

Jude

Introductory Notes

- Jude used many figures of speech (shepherds, clouds, trees, waves, stars).
- He also frequently wrote in groups of three. Some have suggested there are 18 of them in this short epistle (such as *to those...called...beloved...kept*).
- Jude also frequently referred to the Old Testament (the Exodus, Sodom, Moses' body, Cain, Balaam, etc.), indicating his audience was familiar with these events, probably were Jewish believers.
- Jude's writing is similar to 2 Peter, but Peter predicted false teachers *would arise* (2 Peter 2:1; 3:3) and Jude said the false teachers *have crept in* (verse 4). So Jude was probably written later than Peter, but Jude does not mention any time frame or group to whom he is writing. Verse 17 seems to suggest the apostles were dead, but verse 18 implies that some of Jude's readers heard some of the apostles teach. Also, since Jude does not talk about the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., it would seem that Jude is dated between Peter's death and that destruction, that is, around 68-70 A.D.

Greeting

Verse 1—*Jude*—The son of Mary and Joseph, the half-brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3). At first, he and his brothers did not believe in Jesus (John 7:5), but when they saw the resurrected Christ, they believed He was God (Acts 1:14; 1 Corinthians 15:7).

—*a bond-servant of Jesus Christ*—But he didn't use his human relationship as his credentials. He was a bond-servant of Jesus, the same as the rest of the believers.

—*and brother of James*—also a half brother of Jesus, the author of the epistle of James (James 1:1), and leader of the church at Jerusalem (Acts 15:13).

—*To those who are the called*—Synonymous with “a Christian” in the epistles. It is God's sovereign call to salvation. It's a past action—“those who have been called” (John 6:44).

—*beloved in God the Father*—“who are loved by God the Father” (Romans 5:8).

—*and kept for Jesus Christ*—future, better “kept by” or maintained (John 6:35-40; 10:27-28).

Verse 2—*May mercy and peace and love be multiplied* (“to be increased, to the fullest measure”) *to you* (Romans 9:23; John 14:27; Romans 5:5). But with these come a lot of responsibility, which he now explains.

Reason for the Letter

Verse 3—*Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation*—Jude intended to write a positive letter about our salvation, as he had a deep love for them—*beloved*.

—*I felt the necessity*—instead, for their spiritual good, he had to write about the false teachers. He couldn't watch in silence as his readers slipped into error.

—*to write to you appealing*—exhorting, encouraging

—*that you contend earnestly*—only here in the N.T. “to struggle,” an intense effort, as in a wrestling match. And the verb form shows the struggle is to be continuous.

—*for the faith which was once for all* [Gk. completed action, with lasting results] *handed down to the saints*—the foundational truths of the Gospel, which cannot be changed (Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Timothy 1:13-14; 2 John 9-11). That truth is God's Word, which is all-sufficient (Revelation 22:18-19). God's Word is for believers.

Verse 4—*For certain persons*—word for “humans” so it would include both men and women

—*have crept in unnoticed*—secretly, with evil intentions. They *secretly introduce destructive heresies* (2 Peter 2:1). Verse 12 says these are in the *love feasts*, i.e., Holy Communion. Attacks from outside of Christianity often unite God's people, but attacks from within usually divide and confuse God's people.

—*those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation*—just as with false prophets in the O.T., false teachers in the N.T. will be judged and condemned (Isaiah 8:20-22; Jeremiah 5:13-14; 8:12-13; Hosea 9:7-8; Zephaniah 3:1-8; 2 Thessalonians 2:6-10; 2 Peter 2:3-6).

—*ungodly persons*—Paul wrote, ...*lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God* (1 Thessalonians 4:5).

—*who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness*—claiming liberty in Christ, they interpret God’s grace as a license to do whatever their flesh desires, with no inhibitions. For example, the book “What’s So Amazing about Grace,” claims God’s grace extends to homosexuals with no need for repentance.

—*and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ*—Jude doesn’t say exactly how they do this. It could be by their immoral behavior, or perhaps in their teaching they are denying either the Deity or humanity of Jesus—John says they are *antichrist* (1 John 4:1-4).

Examples of God’s Judgment on the Ungodly in History

Verse 5—*Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe*—Although God delivered the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage, yet an entire generation died in the wilderness because of their unbelief (Hebrews 3:16-19). So those who have heard what God expects in His Word but fail to believe will be condemned and destroyed in God’s judgment (Hebrews 10:29).

Verse 6—*And angels who did not keep their own domain [positions of dominion or sphere], but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day*—The most common interpretation of this passage is from Genesis 6:11-13, which, they claim, are angels co-habiting with humans. Or this could be referring to angels who fell from heaven with Satan, the worst of the demons, who are imprisoned in the pits of darkness or the abyss. These demons are released for 5 months during the tribulation (Revelation 9), but are again put back into the abyss where they await judgment. The point of the verse, though, is not what the angels did, which is less clear, but that what they did was wrong and God will judge them for it.

Verse 7—*just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange [different] flesh [homosexuality—Genesis 19; Romans 1], are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire*—God’s judgment on Sodom was to burn it with fire, and these false teachers will also have the judgment of fire, the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10).

“The severest eternal suffering will belong to those who know and reject the truth. Even more terrible will judgment be to those who, having done that, go on to teach demonic lies as if they are true (cf. James 3:1)” [MacArthur].

Descriptions of False Teachers Today

Rejecting Authority

Verse 8—*Yet in the same way these men*—of Sodom and Gomorrah, who indulged in *gross immorality*—*also by dreaming*—

1. This is not the usual Greek word for “dreams” used in the N.T. Instead, this word is used only one other time, when Peter, in his message of Acts 2:17 quotes Joel 2:28-32. So it would seem that these dreams refer to dreams where they claim to get “revelation” from God, rather than normal dreams. False teachers often claim dreams as the authoritative, divine source for their “new truths” which are really just lies and distortions. In the O.T., “dreamer” was synonymous with “false prophet” (Deuteronomy 13:1-5; Jeremiah 23:25-32, see also Colossians 2:18-19; 1 Timothy 4:1-2).

2. One of the most common experiences today are Muslims dreaming about “Isa,” the word in the Koran for “Jesus” who tells them they belong to Him. Would Jesus appear as a Koran description or as “Jesus” of the Bible? Also, this is not the message of the Gospel, which is you are a sinner, Jesus paid for your sins, you need to accept Him as your Savior. Also, when Jesus ascended into heaven, the angels told the apostles that the next time Jesus would appear, it would be in the clouds, at the Rapture and the Second Coming (Acts 1), not as visions to Muslims. Also, this claims an insufficient Bible—that these dreams are new revelation from God apart from the Bible.
3. It’s true, God spoke in visions and dreams to some people in the Bible. *God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son* (Hebrews 1:1-2). But now that Jesus has come and the Bible is written, it is the Word of God, and no “revelations” through visions and/or dreams are to add to it (Revelation 22:18-19).

—*defile the flesh*—Gk. sexual immorality. They *indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires* (2 Peter 2:10). Adultery and homosexuality are not only increasing in the culture, it’s increasing among professing Christians. *...to those who are defiled and unbelieving...they profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him* (Titus 1:15-16).

—*and reject authority*—Gk. “lordship,” i.e., Jesus is not Lord of their lives. They reject the Word of God as the directive for their lives.

—*and revile* [blasphemous, slander] *angelic majesties*—

Verse 9—*But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses* [because evidently God sent him to bury Moses where no one would find the body—Deuteronomy 34:5-6], *did not dare pronounce against him a railing* [blasphemous, slander] *judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”*—We have no record in the O.T. of this event, only what is said here. As an archangel, Michael is the highest authority among the angels (Daniel 10:13-21; 12:1). Yet he was not in charge of judgment, God was, and Michael said God would do the judging of Satan. Man and angels have no control over Satan, only God does.

Verse 10—*But these men revile* [blasphemous, slander] *the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning* [unreasoning] *animals*—like dumb animals, they cannot speak reasonably because they cannot reason. *Professing to be wise, they became fools* (Romans 1:22; 1 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Corinthians 10:5, 12; Galatians 6:3; 2 Timothy 3:2, 4).

—*by these things they are destroyed*—their own lying and deceiving heresies will bring God’s judgment on them.

Walking in Error

Verse 11—*Woe to them!*—an emotional cry: “How horrible it will be!”, as Jesus said about the Pharisees (Matthew 23:13-29, and the prophets said about Israel (Isaiah 3:9, 11; Jeremiah 13:27; etc.).

—*For they have gone the way of Cain*—Genesis 4:1-15. Cain disobeyed and created his own ways of worship, a religion of works without faith. When God did not accept his offering, he responded in jealousy and anger—even killing his own obedient brother Abel (see Hebrews 11:4). These false teachers create a false religion and then kill the souls of men by lies and deceit.

—*and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam*—Pretending to serve God, Balaam led the Israelites into sin, while gaining monetarily from their error (2 Peter 2:15-16; Numbers 22:21-31). He was a prophet for hire, an illustration of false teachers who love wealth and prestige more than faithfulness and obedience to God (Revelation 2:14).

—*and perished* [their destruction is so certain, Jude speaks of it in the past tense] *in the rebellion of Korah*—Korah was a cousin of Moses. When he was not chosen as a priest, he became very angry. He got 250 other men to join him in rebellion against the leadership of Moses (Numbers 16). God judged them by opening the earth and swallowing them up. However, Korah’s rebellious spirit had spread among the

people, resulting in an additional 14,700 Israelites being killed in a plague. By rebelling against God's chosen leader, they were rebelling against God Himself. The same today when the false teachers rebel against the Word of God. Many of today's false teachers have huge followings, made up of people who will share their judgment (1 Timothy 1:1-4).

Leading Falsely

Verse 12—*These are the men who are hidden reefs*—Paul said they are disguised as angels of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). Jesus said they are wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15). They are very difficult to identify. Reefs are an unseen danger, usually close to the shore, they can potentially rip open the hulls of ships, causing them to sink. For example, the Concordia in Italy two years ago—32 people killed. Huge cruise ship destroyed. So false teachers are hidden and spiritually destructive to your soul. A question: if you see a "red flag" by a teacher, should you continue to listen to that teacher? Is being able to recognize "red flags" enough discernment? Do you assume there are no other things you don't observe? "Red flags" may be obvious, but what's being communicated that is *hidden reefs*, something that's destroying your soul of which you are unaware of by putting yourself in that position?

—*in your love feasts*—a gathering of the believers, who ate together and then celebrated the Lord's Supper. We "say" if you are not a believer, don't partake, but these profess to be believers, and so partake.

—*when they feast with you without fear*—They are so deceived they do not even recognize the terror of the Lord against those who mock His Son's death shown in Communion (*examine himself...For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself...for this reason, many among you are weak and sick, and a number are dead*—1 Corinthians 11:23-34).

—*caring [shepherding] for themselves*—Their only interest is self-interest and self-gratification—at the expense of anyone else (John 10:12-13). Think of a shepherd not feeding his flock, just feeding himself!!

—*clouds without water, carried along by winds*—Clouds produce an expectation of rain. But without water, the clouds are light and blown away by the winds. So false teachers have no spiritual water for thirsty souls. They only give the impression that they do. And they get blown from one empty "fad" of Christianity to another (seek-friendly, purpose-driven, etc.).

—*autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted*—These false teachers produce no spiritual fruit, and are also uprooted, so there is no hope of producing fruit. They are twice dead. Jesus said, *Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted* (Matthew 15:13). They produce no life-changing fruit, neither in themselves nor in others.

Verse 13—*wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam* [only time this word is used in the N.T.]—Isaiah 57:20-21 says, *The wicked are like the tossing sea, for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up refuse and mud*. Often waves leave behind foam or debris on the beach. There is nothing beneficial or life-giving in the foam. It's useless—actually, it's disgusting. That's false teaching.

—*wandering stars* [one word]—These would be "shooting stars," which are usually comets or meteors. They are bright and shoot across the sky, then disappear. A ship's captain would be stupid to use them for direction. This kind of "star" is short-lived, useless, and false. God made the actual stars for signs in the sky—dependable and useful for navigation, etc. (Genesis 1:14).

—*for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever*—Just as the shooting star disappears into darkness, these false teachers will be swallowed up into eternal darkness (2 Peter 2:4, 9, 17).

Verse 14—*It was also about these men that Enoch*—*Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him* (Genesis 5:24). The great-grandfather of Noah, he was a righteous man in the midst of a very evil world.

—*in the seventh generation from Adam*—Using the years of Genesis 5, Adam would still be alive when Enoch lived.

- *Prophesied*—We don't have a record of this prophecy, but, for example, we find out *righteous Lot, ...felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds* in 2 Peter 2:7. We don't know about that in the events of Lot's life in Genesis.
- *saying, "Behold, the Lord came*—Jude speaks of Christ's coming as a sure thing—In 2 Peter 3, Peter said the *mockers* were saying *...all continues just as it was from the beginning...* They were mocking Jesus because He had not returned. But Peter said it was because of the patience of God, *not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance* (v. 9). The false teachers think they have all the time in the world to spread their poison, but Jude says the coming of Christ is sure.
- *with many thousands of His holy ones*—possibly the resurrected believers from the church age (1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; Revelation 19:14) or it most likely refers to His angels, used to bring about the judgments of the tribulation. The church age saints judge during the Millennial Kingdom, but it's the angels who participate in the judgment of the Second Coming.

Verse 15—*to execute judgment upon all, and to convict* [Gk. "to expose" or "prove guilty"] **all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds** [what they have done] *which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken* [what they have said] *against Him.*"

—Notice four words, each repeated four times: *all, ungodly*—**All** of these false teachers, and those who follow their teaching, are **ungodly** and will be proven guilty. Their false teaching is "hidden" and "disguised" today, but Christ will expose it as ungodly when He comes.

—This judgment is called the separation of the sheep and goats (Matthew 25:31f). Their final judgment will be the Great White Throne, from where they will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15).

Verse 16—*These* [false teachers] *are grumblers*—Word only used here in N.T. The Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew O.T.) uses this word to describe Israel's murmurings against God (Exodus 16:7-9; Numbers 14:27, 29).

—*finding fault*—Again, used only here in the N.T. Means "to blame." Often you will hear professing Christians say something like, "**My god** wouldn't say that...or condemn that..." When they are confronted with something in the Bible they don't like, they find fault with it—claiming things like, homosexuality is not wrong, women can teach men, etc.

—*following after their own lusts*—lit. "they live by their passions," rather than by the Word of God.

—*they speak arrogantly*—lit. "great swelling words." "They pompously puffed themselves up with an elaborate, sophisticated religious vocabulary that had an external spiritual tone and attractiveness but was void of divine truth and substance" (MacArthur).

—*flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage*—telling people what they want to hear, or cleverly manipulating others for their own gain. Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:4, *they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth...*

How to Avoid False Teaching

—Jude already wrote in verse 3, *appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints*—i.e., a continuous, intense struggle for the truth of the Word of God against the messages of the false teachers, which are to distort the Word of God.

Verse 17—*But you, beloved*—again, Jude's love of the brethren

—*ought to remember the words*—the warnings of the coming of false teachers and a turning away from the Word of God.

—*that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ*—Jesus warned us (Matthew 7:15); Paul warned us (2 Corinthians 11:12-15; 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 6:20-21; 2 Timothy 2:17-19; 3:1-9; 4:1-3); and Peter warned us (2 Peter 2); and John warned us (1 John 4:1; 2:18-19; 2 John 7; 3 John 9-11).

Verse 18—*that they were saying to you, "In the last time* [between Christ's first coming and Second Coming] *there will be mockers*—Because Christ and His judgments have not come yet, they think they

have all kinds of time to follow their own fleshly desires (2 Peter 3:3-9). Probably mocking God's Word also.

—*following after their own ungodly lusts*—without God, they have no desire for holiness.

Verse 19—*These are the ones who cause divisions*—they have their own versions of what is “truth” so they become divided from other groups, they portray themselves as superior to those who teach the truth —*worldly-minded*—lit. “sensual or psychic persons,” claiming to have their own superior spiritual authority

—*devoid of the Spirit*—they are spiritually dead, without God. *They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed* (Titus 1:16).

Personal Edification

Verse 20—*But you, beloved*—i.e., believers. *building yourselves up on your most holy faith*—as Jude already described it—*which was once for all* [Gk. completed action, with lasting results] *handed down to the saints*—the foundational truths of the Gospel, which cannot be changed (Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Timothy 1:13-14; 2 John 9-11). That truth is God's Word, which is all-sufficient (Revelation 22:18-19). God's Word is for believers. *Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ* (Romans 10:17). No one else can build you up. You have to decide to study God's Word (1 Peter 2:2).

—*praying in the Holy Spirit*—as Jesus said, *Thy will be done* (Matthew 6:10; 26:39).

Verse 21—*keep yourselves in the love of God*—i.e., stay obedient to God (John 15:9-11; 1 John 2:5). —*waiting anxiously* [lit. “to eagerly anticipate”] *for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life*—to look forward to eternity with Jesus (rather than mocking it as the false teachers do).

Reaching Out to Others

Verse 22—*And have mercy on some, who are doubting* [or “waver”]—those confused by the false teaching. *With gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will* (2 Timothy 2:25-26).

Verse 23—*save others, snatching* [using force] *them out of the fire*—To help someone get away from false teaching is to save them off from the path that leads to the lake of fire and eternal damnation. —*and on some have mercy with fear* [caution], *hating even the garment polluted* [excrement stained] *by the flesh*—be careful that their pollution doesn't spread to you, that you are not influenced by the false teaching or false teachers.

Verse 24—*Now to Him who is able to keep* [to guard or to watch over] *you from stumbling*—God is able to keep you from falling prey to false teaching (John 10:27-29). —*and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless* [sinless]—*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus* (Romans 8:1; see 2 Corinthians 5:21). ... *nor any created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Romans 8:39).

—*with great joy*—that believers who dwell with God will have forever

Verse 25—*to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord*—*there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved* (Acts 4:12).

—*be glory* [radiance], *majesty* [God's greatness], *dominion* [power] *and authority* [One in charge], *before all time* [eternity past] *and now* [eternity present] *and forever* [eternity future]. *Amen*—