

Jude

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Jude

by Jonathan Cooper

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Summary

AUTHOR: Jude (v1)

DATE: No one really knows when this book was written or to whom the letter was sent.

RECIPIENTS: Christians in general (v1)

CHARACTERS: Jude; said to be the brother of James (who was actually the Lord's brother; see Gal 1:19) (v1)

GREETING: Jude wishes mercy, peace, and love upon them (v2)

TEACHINGS:

God accomplishes our sanctification (v1)

Our sanctification has already been accomplished (we "are" sanctified – present tense) (v1)

Jesus Christ preserves us; we cannot lose our salvation (v1)

If Jesus preserves us and keeps us in the faith then that means we do not have free will (v1)

Jude introduced himself as humbly as possible (v1)

Some of Jesus' family [Jude] eventually came to believe on Him (v1)

God has called us (v1)

Defending the faith was so important that it took precedence over Jude discussing the gospel (v3)

Earnestly contend for the faith; defend doctrine vigorously (v3)

The faith has already been delivered to us; the process of revelation is over (v3)

The faith was delivered to the *saints* (v3)

Defend all doctrine; we are not at liberty to defend some things and cast away other teachings as "non-essential" (v3)

Certain men have crept into the Church without the Church realizing it, and have put the Church in great danger (v4)

The evil men who are putting the Church in danger were predestined by God to do what they are doing; this is more evidence against free will (v4)

Evil men have turned God's grace into a license to sin (v4)

Evil men have denied God and Jesus Christ (v4)

The Church has forgotten the truths of the Old Testament and has been led astray by evil men (v5)

The Lord is the one who delivered Israel from Pharaoh (v5)

Israel was delivered from bondage in Egypt; the Exodus is not a myth or fable (v5)

God destroyed the Israelites who did not believe (v5)

By talking about those whom God destroyed, Jude preached a message of judgment (something many today are reluctant to do) (v5)

Being a Jew does not automatically save you; God destroyed the Israelites who did not believe in Him (v5)

Jude responded to ungodliness by preaching a message of

judgment (v5)

There are angels who sinned and lost their original position (v6)

When angels sin, it is permanent; there is no forgiveness for it (v6)

The angels in Heaven are angels who have never sinned (v6)

In order to keep their Heavenly position the angels must live a life of perfect good works (v6)

The angels who sinned no longer live in Heaven; they have left their former habitation (although, as the book of Job points out, they still have some access to Heaven) (v6)

Some demons are chained in prison and are not free to roam the Earth (these would be the ones who mated with women and created the Nephilim) (v6)

The chained demons are in utter (physical) darkness (v6)

The chained demons are being kept in prison until judgment day comes (meaning they have not yet been judged) (v6)

There is a day of judgment coming (v6)

Like the people of Sodom, the angels who are now imprisoned were guilty of sexual sin (v7)

Sodom and Gomorrha were not the only cities who were judged; neighboring cities were also destroyed because of their immorality (v7)

The inhabitants of Sodom gave themselves over to fornication and immorality (v7)

The sin of Sodom was homosexuality; that is why God destroyed them (v7)

Homosexuality is a serious sin that brings God's judgment on

both individuals and communities (v7)

Giving yourself over to sexual sin brings God's judgment (v7)

Sodom was destroyed as an example of God's hatred for immorality and His judgment upon sin (v7)

God judges cities for their sin and has destroyed cities in the past because of their gross immorality (v7)

God takes vengeance upon those who sin against Him (v7)

Those who sin against God will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire (v7)

The fire of God's wrath lasts for all of eternity; it never goes out (v7)

God judges men, angels, individuals, and cities for their sins (v7)

The ungodly men who deny the Lord and who use grace as an excuse to sin have given themselves over to immorality (v8)

The ungodly men defile the flesh (v8)

The ungodly men despise dominion and refuse God's rule over their lives (v8)

The ungodly men make railing accusations against dignities (which appears to be a reference to demons) (v8)

We should not bring railing accusations against demons (v8)

The head angel, or archangel, is Michael (v9)

Michael the archangel battles the devil and thwarts his schemes (v9)

Michael the archangel once got into a dispute with the devil over the body of Moses (v9)

Michael the archangel did not bring a railing accusation against the devil (v9)

Michael the archangel asked God to rebuke the devil (v9)

We should follow Michael the archangel's example, and should not bring railing accusations against demons (v9)

Satan is at work in this world, but he is being resisted by the angels (v9)

Ungodly men speak evil of things that they know nothing about (v10)

There are some teachings that all men know naturally, without having to be taught (v10)

Animals know certain things by instinct (v10)

Ungodly men have corrupted the innate knowledge that God gave them (v10)

There is woe decreed upon these ungodly men (v11)

The ungodly men have chosen the way of Cain; they hate the righteousness of the righteous and they persecute the saints (v11)

The ungodly men have chosen the way of Balaam; they will sin willingly if the sin pays well (v11)

The ungodly men have chosen the gainsaying of Core (Korah); they seek power that does not belong to them and they will steal it however they can (v11)

The ungodly men hate righteousness and seek money and power; this will be their downfall and they will perish (v11)

The early church had "love feasts" where the poor came to eat (v12)

The ungodly men partook of these love feasts without fear (v12)

The ungodly men were a cancer on these love feasts (v12)

Jude does *not* teach that the ungodly men should be left alone so they can be influenced by the good people around them; instead he says they should be removed so they cannot damage the church (v12)

The ungodly men seem to be a valuable asset but in reality they are incapable of helping; they can only do evil (v12)

The ungodly men are blown about by heresies; they are not rooted in the truth (v12)

The actions of these ungodly men are harmful and diseased (v12)

The ungodly men do not produce the fruits of the spirit (v12)

The ungodly men are characterized by death (v12)

The ungodly men have been plucked up by the roots; there is no hope for them (v12)

The ungodly men rage against others and persecute them (v13)

The ungodly men are tossed about from heresy to heresy, always wandering and unable to stay firmly rooted in the truth (v13)

A place of eternal judgment is reserved for these ungodly men (v13)

The ungodly men will be cast into outer darkness forever (v13)

Enoch was the seventh from Adam (v14)

Enoch was a prophet (v14)

Enoch prophesied about these ungodly men who would trouble the church (v14)

Enoch prophesied about the Second Coming centuries before the Flood (and thousands of years before the First Coming) (v14)

Enoch prophesied that when the Lord returns He will be accompanied by a mighty army of His saints; this is speaking of the Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation (v14)

When Jesus returns He will execute judgment upon all those who are on the Earth (v15)

Jesus will execute the sheep and goat judgment after His return, and will judge the wicked for what they have done (v15)

All of the ungodly will be convinced of their wickedness and will be confronted with the truth of their actions (v15)

All of the ungodly will be judged for all of their ungodly deeds; none of the ungodly will be absent and no ungodly deeds will be overlooked (v15)

God is not indifferent about the evil things that are done and He will judge all of the sins of the wicked (v15)

Ungodly men may deceive themselves in this life, but when God judges them they will be forced to see reality; they will be confronted with what they have done and will be unable to hide behind lies (v15)

The people who will be confronted with their ungodly deeds are the *ungodly*, not the saints (v15)

God will confront the ungodly with all of their hard speeches and blasphemies that they have spoken against Him (v15)

God will judge the ungodly for their ungodly actions and their ungodly words (v15)

Speaking against God is a serious matter, and God will judge the

ungodly men who dare to do such a thing (v15)

The ungodly men are murmurers (v16)

The ungodly men are complainers (v16)

The ungodly men walk after their own lusts (v16)

The ungodly men loudly boast (v16)

The ungodly men manipulate others through flattery (v16)

Christians are beloved (v17)

God wants us to remember His words (v17)

God wants us to remember the words of the apostles and hear
what they had to say (v17)

Jesus Christ is our Lord (v17)

In the last days the church will be filled with people who mock
righteousness and holiness and who do whatever they
please (v18)

God told us in advance that in the last days the churches would
be full of corrupt and wicked imposters (v18)

Ungodly men separate themselves from God and His ways (v19)

Ungodly men are sensual, seeking worldly pleasures (v19)

Ungodly men do not have the Spirit and are not saved (v19)

We must continue to build our faith throughout all our lives; our
faith in God should always be growing (v20)

We must continue to pray (in the Holy Spirit) (v20)

We must keep ourselves in the love of God (instead of sinning
and facing God's chastisement) (v21)

We must not forget that as Christians we will experience God's

mercy and not God's wrath (v21)

Jesus Christ has purchased eternal life for us (v21)

The mercy of Jesus Christ makes the gift of eternal life possible (v21)

Jesus chose to have mercy on us and give us eternal life (v21)

God commands us to have compassion on others (v22)

Having compassion on one another makes a difference (v22)

God has called us to preach the gospel so that we might save others from the wrath of God (v23)

The wrath of God is a fearful thing (v23)

God is to be feared; His wrath is terrifying and certain against those who do not believe (v23)

God has called us to preach the gospel in order to save souls from Hell (v23)

Hell is a real place of fire (v23)

Christians should be passionate about holiness (v23)

Christians should hate sin and view sin as their enemy; they should fight against all sin in their lives no matter how small the sin may seem (v23)

It is possible for garments to be sinful (v23)

Our God is powerful and is able to help us and deliver us (v24)

Our God is able to keep us from falling into sin (v24)

Thanks to God, we can be faultless when we stand in His presence (v24)

We will one day be in the presence of God (v24)

God is able to cleanse us of our sins so we can stand before His presence with exceeding joy (v24)

Our God is the only God (v25)

Our God is wise (v25)

Our God has glory (v25)

Our God has majesty (v25)

Our God has both dominion and power (v25)

Our God's wisdom, glory, majesty, dominion, and power has always existed and will always exist (v25)

We should pursue the glory and plans of God, instead of our own desires (v25)

Verse 1

Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:

JUDE, THE SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST, AND BROTHER OF JAMES

AUTHOR: This letter was written by Jude.

Jude identifies himself as "the servant of Jesus Christ" and the brother of James. The only James who could be referred to this way without any additional introduction was James, the brother of Jesus (Galatians 1:19). James could easily have said that he was "the brother of Jesus", but he didn't. Instead he chose to call himself the *servant* of Jesus.

Before Jesus was crucified his family did not believe in Him (John 7:5). In fact, they thought Jesus was insane. At some point, though, James and Jude were converted. James went on to write the book of James, and Jude wrote the book of Jude.

Note the humility that is displayed here! Jude is not trying to exalt himself. He isn't "building his brand", as people do today. In modern times there are many so-called Bible teachers who go out of their way to make themselves stars. Jude, though, wasn't like that. He had an astounding claim to fame (imagine being the half-brother of Jesus!) and he chose to say nothing about it. He

was not here to magnify himself; he only sought to magnify God. He identified himself as simply and humbly as possible, and he did so in a way that made it clear that Jesus was his master and he was the servant.

TO THEM THAT ARE SANCTIFIED BY GOD THE FATHER

RECIPIENTS: The letter appears to be addressed to Christians in general. No specific group, church, or city is mentioned.

Note that the verse speaks of those who are "sanctified by God the Father". Who sanctifies us? God the Father does. This is a very important truth: *we do not sanctify ourselves*. Sanctification is not something that *we* accomplish, it is something that *God* accomplishes. It is not something that we do; it is something that God does for us. God is responsible for our sanctification. He achieves it, and we are the recipients.

Also notice that the verse says that we **ARE** sanctified. It does not say that we *will be* sanctified or that we are in *the process of* being sanctified. It is not speaking of something in the future but something that is true right now. We *have been* sanctified. We have been made holy. As Christians, we have been given the righteousness of Christ. We are a new creature – a holy creature.

This will probably come as a surprise to many people, because it is commonly taught that sanctification is a long process. While it is true that God is still working in us to conform us to the image of Christ, we need to stop and realize what this verse actually says. We *are* sanctified. That work has already been done. Thanks to the finished work of Christ, we have been made holy.

AND PRESERVED IN JESUS CHRIST

The verse says that we are preserved in Jesus Christ. Who preserves us? *Jesus* does. Our salvation cannot be lost because Jesus Christ accomplished it and Jesus Christ preserves it – and He cannot fail. We have complete assurance about our future because we know that Jesus is actively preserving us and He will not lose any that the Father has given to Him. One day our minds may fail us and we might even forget our loved ones, but Jesus will never forget us. Our salvation does not depend upon us or our willpower; instead it depends completely upon Christ. We really do have a blessed assurance.

Incidentally, this is a serious blow against the idea of free will. If Jesus has the power to preserve and keep us in the faith then that means Jesus has power over our will. You see, the concepts of free will and the preservation of the saints are mutually exclusive. If we have free will then we *cannot* be preserved, because at any time we could choose to leave God and there is nothing God could do about it. However, if Jesus *does* preserve us then that means He has power over our will, in which case His will overrides ours. (I realize this doctrine is hard to accept, but this is one of many places in the Bible that teach this truth.)

AND CALLED

This verse says that we are called. Who called us? God did, of course. Note the fullness of what God has done for us! God has *sanctified* us, taking away our sins and making us holy. God has *preserved* us, sealing our faith and ensuring that we will never be lost. God has also *called* us to serve Him. We did not call God; instead God called us. We were not hunting for God;

instead God was hunting for us.

The truth is that God is the one who initiated our relationship with Him. *God* reached out to us and saved us. We are the recipients of His mercy, His love, and His grace. Salvation is not the story of us coming to God; instead it is the story of God reaching out and saving us. As the famous hymn says, we love Him because He first loved us.

Verse 2

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

MERCY UNTO YOU

God takes great pity on His children; He is longsuffering and merciful to us. Instead of treating us as the rebellious sinners that we are, He loves us and has compassion for us. Although we have failed God many times, God never fails us. God's incredible mercy is bountifully demonstrated in Christ's death on the cross. Without that supreme act of mercy we would be forever lost.

We often think that what we really need is justice – that God needs to give us "our rights". The truth is that if God gave us what we really deserved, we would be in a great deal of trouble. God demonstrates incredible patience and mercy in the way that He deals with mankind – a mercy that we often do not appreciate.

AND PEACE

This is the surpassing peace of God, the peace that passes all understanding. God gives us peace in the midst of trouble; when times are dark and the world is burning we can be at peace and rest. Why? Because we can choose to trust God and rest in

His abundant care for us. Instead of worrying we can trust Him with our future. Instead of being burdened with cares we can trust the One who cares for us. We can depend upon His love, His compassion, His mercy, His wisdom, His power, and His grace. When we do that – when we fix our eyes on Christ and simply choose to *trust Him* – then we find surpassing peace. In that moment the terrors that surround us no longer worries us, because we know that God is greater than our problems. God offers us a tremendous peace that fills the soul and puts it at ease.

AND LOVE

This is the unfathomable love of God, the love that moved God to send His own Son to die a terrible death so that we, His enemies, might be saved. How unsearchable is the love of God! God loves us with a deep love that goes beyond our imagination. The fact that a holy God would die for His wretched and sinful creation is one that we pass over far too lightly. It is *unfathomable* that the infinite God would die for mortal man – and yet that is exactly what He did.

Yet how quick we are to doubt Him and think the worst when something happens, instead of simply trusting in His love! Are we willing to believe that God loves us in both the good times and the bad? Will we still trust in His love during the great trials of our life? After all, God gave His Son to die for us; is that not proof enough of His love and care?

Verse 3

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

YE SHOULD EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH

Jude was going to write to the Church about the "common salvation" (also known as "the gospel"), but he found that there was a more urgent matter that needed to be addressed. In this letter he spends his time warning against false teachings and false teachers. Jude sees a serious danger to the Church and he is hurrying to address it.

Verse 3 clearly states that we should earnestly contend for the faith. We should defend the faith, guard it, and stand by it. The doctrines of our faith are worth fighting for – *and worth fighting over*. That is what *contend* means, after all; it signifies that there is a battle to be waged and that we need to be out there waging it.

This is especially important in our day, because so many Christians believe that defending the Bible's teachings is a foolish waste of time. Even notable church leaders are saying things like "Let's not worry about doctrine. Just preach Jesus and ignore everything else." People who stand up for doctrine are seen as divisive "problem people" and are frowned upon. It is sad to say,

but it is true: many churches have decided to throw doctrine right out the window in a frantic attempt to be more appealing to the world.

But Jude strongly disagrees with this approach. You do not hear him saying "Forget about doctrine and just preach Jesus." In fact, the opposite is true: Jude actually decided to NOT write about the common salvation in order to write about defending doctrine! Yes, he actually chose *defending doctrine over preaching Jesus*. It was *that* important to him. Jude wanted the Church to understand that doctrine is worth fighting over and that it has to be vigorously defended.

I think this quote explains the situation well:

"Many have been carried away from full obedience by a noble-sounding motto which has been applied to Christian work. 'In essentials unity, in nonessentials liberty, and in all things charity.' Some things are not essential to salvation but they are essential to full obedience, and the Christian has no liberty under God to sort out the Scriptures into essentials and nonessentials! It is our duty to declare the whole counsel of God, and to do it wherever we are." (David Nettleton)

Are we willing to earnestly contend for *all* of the doctrines of the faith? For that matter, do we even *know* the doctrines of our faith? Do we know them well enough to defend them, and are we prepared and willing to stand our ground?

In letter after letter the apostles earnestly contended for the faith. They didn't abandon the doctrines of the Scriptures; instead they fought for it and commanded us to do the same.

WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED

Jude said to contend for the faith that was "once delivered". Jude does not speak of an ongoing process of divine revelation; instead he says that the faith was delivered to us *once* and that was all. The faith was not going to continue to be delivered to us over the span of thousands of years. The process has already happened and it is over. By the time Jude wrote this letter the process must have been complete, because Jude spoke in the past tense.

This is very important, because in our day there are many people who claim that they have new revelations from God. These self-proclaimed prophets say that there are *new* things that God has told them that are critical to our salvation – things ranging from new direct revelation to the Book of Mormon. However, all of these people are wrong. The faith was *once* delivered and *then the process ended*. There is no new revelation, there are no new teachings, and there is no new doctrine. God is no longer speaking to us directly; instead He speaks to us through His Word. Those who come along and cry "But you cannot be saved if you do not hear this new teaching that I just got from God!" are false teachers, and should be called out as such.

Flee from those who try to share new divine revelation from you! Those false teachers are exceedingly dangerous. The gospel was delivered to us long ago and *it has not changed*. Those who claim that it has been corrupted are actually committing a very serious error. Those who teach that it has changed are *the very ones* who are trying to change it! Flee from them, because they are trying to drag you down the road to Hell.

UNTO THE SAINTS

Jude tells us that the faith was delivered *to the saints*. Note that Jude does *not* say that it was delivered *to the world*! The saints are the people that God has chosen to save; He gave them the gospel and the faith that they needed to receive it. It is true that the gospel was *preached* to the world, but the only ones who have benefited by it are the saints. The saints (also known as *the people God has chosen to save*) are the gospel's intended recipients.

Yes, we should definitely preach the gospel to all people, and we should preach it with a deep passion. We must urge *all* men everywhere to repent, and we must do this because God has chosen "the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21). However, we must remember that the gospel was given to the saints; to everyone else it is nothing but foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Since we have been entrusted with the gospel we ought to guard it vigorously and defend it from its foes. This modern call to abandon doctrine is madness. Do you not realize that every single teaching in the Bible is a doctrine? If we abandon doctrine then we are abandoning the entire Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation! The gospel itself is founded upon doctrines, ranging from the Virgin Birth to the Resurrection. All of those mighty teachings are doctrines, and *all* of the teachings in the Bible *must be defended*.

Nor do we have the liberty to say "I will guard the most important doctrines, but I will abandon the rest because they just don't matter." There is no such thing as an unimportant doctrine! *All* doctrines in the Scriptures are important because all of them were given to us by God. Some doctrines may not be required for salvation, but *all* doctrines are required for full obedience. God has not given us the liberty of saying "I will defend this truth but not that one." We must earnestly contend

for the *entire* faith. The modern idea of "let's agree to disagree" is completely unbiblical. The apostles never said anything remotely like that; instead they spent their time earnestly contending for the *entire* faith.

God has not given us the liberty of dividing His word into "essentials" and "non-essentials". Instead He requires us to *accept* all of it, *believe* all of it, *teach* all of it, and *defend* all of it. Do you really believe that God will look favorably upon those who abandon His truths on the grounds that "those teachings are non-essential"? How dare we even think of doing such a thing!

Every jot and tittle matters.

Verse 4

For there are certain men crept in unawares,
who were before of old ordained to this
condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace
of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the
only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

FOR THERE ARE CERTAIN MEN CREPT IN UNAWARES

In this verse Jude warns the saints that certain people have infiltrated the churches and are busy doing their evil work. The reason Jude is warning us is because the saints are unaware that these people are in their midst. Unlike some false teachers, these men do not advertise their presence. None of them are holding up signs that say "I AM HERE TO HARM YOU". These wicked men are not obvious and they do not stand out. Instead they are subtle, and that allows them to do a great deal of damage without ever being detected.

The reason Jude is telling us this is so that we can find these people and remove them from our congregations. How do we locate these secret agents of the devil? By examining their fruits. A good tree brings forth good fruit, and an evil tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, and an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit (Luke 6:43). In other words, we must all become fruit inspectors.

Today the rallying cry is "Don't you dare judge me!" But we *must* judge others. We must inspect their fruit to see what sort

of people they are. We must watch and be careful. If you read through the New Testament you will quickly discover that God has *not* commanded us to avoid judging others. Yes, it is true that Jesus did say "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1), but if you read the context of that verse you will find that Jesus is talking about people who condemn others for behavior that *they themselves are guilty of*. In other words, Jesus is actually saying "Don't be a hypocrite"!

In fact, Jesus actually condemned the behavior of other people on *many* occasions – as did the disciples. On top of that, the letters that the apostles wrote to the churches are full of condemnations of sin and certain sinful individuals. There were even occasions when the apostles called out people *by name* to condemn them (2 Timothy 4:14-15)!

Judging is a vital part of Christian life, and it is the only way we can protect ourselves and our churches. In our day we have abandoned the entire concept of church discipline, but it is clearly taught in the Scriptures and it is vital to a healthy church. After all, a body that has no way to remove disease is not going to be very healthy. God commanded us to take sin seriously and to deal with the sin that is in our midst – and that is exactly what He expects us to do.

We must be on guard against these men who have crept in unawares, because they are very dangerous. They are agents of the devil and they intend to do the Church great harm.

WHO WERE BEFORE OF OLD ORDAINED TO THIS CONDEMNATION

Here we see yet again the hand of predestination. Why are these men doing these awful things? Because God ordained it of old. There are many people who claim "Oh, God just looked into

the future and saw the decision that these people were going to make", but *that is not what the Bible says*. Jude is quite clear: the reason these people are doing this is because *God so ordained it*, and He ordained it long ago. These people are fulfilling their destiny and doing what God created them to do.

I have said it before and I will say it again: mankind does not have free will. God is the one who determines the course of history, and God also determines the course of our lives. When God wills that men be saved then they will be saved, and when God wills that men do evil then they will do evil. (As an example, look at Exodus 9:12 where *the Lord* hardened Pharaoh so that he would not let the Israelites go!) When God ordains then *it happens*. God is the one who decides our fate, and at His will we are either saved or lost.

Yes, we should preach the gospel with a passion, and yes, we should tell all men to repent. But *only God can save*, and only God can bring back to life men who are dead in their sins. We may sow the seed, but *God* is the one who gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:4-7).

Why are you saved? Because *God chose to save you*. Why is another man lost? Because God ordained him to do evil and did not give him saving faith. Your salvation is not your doing; it was God's choice.

Does this mean that these evil men are not responsible and will be declared innocent because they had no free will? Absolutely not! God still holds us accountable for our actions. As Paul pointed out in Romans 9:19-21, we cannot defend ourselves by saying "But that is how God made me!"

Jude is very clear about this: the reason these evil men are sneaking into churches to destroy them is because they were ordained of old to do this.

UNGODLY MEN

I find it very interesting that there is not the slightest trace of sympathy in any of these verses. Jude does not ask us to feel pity for these ungodly men or to sympathize with them. Instead he reminds us that they are ungodly and he warns us against them. These men are dangerous and are causing great harm. They do not need our sympathy or pity; instead they need to be rebuked and opposed. They need to be cast out so that they might learn not to sin. They need to be removed from the congregation so that they cannot cause any more harm.

It is very dangerous to sympathize with evil. We should pray for the lost, care for the lost, love the lost, and preach to the lost, but we must exercise great caution. In our age we are quick to follow false teachers and slow to rebuke them. We will gladly embrace someone who is engaged in very wicked sins, but we will go out of our way to avoid telling them that their behavior is sinful and they need to repent and be saved.

Our willingness to embrace sin and our displeasure to preach repentance is *not* a good thing. Repentance is the only way to be freed from sin. If we refuse to tell men to repent then we are robbing them of the only method they will ever have of overcoming their slavery to sin. Telling people to repent is not cruel or heartless; instead it is their only hope of finding freedom and forgiveness.

TURNING THE GRACE OF OUR GOD INTO LASCIVIOUSNESS

These ungodly men say "Since I am saved, I can live however I want and it doesn't matter. After all, God will forgive me." These people believe that their salvation gives them a

license to sin. They don't hate wickedness; instead they embrace it! They don't distance themselves from evil; instead they enjoy it. They have turned freedom *from* sin into freedom *to* sin.

This is a very evil thing to do. God has freed us from sin and called us to holiness, and those who are truly saved will seek holiness and righteousness. Genuine Christians will seek to honor God with their lives and will hate even the *garment* that is spotted by the flesh (Jude 1:23). They will abhor evil and seek God's grace so that they might turn from wickedness and live a holy life.

Sadly, in our day there are many people who claim to be Christians but who actually hate holiness and love sin. In fact, it can be difficult to find people who care anything about righteousness! Sins like divorce, adultery, and homosexuality are common in our churches. It is not at all uncommon for church members to lie, steal, bear false witness, act maliciously toward one another, and gossip. In many cases there is simply no difference between the behavior of so-called Christians and the behavior of the lost. Some churches even go so far as to take behaviors that God has called an abomination and praise them as being right and good! We live in a generation of people who calls good evil, and who calls evil good.

When we see these things happening around us it confirms that those who are doing these things are the ungodly men that Jude warned us about. These men are not helping the Church; instead they are destroying it from within.

God has called all Christians to a life of holiness. If you have rejected holiness and embraced sin then you have rejected God and embraced Hell.

AND DENYING THE ONLY LORD GOD, AND OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

The actions of these evil men are an affront to God Himself. Those who turn the grace of God into a license to sin have rebelled against God and chosen the road that leads to Hell. These men are not saved; they are utterly lost.

But there is more. There are many false teachers who deny the Lord Jesus, and they do this in many ways. Some people preach a false Jesus, such as the Mormon Jesus who was created by God (who himself was "just a man who lived a good life and rose to godhood") or the Muslim Jesus who was not divine but was just a prophet. Others, like Jehovah's Witnesses, deny the Trinity. There are a thousand ways to deny what the Bible has to say about Jesus. Those who do this are ungodly men and should be opposed.

Denying what the Bible teaches about the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit will earn you a one-way ticket to Hell, because *you cannot be saved by belief in a false Jesus*. A Jesus that you made up has no saving power whatsoever and belongs in the same category as Santa Claus or the Tooth Fairy. When we find people who deny the Bible's teachings about Jesus we should call them out, remove them from the congregation, and distance ourselves from them. These people *are not there to help us*. Naming your false god "Jesus" does *not* give it saving power.

Verse 5

I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

I WILL THEREFORE PUT YOU IN REMEMBRANCE, THOUGH YE ONCE KNEW THIS

The people that Jude is talking to once knew the truths of the Old Testament but now they had forgotten them. This group had been swept away by the teachings of ungodly men and no longer remembered the acts and judgments of God.

The Bible tells us that the things that happened in the Old Testament are not just random stories; instead they are warnings and object lessons. God gave them to us to teach important truths, and we should study them and take them seriously. That is how Jude is using them in his letter: he reviews various episodes in the Old Testament and reminds people of important truths that they once knew.

People today don't like to study the Old Testament. The modern church looks down on it as being uninteresting and unimportant, and because of that few people have a good understanding of its contents. That is a serious problem because there is a tremendous amount of truth in the Old Testament, and that truth *should not be ignored*. The New Testament writers often referred to the Old Testament in order to defend their

teachings – and we should do the same. If we do not study the Old Testament and learn what it teaches then we will end up exactly like the people in this verse, who are unaware of the truth and easily swayed by ungodly men.

The reality is that we should already know these things. The fact that so many of us do not is shameful.

HOW THAT THE LORD

The Lord is the one who saved the Israelites and led them out of Israel. It is true that He worked through Moses, but we must never forget that God is the one who accomplished it. It was God's doing and He should get the credit for it.

The same is true in our own lives. Who is the one who saved our souls from Hell? Who is the one who watches over us? Who is the one who hears our prayers, cares for our needs, uplifts us in times of trouble, and who never leaves us or forsakes us? Is it not our Lord? Are we thankful to God for all the mighty things that He has done for us – *all* of which we do not deserve? Do we recognize the fact that the Lord is our deliverer?

HAVING SAVED THE PEOPLE

God told Abraham that Israel would be slaves for 400 years and then God would deliver them and bring them into the land of Canaan (Genesis 15:13-14). It is very important to realize that *this is exactly what God did*; God kept His promise to Abraham. When God told Moses that He was going to deliver Israel out of the hand of Pharaoh, *that is exactly what God did*. God kept His promise.

In order to understand Bible prophecy we must realize that God always keeps His promises and He always does exactly what He says He will do. We must also realize that God made a direct and specific promise and He kept that promise in a literal and straightforward way. The Lord didn't play games or trick people or switch to a "spiritual" or "symbolic" interpretation of His promise. Instead He was straightforward and honest in His dealings with men.

Here is something to think about: *all Bible prophecy that has ever been fulfilled has been fulfilled literally*. There has *never* been a symbolic fulfillment of prophecy. Those who try to interpret prophecy in a symbolic or spiritual manner are committing a serious error. When God promised to save the Israelites that is exactly what He did, and He did it in a direct and literal way.

OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT

In our time there are many people who teach that the Old Testament is nothing but a collection of myths and "spiritual stories". These false teachers reject the idea that the Old Testament is a true historical account and they encourage people to not take the Bible seriously. We need to realize that this is nothing more than unbelief and it does not honor God. This low opinion of Scripture was *not* shared by Jesus or the apostles. Whenever Jesus referred to the accounts in the Old Testament (including the account of Jonah!) He always acted as if the account was true and the event really happened.

Do you see how Jude referred to Israel's deliverance from Egypt as a genuine part of Israel's history? Jude does not see it as a spiritual fairy tale with an object lesson. Instead he taught it as if it really happened – and that is because *it really did happen*.

AFTERWARD DESTROYED THEM THAT BELIEVED NOT

Jude does not mince words here; he goes straight to the heart of the matter. In fact, he is so blunt that if he were alive today he would be harshly criticized for not "preaching love". The Bible teachers of our era would rise up and tell him to lay off the hellfire-and-brimstone messages and instead preach love and tolerance. "Don't tell us about Hell," they would cry. "Just tell people that God loves them and wants them to be rich and happy. Telling people about God's wrath just scares people, and you don't want that. You really need to be nicer."

But that's not what Jude did, is it? Instead he was direct and to the point: *God utterly destroyed all those who did not believe*. Jude is warning people that God has not changed. In the past the Lord poured out His wrath upon all those who did not believe, and He will do the same thing to us. God is no respecter of persons: if we do not repent and believe then we will also face the wrath of God.

I realize this kind of preaching is hated today, but this is actually the same message that Jesus and His disciples brought. There is not a single case of any apostle ever saying "Come to Jesus because He loves you and wants you to be happy". The message of the gospel has *always* been a message of judgment and wrath. The apostles urged people to save themselves from the wrath to come (Acts 2:40). Jesus warned people time and time again that there is a Hell that awaits the disobedient and the ungodly (Matthew 5:22, 7:19, 13:40, 13:42, 13:50, 18:8-9, and 25:41 – just to name a few!). *That* is the message that the apostles preached, and it saved countless thousands (Acts 2:41). That is the message that we need to get back to.

The Lord did deliver Israel from the land of Egypt, but despite the incredible miracles that God did on Israel's behalf there were many who did not believe. In fact, when Israel finally reached Canaan, only Joshua and Caleb believed that God could

give them the land (Numbers 14:6-9)! The rest of Israel refused to believe God and instead wanted to stone Joshua and Caleb and return to bondage in Egypt (Numbers 14:10). Because of this staggering act of unbelief, God forced Israel to wander around in the desert for 40 years until every last one of that wicked generation had died – saving only Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 14:28-30). Since that generation did not believe, God destroyed them all. The only two who survived were the ones who trusted Him.

Yes, it is true that God is a loving God, but He is also a God of judgment and He *will* destroy all those who do not believe. Unbelief is not a valid excuse; instead it is a fearful sin. In fact, unbelief is all that it takes to send a man to Hell. Jesus Himself said that all those who do not believe *will be damned* (John 3:18). The Bible is clear on this point: even if people have not been told the Gospel and know nothing about it, they will still face the wrath of God if they do not repent and believe (Romans 2:12). God will *not* give them a free pass.

In this verse Jude tells us that being ungodly has very serious consequences. Those who do not believe (even if they are the literal children of Abraham!) will face God's judgment. Unbelief carries a very high price – it means an eternity of fiery torment.

Incidentally, do you see how Jude addressed the problem of ungodliness that had crept into the church? *He preached a message of judgment!* Instead of just saying "Smile – God loves you!" and trying to be "nice" and "nonjudgmental", Jude warned the Church of the terrible consequences that ungodliness brings. That is exactly what we should be doing today.

Verse 6

And the angels which kept not their first estate,
but left their own habitation, he hath reserved
in everlasting chains under darkness unto the
judgment of the great day.

THE ANGELS WHICH KEPT NOT THEIR FIRST ESTATE

In this verse Jude is referring to the angels that rebelled against God. In the beginning, on the first day of creation, God created an innumerable company of angels (Hebrews 12:2). The highest of these angels was Satan, who was created as the covering cherub (Ezekiel 28:16). When the angels were created they were all perfect and upright, and they rejoiced in God's creation (Ezekiel 28:15).

However, Satan became proud. His glory and beauty went to his head and he decided that he wanted to be God (Ezekiel 28:17). When he launched his rebellion, one-third of the angels joined him (Revelation 12:4). Those angels fell into sin and became what we now call demons. These fallen angels did not keep their first estate; instead they abandoned their holy position in Heaven and chose to become evil.

Like us, angels are capable of sin, but there is a key difference: when an angel sins he cannot be forgiven. The sacrifice of Christ is able to cover our sins because Jesus became a *man*. Since Jesus did not become an angel and die for the sins of angels, there is no sacrifice that can cover their sins – and

therefore any angel that sins is lost forever. Once an angel has abandoned their first estate there is no way they can get it back. There is nothing left for them but judgment.

This means that the angels which *kept* their first estate are angels that have never sinned. Their salvation is by works, not grace: they maintain their Heavenly position by living a perfect life and never sinning. If they ever stepped into wickedness, even once, they would be lost forever.

BUT LEFT THEIR OWN HABITATION

The home of angels is Heaven – the place where God dwells. That is their habitation. The angels that rebelled against God and became demons left their habitation. They now dwell on Earth, tormenting mankind and causing all kinds of problems. (I realize that many people think that demons live in Hell, but that is actually an error. Demons want to *avoid* going to Hell just as much as people do, and for the exact same reason. Hell was actually created *as a place to torment demons* (Matthew 25:41), not as a comfortable home for them!)

Even though the fallen angels have left their own habitation, that does not mean that they no longer have access to Heaven. The book of Job tells us that at regular intervals the angels present themselves to God and give an account of themselves, and Satan accompanies them (Job 1:6, 2:1). The devil uses his access to accuse believers and try to get them in trouble. Now, the book of Revelation says that one day he will be cast out of Heaven and will never be able to accuse anyone again (Revelation 12:9-10), but that will not occur until the middle of the Tribulation.

As you can see, the fallen angels have left their habitation and now live on Earth. However, there are some demons that are

not allowed to roam freely throughout the world – and that is what Jude talks about next.

HE HATH RESERVED IN EVERLASTING CHAINS

The Bible tells us that there are a great many demons that are *not* chained and which freely roam the Earth. These demons tempt people, possess people, and do everything that they can to impede the kingdom of God and halt the spread of the gospel. However, Jude says that there are some demons that are *not* free to roam around. These demons are kept in chains and are being held in prison, awaiting judgment.

In order to understand why we need to go back to the book of Genesis. In Genesis 6 we are told that certain demons took human women as wives and had children with them (Genesis 6:2, 4). These children (which were called the Nephilim) were a wicked race of powerful giants. These beings were neither demon nor human, but were something in-between.

The creation of the Nephilim was actually a strategic move by Satan. You see, in order to be saved you *must* be a human being. The Nephilim, however, were not humans at all, and because of that they and their children were beyond redemption. If Satan had been allowed to finish corrupting the genetic line of the entire human race, he could have made salvation impossible for everyone. In fact, he could have kept the Messiah from being born at all! (After all, if the Messiah's lineage had included a demon then He would not have been a real human, and therefore His death could not have saved mankind. No Messiah could ever be part God, part Man, and part Evil Incarnate.)

However, God put an end to the devil's plan. The Lord found someone who feared Him and who had a 100% pure

human lineage – the man Noah. God saved him and his family by putting them on the Ark, and God then wiped out the rest of the world with a terrible Flood. This destroyed the genetic corruption that Satan had started and wiped out the Nephilim. Noah then repopulated the world with human beings, and the demons that committed this terrible sin of intermarrying with mankind were put in prison.

It is important to realize that God *does not allow* angels to get married (Matthew 22:30). All of the angels are men, and God strictly prohibits them from taking human wives. The demons who broke this command committed a very terrible sin – a sin so terrible that God imprisoned them in a place called Tartarus (2 Peter 2:4). The demons there are reserved in everlasting chains, and they will be held prisoner until the day of judgment.

Incidentally, notice that this verse mentions holding a demon prisoner *by the use of chains*. There are some people who mock the idea that Satan will one day be bound with a great chain (as Revelation 20:1-3 states), but here we can see that Jude believed that very same thing. This is a second place in the Bible that states that demons can be chained! I see no reason to assume a symbolic interpretation; I think the Bible says exactly what it means. These demons are being held in everlasting chains – and one day Satan will be chained as well.

Notice the firmness of these chains! They are said to be *everlasting*. The demons *cannot* escape; there is no chance of release or jailbreak. God has put them in prison and they are utterly trapped. We don't have to worry that these demons will somehow escape because they are bound in everlasting chains.

Also notice that these demons are reserved *for judgment*. God could have judged them immediately but He chose not to. Instead He has put them in prison and is patiently waiting for the great day of His judgment. God is going to judge them, but He is not going to do it just yet; instead He is waiting until the appointed day.

This should be a valuable lesson to us. We often think that God should judge certain people immediately, without delay, but in many cases that is not God's timing. Even the angels who sinned must wait for the judgment that is to come. The final judgment comes at the end; it does not come now. We must wait for God's plan to be fulfilled. There will indeed come a day when God will put an end to wickedness, to sin, and to the devil himself – but that day will come in God's timing, not in ours.

UNDER DARKNESS

The original estate of the angels was Heaven, where they were in the presence of God. Now, God is light, and light abounds wherever He is. This means that in Heaven the angels would have been in the presence of eternal light. There is no darkness in Heaven; in fact, darkness is not even possible in the presence of God. There is no darkness in Him or around Him. We are even told that the New Jerusalem will not need the sun because it will be lit by the glory of God! That alone tells us a great deal about what it is like to be in the Lord's presence.

But this group of imprisoned demons is in utter darkness. They chose to sin; they left Heaven and abandoned the presence of God. Since they chose darkness over light, God has imprisoned them in utter darkness. The light has been taken from them in a very real and physical way.

Do you see how fall these creatures have fallen? Their sin has cost them everything: it cost them their glorious position in Heaven, their freedom, and even the very light itself. They are now chained in darkness and are awaiting judgment, and they have no hope of salvation and nothing to look forward to except the unending wrath of God.

UNTO THE JUDGMENT OF THE GREAT DAY

In the previous verse Jude warned the Church that God killed the Israelites who did not believe. Here Jude is pointing out that God also took *the angels* who sinned and locked them in prison to await His judgment. Not only does God judge human beings who sin, but He also judges sinful angels. This means that *no one* can escape His judgment, be they man or angel. All of those who sin – whoever or whatever they may be – will face His wrath. No one is great enough or clever enough to get away with sin – *not even the mighty angels*.

The ungodly men who are troubling the Church will *not* go unpunished. Because sin brings unavoidable judgment, Jude urges men to repent and turn from their wicked ways lest they face the wrath of God.

Jude also points out that the fallen angels will not be judged until the great day of God's judgment. This is a reference to the Great White Throne judgment, which will occur after the Millennium. Once the thousand years of the Millennium are over, Satan will be released and he will go out and deceive the nations. The devil will amass a great army and will lead it against Jerusalem, but fire will come down from God and will consume them all. After that battle the Lord will judge *all* of the wicked (both man and demon) for all of their wickedness. The souls that are in Hell will be brought out to stand before God and be judged, and the demons that are in prison will be brought out as well. That is when God will utter His final judgment upon all that is wicked and evil. On that great day God will put an end to all sin, wickedness, and even death itself.

It is a hard thing to wait patiently for the end of evil, but that is exactly what we must do. It is easy to want God to act *now* and judge *now* and do something *now*, but we must be patient. God will certainly judge the wicked and take vengeance upon all those who abused His people, but we must wait for His

timing. Judgment is not something that happens here and now (not even for the fallen angels!); instead it is something that is coming in the future. This is how the apostles always described it, and that is how Jesus Himself described it. They all spoke as if judgment was a one-time event that was going to occur in the future. Now, I realize there are times when it seems that the wicked are judged in this life, but the truth is that the actual judgment of the ungodly does not occur until that final day.

Finally, let's not miss the point that there really *is* a day of judgment coming. If God will even judge the angels who sinned, why do we think that He will not judge all those who have sinned and who refuse His grace and forgiveness? If God will judge the angels then He will surely judge us as well! We desperately need His forgiveness and mercy; otherwise we will be utterly lost. Ungodliness carries a terrible price.

Verse 7

Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

EVEN AS SODOM AND GOMORRHA

Jude compares the sin of the angels (which he discussed in verse 6) to the sin of Sodom. This means that *the angels committed the same type of sin*. Just as the Sodomites gave themselves over to fornication, so did the fallen angels. In the case of Sodom the people gave themselves over to homosexuality. This is a serious matter because it violates God's commands. God only allow sex between a man and a woman who are married to each other. He strictly prohibits any people of the same gender from engaging in sexual activities with one another. That type of behavior is *always* wrong.

The fallen angels committed a sin that was very similar to the sin of the Sodomites. All angels are men (they are not genderless), and angels are forbidden from marrying anyone. However, just as men today have rejected God's commands and are "marrying" other men, the fallen angels rejected God's commands and took human women as wives. Just as it is forbidden for a man to have sexual relations with another man, so it is forbidden for an angel to be with a woman. They are both

serious violations of God's law, and they are similar types of violations.

Now, when an unmarried man and woman have sexual relations with each other, they are committing a sin because God prohibits sex outside of marriage. However, if they were married then the act would be fine. Homosexuality is different because *it is always wrong*, just like sexual relations between an angel and a human being. This means that the sin of the fallen angels was like the sin of Sodom: both groups committed sexual acts that were prohibited under all circumstances.

It should not surprise anyone that fallen angels are capable of committing sexual sins. After all, they can commit all kinds of other sins, so why are we amazed that they might do this? The evidence strongly supports it.

AND THE CITIES ABOUT THEM

Sodom and Gomorrha tend to get all of the blame in this story, but the truth is that they were just two of the cities on that plain. There were other cities nearby that were also caught up in that sin, and those cities were destroyed as well. They all chose to defy God and they were all punished for it.

Abraham tried to interceded on their behalf but they were just too depraved. In fact, those cities were so wicked that *there were not even ten righteous people* in their midst. When you cannot find 10 righteous people in an entire metropolitan area then you know that the area is entirely given over to sin and is ripe for judgment. Sometimes God postpones His judgment as long as there are righteous people present, so that the righteous are not punished along with the wicked. However, once all of the righteous people are gone there is nothing left to restrain the wrath of God.

GIVING THEMSELVES OVER TO FORNICATION

This was the great sin of Sodom: the sin of sexual immorality. However, unlike what some people claim, the people there were not run-of-the-mill adulterers; instead they were homosexuals. That is why even today the word "sodomite" is a synonym of homosexual. In case there was any doubt about this, just take a look at what happened when the male angels came to rescue Lot: the men of the town were so depraved that they wanted the angels thrown out of the house so they could rape them.

These cities had *completely* given themselves over to homosexuality and were sinning on a tremendous scale. There was not the slightest bit of restraint! If you have ever wondered where the homosexual movement is really leading, the story of Sodom should answer your question. When a city or nation comes to accept homosexuality, that is where things will eventually end up. It is only a matter of time.

In our day people don't take sin very seriously. Even many churches have come to accept homosexuality and even celebrate it. However, God does *not* accept it and has warned time and again that the peoples, cities, and nations that commit this sin will face His wrath. As we will see, it is not an accident that these wicked cities were utterly annihilated by God.

AND GOING AFTER STRANGE FLESH

As we saw earlier, both the Sodomites and the fallen angels went after strange (or forbidden) flesh. The men of Sodom burned in lust for one another, and the fallen angels burned in lust for human women. Both groups lusted after something that had been strictly forbidden under all circumstances. The fate of

Sodom is a graphic example of what God thinks of homosexuality.

People claim that the Bible does not condemn homosexuality, but that is pure foolishness. Homosexuality led to God's judgment on the cities of the plain. God is not "just fine" with it; instead He is very much against it. The Bible repeatedly condemns "going after strange flesh" and makes it clear that those who refuse to repent of such things will face the eternal and unending wrath of God. You *cannot* be a homosexual and a Christian at the same time. If you refuse to repent of your sin then you will face God's wrath.

ARE SET FORTH FOR AN EXAMPLE

The destruction of Sodom was not a random catastrophe or "one of those things that happen". Sodom was destroyed by God Himself and He did it on purpose. The reason God destroyed those cities was because of the gross sexual sin that their inhabitants were committing. The sin of homosexuality brings God's judgment upon men, cities, and nations.

Jude points out that the destruction of Sodom serves as a warning to us. It demonstrates that God *does* judge sin, that homosexuality *is* sin, and that homosexuality brings God's judgment. It shows that God is very serious about judging sin and that God is both willing and able to destroy *entire cities* because of sin.

There are many people today who scoff at the idea that God still judges sin. They refuse to believe that in modern times God judges cities or punishes nations, and they refuse to acknowledge the lesson of Sodom: that God is still Judge and when a city becomes completely depraved God will destroy it. Mankind *cannot* sin with impunity. The day is rapidly coming

when God will destroy not just a city but *the entire world* for its wickedness. He has done it before and He promised to do it again.

We ought to heed this example and flee the wrath of God. Forgiveness can be found for those who repent. If we cry out to God and ask for forgiveness and mercy then we will find it, but those who continue on and refuse to see the error of their ways *will* suffer the wrath of God. Those who give themselves over to fornication will never see Heaven; instead they will endure an eternity in Hell – one that could have been prevented if they had humbled themselves and sought God's forgiveness.

SUFFERING THE VENGEANCE

When God destroyed Sodom He took vengeance upon it. Sin is an attack upon God; it is an act of rebellion. When we sin we are shaking our fist in His face. Unrepentant sinners are like a city that has rebelled against their King and dared him to do something about it.

God does not take rebellion lightly, for sinning against His infinite holiness is an infinite crime. God has promised to take vengeance upon all who do such a thing. No crime will be unpunished; everything will be brought to light and judged.

That is why we must repent now, while there is still time. Those who humble themselves and come to Christ for forgiveness and grace will find mercy. However, those who refuse to abandon their rebellion against God will face His eternal wrath, for He has promised to avenge Himself upon all those who have dared to rebel against Him.

OF ETERNAL FIRE

The punishment of the Sodomites did not end when their cities were burned to the ground and they perished in the flames. Jude points out that their punishment goes far beyond that: they are suffering the vengeance of *eternal* fire. At this very moment they are in Hell, where they are being tormented day and night, and their torment will last forever. That is how much God hates sin, and that is how much God utterly despises homosexuality. We would do well to remember that God will do the same to *everyone* who does not repent of their sins and run to Christ for salvation. All those whose sins are not covered by His blood will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire.

The Bible repeatedly warns us of this, and Christ Himself warned us. (In fact, Jesus spoke more often of Hell than He did of Heaven.) God has made it abundantly clear what will happen to those who refuse His mercy, reject His sacrifice, and do not repent of their sins. All those who harden themselves will face God's eternal wrath. This is the gospel that Jesus and the apostles preached, and it is the one that we must proclaim to the world.

Verse 8

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

LIKEWISE ALSO

Jude is writing this letter to warn the Church against evildoers who have crept in unnoticed and are actively working to destroy the body of Christ. In this verse Jude compares these wicked men to the fallen angels and the Sodomites. Just as the fallen angels and the Sodomites gave themselves over to sexual immorality, so these men have likewise given themselves over to immorality. They may appear to be righteous, but they are actually vile.

However, we do not have to be deceived by them! In his letter Jude gives us a list of sins to watch out for. We must use this list to judge those who are in the Church and determine if they are good or evil. Those who are evil should be resisted with all our might.

Church discipline is not a popular subject today, but it is one that we *must* take seriously. If there is a disease in the body then it must be removed, or else it will kill the body and leave behind a corpse. In order to save the life of the person we aggressively treat physical diseases. Likewise, we should aggressively protect the Church from those who wish to destroy her.

THESE FILTHY DREAMERS

These wicked men are utterly caught up in their sins; they have refused the Lord and have gone after their own way. These men do *not* mean well (regardless of what they say). Instead they are plotting evil and are consumed with evil thoughts – just as the men of Sodom were consumed by their immorality.

In our own time immorality has reached a fever pitch. Things have become so vile that one famous pastor (Mark Driscoll) is going around telling people that the Holy Spirit is giving him pornographic visions of their sex life. (For the record, if you are seeing sexually explicit scenes involving strangers playing in your head, I assure you that the Holy Spirit is *not* the one who put them there. Such blasphemy against the Spirit is a very grave sin.) These people are indeed *filthy dreamers*; the things that they promote and preach are utterly vile.

DEFILE THE FLESH

It is astonishing how common immorality is in our day! Churches elect pastors who are open homosexuals. Pastors commonly commit adultery – either with another woman, or sometimes with another man. Sexual immorality and divorce is rampant in our congregations.

These wicked men promote immorality by their speeches and by their example. They defile their own bodies and then encourage others to follow their evil example. Think of all the leaders who have committed gross immorality with their followers. Think of all the pastors who have committed adultery with various members of their congregation. Think of how many people have defiled the flesh through sexual sin.

God puts a clear difference between those who honor the

Lord with their body and those who defile it to pursue sin. Those who defile the flesh and refuse to repent are wicked men. In fact, they are *dangerous* men. It does not matter how charming they may seem; the truth is that they are spreading a deadly poison. We ought to pursue holiness, not sin.

DESPISE DOMINION

2 Peter 2:10 says that these men also "despise government", which is the same basic idea. These men loathe the Lord's dominion and refuse to be ruled by Him. Instead of pursuing holiness, they do whatever is right in their own eyes. They hate the rule of God and seek to live as they please. Oh, they may talk a good game and they may condemn sin in the lives of others, but they only apply God's commands to their own life when it is convenient for them. They may praise God with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him.

AND SPEAK EVIL OF DIGNITIES

This odd phrase is further explained in 2 Peter 2:10-11, where it is made clear that the phrase "dignities" refers to demons:

2 Peter 2:10: "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speakevil of dignities."

11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against

them before the Lord."

In other words, to "speak evil of dignities" means to speak evil of *demons*. I realize that this seems very strange, but the text itself is clear. Peter says that these wicked people are not afraid to speak evil of "dignities", and then says that even angels do not bring a railing accusation against them. Jude says that these people speak evil of dignities, and then gives us the example of Michael not bringing a railing accusation against the devil.

The point is both obvious and unexpected: we should not bringing a "railing accusation" against demons. If even the angels will not do it (and Peter says that angels are greater in power and might), then we must not do it either.

It seems quite strange to think of demons as "dignities", and it is even stranger that we should watch what we say about them. Yet that *very point* is made not once *but twice* in the Bible. God wants us to follow the example of Michael the archangel, and not the example of these wicked men. When Michael was confronted with Satan himself, all he would say is "Let the Lord rebuke you". Instead of judging the devil, he turned the devil over to God for judgment. That should be our approach as well.

Now, that is *not* to say that we should praise demons or speak well of them. The Bible is full of warnings against demons and it commands us to put on the armor of God so that we might withstand their attacks. *Demons are very dangerous*. The devil is a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. However, despite all of this, it is *not our place* to bring railing accusations against demons. Michael did not do it, and we should not do it either. God is the one who will judge them.

Verse 9

Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

YET MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

Despite what various cults have claimed over the years, there is only one archangel and that is Michael. The Bible also refers to him as "your Prince" (Daniel 10:21). He appears to be the leader of the angels. Daniel 12:1 adds that he is the great prince who stands for the children of Israel.

WHEN CONTENDING WITH THE DEVIL

According to the book of Daniel, angels spend a good bit of their time fighting the forces of darkness and battling various demons. Here we are given a small glimpse into a battle between Michael and the devil. It's quite likely that these sort of battles are waged all the time and have a definite impact on the course of history.

It is very comforting to know that the demons are not waging war unopposed; they are being resisted by angels. Since Michael is the archangel, it makes sense that he would be the

one who contends with the devil himself. This is probably not the only time that the two have fought each other.

HE DISPUTED ABOUT THE BODY OF MOSES

One of the many mysteries of the Bible is the exact location of Moses' grave. All we know for sure is that God told him to go up into a mountain so he could see all the land of Canaan. After Moses did that he died, and God buried him "in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor" (Deuteronomy 34:1-6). However, no one saw Moses die and no one saw where he was buried.

The angelic battle that Jude mentions is one of the most mysterious conflicts in the Bible. No one knows why the devil wanted the body of Moses – although that has not stopped people from guessing. I realize that there are various apocryphal texts that delve into this, but they are spurious and should be ignored. The Bible simply does not explain this encounter. All we actually know is that Michael and the devil got into an argument that centered around the body of Moses. People have tried to draw all sorts of conclusions about this, but they are unwarranted. We have to face the truth: since this verse is the only one in the entire Bible that mentions this conflict, there is no way to figure out what the devil was trying to accomplish.

I see no reason to spiritualize this passage. Michael and the devil really did get into an argument over the physical body of Moses. We don't know the particulars, but it happened. (For the record, this argument had nothing to do with the Lord rebuking Satan in Zechariah 3:2. That was a completely different situation.)

One lesson we can draw from this is that Satan has not stopped being evil. He is still working in the world and he is still

trying to thwart the kingdom of God – but the devil is being resisted. His plans are *not* going unnoticed.

DURST NOT BRING AGAINST HIM A RAILING ACCUSATION

This is the whole reason that Jude even brought up the angelic battle in the first place. When Michael the archangel fought the devil himself, he did not bring up a railing accusation. If anyone was allowed to do this it would surely be Michael, and if there was anyone who deserved it it would certainly be the devil. (After all, how could you *possibly* go wrong in criticizing the devil himself?) But yet that was not the course of action that Michael chose! What he did was quite different.

Jude contrasts the response of Michael with the response of the "filthy dreamers". Those people do not hesitate to bring a railing accusation against demons, while Michael doesn't even bring a railing accusation against the devil himself!

It seems rather staggering that we should watch what we say about demons, but that is what this passage is teaching. God has given us the ability to cast out demons through the name of Jesus, but He has *not* granted us the right to be judges over them. It is simply not our place. All Michael would do is say "The Lord rebuke you" – and thus turned the devil over to God for judgment. That must also be true for us. The Lord is the one who will rebuke them, and God will judge them when their time comes.

In other words, one of the characteristics of these wicked men is that they make railing accusations against demons. Lest we forget, demons are clearly in view here; 2 Peter 2:10 speaks of "dignities", and verse 11 then says the angels do not bring a railing accusation "against THEM". Angels would certainly not

accuse other holy angels, for there would be no point; the passage must therefore be talking about demons. This is further supported by the example that Jude gives. Since the angels do not bring a railing accusation against them, we should not either.

I realize this interpretation seems incredible, but look at Michael's example. How did he handle his encounter with the devil? Jude's whole argument is that we should follow Michael's example.

BUT SAID THE LORD REBUKE THEE

Michael's response to the devil was short and to the point: "the Lord rebuke thee". Not only is this a very controlled and measured response, but it also looked to God as the One who would do the rebuking and take vengeance. Michael did not issue any threats of his own; instead he simply called upon the Lord.

Our response should be the same. It is not our place to make a railing accusation against demons, or to issue threats that we cannot possibly follow through with. We should copy Michael's example instead of the example of wicked men.

Verse 10

But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

BUT THESE SPEAK EVIL OF THOSE THINGS WHICH THEY KNOW NOT

In the previous verse Jude explained that the ungodly men brought railing accusations against demons. Since that is the context, that must be what this verse is addressing. These wicked men speak evil of angelic forces, but they don't actually know very much about them.

The same can be said of us. While it's true that God has revealed quite a bit about angels and demons, it's also true that there is much He *hasn't* told us. Stop and think about it for a minute: just what have the angels been doing for the past two thousand years? Do you know what battles have been fought, what campaigns have been waged, or what demonic plans have been thwarted? The truth is that we just don't know. In fact, angels are so secretive that most of the time we can't even *see* them.

These ungodly men willingly speak evil of things that they do not know. Their lack of knowledge does not stop them or serve as a deterrent.

BUT WHAT THEY KNOW NATURALLY

The Bible tells us that God has put His Law in our hearts. There are certain things about right and wrong that we all know naturally, without having to be taught. (The apostle Paul had a good deal to say about this in the book of Romans.) There is a basic understanding of some truths hidden inside all men.

AS BRUTE BEASTS

Just as the animals know certain things by instinct, so people also know certain things by instinct. This is not an accident; it is part of God's design.

IN THOSE THINGS THEY CORRUPT THEMSELVES

Not only do these ungodly men speak evil of things that they know little about, but they even manage to corrupt themselves in matters that they *do* understand! Amazingly, they have corrupted the basic knowledge that God has placed inside them. These ungodly men simply cannot be trusted.

Verse 11

Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

WOE UNTO THEM

No matter how powerful these men may seem and no matter how much influence they may have attained, we must remember that they are on the losing side. These men are servants of the devil, and when they stand before God they will face His wrath. God will not forget their sins or let them go unpunished. They are storing up wrath for the day of judgment.

It may seem like they are getting away with their evil deeds, but that is an illusion. There will be a day of reckoning, and when that day comes they will not escape.

FOR THEY HAVE GONE IN THE WAY OF CAIN

Cain and Abel both offered sacrifices to God, but God accepted Abel's offering and rejected Cain's. The reason for this is because Abel offered his offering by faith and Cain did not (Hebrews 11:4). When Cain saw that God rejected his offering he *should* have repented, but instead he murdered Abel. Cain hated

the righteousness of his brother so much that he actually killed him over it (1 John 3:12).

That is the way of Cain. Cain chose the path of ungodliness and hated all those who were righteous; he hunted down and murdered his brother simply because Abel was godly. Those who follow the way of Cain have a passionate hatred for the saints of God. They refuse to repent of their sins and instead seek to persecute all those who serve the Lord.

That is exactly what these ungodly men are doing. They have a hatred for all that is right and good, and they are looking for godly men so that they can persecute them and get rid of them. They have embraced the way of Cain.

AND RAN GREEDILY AFTER THE ERROR OF BALAAM FOR REWARD

Balaam was hired by the Moabites in order to curse Israel. Now, Balaam was happy to help them; he didn't mind cursing God's people if there was money in it. That is the error of Balaam: to willingly do evil if it pays well. It's true that Balaam was not looking for opportunities to curse Israel, but when the chance came along he agreed to do it. He was willing to curse God's chosen people in exchange for riches and honor.

This is another characteristic of the ungodly men: they will willingly sin and oppress God's saints if it pays well and offers a good reward. They will sell their very souls for money and for the praise of the world.

AND PERISHED IN THE GAINSAYING OF CORE

This is a reference to Korah's rebellion in Numbers 16. Korah gathered an angry mob and led them in a rebellion against Moses. Even though God was the one who put Moses into power and who gave Moses his special position, the men of Korah thought that Moses had taken too much upon himself. They were determined to take his position for themselves, and to perform special ministries in the Temple that God had forbidden them from doing. The fact that God had said "No, you are not allowed to perform those Temple activities" wasn't good enough for them. They were going to do them anyway.

God was not at all pleased about their rebellion. Not only had they rejected the man that God had chosen, but they also rejected the rules that God had established regarding sacrifices and the Temple. Since they rejected God, the Lord rejected them. As punishment God opened the ground underneath them and they were all swallowed alive.

In other words, the gainsaying of Core is a willingness to overthrow the authorities that God has put into place and a desire to steal power. The ungodly men that Jude warns us about are greedy for power and will not hesitate to steal it – or to break God's commands in order to elevate their own status.

The gainsaying of Korah led to his death and the death of all those who joined him. These ungodly men will also perish. No matter how much power they achieve, they will never be mightier than God and He will be their downfall.

Verse 12

These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

THESE ARE SPOTS IN YOUR FEASTS OF CHARITY

The early church sometimes held free meals for the poor. People would bring food to the church and the poor would be invited to partake of the meal in order to get something to eat. These were also called "agape feasts" or "love feasts". It was a way to provide for one of the many needs of the poor.

The presence of these ungodly men, however, were spots in these feasts of charity. In fact, their mere *presence* at these events was like an infection – a spot of mold on a piece of bread. Jude is warning the Church that it is very dangerous to have these ungodly men around. They should be *completely removed* from the congregation, and that included these feasts of charity. These ungodly men were a very real and serious danger.

Do you see how different that is from the way that the modern church treats false teachers? *Nowhere* do you see Jude (or any other apostle!) saying anything like "let these men stay around so that they may learn from us". Instead the message was *completely different*: "get rid of these people so that they

don't poison the rest of the body"! That was one of the major reasons for church discipline: to *protect the church body* from an infection that could destroy the church or weaken its members.

The Church is not made stronger when false teachers are allowed to run wild; instead it is weakened and hindered. God commands us to find these dangerous people and remove them from our midst so that they cannot continue to cause problems.

WHEN THEY FEAST WITH YOU

These ungodly men had infiltrated the churches to such a degree that they were even participating in the love feasts that the churches were throwing! This is a much bigger deal than it seems. In Bible times, eating a meal with someone was a sign of *friendship*, and meant that the people partaking in the meal were no longer enemies.

However, these ungodly men are enemies of the Church; according to Jude their entire plan is to destroy it from within. It is most unwise for churches to make peace with these men. What they ought to be doing is fighting against them and their wicked doctrines.

FEEDING THEMSELVES WITHOUT FEAR

These ungodly men were fearless. They knew that they had gone undetected and could do their evil work without fear of being caught. They knew that they had reached key positions of power and influence. They had no need to fear anyone.

The reason Jude is writing this is so that people will *wake up and do something*. These ungodly men *should* be afraid! They

should be worried that people will catch them and cast them out. They should be terrified that they will be discovered. If they are truly feasting without fear then that means that the church has lost all discernment and can no longer tell good from evil, or the truth from a lie. Once a body loses its ability to tell the good cells apart from the diseased ones, death is not very far away.

CLOUDS ARE THEY WITHOUT WATER

A cloud that is without water is completely *useless*. Since it can't provide the ground with life-sustaining water, it is good for nothing. It may have the appearance of being useful but it utterly lacks any substance. It appears helpful but it cannot provide any actual benefit.

These false teachers are exactly like that. Their use of great words and clever speeches makes them appear to be wise, but they are really fools. Their teachings appear to be valuable but they are actually worthless. They are completely unable to help anyone who comes to them, because all they have to offer is lies and deceit.

CARRIED ABOUT OF WINDS

The Bible warns us not to be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. If a Christian is rooted in the Word then he will not be blown about. He will stand on the truth and not move. Although the winds of change may blow, *he* does not change because he stands firm on the never-changing Word of God.

However, these ungodly men are not standing on the truth. Since they are not founded on the Rock, they are blown along by

whatever the current heresy might be. One day they are here and the next day they are there. The winds carry them about, with each gust blowing them further from the truth. Instead of confronting the culture with the truth and commanding them to repent and be saved, they rise up and tell the Church that it must abandon God's Word and do something else. They are carried around by winds, and they seek to ensnare others as well.

TREES WHOSE FRUIT WITHERETH

Jesus said that we will know each other by our fruits. A healthy Christian will produce good fruit, but an ungodly person will produce dead fruit. The fruit of these wicked men cannot be consumed; it is good for nothing but to be burned. The deeds of these men produce nothing but harm. Their fruit does not help the body; instead it damages those who consume it.

A tree that is bearing withered fruit is a tree that is in the process of dying. If a fruit tree is producing diseased fruit then it needs to be destroyed before it starts infecting healthy trees.

WITHOUT FRUIT

Some ungodly men produce no fruit at all. This is a telling sign, because those who abide in Christ *will* bear fruit. The fruits of the Spirit are plain for all to see, and they reveal the heart of a man. Those who lack fruit at may *seem* to be alive, but in reality they are dead. A fruitless man is a spiritually dead man. A fruit tree that does not produce fruit is just a waste of space.

I will say this again: if you find someone who is not producing *any* of the fruits of the Spirit, then you have found

someone who is spiritually dead. No matter what they may say, they are truly dead; their lives have caught them out.

TWICE DEAD

This phrase is actually far harder to interpret than it seems. I have read what commentators have to say about it, and surprisingly there is no agreement at all. Each commentator seems to have his own personal theory.

For example, does "twice dead" mean that the fruit is dead and the tree is also dead, or does it mean that the tree is so dead that if you cut it down it will not come back? Does it mean that someone came to know Christ and then abandoned Christ and went back into apostasy, or does it mean that the person is spiritually dead and will then be physically dead?

The only thing I can say with certainty is that whereas a Christian is characterized by life, these ungodly men are characterized by death. They are *not* spiritually alive and they are not growing or bearing fruit. There is simply no life about them.

PLUCKED UP BY THE ROOTS

Once you pluck a tree up by the roots it is absolutely dead. At that point it *cannot* come back; there is no longer any hope for it. It is as dead as dead can be. The ungodly men are like that: they are utterly, completely dead, without any hope of return to life.

Earlier in this letter Jude made the point that these men were preordained to be damned (verse 4), and this is a restatement of that. They have been plucked up by the roots;

they are now good for nothing but to be thrown into the fire.
There is nothing left for these people but Hell.

Verse 13

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

RAGING WAVES OF THE SEA, FOAMING OUT OF THEIR OWN SHAME

When the sea rages it beats against whatever happens to be nearby. It beats upon the rocks, it beats upon the sand, and it beats upon any ships that might be sailing along. The sea mindlessly rages against everything that is around it and tries to do it damage.

In this verse Jude is telling us that these ungodly men do the same thing. They are constantly raging (although this may or may not be obvious), beating against whoever happens to be around. Look at all the false teachers today who are constantly beating upon those who still hold to the truths of the Bible! Look at those who stand up and mock the Word of God, saying that it is old and outdated and we need to abandon it for something else. Look at those who try to tear down the Church. These men are like raging waves – constantly fighting, constantly beating, and constantly causing problems.

WANDERING STARS

The true Christian remains rooted in the Word and is not tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. He has an anchor and he remains rooted in the teachings that God has given to us.

These ungodly men, though, are wanderers. They wander from the faith and from the truth. They wander from godliness and from holiness. Whereas the godly man is anchored, the godless are tossed about and move from one heresy to the next. Each time they wander ever farther from the truth.

TO WHOM IS RESERVED

The fate of these wicked men is certain, for God has already decreed it and it will come to pass. No matter how clever they may seem or how influential they have become, these false teachers never had a chance of getting away with their actions.

So many times we think that just because God doesn't immediately strike them dead with a bolt of lightning, that means that either God doesn't care or that He approves of what they are doing. We forget that God has set aside a day of judgment, and that He will judge men *on that day*. These men are heaping up judgment for themselves, and they will not escape.

THE BLACKNESS OF DARKNESS FOR EVER

This is the ultimate fate of these ungodly men that have caused so much trouble and pain. These men, who have harmed others and who are a cancer on the Church, will not find

everlasting joy and peace and will not enter through Heaven's gates. Instead God's terrible and unbearable judgment awaits them. Jesus often spoke of the place of judgment as being "outer darkness", where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

We know from Revelation 20:15 that the ultimate destination of the wicked is a place called the Lake of Fire. It would seem that the Lake of Fire is a *dark* place, and that the fire that burns there does not give off any visible light. This is what these ungodly men will face: not annihilation, but eternal darkness. Not destruction, but eternal torment. Since they tormented others, they will be tormented. Since they rejected the truth, they will be condemned.

Verse 14

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam,
prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord
cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

AND ENOCH ALSO

This is a reference to the mysterious person Enoch, who was first mentioned in Genesis 5. Enoch is famous because he never died. Instead he walked with God, and one day God took him (Genesis 5:24).

I believe that Enoch is a picture of the Church. Just as Enoch walked with God and then disappeared from the world because God came and took him, so likewise the Church walks with God – and one day the Church will also disappear from the world, because God will come and get her.

THE SEVENTH FROM ADAM

Enoch was indeed the seventh from Adam:

Adam > Seth > Enos > Cainan > Mahalaleel > Jared > Enoch

Some numbers in the Bible hold a special significance. Seven is the number of completion, or perfection. There were 7

days of creation, in which creation was finished. There are 7 seals in Revelation, in which the world's judgment is finished. There are 7 Jewish feasts, in which the Lord's work is finished (from the Passover to the Millennium).

Enoch is the seventh from Adam. There is something special about this man (which can be seen from the fact that he was raptured!)

PROPHESIED

Enoch was a prophet – in fact, he was the first prophet. He named his son Methuselah, which means "when he dies it will come". Sure enough, when Methuselah died the Flood came. Here Jude tells us that Enoch also made another prophesy that is not recorded anywhere else in the Bible.

As an aside, in modern times there is a Book of Enoch that is floating around. Although quite a few people take it seriously, the truth is that they shouldn't; it is full of errors and heresy. The reason the Book of Enoch is not included in the canon of Scripture is because *it is a fraud*. Enoch was a genuine prophet and he really did prophesy, but his prophesies were *not* preserved, and we should not look to fraudulent manuscripts to see what else this man of God had to say. Instead we should content ourselves with what the Bible has told us about him and leave it at that.

OF THESE

Enoch was given a marvelous gift: he prophesied about the Second Coming long before the First Coming even happened! He

foresaw the day when evil men would work their way into the Church and do terrible things, and he warned of God's judgment upon them.

In the beginning of this letter Jude told us that these ungodly men were predestined to their task and to their judgment. The existence of these men is not unexpected and it is not an accident. As we can see, Enoch prophesied of them centuries *before* the Flood, and thousands of years before the resurrection of Christ. The appearance of these men did not catch God by surprise.

SAYING, BEHOLD, THE LORD COMETH

This is a reference to the Second Coming. When the Lord came the first time and was born in Bethlehem, there were angels who announced His birth – but He most certainly did *not* come with an army of saints. (Angels are never called saints in the Bible). Likewise, when the Lord comes at the Rapture He will retrieve His saints from the world, but He will not come *to* the world *with* His saints. The only time the Lord will come to the world with an army is at the Second Coming, which occurs at the end of the Tribulation. That is what Enoch is talking about – and he foretold it long before the Flood even happened, let alone the First Coming.

In other words, not only was the work of these ungodly men ordained of old, but their judgment was also ordained of old! The rise and defeat of the false teachers that plague the Church is old news – so old that it predates the Flood itself. The Lord is coming: His coming has been planned for a long time, and it will happen just as the Bible foretold.

WITH TEN THOUSANDS OF HIS SAINTS

Enoch said that when the Lord returns to judge the world He will not come alone, but will bring a mighty army of His saints. In other words, when the Lord returns at the Second Coming He will bring His Church with Him. When He fights against the antichrist and defeats his armies, the Church will be there. However, the Bible tells us that we will not be doing any fighting; although we will be present, Jesus Christ will defeat them all single-handedly. (You can read about this in Revelation 19:11-21 and Isaiah 63:1-6.)

The saints of God – who these wicked men have opposed, fought, and despised – have *not* been defeated. When the Lord returns they will return with Him, and when the Lord reigns triumphant they will reign with Him. The saints may be persecuted and murdered, but in the end they will win and they will reign with Christ over the world. The end is not in doubt: it was prophesied long ago and it will come to pass.

Verse 15

To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

TO EXECUTE JUDGMENT UPON ALL

When Jesus came the first time He came to seek and save them which were lost. When Jesus returns at His Second Coming, though, things will be very different. At that time He will be coming back to execute judgment upon the world. His return at the end of the Tribulation (which is what this passage is talking about) will put an end to the reign of the antichrist. Jesus will destroy the devil's satanic kingdom and replace it with His own kingdom. The sheep and goat judgment will then take place, in which He will gather all the nations before Him and judge them. At that time those who are saved will go on to enter the Millennial Kingdom, and those who are not saved will be cast into Hell.

Now, the Church will *not* be judged in that judgment, but the rest of mankind (those who were on the Earth during the Tribulation and who survived it) *will* be judged. Those who rejected Christ and took the Mark will all be killed and cast into Hell.

This is something that we should take very seriously. The

Lord is coming back, and when He returns He will judge the world. The world will *not* escape, the antichrist will *not* win, and evil will *not* triumph. The doom of these ungodly men is certain, and their end is sure.

AND TO CONVINCE ALL THAT ARE UNGODLY AMONG THEM

Make no mistake about it: there is no such thing as moral relativity. The modern idea of "my truth" and "your truth" and "that's fine for you, but I have a different truth" is utter nonsense. Those who reject the Word and live as they please will eventually face the terrible consequences of their foolish choices. One day they will be forced to see what they have done.

You see, Jesus is going to convince them. On this day of judgment He is going to confront them with the truth. The wicked will not be able to escape, plea bargain, or come up with an excuse. There will be no hiding and there will be no getting overlooked. *All* of the ungodly are going to be confronted and convinced. They will be forced to look at what they have done in the cold, hard light of reality. When that day comes all deception will be gone. There will be no rationalizations in that day – only the light of the truth.

You see, God really does put a difference between those who are His and those who are not. Those who belong to Him – who have repented of their sins and come to Christ for forgiveness and mercy – will be found guiltless and will inherit joy. However, those who continue in their sins and who do not put their faith in Christ will face the wrath of God. Christians will be set free because they are clean. Since Jesus took their punishment, their sins have been covered by the blood of the Lamb. That makes all the difference in the world.

OF ALL THEIR UNGODLY DEEDS WHICH THEY HAVE UNGODLY COMMITTED

How many of their deeds will be uncovered? *All* of them. All of the ungodly deeds of these ungodly men will be brought up. None will be overlooked, skipped, or missed. They will be convinced of *all* of them and will be shown exactly who they are and what they have done. This will be a day of reckoning for them, and it will be brutal and horrifying.

In this life there is still time to seek forgiveness and mercy. There is still time to run to Jesus. However, when Jesus returns and judges the nations that will no longer be possible. Those who remain in their wickedness will face an eternity of endless, unbearable torment.

Now, it is important to remember that Enoch is talking about the sheep and the goat judgment, and *not* the Great White Throne judgment. This judgment takes place after Jesus returns but before His Millennial Kingdom begins. The Great White Throne judgment happens *after* the Millennium is over. In this particular judgment Jesus separates the godly from the ungodly so that only the godly enter His Millennium. After this judgment the Millennium begins.

AND OF ALL THEIR HARD SPEECHES

It is not just their *deeds* that will be judged; it is also their *words*. The wicked have said many terrible and blasphemous things against the Most High God. The things that people have said against the Lord are truly terrible. (For example, I have seen groups of people who said that Mary should have had an abortion and killed Jesus before He was born). God has not forgotten any of these words and He has promised to judge

people for them.

The hard speeches of the wicked *will* be judged. Men will be confronted with all of the terrible things they have said, and they will have to answer for every one of them. These people have blasphemed the Most High God and He is not amused. The ungodly will be forced to face what they have said about Him, and in that day there will be no hiding.

WHICH UNGODLY SINNERS

Who is Enoch focusing on here? The ungodly. They are the ones who will be condemned and destroyed. It is not the righteous who will face the wrath of God, but the wicked. The righteous will be found innocent because Jesus paid the punishment for their sins with His own blood. However, the ungodly have not had their sins forgiven so they will face the endless wrath of an infinite God.

HAVE SPOKEN AGAINST HIM

The ungodly have spoken many terrible things against Jesus. Their words – spoken so callously and blasphemously against God Himself – will destroy them. As the Bible says, by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned.

Those who speak against God do so at their peril. God takes it personally and He will judge the ungodly for every ungodly thing they have said against Him. Instead of praising God they have spoken against Him, and they will be forced to face the consequences.

Verse 16

These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

THESE ARE MURMURERS

In this verse Jude continues to describe the ungodly men who have crept into the Church by calling them *murmurers*. Imagine someone who is hiding in the shadows, whispering words of evil and deceit. Instead of standing up and shouting heresy they hide in the background and murmur. They spread lies and evil *quietly*.

Not all evil is overt and in-your-face. Sometimes it takes the form of a quiet murmur, spoken in the ear of the wrong person at the wrong time. Sometimes all it takes to destroy a church or a life is a single whisper or complaint. The ancient Israelites were quite good at murmuring. When God failed to meet their expectations they murmured against God – and He severely punished them for it. Instead of trusting, they murmured. Instead of praying, they murmured. Instead of seeking to help, they spread discord.

The honorable thing to do when you have a problem or concern with someone is to talk to them about it. When you are facing a problem in your life, bring it to God – don't murmur against Him. However, these people don't do that because there

is nothing honorable about them. Instead they stand back and murmur, spreading destruction wherever they go.

COMPLAINERS

When the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness they needed food and water. However, instead of bringing their needs to God, they complained. They complained about their problems. They complained that God was heartless. They attacked Moses for delivering them from Egypt. In fact, they complained so much and so often that God repeatedly punished them for it.

When you have a need, the right thing to do is to cry out to God and ask for His aid. You can talk to others and see if they can help you. You can work to resolve the problem. You can be patient and wait for the salvation of the Lord. You have a lot of options, but complaining is *not* one of those options.

People who complain are destructive. Instead of seeking to make things better they tear others down. Instead of working to resolve the problem they go on the attack and seek to destroy. Complaining causes strife, bitterness, and discord. It leads to problems and it separates friends.

Take notice of those who spend their lives complaining and be wary of them. Complaining is one of the characteristics of the ungodly men who seek the doom of the Church. Those who spend their time complaining about everything are *not* helping; instead they are causing harm and spreading destruction.

WALKING AFTER THEIR OWN LUSTS

The Bible warns us that friendship with the world is enmity with God. It tells us that the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world. It warns us that walking after our own lusts leads to destruction and death. Jesus told us that we cannot be His disciples unless we abandon everything and follow Him. He said that our love for Him must be far greater than even our love for our families. When it comes down to it we must be willing to sacrifice *everything* for the cause of Christ. We must take up our cross and follow Him. That is the price of discipleship.

Sadly, these ungodly men are not like that. They do not walk after the Spirit, but instead they walk after their own lusts. Instead of seeking the will of God they seek their own will. These people are held captive by their sin and they serve the devil. They serve mammon, not God, and want the things of this world instead of the things of the Spirit.

AND THEIR MOUTH SPEAKETH GREAT SWELLING WORDS

There are some men who murmur in the shadows, speaking evil and laying traps for men. However, there are others who loudly boast. They speak great things of themselves. In modern terms we would say that they promote their own brand. They make much of themselves and their own teachings, and they belittle God and His teachings. Although they speak great things, they are not speaking great things *about God*; instead they are attacking who He is and what He has said.

The Bible says that he who boasts should boast in the Lord. These men, however, boast in themselves. They tell others how

great *they* are instead of how great God is. They talk about the great things *they* have done instead of the great things God has done. They have no interest in preaching what the Bible actually has to say, because they have their own godless agenda. Such men are dangerous and such an activity is not of God.

God alone deserves all praise, worship, and glory. We exist to glorify Him, not to glorify ourselves. He is the one we must worship and He is the one we must praise and honor. Boast about the Lord; don't boast about yourself.

HAVING MEN'S PERSONS IN ADMIRATION BECAUSE OF ADVANTAGE

Another way to put this is that they flatter others and show favoritism in order to gain leverage. Through flattery they seek to gain an advantage and use it to accomplish their own ends. They use words as tools to manipulate the thoughts and feelings of others. Through admiration and flattery they turn people's hearts to their own wicked ends.

Men love to be flattered and told that they are great. It is so easy for flattery to turn a man to wickedness, and for a well-placed word to turn a man to the path of darkness. People want to be liked and they want to be popular. It doesn't take much for ungodly men to use that to their advantage.

The reason this works is because people long for the praise of their peers instead of the praise of God. People care more about what their friends think than what God thinks. As Christians we must never be seduced by the call of the world. When God said that friendship with the world was enmity with God, He meant it. We can be friends with God or we can be friends with the world, but we cannot be both.

Verse 17

But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

BUT, BELOVED

Remember, Jude is writing this letter to those who are sanctified by God (v1). In other words, he is writing this to Christians. This is *not* a letter to the lost; it is a letter to the saved.

Jude is reminding Christians that *they are beloved*. Yes, there are ungodly men out there who are very dangerous and who intend to do the Church great harm. However, those wicked men are *cursed*; they are under God's judgment and will be condemned for what they have done.

Although the ungodly are cursed, the godly are beloved by the Lord, who loved them so much that He gave His own Son for them. No matter what may happen, that is something Christians should never forget. They are the beloved ones – and that makes all the difference in the world.

REMEMBER YE THE WORDS

Jude is urging us to *remember the things God has told us* –

and that is a command we would do well to heed. There are some people who claim that they don't need to study the Bible because when the time comes God will magically give them the right words to say. Such a belief is utterly foolish. God *wants* us to study His word. In fact, He commands us to know it and remember it. It is vital for us to remember the words that God has given to us because they will defend us against many foes – such as the devil and false teachers.

In our time Scripture memorization has fallen out of favor among Christians, but it has *not* fallen out of favor with God. He still wants us to hide His word in our heart and to meditate upon it. We should make it a priority to remember His words.

WHICH WERE SPOKEN BEFORE OF THE APOSTLES

What words does Jude want us to remember? *The words of the apostles*. The teachings of the apostles carries great weight and it is not to be simply dismissed or ignored. Those men were chosen by God Himself and He used them to lay the foundation of His Church. God used these men to heal the sick, raise the dead, and do many mighty miracles. God put His stamp of approval on them and He taught through them. Their words should *not* be dismissed; instead they should be heeded and remembered.

These days it is very fashionable to dismiss the words spoken by the apostles – especially the words of the apostle Paul. When people read the Bible and find things that they don't like, they simply dismiss the teachings of the Bible as if they were nothing more than trash. They think nothing of "disagreeing" with Paul, who actually *raised the dead* (Acts 20:9-12). I would like to see one of Paul's critics go out and try to raise the dead! If you take it upon yourself to criticize him, then I dare you to

demonstrate the same power that Paul had. Paul could heal people by giving them handkerchiefs he had touched (Acts 19:11-12). Can you do that?

God commands Christians to heed the words of the apostles and obey their teachings. Those who dismiss or ridicule the apostles' teachings have fallen into sin; they are outside the will of God and are flirting with damnation. *No true child of God can despise or reject the Word*, because if you despise God's words then you despise God Himself. Those who reject the teachings of the apostles are actually rejecting God, because God is the one who chose the apostles and who spoke through them.

OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

All true Christians have this in common: Jesus Christ is our Lord and master. When a person becomes a Christian he undergoes a change of allegiance. Instead of doing his own will he dies to himself and pursues the will of the Father. Instead of seeking his own glory or his own good, he sacrifices himself and seeks the glory of his Master. Christians submit themselves fully to Jesus Christ and heed His commands.

There are many people today who reject the lordship of Jesus Christ. Although they claim to be Christians, they despise His commands and have no intention of obeying Him. They seek Heaven but insist on doing what is right in their own eyes. They reject the Bible's teachings and do their own will. They will not bow down to Jesus; in fact, the very idea fills them with rage.

Such people *are not saved*. In order to become a Christian Jesus *must* be your Lord. There is no salvation in continuing to rebel against Him. In order to be saved you *must* submit to His will; if you refuse then *you will be damned*. If you refuse to make Jesus your Lord then He will not be your Savior.

This does not mean that salvation is by works, because it is not – it is by grace through faith. It also does not mean that you have to be morally perfect in order to be a Christian. What it *does* mean is that those who pray "Jesus, save me from Hell but don't you dare tell me what to do" are not saved at all. They are simply deceiving themselves, and if they do not repent of their rebellion they will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire.

Verse 18

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

HOW THAT THEY TOLD YOU THERE SHOULD BE MOCKERS

This is an important end-times prophecy. The apostle Peter said the same thing:

2 Peter 3:3: "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,
4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

It's quite possible that Jude was aware of this verse and was referring to it – after all, he just said that he was reminding believers of *something that the apostles had taught*. It's also possible that the apostles taught this on a regular basis and Jude was simply recording what he had heard. In either case, the message is the same: in the last days there would be mockers.

But what are these people mocking? I think this quote does a good job of explaining it:

Now most will admit that we are in the last days; but no one in Christendom who has the power to reach a large audience is saying that Jesus will *never* return. And it is important that we pay careful attention to *exactly* what the Apostle says, for he *does not say* that these scoffers are denying the eventual return of Christ. They say, Where is the *promise....*of His coming: they are *not saying* "Where is the *coming....*that He promised". They are denying that a certain promise of a certain coming can be found: for they say, "Where is it?" The only "coming" of Jesus Christ which is being openly challenged in Christendom today is the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. . . What they are willingly ignorant of is that *after* the "few" were removed to safety in Noah's Ark, the rest were destroyed. What they are denying is that God will remove a few to safety, destroy the present "world order", and then return the few to take over the earth. This is clearly descriptive of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture. (anonymous)

Peter said that the mockers would scoff at the idea that the Lord promised to remove His Church to safety *before* bringing judgment to the world, and Jude said that the mockers would walk in their ungodly lusts. In our time both of these prophecies have come true.

Yes, it is true that the lost world mocks the idea of the Lord's return, and it is also true that the lost world continues to walk in its sins. But remember, Jude is talking about *ungodly men who have infiltrated the Church*. He is saying that the time will come when people *within the Church* will do these things. This prediction has come to pass. Today large portions of the Church

ridicules a literal interpretation of end-times prophecy (even though *all* prophecies regarding the first coming of Christ were fulfilled literally). In fact, pastors such as Rick Warren urge us to not study prophecy at all! The Rapture is dismissed out-of-hand as some sort of ludicrous fantasy, and the Lord's return is cast aside as a "distraction".

As if that were not bad enough, many people within our churches have embraced a doctrine known as Carnal Christianity. This heresy (which used to be called antinomianism) says that you can be saved without ever repenting of your sins. Proponents of this belief claim that as long as you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, you are good to go. You don't have to repent of any sins or submit to God's will. You don't have to make Jesus your Lord. You can just go right on living in sin and doing whatever you want.

So there are indeed mockers in the last time who walk after their own ungodly lusts. They attack people who preach holiness and who are against sin, and they deride those who say that you must repent (even though Jesus Himself taught this in Mark 1:14-15). Even though our Lord preached a gospel of repentance, many people in our churches refuse to believe it.

Jude is reminding us that the Bible predicted this and warned us about it in advance. None of this has taken God by surprise. The day that Jude foretold is finally here; we are now in the last days of the Church Age.

IN THE LAST TIME

The New Testament spends quite a bit of time talking about the return of Christ for His Church. The reason God did this is so that we would not be taken by surprise (I Thes. 5:4). When the Rapture happens, those who have been watching for it will

not be caught off-guard *because they were expecting it*. Yes, it's impossible to know the exact day and hour the Lord will return, but it *is* possible to see the signs and understand them. God has given us enough information to enable us to tell just how close we are to the Day of the Lord. We can see the signs that indicate that the Church Age is coming to a close.

Of course, there are many people who don't bother to study this subject. They ignore the clear commands of both Jesus and the apostles to be watching, and instead dismiss the subject by saying "Oh, it will all pan out in the end". Paul's commandment to watch and be sober (1 Thes. 5:6) has fallen on deaf ears. Those who *are* watching can see the signs and are able to understand what is going on. However, those who refuse to pay attention will be caught off-guard.

This is not the place to delve into a detailed discussion of just how close we are to the beginning of the Tribulation. It is enough to note that one of the signs is the presence of mockers, and *that sign has been fulfilled*. We really are living in the last time – but just how close we are to the end is a subject for another time.

WHO SHOULD WALK AFTER THEIR OWN UNGODLY LUSTS

This behavior is *extremely* common in our churches today. In fact, if God had not warned us about it in advance then it would be easy to fall into despair. Sin abounds to the point where churches are openly hostile to those who preach against sin. Divorce has been embraced and homosexuality is applauded. Sodomites are appointed as pastors and sexual immorality is rampant. Churches refuse to rebuke those who have children or live together outside of marriage. Congregations are full of

hatred, selfishness, strife, and worldliness.

In short, churches are brimming with people who walk after their own ungodly lusts. The behavior of many pastors and deacons in many churches is deplorable – in fact, it is so bad that it often makes the news. People no longer care about God's will; they only care about their own will. They are determined to have their way no matter what the cost. They have rejected righteousness and embraced sin.

I realize that sin has always existed, but in our time apostasy is rampant. When you walk into a church you should not have to wonder what hidden evil is lurking within its walls. Churches should be places where the people of God can come together and serve Him – but that's simply not the case any more. Many churches are no longer serious about doing God's will, and are just feel-good country clubs that stopped caring about God a long time ago.

This is a perilous time to be alive. Sin is rampant and it can easily infect us. It is so easy to copy the "I don't care" attitude of those around us, and become just as apathetic as the rest. However, *we must not do that*. We must stand strong and seek out those who are serious about God. We must stay in the Word and pray earnestly. This is not time to lay down and fall asleep; it is the time to stand up and fight.

Verse 19

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

THESE BE THEY WHO SEPARATE THEMSELVES

In this verse Jude calls the ungodly men that he has been talking about "those who separate themselves". That is a truly great description of these people. They separate themselves from *the truth*, because they cannot stand it. They separate themselves from *the light*, because it reproves their wicked deeds. They separate themselves *from God*, because they refuse to repent and bow down to Him.

In short, they separate themselves from all goodness, holiness, and righteousness. These wicked men are set apart to serve the world, the flesh, and the devil. They are not a part of Jesus' flock, and they do not know His voice or heed it. Instead of following the Lord they follow their father the devil.

SENSUAL

One of the chief characteristics of the ungodly is their lust for worldly pleasures. They long for the things of this world: the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life (I John 2:16). Those who seek after such things do not know God,

because if they did they would have renounced them and sought the things that pertained to God. As Jesus said, no man can serve two masters; those who are sensual and who seek what this world has to offer have rejected God.

As Christians we must mark those who have refused the path of holiness and be wary of them. Such people are not true believers, but are imposters. Those who seek the pleasures, friendship, and praise of this world have renounced friendship with God.

HAVING NOT THE SPIRIT

The apostle Paul made it clear that all genuine Christians have the Holy Spirit inside them. Likewise, all those who *lack* the Holy Spirit are *not* saved (Romans 8:9). Since these men do not have the Spirit they are not Christians; instead they are imposters.

It is important to realize that in the Church Age you *cannot* lose the Holy Spirit because it is sealed within you. No matter what happens you cannot lose your salvation. Since these ungodly men do not have the Spirit, that means they were never saved to begin with; their supposed faith was always a lie.

Verse 20

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

BUT YE

Jude is writing this letter to all believers. It is important to realize that Christians are not like the ungodly, unsaved men that Jude has been writing about; they are different. The ungodly may be sensual, but Christians are not. The ungodly may lack the Spirit, but Christians do not. The ungodly may have separated themselves from God, but Christians do not. They are an entirely different creature.

BELOVED

Jude already said this once before, but it bears repeating: *Christians are beloved*. Although the ungodly men are cursed and are under God's judgment, believers are beloved. Although the ungodly men will face God's wrath, they will face God's mercy. Although God is angry with them, He loves the righteous.

BUILDING UP YOURSELVES

Here Jude begins to draw a contrast between Christians and the ungodly men he has spent the entire letter discussing. The ungodly men are faithless people who have no fear *of* God and have no faith *in* God. But Christians are commanded to be different. They are to build up their faith in our Lord. God has already laid the foundation; He has shown Himself to be trustworthy and has given many precious promises.

In the book of James the apostle pointed out that faith without works is dead. We can say all day long that we have faith, but if our faith doesn't produce any actions then it is completely useless. In fact, it might as well not exist in the first place.

Jude is telling Christians that we need to take our faith and build upon it. We need to *exercise it*. We need to believe in the promises of God and not be hard-hearted. The apostle Paul said that faith is a shield that can quench the fiery darts of the wicked one. Our faith may start out small, but it doesn't have to stay that way. We can boldly *act upon* the promises that God has given to us in His Word. We can *and must* demonstrate our faith by our actions.

This "building process" is not optional for Christians; it is something that we are commanded to do. Instead of remaining babes in the faith forever, we need to grow and become mature believers. Whereas the ungodly run *from* God, we must run *to* God. Whereas the ungodly *do not* trust God, we must learn *to* trust Him. Whereas the ungodly *hate* God, we must *love* Him.

Now, this building process is not a one-time thing. This is a continual practice that we must pursue for the rest of our lives. We must always be building upon our faith and seeking to trust God. There must never be a point where we step back and say "Well, I think I've done enough growing. I'll just stop here."

You see, our faith *will* be tested. Hard times will come. In

the Old Testament God tested kings by sending enemy armies against them. Through these tests it was made clear to everyone if the king trusted in God or trusted in himself. Our faith will also be tested, and through it all we must continue to build.

ON YOUR MOST HOLY FAITH

Here Jude explains that we are to be building *our faith*. Faith is not something that you receive at one point in your life and then put on a shelf somewhere; instead it is a plant that you must be constantly nurturing. You need to train your faith and build it so it will grow. It must never be allowed to remain stagnant.

Notice how Jude refers to it as our *most holy faith*. Our faith is not in some profane idol, or in ourselves, or in our hearts, or in our circumstances, or in some political leader. Instead our faith is in the most holy object of all – God Himself, and Jesus Christ His Son, and His Holy Spirit. In the throne room of Heaven there are beings who never stop saying "Holy, holy, holy" (Revelation 4:8). God's utter holiness is beyond our comprehension. When Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up, he immediately cried out in anguish because he suddenly realized how unholy he actually was (Isaiah 6:1-5). The complete and total holiness of God made him see his own sinfulness.

We do indeed have a most holy faith. Our God is not a fool or someone to be trifled with. He is infinitely just and powerful, and He is also infinitely holy.

PRAYING IN THE HOLY GHOST

There is a tremendous difference between the prayers of a lost person and the prayers of a Christian. When a lost person prays he is praying while mired in his own wickedness and depravity. If he cries out in repentance then that is one thing, but otherwise his prayers are profane. He is praying as an enemy of God, and is asking favors from a Being that he has utterly rejected. Proverbs 15:29 says that the Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous.

When a Christian prays, though, it is an entirely different scenario. As believers God has imputed to us the righteousness of Christ. We are not praying in our sins but in Christ's perfect righteousness. We are not praying as enemies of God but as His dear children. On top of all that, God has given us His Spirit and has sealed it inside us. When we pray we are not praying in and of ourselves, but are praying in the Holy Spirit. God Himself is inside us, aiding us and guiding us.

Do you really think that God will ignore the prayers of His own Spirit? Do you think that God has no interest in the pains and tears of His dearly beloved saints, or that He is unconcerned about the very people He died to save?

Prayer is vital and powerful, for God really does listen to our prayers and He does answer them. The Bible is very clear: God hears the prayers of the righteous.

Verse 21

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

KEEP YOURSELVES IN THE LOVE OF GOD

As Christians we know that once we are saved we cannot lose our salvation. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. However, it *is* still possible for us to sin, and there are very serious consequences for that. God disciplines those He loves, and if we choose to sin He will chastise us.

There are some people who believe that since they are saved they can do whatever they want and there won't be any consequences, because God will just forgive them. That is *not* true, as Ananias and Sapphira learned: when they lied to the Holy Spirit *they were struck dead*. Christ once rebuked Peter, telling him "Get thee behind me, Satan". Even King David (a man after God's own heart!) was severely punished by God after he sinned with Bathsheba.

The reason the Lord disciplines us is because He loves us. Some people believe that they have to earn God's love through their actions, but that is not the case. God chose to love us long before we ever loved Him, and His love for us will never end. However, there are times when God disciplines Christians who step into sin. God does this so that we will learn to stop sinning and live a righteous life. It is an act of mercy.

Remember, Jude is drawing a contrast between the godly and the ungodly. The ungodly live in constant sin and will face the wrath of God. Jude is telling the godly to continue to walk in righteousness so that we will not be punished along with the wicked. In the book of Revelation (18:4) the people of God are told to leave Babylon so that they do not partake of her sins and therefore partake of her punishment as well. Jude does not want us to partake of the sins of the ungodly and in doing so partake of their punishment. Instead he commands us to walk in righteousness so that we might stay in the love of God.

LOOKING FOR THE MERCY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Earlier in his letter Jude told us that the ungodly are going to face God's judgment as punishment for their wicked deeds. However, the godly will not face that fate. Instead of facing the infinite wrath of God, the righteous will be shown mercy. This is made possible by the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, who died in our place and who paid for our sins with His own blood. Thanks to Jesus, our sins are covered and we have been given the righteousness of Christ.

God has had mercy upon us – a tremendous, unfathomable mercy. You see, when we sinned against God He could have let us suffer the horrible consequences of what we had done. God was not required to save us from Hell. He did not have to reach down and help us. After all, God owed us nothing. He was not obligated to do anything on our behalf, and yet He *chose* to pay a very high price to save us. He sent His own Son to die in our place and take upon Himself the wrath that we deserved. He was completely innocent, and yet He suffered a cruel death and died so that we might be free. Think of it: the Infinite One died so that His enemies might live! He suffered so that we might gain eternal

life. Even though His life is worth infinitely more than all of our lives put together, He still chose to die so that we might live. That is the incredible, unfathomable mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

UNTO ETERNAL LIFE

Let us not forget the stakes! The ungodly will face the eternal wrath of God: they will be tormented day and night forever and ever, without any hope of comfort or relief. However, those who have been justified by the death of Christ will *not* face the wrath of God. Instead they will be given eternal life and will live forever in the paradise of God, where there is no crying or death or pain. The ungodly will face eternal torment, but the righteous will face eternal joy. The difference between these two fates (and they are the only ones possible!) is truly staggering.

The gift of eternal life is an amazing gift. God has given us something that is truly beyond our imagination.

Verse 22

And of some have compassion, making a difference:

AND OF SOME HAVE COMPASSION

In the book of James we are told that faith without works is dead. True faith demonstrates itself by the works that it produces. Just as a live tree produces fruit, a living faith produces works. When a person sees someone in need and moves to help him, he is demonstrating that his faith is alive. If he had simply said "May God bless you" and then did nothing to help them then his faith would be useless. People who are suffering need *actions*, not words. In other words, they need compassion.

Having compassion on someone is not a weakness; it is a sign of godliness. Proverbs 12:10 tells us that the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel – but that is not the case for the godly. The godly are able to demonstrate true compassion. They can see needs and meet them. Since they are walking in the light they do not stumble in the darkness.

This is a much bigger deal than it seems. To understand why, take Mother Teresa as an example. Mother Teresa said that it was not her job to convert people to Christianity. In her book *Life in the Spirit: Reflections, Meditations, and Prayers*, she said that she *never tried to convert anyone*. She just wanted to make people better followers of their own respective religions:

We never try to convert those who receive [aid from Missionaries of Charity] to Christianity but in our work we bear witness to the love of God's presence and if Catholics, Protestants, Buddhists, or agnostics become for this better men — simply better — we will be satisfied. It matters to the individual what church he belongs to. If that individual thinks and believes that this is the only way to God for her or him, this is the way God comes into their life — his life. If he does not know any other way and if he has no doubt so that he does not need to search then this is his way to salvation (pg81-2).

She was quite serious about this. In fact, one of the nuns who worked with Mother Teresa said this in an interview:

"These people are waiting to die. What are you telling them to prepare them for death and eternity? She replied candidly, 'We tell them to pray to their Bhagwan, to their gods.'" (*Radio Times*, April 7-13, 1990)

In other words, when the people in Mother Teresa's care were dying, she encouraged them to *pray to their false gods* – gods who were not gods at all and who had no power to forgive their sins or save their souls.

But at least she cared for the sick, right? Actually, no, she didn't do that either. Since Catholics believe that suffering is good for the soul, she did nothing to relieve the suffering of those who came to her:

Christopher Hitchens, in his book *The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice* (Verso:1995), and in his television

program, strongly criticized "Mother" Teresa. He documented the pitiful conditions of "Mother" Teresa's care facilities, despite the millions of dollars she collected yearly. The care facilities were grotesquely simple: rudimentary, unscientific, miles behind any modern conception of what medical science is supposed to do. Very rightly, it was said that she tended to the dying, because if you were doing anything but dying, she hadn't really much to offer.

Hitchens was not indicting her with a lack of compassion or with cruelty toward her patients. The problem was her Roman Catholic belief that personal suffering helps to earn one's salvation. She thought suffering was good, and she didn't use pain relievers in her clinics. She had said that the suffering of the poor is something very beautiful and the world is being very much helped by the nobility of this example of misery and suffering. . . Poverty and suffering are not simply endured, but are sought and even created. Just as she hoped to earn her way to heaven through her own deprivation and suffering, so "Mother" Teresa hoped to help her patients as well to reach heaven through the suffering she imposed upon them. . .

[Mother Teresa] described a person who was in the last agonies of cancer and suffering unbearable pain. With a smile, "Mother" Teresa told the camera what she told this terminal patient: "You are suffering like Christ on the cross. So Jesus must be kissing you" (Hitchens, p. 41).

(<http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/expos/teresa/general.htm>)

Did Mother Teresa tell the dying about Jesus? No. Did she try to save their souls with the gospel? No. Did she try to cure them? No. Did she try to relieve their pain? No. She may have thought that she was having compassion, but in reality her compassion was cruelty. She was not helping people to God; instead she was guiding people to Hell and damning them for all of eternity. Since she had rejected the Gospel and was walking in darkness, she could not see clearly to help people.

But the righteous are different. The saints of God are new creatures in Christ and are called to walk in the light as He is in the light. We can have *real* compassion on people – compassion that helps instead of hurts and that leads to God instead of leading away from God.

God has called us to love one another. He commands us to see needs of those around us and meet them. These are vital ministries! If we do not move to help one another then who will?

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

There is an old song called "Rescue the Perishing", which was written by Fanny Crosby in 1869. Its first verse goes like this:

*Rescue the perishing,
care for the dying,
snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
weep o'er the erring one,
lift up the fallen,
tell them of Jesus,
the mighty to save.*

This is true compassion, and it makes a difference. In fact, it makes all the difference in the world: it is the difference between life and death and between Heaven and Hell. This is the sort of difference that Jude is calling us to make. Are we out there in the world, trying to rescue the perishing? Are we snatching people from sin and the grave? Are we telling them about Jesus, who is mighty to save? *That* is the help that this world needs, because it is the only thing that can save them from the wrath of God.

Having compassion on others *does* make a difference. Compassion can save their life and save their soul. It can rescue a person out of a perilous situation and meet a pressing need. It can completely change the course of a person's life. In fact, Christians should be characterized by compassion. God showed us tremendous compassion when He sent His Son Jesus to die for our sins, and we ought to show compassion on others as well.

If we are not trying to make a difference in the lives of others then what *are* we doing? What do we have going on that is more important than that?

If you want to make a difference in someone's life then have compassion on them. Show them love and mercy. Tell them about Jesus. Be tenderhearted and care for them. The effect that you have on that person can last for all of eternity.

Verse 23

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

AND OTHERS SAVE WITH FEAR

In our time there are a lot of very dangerous heresies that are going around. There are pastors who deny the Bible's clear teachings about Hell and who claim that everyone goes to Heaven. There are popes who proclaim that atheists can go to Heaven if they just live a good life; they don't have to believe in Jesus. Over and over the message is the same: God is not a God of wrath. Believing in Jesus is not necessary. No one is going to Hell – and if they do it's not a place with actual fire, and no one will be tormented forever. If you are just a good person then you will be fine.

All of that *is a lie*. God really *is* a God of wrath, and our sins are a very serious matter. All those who die in sin without repenting and believing in Christ *will* be tormented *for all of eternity* in the Lake of Fire (with no hope of rescue or relief). God commands us to not only love Him, but to fear Him as well.

The world around us has no fear of God. Ungodly men go about their lives and thoughtlessly commit terrible sins because they are not concerned about what God might do in response. They have no fear of His wrath and they are not concerned about His disapproval. They mock God's judgment and ridicule His laws.

But Christians are called to be different. We know what will happen to the wicked if they do not repent. Since we know that Hell and judgment are real and eternal, we move to save others "with fear". Since we know that God is serious and means exactly what He says, we preach the gospel so that we might rescue people from fiery torment. We know that the lost are on the road that leads to Hell, and that frightens us – in fact, it motivates us to go to the ends of the Earth and tell people about Jesus so that they might be saved.

Be not deceived: God will not be mocked. Men *will* reap what they sow. God may withhold His judgment for a time in order to give people a chance to repent, but He will not hold back His wrath forever. *Now* is the time to preach the gospel; now is the time to tell people that Jesus saves.

PULLING THEM OUT OF THE FIRE

This statement is not figurative; it is literal. Jesus Christ spoke a great deal about Hell (in fact, He had more to say about Hell than He did about Heaven). He warned that it is a terrible place of torment and literal fire. He said that it is a place of wailing and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 13:42), a place where the suffering never stops, the fire is never quenched, and the worm never dies (Mark 9:45-46). In other words, Jesus warned time and time again that Hell is a place of unbearable agony in real, literal, actual *fire*.

When a person becomes saved he is literally pulled out of the fire. Belief in Jesus Christ saves a person from being cast into the fires of Hell and tormented for all of eternity. These days many people claim that Hell is just "separation from God", but that is nonsense. Hell is *not* a place where you can go to get away from God; instead it is a place where *God tortures you for all of*

eternity.

God has called us to pull men out of the fire. We do this by preaching the gospel to every creature. The gospel is powerful to save men's souls – in fact, it is the only thing that can deliver them. This is a responsibility that God has entrusted to us and it is something that we must take very seriously. If we do not pull them out of the fire then who will? If we do not preach the gospel then who will preach it? If we do not warn men then how will they be saved?

HATING EVEN THE GARMENT SPOTTED BY THE FLESH

In the modern era people within the visible Church have become very comfortable with sin. Many people think nothing about having sex outside of marriage, or committing adultery, or engaging in homosexuality, or cursing, or lying, or doing a thousand other evil things. Holiness is mocked and people eagerly give in to their basest desires.

But that is not how God has called us to behave. God demands holiness; He requires His children to fight against sin and flee from it. When God saves a person He changes him. In that moment the old man has passed away and he becomes a new creature in Christ. Those who are truly saved will *hate* sin and will fight it each and every day. This does not mean that they never sin, but it *does* mean that they see sin *as their enemy*. True Christians do not make peace with their sin. (Those who *are* at peace with their sin and who love their wickedness are not Christians at all.)

Here Jude shows us the depths of this hatred: true Christians hate sin with such a passion that they *even hate sinful garments*. It is foolish to say that a garment cannot be sinful. When a woman dresses in a garment that is essentially a few

pieces of string and then goes out in public, that is definitely a sin – it is a blatant attempt to tempt others into immorality. When a man goes out wearing a shirt that is covered in obscenities and blasphemies, that is sinful as well. Clothing can be used for good or for evil; it can glorify God or it can blaspheme Him.

Christians should be *passionate* about holiness. They should fearlessly lay aside the sin in their lives and live in a way that brings glory to God.

Verse 24

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

NOW UNTO HIM THAT IS ABLE

In the Old Testament God mocked Israel for worshiping idols that were made of wood and stone (Isaiah 44:10-20, Habakkuk 2:19). The Lord pointed out that a stone idol is *utterly useless*: it cannot hear your prayers, meet your needs, or help in times of trouble. The idol doesn't know that you are praying to it because *it is just a rock*. Any faith that you put into that rock is wasted because it is incapable of helping you. Those who put their trust in idols are truly fools.

But God is different. The God who is revealed in the Bible is *not* just a useless lump of stone. Instead He is the all-powerful Creator – the One who spoke the universe into existence and who upholds it by His power. He is the one who knows every hair on our head and who sees every sparrow that falls. He raises up kings and removes them from power; He saves lives and He ends them. He is the one who destroyed *the entire world* in a Flood, and He is also the One who died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins.

Our God is richly able to do above and beyond that which we think – and He can do so because His power is infinite. We serve a God who *is* able to help us, and that is a very comforting

thought. With our God nothing is impossible.

TO KEEP YOU FROM FALLING

There are many people in this world who try to earn their way into Heaven by doing good works. They strive to obey the Law, be good people, and earn God's favor. These people believe that everything depends upon their own efforts, and they spend their lives trying to lift themselves up by their own bootstraps. Their faith is in themselves.

The Bible has a very different message. It tells us that we are saved by grace through faith; *not of works*, lest any man should boast. It does *not* tell us that we have to earn our way to Heaven; instead it says that Christ has already purchased our salvation for us. In fact, the Scriptures say that Jesus is the only way to find forgiveness and reach Heaven. All those who attempt to enter in by any other way will end up in Hell instead.

Now, the Bible does tell us to strive against sin, to lay aside the sin that so easily besets us, and to die to sin daily. It also commands us to resist the devil and to guard ourselves against his schemes. When it comes to fighting against sin God wants us to be *active*, not passive. He does not want us to just sit there and hope that victory over sin somehow falls out of the sky and hits us; instead He wants us to be out there fighting.

Yet we must not forget that Jesus is the one who gave His life for us so that we might be forgiven. As Christians we are dressed in *His* righteousness, not in our own. Jesus is the one who pitied us, who saved us, who gave us faith, and who promised to sanctify us and conform us to His image. He is the one who is both willing and able to keep us from falling. We do not go through life alone; Jesus journeys with us, and we have the Holy Spirit within us. It's not "all up to us", as some think,

because we have a Heavenly Father who loves us and who watches over us.

We are weak and may fail, but God is not weak and God will not fail. How happy are all those who put their trust in Him!

AND TO PRESENT YOU FAULTLESS

Here is a question for you: what enables us to stand before God without spot, fault, or sin? How could we ever be blameless in God's sight? Well, as all Christians know, it is the blood of Christ that makes this possible. It is not our own works or efforts that accomplishes this miracle; the only thing that can cover our sins and make us faultless is His blood.

When we were saved God gave us the righteousness of Jesus. When God looks at us He does not see our faults or sins, but instead sees the perfect righteousness of His Son. We can stand before God faultless because we are dressed in Christ's righteousness and not in our own. God accepts us because we are wearing His sinlessness and His perfection. Jesus has given us something that we could *never* earn or deserve.

That is why we can be faultless. It is His gift and there is no other way to obtain it. This is why it's impossible to be saved by any other way: Jesus is the only one who can forgive our sins and give us righteousness. The reason all other paths lead to Hell is because no other path can obtain forgiveness. The *only possible sacrifice for sins* is the death of Jesus Christ, the perfect Lamb of God.

One day we will stand before God, and when that happens all Christians will be found faultless and without sin because they are dressed in Christ's perfect righteousness. Our sins are forgiven by His sacrifice and covered by His blood. This is *not* a faultlessness that we earn; instead it is one that is given to us by

God. There is no other way to obtain it.

BEFORE THE PRESENCE OF HIS GLORY

The glory and majesty of God is exceedingly great – in fact, it is so great that it is beyond our comprehension. Yet, the day will come when we will stand before God and behold His glory. It is a sight that we will never forget.

Now, it should be noted that both the wicked and the righteous will stand before God. One group will stand before God and be praised, while the other group will be condemned. One group will be found innocent and will enter into the joy of the Lord, and the other group will be found guilty and be condemned to an eternity of fiery torment. *No one can escape that moment*; everyone will be judged. The only question is this: what will happen to you when you stand before His presence? Will you be found faultless, or declared guilty?

When that day comes your eternal destiny will be determined by what you chose to do with Jesus Christ. Did you believe on Him or did you reject Him? Did you repent of your sins or did you harden your heart? Did you serve Him as Lord or did you do whatever was right in your own eyes?

We will *all* enter His presence, but the outcome of that meeting will be very different for different people. Jude is telling Christians that God is able to remove all fear of this encounter. He can take away our sins and make us faultless. The ungodly, though, will have a very different fate.

WITH EXCEEDING JOY

One of the great truths of the Bible is that there is joy in the presence of God. Heaven is a place where the angels rejoice when a sinner is saved. It is a place where God's will is done. In Heaven there is no evil, sickness, or death. It is a *good* place – in fact, it is the only truly good place in the entire universe. It is a place where goodness, righteousness, and holiness reigns.

But there is more to this verse than that. Some people will stand before God with great joy, while others will stand before God and experience great fear and agony. Not everyone who stands before God will be happy about it. Only those who put their faith and trust in Christ will find joy in God's presence. They will be encouraged and rewarded, and their faithfulness will result in blessings. Their sorrow will be turned into joy.

However, those who rejected Christ and who did not believe will *not* find joy. Instead God will judge them for their wickedness and will punish them for their iniquities. Instead of finding happiness they will be sentenced to eternal damnation. Instead of receiving eternal life they will be tormented forever in the Lake of Fire. There will be no joy for them.

Whether a person finds joy or agony all depends on their faith in Jesus. God truly is able to present us faultless before His presence with exceeding joy, *if* we will repent and believe. Otherwise our fate will be very different.

Verse 25

To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

TO THE ONLY WISE GOD

Our God is the *only* God. The Lord made this very clear in the Old Testament where He firmly declared that He was the only God, and besides Himself there was no other (Isaiah 44:8). The gods of the nations are false gods that are nothing but vanity. There are not many gods; there is only one, and that is the One who revealed Himself in the Bible. The only one way to reach this God and make peace with Him is through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Unlike the false idols of the nations, the God of the Bible is infinitely wise. His wisdom is boundless and His intelligence is beyond searching out. He is not a fool, or lazy, or incompetent. He knows exactly what He is doing, and *we should trust Him*. It is very foolish to doubt God and trust ourselves. We should lean not on our own understanding but instead trust the all-knowing One. After all, God knows everything that has ever happened and He also knows everything that will happen. He has infinite power and He loves us and cares for us – and He never makes a mistake. How could you *not* trust someone like that?

OUR SAVIOR

We do *not* save ourselves. There are many people who believe that they will reach Heaven through their good works, or good deeds, or good life, or through their memberships or family relationships. (For example, the Jews in Jesus' day believed that they were saved simply by virtue of being Jews.) But *they are wrong*. There is only one way to find forgiveness, and that is through our Savior Jesus Christ. He alone paid the sacrifice for our sins and He alone can grant us righteousness. There is no other way. There is only one Savior, and that is Jesus.

Our God – the Creator, the everlasting one, the one with no beginning and no end – *is also our Savior*. The One who formed us is the same One who died for us. In His great mercy He gave His own life to save us! That is the unsearchable depths of His love – and that is something that we must never forget.

BE GLORY AND MAJESTY

To God alone is all glory and majesty! He is the One who created all things and who upholds all things by His power (Colossians 1:16-17). He is the One whose will is worked out through history itself. He creates kingdoms and destroys them, and He sets up kings and tears them down (Romans 13:1). He controls all things, from the largest galaxy to the smallest atom, and there is *nothing* that is outside of His power. All glory and majesty belongs to Him and Him alone, and He will not share His glory with another (Isaiah 42:8).

If you want to glory then glory in the Lord; if you want to boast then boast about what He has done. He alone is worthy.

DOMINION AND POWER

Our God is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords! All power is in His hands and there are none who can resist Him. In fact, there is no counsel or wisdom against Him (Proverbs 21:30). No one can defeat Him because He has infinite power and He rules over all things. Those who rule only do so because God has given them authority.

At this time in history there are many wicked people in positions of power, but that will not always be the case. One day this world will be ruled by King Jesus. The day will come when Jesus will defeat the antichrist, bind Satan, and will rule over this world with a rod of iron. His kingdom will stretch over the entire planet and all nations will bow down to Him. The kingdom of Jesus Christ will be an everlasting kingdom that will never be destroyed, and He will rule for all of eternity (Daniel 7:13-14).

BOTH NOW AND EVER

God is the eternal one: He has always existed and He will always exist. He had no beginning and He will have no end. The increase of His kingdom will continue forever (Isaiah 9:7), and His glory will never fade or pass away. He is glorified now and He will be glorified in the future; He has power now and He will continue to have power in the future. His glory and His reign will continue on forever, without end.

AMEN:

In other words, *let it be*. There are many ungodly men who

oppose God and fight Him at every turn. They hate His power and His glory and they work to defeat Him – but in the end they will be defeated. Jude is telling us that he is on the side of God. Jude glorifies the Son of God, our Savior; he seeks God's glory and majesty and he rejoices in His dominion and power. Jude longs for the day when Christ will return and rule over the nations, and in his heart he says "amen – let it be".

That should be our attitude as well. Do we long for the glory and the splendor of Christ? Do we eagerly await His return, longing for the day when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord (Revelation 11:15)? Or are we too wrapped up in ourselves and what we have going on to care about Christ and His plans? Can we echo what Jude said and say "Yes, Lord, let it be"?