

CONTEND FOR THE FAITH

The book of JUDE

Thoughts come from a wide variety of sources. Some from messages I have heard from individuals, some from assembly Bible studies, some from home life and some from books I have read. The Holy Spirit is the Teacher who makes them real to me.

- "What the Bible Teaches: Jude by A. McShane. John Ritchie Ltd. Kilmarnock, Scotland
- "The Life Application Bible." Tyndale House and Zondervan

The concern of the epistle of Jude is that some of those who professed to be Christians were really apostates. From the very beginning of the church age and on to this present day, the church has been threatened by heresy and false teaching. There are many people who live in opposition to God and His people. They twist God's truth and seek to deceive and destroy those believers who are not aware of them and the dangers they present. This was, and still is, a serious danger to the faith of the children of God.

Some things we cannot deal with even though there is obviously evil associated with those who deliberately turn away from the truth who may be among us. Self-opinionated men are often quite skilled at using the right words in ways that are not consistent with what the scriptures mean in their context. We may not be able to deal with them in some form of discipline and do distance ourselves from them and the evil things they do, but we can "earnestly contend for the faith" ourselves. We cannot ignore that which is wrong but have to maintain scriptural principles while we wait for our Lord to act in His own way like He did in Corinth with those who were "eating and drinking unworthily." However, we can promote what is right while the truth of God does its work by the power of God.

Commitment and courage are what is needed to defend the faith when there is open and/or insidious opposition to the truth of God. God's word and the eternal life we have are of eternal and infinite value. Our Lord trusts us to defend the faith, His word and those who have eternal life, from all attacks. Many people twist the truth and seek to deceive and defeat those who carry the Gospel to those who are lost in sin. They will oppose the true faith of God's elect in any way possible. Our commission remains the same now as when it was given. We have been given the privilege of speaking for God to our generation. This responsibility is so important that we must repulse the attacks of satanic opposition by defending what gains have been made and pursuing the enemies of God by preaching the Gospel. It is "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."

Each human being is of infinite worth whether they know it or not. For their sake we must "preach the word, be instant in season and out of season." God's Gospel must go forth in spite of obstacles and opposition. It is up to us to defend it and those who "repent and believe the Gospel." They belong to our Lord and we are members one of another. This is our greatest responsibility in life. It is the most important duty we have because the consequences are eternal.

False teachers present a danger to God's people and the work of the kingdom of God. Ancient attacks were often obvious and at times, physically dangerous. Many of God's choice people have died because of deceivers and godless teachers. They will seek to deny and destroy the credibility of the word of God by casting doubts upon it and promoting their own interpretation of the scriptures of truth. One of the tactics used is to seek to destroy the unity of God's people and challenge the commitment of believers who seek to "earnestly contend for the faith" by living a Christ-centered life. In any war, in order to repulse enemy attacks; offensive and defensive weapons have been used to save nations and cities. People have fought with courage to the extent of abandoning personal safety, and with total commitment to save their families. At times people fight together and at times as individuals. They will fight with all their strength to defend what is most precious to them from real or imagined attack.

The challenge of the epistle of Jude to believers today is the same as in the past. There are those who teach that Christians can do whatever they want without any fear of God "because he is a merciful God. He would never punish people for doing what everybody else does." Consequences for sin are not considered at all because the common practices of society, to most people, is what determines whether a thing is right or wrong, not the word of God. People even form their own opinions about the reality and existence of God. The God of their own imagination is who apostates believe in, not the God of the Bible. Also, they have their own ideas about God's word as to whether it has any relevance or value to them today.

Many have no desire for fellowship with God's people because they love the world instead of God. If people do not want to obey God, even though they profess to be Christians, the likely-hood is they are either mere professors of salvation or they deliberately reject what God says and are therefore apostates. Jude's letter challenges us to stand firm in our faith and commitment to God's truth as revealed in the Bible. How much do you value God's Word?

How much do you value the fellowship of God's people? How much do you value obedience to Christ? This is of great importance. Really, nothing is more valuable!

*The times in which we now live
Have opportunities which God does give
To let our light shine out before men;
That they might know we truly care for them
Not just for their success or financial wealth
Or their personal mental and physical health
But that they might understand as a reasonable person
God made them like Him for an important reason
And that no matter what others around them might do
There are higher and much more lofty things that they too
Might accomplish as true servants of Jesus Christ
For the good of God's kingdom in which we have been born twice.*

*But around us there are contrary winds that blow
That comes from the pit, the darkness down below
With the objective of deceiving vain mortal men
Into thinking there is not much that is wrong with sin
Because most people today think that it is alright
It doesn't matter to them what it is like in God's sight
Consequently, the downward slide continually increases
And people yielding to sinful temptations never ceases
But want to conform to all that is around
Where sin and its pleasures do greatly abound
And apostasy has men captured in its awful sway
As from God they deliberately go farther away.*

"Father, I know people have less and less interest in spiritual things as the pressures of changing morality and society claim a tight hold on their minds and lives. Please grant that Thy servant may not compromise truth in order to get people willing to listen to our preaching, and at the same time help me to not be disheartened nor become careless and indifferent to our calling. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Jude 1

THE SERVANT

The name Jude, is a derivative of Judah, which means "Praise." This half-brother of our Lord Jesus Christ was conscious of a nearer and dearer connection with Jesus than the natural bond and allegiance of brothers in a family. The spiritual relationship he had with Jesus Christ was of far greater value to him than the fact they had the same mother. The relational connection with "Jesus Christ" that meant most to Jude was that of a bond-servant, and the honorable work that is associated with that title and calling. It wasn't simply modesty that kept him from identifying himself as the half-brother of Jesus, but the dignity and honor of the high calling of God as a servant of the Savior- Messiah.

When he identified himself as the brother of James, this was an act of modesty. James was a well-known person among God's people and Jude was willing to take second place to one who was a public leader. In both of these relationships, Jude clarifies the order of importance to be held in the family of God. Such relationships, and our understanding of our place in them, enables us to be effective in the context of our own life and calling. Service for the coming universal King is a great privilege and it promotes in us a sense of humility in that our Lord Jesus Christ allows us to participate in the work He is doing in the building of the kingdom of God. As the brother of James, Jude does not imply in any way a desire to compete or take a higher place than which he has been given among the Lord's people.

This is a general epistle in that it identifies those to whom it is written with words that are true of every believer whether they are Jews or Gentiles. Any person or assembly who reads this letter can say, "This is to me [us]." Every believer is sanctified by God the Father. This goes beyond only being set apart by God, to really mean, "Beloved in God." In a way this is a wake-up call to the saints in that the divine nature we have received is what establishes this unique, and once only salutation. Beloved people are those who are regarded with favor above that which is common. So, the Father loves us and tells us so! What a joy!

"Preserved in Jesus Christ," reminds us that we are "kept by the power of God," and by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are what we are. We are kept by Him and for Him, in an unbreakable relationship that is eternal in its nature. In the context of this epistle it is being kept from the apostasy that was being taught by false teachers and its effect on the world in which we live. We have the same power today that keeps us from being overcome by the pressures to conform to the moral and cultural changes that are demeaning our deteriorating society. We are beloved by God the Father and are kept by the power of God the Son.

Added to that is the fact we are called by God. This is the work of God the Holy Spirit. We have been predestinated, and called, and justified and glorified by God Himself. None of this is the work of ourselves or of men. There is no sin pollution in our position in Christ.

Our **salvation** is through Christ and Him alone. It is "not of works lest any man should boast. We are made **servants** of Christ so we can have a meaningful life that is conducted with dignity and honor because of the One we serve. Also, we are **sanctified** for Christ, thus making our position of holiness not something we produce, but it is a work of our Lord who placed us where He can have fellowship with us. We are **secure** in Christ. Our eternal life is a gift from God and He has assured us that we "shall never perish." Day by day we are **sustained** by Christ even in times of departures and apostasy.

All of this gives us reason for joy and enthusiasm in the events of life as each day unfolds new truth, new areas of service and a new vision for life and that which is ahead. All of these blessings are for the people of God who are servants of Jesus Christ and preserved in Jesus Christ.

*He must have been a man of grace
When he was willing to take second place
Behind his brother who was more well known
And in his introduction his true humility is shown.*

*He was a servant to His Lord and King
But did not glory because he was a brother to Him
Who created heaven, earth and sea and sky;
And yet he was not willing to just stand by.*

*There were problems that needed to be addressed
And he was one of those who knew what was best -
What had to be done and warnings that had to be given
So that God's people would be preserved on their way to heaven.*

*What he knew he faced, and with his pen in hand
Gave warnings and solutions to problems now common to man
Evil is increasing and the effect of it must be stopped
Before many in the adversary's net will be caught.*

"I know Father God, that the spirit of apostasy is rampant in these days. It is not only in society in general but it is churches that were once known as evangelical and scriptural. As the way is opened before us, help me to be ready to defend the faith and earnestly contend for the faith. I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Jude 2

EARNEST DESIRE

When God's people are facing serious matters, which threaten the work of God and the assemblies of God's people, there are some things of which we are in urgent need. In view of the apostasy taught by false teachers at the beginning of the church age, Jude knew what was needed and where it came from. These three words: mercy, peace and love, tell of the choicest blessings God has for His people in times of testing. Mercy from God is the first need. Then peace from the Holy Spirit and love from Christ are there to meet our need. When they are multiplied, that indicates there is a bountiful supply of each which comes from an Infinite God who has an unlimited supply.

The world promotes pleasure, fame and wealth as what people need to find satisfaction. Even advertising is such that people are kept in a state of dissatisfaction. However, anxiety, care and remorse are right behind each of these and leave us wanting. None of these meets our need nor do they provide what the soul of man desires and

requires. Man may say, "I forgive you," and we hope the mercy that has been expressed is real and lasting. Men give flattering, empty words, and say, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." Philosophy and religion profess to give peace, but they do not calm the conscience nor rid it from guilt. They cannot take away sin nor the fear of the consequences of sin. They cannot reconcile the soul to God.

The Lord's peace which he gave to His own disciples meets all the desires of the soul and silences the alarms of a guilty conscience. The Lord's peace is steadfast in the inevitable changes of life that are happening all around us, and it firmly remains in the valley of the shadow of death. The love of God that is shed abroad in our hearts is because we love Him who first loved us.

"Mercy unto you" is first in order because we needed pardon from God for our sins, and He alone can give this. That imparted mercy has provided acceptance with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We are "accepted in the Beloved." Mercy needs peace, and truth needs righteousness. These needs have met together in the Person of our Lord when He died for us. Now mercy can be multiplied to us, and through us to others. "Be ye therefore merciful as your Father is merciful."

"Peace with God" is a state (Shalom) in which we are found forever. The Holy Spirit has brought this about through the Gospel of peace being preached. Because of the peace our Lord bequeathed upon us, we not only have peace with God, but can have the peace of God in our hearts to guide us as an umpire in a contest controls those who are involved. We can consequently have peace with other people and also be at peace with ourselves. When this is multiplied our conscience is at peace; we live with freedom from the guilt of the past. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" is real to us. In view of the inevitability of death if our Lord does not come before it, we can say as another person wrote....

"In peace let me resign my breath,
And Thy salvation see;
My sins deserved eternal death,
But Jesus died for me."

For love to be multiplied, we have to appreciate the love we have been shown by divine Persons. The love of the Father in giving the Son; the love of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me; and the love of the Spirit who is in us makes it possible for our love to be giving and heartfelt even though it will be costly. "We love Him because He first loved us." "We know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." Our love for the people of the world, not the world itself, is demonstrated when we are willing "to give what we cannot keep, to gain what we cannot lose."

The multiplying principle can be applied to our response to the great commission we have received; to the word of God in our own hearts; to the Gospel we proclaim and to our own intellect if we are teachable. It makes us available for the Master's use; worshipful in our response to Him personally; joyful in our own souls; sacrificial in our giving and faithful in our conduct as disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*The principle of multiplication is more easily applied to others
Then it is to our own personal lives and through us to sisters and brothers.
We need mercy first of all, because from God we were at a great distance.
Sin had separated us from Him, and our conscience did convict us.*

*Mercy from above was shown and then we did implore
That God would hear our plaintive cry, and from His mercy's store
Allow our sincere repentance to be acceptable in His sight -
And faith in Christ then opened blind eyes, so we could see His light.*

*Peace seemed so very illusive; it was like it was nowhere to be found.
But through God's Spirit and His word, we were led to hallowed ground
Where we were made consciously aware of peace made through His cross.
Now peace has been given by our Lord; our peace with God can ne'er be lost.*

*Love finds its source in God Himself, but is now shed in our hearts
The fact of love divine imparted, is understood more now than at the start.
Love's effect is seen in gratitude that increases toward my Lord.
Love for others deepens too as I look deeper into His word.*

*When these are multiplied in life, new visas do emerge.
And consciously mercy, peace and love create an inner urge
To press ahead and rise above the obstacles in the way.
These precious divine gifts from God produce the desire to obey.*

"Father, I have experienced these wondrous gifts from Thee over and over and over again. It is my desire that these attributes of the divine nature given to me, be seen through Thy servant. Perhaps then others will "taste and see that the Lord is good." In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Jude 3

IT IS NEEDFUL

It is not an uncommon thing to any of us when we are engaged in some task, to have that interrupted and have to set that aside in order to give our full attention to a more urgent need. If we are involved in that which affects other people, they need to know that we truly care for them and are not ignoring their interests. When we make a change, they should not feel we have lost interest in them or their concerns or cannot be trusted to carry a matter through to the end. When Jude addressed the readers of this epistle as "Beloved," he is assuring them that it is because of his love for them that he had to change his doctrinal subject to one of exhortation and warning.

The problem of apostasy had to be faced because of the immediate danger it was causing. There were those who were passing themselves off as believers, but were inserting their own ungodly ideas that were contrary to sound doctrine and the "common salvation" that all true believers have. Jude was probably intending to write about sin and guilt, God's love and grace, forgiveness and the new life of those who God saved. "Common" in relation to salvation does not mean something that is valueless because everyone has it as in being ordinary or merely of common interest. This means our salvation is shared by all fellow believers. Likely there is implied having "all things in common" with those who the Lord has saved.

Common faith in Christ leads to salvation for "whosoever will may come." Our "common salvation" is the same for any person anywhere. "Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" is the experience of any child of God. Their past may be different. Their culture, race and religious background may be very different, but those who God saves, "Love our Lord Jesus Christ" and they also "love the brethren," fellow believers who have been saved by grace alone. They are not trying to be saved, but are trusting in "Jesus alone" for their salvation. A new lifestyle testifies to the reality of their faith in Christ.

"Contend for the faith" certainly is a reference to being saved, but it also includes the whole body of truth that Holy Spirit has given us in the scriptures of truth. There is the exercise of faith when God saves us, and then there is "the faith" which we believe. This refers to the doctrines of the word of God to which we commit ourselves as believers in our Lord Jesus. These are the truths that are challenged by false teachers - "ungodly men." We are to keep the words of faith and sound doctrine as a guard keeps the treasures entrusted to him.

Every believer is responsible to "contend for the faith" by knowing what the Bible says. It is up to us to know the truth of God well enough to defend it against wrong teaching that undermines "the faith" and consequently misleads and spiritually injures others. We need to know the truth by actually practicing it in our lives and experiencing it in our own souls. It is the ungrieved and unquenched Holy Spirit who "guides into all truth" and reveals Christ to us. The Spirit of God revealed Christ to us through the Gospel when we first put our faith in Him. Now He continues to give us the spiritual understanding we need for life and service. We also contend for the faith when we do not get sidetracked by the opinions and/or actions of others. Opinions about "the faith" are not what we contend for. It is what the truth of the word of God says that motivates us to earnestly contend for the faith against attacks by ungodly apostates.

The people of God have been entrusted with "the faith" once for all. It is not up for change by us or by anyone else. Our responsibility is to know it, keep it personally ourselves, and make it understandable to other to whom we pass on the truth. Each generation of believers has a responsible role to fill in this work. Paul wrote Timothy, "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

There will be opposition from those who think we are living in a "post-truth" day. They will challenge us to be tolerant of other people's opinions even when they are wrong. They will condemn us for asking questions that need a sincere and honest answer. They believe it is more important to be tolerant of everything, than to boldly state the truth as the unchanging word of God. When our convictions are stated, we do not have to be belligerent and aggressive, but rather calm and assured of what we know to be true and promote. To stand up for the truth in Jude's day meant that many faithful saints died for their commitment to the faith.

So, there is assurance for Christians as to God's interest in them in the first two verses. Those to whom it is written were the Lord's people who are kept by God for the Lord Jesus [vs.1-2]. These believers are called ones who are beloved of God, preserved (kept) through union with Christ, kept for Christ as a gift to be presented to the Father. In verse three we have the aim of the epistle. Believers by faith will earnestly contend for the faith in a way similar to those building the wall of Jerusalem under the leadership of Nehemiah. They had a sword and a trowel to use in their work and prepare them for opposition. The word of God and the faith of God's people go together. We are to "earnestly contend for the faith" ourselves, and build up ourselves in our "most holy faith."

Jude 3. *"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."*

EARNESTLY CONTEND.

*The words are the same but are used in different ways.
What an ungodly man means, is not what he says.
The move toward apostasy is more open these days.
And there's going to be the devil to pay!*

*It was the common salvation we received at the start.
It was a work of God that began in our heart.
But there's a move abroad to drive Christians apart.
And we can't give the devil his way!*

*The body of truth that was given to saints,
Is referred to in scripture, and is called "the faith."
It has been given to us as an act of God's grace.
We mustn't let the devil take it away!*

*The time has now come to stand up for the right.
Against the spirit of apostasy all saints must fight.
The children of day are stronger than children of the night.
Stand up and resist the devil today!*

*Contend for the faith, for God and His truth!
Earnestly press on, each gift you must use.
Do not hesitate at all, for your life you must lose,
If we don't let the devil have sway!*

*It is going to get worse in this world where we live.
Many are not willing: their lives will not give.
Some will go through the fire and the sieve.
But by God's power, the devil will pay!*

"Holy Father, whenever I speak about the devil, I am more conscious of my need of God to preserve me from his attacks. Give me the power to resist him. I know this is the only way to deal with such an evil person. I claim all the power of Jesus' name in this day of departure and darkening shadows of apostasy. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Jude 4

PROBLEM OF APOSTATES

The Aim of the Letter Jude wrote is contained in verses three and four. The Problem of Apostasy was as real then as it is today - and even was in the Old Testament times. The Lord's people who share a "common salvation (faith)", and who are exhorted to "contend for the faith," are contrasted with by those who come among God's people through subtlety. They are those who "corrupt the faith," and are noted by the "conduct of the fallen." Of special interest is the way Jude presented the various subject addressed in this epistle. Note the similarity of the presentation of the subjects from verse 1 through verse 16 and from verse 25 backwards through verse 17. Salutation, v.1-2; Exhortation, v.3; Ungodly—denying, v.4; Remembrance, v.5; Retribution, v.5-16. -- Doxology, v.24,25; Exhortation, v.20-23; Ungodly-separating, v.18,19; Remembrance, v.17.

This letter was written to exhort the saints to keep the faith [vs.3-4]. The Holy Spirit led Jude to change the theme from Salvation that is available for all and "once for all," because no further improvement is possible, to warnings about "certain men who crept in unawares." Note the order of the subjects from the first verse to verse 11 and from the last verse going backward to verse 11.

Vs.1-2. Assurance for Christians. Vs.24-25. Assurance for Christians V.3. Believer and the faith.
Vs.20-23. Believer and the faith. V.4. Apostates described. Vs.17-19. Apostates described.
Vs.5-8. Apostates in O.T. history. Vs.14-16. Apostates in O.T. prophecy.
Vs.9-10. Apostates in supernatural realm. Vs.12-13. Apostasy in natural realm.
V.11. Ancient trio of apostates: Cain, Balaam, Core.

Going back to the aim of the letter: Jude was concerned that the saints of God would earnestly contend for the faith, and build up themselves on their most holy faith. Nehemiah is the comparative book in the Old Testament with the sword to earnestly contend, and the trowel to build up. Exhortation ("earnestly contend for the faith") and Warning ("certain ...ungodly men) go together. The truth of the Bible and the faith of the saints go together. There had come among God's people impious men who distorted the scripture, minimized sin and denied the Sovereign Lord. When danger is near, all other considerations need to be put on hold until the danger has been dealt with. The underhanded secret entrance of ungodly men into the gatherings of the Lord's people should never be allowed to go unchallenged. Immoral men who join themselves to the saints and pervert the grace of God, must be stopped. These men were promoting their idea that sin must be tolerated and people have the right to do what they like. In their perverted view of God, they taught that God would not punish sin because He is a God of grace.

In the times of Enoch and down through the ages, judgment for sin has been ordained. Angels, the people of Sodom, even the Jews who did not believe that God meant what He said, are testimonies to divine judgment by a Sovereign God. This does not mean that there are individuals who have been sovereignly appointed to damnation, but that those who have not accepted God's evaluation of sin, God's remedy for sin, and have a light opinion of sin, will be damned. Unless they repent of their sin and turn to the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, and accept the forgiveness the grace of God offers, they will be lost because of their rejection of Him. All who deliberately turn away from the light of truth and reject the offer of mercy will come under the judgment of a righteous God.

When people minimize the biblical teaching of sin, and think that how they live has nothing to do with God's grace and salvation through faith in Christ, they are without God. Ungodly means their lives and religious pretensions show they have "no fear of God before their eyes." They disrespect the holiness of God and His unchanging standards of justice. There is no acceptance of His command to "Be ye holy for I am holy." True children of God have a new nature imparted by the Holy Spirit that produces a desire to live by the teaching of the word of God and principles that are guided by that new nature. What we believe is demonstrated by how we live. True faith in Christ cannot be hidden nor does it ever excuse sin.

Those apostate men distorted the grace of God. In their view, sin is not all that serious so consequently they lived outwardly immoral lives without restraint. Implied in their licentious lifestyle was the idea that God's grace would be magnified by Him, ignoring the evil they committed and saving them in spite of their sins. Some people today teach that God is so merciful that He would never allow a person to go to hell. Others who are in religion for the money say, "Give us your money and we will take care of your soul." These and many other deceptive teachings are forms of apostate teaching. We are not able to say that a person is an apostate. but we can identify apostasy and know the results of such teaching and the destiny of those who follow that teaching.

Denying the Lord is to reject the doctrinal truths the scripture teaches about God, and in particular, about our Savior, Jesus Christ. People who claim to be Christians as a reference to their religious persuasion, but do not accept the fact of the deity of Christ nor His humanity as our Savior, are not true Christians. They not only abuse the doctrine of the grace of God, but also the salvation that He alone can provide. He is the Sovereign Lord of all, and though men speak well of Him in words, when "in works they deny Him," they are false teachers. "To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and the living." He is the One and Only Savior. There is "no salvation in any other."

In contrast to those who come in by some "side door," are those people of faith who show that by their testimony of word and conduct. They love the Lord who bought them, and desire to honor Him, live by the teaching of His word and show their faith by their respect for our Lord and His people.

*The time is now, we live by faith -
We have experienced the blessings of grace -
And want to see our Lord honored in every place -
No matter what others may say.*

*Some tell us that grace lets us do what we want.
That there are no consequences when in sin we're caught.
But we will stay committed to what we were taught -
No matter what others may do.*

*Tolerance is now touted as the final word -
By those who reject the truth they have heard -
But we will be faithful to the word of our Lord -
No matter where others may go.*

*Some ideas men have that seems to please them -
They want others to accept, even with all of their sin -
But in faith we believe God, putting our trust only in Him -
No matter what others may think.*

"Father, we have had to face some of these matters that seem to be inroads of apostasy. I am praying for wisdom to discern what is wrong and what is right, in spite of what others say. They use many words to seek to persuade us to accept their opinions as right. Thy servant is not really skilled at discerning deception, so I pray for help. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Jude 5

SOLEMN REMEMBRANCE

Lessons from history are often the most effective way to learn how to live in the present and prepare for the future. Jude likely had a specific purpose in mind that related to the day in which he lived because he chose three examples to exemplify apostasy and rebellion, at the judgment of God that came on those involved. There are many examples given in the scriptures of those who not only disregarded the will of God, but rejected the authority of God Himself. This same attitude is a present danger because there are those today who have a similar attitude toward God. The Pharaoh of Egypt said, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?" There are people today who "have no fear of God."

The three examples in Jude 5-7 are: the failure of Israel; the fall of angels and the fornication of Sodom and Gomorrah. Each of these three examples give a warning as to the danger from those who are false teachers and the duty of believers to stand fast for the truth and not let it go. It is our duty in view of evidence of apostasy to keep the faith as a trust that has been given us. In that way we who are the people of God will 'keep [ourselves] in the love of God,' and will be able to help others keep from stumbling. These examples of those who did not keep the truth and were not obedient to the word of the Lord, are warnings of judgment for apostasy.

The children of Israel had experienced deliverance by the mighty hand of God from their bondage in Egypt. They had passed through the Red Sea on dry land. They ate miracle food, manna, from heaven, and drank water that came from the rock. They had sung the song of Moses. and had heard the voice of God in the thunder on Mt. Sinai. But when it came time for them to go forward in faith, they refused to trust God and enter into the land He had promised to give them. One has well said, "Unbelief is the soul-damning sin." It is possible to look like a Christian, talk like a Christian and do things Christians do and yet not be a Christian. The aim of this letter was to get the saints to "earnestly contend for the faith." The argument as to how this is to be done is "remembrance." By reminding them of what they already knew, Jude was awaking them to the seriousness of the situation in which they were found.

It is possible for us to be knowledgeable about the scriptures and miss the point of them being written "for our learning and admonition." To refuse to act on divine directions is a direct contradiction of what God says. By not going forward in faith when we know some direction from God is right, is to say in essence. "I don't believe I can trust Thee, Lord." That is saying in the words of 1st John, "God is a liar." That is an act of apostasy. As Jude wrote in the previous verse, those were "ungodly men [people]" and they are denounced as ungodly who are guilty of unbelief. The doom of such is they will be destroyed like those Israelites who were destroyed in the wilderness.

In mercy God delivered His people Israel from Egyptian bondage. In judgment He destroyed those who had experienced His blessing but refused to obey His will. God's grace has provided salvation sufficient to meet our greatest need, but when we turn our back to what He has provided, and return to what we left as if there

was no value on the life God gives, then just judgment can be expected. Unbelief and deliberate rejection of God are the actions of apostasy. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." To "vex the Holy One of Israel" and "rebel against the Most-High," leads to being rejected by God.

Some people appear to be saved and for a time seem to go forward with the Lord's people. But like seed that falls on stony and thorny ground, when there is no spiritual root that is grounded in the fruitful ground of the truth, the apparent new life is revealed for what it is. There is no real life there. With all that being said, while there is life there is hope for those who will repent of their sin and believe the Gospel. God "now commendeth all men every where to repent." Our God wants "all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Those who die in unbelief are forever lost.

*Negative voices giving negative opinions influence actions whether we like it or not.
Trust in men of negative advice leads to despair – sounds of defeat.
Sounds of fearful people are voiced everywhere.
Perspective is lost – emotions of the moment take over.
Forgetting the character of God – all the way by which He led.
Energy wasted in going backward – going forward, it could have led to joy.
A cry of despair – then ten – then millions – how sad – how defeating.
After all this way – why, O why stop short of the goal!*

*Turning away – stopping their trust in God – fear has such power over weak men.
The sounds of sorrow – tearing of clothes – men who could see by faith;
They tried to turn the tide of negative voices – of complaints – of fear.
"The Lord... He will bring us in... He will give..." but no, people reached for stones.
Negative voices, fear, despair, leads to murder in the hearts of many.
Two respected men with confidence in God – give advice – remember the promise.
Rather than evaluate the advice – compare it to what God had promised – to His Word.
They rejected it – quickly – without consideration – they did not enter, said "No" to God.*

*God is powerful – creating all things by the word of His power.
God is longsuffering – immensely patient – suffering their manners in the wilderness.
God is of great mercy – His love is a promise we can always rely on.
God is forgiving – again and again He forgives iniquity and transgression.
God is just – there is no way sin can be overlooked as if it didn't matter.
God is a pardoning God – His grace extends to the darkest recesses of human experience.
God is unchanging – His character and actions are consistent in every age.
God knows the spirit of man that is in each person – and judges accordingly.*

*Ten times His people had failed to trust and obey Him – at the Red Sea; fear took over.
At Marah – complaining over bitter water; complaining in the wilderness of Sin;
Not satisfied with the quota of manna, but collecting more than enough in their greed.
Going out on the Sabbath to collect manna when they had plenty to gather the day before.
Complaining over the lack of water at Rephidim;
Engaging in idolatry in making and bowing down to the golden calf.
Complaining at Taberah; complaining about manna and over the lack of Egyptian food.
Listening to an evil report and failing to enter the promised land.*

*The promise to the nation is altered – the children will go in but not the complainers.
The next generation – but not those who failed to trust and obey.
Forty years – a year for a day – they would wander about in the wilderness.
Close but not in – they tried in the flesh, and lost to Amalek – the flesh wins.
Failure to trust God, leads to greater problems than we originally imagined.
We are destined to wander without aim if we do not trust and obey.
God's "breach of promise" doesn't mean He goes back on what He said.
It means if we do not "trust and obey"; He will find someone else who will.*

"I am enjoying this land of Beulah, O God of longsuffering and great kindness. It is in this land of promise I find great delight on every bush and under every tree. Each place I go and each job I do, gives a sense of God at work – and fulfilling all

the promises You have made. I worship sitting here at this desk as I think on the way You have led me – from Egypt, and the promise of the blood, to this place and the promise of the Word. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Jude 6

FALLEN ANGELS

The first example of apostates Jude writes about are ungodly people who do not trust God and will be destroyed because of their unbelief. The second example he wrote about are angels who held positions of authority but were not satisfied with the role God had given them. They had apparently been assigned places referred to a "principalities." Their "first estate" was a principality. Angels were created pure and holy and could live without fear in the presence of God. But under the leadership of Lucifer, they gave in to pride and rebelled against divine authority. Wherever their designated responsibilities lay, they refused to carry out or maintain the work to which they were assigned. We read of them in the book of Daniel as being spiritual powers controlling the prince of Persia and the prince of Greece who came against God's people who were defended by Michael, the prince over Israel.

These fallen angels are denounced as examples of those who deny divine Lordship and were unfaithful to God in their assigned places and work. Satan was their leader and in pride, he and those who followed him wanted a higher position, seeking to place themselves equal to God. In spite of their strength, their intellectual capacity and the positions of authority they held, they were dissatisfied. They wanted more. This same mindset is in the human nature today. People want to exalt themselves to where they think they are the ultimate authority over their own lives without any "fear of God" before them. "Up with man," and "No fear" are common phrases used by humanists.

Existentialists such as Jean-Paul Sarte and Albert Camus promoted this philosophy. The attitude and mindset of human freedom and responsibility is up to each individual who is able to create his/her own meaning in life, caught hold in Europe in the 1940's and 50's in which many were disillusioned with religion, society and even life. Like those fallen angels, existentialists believe you have only to be authentic to yourself. We are free to make our own choices depending on what our own prideful will determines is right. You make your own purpose in life that does not depend on morals, science or social responsibility - let alone obedience to God, who the existentialist doesn't believe exists. Those angels who had lived in the presence of God could never have realized the supreme authority of God.

Those who deny divine Lordship and have adopted a "live and let live" attitude toward life, others and God, have no real inner peace. There is a sense of hopelessness and anxiety that accompanies those who live with no predetermined purpose in life or no destiny after life. The example of those angels, demonstrates that now that they know the results of their willful pride is "everlasting chains under darkness," their only purpose is to bring as many as possible down with them. These angels are an example to us of those who deny the Lordship of Christ, deny the faith and are not faithful in "the calling wherewith they have been called." The doom of the ungodly believers is to be destroyed. The whole purpose of their being is totally useless. The doom of those who reject divine authority is darkness forever. No direction, nothing of value can ever be found as a reason for existence. The darkness they are in now, is the darkness in which they will be kept until the day of judgment following which they will be cast into the lake of fire with the devil and all who follow him.

The original habitation of angels was heaven where they would have lived in the light of God's glory. Whatever and wherever their designated responsibilities lay, when they were cast out, they were not satisfied until they infected humanity which had been created in innocence and was sinless at the beginning. Man's God-given ability to make choices, the same as the angels, was challenged by the devil and mankind has fallen in sin. It appeared that Satan had won the battle for the souls of men. However, God's grace is "greater than all our sin," and those God saved by His grace have been raised above angels and are "seated with Christ in the heavenly places." By nature, man is a little lower than the angels who are superior in strength, intellect and ability. But when we are "in Christ" we have been made "partakers of the divine nature."

Here on earth where we are in our present physical state, "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities (angels who kept not their first estate), against powers, against ruler of the darkness of this world (the "princes of ..."), against spiritual wickedness in high places." There are "world rulers of this darkness" who oppose our Lord and His people. Whether the place they are kept in everlasting chains is physical or/and moral darkness, they, or at least some of them are still involved in activities directed by satanic power. They oppose the Gospel, they deceive, they seek to control the will of mankind, they are even determined to use their dark power to create physical problems in human beings. Their leader still opposes God and they follow that "evil one." When we "earnestly contend for the faith" we are up against that dark power. How much we need God in every part of our life and labor.

There will be a final judgment for fallen angels the same as there will be for human beings who choose to follow Satan. It is obvious to us that the "everlasting chains," the darkness and the warnings of coming judgment, though they are real, do not stop the activities of the "principalities and powers" arrayed against us now. Jude's warning to the Lord's people of his day is as relevant to us as it was to them. The spirit of apostasy is present today in individuals, governments, religions and even in some churches. Denying the Lordship of Christ and being unfaithful to God is not uncommon among people.

It is important for God's people to know the characteristics of those who are in opposition to His divine will so that we can stand fast when attacked and earnestly contend for the faith. Our lives do count for the kingdom of God. Our labor and our calling, does not diminish in any way because of the increasing departure from the truth in our day. If anything, our motivation to fulfill our calling should be greater as we consider the consequences of those who fall under the influence of the ungodly and fallen apostates.

*To some people "pride" is a special word,
That means we should think good of one's self.
But when pride is set against our Lord,
That is promoted under Satan's spell
That will result in an awful cost
To be paid someday by prideful man.
With fallen angels such men are lost,
As pride finally, man's souls will damn.*

*To lift one's self in foolish pride,
Is a fateful act of our sinful will.
There is no place where one can hide,
When the cup of iniquity we do fill.
God is determined to bring the proud man down -
When man exalts himself, it is sin.
But when true humility itself is shown,
The humble person is lifted up by Him.*

"Father, I know pride can show itself in many ways in my life. A true estimation of myself is hard to maintain because of the sin of pride. As I read Thy word and learn more of Thyself and my Lord - I am humbled. I want to stay that way and bear the yoke of Him who is meek and lowly in heart. Amen."

Jude 7

IT WILL HAPPEN

Destruction, darkness and damnation were all given as warnings to those who pay heed to the ungodly men who "crept in" among God's people. Apostasy can be referred to as deliberately turning away from beliefs once held to be true regarding the Bible, God, salvation and what it means to be a child of God. That act of rejection is apostasy as in the case of the children of Israel when they did not believe God would keep His promise. It is also a rejection of the supreme authority, the Lordship, of divine Persons over all His creation with the intention of claiming it for themselves as in the case of the angels who "kept not their first estate." A third area of apostasy has to do with defiance against practices once held to be right according to the scriptures, and the abandonment of those practices.

The example of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain is a warning of damnation that awaits those who are apostates and defile themselves by immoral living. Paul and Peter as well as Jude warned of the dangers of "deceitful workers, and those who "depart from the faith." God has given in His word specific teaching regarding interpersonal relationship as well as doctrinal and social practices. The laws of the land have been changed to suit the fallen moral state of our country, but that doesn't change the unchangeable standards of righteousness made by God for the physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of human beings. Deviating from these to the state of unbelief, denial of divine authority and lascivious sexual practices will lead those who engage in such things, to the "vengeance of eternal fire."

Many people deny the fact that eternal fire is real. Others think it is a state of mind rather than the eternal abode of those who reject God's mercy. Others will say it is the annihilation of those who do not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. To them it means that body, soul and spirit are not only destroyed, but they cease to exist in any way. The biblical teaching is that those who are ungodly and unbelieving, those who deny the Lord and are

unfaithful to Him, and those who by lascivious and morally perverted living reject God's standards of righteousness, will be lost. If they do not repent and call upon the name of the Lord for salvation, they will be consigned to the everlasting burnings.

Those who reject the truth of God by unbelief, those who deny the Lord and promote their own opinions and those who accept the "alternate lifestyle" as acceptable will have the whole purpose of their existence lost to themselves and others, to God and His kingdom. They are kept in darkness until the judgment of the great white throne takes place. They will finally be cast into the lake of eternal fire.

Such a warning against false teachers with these examples, should challenge all of those who are born again by the Spirit of God to "earnestly contend for the faith." We should urgently seek ways to further the message of salvation in ways that those who are lost in sin will "flee from the wrath to come." To the degree we value the word of God, the fellowship of His people and are committed to obeying Him, we will extend ourselves to see people saved. We have been given the word of God, and we have received the gift of eternal life ourselves. Now our message to others is the same one we received personally and acted upon by faith. The message is simple.

**"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.
"Be sure your sin will find you out."
"Christ died for our sins."**

God's truth must go forth to those who do not believe; who deny the truth of God and who live ungodly lives. The truth must be presented and promoted by those who know it themselves. We have been commissioned by the highest Authority in the universe to do this. Truth defends itself but must be articulated by those who know it personally. We must teach it and warn those who have not received "the love of the truth that they might be saved," of coming judgment. Of all the tasks we have in this life, this is the one with the most serious consequences.

False teachers are waiting to destroyed the testimony of Christ-centered lives. They anxiously seek to destroy the credibility of the word of God and those who teach it. They are anxious to divide the people of God in order to create confusion. Those who deliberately oppose the Gospel of Christ and true Christianity, know that if what Christians believe and teach is true, they are in serious trouble. One who taught and promotes false teaching said when challenged as to the lack of logic and common sense the teaching he gave contained, he said he did so because the alternative was unacceptable to the lifestyle he wanted to live. He is a loser like the examples of those in these verses in Jude, and is not content until he can take others down with him.

*Destruction - Darkness - and Damnation
Carelessness - Crassness - and Condemnation
Helplessness - Hopelessness - in eternal Habitation
These are ahead of one who is lost.*

*Awakening - Awareness - and Anxiety
Conviction - Consternation - and Complexity
Alarmed - Asking - with Alacrity
As one become awakened to the seriousness of sin.*

*Listening - Learning - and Longing
Hearing - Heeding - then Having
Accepting - Believing - the Confessing
And one who was lost in sin, is now saved.*

"Father, I thank Thee that while there is life there is hope. Hope that one who has gone far away from Thee is still welcomed back when there is repentance, contrition and then faith is placed in our Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation. Some of those recently saved have given me the motivation to not overlook those who seem to far to reach. None are too far for Thee when they come as a sinner to Jesus. I praise and thank Thee in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Jude 8

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

Lawlessness and arrogance characterize the spirit of apostasy that is found in these false teachers who infect their hearers by acting in pride, despise authority and speak evil of spiritual things. The description of "filthy dreamers" implies these men are defiled by the imaginations of their minds. An unguarded mind that takes

uncontrolled thoughts and stores them, can bring those thoughts to the forefront in their dreams in the night or in day-dreams in the day when situations arise that give license to the flesh and/or immoral thinking. The human mind can take thoughts stimulated by pictures, words and situations in which one is found, and transmit them into actions that began as dreams.

Believers must bring "into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Imaginations can direct us into strange philosophies, unusual situations dreamed up in the mind, or even into activities of sexual connotations that are in danger of being retained in the mind. The pride of the human heart is to oppose authority as it exalts self and finds fault with that which they do not consider important. To bring those dreams into captivity and under control, means each believer must submit all of their activities of the mind and body to the authority of our Lord. Emotions, feelings and actions all have to be dealt with by reading and meditating on the word of God day and night like the Lord told Joshua. It is possible to claim control of the thoughts and imaginations of the flesh by deliberating substituting verses of scripture, illustrations from the word of God and things we have personally experienced with God in the place of sinful imaginations.

"These filthy dreamers" often claim some revelations they have received that are out of touch with reality because of their own uncontrolled passions. It is not too long before the inward lustful thoughts give license to the flesh and they outwardly pollute their own bodies. Those who were previously given as examples of those who were apostates, and now shown to actually apply those ungodly ways in their own lives by indulging in corrupt passions of the flesh.

Further in their application of their own false teaching, the "despise dominions (lordship)." They reject authority and have no regard for the designated authority God has appointed in various areas of human life. Civil authority exists by the plan of God for the direction and control of social life in a nation. To despise civil authority by claiming immunity because of our own personal opinion is rejecting divine authority delegated by God to "the powers that be." In families and in the assemblies of God's people there is also delegated authority to fathers and elders. For children to despise the leadership of their parents, or for the gathered-out company of saints to ignore and oppose those "who have the rule" over us, is to again reject God-given authority. The orderly conduct of life in a nation, an assembly or a family is the purpose behind "dominion."

Anarchy and rebellion in social structures, whether it be divine authority, governance, church life or family life leads to chaos. Angels have appointed positions of authority in their "family" the same as do humans. The false teaching of those who undermine the confidence of people in those who God has appointed as leaders in the different areas of society, is to be repudiated, rejected and a stand taken against that by those who "earnestly contend for the faith."

"Dignities" are spiritual powers, both good and bad. To blaspheme is to revile and slander. "Speaking evil of dignities" is an open reproach to those who have positions of designated authority higher than most. Evil speaking is out in the open for all to hear. The uncontrolled tongue of those who slander people and powers in higher positions than themselves, leave no doubt as to their intention. They want to bring the other person down, and exalt themselves. Those to whom Jude refers were likely heavenly beings that were not seen, and so to the arrogant person, doesn't even exist. The men of Sodom insulted angels and found out they were up against spiritual powers that could blind them.

To take lightly the powers of darkness and light can produce serious results. Unbelievers in positions of leadership in the government such as magistrates, governors or those who lead our nations deserve our respect. The demands of respect from us are appropriate even when we disagree with actions they take. We are not called upon to ignore the standards and laws of God in order to please men, but we are to give them the respect due to them because of the office they fill. Paul was an example of this when he submitted to those in authority even though it led to ultimately to imprisonment.

Occasionally there are those who claim to have a superior knowledge of things and seek to move the saints of God away from "the faith" they have received from the word of God. When there are those whom seem to be knowledgeable but there is just something about them that doesn't seem right, then be very careful before trusting what they say and do. The character of a person can be discerned by those who take time to ask pertinent questions about them and their past activities. When there is a lot of "I, me and my" words in a conversation and an explanation of activities, then ask questions that indicate the kind of person they are. Character traits may be hidden. What one says about others reveals much of who they are in themselves.

*Words may not seem to some people important, but listen to them just the same.
One may seem very dignified in their deportment, but how do they speak another's name.
If there are a lot of "I, me and my's," likely they look down on others.*

God will have to bring them down to size, who speak against sisters and brothers.

*If someone make jokes about spiritual things, alarm bells should begin to sound -
That there is a danger that attitude brings, when evidence of sacrilege is found.
For the speech and actions of one who speaks, wanting people to listen to him -
Often reveals there is a following he seeks that is dangerous because he speaks light of sin.*

*Walk away from; avoid; have nothing to do - with those whose manner and words reveal
That to God and His word, they are not true - their lifestyle and purpose they try to conceal.
Because their agenda comes from their willful desire to gain a following and maybe some fame -
We must reject their attempts to inspire us to demean and ignore the authority of Jesus' name.*

"Father, it is with a sense of urgency I ask that I will be on guard to discern those who may bring difficulties to Thy gathered people. Some of those who want to move in among us seem to be nice people but are quite opinionated. Preserve Thy gathered company I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Jude 9

WAIT FOR GOD'S TIME

Those who "speak evil of dignities" set themselves up as judge and jury over the actions of those with whom they do not agree. Whether the dignities are angels or men, there are spiritual powers at work in the world that are far superior to us as far as knowledge and reasons for things - good or bad. What do we know about the reasons God sets up one leader instead of the one we would choose? How can we pass a judgment on why one person lived a long time and another dies young? Life and death are in God's hand. So are unseen powers that are allowed to work in the world today. Our commission is the same under every regime, political party, national identity, and social/ religious structure that may be in authority at the time. We are to preach the Gospel. make disciples, baptize and teach them to observe all things our Lord taught us. Then we are to pass the things we have learned, to those who will be able to teach others.

To make our imaginative thoughts about Satan into some kind of image to scare people into confessions of faith in Christ without them assuming responsibility for their own sin, is both misleading and deceptive. We know he is a liar from the beginning. We know he is the adversary. We know he accuses believers. We know he can seem like a roaring lion or an angel of light. We know when we resist the devil, he will flee from us. We know the Holy Spirit in us is greater than "he that is in the world." We even know the devil's future destiny, but we know he is still opposing the work of God and God is allowing him to do certain things against God's people like Job, and he seems to win. But we know it is not over till it is over. So like Michael who is stronger than the devil, we need to let God do what is His will, even in situations we may not agree with personally at first.

It is not our prerogative to pronounce judgment on that which we do not understand. Does Satan have any right over human bodies after a believer has been taken home to heaven? He has the "power of death," not the keys of death. Perhaps the fact that human beings submitted their will to his in the garden of Eden has given him temporary right over that which disintegrates. Even if he has a temporary claim to our "dust," the bodies of believers are going to "be made like unto His body of glory." We have been "bought with a price ... the blood of Christ," so whatever claim he might have, is only brief. Moses appeared in some way on the mount of transfiguration, likely in a spiritual form but he was recognizable. It may have been the devil's intent in the dispute over Moses' body to have the children of Israel use it as some artifact to be worshipped.

The Lord rebuked the devil by burying the body of Moses Himself in a place unknown to the adversary, or at least where he couldn't get it. Michael, for all his superior strength and authority, kept his hands off of what God was going to do in His own way and time. We need to remember some things belong to the Lord only. Vengeance is one of those things. The leadership of nations is set up by the Lord for reasons known only to Him. Whether He "sets up" or "puts down" is up to His sovereign will. Our responsibilities for "kings and those in authority" is to pray for them and obey them. We can "live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty" no matter what is going on in our nation when we pray in the will of God and accept what happens to us as from His hands. We are reminded by the Holy Spirit that "this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." In a more paraphrased way the words mean, "Do your work in prayer and Gospel witness, and I will take care of the rest, whether it be the government or saving souls."

Michael, the angel for the nation of Israel, pointed out the fact that when it comes to God's own people, God Himself does the rebuking. Jude was making the statement that those who despise dominions and speak evil

of dignities are not people who are speaking under divine authority. They are rather setting themselves up against God. This is part of the description of their character. Pride, ambition and self-interest are all evidence of character deterioration in those who do not "keep the faith."

There are descriptive words of the character of apostates from verse 8 through verse 19. They are people of loose morals and corrupt thoughts. They resist control and mock those who walk with God. Their words are boastful and filled with religious sham instead of spiritual truth. They complain and murmur against others and are like hidden rocks, "spots in your feasts of charity" who undermine the faith of God's people. They want to move the people of God away from the safety of the truth in which they "earnest contend for the faith," to be shipwrecked in their spiritual testimony. They seek to replace the grace of God with their false teaching and the spiritual corruption associated with it.

God has His ways of dealing with those who oppose His sovereign will. The history of Israel is replete with accounts of God at work on behalf of His people. Even when they failed, He gave them opportunities to repent and return to the path of faith. In New Testament times when the apostles went forth to fulfill the commission they were given, the Lord worked with them and "confirmed the word with signs following." In the assembly at Corinth, there were some things wrong they had to deal with themselves, and other things God dealt with. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep." God is still on His throne and vain men still try to usurp those things He has reserved for Himself.

*I wonder what is behind the choice, to criticize those who lead?
Could it be we heard another voice, and to divisive words gave heed?
Who are we to bring one down, what have we done so great?
Criticism is bad seed sown, that may even turn to hate.*

*Leave to God the things He knows are beyond our place to judge.
If He chooses, we may be shown the road another one has to trudge.
My own business takes my time, and I'll trust God's sovereign decision.
Likely I too soon will find; God has worked with great precision.*

*Even if I think one's way is wrong, it is best if I watch and wait.
Another person may not be so strong, but God is the One who knows their state -
What is right or if something needs to be, changed or corrected to the right end.
And later on, I will be able to see He knew exactly what or who to send.*

"Father, these two mighty beings, Michael and the devil, had limited power given to them by Thee. Michael knew his limitations when it came to making decisions that affect a lot of people. I need the common sense and wisdom from Thee to know when to be silent and walk away from confrontation. I ask for this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Jude 10

ANIMAL INSTINCTS

Gnosticism (knowledge), is a heretical teaching contrary to the Bible. In three major points it undermines Christianity, and brings about spiritual and moral corruption that is consistent with false doctrine. It insisted that they had secret knowledge that was hidden from most believers. The scripture teaches that Christ provides all the knowledge we need. The false teaching said the body of a human is evil. The scripture teaches that Christ lived in a body in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Gnosticism taught that Christ only seemed to be a human but was not, because a human in a body would be sinful. The scripture teaches that the Lord Jesus was fully human and fully God. He is the God-man.

The false teachers that came among God's people claimed to have a better understanding, maybe even a secret understanding, of spiritual things that gave them authority. The problem was they were speaking about things of which they knew nothing. They were "dead in trespasses and in sin." Michael the archangel knew when to be quiet, and he was far superior in every way to all of them. They were speaking evil and slandering people and their biblical teaching, when they didn't know even what they were saying. For some perverse reason, those who are false in their teaching want to demean and denigrate those they don't even know because of some hidden reason.

There are those who seem to think it is important to see others put down in order for them to rise up to their perceived position of importance. They spend a lot of time looking for things to criticize in people who are committed to the scriptures. If they can defame others enough, apparently, they think they will gain an exalted

position and power. Often contempt for another person's race, nationality, speech and age are points on which they will focus their attack. Some in Corinth said of Paul that "his bodily presence was weak and his speech contemptible."

Base instinct is simply following animal-like characteristics in a desire to dominate a group of people. Animals have a tendency to "bite and devour one another" in order to take what the other one has, or control a pack of animals similar to it. False teachers are not attacking those who believe other false doctrines as much as those who are committed to the word of God and obediently following scriptural precepts. They want to defeat the counsels of God and take control over true Christians. They do not look upon the people of God as sheep in a flock for which they have been given the privilege to care for, but rather as those over who they can dominate. We must be on guard against the erroneous teaching of those who condone careless living by distorting the teaching of the word of God.

By being personally aware of what the word of God says, and by recognizing what God in grace has revealed to us of Himself, His Son and His will, we can stop the inroads of falsehood. Peter wrote that we should "Beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Even though we cannot comprehend God because of our human limitations, we can understand the dangers of those who act with animal instincts.

When people have a real understanding that they have been made in the image of God for God's use, then they rise above base animal passions. The character of God is seen in those who belong to Him. Grace, mercy, faith and love are instinctive in the children of God. Respect for themselves, for their physical bodies, for the Bible and for other people is part of the nature of those who are in Christ. Those who only see themselves as animals as a part of God's creation, may behave like animals in seeking to satisfy the desires of fleshly instinct without any restraint. That animal instinct brings corruption and destruction upon themselves and a corrupting influence on society in general. Those who are of the flesh only, live a life of animal-like existence. Those who have been born again have a new nature given by God, that shows the character of God, and they want to please God.

*To say what one knows is right, but to live differently is a contradiction.
To seek to undermine another person's worth, is cause for deep suspicion.
Why that is done may to us be unknown, but it leads to a division.
To want a person out down and self exalted, is the logical conclusion.*

*To act like an animal and do animal-like things, is animal instinct.
Even though humans clothe themselves, animal-like actions are not extinct.
The unregenerate man or woman, are from the children of God - distinct.
God is able to bring judgment or new life; in ways we would never think*

*To be a child of God implies that no matter what others might say,
It is my own personal privilege to represent my Lord in every way.
There will be pressures applies by those who want me from faith's path often to stray.
But those in whom the divine nature has been imparted, will not from the truth turn away.*

"Father, it appears that more and more people are inclined to act, live and dress with animal-like intent. The purpose seems to be to attract the opposite sex for immoral reasons. Please give Thy people the moral courage to look, talk and conduct their lives in ways that best represent Thee and Thy family. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Jude 11

INFAMOUS INDIVIDUALS

Those who are the Lord's people are kept by God for our Lord Jesus Christ and are exhorted to keep, and earnestly contend, for the faith. Those who do not keep the truth of God and obedience to Him are kept unto judgment in the future. As the character of such people deteriorates because they do not know, nor do they keep the faith, there are serious and disastrous results. Three individual apostates are used in the book of Jude as illustrations of those who are false.

Cain must have had some conflicts with his brother Abel when it came to what they believed about God. Cain was a willful, rebellious, self-willed man whose would not accept the fact that he was wrong. Even if he had brought one of Abel's sheep his attitude would have meant the sacrifice was of no avail for his need. Cain had a *false religion*, [Gen.4] a man-made religion without blood. He rejected the revelation of God and the sacrifice

of the Savior [1Jn.3:11-12; Heb.11:4]. In essence he said that if God wouldn't accept what he wanted to give as a religious sacrifice, he wouldn't bring anything at all. "If I can't come my own way, I won't come at all." That act of self-will and the anger he displayed is consistent with apostasy. A wrong application of the sacrifice to suit his own will; vengeance against one who did God's will and a desire to bring down one who didn't agree with him are all evidence of one who rejects God truth - an apostate. They are "gone" - "gone in the way of Cain." A woe is pronounced on those who follow that way.

Balaam acknowledged God even though he was an unbeliever. He was outwardly spiritual but inwardly corrupt as is common with false prophets. He was willing to obey God as long as it was for his own profit. This deceptive, greedy man was exposed for who he really was. His prophecy, even though partly true was a *false ministry* [Num.25:1-9]. He led others into sin for personal gain [2Pet.2:15-16]. He had a wrong relation to God's people based on greed, not obedience to God. Balaam knew the truth but deliberately led Israel into sin that he might make money. Apostates run "greedily after the error of Balaam, for reward" even today.

Korah was the third in this lineup of infamy because he tried to grab more than he had to get more than he should or could hold. He refused to be content with what he had; wanted more and ended up with nothing, not even his life. He was a privileged Levite working at the tabernacle. Not everyone is chosen to lead and not everyone is able to lead. His statements to Moses and Aaron were, they were no better than anyone else, which was true. But they had been given their leadership roles nationally and spiritually by God, and Korah had not. He also knew that the Israelites were God's chosen people. Cain was in unbelief like the Israelites; Balaam was an example of corruption like Sodom; Korah was in rebellion like the fallen angels wanting *false worship*. [Num.16]. An apostate is wrong in relation to God's Son. Anger and unbelief; corruption and greed; jealousy and rebellion are all characteristics of those who oppose the will of God. Korah rejected divine authority given to Moses and tried to assume power for himself.

There are warnings from these men that are important for us to consider. Never let the desire for what someone else has, make me discontented with what I already have. Don't attack someone else's position in order to raise up my own position or self-esteem. I should never pick parts of God's word to support a position I have already taken rather than take the word of God as the authoritative statements in the context in which it is written. And also, I must never fool myself that I will find my satisfaction in life in power and position. All of these examples teach us that jealousy, unbelief, corruption, greed and rebellion blinds us to common sense and spiritual discernment.

Contrast the Lord Jesus Christ with these three:

Jesus: The WAY	The TRUTH	The LIFE
Apostates: "the way of Cain."	"The error of Balaam."	"The gainsaying of Core."

*How wondrous is "The WAY" we know, that takes us home to God -
And what a blessing to be guided on our way, by "The WAY'S" most holy Word.
In contrast is "the way of Cain," his jealousy, disobedience and self-will,
Is the way, "they [all] have gone" whose journey's end is hell.*

*"The TRUTH" is a Person, whose word is truth by which we are sanctified.
Our Lord Jesus came "full of grace and truth," and for testifying to the truth, He died.
In contrast "the error of Balaam" who died in his greed after having sown deception.
All who follow "the doctrine of Balaam" will be lost without exception.*

*Our Lord Jesus is "The LIFE," and by grace has given His life He to us.
The gift of eternal life is our present possession, when on Him alone we place our trust.
In contrast "the gainsaying of Korah," is falsehood and false worship which is rebellion.
Everyone will perish eternally like him, who believes and acts on their own opinion.*

*Lessons learned from the wrongs of others, are given for our own admonition -
Lest we compromise "The WAY, the TRUTH and the LIGHT," and listen to false explanation,
That some men teach as the objective of life, and how they think Christians are to walk,
Angels and men who are bound for perdition themselves, bring others down with their talk,*

"Father, may everyone today who hears or reads Thy word or even a verse of scripture, realize that this is the voice of God to them. May its convicting and converting power keep sinners from listening to false teaching, and saints from being misled by their evil speaking. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Jude 12

RELIGIOUS SHAM

Often in our efforts to describe a person, an event or some scene, we look for something well known with which to make a comparison. "He looks like his father." "It tastes like honey and cinnamon." "It makes a noise like a chirping bird." Metaphors are given to enlighten those who do not understand what is happening or to warn of potential danger. Our Lord Jesus used these often when explaining truth to those who heard Him speak. "The kingdom of God is like unto ..." and then He would tell a parable or give an illustration. Jude, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, used a wide variety of word-pictures to warn the Lord's people of men who were religious shams using "Bible" terms and "religious" words to undermine the faith of believers in Christ. The illustrations he used were from those areas of life with which we are familiar and can visualize without difficulty - land, sea and sky.

In the early church, the saints who gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, often had meals together which were called "feasts of charity," or "love-feasts." Likely the original intention was to promote and maintain fellowship between them. A benefit would be that those who had much would share what they brought with those who had little and there wouldn't be embarrassment or class distinction. However, at least in the assembly at Corinth, these meals were done with a wrong attitude that led to wrong actions even at the Lord's Supper. Probably it was in this setting that "certain men crept in unawares" and gave their subtle and wrong teaching in small group settings. That is a potential danger that can happen quite easily. Some of the Lord's people have more in common with some than others because of family ties, social and financial status, age or business associations. There needs to be mature, wise Christians at such gatherings who have discernment and are willing to stop anything that leads to dissention and division.

A person who is not part of the assembly, and perhaps does not want to be, but just wants "the fellowship of Christians," is one of whom we need to be especially watchful. They want what they want for themselves and are not openly desiring to follow the word of God or be taught by those in the assembly. They often believe they are superior to those tried and proven saints. *Their character* is described as a "spot in your feasts of charity." The idea of a spot is not merely a blemish in something that is pure, but is an unseen danger as a rock just under the surface of the water is a danger to a moving boat. It can cause a shipwreck. A person's character is not always revealed the first few times we see or meet them. It is up to us to provide the setting in which a person's character is seen particularly by finding out what they believe and think of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Worthless worship* is a warning to us in that one who is not a true believer cannot hide their true self or their attitude toward our Lord in smooth words or "great swelling words."

Their speech carries the warning as to who they really are and it is right for us to make a just judgment with spiritual discernment as to whether we extend our hand of fellowship or not. A person can use a Bible verse or a biblical phrase and illustration by just reading about them or learning them as a child. The lack of spiritual character and Spirit-guided speech is a warning to those who truly love our Lord. Without the guidance of the Holy Spirit such people bring the danger of division among us. *Worthless worship* is religious sham even at a love feast where these people "feed themselves *without fear*." Such people are *wicked shepherds* who care only for themselves, not the sheep of God's pasture. They have no shame of inserting themselves into conversations in which they have no business. They assert themselves with a desire to influence others to follow their pernicious ways.

These who creep in among God's people are not obvious dangers at first. They seem innocent enough and use nice words and their pleasant personalities to ingratiate themselves to the unsuspecting saints who are people who show grace, kindness and love. But these are really as dangerous as submerged rocks and as deceptive as rainless clouds that promise much but produce nothing. Like shooting stars, they take off with a flash and move in the direction of their own choosing but can give no spiritual guidance. As waterless clouds, withered trees, and wandering stars - all we see are useless people who are a danger to the children of God if they are listened to and followed. A "cloud without water" is a deceptive hope to one who needs the rain to water the dry ground. There can be no refreshment and no fruit produced without the rain to stimulate the seed of life. Clouds that are moved about by the winds do not produce rain, guidance or any kind of stability.

Trees that produce fruit are a great blessing even though they may not be the most beautiful in color or striking in size. A fruit tree exists only to produce fruit. A fruit tree that has no root will produce no fruit and is so weak it will fall over when the first strong wind blows. From deep in the soil containing the "fullness of the Lord," roots spread and grow to bring all the goodness from beneath our feet to the surface to bless us. The roots of a fruitless tree are weak, shriveled and soon die because that for which they have been made is not working. It is dead as far as bringing benefit to people and it is dead in itself. It is "twice dead." Some trees appear to be dead in the dormant season, but when spring comes all that changes. The warmth of the sun and longer days

of light, warmer rains and sun combine warm the earth. Some there is visible evidence of life. First the buds of leaves appear. Then blossoms are set by winds and sunlight. As the leaves get larger, they protect the growing fruit and finally a full harvest follows.

A useless tree is usually burned so that a new one can be planted in its place in view of the blessing it can bring to mankind. Twice dead trees are soon nothing but ashes. Religious hypocrisy and biblical verses out of context are evidence of one who is spiritually dead. A true child of God, particularly if they have been saved awhile, has the spiritual discernment from the Holy Spirit within, to know religious sham when they see and hear it. It is our responsibility to ourselves, others and particularly to the testimony of our Lord in this godless age, to reject, perhaps rebuke, and if necessary, repudiate all that those who are false Christians say and do.

*These should be times of blessing, of joy and of fellowship.
Some travel quite a distance, hoping the time there is worth the trip.
Anticipation is high, each one's soul wants to be refreshed.
How sad if when time to leave, one is really more depressed.*

*Because there are hidden rocks, submerged, although he only seems to be a stranger.
His words in conversation alert us to a potential danger.
If that man is not dealt with now, he will wreck the "fellow - ship."
Caused by an unseen "spot" that by this "certain man did creep."*

*A man is there unknown, pontificating about his knowledge.
He has some degrees, and looks down on those with no "college."
He feeds on his own ego, not caring for hungry sheep.
He is really only a hireling, speaking truth he does not keep.*

*Another at the feast looks like a bright shining cloud in the sky.
He makes a lot of promises and speaks of truth he did not buy.
The words he speaks seem hopeful, but lead to disillusionment at the best.
A rainless cloud he is, disappointing, and creating even more awful dust.*

*There is one also at the feast who looks like a fruit tree in all its glory.
But a closer look at his life and work reveals a much different story.
He has all the answers, but the problems of sin he doesn't even know.
He is like a fruitless tree; he is really nothing more than a show.*

"Father, these descriptions of counterfeit Christianity certainly are a warning to me. I must watch out for others and make sure they are real. At the same time, I must make sure there is no falsehood found in me. Search me and try me in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

v.12-13. Description of present apostates:

- Spots in your feasts of charity: not obvious dangers as in submerged rocks, shepherding themselves, self-centered, no fear.
- Clouds without water: appearance only, false promise, disillusionment, disappointment.
- Late autumn trees: no fruit, no faith, seasonally dormant and without any source of life for the future.
- Raging waves of the sea: uncontrollable, nothing shows but foam, no reality, nothing of value or substance.
- Wandering stars: worthless for guidance, self-induced light, temporary light, cannot be counted on.

Jude 13

OUT OF CONTROL

The description of present-day apostates is the same as those Jude wrote about who were living in his day. Self-centered, taking care of their own interests, promoting their own ideas and trying to impose them on others, is common practice of those who are merely religious but have no salvation. The danger is there even if it is unseen by those who look only on the outward appearance. False promises, disappointment and disillusionment create false expectations that soon are revealed for what they truly are. When there are no lasting results and no evidence of spiritual fruit in one's life, there is no reason to look to that person for guidance and instruction. They cannot be counted on to give the truth of God to His people because they do not know it themselves.

Those without divine life and divine guidance become very concerned and upset when we pay them no attention or when we refute their claims with the word of God. They may temporarily appear to be godly and righteous in life. But there is no inner power from God to maintain a facade very long. They are inwardly like the "troubled sea" and that usually appears outwardly as time passes. Jude uses two more metaphors to describe these false Christians as people who are out of control.

Winds that blow across the ocean will soon create waves that are uncontrollable by man. As they approach the shore, the effect is to scrub the ocean floor in shallow water and move dirt, rocks and offal towards the shore. A person who rejects the truth of God will stir up strife that produces wild, uninformed accusations. They become agitated when confronted with their inconsistency. Like foaming waves, they will often use unclean words that express their own moral uncleanness. Then as their own shame is exposed for what it really is, in an attempt to maintain their pride and lawlessness, their released anger becomes disgraceful.

All that results from their own efforts is to display their own personality and conduct as that which is out of control and is a disgrace to one who professes to be a Christian. A raging sea is often watched from a distance by people who know when it has calmed down, there will be a lot of dirt, rocks, and junk that had been previously hidden. The "troubled sea" casts up "mire and dirt."

A "wandering star" attracts attention for a short time because of its temporary brightness and out-of-control movements. They appear unexpectedly and make a great show of light for a short time. Some people make a profession of faith in Christ and seem to take off in Christian endeavors like they were highly motivated by the new life they found. Generally, that is not only "a flash in the pan," but beside being unreal, it leads us to realize that person is an enemy of the cross of Christ.

Some make a profession and have a remarkable conversion for a short time, but deceive the Lord's people. New believers especially are vulnerable to those who have a dramatic conversion and call for bold changes in the teaching and practices of an assembly. Like a shooting star that quickly goes across the sky, a false teacher with a hidden agenda will go quickly out of sight when they don't get what they want and their own way.

Apostates who are like "spot," a false shepherd, a cloud without rain, trees with no fruit, uncontrolled waves, and shooting stars will all be "in the blackness of darkness forever." The choice to live in darkness during one's life means they will be in darkness eternally. There are consequences to choices that are inevitable and unchangeable. The greatest danger is that those who choose darkness want others to do the same.

*A rock can be a protection, and another rock a danger.
It depends on if the Rock is Christ, or one among us who is a stranger.
One shepherd may be very good, and another a mere hireling.
The Good Shepherd gave His life for His sheep, the other one simply coveting.*

*One cloud may be dark and filled with rain, another one look good to the eye.
The one waters the earth with its rain, the other one leaves it high and dry.
One tree gives life to men, the other one is fruitless and dead.
From the one comes to us eternal life, the other one hopelessness instead.*

*From the sea there can come nourishing food, or dirt, disease and decay.
It depends on what one feeds their own soul, or on the One the seas obey.
A shooting star is here now and then gone; another is the Bright Morning Star.
One is only here for a brief time, the other One seen forever from afar.*

*It is wise for us when meeting one first, to know what they think of our Lord.
We can usually tell a believer, and trust one whose testimony is based on God's word.
But when one speaks mostly about their own self, and who focuses attention on him.
We can suppose that because of the claims he makes, he is still lost in his sin.*

"Father, through these verses of scripture I can see people like these about whom we are warned are here today. I pray for wisdom and clarity of thought when called upon to make an opinion or give some counsel regarding the reality of what they profess to believe. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Jude 14

JUDGMENT PREDICTED

The Enoch referred to in the book of Jude, is definitely not the son of Cain because the Spirit of God specifically states he was the Enoch of the line of Seth who was the "seventh from Adam." Adam was the first - Enoch was the seventh generation. During those years evil became universal even though Adam was alive and likely would have known Enoch. These two men and other people of faith, watched the deterioration of human attitude toward God, increasing acts of evil, decline of morality, and knew coming judgment for sin was inevitable. Whether the message of Enoch was a quotation from the book of Enoch in the apocrypha or from some other source isn't as important as the fact contained in the message. The Holy Spirit has made a plain statement through Jude the fact that there is judgment ahead when the Lord comes.

By referencing Enoch as the source of this statement, Jude is establishing a number of important things. Enoch was a man of faith who "pleased God." He was in a friendly relationship with God that affected his conduct in an evil age. It may have been the birth of his son, Methuselah when he was sixty-five years old that made a change in his life. In some way it was revealed to him that judgment was coming when Methuselah died. There is definitely a payday for sin coming. The days he lived in were similar to the days of Jude - and our day! Great wickedness abounds in personal, family, religious and national life. There is rejection of God's plans and purposes in all areas of human life. Deception and deliberate misrepresentation of standards established by God are on every hand.

Enoch did not "taste" death. He was not personally acquainted with death. His removal from earth when God "took him" helps us understand a few things in relation to the future. First of all, there is a future - another world in the sense of existence, not in the sense of planet earth. There is also another body that is changed to live and experience life in that other world where "tens [of] thousands" of God's people exist with the Lord. There is coming a time of accounting, of facing responsibility for the things we have done. There is a continuing existence after that time of accounting. With these reasons and many more known and unknown, there is a great incentive for believers to live holy, righteous and godly lives.

The coming of the Lord has more than one aspect contained in the overall event. There is the coming of the Lord for living believers and the bodies of those who have already passed on who were saved during this church age. It is known as "the rapture" (catching up) of the church. At the end of the tribulation the Lord will "be revealed" to the whole world as the King coming to reign over the earth for one thousand years of peace. Beyond that time there will then come the final judgment of the Great White Throne takes place. When the Lord comes there will coming with Him a great multitude of those who are righteous because of their faith in Him as Savior, Lord and King. He will be "the Righteous Judge," "the Judge of all the earth" who will judge in perfect righteousness because He is perfectly righteous Himself. His judgment is now and always "just judgment" that leaves no recourse to spurious defense that has no basis.

Mercy has been extended for years, and there is opportunity to repent of sin and accept the "pardon freely offered" to all who will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved from coming judgment. The practice of rejecting God's grace has become so widespread that it is popular today to even reject the existence of God. It happened in the days of Enoch and Noah. The doctrines of apostasy were plaguing God's people in the days of Jude and the early church. Today it is common for those living in atheistic societies and countries to deny the existence of God, and now it has spread into Christendom. Even some of those who are professed "Christian ministers" are skeptics who teach Christianity is simply a template for human behavior. In a coming day angels and believers will accompany our Lord Jesus Christ when He comes to "execute judgment" on all who are ungodly.

*Look on, look up, take a good look around -
Where can those of faith be found -
Who know that soon the trumpet will sound -
When the Lord comes with all His saints?*

*Evidences of doubt and apostasy
Are in our world for everyone to see.
True judgment will come dealing righteously-
When the Lord comes with His saints.*

*Be steadfast, do not move from what is right,
Even though darkness threatens to obscure the light.
Soon faith will give way to purified sight -*

When the Lord comes with all His saints.

"Father, I anticipate the rapture of the church at any moment. As I think of the day when "the brightness of His coming" will expose all the unrighteousness in the world in the world for what it is, and our Lord will be revealed to all for who He is, I can surely say now, 'Even so, come Lord Jesus.' Amen."

Enoch's prophecy was clear and revealed by the Holy Spirit. The spurious book of Enoch was probably written after the book of Jude. The prophecy of the COMING OF THE LORD Enoch spoke of, will have a partial fulfillment after the Tribulation but these verses will have complete fulfillment after the final judgment of the GREAT WHITE THRONE. Four times "ungodly" is used. The people are ungodly; their deeds are ungodly; the performance of these deeds is ungodly; the blasphemies are ungodly.

Jude 15

UNGODLY... UNGODLY... UNGODLY... UNGODLY

Enoch's very blunt message that warned of coming judgment leaves nothing to our imagination. In this judgment scene described by the great power of repetition, there is a sense of fear of that event in which the Judge reviews the past of each one standing before Him. The word "all" leaves no ungodly person out, nor does it leave any actions or words spoken out. The warning from Enoch is that the righteous wrath of God against sin will be the basis upon which judgment is executed, and conviction is passed on the ungodly because of their words and deeds.

It should be a warning to every person that nothing is unnoticed by God. Sin will be judged - every sin. "Every idle word that men shall speak; they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." We know that God will judge according to righteous judgment [1Pe.2:23]. We know people will be judged according to their works [1Pe.1:17]. We know Christ, as the Judge, will judge openly [Ro.2:16] in a final way [Joel 3:12-14]. Disobedience to God and His word; rejecting the warning of consequences for sin; idolatry; leading other people astray and loving evil are all causes of the righteous, legal execution of the wrath of God upon the ungodly.

Ungodly people are those who have refused to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and consequently are "condemned already." To despise God's word and His people is to despise God Himself. There is no natural explanation as to why people become defensive, argumentative and sometimes hostile against the truth of God and those who proclaim it. It has to be that "the god of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not," so they will not hold a reasonable and rational conversation regarding the way of salvation. The fact that they are personally accountable for their words and deeds is abhorrent to them and so rather than face sin, they deny its consequences. They seek to convince themselves there is no accountability for their actions and no God they must meet.

Ungodly deeds refer to the fact that the wicked actions of one's life are neither unnoticed nor inconsequential. It is true that God does not pass judgment on sin immediately as far as our reckoning of time is concerned. But it is not true that sin is ignored or overlooked. Enoch and Noah could see the evidence of evil actions all around them. Even more serious was, "God saw the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Enoch saw all this and perhaps looked at his son Methuselah as the reason God held back just judgment. The fact that "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" held back judgment also for the 120 years while he was building the ark. During that time Noah also faithfully preached righteousness. We know that ungodly deeds have unavoidable consequences.

"Ungodly committed" indicates that what they wanted to do, people did, without restraint. The lack of moral restraint is evident in our day in which even those who are supposed to make and enforce righteous laws, make other laws to suit the actions in which people are already engaged. So, we have valueless laws. Biblical laws and laws that have been in place for generations in this country are now ignored and replaced by those that please the people. They are made by ungodly people to suit the ungodly actions of an ungodly population. The righteous standard of God's laws is ignored and considered "oppressive" and "not considerate of the will of the majority of the citizens." Instead of laws today establishing and maintaining the fundamental order of a normal society to keep chaos from happening, laws are passed to suit the depravity of the human heart. The attitude of hypocrisy has become a standard of action in which people say one thing and do another.

Enoch also warned of ungodly spoken words that were directed toward God's people. Likely he experienced this himself and also his son. Noah would no doubt have been a person of derision as he "built an ark to the saving of his house." He knew judgment was coming because he "was warned of God." His preaching would

have been in contrast to the "hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." When God's people are spoken against, God take that personal. he considers it spoken against Him.

This passage from Enoch is written in a poetic form perhaps to emphasize its importance. The time of which he wrote is not a time for repentance. When the Lord comes to execute judgment upon all, this will be a time for justice to be carried out. The condemning sin has already been done and guilt for sin has been established. Opportunity for mercy has already been given by God's grace, and by faith the guilty can avail themselves of that provision offered by our righteous God on a righteous basis. "Christ died for the ungodly." Those who refused, ignored and/or despised that offer are gathered for the final sentencing and consigned to the lake of fire forever.

Enoch warned the people when and where he lived. Jude wrote this warning down for the people when and where he lived. It is our responsibility in our time and place to do the same for the generation of people today.

*Ungodly people - a description of self-will.
"No God for me" is in the heart of many still.
The mind of those who despise God and His name -
Is evident when for their own sin they refuse to take the blame.*

*Ungodly deeds - not just one, but daily sins committed.
Pleasure seeking; active in business but fear of God omitted.
Looking for opportunities to experience sins forbidden.
At the judgment day - no way for them to be forgiven.*

*Ungodly committed - not a mistake but a personal choice.
Not just thoughts unsaid but hypocrisy with a voice.
The effects not only by themselves but others felt.
When judgment is executed, justice is one each one dealt.*

*Ungodly words - blasphemy, lies, deceit each one told.
Not just quiet deception but spoken in words so bold.
Verbal insults against God's people surely are sin -
Even more serious, God takes those personally as against Him.*

"Father, may Thy servants guard against anything that sounds like it is ungodly, looks ungodly or appeals to ungodly people. At the same time, help me to keep away from passing my judgment unnecessarily on others. All judgment needs the infinite wisdom of Thee, the Righteous Judge. Amen."

Jude 16

"THESE" PEOPLE

The "certain men [who] crept in unawares" are referred to as "those" whose *character* is described in verses 12 and 13 and whose *condemnation* is described in verses 14 and 15. In verse 16 their *conduct* is described. What a person is like is not always visible at the first introduction we might have to them. It is not uncommon for people to "put their best foot forward" to gain an advantage and disarm others with words that make one appear to be a very significant person, even though we have never heard of them. What one says at the first introduction does not always reveal who a person is.

Judgment executed by the Lord when He comes will reveal who seducers and false teachers really are. The present problem is these people follow their own lusts, and those seduced by their teaching and conduct follow them. This is what the Lord spoke about when He said, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." The Spirit of God through Jude gives us clear descriptions of these people who are blind leaders. We have in verse 16 a description of their walk and the deception of their words.

Those who are "murmurers" are in this particular passage, not just discontented with their lives, but are rather complaining against God. Grumblers, instead of being thankful, find fault with what God does and what He allows to take place that they do not like or agree with. Their grumbling extends to the Lord's people, and likely especially against those who lead the saints and have the discernment to understand, "There is something about these people that doesn't seem right." Instead of being thankful for God's grace and all the blessing received, they find fault and grumble against that which doesn't fit their personal agenda.

Those who indulge in the passions of the flesh are those who are "walking after their own lusts." In their permissive conduct they think and teach, "There is nothing wrong with doing that. Everybody does that these days." The pursuit of pleasure and success overrides the spiritual considerations of an event or action taken. Some things people do may seem innocent in themselves, but the associations surrounding it are wrong. Business deals, sports events, a holiday somewhere may not in itself seem to have any wrong. But the hard liquor, the bad language and off-color jokes, the licentious behavior at the resort has a way of promoting "their own lust."

"These people" have a way of gaining attention when they speak, that can sway one's opinion of what is right according to the scriptures, to questioning that which has been tried and proven over many years to be right. The "great swelling words" seem to be so eloquent and put together so well that listeners are impressed in spite of what they have been taught by those who have been their shepherds, and those who faith we follow. Those who are seduced by false teachers, reject truth and follow "these people" who repudiate the truth of God.

Oratory can be learned by those who have attended classes, and in some people it can come naturally. Often extreme statements, impetuosity, or dramatic illustrations and presentation can turn a listener into a follower. A speaker's pride and arrogance can come across in a speech, but we must go beyond the sound and the words to seek the substance of their speech. One may sound like an independent thinker and in the subtleness of great swelling words, reveal the fact that they did not get these thoughts from God, but from their own pride and that of those they follow.

Flattery is a form of deception that some people use to gain a following for their own advantage. Most people like to be flattered because it gives us an inflated opinion of ourselves that normally we would not have. If someone shrewdly passes a flattering comment to us that we know in ourselves is not really true, there should be all kinds of red flags raised that warns us of danger. A child of God usually has a sensible opinion of themselves because we were made conscious of our sinfulness before God saved us. We knew we deserved hell as the punishment for our sins. We knew then and still know, that in our flesh "dwelleth no good thing." We know it is only because of the mercy of God we have been saved by His grace. When flattery comes and we are tempted to accept it as true, our spiritual sense detects the deception and walks away from it - and the flatterer.

The dangers from false teachers who attempt to lead God's people away from the faith, is clarified by the words of Jude so we are not left in doubt. Sincerity, humility, graciousness, integrity, honor and faithfulness are not found in deceivers. These are characteristics of a child of God that contrasts with the apostates.

*The grumbling words that reveal discontent
Instead of being thankful they have another intent.
They want to undermine God's truth
Their character reveals their moral worth.*

*Their passions are out of control
Fleshly lusts easily claim their soul.
If not careful, others will be led astray
Followers soon will lose their way.*

*Arrogant speech soon will get attention.
Those who repudiate truth go the wrong direction
Such words can lead people to extremism
Mature people listen with serious pessimism.*

*Those who flatter others often have a plan
To get something from another man
And so, the words they use just to please
So some advantage over others they can seize.*

"Father, these descriptions of "these" people remind me that what took place in the past at the beginning of the church age, is on-going today. Give all those who lead the Lord's people the needed discernment to protect the saints. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Jude 17

THE ADMONITION

Challenges to believers are important in days of apostasy. We need to know and also be reminded again and again what our role is as those who represent the kingdom of God and are given the responsibility to proclaim the Gospel in days of deliberate departure from the truth of God. Warnings are also important and are given with reasons behind them of which we may not always be aware. Not all dangers that can bring disaster or even threats of trouble are easily seen or discerned. The dangers those who would come among the people of God would bring with them, had been spoken of and written about by the apostles right from the beginning of the church age. Paul warned of "grievous wolves" who would come among "the flock" and not spare the believers in an assembly. He said that some were already in the fellowship of an assembly who would show themselves as self-opinionated people who wanted the people of God to follow them. They would distort the truth of God and lead people astray.

Peter wrote of those who would be simply creatures of natural instinct. They would have shameful ways of immoral living; would be greedy wanting financial support from the Lord's people and would not hesitate to lie in order to get what they want. John called such people antichrists who pretend to be Christians. Our Lord Jesus Christ referred to those who would come "in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves." "The apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" were special chosen messengers who had been given authority by our Lord to lay the foundation of the church. What they taught was the truth of God given to them by the Holy Spirit of God to pass on to us. In "contending for the faith," we need to heed what they say.

We have the words of biblical truth to read, learn from, act on ourselves and pass on to other. We should be aware of the importance of this fact that it is no light-weight matter to be entrusted with the truth of God. Jude understood this and wrote what he did as a "servant of Jesus Christ." He appealed to the readers to remember, and submit to, those who had received apostolic authority from the Supreme Authority of all - "our Lord Jesus Christ." He is the Master; He is the Savior; He is the Anointed One. We are to remember what the apostles said because of who He is.

There are many things in the word of God we are called upon to remember. Usually we remember those things that have made us happy or mad. There are other things, events and people we remember because of close proximity and shared living. However, some things fade into insignificance if we are not careful to remember how important they are. The reading of the scriptures and prayer, review of sound teaching we have received and communication with those we know who have our spiritual interests at heart can preserve our lives for the Lord. If we pay heed to false teachers, before long we scarcely become alarmed at some of the things they say on a radio or television program. Those who use the internet to find information on biblical subjects, will find themselves inundated with all kinds of thoughts from articulate writers and speakers that blur the truth of the scripture.

It is incumbent on a child of God to call to mind that which we get from the words of our Lord and His apostles. Those are the original doctrines expressed to us in the Bible in the way the Holy Spirit delivered them. The Lord's people through the ages are reminded that prophecy will be fulfilled when they see a rainbow. They are reminded that covenants are to be honored and kept. On the Lord's Day at the Lord's Supper we remember our Lord Jesus Christ and the sacrifice He made for us on the cross.

Peter's final word in his second epistle are that the beloved saints are to "be mindful of the words" of the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New Testament. They were to not be ignorant of the promises of the Lord and were to be diligent personally so they wouldn't be blamed but would live in peace in spite of falsehood and turmoil around them. They were also to beware lest they be led away by those false teachers and lose their own testimony.

The power over apostasy begins with reminding believers of what they have been taught [v.17-19]. Then there was their own personal responsibility to themselves [v.20-21]. When those are in place, we are to rescue those who are already backslidden by listening to false teachers [v.22-23] and can reassure them, and themselves, by being reminded of our only wise God our Savior [v.24-25].

*It is not uncommon, rather likely to be expected
That unless reminded, important things will be neglected.
Because in the busyness of life things clamor for our attention -
And unless made consciously aware, escape our mind's retention.*

*We were told that in the last days things would get worse -
But our earth-bound will wants more before the present bubble bursts.
And if we are not careful, to earth's attractions we give heed -
Soon it will be on earthy husks of swine food our souls will feed.*

*Remember what our Lord said when giving warnings of future days.
Remember the words of the apostles warning of falsehood and its ways.
Remember the ones who taught us personally as shepherds caring for sheep
Remember the words of scripture and its truths that we must keep.*

*Remember the warnings of those who told us of wolves wanting in.
Remember the apostles' warnings of those promoting spiritual sin
In cloaks of religious words and eloquent speeches that sound so fine.
They teach their own opinions in this battle for our minds.*

*To remember what is right is one of the best ways to keep from wrong.
To remember the positive teaching we received, is how we're spiritually strong.
Remember who we are and why God saved us in the first place.
His mercy has been shown, and our faith is strengthened remembering grace.*

"Heavenly Father, this earth-bound life has a way of claiming my attention, and also influencing behavior. I do want to live on the high ground of grace and faith. Please help me keep from making decisions and taking action on anything by mere common sense or human reason. My I always be committed to the spiritual considerations of any choice I make. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Jude 18-19

IN THE LAST TIME

The things we have been taught by trustworthy teachers, shepherds and spiritual fathers who opened the scriptures to us and repeated the warnings the apostles gave, need to be reviewed, remembered and passed on. In these "last times," called the "last days" in other places, reference is made to the completion of that which God has been doing down through the ages of human history. Right from the promise of "the seed of the woman" to the coming of the Lord in glory, the promises of God are being fulfilled. From the Babe in Bethlehem lying in a manger, to the King sitting on the throne of David, the last days have been unfolding. These are the "last times." We are living in the last of the "last days."

There were those who mocked our Lord when he was here. The apostles who were in the foundation of the church were mocked. Scoffers said, "Where is the promise of His coming...?" There are those who mock the Lord's people today. That is to be expected because "all that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Scoffers are people who seek to gratify themselves and their own ungodly desires. There are three obvious characteristics that enable us to discern them. Actually, these characteristics define them. Last days mockers are divisive. They seek to cause separations between the Lord's people by a superior attitude. They deliberately create cliques and factions among the saints in local assemblies. That attitude and practice is not uncommon in self-opinionated heretics who are usually apostates.

Unfortunately, there are true believers who are sympathetic toward anyone who comes along with a persuasive and superior way of undermining simple truth - "the things that are most surely believed among us." We learned the truth from trusted people we knew. But some of these have a condescending tone of voice that seems like they are patronizing those who lead us. They might say, "Well, you know they are old and not too well educated. That is not their fault, but they just don't know what is happening in the world today. They don't want to keep up with changing times." Others have assigned themselves an elite position claiming to be more spiritually discerning than other people.

The second statement about these agitators is they are worldly-minded people who follow natural instincts as simple creatures of earth. Carnality, following "fleshly lusts which war against the soul" is their nature. The word "sensual" indicates they are still in their natural state. They have never been born again by the Spirit of God and the Word of God. Those ancient Gnostics and the existentialists of this modern day, are committed to an "up with man" philosophy. That mindset has nothing to do with the will and word of God, nor does it want to. Those who live and die wanting to gratify their own ambitions and passions, are hopelessly lost. Apostates by their commitment to themselves have no possibility of being children of God.

Such people "have not the Spirit." They have not been born again. They have no capacity to understand the things of God. They may have made claims to being a Christian, but when there is no evidence of the Holy Spirit working in their lives, they are "dead in trespasses and in sins" no matter what they say. A believer in our Lord Jesus Christ produces evidence of the fruit of the Spirit. Their profession of Christianity can be seen by their spiritual desires and a willingness to know more of Christ. There is obedience to the word of God. There is an attitude of humility and grace about them. They speak the truth in love with grace. They love the Lord and His people. They hear the Shepherd's voice and they follow Him.

The three statements describing apostates remind us how serious division is, how unlike our Lord sensual living is, and how the lack of spiritual life in one who professes to be a Christian exposes their falsehood. There is opportunity for a person to be saved because "God our Savior: ... will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth." However, rejected light and the rejection of the Savior by those who have known the truth of God, dooms their soul to hell and the lake of fire. One wrote ...

"Never soul in hell shall burn,
Who has not had a chance to turn;
Whether it be a pagan wild,
Or born a Christian's favored child -
God will not suffer them to go,
Unwarned to everlasting woe.
For nothing but rejected light,
Will doom a soul to endless night."

*Please be warned: those who cause divisions
Are not to be trusted. When making your decisions
God's word alone is truth unfailing.
Reject divisive people by truth prevailing.*

*A sensual man is merely a created being.
He is controlled by fallen nature, only feeling.
By contrast, those who have been born again,
Are new creations in Christ, not under sin.*

*One without the Spirit is devoid of spiritual life.
He is characterized by passion, pleasures and strife.
The Holy Spirit within a person God saves -
Has power to live godly by the new nature God gave.*

"Holy Father, in this sinful age there are many who ignore the Bible and consider its truth inconvenient to them, so they reject the truth. Give to us who love Thee, Thy word and Thy ways the needed discernment to avoid those who reject that which is of Thee. May we all commit ourselves without reservation to the truth that we may faithfully 'contend for the faith.' In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Jude 20-21

OUR DUTY

There is a certain impact that effects a response when one is called "beloved." Implied is the fact that there is high value placed on one person by another, especially when it is openly expressed for all to hear. When there is contention and potential division because of falsehood and/or false teaching, those who are beloved know there is a problem and they know the position the writer is taking regarding that problem. There is no ambiguity to what position he has taken. Jude clearly let those "beloved" saints know of his concern for them and his position in the controversy surrounding the believers. He wanted them to take steps to protect themselves and others from the false doctrine that was being presented. Christians must guard against any teaching that would turn us aside from the truth of God. That which was preached and taught in the written word of God is to be held and practiced for what it is - the truth of God.

Half-hearted Christian living does not build us up in our personal faith so we can "earnestly contend for the faith." Every individual believer needs to be conscious of our position and condition in relation to our fellowship with God in order to effectively stand against opposition that comes from the powers of darkness. A Christ-centered life and firmness of faith are necessary to preserve ourselves from subtle deception of modern-day Christendom. The unity of believers and commitment to the word of God does not come without cost. There

will be the loss of popularity, of large numbers in assembly meetings, of friendships, of acceptance by the majority. The Lord's people are to see that they are kept in the love of God and must keep the faith.

In these days of departure and gathering spiritual darkness openly displayed, I need to ask myself - How much do I really value God's word? Am I truly committed to the fellowship of the assembly? Am I earnestly seeking to help maintain unity among the believers? How about my obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ? Am I really giving Him the place of Lord in all aspects of my life? These extremely valuable things in my life I must seek to defend with the truth of God. It is my responsibility as His servant to faithfully represent our Lord Jesus in conduct and with my words. Let us never be distracted from that which is true, no matter how persuasive those who preach false doctrine may be.

There are definite actions we can take to preserve ourselves from that which is deceptive and wrong. First, I have to take personal responsibility for the development of myself by reading and applying the word of God. This is how faith is built up. Communicating with my heavenly Father happens when real connections are made with Him by the ungrieved and unquenched Holy Spirit. When there are real and significant connections made in this way, we are conscious of the love of God and the "keeping" power that gives us the spiritual enjoyment of personal fellowship with Him.

Eagerly waiting to see our Lord Jesus Christ to come is anticipated when we never allow anything in our lives to hinder our testimony. To the degree we appreciate that promise, we witness to other people with compassion and urgency. We truly want them to be saved, even when we have to speak in a way that makes them fear the future because they are not prepared to meet God. We are living in the last times and need to be motivated to reach others with God's truth.

The same actions are an exhortation to us to stay in fellowship with the Lord. "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith" is not some casual and gradual process by which we become better and better Christians. This happens by consistent study and application of the word of God which is the foundation of the truth. It is expected of us when we know the truth, that we obey it and act on what the Bible says. It is possible for us to be loyal to the truth and lack love that makes truth acceptable to those who listen to us. Grace is not only the way God saves people, but our grace makes our faith shown to be real and vital in our lives.

"Praying in the Holy Spirit" is communicating effectively with God. God's revealed will in subjective ways empowers us by the Spirit, to be guided to do that which is right and supported by the truth of scripture. We must build and we must pray.

We are also to "keep ourselves in the love of God" by living holy, godly lives. That practice enables us to live close to God and His people, and will keep us from listening to those false teachers who try to pull us away from Him by means of the "weights" of this world, and "the sin which so easily besets us - the sin of unbelief. There is a sense in which true believers may doubt that which they have been taught. One person has called them, "unbelieving believers." That is simply to say the seeds of doubt will rob us of our joy and the effectiveness of faith. Never let anything stop us from earnestly contending for the faith.

"Looking for the mercy of the Lord" is a reference to His soon return. This anticipation purifies a believer lest "We be ashamed before Him at His coming." That truth and promise are both an incentive and a comfort to us in the trials and the stress of life we may be going through presently. By living close to God and His people, fellowship is maintained and we receive strength for the needs our calling in Christ bring.

Jude 20-21. *"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God,*

KEEP YOURSELVES.

*There are the "these" who in the Bible we were warned about –
Usually they have a lot to say and have an issue to tout.
Their words and presence leave an influence that's bad –
And the results they leave behind them make everyone sad.*

*But we who are called "beloved" are not fooled by them –
Greater and safer are all those who are found in Him
Who has shown us mercy and a whole lot of grace –
And strengthens and empowers us to build up our faith.*

When we pray in the Spirit, we get a totally different view

*Of those who have turned aside from the truth they once knew.
They are not real believers – they are not children of God –
They never knew nor received Jesus as their Savior and Lord.*

*We who by faith, have in Him put our complete trust –
Are kept by His power and can never be lost.
Our God keeps His own, and in a coming future day
Will present us to Himself with His blessings for aye.*

“Gracious, heavenly Father: these people who are around and seem to be undermining the work at times, I know they are not apostates and probably want the best and believe they are doing the best for the Lord’s people. I do not want to pass a unfair judgment on them or condemn them for their zeal and opinions. I am just concerned that the Lord’s people do not lose their heart and joy for Thy work and Thyself because of the unhappy view of the things of the Lord that comes across sometimes. Help me and all the saints to “keep” ourselves with a positive joy in the Lord and a real appreciation for the things of God Thou hast placed in our hands. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

Jude 22-23

SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

When carrying out our duty as believers, there is the responsibility we have to ourselves. It is important for us to continually and consciously be building up ourselves in faith, and maintain a meaningful communication with our heavenly Father through "supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks" to God. We also have to guard every aspect of our lives: body, soul and spirit lest the enemies of the world, the flesh and the devil deceive us into following false teachers. When our affections are set on "things above," the love of Christ does constrain us to not allow anything to hinder our fellowship with God. There is also the conscious looking for the Lord's coming, to motivate us to holiness of life and the rejection of anything that would take us away from happy fellowship with the Lord and His people.

Not all of God's children are strong in faith and there are also some who are seeking the Lord who have very little understanding of the reality of spiritual things. There is no template to follow when dealing with lost souls or doubting Christians. It is always the word of God that gives light and understanding. Yet we cannot ignore the need of those who never read the Bible and who do not even know they have a need. Spiritual development is needed to treat each person and situation individually. Some need to be shown mercy. They need us to "have compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." We need to shown kindness to those who are unbelievers and in doubt.

Doubting God and His word is not uncommon when a person is first saved. Often a period of time passes before a person realizes they still have a nature that is attracted to those things that are in the world. If they have not yet formed consistent spiritual habits, they are easily susceptible to those who seek to claim their allegiance. Even those who have fallen under the influence of apostasy need the compassion and kindness of those who know the truth and have personal knowledge of "the truth [that] shall make you free indeed." It is not freedom to be under the bondage of sin that presents itself as "free to do what you want." An extended hand of mercy may be what is needed by some people. That is why we need spiritual discernment to witness to them as we guide them to a firm conviction of the truth of God. All unbelievers are lost and are in need of God's salvation. We who are children of God must never lose sight of this fact.

We are to love the sinner and hate the sin. That calls for discernment and a willingness to openly witness to others. They likely do not even know they are lost because their lives seem quite intact and they consider they are successful and in no need of the truth of God. By keeping ourselves in the love of God, we are in a condition and position to bring them to our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a problem that arises when witnessing to those who hold false doctrine. We have a tendency to look for common ground where we can adapt the truth of God to what they believe. We dare not compromise the truth to make it more acceptable to us believers. To compromise puts us in jeopardy ourselves. Our feet must be firmly planted on the rock of truth as it is revealed in the Bible. It is of no value to try to find common ground with sin. That is a danger both to us and to others. Our firm convictions regarding "the faith" and "the truth" is one of our greatest personal assets when dealing with those who are lost. They need to be warned of the danger ahead of them. This can have a positive influence as long as our loathing of sin or anything that bears the traces of sin, is evident to those who look on and listen to us.

"Hating even the garments spotted by the flesh," does not leave any room for a witness to the truth of crossing over to the grounds of compromise. The clothing corrupted by the flesh, displays the flesh, not the dignity and grace of holiness as when the flesh is hidden. There is a sense in which even the clothing, or lack of it, in today's world, is a serious obstacle to the truth. Modern fashions and Christian modesty are very opposite. The fad of tattooing the flesh with symbols, even if they are a cross or other "Christian" symbols and words, is not a representation of the Gospel message. It is an attraction to the flesh.

It is impossible for the truth of God and the flesh of man to find common ground. That is why "pulling them out of the fire" is not a mere figure of speech. To reach out and snatch another from the fire, is like grabbing a child who is fascinated by the flame, and pulling them away from the danger that would hurt them or devour them. We need spiritual discernment to be able to reach others with the truth of God, and still be kind, full of grace and love - and yet be firm and uncompromising. Eternal life and death are at stake.

*For some strange reason, fire has a dangerous attraction.
To rescue one in danger, does not allow us any distraction -
But rather, by faithful entreaty and earnest compassion,
The one in danger needs a warm-hearted guide to press into action.*

*Most people do not understand the dangers ahead.
They are not aware of the fire, of it they have no dread,
Or of living and dying in sin - there is for them a trap spread
That makes the worldly adage true to them - "When you're dead, you're dead."*

*Those who in saving faith now live on redemption ground,
Have a responsibility to those who us surround,
Who are lost and don't know it - they need the Gospel sound,
In order to be saved lest in the fire they will be found.*

*We need to guard ourselves against any latent danger.
We need to show mercy and seek to reach those who in sin linger.
We need to seek a connection with those we love - and the stranger.
Especially as we know death comes, and the coming of the Lord draws nearer.*

"Gracious Father: with a sense of trepidation I approach this day, knowing there are those who for some reason cannot understand the importance of that which I believe Thou hast led us to do. Please help Thy failing servant to not do anything that will unnecessarily cause upset or hinder Thy work this day. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Jude 24

HE IS ABLE

The concluding lines of this epistle are in the form of a doxology, a hymn of praise and testimony. This letter begins with an invocation of assurance that is so important when we are in the midst of departure and falsehood in relation to doctrine and conduct of life. The Highest Authority is invoked before warnings were given. Now in the form of a closing prayer comes this conscious awareness of Him who is without limitations of any kind. All blessings come from Him. This commendation of the Lord's people to Him from one who knew Him well, would strengthen their resolve to be faithful to the truth in spite of what other people say or do.

Wherever we go there will be false teachers who are "walking after their own lusts." Their dangerous teaching can claim the attention of sincere saints, and even become attractive to one who has become careless regarding the infallibility of the scriptures. But God is still for us, and we do not have to fear the consequences of false teaching if we are rooted and grounded in faith in Christ and love for Christ. There is no question as to the ability of God to keep His own.

Our Lord is "able to save to the uttermost" [Heb.7:25] as He make continual intercession for us. He is able to establish us in the truth of the Gospel [Rom.16:25] and that motivates us to keep reaching out to others in confidence with the message of salvation to which we have been commissioned. When temptations arise, He is able to provide any and all help we need to overcome those temptations [Heb.2:25]. Opposition to consistent, faithful Christian faith and conduct is going to happen. Our Lord Jesus Christ is able to "subdue all things unto Himself" [Phil.3:21] when He deals with those who seem to be overpowering.

Our God is able to "keep [us] in perfect peace [Isa.26:3] no matter what attacks are made against all that is holy and righteous. If we are tempted to be dismayed, the antidote is available - "whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusted in Thee." Our Lord is able to "keep [guard] that which I have committed," or that which I have entrusted to Him. Confidence in God includes our trust in Him to guard believers by the indwelling Holy Spirit. He does what we cannot do. We also trust Him with our own souls when in danger, times of pain or in death. He is able to do "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." There is no limit to divine authority and grace [Eph.3:20].

As Jude draws his letter to a close, he gives assurance to those under the pressure of dangerous apostasy, that God is with us and for us, and is "able to keep us from falling [stumbling]." A stumble comes before a fall, as it is here in this passage. His hand, His power, His love for us is available to keep us from yielding to temptation. He does not want those who have been standing steadfast for the truth to fall into sin. None of God's children want to bring dishonor on our Lord, but we are plagued with deception around us as well as the deceptiveness of our own hearts. In our weakness we are so grateful for the One "who is able to keep us from falling."

This beautiful commendation to God from whom all blessings come, focuses our attention on Christ rather than the apostasy that was around, and all the other sins that was attempting to trio up the Lord's people. Not only is He able to keep us from stumbling and falling, but He is able to present us "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." To be sinless and faultless is obviously not referring to our present condition. Christians are still "in the world," though they are "not of the world."

As we look forward in our experience with God, we understand and rejoice in the confidence that there will be a time when we are truly sinless and faultless. The final condition of believers in Christ will be that "we will be like Him for we shall see Him as He is."

"To see Thee face to face,
Thy perfect likeness wear,
And all Thy ways of wondrous grace
Through endless years declare."

The words of this hymn will be really true when these vile bodies will be made new like unto His body of glory. The attractions of sin will not be a problem to us when we see Jesus. I expect coming into the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ will be such a wonder that to us in our present limitations, it is indescribable. Truly it is "above all that we ask or think."

Future joy must be in some ways, different than present joy. We have the ability to choose joy now in spite of the circumstances in which we may be found. Our joy comes in choosing to obey His commands. Joy comes when our prayers are answered because we are praying in His will. There is joy when the efforts to win souls are fruitful and the results of the Gospel are seen. There is present joy when we are in fellowship with the Lord and His people. What "exceeding joy," surpassing joy, is like must mean there is an area of emotion and thankfulness that is impossible for us to experience here. Perhaps it will be a special joy to our Lord and Savior "when all the saints are gathered home."

*There are real limitations to our human ability
Even though we may apply ourselves to full capacity
And labor in various way and means enthusiastically -
This is the beginning - we are not home yet.*

*Temptations abound motivated by duplicity
Dark deeds are done thinking it is secretly
Evil men and seducers attack with alacrity;
Pressure continue - we are not home yet.*

*Let us not relax thinking we can deal with sin easily
Nor drop our guard against wrong by acting foolishly
Because grace is sufficient, do not make choices carelessly -
Stumbling is possible - we are not home yet.*

*Keep in fellowship with God by learning deliberately
Truths from His word, then praying and acting accordingly
So that in devotion and dedication we grow spiritually -*

This is training time - we are not home yet.

"Father, I wonder sometimes how the first time I see my Lord in glory, how it will affect me. A growing faith is producing in me a growing joy and desire to please Him. If there are ways I can grow in faith to a greater devotion to my Lord, I want to apply myself to it now. It will be wonderful to step into His presence and experience a whole new kind of joy - and be able to claim it. Amen."

Jude 25

ALONE IN MAJESTY

In these last days of grace in which we live, the dangers of which Jude warned of in his epistle have not gone away. Apostasy and all its deception, has increased to the extent that the evil behavior and blasphemous teaching that was of such concern to Jude, has become acceptable even in so-called Christian churches. Those to whom he wrote were vulnerable to doctrinal heresy and an immoral lifestyle. So are we. There were evidences of departure among the people of God then. There are evidences of departure among the people of God today. If we only looked at the darkness around us and the potential dangers within, we would despair. But God is unchanging and "God is still on His throne, and He will remember His own."

We are anxious to be "faultless" in His presence and to experience ourselves and bring to our Lord, "exceeding joy." But faith still empowers and encourages us to live, holy, righteous lives here. Faith enables us to experience joy now in spite of all the falsehood and immorality around us. Our commission has not changed and divine power has not lost on iota of its strength. eternal life has infinite worth and does not deteriorate in any way. Believers today must continue "possessing our possessions." It is our prerogative to live in the good of what we are in Christ and what we have in Him no matter what goes on around us. It is our privilege to carry out the commission and commands of our Lord so that the light of truth does not lose its brightness in any way. By earnestly contending for the faith, our responsibility to our Lord is able to be done. As we reject that which is false and promote that which is truth, our faith is stabilized and we can be a blessing to others. The defense of the truth sanctifies and protects us. And - He is able to keep us from falling and present us unto God - accepted in the Beloved.

The concluding lines of this doxology remind us of who it is we have the awesome privilege of representing. God our Savior is infinite in His wisdom. The Person to whom we give praise is The Truth we are called upon to present to our generation and the one following us. In His wisdom He is able to teach us the truth about Himself, what His kingdom is like and how people can enter that kingdom. He is our Savior in whom we trust. By His blood as the purchase price for our redemption, He had bought us. Our Savior is "the Wisdom of God" and in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. We are not here in this world as helpless victims of the end times. We are here as heralds of a new day about to dawn.

Our Savior is unsurpassed in glory - His own personal glory and the glory that surrounds Him. There is the brightness of light that comes from Him for He is the Source of light of every kind - moral, physical and spiritual. There is an excellence in Him that is put on display for all to wonder at. The splendor of His majesty prompts praise, honor and worship at the mention of His name. The perfections of His divine nature set Him apart from all other glory and majesty that is only a dim reflection of Him who is alone in majesty. There is none who can compare with the only wise God our Savior. All power and authority, comes from Him who has the preeminence of all things. He is transcendent in His position and glory. There is absolute perfection in His Person. All honor is His and He is glorious in His nature.

Dominion belongs to Him who is before all things and before whom all nations are "as a drop in a bucket." His rule is supreme. He sets up and puts down who He chooses. Every government is subservient to His divine authority and will. Even the perversion of human government is allowed, and at times caused to fail as in times past to reveal the inability of mankind to survive for very long without being submissive to divine order. The power, the energy and capacity to function in any way, finds its source in God our Savior. With such a Person with whom we are identified, why would we be attracted to the vain words of vain men. Their pontifications are as useless as the howling of a dog at the moon to turn off its light.

All of these attributes of the only wise God our Savior who stands alone in His majesty, are eternal in their nature. They are unchanging now in spite of all the heresies being propagated and the apostasy that is taking place. He can keep us from stumbling and falling now while we are in this present state of being. He is with us unto the "end of the ages." Of even greater importance to us in a personal way and that motivates us to look beyond the pressures of falsehood, is the fact that He is unchanging forever. This One who fills our hearts and lives today is infinite in His being, eternal in His nature and is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Without ceasing His glory and majesty, His dominion and power still remain supreme.

So even though temptations may arise from time to time, our Savior is unchanging and the promises of God remain. When doctrinal error and willful departure from the truth increases, the One in whom we have placed our trust is able to meet every contingency. If we despair because our labor seems in vain, the promises of the "only wise God our Savior" remain fully intact. May we continue to earnestly contend for the faith, knowing that He will bring us into His own presence with exceeding joy that is everlasting in its duration. He is God our Savior. He is infinite in wisdom. He is unsurpassed in glory. He stands alone in majesty. He is unchallenged in dominion. He is absolute in power. He is eternal in every attribute today and through the eternal ages.

*The story is unfolding with each passing day
The faith we must be holding, in spite of what others say
God our Savior is unchanging, He still shows amazing grace
In the future glory displaying, we the path of His life will trace.*

*We will see that grace abounding, was provided when grace was needed
When joyful praises in heaven are sounding, we'll recall by faith we heeded
The command to love and cherish, each soul for whom Christ died
He will never let one perish, who in the True Vine did abide.*

*Our praises will all be given, to Him in whom now we live
Our occupation up in heaven, will be a reflection on what He did give
To redeem us and to keep us, so in that place we are able to stand
There with all who in Him trust, we will give all glory in Emmanuel's land.*

"Father, I praise Thee with great appreciation for giving us the warnings and challenges of the book of Jude. It seems so contemporary because what he wrote about is so real today. Give all of Thy people the purpose of faith the earnestly contend for the faith without reservation or trepidation. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

