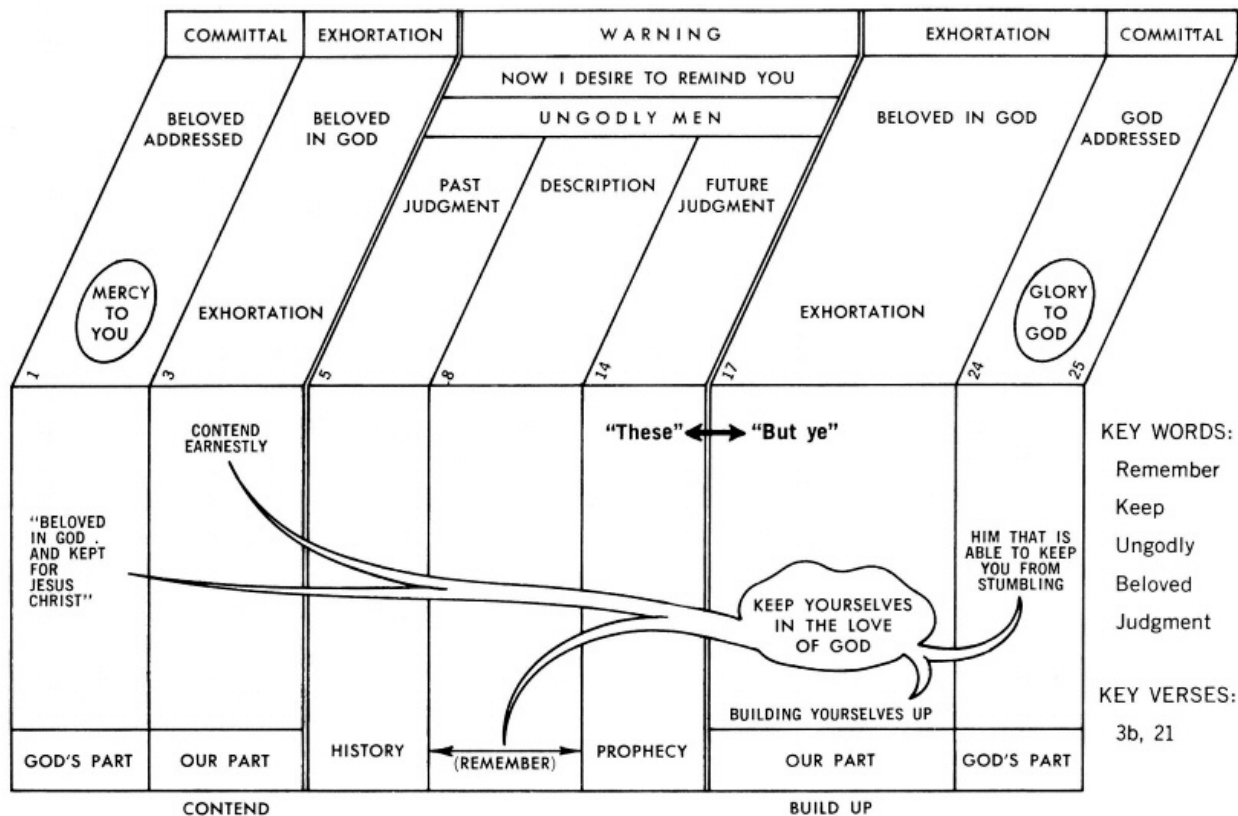


Week 13 – Jude

A Call to Persevere

“But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.” (Jude 20-21,ESV)

Jude Topic Structure



Overview

Written somewhere between AD 60 and 80, the purpose of this letter was to defend the apostolic faith against false teachings that were arising in the churches. The Gnostics viewed everything spiritual as good and everything material as evil. They cultivated their "spiritual" lives and allowed their flesh to do anything it liked. This resulted in all kinds of hedonism and lawlessness.

The first sixteen verses tell us **why** we must contend for the faith against apostate teachers. The remaining verses tell **how** we must contend for the faith by showing our true resources.

In contending for the faith, we must keep ourselves in the love of God. We must love, even while we contend against the errors of false teachers. We must love their souls even while we oppose their words and deplore their ways.

Bewilderment, remorse, doubt, danger, and need deceive others who need "*snatching out of the fire.*"

➤ **Jude 1-2** – “Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are

called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you."

"To those who are called" (Greek: [klétos](#) means "to call"). Literally, *klétos* means "invited" or "welcomed" and was originally used to designate those invited to a banquet. God has invited believers in the proclamation of the Gospel to obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom through Christ. As used in the epistles, "called" is synonymous with "chosen."

- **Jude 3** – *"Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints."*

Jude had originally intended to write a letter containing a positive presentation of the doctrines of the Christian faith. However, the Holy Spirit laid upon his heart the necessity of writing in defense of the faith.

While the salvation of those to whom he wrote was not in jeopardy, false teachers preaching and living out a counterfeit gospel were misleading those who needed to hear the true gospel. Jude wrote this urgent imperative for Christians to wage war against error in all forms and fight strenuously for the truth, like a soldier entrusted with the sacred task of guarding a holy treasure ([1 Timothy 6:12](#)).

Scripture repeatedly reminds us we are in a "life and death" spiritual battle ([Ephesians 6:10-13](#), [2 Timothy 4:7](#)), a competition ([1 Corinthians 9:24-25](#)) against the forces of evil. Jude later reminds his readers that one fights for the faith not only by opposing false teachers but also by prayer, mercy, and love ([vv. 17-23](#)).

In the name of tolerance, many ignore questionable teachings in the modern church. Jude says defending the faith and warning against false teaching is a sign of love for the brethren.

- **Jude 4** – *"For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."*

The devil has two ways to destroy the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and the church. First, through *persecution*. Second, through *infiltration*. John is addressing the second of these - *infiltration*. These false teachers are not just misguided people but intentional destroyers, "designated for this condemnation."

"Certain people" quietly and stealthily insinuated themselves into the church. They were the men for whom judgment was waiting. They work from the inside – like termites, destroying the foundation of a building. See similar descriptions in [2 Peter 2:1](#) (*secretly bring in*) and [Galatians 2:4](#) (*false brethren secretly brought in*).

Similarly, Paul had warned the elders of the church at Ephesus:

"I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them." ([Acts 20:29-30](#))

These false teachers preach debauchery, excess (especially sexual excesses), and absence of restraint, and exhibit an insatiable desire for pleasure. Spiritual leaders in the churches had grown careless and complacent. To wake them up, Jude had to "blow the trumpet" ([Joel 2:1](#)).

Our Lord and His Apostles all warned that false teachers would arise, yet the churches did not heed the warnings. Sad to say, some churches are not heeding the warnings today.

Jude 5 – *"Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a*

people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.”

- All preaching within the Christian church is not so much bringing to men new truth as it is confronting them with truth they already know but have forgotten or are disregarding.

Having remarked that God will surely judge such men (“*were designated for this Condemnation*” – v. 4), Jude now illustrates the truth that divine judgment upon such flagrant evildoers is not unique. He cites three historic instances that establish the certainty of the fate that awaits such rebels against God’s established order:

1. The apostasy in Israel.
2. The apostasy among the angels.
3. The sins of Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. [5-7](#)).

Israel’s apostasy stands as a warning to all those who think that an initial commitment secures their future destiny without ongoing obedience. Subsequently, if any of Jude’s readers dared to follow the false teachers, they, too, would face the discipline of God. God’s revelation of His love and mercy in Christ Jesus will not hinder Him from judging such wicked individuals now.

- **Jude 6-7** – *“And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day – just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.”*

We can be almost certain Jude is referring to the sin of the angels in [Genesis 6:1-4](#). The sin the angels committed, according to the Jewish tradition, was sexual intercourse with the daughters of men. Apparently, Jude also understood these verses in the same way.

This text, “*just as*” ([Jude 1:7](#)), forges a parallel between the sin of the angels and that of Sodom and Gomorrah ([Genesis 19:1-11](#)). The implication is that sexual sin was prominent in both instances.

Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities took their fill of sexual sin and strayed after perverted sexual immorality. How the angels, and Sodom and Gomorrah paid the penalty of eternal fire is Jude’s warning to the churches.

“But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.” ([Matthew 11:24](#))

- **Jude 8** – *“Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones.”*

“*Relying on their dreams*” refers to prophecies that support or justify their ungodly doctrines (“*prophets or dreamers*” in [Deuteronomy 13:1-5](#), also “*false prophets*” in [2 Peter 2:1](#)). This description reminds us of those so-called modern-day “*prophets*” who get a “word from God” and yet prove over time to be morally corrupt.

These immoral dreamers defiled the flesh, despised dominion, and spoke evil of good things. They rejected all restraint, claimed they had the liberty to do whatever they wanted, and when rebuked, they trashed those who honestly rebuked them.

- **Jude 9** – *“But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.”*

The thrust of [Jude 1:8-10](#) contrasts the apostate's behavior with the archangel Michael's. Whether they be divine, angelic, or human, the apostates “*blaspheme the glorious ones.*” These

apostates took actions that even Archangel Michael rejected. Rather than pronounce judgment on another angel, Michael (powerful enough to cast Satan out of heaven! [Revelation 12:7-9](#)), left it in God's hands to pronounce judgment. Michael would not take the law into his hands, as the apostate false teachers were doing.

- **Jude 10** – *“But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively.”*

Spiritual matters are beyond the apostate's unregenerate capacity to understand. They continuously slander and rail against all of which they have no knowledge. They speak contemptuously of these spiritual realities because they do not personally “know” them. These apostates are spiritually ignorant and intellectually arrogant because Satan has blinded them ([2 Corinthians 4:4](#)). These false teachers, not guided by true intelligence (because they cannot think rightly), act like instinct-driven animals. Being deceived, they know only their animalistic cravings and base passions – [2 Timothy 3:12-13](#)).

- **Jude 11** – *“Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion.”*

Why is Jude referencing these Old Testament characters? Jude elaborates on the sins of these men because his readers knew the Old Testament Scriptures well.

Reacquaint yourself with *Cain* ([Genesis 4:3-12](#)), *Balaam's error* ([Numbers 22-25](#), [2 Peter 2:15-16](#)), and *Korah's rebellion* ([Numbers 16:1-35](#)).

All three men had scriptural light. All three refused to obey the light of God's revealed truth. All three perished. Similarly, these apostates in Jude rebelled against light and would receive the severe judgment described in Hebrews.

“For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.” ([Hebrews 10:26-27](#))

- **Jude 12-13** – *“These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.”*

Jude uses six metaphors to describe these false teachers at the church's “love feasts” or “Lord's Supper”:

1. “hidden reefs,”
2. “shepherds,”
3. “waterless clouds,”
4. “fruitless trees,”
5. “wild waves,”
6. “wandering stars.”

As a concrete manifestation of obedience to the Lord's command to love one another ([Acts 2:42-47](#)), “love feasts” serve as a practical expression of the communion that characterizes the church's life.

These apostates shepherded only themselves. Their only interest was self-interest and self-gratification – at the expense of anyone else. Their own schemes and lusts took precedence over the tending of the flock of God.

- **Jude 14-15** – *“It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”*

Jude quotes from the apocryphal Book of Enoch. ([1 Enoch 1.9](#)).

As a side note, Jude's quotation from Enoch was the chief reason for the Book of Jude's rejection from the Biblical Canon for several years. However, by the 4th century A.D., the entire church fully accepted Jude's letter.

In the flood, God sent rain. In the final judgment, God will send His Son to judge the ungodly world. There will be a perfect prosecution but no defendant defense.

“Every mouth will be closed and all will be accountable to God.” ([Romans 3:19](#))

There will be a sentence passed, but no appeal process, for there is no higher court than God's. Finally, there will be a final and forever punishment ([Revelation 20:11-15](#)). The entire procedure will be just. The Son of God, the Righteous One ([Acts 3:14](#), [Acts 22:14](#)), will be in charge.

- **Jude 16** – *“These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.”*

Jude now elaborates on some of the harsh words in verse 15. The New Testament depicts these “*grumblers and malcontents*” as individuals dominated by a smoldering discontent expressing itself in muttered undertones, not in loud, outspoken outcries. They are “*habitual murmurers*” ([AMP](#)), “*constant gripers, never satisfied*” ([TLB](#)), and “*the complainers, the bellyachers*” ([MSG](#)).

“... *own sinful desires*,” which are perverted and unrestrained and which originate from our corrupted, fallen, anti-God sin nature.

“... *loud mouthed boasters*” (Greek: [huperogkos](#) means arrogant, boastful, pompous) is used of great or even excessive size, and in later writers also used it for big words and arrogant speech and demeanor. The speech of these men described as full of high-sounding verbosity without substance. Also see [2 Peter 2:18](#).

“... *showing favoritism*”: they show a warm interest in others, not to help them but to exploit them.

“And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.” ([2 Peter 2:3](#), ESV)

Jude identifies the apostates. He exposes their character to warn believers of their true nature and their final destiny. He was laying the groundwork to call his readers to action against these ungodly men and their practices.

- **Jude 17** – *“But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

In the preceding verses, the aim was to expose and condemn the evil men intruding into the churches. Here, the aim is to provide faithful believers with a strategy to combat the apostates effectively. Jude turns to provide loving guidance and encouragement to the faithful amid apostasy.

- **Jude 18** – *“They said to you, ‘In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.’”*

Jude quotes the apostle Peter's words spoken elsewhere...

“Knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.” ([2 Peter 3:3](#))

What were the scoffers mocking? Reading on in 2 Peter clarifies that these individuals ridicule and treat with contempt the Bible's repeated promise of Jesus' Second Coming.

“They will say, ‘Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.’” ([2 Peter 3:4](#), ESV)

Before Satan can substitute his lies, he must get rid of the truth of God's Word. If he cannot argue it away, he will laugh it away or mock it, and he can usually convince somebody to laugh or mock with him. Those who live according to their own ungodly lusts love to mock those who want to please God. Jude wants Christians to expect this kind of mocking, so it won't surprise them.

- **Jude 19** – *“It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.”*

Jude emphasizes these apostates are not *unifiers* but *dividers*. They divide the church, setting up one against another.

The Spirit guides the lives of those who are sensitive to the Spirit (Greek: [pneuma](#)). The physical life (Greek: [psuché](#)) is the only thing that guides some people. Man shares physical life with every living thing. The spirit makes a man different from the rest of creation and a child of God.

People who rank the amassing of material things as the supreme end of life cannot understand generosity. People who think nothing is more important than the satisfaction of the sex urge cannot understand the meaning of chastity. A person who has never thought beyond this world cannot understand the things of God.

- **Jude 20-21** – *“But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.”*

Remember, **“but”** marks a strategic "change of direction." Always consider what the writer is contrasting. Jude is contrasting the false with the true believers, the ungodly with the godly, and the children of the devil with the children of God. In [vv. 20-23](#), the writer instructs his readers how they are to contend earnestly for the faith. From the mockers who tear others down in [v. 19](#), Jude turns to the beloved who build others up.

Christians must exercise discernment and protect themselves from being led astray. We must remain on the path of sanctification. Doing so involves first building ourselves up on our most holy faith. We must become doctrinally strong to recognize error and effectively fight the battle for truth.

Keep oneself in the love of God by building on God's truth through the scriptures, guided by the Spirit of God in prayer, and waiting with an eternal perspective.

- **Jude 22-23** – *“And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.”*

These three groups seem to describe a progressively greater involvement with the apostates:

First: *Doubters* were wavering under the influence of the false teachers. These should not be rejected or ignored. Such people can be reclaimed.

Second: Those *in the fire* are close to being consumed by the teaching and behavior of the false teachers. We must not give up on them. Their lives can still be salvaged from the fire that threatens to destroy them.

Third: Those with *stained garments* have already been defiled by the false teachers. But they may still be redeemed.

Even to the worst heretics, even to those most far gone in error and to those whose beliefs are most dangerous, the Christian has a binding duty to save. Christians themselves have received God's unmerited mercy, so they must display a similar mercy to people who are wavering. In view of God's offer of grace to all ([Titus 2:11](#)), we must diligently have mercy on all others.

John Wesley snatched from the fire.

Now, a word of caution.

Before a person can rescue others, they must be strong in the faith. Their feet must be firm on the dry land before they can throw a lifebelt to the person who is likely to be swept away. The simple fact is that the rescue of those in error is not for everyone to attempt. Those who would win others for Christ must themselves be very sure of Him, and those who would fight the disease of sin must themselves have the strong antiseptic of a healthy faith. Ignorance can never be met with ignorance, nor even with partial knowledge; it can be met only by the affirmation, "*I know whom I have believed.*" ([2 Timothy 1:12](#))

Jude 24-25 – *"Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen."*

This divine doxology serves as a reminder of the divine power available to believers as they contend against heretics, false teachers, and apostates. Note the striking contrast of apostates kept by God for judgment ([v. 6](#)) while keeping the saints from stumbling ([v. 24](#))! Although the believers observe the apostasy of heretics, they know God will protect His own and keep their salvation intact.

Jude deliberately emphasizes that it is God alone who keeps them! Apostasy will come into the church, but God "*is able*" to keep the Church! Three times the New Testament praises the God who "*is able*."

Here Jude praises God, who "*is able*" to keep us from stumbling.

In Romans, Paul praises God, who "*is able*" to strengthen us.

"Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long age." ([Romans 16:25](#), ESV)

In Ephesians, Paul praises God, who "*is able*" to do far more than we can ever ask or even dream.

"Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us." ([Ephesians 3:20](#), ESV)

Jude Commentary – Precept Austin

https://www.preceptaustin.org/jude_commentaries#jc