

Jude

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Jude 1

1 Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

Jude here identifies himself by name and gives two additional pieces of information which serve to identify him to his immediate readership. Jude affirms that he is first a servant of Jesus Christ, and then secondly a brother to James. The apostle James was long dead at the writing of this epistle and the only other person in scripture who was identified as a brother to Jude or Judas was James the son of Joseph, half brother to Jesus Christ. Obviously the writer felt this was all the identification necessary in order to convey the authenticity of the epistle.

“a bondservant of Jesus Christ”

Before identifying himself as the brother of James, Jude chose to first proclaim that he was a bondservant of Jesus Christ. Obviously this distinction carries the greater weight of the two forms of identification. The application we should take from this is that even though this man was a brother to Jesus Christ Himself, the most important distinction any disciple could have would be that of a bondservant of Jesus Christ.

The word “bondservant” comes from the Greek word “doulos” which literally means either a slave or a bondservant. A bondservant is a person bound in servitude to another human being as an instrument of labor. Sometimes someone who owed a debt they could not pay would offer themselves as bondservants until such time as the debt was satisfied. This is the relationship which Jude claimed to be in towards Jesus Christ. Jude was not the only inspired writer to assume such a position in regards to Jesus Christ. Paul claimed this relationship with Jesus Christ in Romans 1:1 and with God in Titus 1:1. Paul declared “*Epaphras*” to be a “*bondservant*” of Christ in Colossians 4:12. In James 1:1 he claimed to be a bondservant to both God and Jesus Christ. And Peter declared himself to be a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ in 2 Peter 1:1. In every case mentioned, the same Greek word, “doulos” was used.

It is no accident these inspired writers used this designation. Scripture teaches us that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) and as a consequence of that are dead in their trespasses (Colossians 2:12). Paul taught in Ephesians 2:5 that those who are dead are made alive together with Christ. This was accomplished through the atoning work of Jesus on the cross when He shed His blood for the sins of mankind. With His death, Jesus Christ satisfied the death penalty each and ever accountable individual owes for their transgressions. There is a penalty associated with sin. This penalty is death (Romans 6:23). Jesus

paid that penalty at great personal cost and thereby placed us in the position of owing Him our very lives. While Jesus paid this sin debt for all, Christians are not free to live their lives as they see fit.

Because of what Jesus did on the cross for all mankind, a debt which we can never repay has been paid for us. We owe our lives to Jesus Christ. This is a debt we can never repay. Christians are called to offer their bodies a living sacrifice to God in Romans 12:1. Sacrifices are required to be of the free will nature.

Therefore Christians are called to offer their lives as bondservants to Christ. Being made free from the sin which enslaves us and kills us, we willingly offer ourselves as bondservants to Jesus Christ. This relationship of a bondservant to Christ is described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:22-23, *“For he that was called in the Lord being a bondservant, is the Lord’s freedman: likewise he that was called being free, is Christ’s bondservant. Ye were bought with a price; become not bondservants of men.”*

The immediate context of 1 Corinthians 7:22-23 is for Christians not to strive for social or economic betterment to the point they would fail to seek first the kingdom of God. The social status of an individual has no bearing on their standing with God. The application we can make from this in addition to the immediate context is that there was a price paid for us and that we should seek more to be a bondservant of Christ than any other position on earth.

A bondservant remains in voluntary service until one of two things occurs. Either the debt is paid or the bondservant dies during the period of time required to satisfy the debt owed. Since it is the Christians very life which is to be offered as a living sacrifice it is understood that the cost of salvation can never be fully repaid to Jesus by mankind. There is simply nothing mankind can do, either collectively or individually that can repay what it cost Jesus to offer us salvation. There is no way we can take Jesus off the cross or make it unnecessary for Him to have been there. We cannot repay what Jesus gave up for us. The only thing we have to offer in return for Jesus’ amazing gift is a lifetime of grateful and obedient servitude. Such is the bondservant aspect of our relationship with Jesus Christ.

We are literally to be in voluntary bondage to Christ Jesus and as such, we are obligated to conduct ourselves as true bondservants. True bondservants serve their master obediently and faithfully for the duration of their bondage. In the case of a Christian, this term of service is for life.

There are many aspects of the Christians relationship with Jesus Christ. Each one has a bearing on the attitude with which we should conduct and portray ourselves both in the sight of God and in the sight of mankind. Another aspect of a Christian’s relationship is one of friendship. In speaking to His disciples, Christ had this to say about friendship in John 15:14-15, *“Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you. No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father, I have made known unto you.”* Friendship, like bond service is another aspect of our relationship with Christ. This aspect of ones relationship is dependant upon our obedience to Christ. The faithful Christian must be aware that apart from obedience, there is no relationship with Christ at all. John wrote that those who do not obey Christ do not even know Him in 1 John 2:3-4.

A third aspect of our relationship with God is one of fellowship. John confirms this in 1 John 1:3, where by inspiration he writes, *“...and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ”*. A fourth aspect of our relationship with God is one of family, Matthew 12:50, *“For whoever does the will of My Father in*

heaven is My brother and sister and mother.” While bond service is certainly not the only the aspect of our relationship with God, it is indeed the foundational one upon which all other forms of our relationship with God depend.

“to them that are called”

Speaking here of Christians. Christians are:

- 1) called to be saints ([1 Corinthians 1:2](#))
- 2) called into the fellowship Jesus Christ ([1 Corinthians 1:9](#))
- 3) called by His grace ([Galatians 1:15](#))
- 4) called for freedom ([Galatians 5:13](#))
- 5) called in one hope ([Ephesians 4:4-5](#))
- 6) called in one body ([Colossians 3:15](#))
- 7) called into the kingdom of Christ ([1 Thessalonians 2:12](#))
- 8) called through the gospel ([2 Thessalonians 2:14-15](#))
- 9) called to life ([1 Timothy 6:12](#))
- 10) called to glory and virtue ([2 Peter 1:3](#))
- 11) called with a holy calling ([2 Timothy 1:9](#))
- 12) called out of darkness into His marvelous light ([1 Peter 2:9](#))
- 13) called to His glory ([1 Peter 5:10](#))
- 14) and called to be the sons of God ([1 John 3:1](#))

The Greek word for “called” in the context of Jude’s salutation is ‘kletos’ (klay-tos’), which carries the meaning of having been invited or appointed. It comes from the primary word ‘kello’ which means to ‘hail’ or to ‘urge’ or to persuade by words. Another word we recognize in the Greek language is the word ‘Ekklesia’ which is a compound word made up of ‘Ek’ which is a primary preposition denoting origin or in other words the point from where action or motion proceeds. An illustration would be, ‘the boy came out from, or out of his hiding place’. The second Greek word which makes up the word ‘Ekklesia’ is the word ‘kaleo’ which means to ‘call forth’. This word has the same primary root as ‘kletos’ which was used here in Jude 1. The word ‘Ekklesia’ therefore carries the idea of being called or hailed out from something or somewhere. The Greek word, ‘Ekklesia’ is the word which today is translated as church. The church is then those who have been called out from the darkness, into the light. Called to be Christians. When Jude address his letter to “*them that are called*“, he addressed it to Christians.

Jude wrote his epistle to Christians in the first century with an immediate application to their circumstances. But the letter was addressed to Christians in general. While Jude’s epistle may have addressed the urgent need at the time it was written, the message contained therein most definitely has an application to all who have been ‘called’. When Jude addressed his epistle to the “*called*” he addressed it to the body of Christ, also known as the church ([Colossians 1:18](#); [1:24](#)).

“sanctified by God the Father”

Those who are called are characterized as being sanctified in God the Father. The Greek word for “sanctified” in this case is “Agapao” which means to be loved. The ASV renders this phrase as “Beloved in

God the Father” which is probably a more correct translation. This of course extends only to those who answer God’s call. The call of God goes out to the whole world. Whosoever is the range of God’s calling (John 3:16, Revelation 22:17). While many are called, scripture plainly teaches that relatively speaking, only few will be chosen (Matthew 22:14). Those who are chosen are here said to be “beloved” in God. This echoes the teaching of Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, *“But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, for that God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

“and kept for Jesus Christ”

Kept continually, (so the perfect tense means) for Jesus Christ until the day of His coming. This speaks to the eternal security of the Christian. Peter wrote concerning this in 1 Peter 1:5, *“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”* Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 4:18, *“The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom (be) the glory forever and ever. Amen“.* John wrote about this security in John 10:28-29, *“and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who hath given (them) unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch (them) out of the Father’s hand“.* Paul had some more very comforting and emphatic words with regard to the security of the Christian in Romans 8:38-39, *“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord“.*

These are all comforting words for the Christian. However, out of these and other such passages has risen the doctrine of ‘Once Saved, Always Saved’. This doctrine has its roots in Calvinism whose teaching is summed up in five major points called “TULIP”. Each word standing for a particular element of this doctrine. The five are as follows:

- 1) Total Depravity which teaches that at birth everyone is born into slavery to sin and is utterly unable to choose on their own to follow God and be saved. In other words, none of us, without direct intervention from God can make the conscious choice to avail ourselves of God’s universal offer of salvation made available to all. See John 3:16 and Revelation 22:17.
- 2) Unconditional Election which asserts that God chose before creation those whom he will bring to Himself. See 1 Timothy 2:4.
- 3) Limited Atonement which asserts that only the sins of those elected before creation are atoned for by the blood of Jesus. See Hebrews 10:10.
- 4) Irresistible Grace which teaches that for those whom God has preselected to eternal life, grace cannot be resisted. The elected sinner is compelled by God to come to Christ. See Hebrews 12:15.
- 5) Perseverance of the Saints which teaches that because of God’s sovereignty, his divine purpose cannot be frustrated by humans or anything else. Therefore, those whom God has called into communion with himself will continue in faith until the end. In other words, once one is saved, they are always saved and God will not allow them to fall.

This is what happens when men take selected scriptures and form a manmade doctrine around them without regard to what the whole of God's word teaches. It is vital when considering the will of God that we act in accordance with the whole will of God and not selected portions of it. Calvinism with its core teachings represents God as a respecter of persons, teaching that God chose who will be saved and who will not and nothing man can do will ever change that. In other words, those inheriting eternal life do so because they were chosen by God from among the rest of humanity to do so. There is no free will, and there is no personal volition in regards to one's salvation. Those in heaven are there because God chose them to be there and those who are chosen have no choice in the matter, being saved without regard to whether or not they even desire it.

As for the Perseverance of the Saints, or 'Once Saved, Always Saved', there are literally hundreds of scriptures which speak against this doctrine. All it takes is for one of these passages to be in contradiction with the doctrine of 'Once Saved, Always Saved' in order to invalidate it. A contradiction occurs when one of the available choices cannot be true. The doctrine of 'OSAS' teaches that the Christian is preserved by the power of God to salvation in opposition to the will of the individual. In other words, it teaches that a Christian is incapable of so sinning that the result would be the loss of salvation. If this is true then James 5:19-20 cannot be true. *"My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins."* The doctrine of OSAS teaches one cannot fall from grace, yet in Galatians 5:4, we see NT Christians being told they did. The doctrine of OSAS teaches that a Christian cannot fail of God's grace yet the NT Christians were exhorted to be diligent lest they would in Hebrews 12:15. If the possibility of failing from God's grace did not exist, there would be no reason to warn Christians about it.

Yes, Christians are kept by the power of God. Preserved and upheld till the day of judgment. This preserving and keeping is accomplished through the word of God when it is taken to heart and obeyed. It is through the word of God that we learn how to respond to the call of God and how to live our lives in such a way that we will be preserved. We are kept by God, but not unconditionally. We as Christians have a responsibility in God's redemptive process. It is our responsibility to respond to the call of the Lord and to do those things in accordance with His will. Only through our obedience to His will as revealed in His word are we kept by God unto salvation. Without that obedience, there is no preservation of the saints.

Jude 2

Mercy, peace and love be multiplied to you.

As this study progresses, it becomes apparent that Jude uses groups of three several times to make his illustrations. In these first two verses we see three forms of relationship between Christians and God: servant, Lord (Master), and brother. Then here we see mercy, peace, and love. In Jude 5-10, we have three examples of apostasy: Israel of the Exodus, the rebel angels, and the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah. There follows a three-fold portrayal of evil men as walking in the ways of Cain, Balaam, and Korah.

Grace, mercy, and peace ... This follows closely the sentiment of Paul's "grace, mercy, and peace" ([2 Timothy 1:2](#)).

Jude mentions love and mercy again in Jude 21 where he refers to the mercy of Jesus which we are to seek. God has many attributes to His immutable nature. He is Just, merciful, graceful and loving. With God, all of these attributes are absolute. Meaning God is absolutely just ([Isaiah 45:21](#)), meaning fair and without partiality. God is love, grace and mercy in totality. God's love is what compels Him to show mercy and grace. God would have been well within his rights to just let man die when he sins, but His love for mankind compelled Him to offer mankind a way of redemption despite the personal cost to Himself. Mankind did nothing to deserve God's grace and mercy and can do nothing to merit or pay for it in any way. Those who are dead have nothing to offer in return for their lives.

Consider the love it took for a Just God to send His beloved son down to die at the hands of man, and to allow the death of His murdered son to be a substitutionary death penalty for man. To break that down into terms easy to understand, suppose a man perpetrates a crime against you so serious that he faces the death penalty. You know that justice demands he pay the death penalty but you don't want this individual to have to suffer that. You want to give him a second chance. That is mercy.

So faced with the demands of justice, you send your only son, who is completely innocent, to death row where this man murders your only son and you allow that death at his hands to be a substitute for the death penalty he owed in the first place. Forget about the fact that he murdered your son. You aren't going to hold the murder of your son against him. The reason you can do this is because your son volunteered to go do this for him knowing fully well that he was going to die at his hands. Now, not only is this man who justly owed a death penalty for his crime against you going to be forgiven by you, he is now extended an invitation by you to come live with you in your house for all eternity. Because of your love and mercy, this individual has been given an opportunity to be in eternal fellowship with you and your son which he murdered. That is grace.

That is the mercy, peace and love that Jude wished to be multiplied to his readership. Let us consider Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 9:15, *"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!"*

Jude 3

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

When Jude was planning this epistle, his first intention was to write to them about their "common salvation" meaning uniform and pertaining to all mankind generally. The salvation pertaining to them is therefore the same one which is available to us today as well. There have been no changes, no alterations or deviations from that since it was made available in the first century. As Christians today, we know that we can be saved today in the same way Christians were 2000 years ago.

"I was very diligent to write to you"

Because of circumstances which had arisen, Jude was compelled to change the content of his letter from what he intended at first to address something of much greater importance. This letter was written as a matter of urgency and as we will see in the next verse, its purpose was altered to combat the doctrines of false teachers. This was such a dire matter that the entire theme of Jude's epistle centered around false teachers. It was so urgent, that when Jude finished what he had to say about them, he chose not to take the time to include anything of his original intended content, choosing to end the epistle right there.

The application we need to make from this today is that spreaders of false doctrine are dangerous to the body of Christ and that there is an urgency necessary in a right response to it.

“exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints”

Jude jumps immediately to the theme of his epistle following his short and succinct introduction. Let us call to remembrance that Jude is a man from the working class of Jews. He is not going to engage in long winded rhetoric, rather he is going to get right to the point. And he’s going to phrase his words in simple and direct terms, easily understood and to the point, which is precisely what he did. We’re barely past his greeting when we see his readership being urged to contend earnestly for the faith.

The words *“earnestly contend”* is translated from the Greek word *“epagonizomai”* which contains the root of our English word agony. Agonize earnestly and urgently for the faith. This means the system of faith under which we live and labor. It is the sum of that which Christians believe.” *“The faith”* here implies a recognized body of teaching which is inclusive of what we believe and how we should respond to that belief. *“The Faith”* means much more than the faith by which we believe, rather, it means the system of faith which is believed and responded to.

The system of faith under which all Christians live is to be contended for as in a conflict. It means much more than confronting error. It covers the entire range of the believers response to the calling. Contending for the faith first means seeking it diligently as we read in Hebrews 11:6, *“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him”*. One cannot contend for something one knows nothing about. An effective contender is prepared beforehand for the confrontations ahead. It would be ineffective contender indeed who would contend for something he knew little about.

The prepared Christian is then to be ready and willing to earnestly contend for the faith. To strive for, to wrestle for, to agonize for, to compete for and to defend the faith of Jesus Christ. Christians cannot just set on the fence of righteousness, rather they have to make a stand. It is easy to abstain from evil. Most Christians have no problem at all with abstaining from drunkenness, murder, robbery and other obvious forms of sin, but it is more difficult when we are commanded to make a stand for and defend our faith against those who would slip in stealthily and try to pervert it.

There are Biblical guidelines associated with how one contends. Contending does not mean being outwardly contentious or quarrelsome. Paul wrote in Galatians 5:22-23, *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control”*. Paul wrote concerning the conduct of Christians in Titus 3:2, *“...to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.”* 2 Timothy 2:24-25, *“And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth”*. Contending for the faith does not mean being contentious. Many well meaning brethren carry this idea to a level which is not supported by the whole body of teaching in scripture regarding this matter. While it is important that we contend for the faith, it is equally important that we contend according to the guidelines established for Christian conduct. As with anything, there is a proper way and an improper way of accomplishing this biblical directive.

This verse of scripture is not to be understood as the authority to go beyond what is written. There are guidelines for Christian behavior and it is important that we observe these guidelines at all times, even when contending for the faith. This concept of proper Christian behavior is brought up later in the epistle of Jude. It is clear through consideration of what the whole letter of Jude teaches that he did not mean for this to be taken as authority to step outside the bounds of proper Christian behavior. This is further expounded on in our study of Jude 9 concerning railing accusations.

“the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints”

“once for all” is translated from the single Greek word “hapax” which is used twice in Jude’s epistle. This word carries the meaning of “once only and forever.” Peter wrote in [2 Peter 1:3](#), “as His [Jesus], *divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness*“. The gospel was not delivered to mankind in bits and pieces but as the full message in its entirety and completeness, delivered through Christ to the apostles. The gospel was delivered not in part, but as a complete whole. There is hardly any other message of the New Testament that has greater relevance for our own times than this. The revelation of Christ through the apostles is complete, inviolate, sufficient, eternal, immutable, and not subject to any change whatsoever. People who desire to know God, walk in the light and inherit eternal life, should heed such passages as [2 John 9](#), always remembering that the truth was “*first spoken by the Lord*” (Hebrews 2:3), and that all religious doings which cannot pass the test of having been “first” spoken by Jesus Christ should be rejected.

Jude 4

For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The word “For” used in this manner introduces an explanation of the previous statement and such is the case here. Men had crept in unnoticed, meaning to align themselves alongside in a stealthy manner. The ASV translates this as crept in privily.

” who long ago were marked out for this condemnation”

Their actions had been prophesied prior to this fulfillment. What is noteworthy here is that Jude is speaking in the past tense which explains the urgency of his letter. That which had been prophesied had come to pass and he was pointing it out to his readership. Jude did not refer back to the specific prophecy in this case which leads one to the possible conclusion that his readership already knew of it and that the urgency of the situation precluded unnecessary explanations.

Peter prophesied concerning those who would be teachers of false doctrine among them in 2 Peter 2 which starts out with some similar wording to how Jude presented their actions, “*But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction*“. Peter goes on in chapter 2 to deliver some of the harshest words of condemnation to be found in regard to false teachers as can be found in scripture with the exception of what Jude was about to say about them. Peter prophesied of it and Jude revealed that it had happened. Peter, a fisherman by trade, like Jude was from the working class of Jews. Having no formal education, his manner of expression is going to be direct, simple and to the point and it certainly was. A reading of 2 Peter 2 concerning false teachers leaves no doubt the Apostles’ disdain

for, and the condemnation awaiting those who would pervert the doctrine of Christ. We will see that Jude's attitude and condemnation for false teachers is in no way diminished from that of Peter's.

It should be noted here that Peter was certainly not the only apostle who forewarned others about the coming of false teachers. Paul gave instructions to Timothy concerning this in 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 3:1 as well. And Paul's utter disdain and condemnation for them is no less direct and pointed than either Jude or Peter's. False teachers and their doctrines are thoroughly and adamantly condemned in scripture by all who dealt with it by inspiration.

The situation at hand was occurring in the latter half of the first century but the practical application for us today is timeless in the kingdom of Christ. The first century Christians indeed had their false teachers but they were not alone in this. There have been 2000 years worth of false teachers since then and when we look out among those today who claim Jesus Christ as their savior we see an entire host of denominational divisions of the body of Christ each believing and practicing a variant form of the gospel.

Those of us today who seek to serve God acceptably need to take the warnings in Jude seriously and take a hard look at themselves to make sure they don't fall into the same condemnation. False teachers as a whole do not realize they are false teachers. They don't set out purposing in their hearts to destroy Christians. For the most part they believe they are right and that they are doing God's will. They are often sincere, pleasant to be around and genuine in their presentation. They have no idea that they are on the road to destruction and that those they take with them are likewise doomed. This makes it necessary for us to be knowledgeable in the truth, competent in its defense and effective in its preservation. We must first be grounded and rooted in the faith before we can identify and reject false teaching. It is our responsibility to see to it that our house is in order concerning the faith (1 Thessalonians 5:18, 1 John 4:1). Hopefully we will be able to instruct those in error out of darkness and into the light of truth and certainly we should seek to do this whenever the occasion permits.

“ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ”

Ungodly men is translated from the Greek word “asebes” which means irreverent, impious or wicked. Jesus taught as recorded in Luke 11:23, *“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth”*. The range of the wicked covers a broad spectrum from those who are unconverted sinners in the world to those who professing piety and claiming Christ as their savior go about perverting the truth. It is easy to spot a murderer or a thief. It is harder to spot someone who is disguised as a man of God who teaches another gospel. The fact that Jude indicated that they had *“crept in privily”* strongly suggests that these individuals showed up as representatives of Christ in some fashion but were perverting the truth instead of teaching correctly. These Christians would have had no trouble spotting alien sinners and they would not have been able to creep in stealthily as Jude indicated. This infiltration of false teachers was much more insidious in nature meaning they appeared harmless at first but in actuality were with grave and serious effect.

“ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness”

Here we have a clue that might help us connect these false teachers with a known group in history who did this very thing. The doctrine in view came to be known later as Antinomianism. The word ‘antinomian’ means against law being a compound word, ‘anti – against’ and ‘nomos – law’. Basically it held the view that Christians are exempt from the demands of the law of Christ by reason of their reliance upon divine grace alone for salvation. Although this doctrine is not found in Scripture, it is evident that Paul’s teachings were perverted to support this doctrine. Paul was aware of this and he pointedly corrected this misconception in his letter to the Romans. In Romans 3:8 we see Paul writing, *“and why not (as we are slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil, that good may come? whose condemnation is just.”* Not only had Paul’s teaching on grace been corrupted, but his teaching on the subject brought about some slanderous accusations and this is what He was dealing with and denying here. He was not finished with this correction to those who misapplied his teachings for in Romans 6:1 he reinforced it by writing, *“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?,* and then again in Romans 6:15, *“What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid.”* There was an erroneous doctrine built around Paul’s teachings on grace, law and justification in the first century which led many to the false conclusion that Christians are saved by Grace alone apart from any workings of man whatsoever. This teaching opened the doors for any kind of behavior one may want to engage in and still feel secure in God’s grace.

This false teaching was so prevalent and gained such a following that two other inspired writers addressed it. Peter warned his readership of those who would pervert the teachings of Paul in 2 Peter 3:15-16, *“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; as also in all (his) epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as (they do) also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.”*

James, the brother of Jesus Christ in his epistle chose to devote an entire section to the rebuttal of this false doctrine which had arisen. Starting in chapter 2 and verse 14, James launched an entire treatise on justification by faith and works instead of by faith only. In this we see such phrases as James 2:17, *“Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself“.* And in 2:20-22, James goes on to write, *“But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect;”* And then in 2:24, James deals what should be the death blow to the doctrine of salvation by grace or faith alone, *“Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith”* or as translated in KJV and the NKJV as *“faith only“.*

There were at least two groups who arose directly from the perversion of Paul’s teaching in the first century. The Gnostics and the Nicolaitans both arose in part from Antinomianism which advocated a return to sub-Christian morality, hence the words from Jude regarding the turning of the grace of God into lewdness or lasciviousness as translated in the KJV and ASV. They were using and corrupting Paul’s teachings on grace and law to justify sexual depravity.

The Gnostics and the Nicolaitans believed that matter was irredeemably corrupt therefore fleshly passions could be indulged without inhibition. Not only did they accept sexual depravity, they actually encouraged it because they felt the spiritual side of man shined brighter because of it. They felt that their engaging in

sexual sin made God's grace shine ever more brightly, which prompted the words from Paul in Romans 6:1, *"Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid."* The creed of Gnostic antinomianism was: "Give to the flesh the things of the flesh and to the spirit the things of the spirit." They erroneously taught and practiced that the darker their behavior, the brighter God's grace shows forth.

By the time the book of Romans was written, Paul already knew his teachings had been mishandled. He went out of his way in the book of Romans to make sure he was not misunderstood. As shown earlier, Paul directly mentioned the fact that he had been accused of teaching that Christians should do evil so that good could come in Romans 3:8. This is what the Antinomian Gnostics were teaching and they had crept into the church with this unholy doctrine and were propagating it. Other statements of Paul such as Romans 6:1, 6:15 demonstrate further that Paul was indeed aware of the perversion of his teachings. So with that in mind, we'll take a look at Paul's teachings on law and grace right in the book of Romans itself.

Romans 3:20-26, *"Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."*

Paul gives a parallel teaching in Galatians 2:15-16

"We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16 knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified."

In the first century, one of the biggest problems facing the Christians was that of Judaizers creeping into the church. These were Jewish Christians so hung up in the traditions and ordinances of the Mosaic law that they tried to bind certain deeds of the old law to Christians living under the new law. The entire book of Galatians was written in response to Judaizing Christians who were doing just this thing. This was a problem within the church which had to be dealt with. In Galatians 5:4 Paul gives us the consequences for appealing to the law of Moses for justification, *"You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace."*

Where the Antinomian Gnostics were going wrong was to interpret Paul's references to the abrogated and abolished law of Moses as applying to all of God's laws under the Christian dispensation. What they were doing was to claim that Paul's teaching on law and grace abrogated not only the law of Moses but all of God's law in general. This is accomplished by pulling Paul's teachings on law and grace out of the entire body of his teachings and building a doctrine around a fragment of what he taught. Now the Antinomians took this one step further than many do today in that they actually taught that the more debased a Christian acted, the more it caused God's grace to abound.

Even with all the scriptural evidence at hand, when we look out into the denominational world today, we still see the doctrine of salvation by faith alone on the merits of God's grace. This doctrine is almost as old as Christianity itself realizing its origins in the first century and continuing on until today. People still take Paul's teachings on grace and faith and twist them to mean something they do not. The overwhelming majority of those today claiming Jesus Christ as their savior adhere to this belief. They believe that Christians are justified by faith alone and that works of righteousness are simply evidence of their faith or a result of their faith. They believe Paul taught that one is justified by grace alone through faith alone. If this were true, then what on earth did Paul mean in Romans 2:5-11, "*But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who will render to each one according to his deeds*": 7 *eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness — indignation and wrath, 9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; 10 but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek*". And also in light of this perverted doctrine, what could Paul have possibly meant when he wrote "*Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*" (Philippians 2:12-13).

When considering the teaching of any inspired writer it is vital to consider all of what they taught regarding any topic. Picking verses out of the overall teaching and building a doctrine around it is a good way to end up on the wrong side of God's truth.

Jude 5

But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

Here we see another usage of the Greek word "hapax" which means once for all time and never requiring anything in addition. The ASV provides a better translation of this phrase, "*Now I desire to put you in remembrance, though ye know all things once for all*". These Christians knew everything they needed to live their lives in accordance with God's will. The faith, as Jude referred to it was not for them in any way fragmentary or incomplete. Those who had crept in stealthily had worked to assimilate themselves and their beliefs into the system of faith that Jude's readers were completely aware of beforehand. Jude was telling them here that they should go back to the basics and remember the things they had been taught. There's no new revelation, these people coming in did not have anything new to add to what was already delivered. Nothing has changed, everything concerning the faith of Jesus Christ had been delivered and sealed up for all of time.

The application for us today is the same. There has been no new revelation since "the faith" was delivered. It was delivered in its entirety, once for all time, leaving nothing whatsoever out that is needful for the Christian life. Christians today can take comfort from the fact that they can follow the doctrine of the NT exactly and have full confidence that they are living in accordance with the whole will of God. Jude communicated this to them in this letter and the message to them applies to "the faith" as it pertains to every generation of Christians that lived since that time.

“the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. “

This is in reference to the well known accounts of the Israelites delivery from Egyptian bondage amid the plagues and the institution of the Passover feast. The Israelites were destroyed for idolatry in worshipping the golden calf, their fornication with the Midianites, their murmuring and complaining and their lack of faith when it came time to enter Canaan. Their destruction had nothing whatsoever to do with whether or not they had a mental acknowledgement of the facts.

In scripture it is often the case that the word “*believe*” in various forms is used to represent the sum or the whole of the thoughts being conveyed. This is a form of speech known as a synecdoche where a part of something is used to represent the whole. Jude used the word “*believe*” as a synecdoche to cover a whole family of related things, in this case the rebellion and disobedience of the Israelites.

This was the first of three examples Jude would use to put his readership into remembrance of what fate befell those of their predecessors who rebelled against the will of God. The warning is clear enough. The punishment inflicted upon them for rebellion should serve as a grim example of what would happen to any in that time who would similarly turn the grace of God into something it was not.

Jude 6

And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;

These angels mentioned here are the same angels of Satan mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 25:41. These angels of the devil rebelled against the directions of God and were cast out of heaven. It is a well known fact that there are spiritual forces that operated in opposition to God. If there had not been such forces, there would have never been temptation the garden and man would have never fallen. Satan most definitely set himself up in opposition to God and he was not alone in his rebellion.

The angels bound in everlasting chains of darkness has a parallel mention in 2 Peter 2:4-5 where we read, *“For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment“*. In this verse, we see Peter use the Greek word “*tartaroo*” which is transliterated into the English word “*Tartarus*” which is a reference to the deepest abyss of Hades, the realm of the dead where all who die await the final day of Judgment. From the teaching of the rich man and Lazarus, we learn that this Hadean realm has two areas separated by an impassable gulf or void of some sort. On the one side we see the rich man in Jesus’ illustration being in a place of extreme torment and being able to see across to those on the other side but unable to pass. Those to whom the rich man appealed were in another area altogether which is described in scripture as “*Abraham’s bosom*” (Luke 16:22).

We know this a place of rest and paradise because in Acts 2:27, we find these words in regard to an ancient prophecy of David concerning the Messiah, *“For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption“*. From this passage we learn that after Jesus died, he his spirit was sent to the Hades. We know that He was not sent to Tartarus because of what He said to the thief while dying on the cross as recorded in Luke 23:43, *“And Jesus said to him, Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise“*. From these handful scriptures we draw the conclusion that there is a place, called Hades in scripture, where those who die go to await judgment. This place has two areas, one for the righteous dead

who *“have fallen asleep in Christ”* (1 Corinthians 15:18-19), and abide in a place of comfort and rest while the unrighteous dead share the fate of the angels who sinned and are kept in chains of darkness and torment until the judgment of the great day of the Lord.

In this context of Jude, we see the second of three groups of those who align themselves in opposition of God’s righteousness. None of these groups of people fared well as a result of their rebellion. And in the following verse we see yet another group of the unrighteous and in this example we learn of the eternal fate awaiting all of them at the coming of the great day of the Lord and the final judgment.

“the great day“

Jesus spoke of that day in His teachings as recorded for us in John 5:28-30, *“for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29 and come forth — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation“*. It should be here noted that in the words of our savior, the determining factor as to the final destiny of man is over whether they did good or did evil. There is nothing here mentioned from the teachings of our Lord concerning one’s faith or belief. The decision over one’s destiny is based on how they lived their life and not in just what they believed. The Hebrew writer made it clear that faith and belief are an inseparable element from the acceptable Christian walk. Hebrews 11:6, *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him“*. While faith and belief are essential components, so also is doing good in the kingdom of Christ. None of these things in and of themselves will ever result in eternal life, rather all of them coupled with the mercy and grace of God will.

Jude 7

“as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”

The third and final example of those who rebelled against God’s righteousness are presented here in the example of Sodom and Gomorrah. These two cities and the surrounding ones had given themselves over to homosexuality. A study of these cities reveals that they were so corrupted and carried over by this abomination that the men of the Sodom surrounded the house of Lot where two angels sent from God lodged for the night with the intent of forcing homosexual rape on them. These were the very angels sent by God to destroy Sodom if at least ten righteous souls could not be found. Only four were found and only three escaped, Lot and his two daughters (Genesis 19). In chapter 19, verses 24-25, we read of the fate that befell these corrupt cities, *“Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens. 25 So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.”*

It is interesting that the scriptures mentioned that what grew on the ground was likewise burned up. It is believed that the ancient site of Sodom and Gomorrah has been found. The evidence of the destruction is consistent with the Biblical account. Of great interest is that scripture describes this place as a fertile location in Genesis 13:10-10, *“And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go*

toward Zoar“. The plains on which Sodom and Gomorrah were built were like a garden paradise. It’s not like that now. The plains of Jordan are a sun baked wasteland. The destruction of these cities was such that the region never recovered from the desolation. Looking at the present appearance of the area, it is hard to imagine it was ever a well watered area that was described as being like the garden of the Lord.

“ are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”

All three of the examples given here by Jude served as a warning to those who would pervert the doctrine of Christ. The effect was to illustrate in the minds of the readers an association between rebellion to God and the fate of real life examples of those who did. The earthly suffering they endured was but the beginning of their woes. The vengeance they suffered on earth was temporary. The vengeance they are to suffer beyond this world is eternal and without end. These people are doubtless counted among those who are incarcerated in Tartarus, suffering in chains of darkness, awaiting the final judgment of God, to be cast into the lake of fire for all eternity. Their fate, like that of the angels that sinned is set and certain. They are without hope and doomed to spend an eternity in hell fire from which there is no escape. Their situation now is dire indeed, but all they have to look forward to is worse.

These unfortunate and unwise souls though dead, speak to us today as examples of the seriousness about which God views apostasy and false teaching. Having it compared to the illustrations Jude chose, could not speak more clearly. In all of scripture it is hard to find a more graphic example of God’s wrath being poured out on people and to have this imagery associated with the activities of false teachers is intended to send a clear message to the readership. One’s approach to the truth of God’s word needs to be sure and serious. Failure to correctly believe and teach God’s will is going to have disastrous results. The application for us today is the same. Nothing has changed. God’s grace is wonderful and His mercy is incomparable, but none of these qualities in the nature of God will help those who pervert the teachings of Christ which being recorded by inspiration, collectively make up what is referred to by Jude as *“the faith”*.

Jude 8

Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries.

The ASV renders the first of this verse as *“In like manner”*. We are here told that the depravity of the false teachers who had privily come into their midst were guilty of the same sorts of sin that the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah were. Their sin was rooted in sexual misconduct. This aligns perfectly with teachings of the Gnostics and later the Nicolaitans. There can be little doubt that Jude’s urgency in writing this epistle was for the purpose of refuting their influence in the church. In like manner to those of Sodom and Gomorrah, these dreamers defile the flesh.

Jude referred to them as dreamers. This means they were either living in a dreamy world of impurity or they were claiming to have access to divine revelation through their dreams. The latter seems to make the most sense in view that Jude twice used a word that carries the meaning that the faith had been once for all time delivered and that the Christians knew God’s revealed truth once for all time. Jude seemed to be making it a point to demonstrate that there was no more divine revelation in regards to the doctrine of Christ and that they had already received all they needed and there was not going to be any more. They had all they were

going to get, they knew what they needed to know and anything additional to the body of knowledge they had regarding Christianity was to be rejected utterly.

“reject authority”

Similar to the angels who sinned, these false teachers had no respect for authority of God. And this is amply demonstrated in their mistreatment of the word of God in favor of their own lusts. They were perverting the word of God, the writing of Paul in particular, to set forth the doctrine of salvation on the merits of God's grace alone, thus opening the door to all kinds of sexual misconduct which brought about their comparison with Sodom and Gomorrah.

“speak evil of dignitaries”

This is their comparison with the Israelites who had been freed from Egyptian bondage. We see examples of their unbelief, grumbling and complaining in Exodus 14:12; 16:3; 17:2-3, Numbers 20:2-5. In Exodus 32:1, Moses having been gone for a period of time on Mt. Sinai, we read of the Israelites rebellion against Moses and God and their worship of the golden calf.

Jude compared these apostates to the Israelites who rebelled against Moses' authority. This is another way of identifying them and is in direct conflict with clear and concise apostolic teaching on the regard with which the Christian is to have for authorities. Romans 13:1-3, *“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves”*. The only time a Christian ever to resist the commands of the authorities in power over him is when to do so results in a transgression of God's will as evidenced in Acts 5:29 when the Jewish high council ordered the apostles to stop preaching Jesus and they refused.

Jude 9

Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”

Michael is mentioned in scriptures in a number of places. Here we learn that He is an archangel which means he is chief among other angels. From this we can deduce that there is a hierarchy of some fashion among the heavenly beings. Biblical references to Michael begin in the book of Daniel in 10:21 and 12:1 where we learn that he was a prince or guardian angel seeing over the affairs of the Jewish people. He is again mentioned by name in Revelation 12:7-9 where we learn that he personally led a war on the side of God between the unfallen angels and those who unwisely chose to follow after Satan. The outcome of this heavenly revolt ended with Satan and his angels being cast permanently out of heaven to earth where after a brief period of time were sent on to their incarceration in chains of darkness in Tartarus where they await the final judgment as we saw in Jude 6.

Many are the varied deductions drawn from this verse. These are all at best speculation. There is nothing in scripture anywhere else which expounds on what we see here from this immediate context. What is immediately evident is that Michael and Satan had a confrontation over the body of Moses. Evidently Satan had some kind of diabolical use for his dead body. All we really can deduce in regards to why Satan would

desire the body of Moses stems from our knowledge of his continual efforts at the deception and destruction of mankind. It is a safe assumption indeed that Satan was up to no good and had grand designs of using Moses' body as an instrument of harm.

Michael stood opposed to Satan and whatever designs he had for the body of Moses. Instead of railing on Satan over the issue, Michael calmly confronted Satan with the words, "*The Lord Rebuke You*". From this we learn that speaking in opposition to those in authority is not the same as speaking evil of them. There is a proper way to do anything and those who would oppose the authorities dare not bring against them railing accusation, rather a calm presentation of the facts with a cool head and a quiet spirited demeanor. This speaks to the conduct expected of one who would represent God even in times of emotionally charged circumstances.

Evidently the apostates to whom Jude was referring were in the habit of significantly harsh demonstrations of verbal abuse directed at those in authority. such behavior is not only unchristian like behavior it also served as a signature mannerism by which these false teachers could be identified. So we now have licentiousness, immorality, lack of respect for authority and railers which were the identifying characteristics of those who had crept in privily.

Railing is described as violent or slanderous denunciation or condemnation. And this behavior is soundly condemned in scripture (1 Peter 3:9, 2 Timothy 3:2). Interestingly, we have a similar passage of scripture written by Peter in 2 Peter 2:10-11 where he specifically mentions a class of people who's characteristics match the apostates in Jude perfectly, "*and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, 11 whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.*" Here Peter was prophesying of these heretics to come in the future. By the time Jude wrote his epistle this class of heretic had come and had manifested themselves in the Lord's church and were spreading their heresy. And it should be noted that even though these heretics are going to suffer the condemnation of Hell, it is still entirely improper to rail against them, even if one is an angel and it is before the Lord Himself.

The proper conduct of the faithful Christian is given in scripture as we read in 1 Peter 3:4-5 "*...let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God*". 2 Timothy 2:24-26, "*a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth.*" Verses such as these makes one wonder what the leaders of the religious wars of the crusades were thinking when they sent their armies out to convert the masses to Christianity by force.

Jude 10

But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.

"*But these*" Jude is still referring to the false teachers which are the primary subject of his epistle.

"speak evil of whatever they do not know"

The ASV renders this, "*But these rail at whatsoever things they know not*". The Greek word used for "*speak*

evil or “*rail*” is “*blasphemo*” which is where we get the English word ‘Blaspheme’. It means to defame, revile, vilify or speak impiously. These false teachers have no idea what the facts are of who they are defaming. They are simply engaging in this behavior for whatever reasons, none of them good and making things up to substantiate their claims.

“and whatever they know naturally”

What genuine information they do possess about the facts is likewise spoken evil of. These false teachers have nothing good to say about those who fall under their scrutiny whether based in fact or simply made up for the purpose of adding reinforcement to their accusations.

“like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves”

These individuals were set as a contrast to Michael, not hesitating to speak evil of matters they know nothing about. Their only knowledge being their passions, the instincts and impulses that mankind shares with the animal creation. In this behavior, they are only corrupting themselves. Paul wrote of a similar behavior in Colossians 2:18, where he condemned those who would intrude “*into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind*“. Those who surrender themselves to their fleshly appetites descend to the level of brutes and forfeit their spiritual standing and any hope of an eternal destiny associated with God.

These people had already demonstrated their inability or unwillingness to suppress their fleshly appetites. Their entire theology was twisted around what they wanted in so far as that was concerned. Their unsuppressed railing on others is merely another facet of their evil persona. Speaking evil and reviling others was merely another outlet for their already unrestrained behavior patterns. They are wholly governed by their passions, exercising no restraint or inhibition whatsoever.

Jude 11

*Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.
Apostates Depraved and Doomed.*

A simple statement of the misery that will descend upon them, both in this life and the one to come. Jude drew on three old testament characters whose examples served to illustrate his point.

“For they have gone in the way of Cain”

Cain followed his own instincts and passion in determining the nature of his offering to the Lord. He thought an offering of the fruit of the ground would be more appropriate so he offered it to the Lord. Cain’s offering was rejected and he allowed his passion to govern him to the extent that he slew his own brother. Cain was a slave to his own passions.

“have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit“

Balaam was a gentile prophet who lived at the time when Balak the king of Moab was facing his overthrow by the children of Israel as they conquered

Balaam, a gentile and the son of Bosor, was a man of stature among the Midianites (Numbers 31:8). He lived at Pethor (Deuteronomy 23:4), in Mesopotamia (Numbers 23:7). It is evident that though dwelling among

idolaters he had knowledge of the true God, and was held in such reputation that it was believed that those whom he blessed were blessed, and those whom he cursed were cursed (Numbers 22:6). When the Israelites were encamped on the plains of Moab, on the east of Jordan, by Jericho, Balak, concerned that he would be overthrown by Israel (Numbers 22:4), sent for Balaam “from Aram, out of the mountains of the east,” to curse them (Numbers 22:6), but because of God’s intervention he was unable to fulfill Balak’s wish. The apostle Peter refers to Balaam in 2 Peter 2:15-16 as he who loved the wages of unrighteousness.

Though Balaam could not curse Israel, he did counsel Balak during the time he was with him on Peor to entice the children of Israel to “*commit trespass against the Lord*” (Numbers 31:16). Revelation 2:14 gives us more detail concerning this, “*Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication*“. Balaam couldn’t curse the children of Israel directly but he did reveal to Balak a way to cause the Israelites to fall from favor and incur the wrath of God as a consequence. If the Israelites could be tempted to commit fornication with the women of Moab, God would withdraw His support from them. In Numbers 24:25-25:1, we learn that when Balaam and Balak concluded their discussions over Israel, “*Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way. And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab*“. Balaam’s counsel to Balak concerning the Israelites was successful. This resulted in the wrath of God being poured out on Israel which ended with the deaths of twenty four thousand (Numbers 25:4). After this, God sent Israel to destroy Moab during which the kings of Midian and Balaam were killed.

Balaam was mentioned by Jude because he counseled Balak to have the Moabitish women seduce the men of Israel into illicit sexual relations. This lasciviousness was what the Antinomian Gnostics were promoting in the Lord’s church. Jude’s intent here was to illustrate the similarities and to associate these depraved activities with the fate that befell Balaam and Balak.

“*and perished in the rebellion of Korah*“

Kohath was the son of Levi (Genesis 46:11). Kohath had four sons, two of which are of interest here; Izhar and Amram (Exodus 6:18). Izhar was father of Korah (Exodus 6:21) and Amram, his brother was the father of Moses (Exodus 6:20). Korah and Moses were first cousins which is interesting in that Korah was the ringleader in a rebellion against Moses and Aaron (Numbers 16:1-3), “*Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men; 2 and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown. 3 They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, “You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?”*“

This did not work out well for them at all. In the end Dathan and Abiram, along with their families were swallowed up by the earth and Korah along with the two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation perished by fire from the Lord. Korah himself perished while standing before the door of the tabernacle of meeting where he had gathered the opposing leaders of the Israelites against Moses and Aaron.

Korah’s sin by rebelling against Moses and inciting the Israelites to rise up against him was “*Despising dominion and speaking evil of dignities*” as mentioned by Jude in verse 8. The application for us today is of

a warning against those who would rise up in opposition to the civil or spiritual authorities under which a Christian lives and serves. Our instructions concerning the civil authorities is found in 1 Peter 2:13-14 and Romans 13:1-3. Our instructions concerning our conduct in respect to spiritual authorities is found in Hebrews 13:17 and 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13.

In all we have:

- 1) Cain who insisted on his own righteousness instead of God's and failed to govern his own passions.
- 2) Balaam who taught Balak to lead God's children astray with the pleasures of the flesh.
- 3) and Korah who did not respect the authorities above him and rose up against them.

These three examples cover very well the characteristics of the false teachers that Jude was opposing. It is well known fact that the Gnostics approached God with their own righteousness, allowing their lusts and passions to govern their behavior. They promoted sexual promiscuity and had no respect whatsoever for authority, whether it be physical or spiritual. The Gnostics had all three, but it is apparent that to possess any one of these characteristics would bear the same consequences.

The application for us today is that we, like the Christians to whom Jude wrote, need to seek after God's righteousness (Romans 10:3), refrain from the pleasures of the flesh and respect the authorities under which we live (2 Peter 2:10), and do not engage in the acceptance or the practice of false teaching.

Jude 12

These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots;

The Greek word for "spots" here means a reef under the sea, which carries the meaning of a hidden menace. The ASV renders this phrase as, "*These are they who are hidden rocks in your love-feasts*". The NASB simply renders the word for its literal meaning, a "*hidden reef*". The idea here is of a threat that is hard to see but carries an imminent threat of disaster. Like sunken reefs which could not be seen from the surface of the water, but would destroy any ship that hit them, so the apostates in Jude's consideration had hidden themselves among them, giving no evidence of the threat they posed. Peter used this word when prophesying about these very people in 2 Peter 2:13, "*They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you*".

The "*love-feasts*" is a reference to the well known feasts of charity which was a customary practice of the New Testament church associated with their assemblies. These love feasts were not intended to be a part of their worship but the Corinthian Christians combined them with the Lord's supper and brought about the condemnation of Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:17-22. The Corinthian Christians were not the only group of Christians who associated the Lord's supper with a common meal, but it was the Corinthians who abused it and received Paul's inspired teachings on the matter. Several congregations of the Lord's church still observe the feasts of charity today as a custom, not as a part of the biblical pattern. These feasts are more modernly referred to as 'potlucks' or 'fellowship meals'.

One of the purposes, aside from building and maintaining a bond of fellowship among brethren, was to make sure all the Christians received a good meal. At this time in history, Christian persecution had arisen to the point that it was difficult for many Christians to find work to support their families. There were times when the love-feast was the only decent meal a Christian could count on receiving. That the saints were accustomed to meeting together for common meals is evident from this verse and also from 2 Peter 2:13. There are also numerous extra-biblical references to these love feasts by the early ecclesiastical writers of the church. By the 4th century they were suspended because men of the type prophesied by Peter and described by Jude had turned the feasts into banquetings and drinking parties as condemned in 1 Peter 4:3. Anything can be abused to the point that something innocent can be corrupted into something ungodly.

There were other public feasts which were available at the time but Christians were forbidden to partake in them because they involved eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols. Paganism was at its height in Roman society in the first century. Their religion was replete with all kinds of mythological pagan gods such as Zeus, Hercules, Athena, Diana and literally hundreds of others. These gods were actively worshipped in temples constructed in their honor. Animal sacrifices were sometimes a regular part of their worship and the meat which had been sacrificed to these pagan gods would be used to feed the citizens of the Roman Empire in the cities where this took place. These public feasts, well intentioned at the first, turned into wild orgiastic festivals in the streets where drunkenness and gluttony ran wild along with every depraved form of sexual depravity imaginable. These gluttonous feasts were alluded to in Revelation 2:20 where John quoted Jesus words concerning the church at Thyatira, *“I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.”* Paul likewise had this to say concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols in 1 Corinthians 10:18-22, *“Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? 19 What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? 20 Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons“.*

“while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves.”

The ASV renders more correctly renders this passage as, *“shepherds that without fear feed themselves“.* Jude drew this imagery from Ezekiel 34:2 and following, *“Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?”* The apostates in Jude’s consideration care nothing about the sheep, instead all they care about is serving their own interests. They care not one whit for the damage they are inflicting on others. All they care about is serving themselves.

Apostates never seem to be content with just being apostates. They almost always yield to some inner drive to win others over to their way of thinking. It’s as if they feel their point of view is somehow validated through acceptance of others. The apostates in view of Jude were no different. They were not content to just partake of their fleshly desires themselves, they wanted others to as well. That they were in some way associated with Christianity is apparent in that they had “crept in” to the church. These people were obviously coming into the fellowship in the guise of Christians, or else it would not have been possible. And, true to the nature of apostates, they were trying to influence others to their perverted understandings of scripture, thereby dragging the souls of the innocent with them to destruction. They wanted Jesus and the

hope He represented, but they also wanted to be free to satiate their fleshly desires without the fear of losing the hope they had in Christ. So instead of just surrendering to their lusts and leaving the faithful Christians to worship God correctly, they chose to come in stealthily and try to win them over to their way of thinking. They were shepherds that without fear, feeding their own desires and trying to lead the sheep down their path.

“They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds”

This is the first of four comparisons Jude makes from nature regarding the apostates. Compare the clouds without water to Peter’s prophesy regarding apostates in 2 Peter 2:17, *“These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest”*. Clouds promise rain and relief from the dry and the heat. The expectation of those who depend entirely on their environment for survival is expectant that the thirsty earth is to be refreshed with needful showers. Instead of this, however, the clouds follow the wind’s direction, and no rain is received. The clouds which promise water are only carried about by the whim of whatever drives it, with no consistent direction, no defined purpose. So this is of false religious teachers. Instruction in regards to the way of salvation was expected from them; but, instead, they disappointed the anticipations of those who were desirous of knowing the way of life, but were disappointed.

“late autumn trees without fruit”

Similar to a cloud with no water, the tree without fruit cannot bring the sustenance required for life. The imagery here is of expected spiritual nourishment with none available. The tree is there, but there is nothing produced from it of any value.

“twice dead”

These apostates, here described as being like clouds without water and trees without fruit are now declared *“twice dead”*. Christians are characterized in scripture as those who were formerly dead but live again, (Ephesians 2:1-2, Ephesians 2:5, 1 John 3:14). Scripture also refers to this second life and being born again, (John 3:3-5, 1 Peter 1:23). Those who are twice dead, would be in the same condition they were before they became alive in Christ, dead twice. In writing to Timothy concerning widows in the church who live after the flesh, Paul said in 1 Timothy 5:6-7, *“But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives”*. Like the living dead widows who seek the pleasures of the flesh, so also are the apostates who fell under the scrutiny of Judas, and so will be the spiritual state of any who follow after their evil teachings.

pulled up by the roots;

Ezekiel wrote by the commandment of god concerning the rebellious house of Israel in, Ezekiel 17:9, *“It was planted in good soil by many waters, To bring forth branches, bear fruit, And become a majestic vine. 9 Say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: Will it thrive? Will he not pull up its roots, Cut off its fruit, And leave it to wither? All of its spring leaves will wither, And no great power or many people Will be needed to pluck it up by its roots”* And such is the fate of these apostates in the end. They are dead while they live, and will be plucked up and disposed of.

Jude 13

raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame;

Isaiah 57:20-21, "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest, Whose waters cast up mire and dirt. "There is no peace,"

Says my God, "for the wicked." These apostates are compared to the raging waves of troubled seas who appear powerful but produce only mire, dirt and refuse on the shores in their wake. All that is produced by them is a lot of show, leaving behind only trash, mire and filth.

"wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."

Jude is most likely referring to what we today refer to as 'falling or shooting stars'. They appear for a moment in the night sky and then fall into the darkness. Jude's use of the Greek here means a "stars which follow no orbit", or "*stars which have wandered off course*". Jude is using familiar imagery to characterize these apostates. Trees cannot be literally "*twice dead*"; oceans do not foam up "shame"; and real stars do not 'wander off course.' Jude was not referring to stars in a technical sense, rather he was using the imagery to illustrate a likeness which his readers could identify with.

The application of the imagery here, both for Jude's immediate readership and for us today as well, is that the blackness of darkness forever is what is in store for the apostates. Here is their pronouncement of eternal doom and damnation. They will share the same fate as the angels who sinned as mentioned by Jude in verse 6.

There is an apparent resemblance between this entire section of Jude and the words of 2 Peter 2 concerning future apostates. 2 Peter 2 prophecies their coming and Jude describes them in fulfillment of Peter's prediction. The imagery used to illustrate and characterize them is both similar and striking. The harsh terms used by both writers are indicative of the seriousness of their spiritual situation and that of those who would follow after their ways. Neither writer leaves any doubt as to the fate that lays in store for them.

Jude 14

Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints,

Enoch was the son of Jared and the father of Methuselah (Genesis 5:21; Luke 3:37). His father was one hundred and sixty-two years old when he was born. After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch "*walked with God three hundred years*" (Genesis 5:22-24), when he was translated without experiencing death. His life on earth was for three hundred and sixty-five years. He was the "*seventh from Adam*" as distinguished from Enoch, the son of Cain who was the third from Adam. He is spoken of in the record of biblical heroes in Hebrews 11:5. Mention is made of Enoch's prophesying only in this verse of scripture in Jude.

"These men" are the false teachers about whom Jude is writing. In addition to the examples of the Israelites, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and in the punishments which befell Cain, Balaam and Korah, Jude now draws on a prophecy of judgment on their heads.

This is the only reference to him in this letter. Jude's mention of Enoch's prophecy authenticates it as inspired truth. However, it does not authenticate the book of Enoch itself. This book was widely known in apostolic times and a reading of it reveals that it is at best ridiculous and often bizarre. It is rightfully rejected as an authentic work of this ancient old testament figure. When considering the possibility of the book of Enoch as an authentic, inspired wholly complete work of scripture, one needs to keep in mind that if Enoch had indeed written the book, it would have been centuries before the great flood. The earliest book in scripture was written by Moses many centuries removed from the flood. Moses wrote wholly by inspiration of the events which occurred before the flood. Moses never met Abraham but he wrote extensively of his life and the lives of all the Biblical figures by inspiration.

Enoch lived on earth from about 3468 BC to about 3102 BC. This was roughly six and half centuries before the flood which occurred about 2434 BC given a hundred year margin either way. Anything written by Enoch would have had to either survive the flood to be unearthed some time afterwards, or would have had to have been in Noah's possession on the Ark and then passed down from generation to generation until it could be buried to be found at a later date. In all, any such manuscript would have had to survive, unchanged for roughly forty four centuries.

No doubt Jude identified the prophecy of Enoch and forever sealed the fact that Enoch did indeed utter this prophecy. The fact that this prophecy is recorded in a book with Enoch's name on it does not mean that Jude authenticated the entire work. It took much more than that to qualify a book for inclusion in the Bible as an inspired text. While such a thing was taken into account, it was certainly not the only test a document had to pass in order to be counted as scripture.

Paul quoted a pagan prophet in Titus 1:12-13, "*One of them, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.'* This testimony is true..." Biblical scholars hold that this prophet's name was a man named Epimenides. Paul quoted something out of the word of this pagan writer that was indeed true, but it does not follow that everything Epimenides or whoever may have written what Paul quoted was infallible, inspired scripture. Paul also quoted heathen poets and an inscription from a pagan monument to the unknown god in the city of Athens (Acts 17), approving of neither by so doing.

We know from inspiration that Enoch "*walked with God*" (Genesis 5:22), in a very special way, that he was translated (Hebrews 11:5), being one of only two people in history to pass from earth in this manner, the other being that great prophet, Elijah, who rode to heaven in a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2:9-11). Therefore, we may surely believe Jude's account of God's using Enoch to utter a prophecy of the destruction of evil men. It is quite possible and entirely likely that Jude's knowledge of Enoch's prophecy came to him in the same fashion that Moses knowledge of all the historical facts he wrote about was delivered to him, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Jude 15

to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

Enoch lived in the post flood era when the moral fiber of humanity was degrading to what would soon be cause for the God's utter destruction of the earth by water. We know that Enoch was a righteous man amid a world of corruption and we know that God thought enough of him that He translated Him instead of allowing

him to die a natural death. There can be no doubt that Enoch was an extraordinary man of God. And as such, he would be an outspoken proponent of good and a staunch and powerful opponent of evil. There can be no doubt that Enoch spoke of God's coming judgment on the ungodly. Enoch was an eyewitness to plenty of this and no doubt condemned it, preaching to those of the earth at that time of God's impending wrath for their evil ways. Jude's use of Enoch's prophecy does not mean that Enoch was prophesying specifically about the apostates which were the subject of Jude's letter. Rather, it means that Enoch's prophecy of God's coming judgment on ungodly and evil men in his time applied equally to the apostates in Jude's consideration. The condemnation of the ungodly, prophesied by Enoch applied to not only the ungodly activities of the apostates written about in Jude but upon all who would do the same.

The application of Enoch's prophecy by Jude to the ungodly of his time has an application for us today. We serve the same God that destroyed the earth by water in fulfillment of Enoch's prophecy. We serve the same God that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah for their fleshly perversions. We serve the same God that rejected Cain's sacrifice and withstood Balaam and destroyed Korah. The same God that executed judgment on all these ungodly people will do the same against those living today. We can expect God, who has never been tolerant of this sort of activity to be just as severe and harsh on the ungodly today as he was in past ages. The warning words of Paul concerning those who would apostatize are especially relevant here in Romans 11:20-23, *"...Do not be haughty, but fear. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. 22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off."*

God's judgment prophesied by Enoch and here referred to by Jude is going to be executed on all, meaning everybody. 2 Corinthians 5:9-10, *"Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad"*.

Those who will be convicted are:

- 1) All who are ungodly
- 2) Those who commit ungodly deeds
- 3) Those who commit deeds in an ungodly way
- 4) The harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against God.

God is going to execute judgment on the ungodly, what they do, how they do it and how they speak. This completely covers the actions of the apostates in Jude's view. They were guilty of all these things and Jude invoked the condemnation prophesied by a man of God living roughly thirty four centuries prior to that. The intent of Jude by invoking such an ancient prophecy is to demonstrate God's unchanging behavior concerning this. In effect, Jude was telling them that God has been doing this for a very long time and He's certainly not going to change now. Jude first called to mind the actions of Sodom and Gomorrah, the rebellious Israelites, then Cain, Balaam, Korah and the consequences for ungodliness were consistently the same for all of them. Now he goes all the way back to a prophecy that at that time was made thirty four hundred years prior. Could a better case for the consistency of God's judgment on the ungodly be made? Those who would similarly pervert the truth today need to consider the warnings given here by Jude and be warned. Let us all take a hard look at the myriad array of denominations so prevalent in the world today.

Let us consider all the religious division with its diverse teachings on God's truth and reflect seriously on the warnings given by Jude. And then, let us take those steps necessary to assure ourselves that we are of the faith lest we fall into the same condemnation. The words of Paul in 2 Timothy 2:15 are especially relevant here, *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"*.

Jude 16

These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.

In addition to the characteristics of ungodliness that Enoch pronounced, Jude is supplying more descriptions of their behavior, both to help identify them and then to associate them with those who would receive the judgment of God, prophesied by Enoch.

"These are grumblers, complainers"

These apostates were unhappy with their station in life and argued that they deserved better. God's providence wasn't good enough for them so they complained about it. Paul addressed this in Philippians 4:11-12, *"Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content"*. God never promised Christians their lives would be easy and trouble free. Keep in mind that Jude's immediate readership was living in a time of extreme persecution towards Christianity. It's easy to be content when one is living a life of ease, but add a little persecution to the mix and many people start thinking God is mad at them or isn't doing His job. The grumblers and complainers think that God should take care of them better than He does.

"walking according to their own lusts"

They had given themselves over to fleshly immorality. Their desires were the basis for their actions.

"and they mouth great swelling words"

These great swelling words and licentious behavior was directly mentioned in 2 Peter 2:18-19, *"For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."*

This behavior is again arising out of Antinomianism which held the view that Christians are exempt from the demands of the moral law by reason of their reliance upon divine grace alone for salvation.

Jude 17

But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ:

This verse gives us strong evidence leading to the conclusion that Jude was written much later than most of the other books of the New Testament. It encourages the readership to look back on teachings of an earlier time. This verse also excludes the apostle Judas from consideration as the possible author of this work. The

language here is that of someone who is referring his readers to a group of individuals which he is not a member of.

Jude is telling them to disregard what the apostates were teaching and go back to the source. Remember the words of the apostles which came before the words of the apostates. Jude told them to remember the words of all the apostles, not just one. As we learned from our study of Antinomianism from Jude 4, the teaching these apostates were advocating came from a perversion of Paul's teachings regarding grace. Jude's readership was encouraged to go back to the source and consider all of what had been spoken not by one apostle, but by all of them.

The application for us today is that when confronted with a false doctrine we too can do the same thing. We can go back and examine and study what the apostles spoke through the inspired record. We, like the readership of Jude can bypass all the conjecture and teaching of men and go all the way back to the source. That is what is authoritative, that is where we all must look to find the truth and that is where we must go to find the information we need to contend for the faith that was once for all time delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

Jude 18

how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.

Jude's readership was reminded that what they were experiencing with the apostates is what the Apostles warned them about. Some of these warnings can be found in 1 Timothy 4:1, 2 Timothy 4:3-4, 1 John 4:1, 2 Peter chapter 2. Everything these enemies of god were doing had been foretold. Now that it had become a reality, Jude was exhorting them to go back to their predictions of these people and heed their warnings.

Jude 19

These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.

The usage of the word sensual here is associated with those who have not the Spirit. Thus the meaning here is of those who have a manner of life which is inferior to that which is described as spiritual. There are two types of people in the world, those who live after the Spirit, guided by the word of God with the correct attitude and those who live after the flesh being guided by their worldly desires and wishes.

"who cause divisions"

The Greek word for "*cause divisions*" is "*apodiorizo*" which is a compound word in this case meaning one who draws a line through the church and sets one part over against another. It is a vivid description of those who would cause division among the people of the church. This is what the apostates were engaged in. They were drawing a line through the Lord's church and setting the two sides against one another.

Jesus taught in Matthew 12:25-26, "*Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand*". Satan knows that if he can divide the church, he has a better chance of destroying it. This division is exactly the means by which Satan is at work today. And when we look out at the religious diversity among those claiming Christ as savior it is easy to see that Satan has not

been lax in his efforts. The scriptures teach one faith, one body (Ephesians 4:4). The world presents many bodies and many faiths and this division is destructive to the efforts of the Lord's church. Through the division we have today, Satan has managed to successfully set out an impressive array of decoys. Well meaning people seeking God's righteousness may and doubtless are deceived into condemnation by following after one of Satan's decoys. Division is one of Satan's most powerful attacks and deception is how he works. Everyone who is lost is in some way a victim of Satan's deceptions.

“not having the Spirit“

There is no shortage of disagreement over what these four words mean among the religious writers and commentators used for aid in the preparation of this study. Many contend that this means the indwelling of the Holy Spirit which is promised to all Christians and many are the various beliefs associated with that. Some hold to a literal personal indwelling of God within us. Some hold to a strictly representative indwelling through the word of God. Personally, this Bible student sees compelling evidence to support either position and it has been my belief for some time now that the indwelling is a measure of both rather than either/or. I do not believe the use of Jude here is in any way connected to the indwelling of the Spirit in the believer today so we are not even going to look into that aspect of our faith with this study.

Jude wrote by inspiration, which means he was writing to Christians during the period of time when the Holy Spirit was working directly to reveal and to confirm God's word. The apostates coming into the church were trying to pervert the word of God from what was once delivered. These apostates had to be claiming divine direction in some fashion in order to be taken seriously. By telling his readership these apostates did not have the Spirit, he was telling them they were not operating under any direct guidance of the Holy Spirit, therefore what they were trying to teach did not have the authentication or approval of the Holy Spirit and should therefore be utterly rejected.

Jude 20

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,

Jude had used a lot of stern language in identification, characterizing and condemnation of the apostates in his epistle. Yet here he displays his evident love for the brethren. Jude was every bit as loving for the brethren as he was stern with the apostates. He referred to his readership as “beloved” no less than three times in his letter, (3, 17 and 20). There can be no doubt concerning the love and concern Jude had for his brethren.

“building yourselves up”

Christians are here commanded to build themselves up on their most holy faith! Jude like all the other inspired writers failed to stress what believers must themselves do if they hope to receive salvation. On Pentecost, Peter said, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” Paul wrote that people should “work out their own salvation.” All such teachings, including Jude 20 stress the importance of things people are commanded to do, with the undeniable implication, that if they refuse or fail to comply with the conditions upon which God's grace is to be appropriated, they will either fall from or fail of God's grace.

The need on the part of mankind to obey God's teaching is not incompatible with the conception that no man can earn salvation. Mankind cannot repay God what it cost to offer salvation therefore all the works of righteousness in the world will still leave one short of earning salvation. But the fact that we can never earn our salvation does not excuse mankind from the obligation to obey God. The necessity of obedience to God is interwoven throughout Biblical history starting with Adam and continuing unbroken until the great day of the Lord some time in the future.

"on your most holy faith"

Whether one understands this to be the personal faith of the individual or the system of faith to which Christians are bound, there is a necessary human response associated with building oneself up.

"Praying in the Holy Spirit"

Prayer is a vital means of spiritual growth and security for the Christian. It cannot be stressed enough how important prayer is. Through Christ, we have a direct line of communication and fellowship with God the Father (1 John 1:3). As for praying in the Holy Spirit, this was something very much different then, than what it is today. As mentioned earlier, this epistle was written during the age when the Holy Spirit was working directly with believers in revealing and confirming the word of God. There was without a doubt some in Jude's readership who had the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit and could do this. Today when we pray to God in the name of Jesus Christ, our prayers are in line with biblical teaching relevant to the age we live in now. Being in accordance with the will of God as revealed by the Holy Spirit, we are in effect praying in the Holy Spirit. But the ability to do that like they could during the miraculous age in the infancy of the church is not possible for us today.

There is an apostolic example of just such a thing in Revelation 1:10, written by John, *"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet"*. John's being *"in the Spirit"* that day is not possible for us to accomplish today.

Jude 21

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

Here we have Jude exhorting his Christian readers to keep themselves in the love of God. This is significant in that Calvinism teaches that the elect are incapable of leaving the love of God. Jude here puts the responsibility of remaining in the love of God squarely on the Christians to whom he was writing. John tells us exactly how to abide in God's love in John 15:10, *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."* The use of the word *"if"* makes this an optional thing. Those who wish to remain in the love of God must be obedient to God's will in order to accomplish this. Faithful followers of God have always had a role to fulfill in God's plans and that role has always been obedience.

Not only can one not keep themselves in the love of God if they are not obedient, they cannot even claim to know God. John provided us with the test for whether or not we are in the love of God in 1 John 2:3-5, *"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not*

keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.“

Obedience to God is the key to our salvation (Hebrews 5:9), and under no circumstances does the necessity for obedience militate against our being saved by God's grace. It was God's grace which provided man a way of reconciliation with God in the first place. God didn't owe mankind a second chance under any circumstances and would have been well within His rights to have allowed mankind to perish in His sin, suffering eternal condemnation. Jude was making sure his readers knew that they had a role to fulfill in God's plan.

“looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life“

The Christian does indeed have a role to play in God's plan, but it is also a fact that without God's mercy, it is all for nothing. Jesus gave His life for mankind and in so doing paid a debt we couldn't pay and be in fellowship with God. By paying that debt for us, He put us in the position of owing Him our lives. Scripture says that we were bought for a price (1 Corinthians 6:20). We cannot repay that fully so what we do is offer our lives back to Jesus in service. In the end, it won't be our works that save us, because our works can never fully repay what it cost God to save us. In the end it will be God's grace and mercy that bridges the gap between the insufficiency of our works and the debt paid by Jesus Christ on our behalf.

Jude 22

And on some have compassion, making a distinction

Here we have some of the most extraordinary words in all of scripture in regards of how to deal with erring brethren. As uncompromising and stern as Jude was in his condemnation of the apostates, he allows that there is some diversity in the class of those in error and here gives instruction to make a distinction between them. On the one hand, you have those who are honestly in error and will take the steps to correct their actions. A compassionate approach may in some cases be the most appropriate method. And on the other hand, the approach Jude mentions in verse 23 may be the more effective method.

Jude 23

but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

It may be the case where the erring brother may require a somewhat stronger approach. Perhaps the warning of condemnation which Jude certainly excelled in. One can hardly read this epistle and considering it honestly not lend themselves to a healthy measure of self examination.

The application for us today is that there are diverse ways of dealing with those in error. There is room for judgment regarding this. The important thing to keep in mind is that we must always show compassion when dealing with such things. A haughty and judgmental attitude is not going to be an effective means under any circumstances. 2 Timothy 2:24-26, *“And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, 26 and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.”*

“hating even the garment defiled by the flesh”

Garments are used symbolically to represent one’s spiritual state. In Isaiah 61:10, we read, *“My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness”*. Garments which are white represent purity and righteousness (Revelation 7:9) while unrighteousness is characterized by filthy garments (Zechariah 3:3-4), *“Now Joshua [speaking here of the nation of Israel] was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel. Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, “Take away the filthy garments from him.” And to him He said, “See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes.”* And finally, Christians are represented in scripture as those who have washed their garments white in the blood of Jesus (Revelation 7:14-15), *“...These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”*.

All sin defiles the garments of righteousness but the particular sin in view here is that of sins of the flesh. The temptation of the flesh is a powerful force and one that is responsible for the downfall of many. Christians are to hate the garments of all sin meaning they are to remove themselves from it as far as possible. Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:3-7, *“But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; 4 neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not be partakers with them”*.

Christians are to be careful at all times, avoiding sin, not putting themselves in situations where they would be tempted (Romans 13:14). It is a fact that we must live and serve in a sinful world. We’ll never know what it is like to live without sin this side of eternity, but we must never allow ourselves to look favorably upon it. We are exhorted to hate the filthy garments of unrighteousness, choosing to look with disfavor upon them, shunning them and avoiding what they represent. *1 Timothy 5:14, “give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully”, (1 Thessalonians 5:22), “Abstain from every form of evil”*.

Jude 24

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

If Christians heed the instructions of their Lord and walk in the light as he is in the light, they will not stumble; and, for those who thus walk, the Lord indeed can and does guard them from stumbling. Romans 14:4 *“... Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.*

There is a role to play for man in this regard as well. God will not uphold the unrepentant, impenitent sinner. Paul makes this perfectly clear in Ephesians 6:13-18 where he gives instructions on how to stand, *“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the*

shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints”.

Standing without stumbling and falling requires a diligent effort on the part of the child of God. God helps to keep us from stumbling by giving us what we need in order to do it. According to Paul, we need truth, righteousness, preparation in the gospel, faith, the word of God, prayer, watchfulness, perseverance and supplication. And it should not go unnoticed or unmentioned that the adornment of oneself with those things which keep us from stumbling is given by Paul as something we are to do ourselves.

God provided truth, we have to gird our waists with it.

God provided righteousness, we have to put it on like a breastplate.

God gave us the gospel of peace, it is our responsibility to have our feet shod with it.

God gave us the system of faith we live under, it is our duty to shield ourselves with it.

God gave us the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, it is our job to wield it.

God provides us with all that we need to keep from stumbling. God does His part and upholds His role in our salvation, but we as His children have a role to fulfill as well. Our faith has never been passive, rather it is proactive. God reaches down to us in love with His grace, we reach back up to Him in love by faith.

And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

While giving instruction to husbands concerning their wives, Paul compared the relationship they should have to the relationship Jesus has with His church in Ephesians 5:25-28, *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish”.*

It has ever been God’s goal to provide a way of redemption for mankind. Man sinned and forfeited fellowship with God. God went to great lengths and personal sacrifice in order to achieve this. God displayed an enormous amount of intent and desire in His efforts to provide man with a way back into fellowship with Him. Those who have such intent and purpose and go to such lengths have a goal in site. God’s goal is to present to Himself a people who having sinned and lost that fellowship, chose of their own free will to seek to regain that fellowship and do what it takes to avail themselves of His mercy and grace. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.

Jude 25

*To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever.
Amen.*

“To God our Savior.” The KJV and the ASV render this verse more properly as, *“to the only God our Saviour...”*. This reference here to the singleness and unity of God speaks directly against the beliefs of the antinomian Gnostics who, having crept into the church, were infected with polytheism, especially later on as they moved ever further from the truth of God’s word. Jude here reaffirmed what Paul taught in Ephesians 4:4-6, *“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5*

one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all". Even in the closing of His epistle, Jude made sure his readership was fully informed with all the facts they needed, closing with a direct statement affirming the fact that there is only one God.

"Who alone is wise"

The apostates who had crept into the church came under the guise of possessing knowledge they alone had access to. They were like those to whom Paul referred in Romans 1:22-23, *"Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man"*. The apostates about whom Jude wrote were doing this very thing. They came in professing to be the bearers of wisdom but Jude here affirms that it is God alone who is wise. Christians should not be persuaded by the wisdom of men, but should seek the wisdom which comes from He alone who is wise. Paul had this to say regarding the rejection of human wisdom in 1 Corinthians 2:4-5, *"And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God"*.

Jude is closing His epistle with words which strike at the heart of the issue at hand. He has declared, identified, characterized and condemned the apostates. Now in the final words of His letter he has reminded his readership of that which they already knew and should not forget. Our God is the only God. Do not be led away by the persuasive wisdom of man because it's a deception for God alone is wise.

Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.

Jude ends his letter finally with putting the glory where it belongs. There is nothing in this letter speaking to the wisdom of men, rather it has all been about God from the beginning to the end. Jude never credited anything to himself, rather pointing his readership consistently towards God and God alone.

"glory"

1 Corinthians 10:31-32, *"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."* Jude is attributing the glory of God to where it rightfully belongs.

"majesty"

Pertaining to God's supreme greatness or authority or sovereignty as the ruler of the universe, (Micah 5:4), *"And He shall stand and feed His flock In the strength of the Lord, In the majesty of the name of the Lord His God"*.

"Dominion"

Meaning sovereign authority over that which one rules.

Daniel 7:14, *"Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion"*.

"power"

Ephesians 1:19-23, *“and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”*

God has all power, all authority, all dominion and all Glory. Man has nothing substantive to offer in this regard, therefore the duty of man is to recognize and affirm these attributes in God. It is ever the duty of man to point the way to the light.

“Both now and forever”

Jude speaks here to the present reality of God’s *“glory and majesty, Dominion and power”* and then to the everlasting aspect of it. There is never going to be a time when God will not be sovereign and all powerful. There is never going to be a time when the truth of God can be set aside in favor of man. There is never going to be a time when man’s wisdom can supersede God’s. There’s never going to be a time when man should seek the light of God’s truth and the way of salvation from any source other than God. God’s nature, attributes and character are immutable, meaning never ever changing.

Malachi wrote in 3:6 concerning God, *“For I am the Lord, I change not”*

The Hebrew writer wrote a fitting commentary on the closing words of Jude which apply directly to the entire theme of his letter:

Hebrews 13:5-9

For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” 6 So we may boldly say: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me? Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

And then the Hebrew writer continued with words which ring loud and clear in view of the warnings of Jude, the bondservant of Christ and brother to James.

“Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines.”

Let us heed the warnings here of Jude and so many other inspired writers. Let us do those things which we know are of the faith. Let us conduct ourselves in a manner befitting bondservants of Jesus Christ. Let us seek after God’s righteousness alone. Let us shun and reject the teachings of men. Let us contend earnestly for the faith that was once delivered to the saints. Let us consider the biblical examples of those who rebelled against God’s authority and let us learn from the consequences of their errors. Let us beware of the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. Let us learn from the mistakes of Cain and of Balaam and of Korah. Let us heed the warnings of the prophets. Let us seek the wisdom of God alone.

And let us always point the way to God's glory and majesty. Let us always hold God up to the world as the light of truth and let us always follow after His ways, His truth, His righteousness. And by so doing, let us all share in the blessed hope we have in Christ and never ever forget to be thankful for Him and to Him, always giving Him the glory in all things.

Amen.

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