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Clouds Without Water

A Study of the Book of Jude

Radio  *Sermons*



by

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**A Study of the Great Religious Apostasy
of the Last Days**

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Clouds Without Water

(The Epistle of Jude)

A Study of Apostasy in the Last Days

Foreword

"For there are certain men crept in unawares who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4).

Through divine placement, the little Epistle of Jude bridges the three epistles of John and the Book of Revelation. Jude emphasizes some material found in the epistles of John and also fittingly introduces Revelation.

The epistles of John deal with the position of Christians in the family of God, contrasts between true faith and false profession, assurance of salvation, church discipline, the joy of salvation, and fellowship with the Father and the Son. But John also deals with false professors within the church, and with the spirit of antichrist, which, even in his day, was outwardly manifested. John shows that these false professors pretend to know the Lord Jesus Christ, profess a knowledge of spiritual things; but by their false profession and false knowledge, lead many astray. Jude takes this subject of the false professors (those many "antichrists") introduced by John, and reveals their role in the spreading apostasy of professing Christendom.

In divine wisdom, God placed Jude before Revelation so that it may introduce some of those things which Revelation expounds and expands. As the capstone of all Scripture, Revelation reveals the outcome of human history. It is concerned with the "unveiling" of our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Revelation is divided into three sections by the divine Author. Revelation 1:19 provides the outline: "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter (after these things)." The "things which thou has seen" form the first chapter of the book. In this section, John records the circumstances of the giving of this revelation and the description of the glorified Lord standing in the midst of the seven golden lampstands.

The "things which are" form the second section, or Chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation, which contain the seven letters which our Lord addressed to "the seven churches which are in Asia." These letters provide a chronological view of seven sequential phases of church history from the Day of Pentecost to the day of our Lord's appearing, which is often referred to as the "Rapture" of the church. This section indicates that church history will be characterized by increasing apostasy and evil as the age progresses. (Although temporary revivals interrupt this trend on several occasions, apostasy will continue to grow tremendously near the end of the church age. In the seventh letter, the Lord is pictured as outside the church, knocking to gain admittance.)

The third section of Revelation, "the things which shall be after these things," covers Chapters 4 through 22 and foretells earth's history and its completion, after church things are finished.

Jude provides the background for both "the things which are" of Revelation 2-4, and "the things which shall be after these things"; those things occurring after the true church is gone and the "Day of the LORD" begins. In Jude we see the growth and the fruits of apostasy as it continues from the Day of Pentecost to the beginning of the "Day of the LORD." Jude helps us understand why the events foretold in Revelation will come to pass.

In fact, a most descriptive secondary title for Jude can be "The Acts of the Apostates." "Apostasy" comes from the Greek word "apostasia," meaning "a departure." As we use it here,

it means "a departure from truth once known." Apostates are those who have had intellectual understanding of the truth, yet have deliberately turned from it into paths of error and evil. Thus Jude says, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old marked out to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, even our Lord Jesus Christ."

Jude, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has a great deal to say about the history of the world and apostasy of the present age.

May the Lord guide us into an understanding of Jude's message, as we consider his short but powerful epistle!

1.

A Letter from Jude

“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied” (Jude 1, 2).

Jude organized his letter according to the custom of his day, and identified himself at the beginning of his letter. He next named the one (or ones) to whom the letter was addressed, proceeded to write the body of his letter, and finally, closed with an appropriate benediction. This is the form that Jude used in preparing this short letter, the sixty-fifth (and next to last) book in the canon of Scripture.

The Writer

Jude opens his letter by identifying himself as “the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.” “Jude,” a shortened form of the name “Judas,” is derived from the name of Jacob’s fourth son by Leah, “Judah.” “Judas” was a popular Jewish name in the first century A.D., alluding to Judas Maccabaeus, who, with the faithful Jewish remnant, led a successful revolt against the oppressive Syrian King, Antiochus Epiphanes (about a century and a half before the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ). Many Jewish people named their sons “Judas” in honor of this great folk hero. It is likely that Jude was named for this Jewish leader. But after Judas Iscariot’s treacherous act, the popularity of the name rapidly declined.

Jude calls himself a “bondslave” of the Lord Jesus Christ (this is what the Greek word translated “servant” really means) and the “brother” of James. Apparently he was a son of Mary (the mother of Jesus) and Joseph, and was a younger half-brother of our Lord. The “James” that Jude mentions is the human author of the New Testament Epistle bearing his name, and was also a younger half-brother of our Lord Jesus Christ, and full-brother of Jude.

Humbly, Jude does not refer to himself as the brother of the Lord, but rightly claims to be the brother of James. He does not mention his family relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, though we, no doubt, might tend to boast of such a significant relationship. Pushing fleshly pride into the background, Jude only designates his spiritual relationship with the Lord that is shared by all who have been purchased by Christ's blood. Jude specifies that he is the "bond slave," the "servant," of the Lord Jesus, recognizing that he was bought with a price.

Jude's attitude contrasts the attitudes of many today who refer to the Lord Jesus Christ as "our brother Jesus." Scripture does not authorize such familiarity. Scripture does say He calls *us* His brethren, but the Word of God does *not* give us authority or permission to draw Him down to our level by calling Him *our* "brother." Even the disciples never referred to the Lord as "brother," nor addressed Him by His given name, "Jesus."

In John 13:13 the Lord said to those twelve in the upper room, "Ye call me *Master* and *Lord*: and ye say well; for so I am." The Lord Jesus Christ is God, manifest in the flesh; the King of kings and Lord of lords. He is far above us in majesty and power. We are His bondslaves; and our relationship does not give us license or authority to address Him, or to speak of Him, in such a familiar way. Just as Jude, the Lord's brother after the flesh, did not identify himself in any such way as "as the Lord's brother," so we are not to forget the titles of respect that are appropriate to our relationship with Him. We are to address Him as "Lord Jesus," and we are to speak of Him as "our Lord Jesus Christ."

There is evidence that none of the Lord's brothers after the flesh (the sons of Joseph and Mary) believed in Him until after His crucifixion and resurrection. But after the Cross, at least these two sons of the earthly family came to the Lord Jesus Christ in simple faith, accepting Him as their Saviour and Lord. James, the older of the two, became a leader in the church at Jerusalem. He is believed to have been the first

“pastor” of the Jerusalem church, and he is the one who presided at the Jerusalem council as described in Acts 15. James was well-known to the early Christians, not only because of his prominent position in the church at Jerusalem, but also because he was the human author of the epistle that bears his name. Many believe that James is the oldest book in the New Testament. Conservative scholarship dates it around A.D. 45; whereas, the next earliest New Testament book, the Gospel of Matthew, was not written until about A.D. 48 to 50.

Though not so well-known in the Early Church as his brother James, Jude was God-selected by the Holy Spirit to write one of the most significant books in the New Testament. So, it seems appropriate that Jude begins his epistle, “Jude, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.”

Recipients

Jude addresses his letter to “them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.” Older Greek manuscripts have “beloved” instead of “sanctified.” According to these manuscripts, the first part of this address reads, “To them that are the *beloved* of God the Father.”

Jude further not only addresses his epistle to those first century Christians, but also all those who have obtained “like precious faith”; that is, all who have been born into the family of God through the Gospel, having accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour. Jude writes to those who have been regenerated to eternal life by the work of the Holy Spirit, on the basis of the Saviour’s atoning death on the Cross.

“But as many as received him, to them give he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of the blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12, 13). Faith in, and belief on, the Lord Jesus Christ results in spiritual rebirth into the family of God. This is the family relationship that the Apostle John describes so thoroughly in his first epistle. Those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ become “children by adoption” of God the Father through the Sonship of God of the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. These children of God are most

definitely "the beloved of God the Father." Thus, even the opening phrase of Jude's address directs the message of this epistle to all true Christians down through this Age of Grace.

He further writes "To them that are the beloved of God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called" — the status of all true Christians. The Greek word that is translated "preserved" means "kept" or "sustained." Those who are presently "The beloved of the Father" are sustained in that relationship through the power of that One who died to establish that relationship in the first place.

Jude *does not* address his epistle to those "who are preserved by *their own* efforts to keep the law and to obey the Commandments of the Lord." The work of preserving the relationship of the Christian to God the Father *is not* a work of man, but a work of God. The eternal security of the believer is most definitely confirmed in this inspired epistle. The power of Jesus Christ, administered by the Holy Spirit, maintains the Christian in his eternal position as a saved one of God.

The Apostle Paul emphasizes this point strongly in his letter to the law-keeping Galatians. "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made *perfect* (or, *mature*) in the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain? If it be yet in vain. He (the Lord Jesus Christ) therefore that ministered to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, does he it by works of the law or by the hearing of faith?" (Galatians 3:1-5).

Again, the Apostle Paul stresses the believer's eternal security in Christ through the preserving power of God in Romans 8:38, 39. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord."

The recipients of Jude's letter are given a third designation: "the called." All true Christians who have come in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ are "the called" of God. Although we exercise faith upon hearing of the Gospel message, it is the power of the Holy Spirit, extending God's "call" to us, that makes saving faith possible for us. Scripture clearly shows that we have not chosen Him, but that *He* had chosen us.

This is not incompatible with the scriptures that teach "whosoever will may come" and that the Lord "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." The call of God (which is a necessary part of salvation) is exercised within the scope of God's foreknowledge of all things, but in no way removes man's personal responsibility for accepting or rejecting the salvation offered in Christ.

Jude's Prayer

Jude's salutation is in the form of a prayer: "Mercy unto you (all believers), and peace, and love, be multiplied."

"Mercy," according to the dictionary, is the "disposition to forgive, to spare, to pity." It is "forbearance," "compassion," and "beneficence." Jude prays for God's *forgiveness* and *forbearance* upon His children.

Jude pleads that "God's mercy unto us be multiplied." Mercy, within its very concept, recognizes the possibility of failure on the part of the redeemed of God, however diligent their daily walk in this life. Scripture does not teach that God's children ever reach a stage of sinless perfection while living in the mortal flesh. Though exhorted to "follow after righteousness," we will never achieve *perfect* righteousness in this life. We can only "follow after" that which we can never overtake. Christian progress toward spiritual maturity involves a continuous growth process — a process that never achieves sinless perfection. There is always the possibility of failure and sin in the life of even the most spiritually mature Christian.

The Apostle Paul and the Apostle John spoke of failures and sin in the Christian life. Paul recognized such failures within himself many years after he accepted Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord on the Damascus road. In Roman 7:15-17 Paul writes, "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more that I do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

John, speaking of discreet acts of sin in the life of the Christian, bluntly puts it this way, "If we say we have so sin, *ourselves* we are deceiving, and the truth is not in us" (see 1 John 1:8, literal Greek word order.) The child of God who professes to have no sin, no failure, in his life is fooling only himself; not his family, not his fellow Christians, not his neighbors, and certainly not God! John warns that "if we say we have not sinned, we make him (that is, we make God) a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:10).

When the Christian fails, "we have an advocate with the Father (Christ Jesus)." We have One who stands before the throne of grace and pleads our case for us. We have one who says, "Father, I took that transgression into account when I poured out my blood at Calvary." And because of that plea, mercy flows from the Mercy Seat, and the transgression is forgiven. The Apostle John tells us, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Jude writes to all Christians, "Mercy unto you." God's mercy *is* extended his children. "Blessed is the man to whom God imputeth not iniquity, . . ." (Psalm 32:2).

Next, Jude prays for "Peace . . . be multiplied." True peace characterizes the Christian life and belongs to no one *but* the child of God: "There is no peace, saith the LORD unto the wicked" (see Isaiah 48:22). Jude prays that the peace of God be multiplied in the hearts of his children. There are two aspects of peace that Christ secured for His followers. He mentioned **both aspects** on the night of His betrayal. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I

unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). Dying on the Cross, He offered Himself as an acceptable sacrifice for the sins of mankind and settled the sin question for all time. He was that peace offering offered up to make man's peace with God, and became that connecting ladder between earth and Heaven which Jacob saw in the vision at Bethel many years before. Ripping down that veil that closed the way to the Holy of Holies, He made it possible for man to go directly into the presence of God, thereby establishing peace with God forever, by that work He did on the Cross. It is *that* peace He leaves with those who know Him. "Peace I leave with you."

Christ spoke of another aspect of this peace: "My peace I give unto." Christ not only established peace *with* God by His work on the Cross, but He also provided a peace *within* the hearts of those who receive Him as their personal Saviour. Through His Word, the redeemed ones can know that their sins are forgiven, that they possess eternal life in Him, that He forgives their failures, and that no power in Heaven or earth can separate them from the love of God. This knowledge provides peace that no unsaved person can know, a peace that can be increased by knowledge of God's Word, and by a daily walk with Him in the power of His indwelling Holy Spirit.

Love (pure, unselfish love that is the very essence of God himself) is a part of the character of every child of God. John makes this a major theme in his first epistle. Love of God (for the brethren, and for all those for whom Christ died) flows from the hearts of all true believers, and grows as the believer spiritually matures (by daily walking in fellowship with Him).

Jude prays that peace and love would "be multiplied" in each believer. *Growth* in peace and love is a multiplication process. (For something to increase by multiplication implies there is something there in the first place. Any number times zero is still zero. But any number times any other number leads to an increase.) It is Jude's prayer that the peace of God, and the love of God, be multiplied in the heart of believer. He affirms that such is necessary to thwart apostasy.

2.

Ungodly Men

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 3, 4).

The first sentence of the body of Jude's letter sets the circumstances involved in its writing, its necessity to believers, and its theme.

He paints one of the clearest pictures we have of the way the Holy Spirit came upon the chosen human writers to produce verbally-inspired Scripture. Prior to the time of Jude's inspired epistle, the Apostles Paul and Peter also confirmed that all Scripture is verbally inspired. Paul writes, “All scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect (mature) thoroughly finished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Paul understood inspiration because he himself was chosen of God to be the human author of 14 of the 27 books of the New Testament.

The Apostle Peter also states, “Knowing this first, that no *prophecy* (that is, no *utterance of God*) of the Scripture is of any *private interpretation* (that is, it is not to be interpreted out of context). For the prophecy came not in the old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the **Holy Ghost**” (2 Peter 1:20, 21). Peter has described the mechanics of inspiration. Scripture was not the result of man's will, but it came into being as holy men of God spake as they were literally “moved along” by the power of God's Holy Spirit. **Peter**, chosen of God to pen two of the inspired books of the

New Testament, has experienced being caught up in the power of God's Holy Spirit, and of being "moved along" as the power of God directed his thoughts and his pen.

Jude, in this first sentence, gives both the situation and the purpose of this letter: "Beloved when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Intending to write of the joys and blessings of the salvation shared by all believers, Jude addressed all of the family of God, throughout the age of grace. But the Holy Spirit "moved him along" and directed him to write a message of *exhortation*; not one of the *joys* and the *blessings* of the common salvation.

The power of God impelled Jude to write, not on a subject of his own choosing, but on the subject God chose for him. (God supplied the words, then Jude penned them.) The Holy Spirit did not turn Jude into a human robot, using him as a writing implement, much as we would use a typewriter or a dictating machine. He did not bypass Jude's mind, and just use his physical capability. Instead, he used Jude's intelligence and his writing style. Jude composed the letter; yet God's Holy Spirit impelled him along and saw to it that his words were the very ones that God would write.

Jude says that he "gave all diligence" (or gave himself over fully) to the task of writing of "the common salvation." Salvation is not "common" in the sense that it is of little value; rather, it is "common" in that all who are in Christ "share" the blessings and inheritance of Christ. The message was to exhort believers to "turn away" from apostasy.

Furthermore, Jude encouraged Christians earnestly (with all diligence and zeal) to contend (actively and aggressively strive) for the *faith* once delivered to the saints. There was a very real danger creeping into the flock of God. The Lord Jesus Christ pictured this danger in His parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13. The tares had been mixed among the good seed; the true children of God. These toxic plants

represented those who try to destroy the "body" of our Lord Jesus Christ from within. God had chosen Jude to write a letter to exhort the true children of God to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto those who are the saved ones of God."

"Faith," as it is used here, does not refer to the saving faith that leads to salvation. He is not referring to "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (see Hebrews 11:1). Rather, Jude is referring to that system of belief whose doctrines are the foundation of the Christian faith. Christians are to earnestly contend for the continued purity of these truths.

Although this epistle was written about A.D. 75, Jude says that these truths had already been once "delivered unto the saints." The Greek word that is translated "once" in our English version actually means "once and for all." The faith, the creed, the basic system of belief, had already been delivered, *once and for all*, to the saints, and was not subject to future modification or change. There was to be no "evolution in doctrine," or no modification in the system of belief, as the age wore on. Christians were to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once and for all delivered unto them."

The reason for the urgency of this exhortation, Jude says, is because "certain persons crept in unawares, who were before or old marked out to this condemnation, ungodly persons, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, even our Lord Jesus Christ."

Even in Jude's time, Satan was determined to plant his secret agents inside the professing church, and these agents were to destroy the doctrines of salvation. Christ spoke of these ungodly persons when he related the parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13. He said that while men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat. Instead of the pure meal of the Word of God, these imposters would dispense the poisonous product of the zizanium, the darnel, the tare. Then these tares would grow beside the wheat

in the field until the time of the harvest.

The zizanium, or tare, appears to be very much like wheat in the growing stage, and it can only be distinguished by very careful examination. But the tare is poisonous if eaten. The good wheat of the Word of God sustains life; the poisonous product of the tare destroys it. The poisonous tare was very much in evidence among the wheat, even the day of this writing.

“For there are certain men crept in unawares.” Satan plants his agents in great *stealth*. He masquerades as an *angel of light*, and his master art is counterfeiting. His agents creep in “unawares.”

Actually, the word translated “men” should be “persons”; women are not excluded by the word. These persons pretend to believe in the cardinal doctrines of the faith, but they reject the Person and work of Jesus Christ. They are apostates.

“Apostate” is a transliteration of a Greek word which refers to “a departure.” Apostates, then, depart from the principles of truth. Even though they are exposed to the truth, they willfully spurn it. They oppose the truth, distort it, and teach a counterfeit of it. Jude says that these “certain men” crept in “unawares”; that is, by *stealth*. But as the letter continues, Jude pictures them as becoming bolder and bolder, elevating themselves into positions of prominence and leadership, eventually prating themselves against all truths, and against all who hold sound doctrine.

God knew these apostates in eternity past, the role they would play, and how and when Satan would use them for his deadly work. The words “before of old ordained to this condemnation” are a little strong here. The Greek actually means “marked out.” Because of God’s foreknowledge, He “marked out” these persons in time past for the satanic role they were to play among the ranks of those professing to be children of God. But they role they play is of their own choosing; they are responsible to God for their apostate actions.

An outstanding characteristic of these apostates is ungodliness; that is, they actively oppose those things that characterize God and reject the principles of righteousness and holiness. Their morals and daily conduct reflect their opposition to God's rules of righteous living. Yet, having crept into the professing church, they profess to be children of God, all the while seeking to pervert the teaching of God's Word.

It is important to note that the wording of certain parts of this epistle is similar to the wording of certain parts of the second chapter of 2 Peter. Some critics have even charged that Jude is an imperfect copy of 2 Peter 2. While there are some strong similarities between those things spoken by Peter and Jude, there are also many strong differences. Both inspired writers considered the work and the condemnation of the false teachers, the apostates of the church age. Peter deals primarily with these false teachers, and their "damnable heresies," while Jude deals primarily with the ungodliness, and the ungodly ways, of these apostates. Jude speaks of their fainal condemnation as though it were an accomplished fact. The word "ungodly" appears six times in his short epistle: Verses 4, 18, and four times in Verse 15 (which is a quotation from the prophecy of Enoch).

These apostates are characterized by ungodliness of habit, looseness of morals, and the desire to drag all with whom they come in contact down to their own level. Through their influence, the professing church will be characterized by increasing ungodliness of living and lowness of morals as the age wears on.

Let's look again at Jude's words in Verses 3 and 4, literally translating the Greek words and retaining the original word order. In this way, Jude's emphasis and inflections come through in the translation. This, of course, does *not* result in good English grammar, but it does provided a better understanding of the way Jude began the main body of his letter. "Beloved, all diligence using to write to you concerning the common salvation, necessity I had to write to you, exhorting (you) to contend earnestly for the once-delivered-to-the saints

faith. For came in stealthily certain men, they whom of old have been before marked out to this sentence, ungodly (persons), the of-our-God-grace changing unto licentiousness, and the only master-God-and-our-Lord Jesus Christ denying."

Jude is explaining to all Christians down through the age why such earnest contention for the faith once-for-all delivered to the saints is necessary. "For came in stealthily certain men" Notice that Jude speaks of this as having happened already. These "ungodly persons" had already crept in, and they were already at their work of destruction from within, at a time only about 45 years after our Lord was crucified and resurrected. The enemy wastes little time. Men (those who truly were the bondslaves of the heavenly Sower, our Lord Jesus Christ, by the purchase of His shed blood) had slacked in their warfare. They had failed in their "earnestly contending for the faith," which allowed Satan in this short time span to creep in and to plant his tares.

Knowing the rebellion and the ungodliness that would characterize the lives of these implements of Satan, God, in his plan of the ages, had before designated that the evil which was to characterize these men would be allowed to work against the purity and the testimony of the professing church. God did not "predestinate" these individuals to a life of evil. They were to hear the Gospel, but by their own choice they were to turn a deaf spiritual ear to it. In their apostasy from the truth, they were to become the willing tools of Satan. God allowed them to have their evil day.

These apostates are those "who of old (that is, who of ages past) have been previously marked out to this sentence." The word, "sentence," refers not only to the previously prophesied deeds of wickedness of these apostates, but also to the eternal destruction of the second death which awaits them at the Great White Throne judgment. Jude speaks of that judgment, the eternal separation of God from these men, as though it were already an accomplished fact.

Jude described these agents of Satan posing as saints of God as “ungodly persons.” “Ungodly” indicates that these persons stand against all that is of God. They are opposed to God’s principles, and to God’s law. Both their *inward* desires and *outward* conduct are directed toward those things that are of the prince of this world, rather than to those things which are of God. They are base and carnal in their affections, and their personal lives are marked by immorality and sin.

As ungodly persons, they—both by their teachings and by their example—“change the grace of our God into licentiousness.” They pervert God’s grace by saying that the child of God does well to continue in sin. Their reason: God’s grace can be better exercised if there is a great deal to be forgiven. They are antinomianists, saying that God delights in forgiving His sinning children; for the more they stand in need of God’s forgiveness, the more God delights in forgiving them. Paul also spoke out against this false philosophy in Romans 6:1-4. “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

By their evil teachings and example, these apostates from the truth “turn the grace of our God into licentiousness.” That is, they take the principle of God’s grace—God’s unmerited favor to those who merit the very opposite—and pervert it by making it an excuse for licentiousness, lasciviousness, and lewdness in daily moral conduct. They believe that the more one sins, the more God forgives; and the more forgiveness is extended, the more grace is exercised. So, more sinning results in more grace. To this false teaching the apostle Paul explains, “God forbid!”

In addition to perverting God’s grace, these agents of Satan deny the Person and work of the Lord who bought them. They not only do *not* know Christ as personal Saviour, they also

actively *deny Him* to others. They do not confess that He is the Son of God come in the flesh; they deny the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." Jude says that these apostates come "the only Master-God even our Lord Jesus Christ denying"; that is, denying Christ.

Such denial of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ and His salvation is "the spirit of antichrist." By denying the Person of our Lord, His substitutionary atonement for sin is also denied. Therefore, the only true basis of salvation is denied.

Jesus Christ is God come in the flesh, and to deny Him is to deny God. "And the Word (living Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ) became flesh, and tabernacled among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (see John 1:14).

When these apostates deny "our only Master-God even our Lord Jesus Christ," they manifest the source of the spiritual power in which they come. The Apostle John writes, "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is the spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (1 John 4:2, 3).

These apostates are agents of Satan, opposed to the things of Christ, and characterized by ungodly and immoral living. Their mission is to spread poisonous doctrine in the name of Christ while denying the Person for whom that name stands. They are antichrists, come in the spirit of antichrist. This spirit is none other than "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan." It is against these apostates that Jude writes his urgent epistle, exhorting true Christians to "ear-

nestly contend for the faith once-and-for-all delivered unto the saints.”

3.

Examples from History

“I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities” (Jude 5-8).

Having declared that Satan has planted his tares among the Lord's wheat, Jude reminds his readers that Satan's tactics are not new. History shows that he has employed this same strategy in attempting to pervert the people and the purposes of God. But history also reveals that, although Satan used agents working on the inside of God's people for his destructive purposes, God still remained (and remains) in control. But those evil agents of Satan have met destruction at God's hand. God permitted them “to do whatsoever his hand and his council determined before to be done.” So, reminding his readers of the activities and destruction of these Satanic agents, Jude cites three well-known examples from the Old Testament Scriptures.

The first example is taken from the history of redeemed Israel, the time when God, with a high hand, had led his people out of Egyptian bondage into the wilderness of Sinai. Jude says, “I would like to remind you, although you were once well aware of this, how that the covenant God of Israel, having

saved that chosen nation out of bondage in the land of Egypt, afterward (during the years of wandering in the wilderness) brought about the destruction of those among this company who were not true believers."

The Christians of Jude's day were familiar with the history of the Exodus. Many were from a Jewish background and had known these Old Testaments Scriptures from childhood. And many of the Gentile *Christians* (from the nations and kindreds of the Gentiles) were being taught the Old Testament Scriptures by the gifted teachers God had placed among them.

Jude's expecting Christians of his day "to remember" (which implies prior knowledge) speaks also to us today. Every true child of God should be familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures. The thirty-nine books of the Old Testament are just as much the inspired Word of God as are the twenty-seven books of the New. We are exhorted to "search the Scriptures," because they tell us of Christ. God expects His spiritually mature children to be familiar with all of His Word. The Old Testament is *not* to be neglected in personal Bible study.

The Apostle Peter speaks of the importance of knowing the Old Testament in 2 Peter 3:1, 2 (the opening of his "Panorama of the Ages"). Note: "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets (Peter is referring to the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament which were indeed written by the holy prophets of Israel), and of the commandments of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour (here, Peter refers to the books of the New Testament which were most definitely written by the Lord's apostles)." The Old and New Testaments form a unified whole, without which no child of God can have depth of knowledge.

Jude's first illustration explores the character of those who followed Moses in the Exodus from Egypt, described in Exodus 12:37, 38: "And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that

were men, beside children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle." Israelites were not the only ones in the company led by Moses. Numerous Egyptians and many peoples of other national backgrounds joined the company, making the "mixed multitude." Many of these Egyptians (who were not the physical descendants of Israel), along with many of the Israelites, did not have true faith in God. Thinking they saw a good thing in this movement that Moses was leading, they joined up with it. But they were *not* true worshipers of the God of Moses.

These imposters of the mixed multitude were agents of Satan, placed in that company of the redeemed of God to mislead and destroy them. To the Children of Israel, these were the "certain men, crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this sentence."

These apostates of the mixed multitudes did their work well, instigating Israel's rebellion against Moses' authority and against *God's* authority, which Moses represented. These immoral and lewd persons revealed their character during the celebration of the golden calf before Mount Sinai and in the terrible sins of Baal-Peor. Thus, God found it necessary to bring destruction on these apostates.

Apostasy and unbelief, however, have not been confined only to the ranks of mankind. Jude's second example reminds us that Satan led a rebellion among the angels of Heaven through the same subtle means. But once again, doom was assured even before the time of the creation of these rebellious angels. Satan, for a time, may be able to mislead and misdirect God's creatures (by his acts of subtlety and deceit), but it is impossible for him to finally succeed in his rebellion. He cannot overthrow God's throne. These "angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he (God) hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgement of the great day."

Angels are only creatures, created beings brought into existence by the power of God. It is inconceivable that living

creatures who are dependent on God for their very existence could even hope to successfully revolt against their Creator. But Satan's persuasiveness overruled intelligent reasoning, and he was able to deceive a great multitude of the angels, leading them to their eternal doom. If angels can be deceived by Satan's craftiness, then *men* (through the teaching of his "fifth column" of apostate agents, which he has planted by stealth within the professing church of this age) can be and often are deceived.

Scripture does not tell us a great deal about Satan's fall, or about the rebellion that he led among the angels of Heaven. The sixth verse of Jude's epistle is one of the few Scriptures that deal with this subject. Satan's fall is contained primarily in two short passages, found in Isaiah 14:12-17 and Ezekiel 28:12-15.

As Jude speaks both of the fall and certain doom of the wicked angels, so Isaiah speaks of Satan's fall and certain doom in the reference passage. Isaiah tells us that Satan was created as Lucifer, the son of the morning, the highest of the created angels. Lucifer, the masterpiece of God's creation was perfect in wisdom and beauty. God placed him in authority over all the other created angels.

Lucifer was the crowning figure in God's creation, full of beauty and wisdom, and mature in his ways from the very moment of his creation. He did not acquire knowledge and wisdom through any learning process; these things were a part of him at the time of his creation. God appointed him the anointed cherub of the throne of God. No other creative being in the universe possessed the beauty, wisdom, and power.

Lucifer, however, was not created as a robot. God gave him a will to either love and obey or to rebel against Him. Lucifer chose rebellion, and became proud because of all his wonderful attributes, power, and authority. Resenting his subordination even to God, he desired to be at the pinnacle of all authority.

In order to rationalize his rebellion, Lucifer was the first of all the created beings of God to put his faith and trust in a "theory of evolution." God had told Lucifer that He created him, along with the heavens and earth and all the host of them, out of nothing. But because Lucifer observed his own great beauty, wisdom, and power that was so much like that of God, he desired to reverse his position with God's. So, he chose not to believe that he was created by God, reasoning that both he and God must have come into existence by some kind of principle of cosmic evolution. To him, God was just multitudes of years more advanced on the "evolutionary scale." Perhaps a well-planned and well-executed rebellion would overcome the happenstance that had placed God in authority. Perhaps Lucifer himself could seize the throne of God, and make God subordinate. This kind of reasoning can be the only possible cause which led Lucifer to execute the rebellion resulting in the fall of "the angels which kept not their first estate."

Lucifer (now known as Satan) was (and still is) an "evolutionist." He fathered this preposterous theory. Because he now had a motive, Lucifer organized his rebellion in Heaven. In order to bring about his "revolution," he recruited lesser angels (from just below himself, to the bottom of the heavenly scale of authority) to his cause.

This rebellion against God marks the first time Satan exercised his strategy of pretending to be what he was not, of false teaching, and of perversion of the truth. This strategy led a great multitude of the heavenly host from God to eternal destruction. And, as Jude declares, that strategy has been used over and over again—in the earthly realm—as Satan attempts to pervert and destroy that which is of God.

God does not ignore rebellion against Him or apostasy from His Word. Those who rebel against Him are scheduled for judgment and for eternal destruction in separation from Him. God has no program of redemption for wicked angels. Those who participated in Satan's rebellion are now reserved for the day of judgment, in which they will be eternally cast into "Gehenna" (the "lake of fire") or "hell."

The Lord prepared this place, not for the wicked, but "for the devil and his angels." God has a plan of redemption for men. Even some of the apostates may still be "snatched from the fire," if, before physical death forever seals their doom, they avail themselves of that cleansing provided by the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. But men who reject that salvation, that eternal life, will spend eternity in Gehenna.

Those angels "which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation" could only refer to those angels who followed Satan in his rebellion. Revelation 12:3, 4 indicates no less than one-third of all the created angels followed Satan in his fall.

Jude writes that these angels "kept not their *first estate*, but left their own habitation." The "first estate" refers to the place of God's dwelling in the third heaven. (In Scripture there are three heavens, all of which were created at the moment when God spoke the universe into existence.) The opening verse of the Bible says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The word "heavens" is a Hebrew plural, designating three, or more. The three heavens include the atmospheric heaven (which is designated as the second heaven; we call it "space"), and the third heaven (which is the place of God's abode).

Angels were created to occupy the third heaven. Those who followed Satan were originally a part of that host placed there to minister to God. This was their designated home; their first estate. When they rebelled against God, they could no longer remain in the third heaven, but were forced to "leave their own habitation," to occupy the second and first heavens. Once angels of God, they became the demons of Satan.

Some of these fallen angels are free to oppose God and His work in the regions of the second and first heavens. We know from other Scriptures that a large army of fallen angels (often referred to as "demons") are under the command and control of Satan and are clustered in the atmospheric heaven of this earth, and are free insofar as God permits to carry out their

evil work among men. The Apostle Paul speaks of the abilities and efforts of these demons in Ephesians 6:11, 12. It is clear from Paul's words that these spirit beings are *not* "chained up" in some place of everlasting darkness.

On the other hand, Scripture tells us that a part of the fallen angels are confined at the present. Jude says that those who "kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he (God) hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." The Apostle Peter confirms this in 2 Peter 2:4: ". . . God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell (Tartaras), and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." In these words, Peter names a place called "Tartaras" (translated "hell" in our English version), a place of confinement (during the present age) for "angels that transgressed."

In this present age, some fallen angels are already confined "in everlasting chains under darkness"; and some fallen angels have not yet been confined. Jude *may* be speaking of only those angels who are presently confined, though he is more likely speaking of the eventual destiny of all the fallen angels as an accomplished fact. God promises that all of these rebel angels will someday be bound for all eternity.

For his third example, Jude speaks of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrhah and other cities that were influenced by them. These people had turned away from God and from His moral law; they "did not wish to retain God in their knowledge." Instead, they gave "themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh." Because they totally indulged in sin, "God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."

The Canaanites' background, their motivation, their relationship to God, and their certain judgment is revealed in Romans 1:21-28. That passage definitely conveys God's feelings concerning sexual perversion, which is so prevalent in our own day. All who believe in God and respect the authority of His Word, should open their spiritual ears to what is said here.

Sexual perversion in *any* form is sin, and is abhorrent to God. The attitude that "anything goes between consenting adults" is not the attitude of God; it is the attitude of Sodom and Gomorrha and the cities of the plain—an attitude which led to their destruction!

The descendants of Canaan who occupied these cities were aware that God had established the institution of marriage between one man and one woman, and that God had provided a normal outlet for the sexual appetite within the marriage relationship. Knowledge of God and of God's moral law was possessed by Noah and all three of his sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. They, in turn, passed this knowledge on to their descendants. The life span of Ham's younger son, Canaan, overlapped that of his grandfather, Noah. But the tendencies toward sexual perversion and immorality had already been observed in Ham's younger son, even at the time of Ham's great sin against his father. This tendency and this incident led to Noah's curse that is found in Genesis 9:25. "And he said, cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren."

The Canaanites of Sodom and Gomorrha were not too many generations removed from their progenitor Canaan. It was not ignorance of God and His ways that led first to their spiritual rebellion and then to their moral degeneration. Rather, they deliberately went out "from the presence of the LORD" and descended into the degeneracy that eventually resulted in God's removing them from the face of the earth.

The sordidness of the physical excesses these degenerate people had is revealed in Jude's words "giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh." "Giving themselves over" stresses that these people abandoned themselves to the pursuit of immorality. Sexual appetite became the driving force of their existence; their main purpose in life became that of gratifying their baser passions.

Their descent into this state of degeneracy occurred in two steps. First, they "gave themselves over to fornication,"

abandoning the concept of the monogamous marriage (one man to one woman) and the normal sexual relationship within the sanctity of the marriage bond, as established by God. Instead, they practiced "free love," i.e., sexual relations without restriction, rejecting the ideal of the marriage relationship. The Canaanites became totally promiscuous, exercising no restraint whatsoever between individuals of the opposite sexes—because they "gave themselves over to fornication."

But this was not the limit to their moral degeneracy. The second step was that they "went after strange flesh." "Fornication" as it is used here speaks of a normal heterosexual relationship, male-female between unmarried adults. But "going after strange flesh" speaks of perverted relationships of both *heterosexual* and *homosexual* types. (See Romans 1:26, 27.) These people practiced those same abnormal and perverted acts widely and extensively. Today we classify such acts under a general name derived from the name of their city: "Sodomy."

"Going after strange flesh" included "beastility," physical relationships between humans of both sexes and domestic animals. There was no limit to the depravity that these people stooped to as they searched for physical gratification. They "gave themselves over to fornication," and then they "went after strange flesh." Godless men and godless women plunged themselves into the depths of moral depravity. After "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God in an image like unto corruptible men."

The wages of this turning to total moral depravity to gratify the lust of the flesh, Jude (as well as Genesis 19) tells us that they "are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

As a side note, these verses concerning the perversions of the Canaanites do not refer to the "angels that kept not their first estate." Note the literal, exact word-order translation of Jude's Greek: "As Sodom and Gomorrhah and the around-them cities, in like-with-them manner, having given themselves to

fornication, and having gone after flesh other (that is having entered into very possible perversion of both homosexual and heterosexual relationship), are set forth as an example of fire eternal, (the) penalty undergoing." The words "in like manner" refer to the "around-them cities" as they entered the perversion of Sodom and Gomorrha. It is extremely important that we understand this, because many feel that these words associate the fallen angels of Verse 6 with abnormal sexual practices, also. Because of this passage, some believe that Jude is referring to a time in the pre-flood world when, supposedly, fallen angels of God cohabited with women of the earth and produced a race of mongrel offspring, half-angel and half-man. They think that they find proof for this in Genesis 6:1, 2, 4. "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose . . . There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men (heroes) which were of old, men of renoun (name)."

The expression "sons of God" is said to be a reference to the fallen angels (and this identification is supposedly supported by Job 1, 2 and 38), and the expression "daughters of men" is said to be a reference to the women of the earth. There are many scriptural problems associated with this interpretation of Genesis 6:1-4. Many believe that the "sons of God" were the men of the faithful line of Seth, and the sin described is the initiation of polygamy (with the extra wives coming from the line of Canaan) among those who were faithful to Jehovah.

However, regardless of one's interpretation of the Genesis passage, Jude is *not* referring to any sexual perversions of deviations among fallen angels when he uses the word "in like manner." He simply associates the "around-them cities" with the sins of Sodom and Gomorrha. "As Sodom and Gomorrha and the around-them cities, in like-with-them manner, having given themselves to fornication, and having gone after flesh other, are set forth as an example of fire eternal, the penalty undergoing."

Each of these three groups mentioned by Jude was similar in rebellion against God and His Word, but each group was different in the outward manifestation of its rebellion. The apostates of Moses' "mixed multitude" rebelled because of unbelief and of "speaking evil of dignities," or blaspheming authority. The angels of heaven who followed Lucifer in his fall "kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation," and they "despised authority." The ungodly nation of the Canaanites, who occupied Sodom and Gomorrhah and the other cities of the plain, rejected God and His Word altogether, allowing their standards of living and daily conduct to fall to the lowest depravity. They defiled the flesh, "giving themselves over to total uncleanness and immorality as a deliberate defiance of God, and of His moral law.

As all three groups deliberately turned to total ungodliness, they met the sentence of doom that was "before marked out" for them. All three groups suffered the same consequence: God "destroyed them that believed not." He "hath reserved (them) in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day," and He "set them forth as an example, causing them to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire."

Having reminded his readers of past apostates and their destruction, Jude turns his discussion to apostates of this present age, those who have "crept in unawares, who were before of old marked out to this condemnation, ungodly persons, turning the grace of our God into licentiousness, and denying our only Master-God, even our Lord Jesus Christ."

These agents of Satan (in this age) combine (and will continue to combine) the courses of rebellion and conduct that characterized all three examples cited from history. "Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh (they will be characterized by the same immoral practices that led to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrhah), despise dominion (they will turn against God and against His authority as did the angels of heaven who followed Satan in his rebellion), and speak evil of dignities. They will speak disparagingly against the appointed priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ and will laugh at the absolute rule and the total authority of the spoken

and written Word of God, as did the unbelievers and rebels among the mixed multitude led by Moses).”

Verse 8 not only sums up the specific characteristics of these three examples from history, but also summarizes all the dominant characteristics of the apostates of the church age. The verse reverses the order of the example cited in the previous verses. The “defiling of the flesh” refers to the immoral sexual conduct of the residents of Sodom and Gomorrha, Jude’s third example. The “despising of dominion” refers to those angels who rebelled against the authority of God. The “speaking evil of dignities” refers to the scorn and derision of the unbelievers who followed Moses, but rebelled against God’s duly constituted established authority in the earthly sphere.

These apostates are “filthy dreamers.” That is, these ungodly persons fill their minds with unwholesome and immoral thoughts. As they think, so will they do. Even though they profess to be children of God, they have no respect for God himself, or for His authority in the earth. “The imagination of their hearts is only evil continually,” and they will materialize their evil dreams through deeds of the flesh.” Their profession of knowing God is only a cover for their work of carrying out the will of Satan!

While God’s Word firmly condemns all immoral acts of the depraved people of Sodom and Gomorrha, “these filthy dreamers” will advocate movements which condone such acts. First, they will promote such movements as the “new morality,” which is designed to weaken the marriage ties, and to promote fornication under the designation of “sexual freedom” Advocates of the legalization of various acts of sexual perversion, they will state that “anything goes between consenting adults.” Then, these apostates will applaud gay liberation movements, and will even establish “churches” for homosexuals which provide an air of morality to those acts of total depravity.

Indeed, they are “filthy dreamers who defile the flesh.” They defy God’s Word, which condemns these things as sin

and lawlessness, because they “despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. The false professors of the church age, those planted agents of Satan, combining the outstanding characteristics of all apostates of the past, will seek to subvert the true children of God.

4.

The Trinity of Apostasy

“Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. But these speak evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gain-saying of Core” (Jude 8-11).

In describing the character, work, and certain destruction of the church age apostates, Jude compared them to three historic examples of apostasy. What these all have in common is that they “defile the flesh,” they “despise dominion,” and they “speak evil of dignities.” Their attitudes are those of the “mixed multitude” in Moses’ day. By denouncing the Lord Jesus Christ’s priesthood and kingship, by denying the divine origin, inspiration, and authority of God’s written Word, and by scoffing at the existence of spiritual beings both in God’s kingdom and in Satan’s, these “filthy dreamers” profess to be wise, but in reality “they became fools.”

“Yet Michael the archangel,” Jude exclaims “when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.” Because the church age apostates refuse to acknowledge the existence of spiritual authority and

power and are puffed up with self-pride, they disdain the idea of the existence of powerful spiritual beings who influence and control the affairs of the earth. Just as they do not recognize God's power and authority, they do not recognize the existence, or the power, of Satan and his demon army.

The attitude of the bold human apostates contrasts with that of Michael the archangel, the highest angel presently in the ministry of God.

The things that Scripture ascribes to Michael imply that he is the most powerful of the created angels that have not "left their own habitation." Yet Jude says that even Michael, when confronted with the devil, called on the power of the Lord to overcome this most powerful, fallen spirit-being. Michael did not "bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." Michael recognized that even he—the highest of the holy angels—faced in Lucifer a foe he could not defeat in his own power. So he called on the power of God to defeat the "Adversary."

In contrast to Michael, these puny, puffed-up apostates "speak evil of those things which they know not." They mock the idea of a personal adversary called "the devil" and boldly proclaim, "There is no place in my theology for the concept of a devil. 'Devil' is only man's personification of the principal of evil, putting the letter 'd' on the front of the word 'evil.'"

How the devil must laugh as these apostates, masquerading as children of God, make such proclamation, while at the same time they are carrying out his bidding to the letter! We have many "ungodly men" presiding as the spiritual leaders over congregations of professing believers, periodically giving out the poisonous product of the "tare" to those who sit before them, rather than the "good wheat" of the Word of God. Mere human beings, turned from the knowledge of God but "professing themselves to be wise," are not afraid to speak lightly of that one with whom even Michael the archangel would not contend in his own power.

Jude brings up a historical point about the conflict between Michael and the devil that is not mentioned anywhere else. Jude says that Michael contended with the devil over the disposition of the body of Moses. The record of Moses' death is given in Deuteronomy 34:5, 6: "*So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.*" According to this passage, God, not man, buried the body of Moses. God wanted the burial place of Moses' body to be kept secret from all men; so the body was buried in some unknown valley in the land of Moab, near the place referred to as "Beth-peor." Apparently it was Michael who actually accomplished this act of burial.

Since Jude tells us that Michael contended with Satan over the body of Moses, it seems that the LORD (YHWH) had sent Michael to accomplish the act of secret burial in a place unknown to man.

Perhaps Satan opposed God's purpose of secretly burying Moses' body because he realized that if the body were buried in a place known to the Israelites (and to the rest of the world), the site would become a shrine. Satan desired to turn the hearts of men from worshiping the LORD to worshiping the remains of Moses. The Israelites had already come close to worshiping Moses, and if they knew the whereabouts of his body, this form of idolatry would probably be established.

So, when the LORD sent Michael to take Moses' body and to bury it in a secret place, Satan stood in Michael's way. The devil (as the usurper), determined that he would have his way, had already taken possession of the body. Realizing that Satan was more powerful than himself, and that he could not defeat Satan in his own power, Michael called upon YHWH, the LORD. Only through Michael's dependence upon the Pre-incarnate Christ's strength was he able to wrest the body of Moses away from Satan, and to bury it according to God's command.

How different are these human agents of Satan! Because they will not recognize spiritual powers and authority from any source, Jude says, "These speak evil of those things they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts in those things they corrupt themselves."

These ungodly persons are *natural* men, or men who have never been born of the Spirit of God in spite of their profession. They are "twice dead"; that is, dead in their trespasses and sins, and dead in their profession of faith. They, as natural men, have no spiritual discernment. As the Apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Jude says that these apostates "speak evil (that is, they speak blasphemously) of those things which they know not." Any concept of the spiritual or of the supernatural, is beyond the understanding of these natural, unreborn carnal men, and so these concepts are foolishness to them. Puffing themselves up in their pride, they speak blasphemously of anything that is outside natural reasoning.

Just as they speak evil of those things which they don't understand, they corrupt themselves in the things (the things of the natural realm, the things of carnality) that they do understand. Carnal and worldly, these persons live for the flesh and for the things of the world. And, as the Apostle John writes, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world" (see 1 John 2:16). They give themselves over to these drives of the flesh, and (as the people of Sodom and Gomorrha) "they defile the flesh."

"But what they know naturally, *as brute beasts*, in those things they corrupt themselves." This phrase, "as brute beasts," brings up an interesting topic worth developing. Man is a tripartite being, made up of *spirit*, *soul*, and *body*. The *spirit* is the highest part; designed for fellowship and

communion with God. It is man's spirit which makes him separate from the lower animals, placing him on a higher plane than the other kinds of conscious life which God created for the earthly domain. The spirit was designed to be the pinnacle of man's "three-story building."

The next level of man is the *soul*, the seat of conscious life, the seat of the intellect. All the creatures of the earth that possess conscious life (in the technical meaning of the word) have souls. It is the source of the fleshly nature, the source of carnality.

The third, and lowest, level of man is the *body*. The body houses the spirit and the soul, and is the part of man which interfaces with the physical universe, and which makes it possible for man to live upon the earth.

Man was created in the image of God, and in this image, the *spirit* was made the highest part of man. God intended that the spirit control man. But when man sinned, he died spiritually. His spirit dropped from the pinnacle and lost its position of control. The *soul* now became the highest controlling part of fallen man; that is why the Apostle Paul speaks of unregenerated natural men as "soulish" men. The soul has very good understanding of the things of the flesh, so these "soulish" false teachers of the church age have complete knowledge of the driving forces of the flesh.

As Jude says, "But what they know naturally, *as brute beasts*, in those things they corrupt themselves." With the soul in control of things, natural man is on the level of the lower animals. The animals, having no spirits, are totally controlled by fleshly things, and the apostates of the church age (understanding the things of the flesh) do as the "natural brute beasts," even feeling a kinship to the beast. Indeed, they like to think that they sprang from the beasts; so they cling to the theory of biological evolution for the justification of their "beastlike" lusts. The reasonable concept of biblical creation is tossed aside for the absurdities of biological evolution. These apostates will scream the loudest when anything comes to

light that might cast doubt upon the validity of their pet theory. They *want* to be the descendants of the lower animals; it gives them an excuse for their behavior. These wicked persons are humanists, denying the spiritual but promoting the carnal. They "defile the flesh."

However, Jude exclaims, "Woe unto them!" Their judgment and eternal condemnation is certain!

Having pronounced this woe, Jude expounds the three-fold aspect of their apostasy. Verse 11 reveals the trilateral aspects of the false teachings of, and the false paths walked by, these church age apostates. "For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core." "The way of Cain," "the error of Balaam," and "the gainsaying of Core" are the three-fold aspects of apostasy. Let's consider each of these paths of apostasy in the order in which they are mentioned.

"The way of Cain" is natural man's religion. There are only two religions in the entire world: the *true religion* of God's appointing (which is the system of faith revealed by God) and the *false religion* which is the system of belief based upon the product of man's mind).

The second of these two is the religion of "credulity," or "superstition." This religion comes in many different forms, but all are built on the same concept. All false religions assume that man can buy his acceptability before God, that he can buy his salvation by his own works. This contrasts to God's revelation that man is a fallen creature and spiritually dead, and that it is impossible for him to approach God on any basis other than by the work that God himself has done. God has revealed that the salvation of man comes by *faith in Him*, not by any of man's *works*.

In Eden, God clearly revealed to guilty man that death and judgment were his rightful lot. As God promised, only through the sacrifice of the coming "Seed of woman," who (in the fullness of time) would appear to offer Himself as

Substitute and Saviour, would mankind's death and judgment be averted.

The LORD said unto the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (see Genesis 3:15). In accordance with this revelation, faith taught those in whose hearts the grace of God had worked that the guilty sinner's only approach to God was through bloody sacrifice. There must be a Substitute; the wages of sin are death; either the sinner must die, or one must die in his place.

Every sacrifice offered to God pointed toward the promised "Seed of woman," the One whom the LORD said would have the power to crush the head of Satan. God was to send the one perfect sacrifice who would "take away the sin of the world."

We read in Hebrews 11:4, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Notice, this passage says that it was "by faith" that Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice unto God. It was not by Abel's invention or by his intuition, but by his faith in the revealed will and Word of God.

God had revealed to those early residents of the pre-Flood earth the proper approach; that approach was through faith in God's promise of the coming Redeemer, to Him. This is the very basis for the Gospel. Only the shed blood of God's appointed Substitute could take away sin. Scripture repeatedly testified that "without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin." Only blood, "the life of the flesh," poured out upon the altar, can pay the wages of sin.

Cain denied this true revelation of God. He would not accept the fact that he could not approach God on his own merit. So he brought an offering according to the promptings of his own heart, refusing to believe that the heart of natural, unregenerate, fallen man "is deceitful above all things and des-

perately wicked." To Cain, the things that he brought to God were valuable, and acceptable and good. He brought the fruits of his labor, those things of which he had won from the earth "by the sweat of his brow," believing these things had much greater value than the bloody carcass of Abel's "fatlings."

Cain refused to heed God's revelation, did not recognize the true nature of sin, and refused to view himself as a spiritually dead sinner whose sins must be washed away by the blood of the promised Righteous One. Refusing to accept the reality of God's sentence of death, Cain gave no life; he brought no blood and exercised no faith in God's promise.

"The way of Cain" is natural religion. The fruits of Cain's field are an excellent picture of all of natural man's best efforts to elevate himself and to approach God by means of his best attainments. But the claims of God's divine justice reveal the worthlessness of all of these things. Man, as a spiritually-dead creature, is totally incapable of accomplishing anything that can be brought to God as payment for the wages of sin. As the Scripture asks, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Nothing—man has absolutely *nothing* to give!

"The way of Cain" is also false religion. Because it is the religion of man's works ("something in my hand I bring in exchange for my soul"), it contradicts the revelation of God ("just as I am without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me").

Cain was the originator of the world system and all false religions. The apostates of the church age will walk in his "way." The "way of Cain" embraces every form of religious teaching, ceremony, or cult that ignores the need of the substitutionary atonement of Christ, and seeks salvation by some other route. Whether that route be the substitution of rites and ceremonies (as the blend of paganism, Judaism, and Christianity that grew up in the Middle Ages and continues as the papal system today), or whether that route be the intellectual and refined speculations of the modern religio-metaphysical cults (such as Christian Science, New Thought, Theosophy,

Rationalism, etc.), it is *still* the "way of Cain." All false religions have in common the *denial* of the fallen nature of mankind.

Cain's offering of the fruit of his field is just another version of Adam's and Eve's fig leaves. The present age apostates, masquerading under their false profession as children of God, will walk and teach "the way of Cain." They will succeed in turning thousands to this way, the way that leads to destruction. The Apostle Peter speaks of these same apostates when he prophesies, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that brought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you" (see 2 Peter 2:1-3).

Jude speaks of the second aspect of apostasy as "the error of Balaam"—false ministry. Three times in the New Testament we read of Balaam, the greedy Gentile prophet who taught King Balak to cast a stumbling block before the Children of Israel. The Apostle Peter speaks of "the way of Balaam" in His letter to the Church of Pergamos in Revelation 2:14. Here, Jude mentions "the error of Balaam." It is evident that Balaam's way, his error and his doctrine, are all intimately related.

Numbers 22-24 records the history of Balaam as such relates to the Children of Israel. Balaam is unusual in Old Testament history in that he was a Gentile whom God had given the gift of prophecy, and who for the sake of monetary profit, was willing to prostitute that gift to the enemies of God's people. Balaam is sometimes incorrectly referred to as a false prophet. Balaam *did* speak the words of God, though he did so reluctantly. And since Balaam spoke the words of God before man, he was indeed a prophet—not a *false* prophet.

Balaam appears in history as a true prophet of God who used his prophetic gift for financial gain. Balaam's "error" was to gain financial reward and earthly prestige for himself through his God-given ministry. And out of Balaam's "error" sprang both his "way" and his "doctrine." Balaam is a striking example of those who suppose that the object of knowing God is to make gains in the goods, in the power, and in the prestige of this world.

Just as Balaam considered using his gift of prophecy to his own personal advantage, Jude says that the apostates of the present age "Have run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward." Any person (no matter what sect, cult, or religious system to which he belongs) who decides to dispense religious and mystical services for financial gain follows after "the error of Balaam." Ministers who occupy the pulpit of professing Christian churches solely for the financial gain and personal prestige are "running greedily after the error of Balaam for reward." Anyone who "dispenses" physical and spiritual "faith" healing in return for financial gain is traveling in "the way of Balaam." Those who direct a God-given gift of teaching toward a monetary enterprise (whether a ministry of speaking before congregations of God's people for a fixed price or holding "teaching seminars" for paid admissions and required fees) are caught up in "the error of Balaam." Performers who have a God-given talent for singing or creating religious music follow this "error" if they perform for paid admissions, or for self-recognition. The gifts of God are not to be prostituted for the purpose of obtaining a profit in the goods, and in the prestiges, of this world!

Balaam's history is an intensely solemn one. The Apostle Peter said that Balaam "loved the wages of unrighteousness." While professedly a prophet of God who possessed the gift of prophesy, Balaam used his sacred office for the accumulation of wealth. He stands before the people of God, branded eternally on the pages of Holy Scripture, as a man with knowledge of the truth, but who for a profit would stifle his own convictions and lead astray those who came under his influence. He let the "god of Mammon" direct his way. He would destroy God's people in order to bask in riches.

"The error of Balaam" is the basis of a vast majority of evil religious systems. How many of our cultic religious systems today would continue to exist—even for a moment—if the influence of money was taken away? What religious faddist gives freely to others what he professes to be a divine gift to himself? Are there any real martyrs among the liberal "religionists"?

When the profit motive controls the professed religious leader, his effort, teaching, and labor are directed—not to please God—but to please men. He prophesies and teaches pleasing things; and the *truths of God*, that are offensive to unregenerated "ticklish" ears, are never mentioned. The objective is to separate the cash from their listeners. Their ministry is to be both a prestigious—and profitable—enterprise. They have a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof. The Apostle Paul says, "From such turn away."

There is also a third aspect to the apostates' false teaching, the last of this "unholy trinity" of apostasy. Jude says, "they perished in the gainsaying of Core." The "gainsaying of Core" is false worship; it is rebellion against the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The story of "Korah" is found in Numbers 16. (The Greek name "Core" is the transliteration of the Hebrew name "Korah.") Korah and his followers were swallowed up by the earth as God caused the ground to open under their feet. "Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: And they rose up before Moses; with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD? (see Numbers 16:1-3).

Korah was not a priest, and neither was any of his two hundred fifty followers. Korah was a Levite (a descendent of the tribe of Levi), and the others were well-known and influential men from other tribes. They were "famous in the congregation, men of renown."

These proud men rebelled against Moses (God's appointed prophet) and Aaron (God's appointed priest). They sought to force their way into the Holy Place of the tabernacle without authority, in an attempt to force their way into the place of God's special presence by a path of *their* choosing, not by *God's* appointed way. With the cry, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, everyone of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?" they sought to enter into the holy place and to install themselves as priests before God.

Moses (a type of the Lord Jesus Christ in His office of *prophet*) and Aaron (a type of Christ in His office of *priest*) represented the Lord as the only Way that men may enter into the presence of God. Only through the shed blood of God's perfect Sacrifice, offered by God's appointed High Priest, can man stand before God. Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (see John 14:6). Thus, our only approach to the Father is through the Son. Korah and his followers ignored the authority of God's anointed prophet and priest, and sought instead to set themselves up in capacity. They claimed that "all are holy," that "all are sons of God and anointed priests of God by nature," therefore, all have the right and the power to act as their own priests.

Such teaching is prevalent among professing "religionists" today. Proud and independent, these vain men openly rebel against the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. They dare to worship God apart from that "Way" God has provided. To them, He was only another man. To be sure, they contend, **He was a great example, a great teacher, and a great martyr; but not the Son of God; the Way, the Truth, and the Life.** They

reject Him as God's Prophet, Priest, and King, crying that all men are the sons of God, are holy, and can stand in the presence of God on the basis of their own priesthood.

Such belief is the substance and core of Socinianism, Unitarianism, and the "Unity" movements. This leaven of apostasy has permeated a great part of today's professing Christendom (or professing "religionism"). The cry of the false teachers and leaders is, "All men are the sons of God. He is our Creator. All are holy." They say, "We have no need of a mediating high priest. We will approach God in our own priesthood. We believe that God exists and that He loves us and that we can come into His presence without a mediator." Denying the trinitarian nature of the Godhead, they say, "God is God. He is the only One, whether one calls him Jehovah, or Allah, or Buddah, he is still the same God. Jesus Christ, and the other 'prophets' of other religions, were simply men who pointed to different paths; but all paths lead to God."

To the Lord Jesus Christ, they say, in effect, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, everyone of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourself above the congregation of the LORD?"

Jude says that these apostates "perished in the gainsaying of Korah." He speaks of the doom of these satanic agents as though it were an accomplished fact. Under God's decree, their doom is sure; they were "before marked out to this sentence." In the case of Korah and his two hundred fifty rebels, their end (as far as this physical life is concerned) was real and literal. Moses writes, "And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and all their houses, and the men that attached themselves unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive unto the pit, and the earth closed upon them and they perished from among the congregation."

God removed Korah and his followers from the midst of

the congregation of His people for "gainsaying." He will do the same to the apostates of this age.

5.

Wolves in Sheep's Clothing

"These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 12, 13).

The Holy Spirit of God, speaking through the pen of Jude, graphically describes those agents of Satan who profess to be children of God, but who in reality oppose His purpose.

After exposing the three-fold aspect of the apostasy of the false teachers, Jude uses metaphors to describe their character, activity and destiny. The danger these apostates represent to the true children of God (who are seeking after God and His ways) is brought out in the words "These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you." The word translated "spots" is a nautical term that refers to "hidden rocks"; i.e., rocks that are just below the surface of the water. Rocks that protrude above the surface of the water are not a significant danger to ships since they can be seen and avoided. But rocks just below the surface can rip the bottom out of a boat and cause a shipwreck.

Jude compares apostates to "hidden rocks" because they conceal their true nature under the "water" of deceitful words and false profession. The seeker of truth who has not placed his faith firmly in the Lord Jesus Christ may be "shipwrecked by the apostates" damnable heresies," which if believed, will keep him from coming to a knowledge of the truth. He himself will become a "religionist," propagating those same lies that

were fed to him when he encountered the "hidden rock." For the immature Christian who encounters the "hidden rock" of misleading doctrine, his "shipwreck" is the neutralization of his witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. He will follow after falsehood; and his spiritual growth will be stunted and retarded.

The "feasts of charity" are the comings together of Christians to observe the Lord's Supper. In Jude's day, Christians had a common meal together before they partook of the communion elements. These apostates come boldly to the table of the Lord, even though they had no personal relationship with Him. Their boldness then, as well as now, makes them extremely difficult to recognize. The metaphor, "hidden rocks," is quite apt to describe the boldness of these agents of Satan as they do the bidding of their master.

These apostates go about their evil business, Jude says, "feeding themselves without fear." "Feeding" is actually the Greek word for "shepherding." The "pastor" of God is supposed to "shepherd" God's sheep; that is, he is to feed and water them and care for their well-being. But the apostates do not "shepherd" the sheep. Rather, they "poison" them with false doctrine, and "shepherd" themselves with the food and drink of this world. "They run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward." They "shepherd *themselves*," and destroy God's sheep.

"Water" symbolizes the Word of God, which God's true ministers bring to the thirsty people of God. But these apostates, posing as "clouds" (channels through which God's Word flows), are totally incapable of supplying the Word. They are dry clouds, and those they purport to shepherd will remain thirsty.

As "clouds without water," they are "carried about of winds." "Winds" in Scripture symbolize spiritual forces interacting with the affairs of the earth. In Daniel 7:2, 3 we read, "Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the *four winds* of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from

another." The "four winds" striving on the sea represent the spiritual powers directed by Satan that affect troubled, rebellious humanity. Out of this stirring up of the waters by the four winds, come the four great beasts. These "beasts" represent those four great world empires which must sequentially run their course upon the earth during that period of time designated by Christ as "the times of the Gentiles."

Thus, "winds" represent spiritual powers. The Lord used the symbol of the "wind" to refer to the ministry of God's Holy Spirit in the earth. The "sound of a rushing mighty wind" was one of the perceptible signs of the coming of the Holy Spirit (for His special indwelling ministry) to the church on the Day of Pentecost.

The "winds" of Daniel 7:2 and the "winds" of Revelation 7:1 (where we read, "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree"), represent wicked spiritual forces under the control of Satan.

When Jude says that the apostates of this age are "clouds without water, carried about of winds," he is also referring to wicked spiritual forces. These waterless "clouds" are directed in their doctrine and places of ministry by the prince of darkness. These apostates move restlessly in the sphere of the first heaven (the atmospheric heaven), and are controlled by those spiritual powers present there. While they have no ability to supply the water of the Word of God, they do have the ability to follow the bidding and accomplish the ministry of their master, "that old dragon, who is the devil, and Satan." "Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds."

These "ungodly persons who have crept in unawares" are pictured as "trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots." The picture is that of a fruit tree seen in the autumn with its fruit rotting on its branches. Instead of bearing fresh fruit as the "good seed" and as "sons of God" do, these "trees"—these false teachers—bear rotten,

stinking fruit. Scripture says, "By their fruits ye shall know them," and Jude points out that this literally applies to the secret agents of Satan planted among God's people in the present age.

Jude also says that these apostates are "twice dead." They are natural men who have never been spiritually reborn. Not only are they spiritually dead (dead in trespasses and sin), they are also dead in their profession before men. They claim spiritual life but are "dead" in their profession; i.e., "twice dead."

The eternal destiny of these "twice dead" persons is spoken of as certain. They are "plucked up by the roots." God will "leave them neither root nor branch" as He pours out His wrath on those who have no love for the truth and who have followed the way of error, as they lead others to share their doom.

These satanic agents are "raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame." In Scripture, the sea often symbolizes the troubled mass of the earth's unregenerated humanity. Just as the sea is stirred by the winds, this mass is stirred by the "winds of heaven," those evil spiritual forces under the direction of Satan.

As "raging waves (the visible manifestations of the work of the winds of the sea), foaming out their own shame," these secret agents among God's people are the visible manifestations of the spiritual forces of Satan (the prince of the power of the air) as he supplies the driving energy to the waters of the mass of unregenerate, troubled humanity. An ocean wave is stirred by the pumping power of the wind. It rises to great height, clearly visible for all to see, and has tremendously destructive power for a short period of time. However, that wave sinks back again, leaving only a trace of foam to testify of its existence. Other waves rise to take that one's place, and the destructive forces continue through the medium of these new stirrings of the winds of heavens.

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The analogy to the apostates is clearly seen. The "winds of heaven" stir the sea of humanity, and a figure (wave) arises visible to all, as he brings about the destructive work of the spiritual driving force. But like the raging waves of the sea, the lifespan of the apostates, their term of destructive work, is limited. They, like "raging waves of the sea," soon "foam out their own shame" because their mission is completed. Other "raging waves" arise, and Satan's destructive work continues.

Finally, Jude compares the apostates to "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." This metaphor looks beyond the work of the unregenerate in this life and graphically portrays their eternal destiny. Their destiny is *not* to go into the presence of God. Neither is it to go to "purgatory" where they will have a "second chance" to accept the salvation they rejected in this life. Rather, they are *eternally separated* from God, with no aim, no tie point for their existence in eternity, or no state of expected change. They are like shooting stars, moving endlessly through the heavens, burning themselves out.

The destiny of the apostates is judgment; their eternal home is the place prepared for the devil and his angels. Scripture describes this as a place of intense heat, totally devoid of light—both spiritual and physical.

6.

The Prophecy of Enoch

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons

in admiration because of advantage” (Jude 14-16).

Jude next records the string of metaphors which so vividly describes the nature, the work, and the destiny of those apostates and false teachers whom Satan has, by stealth, intermixed with the children of God. He turns his attention to the testimony of one who lived five thousand years prior to the time of this epistle—Enoch. “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these.” The history of the Patriarch Enoch is briefly recorded in the concise statements of Genesis 5. Of this man, Moses wrote, “And Jared lived an hundred sixty and two years, and he begat Enoch: And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him” (vv. 18, 21-24).

Jude carefully identifies Enoch as “the seventh from Adam.” In the genealogical list of Genesis 5, the seventh patriarch in the line of Seth (counting from the federal head of the human race, Adam) is Enoch, the one who “walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.” This man is the first recorded in Scripture that God translated out of the earth through means other than physical death.

“And Enoch also,” Jude says, “prophesied of these.” The “these” are the apostates Jude has been speaking about. Those who have “crept in unawares” and who “turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and deny the only Master-God, even our Lord Jesus Christ.” Enoch, living several centuries before God sent the Flood to destroy that beautiful pre-Flood world, spoke these words concerning the apostates of the church age.

Enoch’s prophecy is, “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” This prophecy is one of judgment, which clearly states

that the apostates living in the last age will be judged at the time of the Lord's coming in power and glory. Jude emphasizes that Enoch's prophecy of judgment relates to this age—our age—when he introduces Enoch's prophecy with the words, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these."

Where did Jude get these words which were spoken by the Patriarch Enoch? How did he know that such words were actually spoken by Enoch, and that these words were significant to this message? These words are not recorded elsewhere in Scripture. But the Holy Spirit of God (who was impelling Jude along as he wrote this epistle) gave Enoch's words to Jude.

There is a Book of Enoch containing words (purported to be spoken by Enoch) that are very similar to these words. But this book is *not* inspired Scripture. It is a part of the biblical apocrypha; or, it is a part of those spurious words which deal with biblical subjects, but which are not (and never were) a part of God's inspired Word! The Book of Enoch was not written by Enoch at all, but was written sometime after 420 B.C., when the last Old Testament book of Scripture (Malachi) was finished.

Possibly some of the things in the Book of Enoch came from Israel's oral tradition. Some parts of the book do record true facts, but Jude's quotation from it does not mean that God endorses the entire book. It only verifies that Enoch did actually speak these recorded words. A secular book can contain truth, but that does not automatically make the entire book true. Likewise, quoting a passage from an uninspired secular book within an inspired book does not in any way detract from the inspired book. The Book of Enoch is still a book of the apocrypha, and God *has not approved* all that the book records. However, regardless of Jude's source, Enoch did utter the prophecy that Jude attributes to him, and it is a part of the Word of God.

This prophecy of the Second Coming of Christ and His judgment on apostates may seem strange to come from a

prophet who lived before the Great Flood. Christ's establishment of His earthly reign was far in the future at the time of Enoch, of whom Hebrews 11:5 says, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."

During Enoch's life, and definitely after his translation to Heaven, there were many who turned their backs on God, going their own way. No doubt, many pretended to be sons of God; yet they taught false doctrines. God brought judgment on the ungodly of that first world; the judgment of a great universal flood which destroyed not only the human population of that world, but also destroyed the outer crust of the planet. Those wicked men and women who perished in the Great Flood are still to undergo the final judgment at the Great White Throne. Revelation 20:13 seems to speak specifically of the judgment of those who died in the Great Flood: "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it." This judgment of the wicked dead comes at least a thousand years after that time when "the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints."

Yet Enoch's prophecy does not relate to the apostasy of his day and its judgment, but to that at the close of this age in which we live. This patriarch was a witness for the LORD in the pre-Flood world, and God gave him significant revelation concerning His program throughout the ages.

Jude's inclusion of Enoch's prophecy of Christ's Second Coming hints at another important point. Enoch is one of two men in Old Testament history who were translated out of this earthly sphere without physically dying. Enoch witnessed to the pre-Flood world inhabitants, speaking of things to come in God's plan of the ages. He was also a contemporary of the wicked Lamech of the line of Cain, who (according to the record of Genesis 4) was a prime leader of the landside movement of the pre-Flood world population toward total wickedness and immorality.

The other man in Old Testament history who was translated without dying was the Prophet Elijah. The record of his translation is contained in 2 Kings 2:11. "And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." Elijah witnessed to Israel in the days of wicked King Ahab and his pagan, immoral wife, Queen Jezebel, under whom Israel took that nation's greatest step toward ungodliness and immorality. Like Enoch, Elijah was God's witness during one of the blackest periods of history.

The Old Testament, then, testifies that these two men in history have been translated out of the world without dying. Not only were their souls and spirits taken, but their bodies were also taken. The bodies of Enoch and Elijah were mortal bodies; that is, those bodies were bodies of this cursed earth, subject to decay and death. The apostle Paul tells us that "there are also *celestial* bodies, and bodies *terrestrial*" (see 1 Corinthians 15:40). Enoch's and Elijah's bodies were terrestrial bodies suited to the environment of this earth. Yet they were translated out of this earth. Those earthly bodies are existing somewhere in the universe, and are being preserved in some specially prepared environment. God must have some purpose for these two exceptions to the normal rule of physical death.

Some feel that God transformed those terrestrial bodies of Enoch and Elijah to *celestial bodies* at the moment of their translation, and that those two exceptions to the normal destiny of physical death are now present in the heavenlies in immortal, resurrection bodies. Since this is the procedure God will use when He catches the living children of God out of this world at the time of the "Rapture" of the church (1 Corinthians 15:51-55), then perhaps God did the same thing to Enoch and Elijah.

However, it is not congruous to the revelation of God's Word that Enoch and Elijah received resurrection bodies at the time of their translations. Both of these translations came

many years before the work of the Cross, before the time of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord. Paul declares that "now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the *first fruits* of them that slept." If the Lord Jesus Christ had the *first* resurrection body, then it is impossible that Enoch and Elijah received resurrection bodies centuries before the incarnation and the offering up of the Son of God. We are required to believe that both Enoch and Elijah are still in mortal flesh, and that both are still living somewhere in the universe.

What would God's purpose be in the preserving of these men in their mortal flesh? In Revelation 11 we are given a very likely answer. Two quite unusual witnesses will appear in the earth during that time of judgment we refer to as "the tribulation." God says of those two men, "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth." Later in Revelation 11 we find at the end of their testimony, that these two witnesses are slain by the hands of the "beast." Their dead bodies lie in the streets of Jerusalem for three days; then they are resurrected and caught up into Heaven while the entire world watches.

These two witnesses are Enoch and Elijah, two men whose physical deaths were purposely delayed so that they could give witness for God in a godless and immoral period of this earth's history. This is why the prophecy quoted by Jude speaks of the judgment at the end of this age, rather than the judgment of the Great Flood. Jude says that Enoch prophesied, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." Enoch himself will repeat this prophecy during the tribulation period.

According to Jude (and Enoch), the Lord will come with myriads of His saints. This same coming is spoken of in Zechariah 14 and in Revelation 19. It is the Second Coming of Christ in power and glory at the end of the tribulation period. When He comes, He will "execute judgment upon all," or He as King will judge those Gentiles and those Jews still living in mortal

bodies at the time of His coming. The record of the judgment of living Gentiles is found in Matthew 25:31-46, and the record of the judgment of the living Jews is found in Ezekiel 20:33-38. In these judgments, the King (our Lord Jesus Christ) will purge out the wicked from among the faithful of His people living at the end of the tribulation. Then, His people will enter the millennial kingdom to repopulate the earth.

Since it is the apostates of the church age who are the special subjects of Enoch's prophecy of judgment, a major portion of these "ungodly men" are to be living in the earth at the end of the age. Already, in Jude's day, many of these secret agents of Satan had crept into the professing church. But as Jude goes on in his letter, he informs us that these false teachers will not only grow bolder and bolder in their work of deceit, but will also grow more and more numerous. The greatest majority of them will be living in the earth just before Christ's return.

When the church (God's "wheat" in the earth) is caught up at the time of the Lord's appearing, these apostates will be left to continue their false profession and teaching into the tribulation period. They will accept the false "christ" or "anti-christ" known also as the "beast" of Revelation 13. The false prophet, or the second "beast" of Revelation 13, will come from the ranks of these apostate "religionists." He will direct the people to worship the first "beast." The majority of the people left in the earth at that time will follow him. Many of the apostates of the church age will still be alive when the Lord comes in power and glory. These will be among the "goats" at the earthly judgment of the "sheep" and the "goats."

At the Lord's return with the myriads of His saints, He will accomplish the earthly judgment of all the living. Those who are not His by faith in His shed blood and by God's saving grace will be found guilty. The sons of Satan will not escape this judgment. Christ will judge the apostates for their "ungodly deeds" and "hard speeches." These "hard" speeches are blasphemous words spoken to discredit the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Enoch's words specifically say that

these "hard" speeches were directed against the Lord, the One who will come "with myriads of his saints." These false teachers and preachers, placed inside the professing sphere of "religionism," will (before the time of the Second Coming of Christ) boldly speak out against Him, denying His deity, His work on the Cross, and defiling and degrading His name. Their speech will ridicule the Son of God. However, these apostates of the church age who have survived the tribulation will be convicted of "all their hard speeches."

Expanding on this theme of wicked speeches, Jude proclaims that these false teachers and preachers of God are "murmurers, complainers." A "murmurer" is one who does not speak clearly. His mouth moves; he makes sounds; yet his complaints are not clearly audible. The mixed multitude who opposed Moses in the wilderness were "murmurers." They complained but not clearly nor audibly.

These "murmurers" complain about God's law of righteousness. These ungodly persons break all restrictions placed upon their satisfying of "the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life." They want nothing to do with it, so they complain against God's law and even against God himself, blaming Him for the sin and evil present in the world, and for their tendency toward wickedness and immorality. "These are murmurers, complainers."

The driving force in the lives of these apostates are the lusts of the flesh. Jude has already said that, like the fallen population of Sodom and Gomorrha, they "defile the flesh." These false teachers practice the same perverted acts as did the Sodomites, for they are "walking after their own lusts."

"And their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration, because of advantage" shows that these soldiers of Satan's "fifth column" have a gift of oratory. They speak eloquently, attracting the admiration of men with their impressive speeches; but they do not speak a clear message. Their "great swelling words" are able to lead many astray.

The Apostle Peter says, "And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (see 2 Peter 2:2). "The Way of truth" is our Lord Jesus Christ; the One who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." These men "speak great swelling words," but the words do not honor the Lord Jesus Christ. Instead, the words "speak evil" of Him, but they will "have men's persons in admiration because of advantage."

What is the immediate goal of these apostates in praising other apostates? Jude declares that it is "because of advantage," actually, monetary gain. These satanic agents find it profitable to speak "great swelling words" that lift up other false religious leaders or false teachers like themselves. Their aim is to untie purse strings and unzip wallets. As Peter puts it (2 Peter 2:3), "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." Their "great swelling words" of praise to other false professors are designed to tickle the ears of their listeners in order to bring monetary profit to themselves. This is the motivation and situation that will lead to the great apostate religious system of the early tribulation years, pictured in Revelation 17 as the great harlot seated upon the multi-headed and multi-horned beast. From this false ecclesiastical organization, the false prophet or the second "beast" of Revelation 13 shall arise and shall point to that one who is Satan-incarnate, the Antichrist or the first "beast" of Revelation 13, saying, "Worship him. He is your Christ."

A majority of those living in that day will do just that. The Apostle Paul speaks of the inauguration of this man in 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12. "And then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with brightness of his coming: Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who

believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

"Their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of monetary profit" (see Jude 16). The apostates walk "in the way of Cain, and run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward."

But Enoch said, "Behold, the Lord cometh, with myriads of his saints, to execute judgment upon all."

7.

"Having Not the Spirit"

"But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there would be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit" (Jude 17-19).

As he nears the end of his short epistle, Jude returns to the exhortation that God's Holy Spirit has led him to present to the true children of God. Jude's closing words concern the latter days of this Age of Grace, the time he calls "the last time."

Jude beseeches the true children of God, the "beloved of God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called" to remember "the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you that there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts."

The command to "remember" implies that the believers of Jude's day had a previous knowledge of other Scripture that Jude wishes to bring afresh to believers' minds. Once again, Jude is telling us (as well as those first-century believers) that we should know the Scriptures. As Jude declares,

the apostles, too, have spoken of, and have warned against these men. Their statements, as well as Jude's, have particular bearing upon the activities of those bold apostates who will come in the last days.

At least two of the apostles had penned Scripture prior to the time of Jude's epistle. These writings were circulating among the churches when Jude wrote.

Paul warns that in the latter days of the Age of Grace, bold apostates would work themselves into positions of ecclesiastical authority (see 1 Tim. 4:1-3). Their teachings will oppose the teachings of the Word of God. These apostates will "give heed to the doctrines (that is, the teachings) of demons." They will heed, not the Spirit of God, but "seducing spirits."

One of their false teachings is celibacy. Believing that marriage is a less holy state than celibacy, the so-called clergy are forbidden to marry. But God states that this is a "doctrine of demons." The concept of a celibate "priesthood" is Babylonian, not Christian.

Also, these apostates commanded their followers to abstain from eating certain kinds of food that God provided for mankind's sustenance. Another part of this demonic teaching is the belief that certain foods must be avoided on certain days of the week or at certain seasons of the year.

Peter is another of the apostles Jude no doubt had in mind when he spoke of "the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ." Peter referred to "the last days scoffers" (that is, mockers), walking after their own lusts, And saying, where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (see 2 Peter 3:3, 4).

In 2 Peter 3, the chapter that provides us with "The Panorama of the Ages," Peter speaks of those who would mock the doctrine of the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. They question the fact that God in the Person of Christ will come

again to the earth to intervene with man's affairs and to bring judgment upon all of the ungodly. Realizing that a great deal of time has expired since the Lord promised to return (time measured in units of thousands of years), they (following the doctrine of demons) teach that the promise *will not be kept*.

They support their denial of the Lord's bodily return to the earth by observing that "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (see 2 Peter 3:3, 4). In other words, "natural law" controls all things. Never, they claim, has there been any supernatural intervention in the affairs of the earth. They teach the "doctrine of uniformity," that doctrine of demons that says "the present is the key to the past." These mockers have been totally caught up in the concept of evolutionary uniformity, believing that God's Word (which tells of a supernatural creation "in the beginning," and of at least one major intervention of God into the earth's affairs at the time of the Great Flood) can be rejected as myth and falsehood.

Jude writes to God's people, "But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you that there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts." Jude's previous descriptions reveal the nature, methods and morals of the apostates who will arise at the end of this age. To make certain their identification is not overlooked, Jude exclaims, "*These are they* (the mockers of God's Word in the last days) who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit."

These wicked "tares" are not naive and misled children of God who have gone astray on certain doctrines. They "separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." Since these men have not been separated (sanctified) unto God by a work of regeneration, they "separate themselves." God has nothing to do with it. In addition to their profession of spiritual life being false, their profession of being separated unto God as a leader of God's people is also false. Being the devil's agents, they "separate themselves."

Jude's statement that these apostates "separate themselves" also is another reference to the "gainsaying of Core" that he mentioned in Verse 11. These pompous individuals decide that salvation is through their own methods, not the methods of Christ.

The apostates "have not the Spirit," i.e., God's Holy Spirit. Only true children of God are indwelt by His Holy Spirit. One of the great blessings of the "so great a salvation" of this inter-advent age is that the Holy Spirit of God comes to baptize the believer into the body of Christ and to take up residence within him at the moment of his salvation. All true children of God "have the Spirit," because He has come to regenerate them to eternal life. He baptizes them into the body of Christ, swells within, and makes His presence known to them.

But those professing "religionists" who are "twice dead" (dead in sin and dead in profession) "have not the Spirit." The Holy Spirit does not indwell natural men. So this further separates these church age apostates.

8.

"Keep Yourselves in the Love of God"

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 20-23).

The major part of Jude's short letter describes the characteristics, methods, and destiny of the false teachers during his interadvent age. The professing "religionists" have already crept into the true church to disrupt and to destroy God's Word. As the age wears on to the end, these apostates will become more numerous and bolder.

From Verse 20 to the end of his letter, Jude once again exhorts true believers. At the beginning of this letter, Jude exhorted them to "earnestly contend for the faith." He now continues that exhortation: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

Believers are exhorted to build themselves up on their "most holy faith." This "most holy faith" could be nothing else but that "firm foundation" of whom the Apostle Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 3:11: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Contrast this position to that of the apostates. They have no foundation. "Clouds they are without water, carried about of the winds; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame." They have no anchor point. Their house, built upon the sand, does not stand.

The Christian's task is to build a superstructure upon that firm foundation, the object of his saving faith. First Corinthians 3:11-15 states, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the first shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

We are to grow continuously through obeying the commandments of our Lord and Saviour. This "building" that rests on the Foundation we have placed our faith in is constructed of worship and obedience. The building tools used are Bible study and prayer in the Holy Spirit. God directs our daily paths through His written Word. We speak to God through our prayers in the Holy Spirit, and God directs us by the Holy Spirit through the Word. We pray according to the

direction of the Holy Spirit as He quickens our conscience and our understanding of the Lord's will in our lives.

As we build ourselves up on our most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit, we "keep ourselves in the love of God." We do not keep God's love flowing *toward* us because of our Christian growth and our prayers, but by these we keep ourselves *in* that flow of love.

For example, the sun continues to shine upon the earth whether or not we are outside receiving it. We can hide in a cave, and not be the recipients of the sun's light. However, just because we are hiding in a cave does not mean that the sun ceases to shine. We have only kept ourselves *out* of its light.

Christians are exhorted to look for "the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." When one places his "most holy faith" in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, he is reborn into the new creation of the second Adam; and is quickened unto eternal life. But he has not yet been separated from the old nature. The new spiritual nature is in constant conflict with the old fleshly nature. Because of this conflict, failure and sin are possible. Christians, God's redeemed children, do fail and do commit acts of sin. God's children constantly need daily cleansing from the defilement of the fleshly nature, and from the defilement of the world.

The Lord Jesus Christ is responsible for preserving the eternal life imparted to God's children through the miracle of the new birth. Jude mentions this great truth in his opening salutation to his readers. He calls God's children "the beloved of God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." We cannot and do not preserve the eternal life that became ours when we accepted Christ as our personal Saviour. It is God's power, administered through our Saviour, that preserves the divine, eternal relationship we possess through God's grace.

Our acts of sin and disobedience do not break the bond of union that established us "in" Christ. The weight of a million worlds cannot break this bond, because it is secured by the

power of God himself. However, our failures and our sins do break another bond—the fragile *bond of fellowship*. When this bond of fellowship or communion is broken, we have not kept ourselves “in the love of God.” This bond of fellowship can only be restored through our repentance and confession. We have an Advocate in heaven, and “when we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Jude’s exhortation is, “Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

The word “mercy” implies a failure that needs unmerited forgiveness. Christians do fail, but the “mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ” assures us that our failure has in no way quenched our eternal life. The Lord himself preserves the bond of union. And through His mercy, He forgives the failures of His people, thus restoring that bond of fellowship. We keep ourselves “in the love of God,” or in the bond of fellowship, through obedience. When fellowship is broken, repentance and confession restore it. Then our Advocate and High Priest makes us once again fit for communion with God. The “eternal life” mentioned in this verse is never in peril. Christians are “preserved in Jesus Christ.” Close fellowship with God through obedience to His will allows us to avoid the trap of false teachings, and allows us to stand as witnesses even to the apostates.

Verses 22 and 23 show what the attitude of the true child of God is toward the apostates. While these apostates are unregenerated, ungodly men, they are men nonetheless. They are sons of Satan, opposing God’s work in the earth. However, they are part of the world population that “God so loved that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Since they are not yet physically dead, they have not finally and eternally rejected the Lord Jesus Christ and His work on the Cross. These opposers of the Word, enemies of God, and secret agents of Satan, have not passed beyond their opportunity to repent and receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour, and thus to pass from death into life. Even the enemies of God

are not to be hated by the child of God!

But the believer *is* to hate the apostates *deeds*, to separate himself from their sphere of influence, and not to give them aid and comfort.

Jude says that Christians are not to hate or despise the false teachers of Satan. Even the most wicked of these religious leaders might come to repentance, receive the Lord Jesus Christ in faith and thus be saved.

“And of some have compassion, making a difference.” The word “some” refers to certain of the apostates. Christians are to “have compassion” for some of these who are turned from the truth. They are to pray for them and witness to them. Never are the apostates and their teachings to be recognized as respectable men and acceptable doctrines, but they are to be treated as sinners in need of a Saviour. They are to have the prayers and the witness of true Christians.

Christians are to be alert in approaching the enemies of God and His Word. “And of some have compassion, making a difference: others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garments spotted by the flesh.” Apostates come in all types and sizes. Some apostates are more dangerous because of their apostasy, more ungodly in their moral conduct and hatred of God. Christians must be discriminating in the kind of approach necessary to reach these. To some, compassion of the child of God, showing concern for the apostate’s soul, is the proper approach in witnessing for the truth of the Gospel.

“And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garments spotted by the flesh.” The word “save” here means “rescue.” Men do not “save” other men; *only God* can save. But the Word of the Gospel, we can throw out the Gospel lifeline to rescue some of Satan’s bondservants from the fires of judgment. We must be discriminating in our approach as we “earnestly contend for the once-delivered-*unto-the-saints* faith.” Some of those satanic agents with their

powerful and persuasive influence and oratory can almost pull even the spiritually-mature Christian into his morass of false doctrine. These we must "rescue (or attempt to pull them out as a brand from the fire) with fear." Herein we show our love for the polluted sinners, though hating the defilement of the flesh that comes with their pollution.

These closing words of Jude's message provide our instructions for dealing with apostates. The instructions seem to be primarily directed toward those who have been taken in or shipwrecked by the teachings of a false leader. There are always followers of the so-called "liberal" preachers, and of the cult leaders. These, in particular, are to be witnessed to because some can be rescued from the fires of destruction.

In some of the ancient Greek manuscripts of the Book of Jude, Verses 22 and 23 say, "And some *convict, when contending*, but others save with fear, snatching them out of the fire; hating even the garments spotted by the flesh." This could well be the wording of Jude's original autograph. If so, then Verse 22 instructs us to discern those who are so far gone in their heretical ways that there is no hope of ever reaching them with the truth. This discernment comes as the apostate is faced with a testimony for the truth. As he counters that truth with his own heresy, the believer giving witness discerns that this one will not turn from his blasphemy. There is no further need of contending. "Convict" that one; and then turn away.

"But others rescue with fear, snatching them out of the fire; hating even the garments spotted by the flesh." Others can be reached with the truth. The believer is responsible for confronting these apostates with the truth; but he is to approach his task with great caution and fear, lest he himself be caught up in the pollution of the apostate. Godly discrimination must always be used in dealing with persons taken by error. Jude makes it clear that treating all apostates alike is contrary to these divinely-inspired instructions. In fact, such a hard and fast rule for dealing with *all* of the lost of the world is contrary to the general instructions of Scripture.

The Word of God when presented to any lost person is never without its effect. The one who hears the Word is either convicted of his sins and drawn close to the Lord or is hardened in his sins and driven from the Lord. One already caught up in some evil apostate system may be driven even further within that system, because an unwise and overzealous witness for the truth used unnecessary harshness and vigor in his approach.

On the other hand, many of these apostates are willful teachers of that which opposes the Person and the work of Christ. Second John 10 provides decisive and clear instructions for dealing with this type of apostate. We are to waste no time at all with that one. He is to be shunned. We are not to give him even a common greeting.

Each apostate must be dealt with individually. While some are to be shunned completely, others need to be "snatched from the fire." That is, one might expend energetic effort to present the truth, to warn and deliver them before the heresy gets such a firm hold on them that it will be too late to recover. But in every case, we are to remember that unholy teaching of "damnable heresies" defile all who come in contact with it, and that unholy teaching is always linked to unholy and immoral living.

In our rescue attempts, we must not strain our own fellowship with God, nor let the ungodliness of those we are trying to rescue stain our own walk. We must "hate even the garments spotted by the flesh." Compromising the principle of Scripture, or stepping in the mire ourselves upon the excuse that we are trying to reach the apostate for Christ, is forbidden by God. When evil and righteousness, when cleanness and uncleanness are brought together in close contact, the evil spreads to the righteous, and the unclean pollutes the clean. In dealing with the lies and immorality of apostasy, Christians are to exercise godly concern, lest they become defiled.

The Benediction

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude 24, 25).

Jude closes his short letter with a fitting benediction of praise and glory to "the only wise God our Saviour," the Lord Jesus Christ. Jude had sat down to write a letter to fellow Christians, intending to write of the "common salvation" shared by both Jude and those to whom he wrote. But after Jude identified himself and his recipients (who are all the believers of this age), the Holy Spirit came upon him, compelling him to write on the dangers of growing apostasy. Jude says, "It become needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the once-delivered-unto-the-saints faith."

In the body of his letter, Jude spoke of the apostates who were active among the people of God, and who attempted to disrupt God's program for this age. He says that even in his day, they have "crept in unawares." As the age wears on toward the "last time," these apostates will grow more numerous and bolder.

Jude strips away the exterior glory of these apostates and reveals their ungodliness and immorality. These false "religionists" blaspheme or give "hard speeches" against the Lord Jesus Christ. Then Jude predicts God's certain judgment of these enemies and refers to their eternal destiny as "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." Then Christians were told that though many are caught up in false religious systems and apostasy, they can be "snatched out of the fire" through the witness of God's true children. However, Christians were cautioned in their contacts with apostates, because their filth and pollution can contaminate them (the Christians) and mar their fellowship with God.

It is after this that Jude gives his familiar benediction: "Now unto him that (who) is able to keep you (them) from falling (without stumbling), and to present (set) you (them) faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy (exultation), To the only wise God our Saviour be glory and majesty (greatness), dominion (might) and power (authority), both now and ever (to all the ages). Amen." The antecedent of the pronoun "them" seems to be the apostates mentioned in the previous two verses; specifically the ones who are to be rescued "with fear, snatching them out of the fire."

Jude has pointed out earlier that Christians are "preserved in Jesus Christ." This benediction promises that even apostates who repent of their apostasy and turn to faith in Jesus Christ are kept by that same power that preserves all other Christians. The "glory and majesty" and the "dominion and power" are ascribed to the One "who is able to keep" the former apostates. When they turn from "the way of Cain," "the error of Balaam," and "the gainsaying of Core," and plant their feet on that Firm Foundation (which is Christ the Lord), His power is "able to keep them from falling."

"But to *Him* who is able to keep them without stumbling" is addressed to that One who said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man (one) pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man (one) is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (See John 10:27-29.) He is well able to keep all who come to him "without stumbling."

All true Christians, whether former apostates or not, will appear "before the presence of his glory, blameless, with exceeding joy." That is God's purpose and program for His church. The Apostle Paul spoke of this in Ephesians 5:25-28, under the figure of the proper relationship between a godly husband and his wife. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church,

not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." All who have built upon that Firm Foundation are a part of His church, and all are to be "set before His glory blameless with exultation."

The ascription of "glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever" refers to "our Saviour." This benediction declares that our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, is God: "To the only wise *God* our *Saviour*." These words refer to the very same Person. The "only wise God" is "our Saviour," who is our Lord Jesus Christ!

Apostates of the Socinian strip (Unitarians and various cultists) erroneously *deny* that *Christ is God*. This benediction of Jude is but one of several direct statements that *declare* that *Jesus Christ is God*. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. All glory, greatness, might, and authority are His.

That God allows man to have his own way in this Age of Grace does not lessen the Lord's control over man. But God is not presently bringing immediate judgment on overt sin. Now is the day of salvation, and God is giving all men an opportunity to come to Him through the shed blood of Christ. In "having their way," apostates can presently speak "great swelling words" and "hard speeches" against Him without fear of immediate retribution.

But "glory and greatness, might and authority" are His now (in this age), and in all the ages to come. God is in control. God has spoken. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand forever" (see Isaiah 40:8).

Jude closes his letter with "Amen," or "So be it." Essentially, Jude is saying, "Let all those things God pronounced in this letter concerning the apostasy of this age, the preservation of God's children until the coming of Christ, and the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in judgment and glory, take place." Amen.

The End