



We see at the start of this short letter that Jude reveals that he had intended to write concerning the “common salvation” yet he was compelled to change the focus of the letter which we have now before us. If a theme is to be chosen for this epistle it would seem to best be derived from his opening comments, especially the admonition that they “earnestly contend for the faith.” (1:3) There are two general ideas with this command, that of fighting for the faith to be protected, and as it is in its purest form, its purity be preserved from errorists (those seeking to re-purpose/reform it for their own agendas). The second idea included in this would be the fighting for the cause/commands/purposes of the faith (actually living it out, truly believing it (reminded of the consequences of those not believing - 1:5).

Jude will build his case with a variety of examples, such as the angels who did not “remain at home” (1:6), branching out on their own (following their own will/desires/priorities), being their own authority (out of rebellion against God) and the consequences of their life choices, followed by the example of Sodom and Gomorrah (1:7) and their version of apostasy in following after (living for) the indulging in “gross immorality”. Both of these representing the enemy/opponent of defecting from God (ultimate apostasy), His Word/will, His ways and norms. The issue that motivated this letter was the “creeps” (those who “crept in” in verse 4), and these coming in unnoticed. Their result being “licentiousness” (turning, as it were, the grace of God into a license to sin). Jude is more focused on various actions/pursuits leading to apostasy (defecting from the faith that they have known or associated with), and those that come in to cause this defection. Some of these have been called “libertines,” a label given to those who are “free thinkers”, especially in things related to sexual sins. They are those driven by sensuality (feelings), these natural (sin infected inclinations) being how they define what “truth” there is to be had (certain only of uncertainty, and so “everything if permissible”)

Jude will expound on their influence and their empty promises (1:12). They will promise much and deliver little to nothing, and certainly nothing of lasting value (other than despair, a life numbness, a life purpose of skepticism or unrestrained bitterness against the truth of the Lord (1:16)). The letter will go on to identify who/what these really are, answering why they should not be trusted and followed (allowed to influence). Jude will stress their needed, protective “building yourselves up on your most holy faith” and this with prayer, all with a focus “keeping yourselves in the love of God” and excitedly waiting for the return of Christ in “mercy” (vs. 20-21). The letter will end with a reminder of the only reliable constant that will preserve us (ensuring we will persevere) to blamelessness and true joy.

I. The Reason for this Letter - Earnestly Contend for the Faith - vs. 1-4

A. The writer, the greeting (to “the called”) - mercy, peace, and love growing - vs. 1-2

1. Jude, the slave of Jesus Christ, who also identifies himself as the “brother of James” - vs. 1a

A “slave” finds their purpose in the purposes of another, and exists to learn/know and do the will of their master/owner- their success is defined not in their independence, but in their loyal obedience

James was the earthly half-brother of Jesus, but the spiritual relationship was now primary - see II Cor. 5:14-17 - the spiritual now outranks the earthly relationships

- a. His name in Greek is “Ιούδας” which is typically translated as “Judas” and is believed that it is translated “Jude” so most readers won’t be confused with Judas Iscariot (negative association)
- b. Jude first identifies himself as “slave of Jesus Christ” - it’s the word “δοῦλος” clearly describing one owned by another, whose purpose and life are defined in the service of another - this may seem to be a demeaning, self-deprecating title, but even in Rome, if one was a “slave” of someone of great importance and authority, it was a prestigious and even authoritative title
- c. He was the brother of James, who is also then narrowed down to the James who was the brother of Jesus (so Jude would also be the Lord’s earthly half-brother) - Mat. 13:55, Mk. 6:3
- d. James was noted to be the pastor/leader of the church in Jerusalem and is believed to have already been martyred by the time Jude wrote this. This may have been part of the reason Jude wrote this, now taking on some of the “slack” with James now gone

2. To the “beloved,” “kept,” and “called” - three relational truths for protection from distraction - vs. 1b

Paul dealt with this in a similar way with the Ephesians in 4:1, where he stressed that they should walk “in a manner worthy” of such a calling - these are far more than just words... they describe us in reality, so to live/think as if they are not true is to be deluded

- a. Jude begins with more than just a standard greeting - his choice of words is fitting with the point of the letter - he is writing to those (the Church) who are (and must see themselves as they are) commissioned (called), loved more than any other could be loved, and in it for the purpose of their Lord (note also vs. 24-25)
- b. In the Greek, the word for “called” is last in this sentence, making the other descriptors point to it - so the “beloved of God, kept in Christ, the called”

We are not, then, to ever see ourselves as “self-definers” - we truly “discover ourselves” by means of God’s revealed truth

Much of the theological content we learn from Scripture is given to help ward-off doubting thoughts caused by the inconsistent, wavering, falling-away participants in “church”

There are some who note the seemingly odd use of “ἐν Θεῷ Πατρὶ ἡγαπημένοις” (in God the Father having been loved)- the “in” versus the expected “by” is not problematic considering Jesus’ use of the idea in John 17:21

see also I Thes. 5:23-24 - “He who calls” will preserve - this understanding and awareness of our security and its source is essential in warding off those seeking to lure away by sensual means or by scare tactics - we can differentiate our feelings as either for “the flesh” or from our new nature

Even as those positionally sanctified and justified, there is still the practical outworking of all three - we daily should be conscious of our need for God’s mercy, peace and love, for no other earthly source could/can provide them in full measure

In the way Jude “wishes” this for them, he is drawing attention to all three, each being vital to understand in fighting off the errorists (who abhor their need for mercy, play off of anxiety and redefine love)

A merciful Father is approachable when we become aware of our sin - we need not hide as our original parents did

We have confidence in this peace because we are at peace with God (the ruler of all) because of His mercy - when our sin is seen as unforgiven or unforgivable we will not be at peace

We who are the called (chosen) should always be aware of the exceptional mercy that has been freely given to us (we being so undeserving) with the result of peace because we are so clearly loved

We as believers are to actually believe - having the true Truth we are without excuse to trust our doubts more

- c. As “the called” they were to see themselves (as we) defined by this - this “call” is not like the others within mankind, since it is what is commonly referred to in theological terms as the “effectual” call” (as in being synonymous with “the elect” as Peter used in I Peter 1:2)
- d. The draw of heretics, Libertines, and the like will be less alluring if we are continually conscious of who/what we are and why - a lazy, impressionable (by the draw of this world/age) approach to life is at the core of distracted believers - it may be that Jude used the word “called” with the purpose that many who were around the truly called would be drawn away, proving their lack of a genuine, actual call - compare this to I Peter 2:9-12
- e. As the called, these (and we) are so because of the love of God the Father - many would have likely expected this to be the “love of Christ” and some variants of Christianity (such as Roman Catholicism) picture the Father as mostly unapproachable (and why another go-between (Jesus or Mary) is supposedly needed) - sadly, other “loves” are placed more prominently than God’s
- f. This call’s reason/motive was by the Father’s love (and so not by our merit, II Timothy 1:8-9, Titus 3:4-5) - the “election” by the Father is not a “popular election” based on our virtue - compare this to I John 4:13-19 - all other “gods” or god-concepts must be placated (appeased) - many errorists will come, religiously/spiritually with ideas of how to please God and some, with more of a sensual motive, will go further... saying that God is pleased when we please ourselves
- g. These called, loved of the Father, are then assured of the protection of the Father, “keeping” them (guarded, protectively secured) for Jesus Christ (in keeping with John 17:11) - this being “kept” is key for these to remember and understand for at least two reasons: (1). That they belong to Christ (they are His, held in reserve and are not to consider any other, and (2). in this, there is an inheritance “reserved” for them/us by the Father (causing us to be born again)- I Peter 1:3-4

3. A greeting of hope of God’s mercy, peace, and love in abundance - vs. 2

- a. These three gifts of God, stemming from His character, may seem to be a needless desire if a focus is strictly on these being given anyway by God’s grace (to the undeserved and yet favored) - but such a perspective does not allow for the ongoing applications of these - true, we have God’s mercy, peace and love in our salvation, but all three are ongoing in their practical applications
- b. Jude did pray/wish that these three be “multiplied,” likely also that they would recognize their constant need for all three in their lives, and then be looking for them and grateful for them as they are evermore aware of them being applied to them each day
- c. Mercy is a word directed at the pitiful (those to be pitied), and so in need of compassion - if we are cognizant of our sin (as we should be), we should be always grateful (not presumptive) for it - the common definition for mercy is “God not giving what we deserve” - we, technically, need not ask God for forgiveness (though this is not necessarily wrong), but we most certainly should be thanking Him for it (forgiveness)! - compare to Psalm 51:1-3
- d. The constant awareness for God’s mercy not only keeps us humble, but also keeps us open/honest before Him - so if anything, for instance, in this letter particularity convicts (exposes) some wrong thinking/acting on their part, they will not hesitate to flee back to God - it will be the proud that will wince at the thought of their need for mercy
- e. The second in this “wish list” is peace (a calmness of spirit/soul) - it protects/guards against panic and worry (anxiety), finding its source in faith in God (and this fully legitimate because of Christ) - such peace will also be essential with the coming onslaught of the enemy - it is most likely that Peter and Paul were also dead by this time, so there would have naturally been an inclination to begin to worry when their teachers were dying off (being killed), while the enemy was seeming growing in influence - peace comes when we know they can only be as “big” as God allows
- f. Finishing off this triad is love (ἀγάπη), the highest form of love (it being a willful, determined preference and care for another) - there will come times when being attacked by the opposition and feeling alone, that it will be empowering to know/be assured that we are loved (favored, cared for) in abundance - this is also important to dwell on so that we also will be loving (being so loved we are freed to love (not needing to focus on self))
- g. Any counterfeits of any of these three are to be obvious - this is why so much will be stressed in this letter in the defense of the faith against the oncoming distorters - a contented believer is far less temptable than the discontent, disoriented and discouraged
- h. “Note, God is ready to supply us with all grace, and a fullness in each grace. If we are straitened [hindered], we are not straitened in him, but in ourselves.” Matthew Henry

B. Challenged to be on the offensive for the “once for all” faith - vs. 3-4

1. Refocusing on the need to join in the fight (taking nothing for granted) - vs. 3

It is this view of “faith” that has lent to so many abuses and distortions throughout Church history

It is a salvation we all share in common in Christ - it is personal, but not individually exclusive

It is out of genuine love that subjects like this are dealt with

Many people, as they face old age, fear becoming irrelevant in the eyes of their generation and are (or maybe should be) motivated to reemphasize the fundamentals

All others are to be so overwhelmed that not only are they defeated, they cannot truly compete - true grace given to sinners (the totally undeserving) out does all other religious systems “out of the gate”

“Saints” being those set apart (sanctified) in Christ by His work of righteousness alone - it was this core point that was in the cross hairs of the scope of the enemies - either by means of self-righteousness or God’s grace turned to license to sin

It should be a clear contradiction to see those supposedly studying and defending the faith who do not have lives (especially morals) affected by The Faith

It is conceivable today that many are in this category and are not aware that they are - they see it as simply their “take” (which they feel entitled to, but it is just as dangerous since it lacks actual Biblical authority)

Many that are startled to see of digression into perverse sins, fail to see the connection all the way back to “excused” idleness in the face of Scriptural commands (to act) - not doing what we ought will lead to more sin... sin does not stay idle

This ought to be a strong deterrent against faddish doctrines and movements and even against personal doctrines pushed by us for recognition or to excuse self

- a. It has become too common for “the faith” or “your faith” to be looked upon as subjective (as in how one believes, what they personally believe) versus an objective faith (as in “the faith” one not subject to popular or even personal “belief”)
- b. Jude expresses his earnestness in writing to them, to begin with, regarding “our common salvation” (likely something like a general overview (a rehearsal) of the salvation (security)) but changed his topic/subject due to his sense of urgency - this is different than the other epistles in that he indicates his intended focus but uses the change in emphasis as an emphasis
- c. Because they are truly “beloved” (in the vocative, not only addressing them now, but using it to begin the content (draw their attention to it)) - this how you talk to the “beloved”
- d. Jude was “making every effort” to write to them... it was a priority. It may have been motivated because of his age and he knew his time was short - if so, it is a noble motivation to take at least one more effort to steer their direction right before he was gone
- e. His emotional response to this need is seen in his use of “felt the necessity” (from ἀνάγκη describing pressure, urgency even distress) and “appealing” (admonishing with urgency) - it was likely alarming not just how the heretics were infiltrating, but how quickly
- f. The admonition was that they “contend” (and that with much fervor) and this contending similar to that in athletic events (where one overpowers or outruns (so out performs) all others) and here, more to be associated with that of warfare/battle - it is crucial that we remember we’re not fighting with the faith- the objective is clear... know what THE FAITH is and then contend for it - again, there is a simplistic clarity that needs to be up front, the basics/foundation of The Faith - too many fight for subjective nuances of their take on The Faith - compare with Php. 1:27-30
- g. This was far more important than many seem to recognize today - it was a key point as Paul was ready to face death, while assessing his life work - see II Tim. 4:6-8
- h. Jude clearly defines The Faith as the one “once for all handed down to the saints” - the sense of this description is “once for all time” (not to be altered, not subject to change and non-negotiable)
- i. It’s “The Faith” once for all “delivered to the saints” (all those made so in Christ, and those of The Faith will know who “the saints” is in reference to)
- j. The underlying Greek, describing the faith, reads like this, “...the once for all having been delivered to the saints faith.” (Heibert) - it was delivered to the saints via the Apostles who had it “delivered” to them - each generation of the Church is to carefully/meticulously pass it on, striving to keep it free from alterations, keeping it as clear as it was delivered - no embellishment
- k. It is also believed that Jude refers to them as the “holy ones (saints) to counter the emphasis of the Libertines (who would have them live “free lives” of sin, calculating grace as the currency to spend to free them to a life of sin without judgment)

2. Beware of “church creeps”, pre-condemned Christ deniers, who are grace distorters - vs. 4

- a. The reason is now given for the need to contend for the faith - “certain persons have crept in” (“to slip in secretly as if by a side door” RWP) - these are ones stealthy, not only in their entrance/influence, but in their agenda - it generally refers to those fully intentional on influencing the church (congregation) in its teaching, focus and priorities with theirs
- b. Another idea behind “crept” is their ability to blend in after joining with the congregation (they seem to fit in at first) - they likely use the same approach Paul warned the Colossians against in using their “plausible arguments” (Col. 2:4) - this is part of their lure... they seem to be “one of us” and have such “good” ideas, many of which seem to improve (practically and aesthetically)
- c. Yet, at the core (and the end result) of their agenda/teaching is condemnation, and that on those revealed to be “ungodly,” distorting the idea of God’s grace to make it freedom (license) to sin (not just active rebellion, but passive disobedience/irresponsibility)
- d. Before Jude lays out their true character, he points out their foreordained end - these are those to seriously and deliberately avoid - they were “long beforehand marked out for this condemnation” (a judgment yet to be detailed and demonstrated from the past) - note verses 14- 15
- e. There is debate as to whether this “long ago” means before time, to in the Old Testament or even possibly referring to the warnings of Peter and Paul (though not likely) - it really has no impact on this text since it just indicates that such persons have a judgment that was preset (automatic)

Compare with Gal. 6:7-9,
Rom. 2:6-11, I Pet. 1:14-19

"...the seed of irreverence was
already producing a crop of
corruption. Such men are
headed for sure judgment."
Hiebert

"Jude would not countenance
[accept] the contemporary
notion that meaning of texts
is altered with every new
reading." Gene L. Green

Not only our sin, but our nat-
ural inclination to sin must be
constantly restrained (unyield-
ed to) mainly by living as we
ought versus how we might
feel at any given moment

"Not sinning" is not so
much (here) a matter of
keeping salvation as much
as it is the expected obedi-
ence to our Lord

Every sin for one in Christ is
an act of denial of His author-
ity (so we should call it what
it is in our confessions to
Him) - we are never to seek
to deal with the sin issue by
using grace to excuse it!

II. Reminders of Biblical (Historical) Examples of God's Judgment on Sin - vs. 5-7

A. Jude will give three examples of how God judges sin - sin is never to be taken lightly - note Prov. 14:9

1. It might be argued in opposition asking, "What about Christians who sin?" - How does this apply?

True believers will never yield
to the apostate thinking of
grace being license to sin,
in particular, because of the
"newness of life they have"
and because of this same
enabling grace (to keep from
being ruled by sin)

- a. Jude is not making a case for the sins of true believers, since those are truly forgiven in Christ (as he had planned to write about at the onset of this letter) - the case Jude is making and the examples he is using are those whose lives were characterized by sin (it was "who" they were)
- b. John had made the case for this in I John 3:1-10 - Jude is making a case to demonstrate the opposite "evidence" to counter the heretics that had crept in to influence them (as if sin not an issue)

2. Jude begins in a way something like we would say, "Let me remind you..." - vs. 5

Much (if not most... after a
while) of what we read and
hear in Scripture will be
reminders - it's not always
that we have truly forgotten
as much as it is we just haven't
been thinking on what we
ought and are distracted -
II Pet. 1:12-25

- a. He starts this way with a two-fold purpose - first, actually helping them remember undeniable examples (which should have been obvious) from Scripture and, second, to somewhat rebuke them for having been distracted (for what they learned was to be "once for all"... not open to debate)
- b. The phrase, "...though you know all things once for all..." is an accurate depiction of the Greek - Jude is not saying they know everything, but that they know everything they need to know (they have been adequately taught) and what they have been taught is settled (not subject to change), and so the "once for all" - Scripture is sufficient! - see also I John 2:18-21

3. There were those practically saved by the Lord yet were later destroyed - vs. 5

Jude will use three examples:
Israel out of Egypt, the angels
out of Heaven and then those
destroyed in their pursuit of
excessive sin

- a. Jude first uses an example they should be presently considering, how there was a group (Israel) who were miraculously delivered "out of the land of Egypt" - these were particularly advantaged and treated with special treatment and insight into God and His way
- b. The "Lord" (some manuscripts have "Jesus", so we will take it as "the Lord Jesus") having saved "a people" out of their slavery and cruel treatment, and yet ended up destroying a large number of them.. because they "did not believe" - note Heb. 3:16-19
- c. There is a clear distinction between knowing (the facts/material) and still not believing it

It's significant that Jude starts with this illustration - here we have disbelief as the great sin (one which many now and likely then don't see as much of a sin at all) - see also Heb. 3:12-4:2

It is here where the "big sins" find their start

Take note of Heb. 10:23-31 - there is a very clear sense in this text that a life that once was "Christian" that now pushes on into a life of rebellion/sin, there is nothing but dread/doom ahead

"Proper abode" is from "τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον" (the own dwelling) as in saying it was their place, the place they belonged

We need not tie this to Gen. 6 (as though that references angels intermarrying with women to produce "giants") - the safest conclusion is that these are a particular set of angels that sinned (with Satan or after) that have a special judgment already in place (being served, or yet to be served in full)

These first two examples are of those who should have (from how we would normally look upon it) not drifted or plunged into a life of sin (self-will)

As has oft been stated, "The essence of sin is self" - at the heart of sin is the pursuit of self-rule (though it's all a lie)

Genesis 13 tells of the choice of the region of Sodom and Gomorrah that Lot chose to live in when he and Abraham parted ways - it was described as "... well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD." - it is, to this day, a barren wasteland... because of sin

For Jude to use such an illustration may indicate there were some seeking to justify such behavior or advocating for its participants (as still being somehow "Christian")

Homosexuality was certainly part of their "gross immorality"

- d. Jude will use these examples to stress that God judges sin - examples that should be known (especially by these and even other reminders, such as the fossil record, demonstrate God's dealings with sin)
- e. Here we have Israel, after being saved out of Egypt (again, practically saved in this life) were the same who were "subsequently" (literally in the Greek it is "the second time") destroyed by the same Lord - this is in reference to Number 14:22-32 where, after hearing the negative report of the 10 spies (against the positive reports of Joshua and Caleb) gave up, refusing as it were, to press on (obey)
- f. The disbelief here was demonstrated (worked out) in yielding to their fear (using seemingly impossible obstacles as an excuse to disobey) - this is not uncommon today where disregard of clear commands and detailed priorities are normal, resulting in a life with self as the lead
- g. Their end was to be "destroyed" (killed, left to die, done away with) - so, a life characterized by disbelief, leading to self-rule will inevitably lead to destruction/death - many work to make the point this does not need to indicate eternal destruction (the "second death"), but it would be too risky to fight for this handling - a life characterized like this is likely doomed eternally also
4. Even angels were not exempt from the sure and harsh judgment of God on sin - vs. 6
 - a. There is much chatter regarding who exactly these angels were, but too often to the detriment of the flow of thought (and purpose) of what Jude is walking through
 - b. What we know for certain - there were angels who were with God, having God-given responsibilities/authority (ἀρχή here used of a "domain" or a type of rule), yet for some unrevealed reason, they left their domain, and as a result, left their "proper abode"
 - c. It was these, even these, that God has literally (listed earlier in the Greek) "into the judgment of the great day" (εἰς κρίσιν μεγάλης ἡμέρας) has kept/secured them - these who did not "keep" their position/place, He (God) has kept - for judgment
 - d. Angels, positionally, had an apparent advantage of seeing God. being with Him, serving Him and yet, were not exempt from God's judgment of sin - the Israelites had been "saved" from Egypt and then destroyed in their disbelief (even with all they had seen/experienced)
 - e. Why, then, would one seeing themselves as "saved" believe they could live in sin and rebellion like disbelieving Israel or as powerful and privileged angels who were not spared? Clearly, Jude's point is to stress and illustrate the thought is absurd! - It is dangerous presumption
 - f. Is this a case for losing salvation? No, but it is a case for false believers (professing without possessing) to beware - just identifying with Christ and His church, just by knowing much of the Bible will not save from judgment - true salvation not only rescues from sin's judgment/curse, but also from sin's power now (freed from sin - Rom. 6:1-2) - note also Col. 3:3
 - g. It is incredible to consider how Jude present this example - angels, who had it so well, with such a privileged calling and a perfect abode, still sought something different - they left their own "domain" (sphere) for another, possibly out of proud ambition - the "great day of judgment" is coming!
 - h. Peter also uses this in II Peter 2:1-12 (possibly, this is where Jude took his point)
5. The historical example of God's fiery judgment on unrestrained, sexual sin - vs. 7
 - a. Sodom and Gomorrah were notorious for their exploits into sexual perversions, lives filled with these pursuits - their lives were dominated by their feelings/passions/sensuality
 - b. Note, first, how this verse ends - this is "exhibited as an example" the word for "example" being "δείγμα" (something seen, a thing shown), for, in contrast to the first two examples, this one they could still see the results (the area surrounding the Dead Sea and the Dead Sea itself)
 - c. These, "in the same way" (referencing the two previous examples of rebellion), exhibited their sin, not in disbelief (for they were never as privileged as Israel and the Angels), not in leaving their glorious, God-ordained life in Heaven, but used their sexuality as a life purpose/focus
 - d. These cities were known for indulging "... in gross immorality..." and "went after strange flesh..." - these terms, "ἐκπορνεύω" (describing not only sexual practice, but a life given over to it) and having pursued "σαρκὸς ἐτέρας" (flesh of a different kind), describing unnatural sexual practices, those seeking (at the least) "other" people (of all types and sexes) up to something akin to the misuse of the body and sexuality altogether (as seen in Rom. 1:27)
 - e. "Sodomy" is a word derived from this city and its practices and, essentially, described an unnatural use of the body (or body parts)

The judgment on sin will always be greater than we expect (now and in eternity)

f. This “example” then concluding with the ultimate end of all these apostates; “undergoing the punishment of eternal fire” - literally it is a fire/burning that is eternal (it is present now) that these will be “held under” (from ὑπέχουσαι) - compare to Mt. 25:41-46 and II Pet. 2:6

B. Jude’s point with all three, that regardless the starting point, God will judge sin - there must never be an acceptance of the idea that God’s grace will/can equate to all-permitted sin (in time, type, and quantity)

1. The fire God used was not, itself, eternal but provided a type of fire that is coming, eternal (never ending) for those who’s life is “of sin” - many work so hard to lessen the fear of an eternal fire judgment, that they take the focus of the true use of God’s grace, compromise the idea of His holiness, and lend to condemned sinners feeling unafraid, still in their sin
2. Note Jeremiah 23:14-23 as an Old Testament example of not only sin being pursued, but of prophets who stood as prophets of God and yet led Judah into sin

III. Disillusioned, Lust Driven, Self-Recognized Authorities, Revilers of True Authority - vs. 8-16

A. Ignorant yet dangerously bold blasphemers - vs. 8-10 (note the parallel in II Peter 2:10)

1. “In the same way...” - Jude now unites these Libertine creeps with the previous examples - vs. 8

There is never a scarcity of those making themselves out to be something they are not- the great revealer is how they live (their “deeds” - see Mt. 7:15-20, Jn. 3:19-20, Rom. 8:13)

- a. Note that it’s not necessarily focused on what these infiltrators profess (or profess they are), but the focus is more on what they do (their actual, lived character)
- b. The first word used to describe these is “dreamers” (by dreaming), they live out/practice three things - they “defile the flesh,” “reject authorities” and blaspheme/revile “angelic majesties” (or “glorious ones”) - simply put, they are this way and live this way because they are not grounded in reality (they seem to see life as though, it is how they see it, or how it must be seen)
- b. “Who are so stupid and void of reason as if all their fears and wits were asleep.” GBN
- c. They may include those that base their life and life decisions off of “dreams” (visions), and use the supernatural nature of such to work to “legitimize” their actions - Matthew Henry warned, “These filthy dreamers dream themselves into a fool’s paradise on earth, and into a real hell at last: let their character, course, and end, be our seasonable and sufficient warning; like sins will produce like punishments and miseries.”
- d. As a result of this (and other contributors to be discussed), they “defile the flesh” (from μαιίνω meaning to stain, dye, pollute) their flesh/bodies - this is in the present tense, so it is what they do (are continually doing) - see Titus 1:15-16 - the parallel text (II Pet. 2:20) has it is “... indulge in the lust of defiling passion...” - they give themselves over to it
- e. With this, because they live as dreamers, they also “reject authority” - they “set aside” (disregard) authority - they might be submissive at times, but would typically be to those they agree with - they are authorities to themselves (self-rule) - this, of course, is against the **Lord of All**
- f. They also despise/blaspheme “glories” (angelic majesties, glorious one) - though there is much written regarding who this refers to, it just means “glorious one” which can include angels, but at its most basic idea, it is enough to know these mock and openly speak ill of those that are (or are associated with) what is truly glorious (of God and His righteous glory) - their mockery, and that in boldness, is another indicator of their living apart from reality

The word “filthy” in the KJV was added and is not necessary - just in their being in, as it were, a dream state versus facing truth/reality is what lent to their filthy behavior.

Many have indicated this defiling includes the human nature, their own and that of others

“δόξα” (glories) is a word used often of God’s splendor, His “light” (brightness”) as in contrast to darkness (and so evil and its deception, its error)

2. The example of Michael and an incident with the Devil - vs. 9

Even with hundreds/thousands of years of scrutiny of the Scripture, many are still acting as though it is somehow responsible of us to questions its authenticity

To Jude’s point, this would have seemed like a time where Michael could have condemned/cursed the Devil for his obstruction/interference

Many allow themselves to take an idea of a moral posture so as to believe they can exercise this type of condemnation- even when one was to be “accursed”, Paul was careful to word it “let him be accursed”- Gal. 1:8-9

- a. Much is discussed regarding the source of this account, though many seem to lose sight of Jude’s point in trying to do so - taken as basically as we can, it is safe to assume that God buried the body of Moses by means of Michael (the Archangel) - Jude references a challenge by “the devil” and we need not tie the account to any currently known resource to somehow legitimize it - there has been noted a reference to this in the “Targum of Jonathan” (of Deut. 34:5-6), though we don’t know if this was the source of Jude
- b. Jude uses this account to add another example (though this one is positive) of how, when Michael was to deal with Moses’ body (to bury it), the Devil made some argument about it - it is believed the Devil was claiming authority over it (Moses having sinned and had been a murderer)
- c. The Devil was truly wrong/evil, but even in this situation, Michael “did not dare” (literally, did not show boldness) enough to condemn (judge with a sentence) against the Devil - why? Michael knew he was also a created being and that this judgment, even against the Devil, was only God’s authority to bring/pronounce - he did not promote himself in this
- d. Yet “certain persons” who had crept in, had no issue pronouncing eternal judgment

We ought to know right and wrong, but never losing sight/perspective of the true authority - none of us defines right/wrong in ourselves

Their lack of knowing/ understanding could have been deliberate or just out of neglect (which can even become willful)

As the animals, their focus is on comfort, eating and self-preservation (and even dominance)

Compare to Gal. 6:7-8 - these, thought they had the knowledge of the truth (and associate with it), chose to live only a natural life, not one, spiritual, focused on eternity

Compare to I John 3:11-13- here also, not only is Cain's motivator revealed, but he is likened to the world and its hatred of those in Christ

When Balaam was unable to curse Israel (God would not let him), he still helped the enemies of Israel by having them encourage Israel to sin (intermarry) - Num, 31:16 and Rev. 2:14

These will often bring with them (as they creep in) an excitement and energy, only drawing from carnal (of the flesh) excitements/inclinations (sensual & pride)

Read Num. 16:8-14 for part of the overall complaint against the current leadership - it concluded that they were removed from prosperity (Egypt), brought to the wilderness to die, and that it even involved Moses' leadership over their sure to come (perceived) demise

As with Korah (Levites), so these with Jude were "holy" in identity, but the core of their cause was self (self-rule)

e. Michael set the right example in responding to the Devil with "The Lord rebuke you!" - if Michael would have condemned the Devil, it would not have authority in itself (as it is with all of us when it comes to not only spiritual/eternal condemnation, but even any "moral" dispute) - the Lord is the standard in Himself, and must be invoked (reverently and consistently)

f. This same standard of the true authoritative rebuke is seen also in Zechariah 3:1-2

3. Yet, "these men" (retuning to these in verses 4, 8) give themselves authority/position above that of Michael in that they, of themselves, "revile" (speak evil of, as in treating things as blasphemous in their estimation) things they do not truly understand - vs. 10

a. The NET Bible translated the first phrase as "But these men do not understand the things they slander." - they speak condescendingly of things they do not truly perceive (they have not seen, learned) - this is in line with II Pet. 2:12 where Peter used the word "ignorant" (from ἀγνοέω, mainly because they ignore what it true/right and its authority)

b. These are not governed by the revealed truth found in God's Word, but instead are driven by instinct (instinct even dictating/controlling what they seek to learn/know and then how to respond) - this "instinct" is the word "φυσικός" (physical/natural) - it is the defining right/wrong by feeling, natural sense (in contrast to faith/trust in what God has said)

c. This instinctive living leads to their ruin (it leads only to their literal corruption (of mind and body)) - the reasoning abilities are supposed to lend to our protection/safety, but the more one progresses into sin, the less sense they have (Rom. 1:28) - the verb for "destroyed" is present, so it's happening now and will lead to their ultimate, eternal destruction - but the verb is also either passive or middle (both fit) - passive in that it happens to them (it is as a rule of life for all participating/living as such and, middle, in that it is by their own doing that they participate in their own destruction - and losing true (Godly) reasoning, they do not see their self-destruction

B. Peddlers of error and evil, having all the appearance of offering satisfaction, yet disappointing - vs.11-13

1. These "church creeps" are first identified by their underlying pursuits/inner drives - vs. 11

a. "Woe to them" looks to be as if an exclamation because of what is coming (because of what they have pursued (decided on in life) and the magnitude of its predetermined consequences (note 1:4))

b. They have, for instance, "gone the way of Cain" - Cain (in Genesis 4), when coming to God with gifts/sacrifices, he chose to come at it his way (in contrast to the right way) - he became bitter when his offering was rejected by God, and then killed his brother Abel in reaction

c. The "way of Cain" essentially is seeking to live as though God must meet you on your terms, and when desires/demands are not met, bitter/vengeful responses are seemingly justified

d. They have also "rushed headlong into the error of Balaam" (also another who had not only exposure to God, but was a prophet (supposedly to bring what God said and to give it to the people) - Numbers 22 tells of the account how Balaam was called upon (by Balak, king of Moab) to curse Israel - God forbade it but Balaam succumbed to the offer of great wealth

e. So Balaam was motivated by money (a "Prophet for Profit" (J. Vernon McGee)) and went on to aid in luring Israel into sin, and it is this same thing that Jude says they "rushed headlong" into (the underlying Greek picturing a "pouring out" (as in all restraints removed) - if one is in "ministry" for money, they will be tempted to be accommodating to more people, and "accommodating" sin will typically grow a generous, excited crowd (of sinners)

f. As if building momentum (in these examples), Jude starts with "gone the way" (as in deciding on the direction (of a skeptic and independent)), to then "rush headlong" into a way of error (of doctrine, motive and influence (into sin)), to then end in "perishing" like the end of Korah and his rebellion (seen in Numbers 16:1-30)

— g. Korah compiled a group of 250 leaders against Moses and Aaron, with their core point being the assumption that Moses and Aaron had assumed their leaderships on their own (the very thing Korah was looking to do)

h. These rebelled, though they thought it was against Moses/Aaron, it was against God and His established order - God is over all authority, and so we must follow His ways in dealing with it (understanding that defiance/rebellion like this is not of God... even against ungodly leaders)

i. The word for "perished" is from "ἀπόλλυμι" which describes a wiping away/out, which is the ultimate, unavoidable end... utter loss - countless religious rebellions have risen with motivated sponsors/followers, only to lose-out because the cause or approach was not truly of God

j. Getting the “holy” cause/objective wrong, even sincerely wrong, brings serious consequences

2. Detriments among you, bringing shipwreck and disappointment - vs. 12-13

Note a similar text and topic in II Pet. 2:12-14 - they are driven by lust and unfaithfulness, luring away from the truth “unstable souls”

Paul dealt with the misuse of this time in I Cor. 11:17-22 - it had become a time of selfishness, pride/arrogance and a segmenting (into classes) of the local body

Too often, local churches are looked on as social clubs, run at the whims of its members - yet each is to be seen as the Lord’s!

Compare this to Isaiah 56:9-12 - here is a rebuke of irresponsible, leaders and the lack of defense it brings with it

These promise what they cannot deliver (for the true source to life is not in us, but Christ) - these, instead lead others to temporal fulfillments (driven by multiple forms of sensuality)

Fruit trees that have no fruit are a disappointment and only serve to be removed (so as not to take up space/resources from other trees bearing fruit) - see John 15:1-6 for the source of bearing true fruit

Though these might be those also who, in the end, glory in such shame - see Php. 3:18-19

Focusing on the use of navigating by the stars, these would only lead to confusion and being “lost at sea” - these are an unreliable standard, maybe fun/exciting in changes of direction, but they have a horrific destination!

There looks to be a special judgment for those who were associated with the truth and who turn on it or misrepresent it

No matter any conception of the perceived benefits of following after these, it is horrific to follow them to their end

- a. “These men” (or “these are they”) still being the same “church creeps” in verse 4, who in addition to their defiling, reviling, and rejecting authority are also those, who end up serving as “hidden reefs” (rocks in shallow water), catching others by surprise and, as in the illustration, sinking those who are influenced by them - compare to I Tim. 1:18-20 - Paul stressed the significance of stable/continuing faith along with a “good conscience” (knowing right/wrong)
- b. They are those participating in the “love feasts” (ταῖς ἀγάπαις), a common practice in the early Church where believers in the church would assemble to share a meal in common - it was to be a place/time where true Godly love was expressed in generosity and edifying fellowship
- c. Taking this verse plainly, it looks as though these “shipwrecking” endeavors/influences are happening while they fellowship with others in the church “church time” used against church purposes)
- d. They are characterized (identified) as “without fear” (ἀφόβως), having a boldness for the wrong (not reverent (respectable fear/honor) of the Lord and His Church) - they were/are likely bold personalities (part of how they entice and lead others)
- e. And in their boldness, they literally “shepherd themselves” (ἐαυτοὺς ποιμαίνοντες) which can just mean they only look out for (tend to) themselves or that, as seen in verses 8-9, they are guides to themselves (self-authorities, self-ordained) - either way, they are focused on their needs (as defined by themselves), and are selfish and proud in their pursuits (personal agendas)
- f. These are compared to “clouds without water” - they (plural) seem to bring with them the promise of meeting actual needs (actual refreshing) yet, as clouds without rain, they only disappoint - the people in the church have needs (known and unknown), yet these promise so much and deliver only more thirst (or parched, unproductive land) - note Prov. 25:14
- g. As such, they are also characterized as “carried along by winds” - they “go with the flow” (as in being popularists or pursuing popularism) - they are trendy and carried along with trends/fads - the underlying word (παραφέρω) describes something carried off to the side (as, here, into error) - one will not know where they will end up if they follow after such unstable souls!
- h. These are also compared to fruitless trees, as trees in the Autumn (either trees that should have had “end of season fruit” or as trees in the Fall just don’t have fruit and are dying) - either way, they become useless as to the type of tree they are supposed to be (or recognized/identified as)
- i. These corrupting creeps are not just fruitless trees, but are “doubly dead” (either dead in that they have no fruit as well as are now unable to be revived) and, as such, have been uprooted (there is no hope in them for anything of use)
- j. They are also “Wild waves of the sea” as in loud and seemingly ferocious, yet only producing foam on the beach, and that just bringing with it dirt and other residual fragments from the ocean and sand - this would be the “casting up their own shame” - their activity (and the force of it) reveal impurity and undesirables - compare this to Isaiah 57:20-21
- k. And, finally, these are also “wandering stars” (in the the Greek, “ἀστέρες πλανῆται”, stars wandering (planets)), with the main idea being fixed stars (in a fixed pattern and are reliable to navigate with on the sea) versus planets or comets/shooting stars that are not to be used to determine accurate position - they are the opposite of lasting stability
- l. Their doom is sure (it is “reserved” for them... again demonstrating the seriousness of these who are in churches and participate in the functions/fellowships) - this doom is first described as “black” or “gloom” (the word being “ζόφος” describing more than darkness, but a scary/eerie, gloomy, murky darkness - compare to Mt. 22:11-14)
- m. This horrific reservation is forever - “Beware of following a falling star! It will lead you into eternal blackness! “ Warren Wiersbe - Heibert, quoting Lawlor about this double-emphasized darkness, “Who can conceive an eternity out of His presence, in the unending blackness of darkness, where no other creature can be seen, where no ray of light ever penetrates, where those who spurned God’s offer of love forever wander without hope, alone and lost?”

C. The foretold judgment on these grumbling, fault-finding, lust-laden boasters - vs. 14-16

1. The prophecy of Enoch, seventh from Adam - this was set long ago - vs. 14-15

This was and always has been the set future for those opposing God

- a. Enoch was in the seventh generation of the world and was most noted for two things: he “walked with God” (he was a believer) and God “took him” (translated him into Heaven)

Many attribute this quote to the “Book of Enoch” of which (as it is accessible now) looks to be suspicious and unreliable... having much added to it. We have no solid reason to believe Jude was quoting from this as a source - some have looked to this as an approval of its inspiration, which is wrong and dangerous!

See also Rev. 20:11-15

Compare this to II Thes. 1:5-12 - this judgment is also called a vengeance

All are spiritual (whether it is acknowledged or not) and, as such, must worship/serve something (and they see all as permissible to them accept the True God of Scripture)

Reverent Godliness is more than just doing what we are told, but doing it as we are told to do it - the opposite is often motivated by following popularly acceptable means

Even a “here’s how I see it” response can be or swerve into this harsh/hardened talk/speech

Even beware of those who profess a “good theology” but whose lives/living are more unholy than Godly

Though such a philosophy of life may not be mentally organized and documented, there is always something driving/motivating each of us

Their expectations are driven by their lusts (feelings, not faith-based reason rule their days)

Our natural dislike of something doesn’t make it bad - living by faith is necessary for learning to be truly content in all situations - see Php. 4:10-13

They may not seem to be pessimists since their fault-finding and grumbling are a means to sell their alternatives

See Ecc. 2 for an example

- b. Enoch, being so early on in human history was used to (already) foretell the imminent, unavoidable judgment on ungodly people/influencers such as these (Jude linking the ones he was opposing with the same group Enoch was foretelling of condemnation)
- c. The NASB translates the actual tense of the Greek in “... the Lord came...” - as some prophets, Enoch would have seen it happen and could reference what he saw as having already happened, yet still to happen in time - it is assured... it is decreed so cannot be avoided
- d. In His coming judgment, He will be accompanied by thousands of holy ones (literally, “ἐν ἀγίαις μυριάσιν αὐτοῦ”, amidst holy myriads of His) - this describes the final judgment, coming after all other judgments that have happened on Earth, and ones of those condemned to the waiting cell of Hell - for those still left alive on Earth, the Lord will return, in judgment, which will include more than Armageddon, but also what is described as the “Great White Throne Judgment”
- e. At His coming, His Holy ones will likely include those who were condemned, judged, persecuted and killed by these who are about to be judged - all sin is judged!
- f. All sinners are judged! - it will be just judgment against all (in this case, all the ungodly) - just a side note: this is to be kept in focus whenever persecuted, mocked or rejected by these, keeping our eyes beyond their faces of intimidation (attempted), focused on the coming wave of complete judgment behind them
- g. At the core of this is the “conviction” (the exposing (bringing to light)) of their “ungodly” deeds, done in an “ungodly” manner/way, and the “ungodly” things said - “ungodly” can include the godless but can also include those who “believe” there’s a god, but they are irreverent (He is not obeyed/served) - making them anti-God and pro-self (or “pro” any other god or god-concept)
- h. They are described by their works, characterized as “ungodly” (disrespecting God, because they are on their own terms/definitions, priorities and values) - the evidence against them is made up of their “deeds” (as in Mt. 25:41-46 where even the pseudo-religious are proven false and worthy of judgment because they did not truly serve Christ (the Judge Himself!))
- i. Not only are their works “ungodly,” but how they have done them (their methods, ways, plans and actions) have been ungodly also - how something is done can be wrong (sinful) even if the doer claims a good motive
- h. Their mouths are also fully engaged in this ungodliness - Jude (quoting Enoch) describes their “judgment worthy” speech as “harsh” (also including unyielding (as in a hard heart) and brash against God) - these are bold critics of God and His ways/Word/people
- i. These were the people that Jude said were in, and influencing the Church - these “ungodly sinners” (“missing the mark” altogether while associating with the Lord and His work) - note that these “creeps” are more identified in their sin, their ungodly character/practice, than even their poor/bad theology

2. Self-absorbed gain seekers - vs. 16

- a. These really aren’t the type of people we would desire to be with (or associated with) - Jude describes their overall demeanor and approach to life - though it may seem too formal to some, it is a fact that everyone has a philosophy of life (a drive/purpose they live by)
- b. These libertines (pleasure seekers) are grumblers (murmurers) who find-fault with others, and life in general (so also, then, God) - a life characterized by constant complaint is, at best, mis-focused (certainly not living by faith) - note Php. 2:14 and I Pet. 4:9 where it is forbidden
- c. These two words (grumblers and complainers) describe someone dissatisfied with life and their own lot in life - they don’t like how things are around them (even to the detailed level) as well as their part in it all (believing they deserve better) - the opposite being contentment
- d. Their discontent is “with the condition of life which God had assigned them, and not only blaming Him for this, but for the moral restrictions which He had imposed upon them and upon all mankind.” Alfred Plummer
- e. The NASB translated the second as “finding fault,” which helps picture part of their motive in persuading others into sin - they find fault (as seems natural... not of faith in God’s providence) with obedient, trust-driven outlooks on life and the perceived natural discontent that comes - they offer ways to fulfillment, though they are temporary and these catered-to lusts grow, demanding more, controlling more, robbing them of any true path to contentment
- f. Jude identifies their motive openly - they follow “after their own lusts” - natural desire dominates them

The underlying Greek for “arrogantly” is “ὕπερογκος” describing words that are inflated (oversized) in what they attempt to describe (themselves) and possibly the words themselves (“oversized words” to stand out and be above others)

Note James 2:1-9 and then the description used of the Lord in Mt. 22:15-16 (not “swayed by appearances”)

- g. These are complainers because their lusts/desires aren’t fulfilled - since this drives them (they are “along for the ride”), they are slaves to these lusts - their conduct must follow suit
- h. Outwardly they can also be identified as “loud-mouthed boasters” (ESV) - they express bold confidence, quick to draw attention to themselves and to build themselves up - these are often forceful personalities (leading/influencing by intimidation or improper reverence) - see Psalm 12
- i. And finally, the “flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage” is from two Greek words, literally picturing being astonished (in wonder) at the face of someone - they act very impressed with others with the purpose to gain an advantage over them - note Pro. 29:5 - these say nice things (flatter) others, not to help them, but to exploit them - they work at saying what others desire to hear, and once discovered, will work to win them over - note Titus 1:10-11
- j. “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.” Hiebert quoting Bauckham

IV. What Is To Be Done? Keep a Guarded Focus On God’s Love, Excitedly Waiting for the Merciful Return of Christ - vs. 17-25

A. First of all, in contrast to the apostates, remember, this was predicted - vs. 17-19

- 1. The first word “But you” (including the idea of “however”) contrasts these true believers (brothers in Christ) with the apostates/errorists just dealt with - vs. 17

It is easy (and humanly normal) to look on such interference and influence as failure and potential, overall loss - there is assuring comfort in knowing this was expected and that such enemy influences will not win out! Compare with Rom. 9:6

The warning, not because of failure, but to understand it was not unknown to the Lord Himself, and so was not to cause them fear or despair

- a. All of these characteristics and coming judgments are not for these believers - in fact, as Jude expounds, these particular people/attempted influencers were foretold as coming
- b. It was very important for them to know (and us) that this was no surprise or something to be looked upon as true loss on the actual Church’s part (or the Lord’s)
- c. The same instruction to remember was by Peter in II Peter 3:1-7, only there it dealt with scoffers mocking the “promise of His coming” and the apparent evidence that no judgment had come... and so would never come... they scoffed - see also Acts 20:28-30 and II Thes. 2:1-4
- d. So back to the “you” and what is to be done in response to these apostates, these believers are to remember well that the “Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ” had spoken before (no too long before) as a point of awareness and warning - as verse 18 shows us, it was “to you” (they being contemporaries of the Apostles and many (maybe most) had heard for themselves)
- e. “The rising up of such monsters” was spoken of before, that we should not be troubled at the newness of the matter.” GBN - there are many dangers to forgetting these truths/warnings

- 2. The message of the Apostles was clear - “In the last days, there will be mockers...” - vs. 18

This phrase has kept all responsible Christians on the alert to the shortness of time and the coming judgment on the world

This is further support of verse 10 (where it reveals they do not truly understand what they are mocking)

And being this way, stressing the sensual, they draw others in (and draw them away from safety)

- a. The “last days” was a common phrase and it was (and is) in reference to the time after Christ had ascended into Heaven - they were (as we now) living in the last days - there is always to be an awareness that the Lord will return - we must not live as though we live for this world/age!
- b. So in/throughout this “last time” there will be “mockers” - these are those Jude has been describing in this letter - part of their approach will be scoffing/ridicule - they will “make fun” of truly Godly truths, practices, and beliefs (either to persuade the intimidated/weak or to drive away the true believers) - they will take belittling/condescending tones and approaches
- c. II Peter 3:3, Peter includes the phrase that these scoffers will “come with their scoffing” (as if they, like merchants or tradesmen come with their wares of scoffing) - see also II Tim. 3:1-5
- d. They are loyal followers of “their own lusts” (from “ἐπιθυμία” literally focused on their own passions/desires) - they are driven by their natural passions (versus spiritual) - these lusts particularly described as “ungodly” (irreverent, either being blatantly evil/sinful, or not truly serious about the things of God (and so driving their desires/actions to more of the secular))

- 3. What these mockers do (their approach/plan) and why - vs. 19

They segment the people, focused on differences and not on the common unity in and because of Christ

The same is described in I Cor. 2:14 (note the inabilities of such)

They are only “born of the flesh” - John 3:5-6

- a. They are those that divide (from ἀποδιορίζω, describing those that separate individuals and groups away from each other) - they are not uniters, and as wolves, separate the vulnerable from the flock to go in “for the kill” - read Rom. 16:17-18 and I Cor. 1:10-13
- b. Their motivation being that they are truly “worldly” (instinctive), from “ψυχικοί” a common/basic word used to describe natural life (without reference to a spirit), so animalistic - they are driven by natural feelings (as distinct from Biblical faith (spiritual)) - it is essentially living (having a life) driven for the life now (life for this life)
- c. They are “devoid of the Spirit” - this may or may not be in direct reference to the Holy Spirit, but He must be primarily considered, for those “dead in sin” do not have a/the “living” spirit

See also II Peter 2:1-2

- d. This “soulish” living is a life lived as strictly a “natural” person - life and its priorities is about this life and those who would stress the importance of living for the life to come are looked down upon, mocked, and seen as very impractical (their standard being the wrong one!)

B. Guard/protect yourselves in the “love of God” - vs. 20-21

1. The focus of these two verses looks to center on verse 21 and the objective (the command) to “keep yourselves”, as in setting up ahead of time a security structure, only this, based upon [its substance, its core defense] our love of God (because of His love of us) - I John 4:19

Note Acts 20:28-31 -

“wolves” will attack from without and perverse teachers from within

- a. It is to be based upon (founded on) two general practices: building and praying - constructing a security system (a parameter wall) and maintaining a consistent communication

- b. Apostasy influences/influencers will assuredly come, so they must be anticipated

2. In confident (expected focus) preparation, “Build [construct] yourselves up” praying - vs. 20

“The metaphor of growth by building suggests effort, and it suggests continuity; and it suggests slow, gradual rearing up, course upon course, stone by stone. Some of us have done nothing at it for a great many years.” Alexander MacLaren

These errors are detrimental also in the hindering and stifling of growth in a true believer

see also Php. 2:12

Even the best of counterfeits won't be able to hold-up against the truth effectively

Compare all this to I Cor. 3:10-22... be careful how you build (using only the best of materials (truth))

“Only the prayer which comes from God can go to God.” Spurgeon

The last part in the listing of the spiritual armor of Eph. 6 is the action of “praying with all prayer” - the armor is protective in the battle, prayer is the all important communication

- a. It begins with a contrasting reference to them directly ... “But you, beloved...”, stressing they will be totally different from these worldly influencers
- b. Peter had given a directive along similar lines in II Peter 1:1-9
- c. It is very important to take note of the building foundation and materials - it's clearly not a building up of self, of self, but a construction with purpose and protection which is not self-defined
- d. The underlying word is “ἐποικοδομέω” making it clear this is not just a building up, but a building upon (a foundation already laid in Christ) - Jude references this foundation as “your most holy faith” which is not a subjective, personally defined faith, but is a faith (the faith) given to us in Christ - it is well defined and authoritative and so will be not only growth inducing/creating, but protective against all errors such as Jude was having to fight/fight off
- e. Note that apostates are characterized as tearing down the real faith either in just dismantling it or in the pursuit of replacing it - this is in keeping with the overall theme in verse 3
- f. It is building upon a somewhat rare superlative, “most holy faith” - it is “most/best” above all other faiths that could ever be considered and it is “most holy” (most sacred), most “set apart/above” all other faiths and philosophies - its like is never to be found
- g. Only those not truly in/of the faith (in Christ) will be overtaken with the counterfeits
- h. This is followed with the second way of “keeping” themselves “in the love of God” - the “praying in the Holy Spirit” - the Spirit is the giver (inspirer of the faith), and the enlightener of and to the faith (John 16:13) - this type of praying will be in harmony with the Scripture
- i. Knowing the truth of Romans 8:26, we realize that the Holy Spirit makes up for our inability to pray, so a major part of praying in the Holy Spirit is a posture of faith and submission
- j. Of course, this necessitates praying as an ongoing practice - it is deliberate, consistent, and done with the submissive pursuit of guidance (already knowing natural inability) - many pray their way, on their own terms, and when it seems to be unproductive or even counterproductive, they become bitter and retaliatory

3. Preserve/protect yourself, not in any other “love” but God's - vs. 21

Read Romans 8:35-39 -

nothing can separate us from His love which is the sole source of true security-seeking other sources of “love” are disabling and set one up in danger

Clearly, part of this is our deliberate action(s) to love God - we are focused to “Keep your heart with all diligence...” (Prov. 4:23)

Phrasing it this way is also a reminder that salvation is never by means of personal merit. Read Titus 2:11-15

- a. There is an instinctive drive in all of us to protect ourselves, though the actual dangers are often misidentified (for various reasons), and that which would harm us is misidentified as a friend
- b. And, as already stated, the idea is that of security (“keep” from “τηρέω” a word used for guarding, attentively watching over in a protective way) - the protective barrier being “the love of God” (more His love of us than our love of Him (though both must be included))
- c. Notice that it is assigned to “yourselves” (this is something they actively pursue and not passively accept as though it is somehow a practical assurance) - it is true that God is over all and our protector, but this illustrates one of His practical means
- d. The underlying thought/motive being the awareness of God's love of us, it guarding our hearts from erroneous affections/lures (of the heart), as well as dealing with situations like Jude was dealing with... understanding the purpose/nature of God's protective restrictions and imperatives
- e. Jude identifies one core focus and result of this... “waiting [expecting] for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life” - this is not dealing with His mercy already applied at salvation, but is another way of describing the result of His mercy at His coming and the resulting eternal life
- f. It is because of Jesus Christ that we now, excitedly, look forward more to the eternal life over the temporal life here - with this in view, the loves that this age are obsessed with and live for, won't be able to lure away these believers into the apostasy the “creeps” are promoting

C. What is to be done to/with the victims of these apostates/mockers? - vs. 22-23

1. There has been a great deal of discussion regarding the manuscript and translation differences in relation to these two verses - it seems most normal to take it as seen in the NASB and ESV and others that lay out three scenarios and responses - Jude clearly has an affinity for triads

Clearly, one take away from these verses is that indifference is not an option - they are to be seen according to their need (in varying degrees)

- a. Jude does not give instructions/directives in dealing with the apostates, only to those who have been adversely affected by them
- b. As to the victims, they must not be just “written-off” yet they must also not be “catered to” - as these verses demonstrate, their situation is dire! - compare to Gal. 6:1

2. How to deal with those brought to doubting because of these “creeps” - vs. 22

Some translate “doubting” as “disputing” which just reflects the result of many when they doubt - they become argumentative

There is often a lazy side to these where they just want the issue in their mind settled, and now that they have been influenced away from something, they are fatigued at the idea of working their way back

“Mercy prefers to deal with the needy in terms of what is needed rather than what is deserved.” Hiebert

- a. This first scenario deals with those struggling in discerning the right way of thinking/believing/acting - the word for “doubting” is from “διακρίνω” which describes the judging/discerning between two or more things - they have come to be unsure if, for instance, they should strive to avoid sin or if the grace of God in salvation allowed for unrestrained, sinful actions
- b. The KJV translated “doubting” as “making a difference” and so only seems to show two types of victims and two responses (as in distinguish between the differing victims) - of course we ought/must distinguish between the unsure and the belligerent (aggressive reactors)
- c. These that have been so adversely influenced need to be shown compassion in how they are dealt with - they are as Alfred Plummer puts it, “...earnest doubters, who are unable to make up their minds for or against the truth.”
- d. The “mercy” here is not an excusing or leaving them be (as they are) - this is our part in keeping others in “the love of God” (verse 21) and waiting for the Lord’s return - we may not know if they are truly in Christ, but a hopeful expectation ought to motivate us for their good - we are a team and need to live in the reality of it
- e. There is another handling of this phrase in being best translated as “confute” these doubters (with some manuscript backing) - it would take on the idea of being more direct/forceful, and as Michael Green put it, “Argue some out of their error while they are still in two minds.”

3. Rescue others on a trajectory for “the fire” - vs. 23

Clearly, if any of these is truly in Christ they will not apostasize, and one method/means God will use will be His use of us “snatching them from the fire”

This describes a narrow escape from doom

see also James 5:19-20

- a. The “fire” here refers to the eternal fire of eternal judgment - many are uncomfortable with this since Jude is addressing Christians, but we must realize that not all that profess faith are genuine - so from our vantage point, they need to be saved from activity that is always associated with the unsaved... those headed for Hell
- b. Rather than debate the “eternal security” aspects of salvation in this text (which is covered elsewhere (e.g., John 6:37; 10:25-29, Romans 8:38-39)), we need to seriously consider our part in God’s saving work, even among those that are a part of the local Church
- c. This second group (Jude points them to) are those who have bought-in enough to these apostates that they are living a life of sin (open sin), and the urgency of the need is what prompts such aggressive, passionate action (to seize/“catch away”) - likely from Zech. 3:2 (context referenced in vs. 9)
- d. We should hesitate at the idea that a true Christian could look on, without deliberate, urgent action on one who claims to be in Christ who is giving themselves over to sin

4. Have pity on the rest who have given themselves over to sin, and this pity with caution - vs. 23

These are not to be hated in and of themselves - they are to have pity in their apparent lostness - there is likely, though, no pity on the promoters (creeps) of error

Too close an association and lack of care for infecting self could contaminate

Compare to Rev. 3:1-4

Such necessary action does not nullify love/concern

- a. This sentence may seem a strange pairing of ideas... pity with fear - yet it is common to see some that seem strong in their faith to be swayed with an undue compassion for those in sins (even extreme “gross” sins) - they don’t see caring involving confronting
- b. “... so polluted that they can be dealt with only in cautious compassion to avoid contamination by their sins. This is clearly the most degraded of the three classes. They are teetering on the brink of ruin, with meager probability of their being turned back” Hiebert
- c. Again with their pity (sad compassion) there is a reservedness (not completely allowing the care for them to be allowed to draw into the same corruption) - we see this illustrated in the wording “...hating even the garment polluted by the flesh” - this describes the inner garment of someone with a disease/plague, and so the garment is even “hated” (it having been tainted)
- d. We’ve seen variations of this in our time where some have had such love/compassion on one deep in sin that they either endorse/condone it or they join in (in varying degrees)
- e. Texts also such as I Cor. 5:9-11 demonstrate the caution/warning of dealing with “anyone who bears the name of brother” who are practicing sexual immorality - disassociate

This is all a balanced pity and fear as also in Gal. 6:1, considering yourself when dealing with the faults of others (and considering others around)

The Gospel starts with depravity and then on to rescue

- f. Part of this “hating” would be because of the potential spread of its infection to others in the Church - it has become too common, under the banner of “love,” to excuse sinful behavior/character when concern for those not infected is dropped
- g. We must never allow for a scenario where we act as though we are more merciful than God, more loving than He is when disregarding how sin must be dealt with - thus we see why Jude carefully worded this sentence - have pity but be careful it be governed in reverent holiness - sin will never be dealt with if it is not seen and identified by what it is in one's life

D. Where full security/confidence resides and the assured purity- vs. 24-25

1. Having written concerning all the threats and errorists influences, Jude now concludes this letter with the highest possible confidence, because confidence is not in any of us (or because of us), but in the Lord Himself to “keep us from falling” - vs. 24

He is the preserver, the cause of our perseverance, and by such means we are protected - our resolve would never hold-up against the humanistic and self-righteous onslaught

- a. It can become common (and expected) that many that read letters like this will become overwhelmed at the widespread influence of apostates in the churches - see also Rom. 16:25-27
- b. He (“the only God our Savior”) is able (δυναμένω- the One with power, being able) to sustain/protect/guard/keep us from stumbling (so as to fatally fall)
- c. It's not just a protective work, it is a sanctifying/justifying work, complete to the point that our standing before the Holy God is secured in total!
- d. In contrast, the “wicked will not stand in the judgment” (Psalm 1:5), we, because of Christ, in Christ will be made to stand (where all else would be face down, on their knees in horror, they being still in their sin before a thrice holy (to the ultimate) God)
- e. Not only will we stand in the Great Day (of judgment), but we will do so in “the presence of His glory” His unsurpassed splendor (visible greatness over all else)
- f. And in all this, we being truly “blameless” (without flaw/fault nor the possibility of failure) - see also Col. 1:21-23

The fulfillment of John 17:24

Many are swayed by the errorists because they seek a joy here and now, one that cannot be had (to the fullest degree) until we stand blameless before the Lord

- e. With having all of this, there will be truly “great joy” (versus the dread terror of the sinners) - see also I Peter 4:12-13 - our joy is not found/founded here - we are assured of complete, unhindered, limitless joy throughout eternity; why would we consider trading that for the here and now

2. Who is it that is credited with all this? “The only God, our Savior” - vs. 25

The major components of what most long to see, know and have are found in Him: security, hope, glory and joy (all of which will never end/fade)

All these words making it clear, He alone is to be revered, trusted and so followed - errorists try to compete with far lesser “glories” which must be embellished / exaggerated to be considered

- a. Jude, to the last, makes it clear that there is only one God, and in the Godhead (the true triune “He”) is the work of salvation - all this through “Jesus Christ our Lord” - it was the Father Who gave, it was the Son Who came and it was the Spirit Who sealed
- b. “More secure is no one ever, than the loved ones of the Savior....” from the first line of the poem written by Lina Sandell Berg, and, “... Little flock, to joy then yield thee! Jacob's God will ever shield thee; Rest secure with this Defender, at His will all foes surrender. What He takes or what He gives us, shows the Father's love so precious; We may trust His purpose wholly, tis His children's welfare solely.”
- c. So there can be no considered greater! For Jesus Christ, Who is Lord, is the only one to Whom we direct our glory (glorying), acknowledging in true worship His majesty (royal standing and from “μεγαλωσύνη” a word describing the greatest greatness, the most majestic majesty) - with this, He also then has all “dominion” and “authority” (all authority, versus the authorities of this age) and so all of creation is under His jurisdiction
- d. This glory being acknowledged here is also marked out as having always been, being now and always being - from eternity past to eternity future it is His glory alone, not to be shared, not to be doubted and not to be overlooked (distracted from... EVER!)
- e. And, rightfully concluded, “Amen!” (so let it be... since it is) - see also Rev. 5:11-14