

Jude

Keeping the Faith!

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This past Thursday, while I was walking to the store from the Walmart parking lot, (a place I visit very frequently) I spotted a vanity license plate on a gray Mazda 626 Hatchback, and this license plate read, "Jude 3." That is all it said. Everybody knows Jude 3, "Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." Also on the bumper of this car there were various bumper stickers that you would normally associate with someone who put a Scripture on their license plate, such as "Jesus Is Lord," and "Are You Saved?" You have to remember that I live in the Bible Belt, and that is fairly common down here. The license plate made me think. I had already long before Thursday of giving a sermon on the book of Jude, so it was right up the alley of things that I was already thinking about.

But this coincidental sighting (I think it was coincidental), made me start thinking about how the world's churches apply this book to themselves, to their lives, to their churches, and to the things that are going on within them. Obviously they do not take Jude 3 seriously, because if they did, I feel that they would have doctrines more on the same line that we have because Jude 3 says, "Get back to Scripture," to what was written there from the pen and from the mouth of Jesus Christ and the apostles and the prophets, and if they just listened to them they would have a much different outlook on doctrine. They obviously do not adhere to the faith once delivered to the saints. Evidently someone thought that he ought to spread the word by putting Jude 3 on his license plate.

I also remembered a statement I read in a commentary saying that Jude is the most neglected book in all the New Testament, and I am thoroughly convinced that that is true. It is primarily known for Jude 3, and for the last two verses of the book, verses 24 and 25, which is a very noble and uplifting praise of God. The book of Jude is only twenty-five verses long, and it is tucked between the epistles of the apostle John, (and we have a lot of memory scriptures out of I John, especially) and the well-worn dog-eared pages of the book of Revelation. Everybody likes to get into Revelation and try to figure out what it says, and everybody has their opinion on it about how things are going to come out in the end. Really, as I think about it, Jude does not provide very much in the way of doctrine in Christian living. Besides that, it is almost a carbon copy of II Peter 2.

There are a lot of things going against this little 25-verse book. In fact most of Jude is a

scathing denunciation of false teachers. The smoke almost rises from the pages—or the page—of Jude, and this scathing denunciation is sandwiched between two very short 3-verse sections where he exhorts them to faith and to love. One of the things that almost kept it out of the canon was that Jude quotes two passages from Apocryphal books, *The Assumption of Moses* and *The Book of Enoch*, both of which were written between the time Malachi was finished and the time the New Testament books were written. They were apocryphal. They were unacceptable. Jude has no problem quoting passages out of it.

It seems like there are all kinds of things wrong with this little book. There really are not, but this is how people perceive the book. God has no problem with this little book whatsoever, because He included it within the pages of the Bible, and it is there for a reason. He saw something in it that would be of great value to His people down through the ages, and maybe, just maybe Jude was written *specifically* for the end-time church when the things that Jude would speak or write about would be most applicable. Now obviously it was applicable to the people in the first century, because that is why he wrote it. They were facing similar problems. In a way this is a timeless book because the things that happened in Jude's day crop up from time to time within the church.

Today we are going to look at the book of Jude, and we are going to look at it from the standpoint of **now**, to what is happening in the church today in the late twentieth century. First we are going to begin in Acts 20. This is the situation where the apostle Paul is being led by the spirit back to Jerusalem, because he has things to do there. He is going to be arrested and tried, and he needs to take leave of the elders at Ephesus. He makes some predictions about how things in the church would work out, and this, Acts 20:17-32, provides the background for what Jude wrote about ten years later.

Paul's address here to the Ephesian elders probably took place in the springtime of A.D. 56. That is the best timing I could put on this, and he prophesies to them of apostasy and corrupt leadership that Jude would later write about as it was happening. Like I said, II Peter is similar to what Jude wrote, and nobody knows which was written first, II Peter or Jude. They probably wrote about the same time. When I was trying to search this out, it looks like Peter would have had to obviously written it before he died, and he died anywhere in the period between 66 and 68 A.D., so there is your period for II Peter. Jude was probably written in the same timeframe, and most people seem to think that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, so we have a period of maybe four or five years, somewhere 66 to 70 A.D. that Jude wrote.

We have to first start in Acts 20:17 because this is Paul looking out into the future, and we get some hints of what will be coming up in Jude.

Acts 20:17-18 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them: You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you.

Acts 20:22-27 And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

And here he would be declaring another bit of the counsel of God, a warning. This is true counsel, true advice that they should take to heart.

Acts 20:28-32 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

He gave them a warning. He told them some particulars about how it would shape out, and then he says, "I commend you to God and to the Scriptures," which is interesting because that is exactly where Jude pointed them back to, "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered," the truth that is found in the Scriptures.

I want to emphasize five different details in here that Jude brings up, and as we go through Jude later on I want you to think of these things and see how Jude treats them.

The first one is in verse 28. Paul tells the elders to be careful how they shepherd the flock. He emphasizes this, that this is a God-given duty, a God-given responsibility. He said, "The Holy Spirit has **made** you overseers." They were especially called out to watch over the flock, to guard it, to help it, to lead it. This was no light matter. Not only that, the ones they were supposed to help were the precious redeemed of God. Jesus Christ had given His life's blood for these people, and they are precious in God's sight. So they were to be very careful how they watched over these people. When we get to Jude we will see that he mentions this right off the bat, showing what the people of God are to God, and this thought never really leaves his mind.

The second thing is that in verse 29 he called these future apostates, these future false teachers "savage wolves." Jude later calls them in Jude 20 "brute beasts." The idea that this is to conjure up in our mind is that the animalistic nature that man has, what you would call the physical side of his nature, that nature he shares with the beasts, is what is driving these false teachers. It is not necessarily their mind and these ideas that they have that is driving them, but it is their bodies—their desires, their lusts—and they want these lusts satiated in some way. I am not just talking about feeding sex and that sort of thing, I am talking about these base desires that men have for gain, for being at the top of the pack, of things along that line. These false teachers are letting their "animal nature" get the best of them.

The third one, verses 29 and 30, is that he specifically says these will rise up from among the ministry. In verse 29 he says that savage wolves will come in among you, and in verse 30 he says that "among yourselves men will rise up." They will be people who are in leadership positions, or who are at least considered to be pillars in the church and highly respected, and so they are in an advantageous position, from their point of view, to do the most damage.

The fourth thing is in verse 30 also. They will do the damage with their tongues. They will manipulate the brethren with cunning sermons and with seemingly large arguments, but their motivation is "to get," to get for themselves, and Jude says they mouth great swelling words. They are full of bombast, and they sound real good, but there is something beyond that that you have to look at and notice.

The fifth thing, which I already mentioned here in verse 30, is that they will do their evil deeds to gain a following. Remember I said there that their motivation is to gain, or to get for themselves. More specifically, Paul here says they want to get a following. They want people to follow them, to love them, to do the things they do, and they want other things like power, influence, money, prestige, wine, women, and song, and they would be very happy for other people to join them in this. One word can be used to show what

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the motivation is here. They are "self-seeking." They are seeking for themselves. Of course Jude's description is very similar. We will see that later.

Let us go on to Matthew 7, because there is another principle in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7:15 that I want to bring out here before we go too much further. Remember, Jude is Jesus' half-brother. It is important, because both James and Jude hearken back to the Sermon on the Mount quite a bit. That is their basic fundamental text, and it should be ours too. It is the opening up of the spirit of the law, the spirit of how a Christian should live. Jude's entire book is based on about this 6-verse section here, starting in verse 15.

Matthew 7:15-20 Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire [the lake of fire]. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

Keep this thought in the back of your mind throughout Jude because most of the book describes these false teachers and their false teachings, and he is giving this warning so that we will be able to spot them when they come out, when their fruits are shown. I think God included Jude in His Word so there would be a **second** warning. "Out of the mouth of two or three witnesses" it says about how you can spot, ferret out the false from the true, the tares from the wheat. Jude and II Peter 2 are not all that similar. They are similar on the surface, but they bring out different nuances of these false teachers, and it is good to read them together, but it is also good to study them separately, because though they dwell on the same subject, they are not necessarily saying the exact same things. They are agreeing, but they are giving you more and more detail, more and more information so you can have a better arsenal in how to spot these false teachers.

Before we go to Jude, I also want to go to Revelation 2. In the apostle Paul's prophecy we saw how things were going to be. Now from Jesus Christ's viewpoint, *after* it all took place, we see how it came out in the letter to the Ephesian Church.

Revelation 2:1-2 To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: I know your works, your labor, your

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patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars.

Evidently Paul's, Peter's, James', Jude's, and John's warnings worked to some degree.

Revelation 2:3 And you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.

Actually Jesus commends them quite a bit because they had stood up to the falsehood and to the false teachers. That was His "core" group, the ones that were the true church that stuck it out, and they had seen who was false, and they avoided them.

Revelation 2:4-5 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen: repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

Now they did have a problem. Their problem was not in holding these people at arm's length, their problem was that they had a tendency to become lax. They had a tendency to kind of "drift with the tide" as it were, and this made them an easy target for false teachers, and so they had a strength that in a way was their weakness. They had this kind of lackadaisical way of approaching things when times were fairly good, but when times got bad they seemed to be able to stand up for the truth. Jesus says, "I would rather that you were strong all the time, and that you would go back and do the first works and remain strong so that these false teachers wouldn't get any foothold, or handhold, or whatever hold in the church, in the first place."

Revelation 2:6-7 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

Their devotion to God's ways left a lot to be desired at certain times, and by the time the apostle John died in about A.D. 100, this was very much the case, and he had to really rouse them to get them back. Evidentially from what we know from church history, by that time the true church was not very big. It seemed to be concentrated mostly around

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the apostle John in the church of Ephesus and some of the other churches right there in Asia Minor that he had direct control over. Like I said, their strength in a way was part of their weakness as well, or their weakness was part of their strength. Even by the time that Jude wrote in the mid sixties, this was beginning to be evident. That is why you see all the warnings from Paul and Peter and James and Jude and John, that they needed to get on the stick, because these false doctrines and false teachers were there and they were beginning to cause problems. If they did not root them out and get them out quickly, there was going to be destruction. They were far too tolerant of divergent beliefs and practices, and Jude, especially today in this sermon, had to make his point rather bluntly. He basically yelled at them. The people who know Greek say that his language is very terse and very sharp, and Jude kind of lays in to them for being too tolerant of untruth.

Let us see a couple examples in the works of Paul where he had to make similar calls to the purity of the truth. Let us go first to Philippians 1. This is interesting that it is in Philippians, because they were a very good church. They were very strong. They had a few problems, but all in all you would consider the Philippians to be a very strong church. But in verse 27 of chapter 1 he says:

Philippians 1:27 Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.

This sounds very much like "Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." This was probably before it started getting bad, but he was already beginning to warn them that they needed to get united in one spirit and one mind, and *strive* (show some effort), that they would really work hard to keep the unity of the faith. Also in Hebrews 2 it shows that these people were also starting to neglect things. This was written a few years later, most likely after the book of Philippians, and his call to them is a little bit stronger.

Hebrews 2:1-4 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

You see here this is a bit stronger than what he said in Philippians. He said in Philippians, "Let's all with one mind strive together to keep the faith of the gospel." Now he says, "Let's be earnest about this, guys. Give **earnest** heed to the doctrine, to the gospel, to the things we heard, because we're in danger of losing it." And then he has to frighten them. He says, "Don't you know that under the Mosaic dispensation that people were punished very severely for neglecting what they had heard? Every transgression and disobedience received a just reward. How much **greater** under the dispensation through **Christ**, the Son?" It is starting to get serious. *Work hard. Be diligent. **Get on the stick!***

It is about this same time that Peter and Jude add their voices to it. They were having a rough time because these false ministers, false teachers, were in the church, and they also, just like us, had the pressures from the world to conform. It takes great effort to resist both on the homefront and out and about in the world. When it is amongst us, it is tough. And then you have all the things that are going around outside in society that is also pulling you maybe in the same direction, maybe in another direction, but all towards destruction, so you have to really stand up and try hard and strive, contend, and face it, and vanquish it. Are we in the same boat? I would have to say "yes." Maybe some of the details are different.

The deception has taken a somewhat different form. It is not the same sort of thing that the Gnostics and others were trying to get across in the first century, but there is enough similarity that the book of Jude makes a lot of sense. The results however, the fruits of the false teaching and of the false teachers, are the same—apostasy, falling away, confusion, distrust, especially of those who have been given a measure of authority, scattering obviously, and disunity. This is why we need to be aware of what is in Jude, because he is speaking to us. I am going to be tying this into the theme of unity as we have been admonished to do. Actually this is going to be more about "**disunity**" and what causes it rather than what causes unity, because we first have to start with the understanding of how it happened and how we can be pulled into it if we are not careful.

Turn now to the general epistle of Jude. We are going to take this epistle in chunks rather than verse by verse, because I think the flow is a little better if we take it in the form of subject matter rather than verse by verse. There are basically six sections to this little 25-verse book, and we will go through them one by one.

The Book of Jude

Section 1: *The salutation* (verses 1-2)

Section 2: *The purpose for writing, and opening exhortation* (verses 3-4)

Section 3: *The false teachers are compared to Old Testament examples.* (vs.5-11)

Section 4: *The false teachers and their fate described.* (verses 12-19)

Section 5: *The closing instruction.* (verses 20-23)

Section 6: *The doxology [a praise to God].* (verse 24-25)

Jude 1-2 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

Jude does not waste any time getting into his subject. The first thing he does is call himself a servant of Jesus Christ. He does not call himself the brother of Christ. Most commentators will note that this shows his humility. He was not coming to them as someone of authority because of his blood relationship with Christ, but he was coming to them with the *authority* of Christ's *servant*, that he had been specifically commissioned as one of Christ's servants to do this job. So there is humility, but there is a great amount of authority there.

He also underpins his authority by calling himself the brother of James. James, in the New Testament church, was one of the bedrock figures. Remember Paul called him, with Peter and John, as pillars, and he had a very high reputation in the church as having great authority. He was the one who summed up things in the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, and he was also known as "righteous." There is a tradition that goes around that James had knees like a camel because he spent so much time in prayer. Jude establishes his credibility by being humble. His authority is that he is Christ's servant and that he has a direct link to James who had a sterling reputation in the church.

In the second part of verse 1 he goes on to describe true Christians. Now he makes sure his salutation includes these things in it, because he is separating the wheat from the tares. True Christians are like this, he says. They are *called*, they are *sanctified by the Father*, and they are *preserved by Christ*. First, he says true Christians are specifically invited into the family [John 6:44]. God the Father sends out the call, and He brings them to His Son Jesus Christ. Secondly, true Christians are set apart by the Father's calling first of all, His mercy in forgiving them, bringing them to repentance, and

His acceptance of them when He gives them His Holy Spirit. Remember what Romans 8 says, that if we have the spirit of God we are the sons of God. So Jude makes a distinction here. They are "the called," and they are "the sanctified," the ones who have been made holy. The third thing, he says we are guarded, we are kept, we are made secure. We are preserved, as the *New King James* has it, by Christ's work on our behalf. But for Him, we would have fallen away years ago. But for Christ's intervening on our behalf before the Father, we would be long gone. It is His strength that has kept us here, not our own, so it shows a relationship with our Protector. We have a calling, we have a relationship with the Father, and we have a relationship with the Son. These distinctions are very great in the midst of apostasy, because these separate the sheep from the goats, to use another metaphor.

Then he wishes upon them specific blessings. It is not the same as the apostle Paul used and some of the other writers used. He says, "mercy, peace, and love." All three of these are necessary in times of apostasy; mercy, because they probably needed to repent because they had started to get lax, and they had allowed the false teachers and the false teachings in. So Jude wishes upon them God's mercy as they began to repent. Secondly he wishes them peace, because obviously one of the great results of apostasy is war, disunity. Remember his brother said in James 3:18 that the fruits of righteousness are produced in peace, and they were not producing the fruits of righteousness for two reasons: (1) There were false teachings, and (2) there was war; so they needed peace, and he wishes them peace. And then obviously he has to include "love," the premiere virtue. They needed love because that is what it would take to resolve this situation, and not just love for God, but love for one another, and this is the *agape* form of love, by the way, not just *phileo*, not just caring for one another, but for setting your mind to do God's will for one another, and for God.

Jude 3-4 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. [Why?] For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

He starts off by saying, "I really wanted to write something theological to you, something about our salvation, but this thing came up and I felt that it was most necessary that I take my pen and write to you about *this*, because it's a more pressing problem."

He, in the strongest possible terms that he could, told them to fight, to strive, to struggle

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for the truth as it had been given to them by the apostles, who in turn had been taught by Christ Himself. He told them "to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

This word in Greek, the one that is translated "contend earnestly," is a very interesting word. In Greek it is *epagonizomai*. Did you catch the English word in there? "Agony." *Epagonizomai* means "to contest" or "to contend." It describes the efforts of an athlete to win his particular competition in the midst of the games, whether it was running, javelin throwing, or discus, or whatever his particular sport was. This is the effort that he is to put forth to win the prize. An athlete who is truly devoted and is focused on winning gives his every last ounce of strength to come out on top, and that is the word Jude uses as to how **we** should be exerting ourselves in keeping the truth pure, and doing it ourselves. This word is literally "to agonize about." It is a very picturesque word. It gives you the idea of just straining for all your worth to make sure that you do it; not just know it, but to do it. It is a struggle that is hard and painful at times, even deadly at times, but the truth is that important to God, and to our brethren.

Jude also affirms here that the truth we need for salvation has already been given *once for all*. It is a very important distinction that Jude makes here, because it lays the foundation for what he says later. The truth was given, and that is it! There is no continuing revelation, no evolution of truth. It was closed for the passing of the apostles, specifically the twelve. He says here, "Beware of those who say they have **new** truth." He says, "It's okay if it's a refinement of an "old truth," but claims of new truth should raise red flags. It should sound sirens and flash lights in our mind. The truth, the faith, has been delivered once for all. Cling for all your worth to the Scriptures, and don't listen to those who claim to have special revelation." The Bible should always be *the base* for our belief in **anything**. If it does not square with the Bible, do not believe it, because that is the faith that was once delivered. Anything contrary to that should be thrown away as soon as possible.

In verse 4 Jude gives a few general points about these false teachers. I want to emphasize the word "general." Try to think of these things in today's terms and not just what was happening in the first century, because it is not going to do us a bit of good if we just look at this historically and do not apply it to today.

Jude 4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed. . .

The real literal translation is, "They **wormed** their way in." They slithered in like snakes without our being aware. He calls them worms who slithered into the church on the sly.

But God has marked them out from a long time ago. He knows they are there. A couple of times you heard me mention the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. This has a lot of connections with that, that God has allowed the adversary to sow the tares among the wheat, but if you remember in the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, God, in the parable, knew that it had been done, and He left them there for a reason. Paul later says in I Corinthians 11 that they are left there to show who the good guys are, and who the bad guys are.

The bad guys are shown in stark contrast to the good guys. Jude calls them ungodly, or impious. The word "ungodly" crops up six times in the book of Jude. It is a very important word in the book, and it means "irreverent," "impious." It means those who are not afraid to contravene God's way. They do not have the fear of God in them. They just go ahead and do what they feel like doing. They are ungodly. Remember, we talked about "the natural brute beast." They have nothing in common with God. Now do not put them so far in the extreme though, because like it says in II Corinthians, Satan makes his ministers into ministers of light. They look good on the outside, but on the inside they are totally ungodly. Their look on the outside may be deceiving, but the fruits in the end is what gives them away.

The third thing Jude says here is that they are blatantly immoral. They turn the grace of our God into licentiousness. What they do is that they have this feeling that the more they sin, the more they allow God to show them grace and mercy. That is a twisting of what grace is. They think they are glorifying God by giving God the opportunity to forgive them more. It just ain't so.

Lastly, they deny Christ. This does not mean they stand up and say that Christ never existed or that Christ is not the Savior. What this means is that with everything that they say and do, and everything that they believe, they contradict God's way. If you deny something, you are actually contradicting the person who says it. That is what this one means. They contradict Jesus Christ in everything. Once again they can appear to be going by the rules, but their innermost drives and motivations are in denial of the true way of God.

Those are the general points about these false teachers. He then goes on to expand upon all this.

Jude 5-11 I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains under

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darkness for the judgment of the great day; as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them, in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you! But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves. Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

He starts off by comparing these false teachers to the unbelieving Israelites, to the angels that sinned, and then to the perverts in Sodom and vicinity. What he wants to get across is what three major hallmarks of apostasy are. They are:

1. Unbelief

That is the major word that he talks about in reference to the Israelites.

2. Rebellion

This is what the angels did.

3. Immorality

That is the main thrust of what happened in Sodom and Gomorrah.

So unbelief, rebellion, and immorality and all of these things result in divine judgment and punishment. The Israelites died in the wilderness, the angels that sinned were placed under restraint, and Sodom and Gomorrah were blasted off the face of the earth. You cannot get much stronger divine judgment than those things.

Now Jude 8 adds more detail to this. Jude calls these false ministers "dreamers," but this really is not a good translation. It should properly be like this: "Likewise also these, *as a result of dreaming*, defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries." These new beliefs that they have are based on dreams, on visions, on foolish imaginations of their hearts, and trips on LSD. I am just putting that one in there to show

you that the basis for their false teachings is not from God. They are from **anywhere** but from God.

What Jude is doing here is specifically pinpointing certain Gnostic beliefs: debauchery, total freedom from authority, and even insulting angels. That is the literal understanding of "speaking evil of dignitaries." That word "dignitaries" is literally "glorious ones." That was some of the things that this Gnostic doctrine believed, that you could be free sexually and do whatever you wanted, debauch yourself to any extent, and God would forgive it, for He is gracious. They believed that no one had authority over them, and that they were free to do whatever they wanted, that they were free from law, and that they were free from government because they were spiritual, and no one could tell them what to do. They had gone beyond all need for physical law of any type of court and any kind of physical government.

Lastly they were so self-willed that they would even reject the authority of angels, believing that they were *higher* than the angels. But does it not say in the Psalm and in Hebrews that He has left man for a little while *lower* than the angels? The idea here is that they already exalted themselves above the angels, so they were not afraid to speak evil of them. Do you see where this puts them? They are **way** up here, and the ideas that you peons have to adhere to, they do not have to.

Do you understand? I am including myself within all the rest of you. They are beyond all law and government, so they can do whatever they want, and no one is going to stop them. It is no coincidence that one of the hallmarks of apostasy today is a total rejection of government. **It is the number one problem in the church. No one wants to be governed.** They say such pious things as, "Only God governs me." Well, it is a false teaching. They have placed themselves above their position, and do you know what that is? It is a Korah, which we will get to in a minute. This is very similar to the movement of "sovereign citizenship." "No one will tell me, not even the federal government, what I can do and what I cannot do." It is a damnable heresy. Pardon my French. Government tends to point out, or even punish evil doing, so if these false teachers get rid of government and law, then they are very free to do whatever they please without any oversight.

In Jude 10, Jude calls them "brute beasts," just like Paul called them "savage wolves," and Jesus also called them "wolves in sheep's clothing." They have sunk down to the level of animals in that their only desire is to satiate their lusts, their drives that we share with animal kind: food, security, sex, being on top, being the head of the pack. They really cannot comprehend the higher values because they only think in terms of gratifying themselves. So you try to argue with them the points of the law, and they will

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never get it, because they do not care. All they want is what they think is theirs—their position, their food, their this and their that. It does not matter what it is. If they think they want it, if they need it, you will not be able to convince them from it in many cases because they are not even thinking on the same level as you. They are being driven by their physical desires.

Let us go to I Corinthians 15 just for a moment and get the flavor of this. This is obviously the resurrection chapter.

I Corinthians 15:32-34 If in the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

This was already happening in Corinth. People were using such fallacious arguments as saying the resurrection was already past in order to do whatever they wanted to do sexually, or as it mentions in chapter 11, to gorge themselves at the feasts, and to drink until they could not stand. The idea here is they used illogic, as far as we are concerned, to justify doing whatever they pleased. You are seeing that it will be very hard to talk these people out of what they are doing.

Jude then adds the examples of Cain, and Balaam, and Korah. All of them were rebellious and anti-God at the core, but in different ways. Cain's sin manifested itself in a sullen selfish hatred that ended up in murder. Balaam's sin was manifested in the form of covetousness and greed, and finally he used it to induce others to sin. Remember what it says there in one of the gospels that whoever teaches against God's law will be least in the Kingdom. They probably will not even be there at all. That was the problem Balaam had. He taught others to sin. Korah's sin manifested itself in speaking against the God-appointed authority and attracting a following to wrest away an office that was not his. He is forever an example of that, going above his station as it were.

Those are not things that we like to hear about these days in our democratic society, about going above your station. The church isn't a democratic society. The church is God's family, and He places people in His body as it pleases Him. Korah had been placed in Israel in a certain spot, and he tried to go above his station, and attracted other people to do the same, to support him in this, and he ended up as a black spot on Sinai along with many others who supported him. So throughout this section here Jude is not only showing a sin, but he is also showing the judgment, and that they are all

judged, and all punished very severely.

Jude 12-15 These are spots [A bad translation. It should read "hidden reefs."] in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves; they are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam prophesied about these men also, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment on all . . .

Now listen to all the "ungodlies" in here.

Jude 15-19 . . . to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the spirit.

Jude uses kind of a nautical theme in part of this. That is why I think this "hidden reef" is better than "spots." The Greek seems to support this as well. Jude says that these false teachers are like hidden reefs at our socials, that they are just there under the surface, just waiting for you to come along and be shipwrecked upon them. In I Corinthians 11 Paul dealt directly with this in Corinth.

I Corinthians 11:17-22 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or

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do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing?
What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.

Now I Corinthians 11 is an actual example of what Jude was warning against in Jude 12, "the feasts without the fear of God" he says. The fear that they do not have is the fear of the punishment of God, that what He says will happen when they do all this self-satisfying stuff that may take many forms, that they do in our socials. They gorge themselves, but that is only one part of it. They use these occasions to shipwreck people, to undermine their faith, to whisper in their ear to get them thinking along the wrong lines. Jude says here that they serve only themselves. That is very interesting. That is badly translated. It should be "shepherding only themselves." Look at Ezekiel 34:1-5, and verse 10, because God says that these shepherds that He set up only serve themselves. This is the same illusion, the same illustration that Jude was getting at.

Ezekiel 34:1-5 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost, but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they become food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered.

Ezekiel 34:10 Thus says the Lord GOD: behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require My flock at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep, and the shepherds shall feed themselves no more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them.

Jude 12 also says here that they outwardly show promise of producing fruit, of bringing rain, but they never do. This is where you bring in the idea that they are angels of light, but their fruit shows they have nothing of substance. They will never produce godly fruit. They look good on the outside, but on the inside they are corrupt and full of bones. When Jude says here "twice dead," this may be a reference to the second death, that they will die physically once, and then they will die spiritually the second time. It is at least saying they are well on the road to the Lake of Fire.

Go to Hebrews 10:26-31 and you will see that once we have been forgiven and redeemed by the blood of Christ there is no going back. If we sin again as a way of life, then there is no second redemption, and all we face is the vengeance of God, who is a consuming fire. That's the idea that Jude is getting across.

Hebrews 10:26-31 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment do you suppose will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord. And again, The LORD will judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Jude 12 says here that they are raging waves of the sea. Remember I said it was a nautical illustration? He mixes his metaphors a bit, but he comes back to this one. He says that they are like *storms* wherever they go, that they cause trouble. They cause turbulence. They are raging waves of the sea. Remember that James said that they are doubters, double-minded people, raging on the sea, wind-tossed waves, and they are going to end up causing problems. These waves toss people into the hidden reefs. They get caught up in the turbulence, and they can be turned. They say these people, that their mouths fold up their shameful deeds. It is really picturesque. You know, the foam that is on the beach after a storm, that is the illusion that Jude is getting to. They are dirty with all kinds of driftwood that ruin the placid view of the beach, like a bad wake that they throw up on the beach.

He calls them wandering stars. They are supposed to be leaders. Here is the nautical allusion again. What did seamen, mariners use to guide themselves? They used stars to align themselves up, and they would go in certain directions based upon the stars. Well Jude says these leaders are all over the map. They go here, they go there, and they go this way and that way. Anyone following them is going to fall into the ditch, to use another illustration. I am mixing my metaphors too. But they are not reliable guides, and they give horrible advice. They are not worth even talking to about one's problems because they are going to lead you astray.

At the end of Jude 13 he says, "for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness

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forever." Let me tell you the literal translation of this. It is really dark. He says that "their fate is the utter darkness of darkness for eternity." Lights out forever. Remember James 3:1 says that those who want to be teachers will receive the stricter judgment. That is what this is, the utter darkness of darkness forever.

Jude 15 emphasizes on godliness. They are the total opposite of what God is, and if you know what God is, then you will know what these people are.

Jude then gives five more descriptors. This is just full of ways that you can identify false teachers. They are discontented murmurers and complainers. They have always got something to gripe about. They are discontent with their lot in life, and they find fault with everything. Nothing is ever right for them. They live to satisfy their every desire. We have already seen that several times. They speak bombastic bragging words, and they are respecters of persons, if it will benefit them. One translation says, "They are toadies, who will do anything to get ahead." In Jude 17 it says that we were warned that such people will enter the church and try to ruin it, so we do not have any excuse. They are here, and we need to make sure they do not stay here. And then he gives three final descriptions of them in Jude 19. He calls them worldly [sensual]. They are like the world. They cause divisions, and just the opposite of what he said in Jude 1, they do not have the Spirit. They are not of us. They may be among us, but they are not of us. They do not have the Spirit, and you can see from their spirit they do not have the fruits that that is the case.

So now that we have this description of false teachers, we can do better in testing the spirits, and you can find in I John 3:24, and go through chapter 4, verse 6, that we are required to do that, to test the spirits.

Practical things that we need to do given in Jude 22-23:

1. Do whatever it takes to be thoroughly grounded in the truth.

Ephesians 2:19-20 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.

2. Pray in the Holy Spirit.

This means we need to use that connection that we have with God so that we can take on God's mind. Our prayers should strengthen that bond and make us more

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like Him.

Ephesians 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

3. Keep yourself in God's love.

I John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

4. Wait patiently for Christ's mercy.

What he really means here is wait for Christ to come, for that will ultimately take care of all false teachers and all false teachings. Do not despair just because things look bleak right now. In the end they will be fixed.

Psalms 37:7-11 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret—it only causes harm. For evildoers shall be cut off; but those who wait on the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; indeed, you will look diligently for his place, but it shall be no more. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

In Jude 22-23 he tells us how to take care of these people. If there are some that are wavering and they are just beginning to turn, he says have compassion on them and try to turn them back.

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

If you find someone in a fault, be gentle, and try to turn them back so that you are not snared as well. For those who have already started down the path of evil, we have to take a more forceful approach. We have to put the fear of God in them if we can. That may be the only thing that will bring them back. We have to let them know what their fate will be if they continue on, just like Jude did here. He constantly said, "These are more bad things, and they will be totally destroyed." We have to let them know that is in their future if they keep it up, and sometimes this means even dismissing them from our fellowship unfortunately, just like Paul had to do with the sinner there in Corinth who

was being incestuous.

I Corinthians 5:1-5 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife! And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

He also says here that while we are doing this, we have to keep them at arm's length so we are not turned ourselves, "hating even the garment defiled by the flesh." I do not want to have anything to do with that.

Jude 24-25 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.

In the end Jude turns the whole situation over to God, so we leave his epistle with the right frame of mind. God is our strength and our refuge in this time of confusion. If we stay close to Him, He will work to produce holiness in us and give us His glory. God alone is our Savior, and to Him goes all the glory.