

The General Epistle of JUDE

INTRODUCTION

1. Title. In the earliest Greek manuscripts the title of this epistle is simply *Ioudas* (“Judas,” or “Jude”). The words “The General Epistle of,” found in the KJV, refer to the fact that this letter is addressed, not to any specific individual, or church, or group of churches, but “to them [that is, all] that are sanctified” (see on v. 1). For the same reason it is sometimes called a “catholic epistle,” in the sense that “catholic” means “universal.”

2. Authorship. The writer calls himself “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James” (v. 1), and there is no reason to doubt the identification, though the words may be interpreted in more than one way.

In the NT several men by the name of Judas are mentioned. These are Judas Iscariot (Mark 3:19), Judas “not Iscariot” (see on John 14:22), Judas of Galilee (Acts 5:37), Judas of Damascus (Acts 9:11), Judas surnamed Barsabas (Acts 15:22), and Judas (Jude) who, as were James, Joses, and Simon, was a brother of Jesus is the James who presided at the Council of Jerusalem (see on Acts 12:17; 15:13) and who possibly also later wrote the Epistle of James (see Introduction to the book). The writer of Jude, therefore, may well have been the brother of this James, and thus a brother of the Lord Jesus. This relationship would tend to make him prominent in the church and to give him the degree of authority reflected in his epistle. That he does not openly claim his family connection with the Lord, but calls himself “the servant of Jesus Christ” (Jude 1), may be accounted for by a sense of delicate reticence that would prohibit him from making capital of his relationship with Jesus.

3. Historical Setting. The epistle contains no direct statement concerning the circumstances that led to its being written, and no clue as to the congregation to which it was addressed, but certain information can be deduced from its contents. It is clear that disruptive elements had crept into the church (vs. 4, 8, etc.) and drawn many away from the purity of the gospel. Allusions in Colossians, the pastoral epistles, and Revelation indicate that Gnostic heresies had begun to come into the churches of Asia Minor. It is therefore possible that Jude’s letter was addressed to these churches.

An interesting question is raised by the fact that much of Jude’s material is found also in 2 Peter (cf. Jude 4–18 with 2 Peter 2:1 to 3:3). Not only the same thoughts, but in many instances the same words are used, with some words quite unusual. Did Jude borrow from 2 Peter, Peter from Jude, or did they both borrow from a common but unknown source? This question cannot be answered with finality. Most Biblical scholars think that Jude is the earlier of the two letters, since it would be difficult to explain why Jude would write a letter at all if he had little to say beyond what was already well expressed in 2 Peter. These scholars assert that it is easy to explain how Peter might have used thoughts expressed in Jude’s brief epistle, and then have added material to it. Literally studies show that the shorter of two similar works is usually the earlier. However, a minority of scholars defends the priority of 2 Peter over that of Jude. Among the reasons set forth are the following: (1) 2 Peter 2:1 speaks of the future appearance of false teachers whereas Jude gives the impression that these teachers are already at work (Jude 4). (2) Jude speaks of the warning about the coming of skeptics as being in the past (vs. 17, 18), whereas Peter utters a current warning (2 Peter 3:3).

The arguments on either side are not sufficiently decisive to determine which of the two epistles, Jude or 2 Peter, was the earlier (cf. Vol. V, p. 186). For this reason it is impossible to date Jude's letter. If written before 2 Peter it must have been composed before A.D. 67, the probable year of Peter's death (Vol. VI, p. 102); if Jude followed 2 Peter, it may have been written between the years A.D. 70 and 85.

4. Theme. From v. 3 it would appear that the author intended to write a regular epistle to confirm the believers in their Christian faith, but news of the havoc being wrought by libertine teachers led him, under the guidance of the Divine Spirit, to change his original plan and to urge his readers to a bold defense of the faith. To encourage them in such work he unmasks the deceivers, shows their connections with earlier rebels against divine authority, and exhorts his flock to avoid these deceivers and to concentrate on preparation to meet their Lord in glory. For an understanding of the contents of the epistle frequent reference to and comparison with 2 Peter is necessary.

5. Outline.

- I. Salutation, 1, 2.
- II. The Occasion for Writing, 3, 4.
- III. Historical Warnings Against Backsliding, 5–7.
 - A. The Israelites, 5.
 - B. The angels, 6.
 - C. Sodom and Gomorrah, 7.
- IV. The Defiant Attitude of Sinners, 8–11.
- V. The Fruitlessness of Sin, 12, 13.
- VI. The Certainty of the Doom of the Ungodly, 14–16.
 - A. Prophesied long before, 14, 15.
 - B. Their fitness for destruction, 16.
- VII. The Crisis Foretold, 17–19.
- VIII. Conclusion, 20–25.
 - A. Exhortation, 20–23.
 - 1. Personal application to the believers, 20, 21.
 - 2. Responsibility toward others, 22, 23.
 - B. The ascription of praise, 24, 25.

He exhorteth them to be constant in the profession of the faith. 4 False teachers are crept in to seduce them: for whose damnable doctrine and manners horrible punishment is prepared: 20 whereas the godly, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and prayers to God, may persevere, and grow in grace, and keep themselves, and recover others out of the snares of those deceivers.

1. Jude. For a discussion of the possible identity of the writer see p. 701.

The servant of Jesus Christ. Or, “a slave of Jesus Christ” (see on Rom. 1:1). If Jude and James were brothers of the Lord (see p. 701), then both show great delicacy in their epistles by refraining from mentioning this relationship, preferring to acknowledge the deity of their Master and to proclaim their total submission as His obedient slaves (cf. on James 1:1). Jude does not claim to be an apostle (see on Acts 1:2; Rom. 1:1).

Sanctified. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “beloved.” The latter part of the verse then reads literally, “to those who by God the Father are beloved and [by] Jesus Christ are kept, to the called.” The phraseology is difficult, but the meaning is clear. The writer is addressing those who have been called (cf. on Rom. 1:6, 7), who are deeply

loved by the Father, and are being kept by Jesus for the inheritance God has prepared (cf. 2 Peter 2:9)

2. Mercy. This form of salutation occurs nowhere else in the NT, but there are somewhat similar greetings in 1 Peter 1:2. Compare Paul's usual form in most of his letters (cf. Rom. 1:7; 2 Cor. 1:2; etc.). Jude, like Peter, wishes his readers to gain increasing supplies of the heavenly gifts (cf. on 2 Peter 1:2).

Beloved. This is a common form of address in the general epistles (cf. 1 Peter 4:12; 2 Peter 3:1; 1 John 3:2; etc.).

Diligence. Gr. *spoudē* (see on Rom. 12:8, 11; cf. on 2 Peter 1:5). Jude shares with the readers the actual situation that obtained when he came to write the letter.

The common salvation. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading "our common salvation," that is, the salvation we share in common. It was Jude's original intention to write a general pastoral letter, but it appears that disturbing news reached him concerning the disruptive activities of "ungodly men" (v. 4) and led him to abandon his original design in favor of a vigorous attack on the troublemakers and an earnest exhortation to the believers.

It was needful. Literally, "I had necessity," implying a sudden urgency that led Jude to change his plan and prevented him from preparing his intended epistle in a leisurely manner.

Exhort. Gr. *parakaleō* (see on Matt. 5:4).

Earnestly contend. Gr. *epagōnizomai*, a strengthened form of the verb *agōnizomai* (see on Luke 13:24).

The faith. That is, the complete body of Christian teaching (see on Acts 6:7; Rom. 1:5).

Once delivered. Rather, "once for all delivered." For comment on "delivered" see on 2 Peter 2:21.

Saints. See on Rom. 1:7. Jude wanted his readers to hold fast to the original form of Christian doctrine as it had been delivered to the church by Jesus and apostles.

4. Certain men. Compare 2 Peter 2:1, where Peter speaks of a similar group of men whose coming was still in the future. Jude declares that at the time he wrote, such deceivers were already disturbing the church. See on Jude 18.

Crept in unawares. Gr. *pareisduō*, "to enter secretly," "to slip in stealthily." The false teachers were not honest. Because their doctrines were subversive they took pains to disguise themselves and to enter the church without disclosing their true character.

Before ... ordained. Gr. *prographō*, literally, "to write beforehand." Jude's meaning is that the condemnation of the deceptive teachers had already been pronounced, not in the sense of predestination, but as a considered judgment based on a knowledge of their harmful activities. The phrase "of old" may refer to the words of Enoch as quoted in vs. 14, 15; or, if "of old" (*palai*) be interpreted in a more immediate sense, as in Mark 15:44, the reference could be to 2 Peter 2:3. However, see pp. 701, 702.

Condemnation. Gr. *krima*, "sentence," "doom" (see on Rom. 2:2). Jude does not identify the doom. If his letter was written after 2 Peter (see pp. 701, 702), he may have had Peter's words in mind, leaving their explanation to him (see on 2 Peter 2:3, 9).

Ungodly men. Gr. *asebeis*, the plural form of *asebēs* (see on Rom. 4:5). Peter applies the term to the antediluvians (2 Peter 2:5).

Turning. Gr. *metatithēmi*, “to transfer,” “to change” (cf. on Gal. 1:6).

Grace. Gr. *charis* (see on Rom. 3:24).

Lasciviousness. Gr. *aselgeia* (see on 2 Peter 2:2). Jude’s description of the character and work of the false teachers parallels that given by Peter. They perverted the words of Scripture for their own immoral ends (cf. on 2 Peter 2:2).

Denying the only Lord God. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of the word “God.” The complete phrase may then be rendered: “denying the only Lord [*despotēs*], that is, our Lord [*kurios*] Jesus Christ.” Of other NT writers only Peter directly applies *despotēs*, “master,” to Christ. For comment on *despotēs* see on 2 Peter 2:1.

5. In remembrance. We need not assume from these words that his readers had forgotten the facts of which Jude is about to remind them. The writer calls known facts to mind as part of his vigorous defense of the faith. For similar phraseology cf. 2 Peter 1:12, 13; 3:1.

Though ye once knew this. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “though ye know all things once for all,” confirming the above interpretation of “put you in remembrance.”

The Lord. That is, Christ, who led Israel out of Egypt (see on Ex. 23:20; 1 Cor. 10:4).

Afterward. Literally, “the second time,” that is, the next event was the destruction of the unbelievers mentioned in v. 4 (Num. 14:26–39).

6. Angels. See the corresponding passage, 2 Peter 2:4. Jude goes into greater detail than Peter in this instance.

First estate. Gr. *archē*, generally translated “beginning” (John 1:1; etc.). Paul frequently uses *archē* and its plural form *archai* to describe principalities (see on Rom. 8:38; Eph. 1:21; 6:12; etc.). Once *archē* is translated “rule” (see on 1 Cor. 15:24). In Jude the word clearly refers to the original position enjoyed by the angels, which they lost when they followed Lucifer and were cast out of heaven (see on Isa. 14:12; Eze. 28:16–18; Rev. 12:7–9).

Left. Gr. *apoleipō*, “to forsake.”

Reserved. Or, “kept” (cf. on 2 Peter 2:4, 9).

Everlasting chains under darkness. A phrase that distinctly differs from 2 Peter 2:4 (see comment there), where textual evidence attests the reading “pits of darkness.” The “chains,” or “bonds,” are everlasting in the sense that the rebellious angels cannot escape from them.

Judgment. Gr. *krisis* (see on 2 Peter 2:4).

The great day. That is, the day of judgment (see on 2 Peter 2:4, 9).

7. Sodom and Gomorrah. See on 2 Peter 2:6; cf. Gen. 19:23–28. Jude omits reference to Noah and the antediluvians and makes no mention of Lot (2 Peter 2:5, 7, 8).

The cities about them. That is, the neighboring cities of Admah and Zeboim (Deut. 29:23), which Peter does not mention.

Giving themselves over to fornication. One word in Greek, used only here in the NT, and implying a complete abandonment to sexual debauchery.

Strange flesh. Or, “other flesh,” apparently a reference to the sin of sodomy as practiced by the inhabitants of the cities of the plain (see on Gen. 19:5).

Set forth. Gr. *prokeimai*, “to be placed before,” “to lie in sight.” The sin and fate of the cities of the plain have ever been held out as a warning of the terrible results that come from rejecting the righteous way of life. The unnatural Dead Sea, with its total absence of life and the strange qualities of its waters, serves to emphasize the nature of the wages paid by sin (cf. James 1:15).

An example. The “eternal fire” that will eventually destroy all the ungodly is compared with the “eternal fire” that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. As the one was eternal in its effects, so will the other be.

Suffering. Gr. *hupechō*, literally, “to hold under,” hence, “to undergo.” Jude’s use of the present tense implies that the destroyed cities are still undergoing their punishment. Their punishment is their state of utter destruction. Their punishment therefore continues.

Vengeance. Gr. *dikē*, “penalty,” “punishment.”

Eternal fire. See on Matt. 25:41. Some commentators have adopted the following interpretation of Jude’s words: “are set forth an example of eternal fire, suffering punishment”; but this rendering does not harmonize with 2 Peter 2:6, and is an unnecessary effort to avoid the problem connected with a correct understanding of “eternal fire.” The fire that annihilated the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah completed its work. When all that could be burned up had been burned up the fire went out. That fire has long since ceased to burn, but its effect will continue throughout eternity. It is in this sense that these cities suffered “the vengeance of eternal fire.”

8. Likewise. Or, “yet in like manner,” emphasizing that, in spite of the terrible example of the Sodomites, the false teachers persisted in similar ways.

These filthy dreamers. Literally, “these who are dreaming,” that is, the false teachers. Translators of the KJV supplied the word “filthy” on the basis of the following words, “defile the flesh.” However, the reference to dreaming may be to the prophet-like pose and activities of the teachers.

Defile the flesh. Compare the phrase “walk after the flesh” (2 Peter 2:10).

Despise dominion. Compare on 2 Peter 2:10. Jude uses a different word for “despise” (*atheteō*, “to nullify,” “to reject”), but the same word, *kuriotēs*, for “dominion.”

Speak evil of dignities. See on 2 Peter 2:10.

9. Michael. This commentary holds the view that “Michael” is one of the names of Christ (see on Dan. 10:13; 1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 12:7), not as the chief angel but as ruler over the angels.

Archangel. Gr. *archaggelos* (see on 1 Thess. 4:16). Angels are created beings; Christ is their Creator (see Col. 1:16, 17). Christ is very God (see Vol. V, p. 917; see on John 1:1–3), and the angels are charged to worship Him (see on Heb. 1:3–8, 13, 14).

When contending. Peter does not refer to the incident that Jude now mentions (cf. on 2 Peter 2:11), but speaks in a general way of the circumspect conduct of angels in the presence of the Lord. Jude is more specific and cites a more crucial example in the personal encounter between Michael and the devil.

Devil. Gr. *diabolos* (see on Matt. 4:1; Eph. 4:27).

The body of Moses. Apart from Jude's account, the only scriptural reference to the burial of Moses is Deut. 34:5, 6, where it is recorded that the Lord buried His faithful servant and that his grave was not known to men. Jude now reveals that the dead body was the subject of dispute between Christ and Satan. From the fact that Moses appeared with Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration it may be concluded that the Lord triumphed in the contest with the devil and raised Moses from his grave, making him the first known subject of Christ's resurrecting power (see on Deut. 34:6; Matt. 17:3; see PP 478, 479).

Durst. Gr. *tolmaō*, "to dare," "to presume," "to bring oneself [to do something]." It was not in keeping with the divine character to slander anyone, even the devil, and Christ would not presume to do anything contrary to His own perfect nature and character as God. Christ would no more "bring against him [the devil] a railing accusation" than He would lie or steal. Satan is the great "accuser" (Rev. 12:10), the great slanderer (see on Zech. 3:1, 2), and Christ could never bring Himself to use the devil's weapons of warfare.

Bring. Or, "pronounce."

Railing accusation. Literally, "slandering judgment."

The Lord rebuke thee. Compare Zech. 3:2, where the Lord rebukes the devil. There can be no stronger condemnation than being rebuked by the Lord. Compare on 2 Peter 2:11.

Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Didymus assert that Jude 9 is a quotation from a passage in the pseudepigraphical work *The Assumption of Moses* (see Vol. V, p. 89). This work is preserved only in fragmentary form, and the extant portions do not contain the passage in question. However, scholars are generally agreed that there is no reason to doubt the claim of these early Church Fathers. The assertion that Jude quotes from the *The Assumption of Moses* does not require us to accept that work as inspired. If Jude quoted from it, he was simply making use of certain factual material contained in it (cf. on v. 14).

10. But these. That is, the false teachers. The entire verse corresponds closely with the parallel passage, 2 Peter 2:12 (see comment there).

11. Woe. Compare on Matt. 11:21; cf. Rev. 8:13. Jude's exclamation points to the results that are certain to come to those who take the way chosen by the false teachers.

They have gone. Jude was able to base his judgment of the teachers on their past conduct, for they had already followed the path of other ungodly men.

Cain. Jude has already cited the examples of unbelieving Israel (v. 5), the rebellious angels (v. 6), and Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7). He now adds Cain, Balaam, and Core (Korah) to the list, making a total of six illustrations of the class to which the false teachers belong. The name of Cain immediately suggests the crime of murder. It is doubtless Cain's heinous crime of murder that Jude has in mind, for the works of the deceivers resulted in spiritual death.

Ran greedily. Gr. *ekcheō*, "to pour out," here implying that the teachers recklessly abandoned themselves to emulating Balaam's sin.

The error of Balaam. Peter says the false teachers had "gone astray" (*planaō*) after Balaam, while Jude says they were following the "error" (*planē*) of Balaam. With only a

slight variation in language the two writers thus convey similar thoughts. For comment on the analogy between Balaam and the false teachers see on 2 Peter 2:15.

Gainsaying. Gr. *antilogia*, “contradiction,” hence, “opposition,” or in this instance, “rebellion.”

Core. The OT form of the name is “Korah.” Korah, Dathan, and Abiram rebelled against the divinely ordained authority of Moses and generated rebellion in the camp of Israel. Jude says that the false teachers have similarly rebelled against authority. As a result they will perish as surely as Korah and his companions did because of their sin (see on Num. 16:1–35).

12. Spots. Rather, “reefs,” a metaphor describing those who cause shipwreck to others.

Feasts of charity. That is, love feasts (cf. on 2 Peter 2:13).

Feeding themselves. Literally, “shepherding themselves,” that is, selfishly caring for their own interests at the expense of others. They pursue this course fearlessly, that is, without godly fear, in a brazen manner. In this verse Jude uses three Greek words that begin with *a*, signifying “without”—*aphobōs*, “without fear,” *anudroi*, “without water,” *akarpa*, “without fruit” (see comment below).

Clouds. Jude now continues the list of metaphors that he began when he called the teachers “spots in your feasts.” He adds four other comparisons—“clouds,” “trees,” “waves,” and “stars.” That the false teachers are said to be “clouds ... without water” implies that they no more fulfill the promise of spiritual rain than clouds that fail to water a thirsty land. In this sense they are fraudulent, disappointing those who expect spiritual refreshment from them.

Carried about. Rather, “borne past,” as clouds that pass without dropping their moisture.

Trees whose fruit withereth. Or, “trees in late autumn” (RSV). Late autumn was the time when fruit might be expected, but these false prophets are “without fruit” (cf. on 2 Peter 1:8).

Twice dead. The “trees” are not only fruitless but have been plucked up by the roots. Similarly, the false teachers thus represented were formerly dead in sin, and have now returned to that former spiritual state.

Plucked up by the roots. Even a living tree could not survive such treatment. The false teachers have lost their hold on Christ. They are not “rooted and grounded in love” (Eph. 3:17), but have founded their lives on selfishness.

13. Raging waves. Or, “untamed waves,” referring to the ungoverned passions of the apostate teachers.

Foaming out their own shame. As the sea gathers its scum upon the crests of its waves, so the teachers exhibit their disgraceful lusts for all to see. “Shame” should read, literally, “shames,” referring to all the objectionable habits practiced by the false instructors.

Wandering stars. The fixed stars are valuable as navigational aids, but shooting or wandering stars, by which Jude may mean “comets,” serve no useful purpose, giving neither constant light nor guidance. So these false teachers, brilliant as they may appear, help no one to make progress toward his heavenly destination.

To whom ... for ever. The phrase thus translated occurs also in 2 Peter 2:17 (see comment there). As meteors that flash across the darkened sky and then plunge into blackness are forever lost to mortal sight, so the seducers, after a blaze of publicity, will disappear from view.

14. And Enoch also. Jude's reference to Enoch and his quotation of that patriarch's prophecy has occasioned much comment. Commentators are in general agreement that the pseudepigraphical book called 1 Enoch was in circulation among the Jews by the middle of the 1st century B.C. (see Vol. V, pp. 87, 88). Chapter 1:9 of this noncanonical work reads as follows: "And behold! He cometh with ten thousands of His holy ones to execute judgment upon all, and to destroy all the ungodly: and to convict all flesh of all the works of their ungodliness which they have ungodly committed, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, Vol. 2, p. 189).

It is commonly believed that Jude quoted from this noncanonical work, though some hold the reverse to have been the case. If Jude quoted from 1 Enoch it was because the Holy Spirit led him to do so.

The seventh from Adam. In 1 Enoch 60:8 the patriarch is also referred to as being the seventh generation from Adam. The genealogy is given in Gen. 5:4–20, where the following descent is traced: Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, and Enoch. This makes Enoch the seventh in line, including Adam, according to a well-established ancient method called "inclusive reckoning" (see Vol. II, pp. 136, 137). In modern terminology he would be called the sixth from Adam.

The Lord cometh. Literally, "came [the] Lord," the past tense being used because of the certainty of the fulfillment of the prophecy. After Peter describes the false teachers and foretells their fate he devotes the greater part of his 3d chapter (2 Peter 3) to a discussion of the Lord's return. Jude contents himself with a brief reference that consists entirely of a quotation from Enoch's prophecy (Jude 14, 15), possibly because he wished to keep his letter (cf. on v. 3) within brief bounds. Both Peter and Jude view the Lord's coming in relation to the ungodly teachers, with Jude placing the greater emphasis on the judgment of the deceivers.

Ten thousands of his. Literally, "in his holy myriads, that is, in the midst of His holy myriads. The word translated "ten thousands" (*muriades*) is the source of our word "myriads" (see on Luke 12:1).

Saints. Literally, "holy [ones]." Whether Jude here refers to the vast host of holy angels who will accompany Christ when He returns to earth (cf. on Dan. 7:10; Matt. 25:31; 1 Thess. 3:13) or to the redeemed at the close of the 1000 years (see on Rev. 20:4–9) is not certain.

15. Judgment. Gr. *krisis* (see on 2 Peter 2:4). Christ comes to pronounce judgment upon all men, some of whom will be saved and some lost (cf. on John 3:17; 5:22, 27).

To convince. See on John 8:46; 16:8.

All that are ungodly. Literally, "all the ungodly." For comment on "ungodly" (*asebeis*) see on v. 4. The fourfold use of "ungodly" stresses the depraved nature of the teachers of v. 4 and points to the certainty of their punishment.

Hard speeches. Rather, "hard things." Sinners have ever said hard things about God and Christ, by way of excuse for their own sinfulness and by way of detracting from the

Lord's wisdom and justice. In the final judgment such accusations will be answered and required.

16. *These are.* Jude now returns to his discussion of the false teachers (cf. v. 12; 2 Peter 2:17), implying that they are included among those to whom the prophecy refers as “ungodly.”

Murmurers. Gr. *goggustai*, “grumblers,” from *gogguzō*, an onomatopoeic word (pronounced “*gongudzō*”), “to grumble,” “to mutter.” Compare on 1 Peter 4:9.

Complainers. That is, those who are dissatisfied with their lot and who consequently murmur against God.

After their own lusts. See on 2 Peter 3:3.

Great swelling words. Gr. *huperogka* (see on 2 Peter 2:18).

Having men's persons in admiration. Literally, “admiring faces,” that is, showing respect to persons, contrary to Christian ethics (cf. on James 2:1). The false teachers were morally rotten and had no compunction about employing flattery to their own advantage. Such men are not to be trusted, and Jude was careful to warn his readers about their deceptions.

17. *But, beloved.* Literally, “But ye, beloved,” with emphasis on “ye” to separate the faithful Christian from the grumbling self-seeker.

Remember. Forgetfulness of what the apostles had said would make the believers susceptible to the seductive teachings of the enemy and prepare the way for apostasy.

Spoken before. Although the reference may primarily be to the spoken word, it does not exclude what was written. Most of what the apostles wrote they had also doubtless set forth by word of mouth.

Apostles. Probably including Paul and his chief associates (see on Acts 1:2; 1 Thess. 2:6). The apostles, in turn, appealed to their Lord's instruction and to the OT Scriptures in support of their statements (cf. on 2 Peter 3:2).

18. *They told you.* Whether Jude here alludes to 2 Peter 3:3 or to some other inspired source is not certain. Some hold that Jude and Peter both quote from some earlier, then well-known prophecy. Others see Jude's words as an almost literal quotation from 2 Peter 3:3 advancing these reasons in support of their view: (1) Jude declares he is reminding his readers of “the words which were spoken before the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 17). (2) He then quotes a prophecy that is found only in 2 Peter 3:3. (3) Peter, on the other hand, while referring to both OT and NT instruction (see on 2 Peter 3:2), does not claim to be quoting but rather delivers a statement of his own that is reliable because it is based upon past inspired instruction and in harmony with it (see on v. 3). Some regard this as evidence for the priority of 2 Peter (see pp. 701, 702).

However this may be, Jude reminds his readers of the apostolic prediction of “mockers in the last time,” who, he declares (v. 4), have already crept into the church unawares. John similarly reminds those to whom he wrote of the warning that had been given concerning antichrist (1 John 2:18), and then adds: “Now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time” (cf. 1 John 4:3; see Additional Note on Rom. 13).

Verbal differences between Jude 18 and the corresponding verse in 2 Peter will be noted in the comment that follows, but the sense is identical in the two passages (for comments see on 2 Peter 3:3).

There should be. Peter says, “there shall come” (2 Peter 3:3).

Mockers. Or, “scoffers,” as in 2 Peter 3:3.

Last time. Peter says, “last days” (2 Peter 3:3).

Who should walk. Or, “walking,” as in 2 Peter 3:3.

After their own ungodly lusts. Or, “according to their own lusts of ungodliness,” that is, under the direction of lusts that arise from their irreligious practices. Peter speaks only of “their own lusts” and does not refer to their source of their nature.

19. These be. Or, “these are.” The Greek is the same as in v. 16.

Separate themselves. Or, “make divisions,” that is, those who cause factions in the church in pursuit of their own ends. He who harbors ungodly ambitions has little scope for the fulfillment of his designs in a united church. Accordingly, he seeks opportunities to promote divisions among the members. True spiritual life goes out when factions come in (cf. 1 Cor. 1:10–13).

Sensual. Gr. *psuchikoi* (see on 1 Cor. 15:44; James 3:15). *Psuchikoi* stands in apposition with the expression “having not the Spirit,” that is, unspiritual persons.

The Spirit. Literally, “Spirit.” It is possible to interpret Jude’s words as “not having spiritual life,” in accord with the previous thought of the unspiritual nature of the false teachers. But the reference to the Holy Ghost in v. 20 makes it probable that Jude has the Holy Spirit in mind here also. It is certainly true that those who cause divisions in the church and are themselves unspiritual will not be possessed by the Holy Spirit.

20. But ye, beloved. As in the literal translation of v. 17 (see comment there), with the present emphasis on the true believer as distinct from the self-seeking disrupter of churches.

Building up. Jude admonishes his readers to build up their faith as a defense against the deceivers, who have been so active in breaking down their own spiritual life and that of others. For the figure of “building up” see on Acts 9:31; 20:32; cf. on 1 Peter 2:5.

On your most holy faith. Or, “by your most holy faith,” that is, the Christian faith, all that the church teaches concerning Christ. Paul speaks of building upon the foundation of the apostles, prophets, and Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:20), and it is probable that Jude has a similar thought in mind. The readers’ personal faith in Jesus Christ would hardly be described as “most holy.”

Praying in the Holy Ghost. That is, praying in accordance with the Holy Spirit’s directives and with the Spirit’s aid (cf. on Acts 9:31; Eph. 6:18). For comment on the spiritual value of prayer see on Luke 18:1.

21. Keep yourselves. Although Christians are “kept by the power of God” (1 Peter 1:5; cf. on John 17:11), they also have to keep themselves from all evil and to stay in the sphere of good influences (cf. on 1 Tim. 5:22; James 1:27; 1 John 5:18, 21).

In the love of God. That is, within the orbit of God’s love for man. Those who remove themselves from God’s protective love, as did the false teachers, cannot expect to be guarded from evil. For comment on the love of God see on Rom. 5:5; 1 Cor. 13:1.

Looking for. Gr. *prosdechomai*, “to expect” (cf. on Titus 2:13). Compare on 2 Peter 3:12.

Mercy of our Lord. Scripture generally speaks of the mercy of God (cf. on Eph. 2:4; 1 Peter 1:3), but Christ, being of the same nature as the Father, is no less merciful. This attribute, on which our future depends, will find the acme of its fulfillment at the second coming, when the Lord returns to redeem those who have accepted the eternal life that His mercy has provided. The Christian, therefore, eagerly looks for this fulfillment.

22. *Some have compassion.* Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the reading “some rebuke.” Accepting the reading suggested below instead of the phrase “making a difference,” we might here read “some rebuke,” or “some convince.”

Making a difference. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) a reading which may be translated “who are in doubt,” or “who are contentious.”

23. *Others save with fear.* The text here is also uncertain (cf. on v. 22), but it is clear that Jude exhorts his readers to exert themselves on behalf of others. Also, they are to be under the constant stimulus that comes from a realization of the fate awaiting the unsaved and from a recognition of their own inadequacy in view of the magnitude of the task that confronts them.

Pulling. Gr. *harpazō* (see on Phil. 2:6).

Fire. The figure is possibly suggested by Jude’s own previous reference to fire in connection with the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7) and with that of Korah and his company (v. 11; cf. Num. 16:35). A similar figure is used in Amos 4:11; Zech. 3:2.

Hating. This expresses the loathing the Christian feels for the contamination caused by sin, even while he lovingly cares for the victims of sin.

Garment. Gr. *chitōn*, the inner garment worn next to the skin (see on Matt. 5:40) and the one most likely to be contaminated by contagious diseases.

Spotted by the flesh. Jude may have leprosy in mind, a disease commonly considered typical of sin (cf. DA 266), or he may refer to the “flesh” as typical of man’s sinful desires (cf. on Rom. 6:19; 8:3–5). His figure points to the abhorrence the converted man feels for all manifestations of sin.

24. *Now.* In concluding his letter Jude turns from the false teachers and their prototypes and directs his readers’ attention to the ineffable glory of the Lord. This doxology closely parallels that of Rom. 16:25–27 (see comment there).

Unto him that is able. The same Greek words are translated “to him that is of power” in Rom. 16:25 (see comment there and on Eph. 3:20).

Keep you. A vivid picture of the Lord’s constant care for His children.

From falling. The one who accepts God’s guardianship can live above sin (cf. on 1 John 3:6, 9).

To present. The climax of God’s keeping comes when the believer stands without fear in the divine presence, on the day of judgment (cf. on 1 John 2:28). By the enabling grace of Christ the Christian lives with a confident belief in God’s power to keep him from falling into sin and to enable him, eventually, to stand spotless and unashamed in the divine presence.

Faultless. Gr. *amōmoi* (see on Eph. 1:4).

Presence of his glory. The final test of sinlessness is the ability to stand before God who dwells “in the light which no man can approach unto” (1 Tim. 6:16). It is the purpose of the gospel to make men ready for that experience (Col. 1:22). For comment on “glory” (*doxa*) see on John 1:14; Rom. 3:23.

Exceeding joy. That is, joy so great as to be beyond human words to express. The mind fails in any attempt to describe the joy that will fill the believer’s heart when he at last stands before the throne of God.

25. Only wise God. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “only God.” Thus the emphasis is upon God’s uniqueness (see on John 5:44; cf. on Rom. 16:27; 1 Tim. 1:17).

Our Saviour. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the inclusion of the words “through Jesus Christ our Lord” after the words “our Saviour” (cf. Rom. 16:27). For comment on the title “Saviour” as applied to the Father see on Luke 1:47; 1 Tim. 1:1; 4:10.

Be glory. In utter amazement at the infinite greatness and goodness of God, Jude ascribes all “glory and majesty” to Him. For comment on “glory” (*doxa*) see on John 1:14; Rom. 3:23.

Majesty. Gr. *megalōsunē* (see on Heb. 1:3).

Dominion. Gr. *kratos*, also translated “power” (see on Eph. 1:19).

Power. Gr. *exousia*, “authority” (see on Matt. 10:1; Mark 2:10).

Now and ever. Literally, “now and unto all the ages.” Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the inclusion of the words “before all eternity” or “before all time” (*pro pantos tou aiōnos*) before the phrase “both now and ever.” Jude thus testifies to the pre-existence and eternity of Jesus Christ, through whom the Father has received, is receiving, and will receive the fourfold ascription of glory, majesty, dominion, and power. It has ever been the Saviour’s mission to glorify the Father (John 17:1–5), and He will continue this work throughout eternity.

Amen. Gr. *amēn* (see on Matt. 5:18). By the use of the word here Jude may imply his own agreement with the ascription of such praise to God, or it may express his desire for the readers to be kept from falling, that they in turn might also join in the paean of praise to the Father. It is probable that the writer intends the “Amen” to apply in both senses. His letter, brief as it is, must certainly have brought spiritual stability into the lives of those who studied it.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 3 Ev 361; GC 51, 64, 298; MM 22; 5T 16, 525, 601; 8T 158, 198, 199, 211
- 4 1T 610
- 6 GC 548, 661
- 9 DA 421; EW 164; MB 57; PP 479; SR 173; TM 222, 249; 1T 626; 3T 220; 9T 239, 242
- 11 CS 139; PP 81
- 12 TM 81; 1T 527; 2T 376; 4T 335
- 13 1T 327, 414
- 14 PP 85; SR 58
- 14, 15 GC 299, 426, 548; GW 52; PP 86, 393; TM 230; 6T 392; 8T 330
- 16 1T 475
- 20 7T 22, 184
- 20, 21 SC 97
- 20–236T 280
- 21 CT 191; FE 267; 7T 201
- 21–23CT 253; 7T 268
- 22 MH 178; 4T 221
- 22, 23 COL 236; Ev 368; TM 123; 1T 382; 2T 220, 673; 3T 108, 270, 420; 5T 255

- 23 EW 120; 1T 152; 2T 504; 8T 18
24 DA 632; Ed 309; GC 646; MB 42; 8T 127
1

¹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Jud 1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.