers are extremely dangerous to God's church. Most major false religions are a result of such experiences: Mormons, Jehovah witnesses, Muslim faith, etc. Frankly speaking, dreamers throughout church history have never been allowed into the church until today. However, today through the Pentecostal movement, dreamers are being embraced within evangelicalism. I believe Jude's message can be a great warning to our church within the 21st century. Watch out for dreamers!

How does the example of Balaam relate to men being false teachers? One easy way to identify a false teacher is by looking at what motivates him. If a man is consumed with money, then watch-out for his message! Paul makes it clear in I Tim 6:5 that the Lord's servant is never motivated by money and that God's minister should stay far away from such pursuits (2 Cor. 12:14-16; 1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 5:2). O my dear friends, watch out for being like Balaam (Num 31:1-16; Deut. 23:4; Rev. 2:14; II Pet. 2:15). Guard your church from such men. They will come through radio, TV, books, and maybe even from your congregations.

***Jude 1:12-16** ~ Jude, having outwardly expressed his remorse for the destructive path these men have chosen (1:11), now turns and warns his readers further of their need to get rid of these men from their midst. Throughout this whole section, Jude is going to describe in full detail for a third time what these men look like. This section is a powerful section in light of what Jude has just said in verse 11. Jude, with power, reveals to his readers that these men who have gone the way of Cain, Balaam, Korah, and ultimately destruction are presently in your fellowship, eating with your people. Within this long section, Jude gives his readers 11 vivid descriptions of these men. These men are hidden reefs (v.12a), clouds without water (v.12b), fruitless autumn trees*

(v.12c), wild waves of the sea (v.13), lost, wandering stars (v.13), negatively prophesized (v.14-15), grumblers (v.16a), critical of others (v.16a), enslaved to their lust (v.16a), arrogant (v.16b), and full of flattery (1:16b). It should be noted grammatically that the four images given in verse 12 are describing how these men care only for themselves (clouds without water, fruitless autumn trees, wild waves of the sea, lost, wandering stars).

Outline:

V. Jude's third description of these men (1:12-16)

1. Men who are hidden reefs (1:12a)
 - a) Present within love feasts (1:12a)
 - b) Without fear (1:12a)
 - c) Shepherding themselves (1:12a)
 1. As clouds without water carried along by the wind (1:12b)
 2. As autumn trees without fruit (1:12c)
 - a. Totally Dead (1:12c)
 - b. Uprooted (1:12c)
 3. As wild waves of the sea, casting up shame (1:13)
 4. As wandering stars (1:13)
 5. Whose ultimate destiny is hell forever (1:13)
2. Men who are prophesied negatively (1:14-15)
3. Men who are grumblers (1:16a)
4. Men who are critical of others (1:16a)
5. Men who are following after their own lust (1:16a)
6. Men who are arrogant (1:16b)
7. Men who are full of flattery (1:16b)

Bible Study:

1. How does verse 12 relate to what Jude has just said in verse 11?
2. What do you think Jude means when he says that these men are "hidden reefs"?
3. What do you think was this love feast?
4. Where does Jude say that these men resided?
5. What two descriptions does Jude give for how these men acted at these feasts?
6. What do you think Jude means when he says that these men are "clouds without water"?
7. What do you think Jude means when he says that these men are fruitless autumn trees?

8. Why do you think Jude is saying referring to these men as doubly dead and uprooted?
9. What do you think Jude means when he says that these men are “wild waves”?
10. What do you think Jude means when he says that these men are “wandering stars”?
11. According to verse 13, for what are these men being reserved?
12. How long does Jude say these men will be in the reserved black darkness?
13. Who do you think is this man named Enoch?
14. According to Enoch’s prophecy what two things will the Lord do with his angels? To whom will God do these things?
15. What other five descriptions does Jude give of these men in verse 16?
16. What does Jude say these men follow?
17. For what purpose do these men flatter others?

Meditation:

1. In what ways do these truths in this section change my way of thinking?
2. How should I live differently from this section?

Comments:

What is Jude saying in verse 12 with all these nature illustrations? These illustrations can be understood as follows:

1. “Hidden reefs in your love feasts” ~ By calling these men “hidden reefs” he is saying that they are like a dangerous obstacle on which a ship can be wrecked when it is approaching land. In relationship to the heretics, Jude is saying that they who mingle in the Christian

community and have not yet been identified as dangerous to the life of the church.¹³ A love feast was “a common meal eaten by early Christians in connection with their church services, for the purpose of fostering and expressing brotherly love.”¹⁴

2. “Clouds without water” ~ This imagery is very common for those who live in the middle east because they are very often exasperated by heavy clouds which fail to result in rain (rain was scarce but very necessary during these days). By this illustration, Jude is suggesting that these heretics are all show and no substance; they have nothing to give to those who are so foolish as to listen to them.¹⁵
3. “Autumn trees without water, doubly dead, uprooted” ~ The imagery is that of a completely dead and unprofitable tree. Suggesting that these men are spiritually and morally dead and useless for any spiritual good.
4. “Wild waves of the sea” ~ The picture here is of a sea that is out of control, causing disarray and the collection of filth and trash. This is suggesting that these teachers who are lead by lustful impurity are involved in sinful acts that are affecting the people that surround them. Jude is portraying the fact that these men’s evil is forceful, untamed, random, and involves any innocent bystander, and the results always produce trash.¹⁶
5. “Wandering star” ~ The image is that of the star which has lost its course and is not helpful whatsoever to be used for navigation. These false teachers resemble these stars in that they, as a result of their rebellion and sin, have gone off course, and while pretending to give beneficial light, they in reality lead people astray.¹⁷

Where does this prophesy from Enoch come from? Verses 14 and 15 are an interesting quote from the apocryphal book of I Enoch. This book was very popular during the first century. It is assumed by scholars that Jude took a copy of this book, originally in Aramaic, and translated this verse into Greek for the point of showing these teachers their future doom. Nevertheless, it should be noted that even though Jude quotes from an Apocryphal book, I Enoch is still in no way regarded to be scriptural. However, since through divine inspiration Jude quotes from this book of Enoch, these words of Enoch should be regarded as authoritative words of God (II Pet. 1:21; Acts 17:28).¹⁸ Why did Jude use this book for his authoritative quote? The answer to this question cannot be known for sure. However, maybe he used this book because these false teachers highly respected it, so he wanted to use the false teachers’ own respected writings for their condemnation purposes.

Jude 1:17-23 ~ *From this point forward Jude makes a transition from describing these heretics (1:5-16) to tenderly addressing his readers (17-23). Jude, having passionately and clearly warned his readers to look out for these dangerous men who have crept into the church, now gives his readers advice on how to contend for the faith against such men. His first advice is given in 17-19, which is to remember the words of the apostles that false teachers are going to come. Jude does not want his readers to be shocked that these false teachers are among them*

¹³ Kistemaker 391

¹⁴ Kistemaker 392

¹⁵ Kelly 272

¹⁶ Kistemaker 392

¹⁷ Kelly 274

¹⁸ Kistemaker 395

but he wants them to continuously remember how the apostles told them that these teachers were coming (Acts 20:29ff; 1 Tim 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 4:3; Mark 13:5ff; 21:1ff). In essence he is telling his readers, "be on guard because you know these heretics are coming." In verse 20, Jude gives his second and third pieces of advice. He tells them to continuously be building themselves in both the faith (applied today by continuously studying God's Word) and in prayer. The importance of these two issues can never be overstated. If Christians are not about these things, they are left in a dangerous position, very susceptible to false teachers. In verse 21, Jude gives his fourth and fifth pieces of advice for his readers to keep themselves in God's flowing love (versus his arm of discipline) and to wait eagerly for eternal life. In verses 22-23, Jude will give his final pieces of advice on how his readers are to behave toward fellow believers who have fallen or are falling into the trap of these false teachers. His first advice is to those who are tempted to fall into the lies of these teachers; these people are called the doubtful or wavering ones. Jude tells his readers to have mercy on them, saving them out of the fire. His second advice is to those who have already fallen into the lies of these teachers (vs.22-23). He tells his readers here to have mercy but with fear, hating every evil filth about these men (v.23). Jude wants his readers to know that this is a dangerous mission that needs to be made with the right attitude. By God's grace, I pray that Jude's advice in these verses will be clearly heard and urgently heeded within God's church today.

Outline:

- VI. Jude's advice on how to content for the faith (1:17-24)
 - 1. Remember the words of Christ's Apostles (1:17-19)
 - a) In the last days there will be mockers (1:18a)
 - 1. Following their own ungodly lusts (1:18b)
 - b) In the last days there will be men who cause divisions (1:19)
 - 1. Because they are worldly-minded (1:19)
 - 2. Because they are devoid of the Spirit (1:19)
 - 2. Build yourselves up continuously in the most holy faith (1:20)
 - 3. Pray continuously (1:20)
 - 4. Keep yourselves constantly in the flow of God's love (1:21)
 - 5. Wait anxiously for heaven (1:21)
 - 6. Have mercy on those who are struggling in their faith (1:22-23)
 - 7. Have fearful mercy on those who are carried away by the false teachers (1:23)

Bible Study:

1. Why do you think Jude calls his readers *beloved* in verses 17 and 20?
2. In verse 17, what are Jude's readers told to remember?
3. According to Jude in verses 18-19, what did the apostles say would happen?
4. To whom do these apostles belong according to verse 17?

5. When will these bad things happen according to verse 18?
6. After what do these men follow according to verse 18?
7. What does verse 19 say that these men are causing?
8. In what does Jude tell his readers to build themselves up?
9. What do you think is the faith that Jude is referring to in verse 20?
10. What do you think makes this faith holy?
11. What is the second piece of advice that Jude gives in verse 20?
12. What do you think Jude means when he says, “Keep yourselves in the love of God”?
13. According to verse 21, for what is a Christian to wait?
14. How does verse 21 advise a Christian to wait?
15. How does verse 22 advise the strong to act toward the doubting?
16. What do you think is this fire (referred to in verse 23)?
17. How does verse 23 advise the strong to act toward the apostates?
18. What do you think is this garment that is polluted by the flesh?

Meditation:

1. In what ways do these truths in this section change my way of thinking?

2. How should I live differently from this section?

Comments:

How important is it that God's children continuously devote themselves to God's Word and to prayer? According to Jude, this is essential! The whole of Scripture speaks of how important it is to be saturated in God's Word. In this context, God's Word will protect us from false teachers.

***Jude 1:24-25** ~ Jude concludes his letter with a beautiful doxology of praise to God. Most scholars believe that this doxology was a song sung within the early Christian church, due to the literary balance and cadence of these two verses.¹⁹ This is a fitting ending for such a book, considering the dangerous threat of such false teachers. In these final words of praise to God, Jude assures his readers of God's power to protect and present His children to appear blameless on the final day of judgment (v.24). These words were probably of great encouragement to Jude's audience, especially those who had been polluted by the filth of these heretics. Jude assures his readers that God will keep his children protected now and forever from the evil one (the word "keep" communicates eternity). The letter ends by declaring praise and adoration to the one and only God, our Savior.*

Outline:

- VII. Jude's closing doxology (1:24-25)
 1. To Him who is able
 - a) To keep you from stumbling (1:24)
 - b) To make you stand in His glory (1:24)
 1. Blameless (1:24)
 2. With Great Joy (1:24)
 2. To the only God our Savior (1:25)
 - a) Be now and forever glory (1:25)
 - b) Be now and forever majesty (1:25)
 - c) Be now and forever power (1:25)
 - d) Be now and forever authority (1:25)

Bible Study:

1. What two things is God able to do according to verse 24?
2. How does Jude describe God's presence in verse 24?
3. For a Christian, what two things will take place when he appears before God?
4. How does Jude describe God in verse 25?

¹⁹ Kistemaker, 410

5. What four things does Jude ascribe to God?
6. For how long will God be praised according to the end of verse 25?
7. What do you think the word “amen” means?

Meditation:

1. In what ways do these truths in this section change my way of thinking?
2. How should I live differently from this section?

Comments:

What is your response to the truths of verses 24 and 25? They should be, “Praise God! Praise God! Praise God!” May we together begin this praise to our great God, now, as we eagerly wait our future place in the choir of heaven.

Jude Study

Sheets