

CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH – COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF JUDE

by Paul G. Apple, December 2005

THE THREAT OF APOSTATE FALSE TEACHERS (WHO ARE DOOMED TO DESTRUCTION) CALLS BELIEVERS TO FRONT LINE BATTLE POSITIONS

“contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”
(Jude 3)

For each section in the Book of Jude:

- Thesis statement ... to focus on the big idea
- Analytical outline ... to guide the understanding
- Devotional questions ... to encourage life application
- Representative quotations ... to stimulate deeper insight

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BACKGROUND

Piper: Contend For the Faith -- So God's way as we see it in Jude is to give his people confidence that their faith will be victorious in the end (in verses 1 and 24) and then to send them out to fight for it.

1. There is a faith once for all delivered to the saints.
2. This faith is worth contending for.
3. This faith is repeatedly threatened from within the church.
4. Every genuine believer should contend for the faith.

Pounds: PURPOSE: Jude starts out with the intention of writing a treatise on salvation, but the pressing circumstances in the church required him to write a warning against false teachers and a plea that his readers contend earnestly for their faith. Both Jude and Peter were alarmed at the inroads which false teachers were making. Jude urges the Christians to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). The heresy seems to have been an incipient form of Gnosticism, not the ascetic variety, but antinomian. This heresy allowed the flesh to run wild. They said, "Do anything you want to do; if it feels good go ahead as long as it doesn't hurt you or the other person. It was a very serious situation in the early church."

Wiersbe: It bears repeating that an apostate is not a true believer who has abandoned his salvation. He is a person who has professed to accept the truth and trust the Savior, and then turns from "*the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*" (Jude 3)

Baxter: Contend for the Faith

Key Verse – 3

Greeting, verses 1, 2

WHY TO CONTEND – APOSTATE TEACHERS (3-16)

- Their subtle perversions: two basic denials (3-4).
- Their certain doom: three historic examples (5-7).
- Their impious ways: three historic examples (8-11).
- Their utter falsity: six awful metaphors (12-13, R.V.).
 - Enoch's prophecy: Coming destruction (14-16).

HOW TO CONTEND – OUR TRUE RESOURCES (17-23)

- Realise that the apostasy has been foretold (17-19).
- "*Build,*" "*pray in the Spirit,*" "*keep,*" "*look*" (20-21).
- Show compassion towards certain who contend (22).
- Others seek urgently to rescue: but keep pure (23).
- Jude's doxology: Coming consummation.

Constable:

A former student of mine, Brian Baker, submitted the following structural study of Jude

in the spring of 1995. He concluded that Jude deliberately constructed his book in a chiasmic structure to focus on the warning of woe in verse 11.

- A** To you who are *kept* in Jesus Christ (1)
- B** *Mercy* to you (2)
- C** Common *salvation* (3a)
- D** *Contend earnestly for the faith* (3b)
- E** *Licentious* people (4)
- F** I *remind* you (5a)
- G** The Lord *destroyed unbelievers* (5b)
- H** Angels in *darkness* for rebelling (6)
- I** *Sodom and Gomorrah* an example (7)
- J** Defilement during *sleep* (8)
- K** Michael and Satan *argued about Moses* (9)
- L** Like *unreasoning animals* (10)
- M** Destruction for *ungodly actions* (10)
- N** *Woe to them!* (11)
- M'** Cain punished for *ungodly actions* (11)
- L'** Balaam's *unreasoning animal* (11)
- K'** Korah *disputed with Moses* (11)
- J'** Hidden reefs present *unseen danger* (12)
- I'** Open exhibition of *shame* (12-13)
- H'** Stars wander in *darkness* (13)
- G'** Enoch prophesied *judgment on the ungodly* (14-15)
- F'** *Remember* the apostles' warning (17)
- E'** *Mocking* people (18-19)
- D'** *Build yourselves up in the faith* (20)
- C'** Wait for *eternal life* (21)
- B'** Have *mercy* on some (22-23)
- A'** To Him who *keeps* you from from falling (24).

Williams:

PECULIARITY OF THE EPISTLE: 'The author is very fond of triple arrangements. Each thought is expressed in groups of three. In the 25 verses he presents 11 groups of triples.

vi The author:

1. Jude
2. Servant of Jesus Christ
3. Brother of James

vi Ones addressed:

1. Called
2. Beloved in God
3. Kept for Jesus Christ

v2 Salutations

1. Mercy
2. Peace

3. Love

vv. 5-7 Examples of Judgments

1. Unbelievers among Israelites
2. Angels who sinned
3. Sodom and Gomorrah

vv. 8-10 The dreamers:

1. Defile the flesh
2. Set at naught dominion
3. Rail at dignities

v 11 False teachers went:

1. In the way of Cain
2. Error of Balaam
3. Gainsaying of Korah

v. 16 False Teachers are:

1. Murmurers
2. Complainers
3. Walking after their own lust

v. 19 These are:

1. They who make separations
2. Sensual
3. Having not the spirit

v. 20 Christians are to:

1. Build up yourselves
2. Pray in the Holy Spirit
3. Keep yourselves in the love of God

vv. 22-23 How to deal with those in error:

1. On some have mercy
2. On some save, snatching them out of the fire
3. On some have mercy with fear

v. 25 Giving glory to God:

1. Before all time
2. Now
3. For evermore

Morecraft:

Keathley: OUTLINE

- I. Greetings and Purpose (1-4)
- II. Description and Exposure of False Teachers (5-16)
 - A. Their Past Judgment (5-7)
 - B. Their Present Characteristics (8-13)
 - C. Their Future Judgment (14-16)
- III. Defense and Exhortation to Believers (17-23)
- IV. Benediction (24-25)

Tommy Hames:

Our society is full of people who do not teach the truth about God's Word. As Christians, we should be constantly aware of this and guard ourselves from these ungodly, sensual mockers. By looking at Jude 20-23 we found that we can know God's truth and avoid deception by:

BUILDING OURSELVES UP ON OUR FAITH

PRAYING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

KEEPING OURSELVES IN THE LOVE OF GOD BY REMEMBERING THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST.

REMEMBERING THE MERCY OF JESUS CHRIST BY PERFORMING GOOD WORKS

HAVING COMPASSION FOR THE LOST

TELLING OTHERS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

STRIVING TO KEEP THE FLESH UNDER SUBMISSION

OUTLINE OF JUDE

CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH

THE THREAT OF APOSTATE FALSE TEACHERS (WHO ARE DOOMED TO DESTRUCTION) CALLS BELIEVERS TO FRONT LINE BATTLE POSITIONS

I. (1:1-4) THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST MUST BE MAINTAINED AS A KEY FUNDAMENTAL OF HISTORIC CHRISTIANITY

- A. (:1-2) SALUTATION
- B. (:3) WARNING TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER ENCOURAGEMENT
- C. (:4) THE POINT OF DECEPTION FOR THESE FALSE TEACHERS CENTERS ON DENYING THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST

II. (1:5-11) CERTAIN ETERNAL DESTRUCTION AWAITS THE APOSTATE FALSE TEACHERS WHO ARE MARKED BY LUST, REBELLION AND IRREVERENCE

- A. (:5-7) THREE OT EXAMPLES OF ETERNAL DESTRUCTION OF APOSTATES
- B. (:8) THREE DAMNING CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS CURRENT CROP OF APOSTATES
- C. (:9-10) UTTER PRESUMPTION AND FOLLY OF REJECTING ANY CONCEPT OF THE FEAR OF THE LORD
- D. (:11) THREE OT EXAMPLES OF BIG-TIME REBELLION AND CERTAIN DOOM

III. (1:12-16) DESPITE THEIR DECEPTIVE NATURE, THE APOSTATE FALSE TEACHERS ARE EXPOSED AND DOOMED TO DESTRUCTION FOR THEIR PURSUIT OF UNGODLINESS

- A. (:12-13) DECEPTIVE NATURE EXPOSED
- B. (:14-15) ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONDEMNATION GUARANTEED --- PROPHECY OF JUDGMENT AGAINST UNGODLY FALSE TEACHERS
- C. (:16) FOUR FATAL CHARACTER FLAWS EXPOSED

IV. (1:17-25) THE UNGODLINESS OF RELIGIOUS IMPOSTERS ONLY SERVES TO INCREASE OUR SENSE OF URGENCY IN PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE FLOCK

- A. (:17-19) NO SURPRISES – S.A.D. State of Affairs
- B. (:20-21) NO COMPLACENCY
- C. (:22-23) NO ABANDONING OF THE FLOCK
- (:24-25) BENEDICTION

TEXT: Jude 1-4

TITLE: DOCTRINE WORTH FIGHTING FOR – COMBATING FALSE TEACHERS

BIG IDEA:

**THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST MUST BE MAINTAINED AS A KEY
FUNDAMENTAL OF HISTORIC CHRISTIANITY**

INTRODUCTION:

What undermines this essential doctrine of the Lordship of Jesus Christ?

- 1) Back in the days of Jude
Form of Gnosticism he was reacting against

- 2) Currently in our days
 - a) Various cults
 - b) Easy Believism (market-driven, Seeker-driven church growth movement) – no commitment required
 - c) Trying to separate repentance from faith – they are flip sides of the same coin

Some people today denigrate the importance of doctrine –

Here Jude shows us that there are some doctrines worth fighting for

All “contending” is not wrong – there is a time and place when we need to stand up and “*contend earnestly for the faith*”

I. (:1-2) SALUTATION

A. (:1a) Author – Jude Deserves an Audience Because He is Connected

1. Connected Closely in Submission to the Founder of the Church
“Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ”

I have to do what Jesus wants me to do; this is what Jesus would do if
He were here in our midst

Green: Now that he had become a believer, Jude’s aim in life was to be utterly at the disposal of the Messiah Jesus. One of the paradoxes of Christianity is that in such glad devotion a man finds perfect freedom.

2. Connected Closely in Partnership with the Key Leader in Jerusalem
“and brother of James”

Historical roots to the true apostolic church – important since it is the body of truth, the apostolic tradition that must be faithfully passed down from generation to generation

B. (:1b) Recipients – Believers Enjoy the Security of the Triune God’s Sovereign Favor

1. Called to Holiness and Christlikeness – Living a Transformed Life
“To those who are the called”
Rom. 8:28 *“to those who are called according to His purpose”*
Never separate the calling from the purpose
Effectual Calling – Precious doctrine of Election; how can believers despise this doctrine of love and security?
2. Guaranteed God’s Favor – Responding with Love and Thanksgiving
“beloved in God the Father”
Rom. 8:28, 37 *“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God”*
“But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us”
Irresistible Grace – we respond in love because Christ first loved us
1 Jon 4:10
3. Protected for Eternity – Eagerly anticipating the Return of our Lord
“and kept for Jesus Christ”
Kept in a condition of growing Sanctification
Perseverance of the saints; what lies ahead is far more important than this temporary pilgrim journey

Kelly: i.e. for His Coming and for the kingdom He will establish. When the great day arrives, they will have no need to be afraid.

Piper: All three verbs are passive. They stress the action of God. God calls, God loves, and God keeps.

B. (:2) Greeting

“May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.”

II. (:3) WARNING TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER ENCOURAGEMENT

A. (:3a) Encouragement is Always Appropriate

“Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation”

Precious truths that bind us together in fellowship by the Holy Spirit

“one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4:5)

Some believers quibble over the non-essentials and divide the body rather than focusing on protecting that common salvation

Coffman: This has the meaning of the salvation which is offered to all people alike, upon the same conditions, from the same source, and entailing the same obligations. This salvation is not common in the sense of being ordinary, being on the other hand

the most precious treasure ever made available to the sons of earth.

B. (:3b) Warning is Urgent and Must Take Priority

“I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith, which was once for all handed down to the saints.”

Not a pleasant task; but a necessary task – and one that takes priority

**III. (:4) THE POINT OF DECEPTION FOR THESE FALSE TEACHERS
CENTERS ON DENYING THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST**

A. (:4a) Imposters Need to be Exposed

“For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation”

1. Secret Agenda – using the same vocabulary, but changing the meanings
2. Known to the Lord – “for lo their doom is sure”

B. (:4b) Grievous Error

1. Error in Practice -- Justifying Licentious Living

“ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness”

Wiersbe: A person who is lascivious things only of satisfying his lusts, and whatever he touches is stained by his base appetites.

. . . stemming from ...

2. Error in Doctrine – Denying Lordship of Christ

“and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ”

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) Do we take time to meditate on the security we enjoy as those who have been *called, beloved* and *kept* by the Triune God?

2) Do we appreciate the “*common salvation*” we enjoy with the members of the universal body of Christ – regardless of what particular local church or denomination colors the minutia of their faith?

3) At the same time, are we willing to “*contend for the faith*” when fundamental principles (such as the Lordship of Christ and the necessity for holiness) are being undermined?

4) In the church culture of today, what are the examples of turning the grace of our God into licentiousness?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Piper: For us one of the most important phrases in verse 3 is "*once for all*". Here we are 2000 years after the faith was first delivered to the church, and we are surrounded with hundreds of people and sects and cults who claim to have a new word of revelation that now completes God's word to mankind. Mohammed offered his Koran. Joseph Smith his Book of Mormon. Sun Moon his Divine Principle. And you meet people every day who consider every contemporary intellectual trend as a suitable replacement for the Bible.

Piper: In his last message to the pastors of the church of Ephesus in Acts 20 Paul warned them that after his departure "fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (vv. 29-30). The wolves who pervert the faith are professing Christians. They are pastors and church leaders and seminary teachers and missionaries.

Stedman: There are some striking things about that instruction. That says first, that our faith is not something that anybody has manufactured; it was delivered to us. It is not fabricated, or worked up by a collection of individuals. It is one body of facts that is consistently delivered by authoritative persons, the apostles. It has come to us through them. Furthermore, Jude says that it was once for all delivered. It was only given at one time in the history of the world. It does not need any additions. . .

Now some think that contending for the faith means to roll the Bible up into a bludgeon with which to beat people over the head. Such people feel that they need to be very contentious in contending for the faith. But this is not what Jude has in mind at all. He is simply talking about the need for proclaiming the truth. As Charles Spurgeon used to put it: "The truth is like a lion. Whoever heard of defending a lion? Just turn it loose and it will defend itself." This is the way the word of God is. If we begin to proclaim it, it will defend itself.

Wiersbe: Jude did not write that these men were ordained to become apostates, as though God were responsible for their sin. They became apostates because they willfully turned away from the truth. But God did ordain that such people would be judged and condemned. . .

The church is always one generation short of extinction. If our generation fails to guard the truth and entrust it to our children, then that will be the end! When you think of the saints and martyrs who suffered and died so that we might have God's truth, it makes

you want to take your place in God's army and be faithful unto death.

Kelly: all three [mercy, peace, love] surely denote coordinate aspects of God's grace. As often in the NT (e.g. Rom. xv. 9; Tit. iii. 5), *mercy* refers primarily to God's saving action in Christ; as in 21, it probably carries eschatological overtones also, hinting that He will be merciful at the judgment. For Christians *peace*, too stands not so much for the interior tranquility of believers as for their reconciliation with God, which Christ has brought about by His death and resurrection, and their resulting preservation at the final denouement. Similarly *love* in such a context as this is primarily "*the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Rom. viii. 39; cf. v. 8); it is this love which makes men children of God (1 Jn. iii. 1), and in so far as it is *multiplied* to them they abide in it, and their joy becomes full (Jn. Xv. 11).

TEXT: Jude 1:5-11

TITLE: MARKED OUT FOR THIS CONDEMNATION

BIG IDEA:

CERTAIN ETERNAL DESTRUCTION AWAITS THE APOSTATE FALSE TEACHERS WHO ARE MARKED BY LUST, REBELLION AND IRREVERENCE

INTRODUCTION:

“marked out for this condemnation” (vs.4)

I. (:5-7) THREE OT EXAMPLES OF ETERNAL DESTRUCTION OF APOSTATES

Introduction: Urgency of this reminder

“Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all”

Jude repeating Peter’s warning against these false teachers

It is clear from history who is going to win this spiritual confrontation

A. Example of Unbelieving Israelites Despite Deliverance From Egypt – Emphasis on root problem of Unbelief

“that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.”

B. Example of Rebellious Angels – Emphasis on rejecting authority and reviling angelic majesties

“And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.”

Stedman: His point is that even angels are not excluded from judgment, when they fall through pride and lust.

C. Example of Depravity of Sodom and Gomorrah – Emphasis on defiling the flesh

“Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.”

II. (:8) THREE DAMNING CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS CURRENT CROP OF APOSTATES

Connection to OT Examples:

“Yet in the same manner these men, also by dreaming”

Wiersbe: The cause of their rebellion is found in the word *dreamers* (v. 8).. These people live in a dreamworld of unreality and delusion. They believe Satan’s lie, “*Ye shall be as gods*” (Gen. 3:5). Having turned away from God’s truth, they feed their

minds on false doctrine that inflates their egos and encourages their rebellion.

Green: he may simply be referring to their voluptuous dreams . . . Or he may mean that they are dead to decency, sunk in the torpor of sin . . . But as the word occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only in Acts ii. 17, where it is used of prophetic dreams (cf. Joel ii. 28), it probably indicates that the false teachers supported their antinomianism by laying claim to divine revelations in their dreams.

Coffman: Any, or all, of a number of things could have been meant by this. "Idle speculations," F28 impractical and unrealistic thoughts, "certain visions they had received," F29 divine revelations they claimed to have had, or simply that, "their thoughts, whether awake or asleep, were impure, sensual, evil." F30 Whatever the exact meaning, all of their activity was directed to a single objective, that of defilement, whether self-pollution, or the corruption of others, or both.

A. Marked by Lust

"defile the flesh"

B. Marked by Rebellion

"reject authority"

C. Marked by Irreverence

"revile angelic majesties"

III. (:9-10) UTTER PRESUMPTION AND FOLLY OF REJECTING ANY CONCEPT OF THE FEAR OF THE LORD

A. (:9) Presumption of Assuming the Role of Executing Vengeance

"But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you.'"

Stedman: Jude's argument is, if archangels, who have so much power and knowledge of truth, are careful to respect the God-given dignity of a fallen angel, then why should we, mere men, speak contemptuously of the principalities and the powers in high places? It is a thing to think about, isn't it, when certain people today just sneer at the idea that the scriptures present the existence of demons or Satan.

B. (:10) Folly of Rejecting any Concept of the Fear of the Lord

"But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed."

IV. (:11) THREE OT EXAMPLES OF BIG-TIME REBELLION AND CERTAIN DOOM

Blast of Condemnation: *"Woe to them!"*

Wiersbe: illustrates the enormity of their rebellion and sin

- A. Example of Cain – Choosing Prideful Works over Faith . . . and Murder over Love
“For they have gone the way of Cain”

Stedman: He speaks of "the way of Cain," which was essentially selfishness. Cain stands forever as the man who thought only of himself, who had no concern or love for his brother, but put him to death. He looked out only for his own welfare, and Jude says that is the first step on the way to ultimate rebellion -- selfishness.

Wiersbe: the way of religion without faith

- B. Example of Balaam – Merchandising the Prophetic Gift
“and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam”

Stedman: In return for money, Balaam taught the children of Israel how to sin, (Num 31:15). He sent the pagan women among the camp to seduce the men of Israel sexually, as well as to introduce them to the worship of idols, which involved sexual rites. Thus, he became guilty of teaching others to sin. That is the error of Balaam.

- C. Example of Korah – Rebelling Against God’s Appointed Authorities
“and perished in the rebellion of Korah”

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How are the elect kept and protected by Jesus Christ (v.1) while these apostates fall away from their external connection with the believing community and end up under condemnation? How do you explain the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints?
- 2) What motivated these angels to “*abandon their proper abode*”?
- 3) What are some of the things which these false teachers are said to “*know by instinct*”?
- 4) Why don’t we hear more teaching and preaching about the subject of apostasy?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Stedman: They were all delivered and they were all set free. They all went through the Red Sea and all experienced the miracles of God's fatherly care. But when they came into the wilderness, God began to choose and judge among the m. Those who murmured and complained and rejected his leadership, refusing to enter into the land, he judged.

Finally, out of all the multitude that left Egypt, only two men entered into the land -- Joshua and Caleb. The rest all perished in the wilderness. Their children entered in, but this was God's way of saying that he has a way of handling those who refuse to act by faith.

Chestnut:

A. Sexual Immorality (5-7).

1. Golden Calf incident (cf. Ex. 32; 1 Cor. 10).
2. Angels who sinned (cf. Gen. 6--"SOG & DOM").
3. Sodom & Gomorrah--sexual immorality & perversion.

B. Rebellious, Slandorous (8-10).

1. Cites "Assumption of Moses" (non-extant).
 - a. Authoritative? NO!
 - b. Did it happen? Not necessarily.
2. AOM probably a favorite book of FTs.
3. Disregard for authority--"speak abusively against whatever they do not understand."

C. Envious, Greedy (11-13).

1. Three allusions (11):
 - a. "Way of Cain" (envy, hatred, murder).
 - b. "Balaam's error" (Num. 22-24; distort truth for personal gain).
 - c. "Korah's rebellion" (Num. 16; rebelled against Moses/Aaron).
2. Medley of figures (12-13):
 - a. "Blemishes/hidden rocks at love feasts."
 - b. "Shepherds who feed only themselves."
 - c. "Clouds without rain" (promise refreshment but do not deliver).
 - d. "Empty fruit trees in autumn ... uprooted!"
 - e. "Wild waves of the sea" (busy, restless, untamed).
 - f. "Wandering stars" (unpredictable, untrustworthy).

Pounds: Jude 9 gives a quotation from the apocryphal book of The Assumption of Moses and Jude 14 gives another from the book of Enoch. Does this mean that Jude thought those apocryphal books were inspired? No, they simply illustrate how the early writers quoted from contemporary religious literature to bring out a truth, much the way modern writers do. Paul did the same thing in Acts 17:28; I Cor. 15:33; and Titus 1:12 where he quotes from heathen poets without implying their inspiration. This does not mean they considered the pseudepigraphal writings to be inspired as the canonical Scriptures were.

Wiersbe: The sin of Israel was rebellious unbelief (Heb. 3:12). The sin of the angels was rebellion against the throne of God. The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was

indulging in unnatural lust. Unbelief, rebellion against authority, and sensual indulgence were sins characteristic of the false teachers. The conclusion is obvious: the apostates will be judged. But, meanwhile, God's soldiers must stay on duty and see to it that these false teachers do not creep into the ranks and start to lead people astray.

Green: With the three warnings of verses 5-7 before them, Jude's readers are urged to beware of the spiritual decadence of the false teachers. This pervaded their whole personalities. Physically, they became immoral. Intellectually, they became arrogant. Spiritually, they became disobedient to the Lord. "Progressive morality" and "progressive thinking" often go hand in hand with progressive deafness to the voice of God. To live like that is to inhabit a dream-world, according to Jude. His letter constitutes a stirring call to awake to moral integrity, intellectual humility and spiritual sensitivity.

Melvin Shelton: 3 Descriptions of these Filthy Dreamers

I. They Defile the Flesh

When a man knows the truth and rejects the truth something happens to him. He commits soul suicide. He just kicks his conscience to death. When he does that, he becomes the Devil's play thing. You see, it is the Word of God that keeps us from sin. But when a person rejects the truth, something happens to his character. Apostasy and fleshly sins are linked together.

II. They Despise the Father

III. They Disgrace the Faithful

"and they speak evil of dignities"

John Darby:

Jude then sums up the three kinds or characters of the evil and or estrangement from God; first, that of nature, the opposition of the flesh to the testimony of God, and His true people, the impetus which this enmity gives to the will of the flesh; in the second place, ecclesiastical evil, teaching error for reward, knowing all the while that it is contrary to the truth and against the people of God; thirdly, open opposition, rebellion, against the authority of God in His true King and Priest.

TEXT: Jude 1: 12-16

TITLE: PINNING THE TAIL ON THE DONKEY

BIG IDEA:

DESPITE THEIR DECEPTIVE NATURE, THE APOSTATE FALSE TEACHERS ARE EXPOSED AND DOOMED TO DESTRUCTION FOR THEIR PURSUIT OF UNGODLINESS

I. (:12-13) DECEPTIVE NATURE EXPOSED

A. Trojan Horse Syndrome – Danger from Within

1. Hidden Danger

“These men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts”

2. Arrogant and Devoid of the Fear of God

“when they feast with you without fear”

2. Characterized by Selfishness rather than Love

“caring for themselves”

B. Four Examples from Nature of Disappointing and Shameful Outcomes

1. Clouds that fail to deliver needed rainfall -- empty

“clouds without water, carried along by winds”

Green: Here is a graphic example of the uselessness of teaching which is supposedly “advanced” and “enlightened” but has nothing to offer the ordinary Christian for the nourishment of his spiritual life.

2. Trees that fail to yield fruit -- dead

“autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted”

3. Waves that wash up shame – wild and uncontrolled

“wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam”

4. Stars doomed to darkness – aimless

“wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever”

Coffman: Those evil men who troubled the church were just like "shooting stars" that shine a moment and then plunge to doom and darkness.

MacArthur: Those verbal metaphors are very vivid: hidden rocks, waterless clouds, autumn trees, raging waves, and wandering stars. That is how Jude describes apostate false teachers. Hidden rocks speak of the danger of apostasy. Waterless clouds refer to the false promises that apostates make. Autumn trees illustrate the barrenness of

apostasy. Raging waves depict its wasted effort, foaming out nothing but shame. Wandering stars picture its brief and aimless course ending in darkness. What descriptions!

Green: In these two verses, then, Jude has evoked a swift, bold picture of the men he is castigating. They are as dangerous as sunken rocks, as selfish as perverted shepherds, as useless as rainless clouds, as dead as barren trees, as dirty as the foaming sea, and as certain of doom as the fallen angels.

II. (:14-15) ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONDEMNATION GUARANTEED --- PROPHECY OF JUDGMENT AGAINST UNGODLY FALSE TEACHERS

A. Source of the Prophecy – extra-Biblical

“And about these also Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying”

B. Execution of Judgment

“Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all”

C. Accountability for Ungodliness

“and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

III. (:16) FOUR FATAL CHARACTER FLAWS EXPOSED

A. Unthankful

“These are grumblers”

B. Judgmental

“finding fault”

C. Immoral

“following after their own lusts”

D. Manipulative

“they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.”

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) How were such apostate false teachers as described in this passage able to creep into the large mainline denominations and take over so much territory?

- 2) How can we give more weight to substance than style when evaluating spiritual leaders and those who profess to proclaim the Word of God?
- 3) How serious is God here about judgment and punishment? How can people say that only the God of the OT has a fire and brimstone component?
- 4) Where do we exemplify some of the same traits -- of grumbling and complaining and finding fault and manipulating others -- that are characteristic of these false teachers?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Kolkebek: Ungodly: Impious - Disregard/Defiance towards God's Will

1. Ungodly Deeds = Defiance Towards Proper Behavior
2. Ungodly Way = Defiance Towards Known Truth
Suppress truth, denial of "The Faith" and
sears the conscience 2 Tim 4:1-2
3. Ungodly Speech = Fierce/Hard/Driving Speech

Wiersbe: The mariner who is unaware of the hidden rocks can quickly wreck his ship. The pilot must always be alert, for waters that look calm and safe can contain treacherous reefs. Spiritual leaders must constantly be on guard. . .

False shepherds *use* and *abuse* people in order to get what they want, and yet all the while, the people love it! Paul marveled at this when he wrote 2 Corinthians 11:20 – *“You don’t mind, do you, if a man takes away your liberty, spends your money, takes advantage of you, puts on airs, or even smacks your face?”*

MacArthur: False teachers appear for a little while, flashing erratically and rebelliously across man's sky just long enough to attract many who vanish with them into eternal darkness. Their destiny is the most intense, indescribable hell imaginable.

False teachers who say that God is something other than He revealed Himself to be, that Jesus Christ is not deity, that He was not born of a virgin, that the Bible is not the Word of God, that salvation is by works rather than grace--those are the individuals that Jude has been describing. They are the among the many apostates that have been attached to Christianity, but have rejected the truth. To be an apostate is bad enough, but to be a false teacher is the severest rebellion of all. Paul warned the Ephesian elders about false teachers who would seek to destroy the church: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Ac. 20:29- 30). The infiltration of the church with false teachers is Satan's plan.

Green: They are at the same time bombastic, noisy, full of themselves, among those they hope to impress; and also prepared to curry favour with those they deem important, so as to get some advantage out of it! On this question of toadying, Mayor says well, “As the fear of God drives out the fear of man, so defiance of God tends to put man in His place, as the chief source of good or evil to his fellows.” At the end of all the thunderbolts which Jude has unleashed upon these folk from the armoury of God, we find them at the mercy of their own fears of what men will do to them.

Constable: A coral reef that lies hidden under the surface of the water can tear the bottom off a ship if it unsuspectingly runs into it. Likewise the false teachers could ruin a local church. They threatened the moral shipwreck of others. That some of the false teachers were believers or at least professing believers seems certain since they were participating in the love-feast, the most intimate service of worship the early church practiced. "Caring for themselves" highlights the apostates' self-centeredness (cf. Ezek. 34:2, 8; Isa. 56:11; John 10:12-13).

Khoo: These apostates think so highly of themselves that they cannot stop talking about themselves – their degrees, achievements, commendations, medals, prowess, etc. It is an over-inflated case of the self esteem syndrome revealed in the pompous statements they make of themselves. Such were the false teachers in the Corinthian church who called themselves “super-apostles” (2 Cor. 11:5; 12:11). This is revealed in their (1) self-commendation (2 Cor. 3:1; 10:13-18; 11:12,18) (2) self-promotion (2 Cor. 4:5) (3) self-ostentation (2 Cor. 5:12) and (4) self-righteousness (2 Cor. 11:20). The APOSTATIC spirit seeks always to promote SELF while the APOSTOLIC spirit seeks only to promote CHRIST. The apostle Paul said, “*For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.*” (2 Cor. 4:5).

TEXT: Jude 1: 17-25

TITLE: WE MUST PROTECT THIS HOUSE

BIG IDEA:

THE UNGODLINESS OF RELIGIOUS IMPOSTERS ONLY SERVES TO INCREASE OUR SENSE OF URGENCY IN PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE FLOCK

INTRODUCTION:

Cf. Under Armour commercial – “We must protect this house”

Something much more at stake than a football game – precious lives of the flock of Jesus Christ who are being ravaged by savage wolves who have crept in unawares

Genuine believers are those who are “*beloved in God the Father*”

I. (:17-19) NO SURPRISES – S.A.D. State of Affairs

“*But you beloved*”

A. (:17-18a) Scenario Predicted by the Apostles

“*ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you*”

B. (:18b) Arrogance Motivated by Unrestrained Sensuality

“*In the last time there shall be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts*”

C. (:19) Division Accomplished by Fleshly Orientation

“*These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit*”

II. (:20-21) NO COMPLACENCY

“*But you beloved*”

A. Pursue Mutual Edification

“*building yourselves up on your most holy faith*”

Hamilton Smith: We cannot rightly contend for the faith unless we are building up ourselves in our most holy faith. We are not called to build ourselves up in all the different forms which evil may assume. We shall not be able to resist error by simply having an acquaintance with error. We can only meet error as we are built up in the truth. Moreover, our faith is a "most holy faith." So that in being built up in the faith we are not only gaining a deeper acquaintance with the truth, but we are increasingly wrought upon by the truth. It has a holy, sanctifying effect upon our souls, leading to a greater separation from the evil by which we are surrounded (John 17: 17).

B. Practice Focused Prayer

“praying in the Holy Spirit”

C. Protect Redemptive Relationships

“keep yourselves in the love of God”

F. B. Hole: In the third place we are to keep ourselves in the love of God. In the consciousness and warmth and power of it we are to dwell. We are persuaded of course with Paul that nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8: 39). His love has a firm hold on us, and He will never let us go. But we are also to have a firm hold upon it in the quiet recesses of our hearts. We are to be bathed in it, just like a bucket or other vessel which has been flung into the ocean. Then it is in the ocean, and the ocean is in it. So if we keep ourselves in the love of God, the love of God will be in us, imparting its beautiful character to our lives.

D. Pant for Eternity

“waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life”

III. (:22-23) NO ABANDONING OF THE FLOCK

A. Compassion Towards the Wavering

“And have mercy on some, who are doubting”

B. Deliverance Towards the Desperate

“save others, snatching them out of the fire”

C. Holy Trepidation Towards the Ensnared

“and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh”

Guzik: But using wisdom, we approach different people in different manners; by being sensitive to the Holy Spirit, we can know when we should comfort, and when we should rebuke

Faussett: **even the garment**--a proverbial phrase: avoiding the most remote contact with sin, and hating that which borders on it. As garments of the apostles wrought miracles of good in healing, so the very garment of sinners metaphorically, that is, anything brought into contact with their pollution, is to be avoided. Compare as to lepers and other persons defiled, Lev 13:52-57 15:4-17 : the garments were held polluted; and anyone touching them was excluded, until purified, from religious and civil communion with the sanctified people of Israel. Christians who received at baptism the white garment in token of purity, are not to defile it by any approach to what is defiled.

MacArthur: The first group are those who need compassion and tenderness because sincere doubts trouble them. Their problem is not a violent reaction against Christianity; their problem is doubt. The second group includes those requiring a bold confrontation if they are to be snatched from an eternity in hell. They have gone past doubt and have committed themselves to a false system. The last group are those who must be dealt with very cautiously. They are so vile in their contamination by evil that the believer is in danger of being contaminated himself.

(:24-25) BENEDICTION

A. The Preservation of the Saints – despite the threat of apostasy

1. Protection From Falling

“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling”

2. Right Standing with God

“and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy”

B. The Personal Relationship with the Triune God of Redemption

“to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord”

C. The Power and Prestige for all Eternity

“be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”

Piper: Jude begins and ends the letter by assuring believers that God exerts his omnipotence to keep them from falling away from the faith.

Liana: The end of preserving is presenting. In Jesus Christ we will stand blameless in the presence of God. We will see His glory and be filled with joy, that is, an abundant and never ending joy that will never fade in the least. (Eph. 5:27)

Wallace: vs. 19 – Jude continues his indictment against false teachers on two counts: they are divisive, and they are without the Spirit of God. The Greek verb *to separate* suggests setting up lines of demarcation that give rise to a factious spirit. Moreover, it bespeaks a sense of superiority on the part of these false teachers. With fine irony Jude accuses the Gnostics, who regarded themselves as spiritual, of **having not the Spirit**. He affirms that spirituality is a quality of life produced by the Spirit of God, and not by religious exercises known only to the initiated few.

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What type of *mockers* do we see today all around us in our culture? What is their contention?
- 2) Why should believers have a heart of *mercy* and compassion rather than a spirit of harsh condemnation?
- 3) How does God's initiative in sovereignly preserving us from stumbling balance with our responsibility to *keep ourselves in the love of God*?
- 4) What type of *joy* do we anticipate in standing *blameless* before our God?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Piper: At least two things are evident here. One is that contending sometimes involves an intellectual effort to change the way a person thinks: "Convince some who doubt." The other is that contending sometimes involves moral reclamation: go after them into the mess where their perverse ideas have taken them, and snatch them back to safety even while you hate what they are doing.

Liana: They are, in turn, to make certain that they do not become complacent in their love for God, that is, going through the motions of service, but having left their first love. (Rev. 2:2-4) They are to keep their love "stirred up" and vibrant; fresh and alive. It is to be the motivation behind their every good work.

Robertson: Surrounded as they are with false brethren, whose presence and influence may constitute a danger to their spiritual life and suggest the possibility of lapsing from a true faith, the true members of the Church are left with the thought of God's power to keep them from falling.

Guzik: Jude's message of warning and doom might have depressed and discouraged his readers. With so much false teaching and immorality around, how can Christians ever reach heaven? The answer lies only in the power of God.

- i. In mountain climbing, the novice hiker attaches himself to the expert, so if he loses footing, he won't stumble and fall to his death. In the same manner, if we keep connected with God, we cannot fall. He keeps us safe

Matthew Henry: When believers shall be presented faultless it will be with exceeding joy. Alas! now our faults fill us with fears, doubts, and sorrows. But be of good cheer; if we be sincere, we shall be, our dear Redeemer has undertaken for it, we shall be presented faultless; where there is no sin there will be no sorrow; where there is the perfection of holiness, there will be the perfection of joy. Surely, the God who can and will do this is worthy to have glory, majesty, dominion, and power, ascribed to him,

both now and for ever! And to this we may well, with the apostle, affix our hearty Amen.

Edwin N Cross: Can I be filled with praise even when false teachers are troubling the church? Certainly! Shall I let heresy stop me from being in the atmosphere of God's love? Certainly not! The believer's portion is exactly opposite to the apostates. He is kept from falling; a blessed contrast to the abounding apostasy previously described. To this God alone be all the glory for ever. He is the unique God and Preserver of the life of His people. The Lord Jesus is referred to as the Saviour sixteen times in the New Testament, and the Father is so described eight times. The prophet Isaiah makes it plain that there is no Saviour but God (Isa. 45:27). He alone is worthy of glory (the radiance of light) and kingly majesty. He alone has the dominion (everything in His control) and authority (ability to do anything He pleases) to which all must bow and which is effectively engaged in the sustenance of His people whilst toiling and suffering here in this world.

John MacArthur :

We live in the last days. The Bible makes it clear that the last days began when Jesus arrived. It's probably true that we are living in the latter portion of the last days before our Lord Jesus returns. If, in fact, we are living in the age symbolized by the apostate church of Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-19), how are we then to react to the increasing apostasy around us? What does a Christian do in the midst of the apostasy that precedes the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ?

The answers to those questions are found in Jude 17-25. Jude has discussed the history and definition of apostasy, and has given examples of it. He has also warned Christians to be ready for it and fight against it, and has warned apostates of the consequences of their departure from the faith. Now in the final climactic passage, Jude provides four key principles that Christians have been following ever since: **remember, remain, reach out, and rest**. They offer security to the believer in the midst of the apostasy of the last days. As you examine those principles, you will understand how to enjoy God's blessings even if everything seems to be falling apart.

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