



The Epistle of Jude

Author and Title

As its title implies, the book was written by Jude, the brother of James and Jesus, although he prefers to call himself Jesus' servant. He is referred to in Scripture as the Lord's brother: <<*Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas?*>> (Matthew 13:55), and: <<*Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him*>> (Mark 6:3), where Greek Judas is the same as Jude in Jude v.1.

There is little debate regarding the authenticity of the letter because of the strength of internal evidence, e.g. v.1. Some have claimed that an anonymous author wrote this using Jude's name, but it is unlikely that any imposter would choose the name of such an insignificant figure for his writing. Also, such a pseudonymous work would have been rejected by the early church, and Jude has been accepted as canonical from earliest times.

Some consider Jude to be an apostle and others accept that apostolic authority would have come from his close association with his brother James.

Date

Since Jude addresses a situation similar to that addressed by 2 Peter and exhibits a literary relationship, probably as a source, to Second Peter, the two letters are commonly dated in fairly close proximity. Therefore, while external evidence is sparse, Jude is best dated in the mid-60s AD. However, there are some who would go for a decade later.

Theme

The church must contend for the one true faith, once for all delivered to the saints (v.3), and people of faith must persevere to the end, that is, either the end of their earthly life or until the return of Christ, by resisting the false teachers and following the Gospel truth.

Purpose of Jude

Jude warns against following those who have surreptitiously gained entry into the church and are perverting the one true faith with false teaching. Indeed, the letter warns against allowing the false teachers to continue having any influence in the church. Jude calls on the church to defend the truth aggressively against this type of infiltration. While the false teachers of Jude were profoundly libertine, i.e. morally unrestrained, it would be anachronistic to argue that they were Gnostic, an early heretical sect, or group of sects, influential from the 2nd Century AD onward.

Jude accomplishes his purpose by interpreting the OT analogically, using the same principles of interpretation found especially in 2 Peter, but also elsewhere in the NT. He also draws on Jewish apocalyptic traditions, as he refers to 1 Enoch and the Testament of Moses, in building his case. Thus, as literature, Jude has a distinctively Jewish flavour.

Given the apparent Jewish perspective of the letter itself, the audience of Jude is frequently identified as Jewish, or as a mixture of Jewish and Gentile readers, where the Gentiles are familiar with Jewish traditions. However, any identification of the audience is largely conjecture.

Salvation History

Since Christ has accomplished salvation, believers are to hold fast to him and reject false ways. They are called to remember that there is only one route into eternal salvation.

Writing Style

The format is that of the NT epistle, with its loose divisions of salutation, body, and closing. But the central unit of the letter (vv.5-16), falls decisively into the genre of a judgment oracle. It has an object of attack, a many-sided vehicle in which the attack is embodied, a discernibly harsh tone, and an implied standard by which the attack is being conducted, e.g. <<***the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints***>> (v.3).

The description of the apostates (vv.8-16), uses the portrait technique in which, as one learns more and more about the apostates, one finally has a picture of their character and actions. The concentrated use of images and allusions lends a poetic quality to the letter; for example, his references to Sodom and Gomorrah, and to the archangel Michael.

The writer displays horror over the spectacle of apostasy and the false teachers who induce it. The only NT passage that surpasses Jude in these traits is Jesus' denunciation of the religious leaders in Matthew Chapter 23. But the letter begins with the usual soothing notes of NT epistles, and in the last two verses it modulates into one of the most moving benedictions in the NT.

Key Themes

	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Verses</u>
1.	Christians need to defend the doctrines of the faith.	3.
2.	False teachers may be identified by their immoral character.	4, 8, 10, 12-13, 16, 18-19.
3.	God will judge false teachers.	4, 5-7, 11, 14-15.
4.	Saints must persevere to be saved.	17-23.
5.	As God grants mercy to those who are called, they must show mercy to others.	2, 21-23.
6.	God grants grace that ensures that his own will persevere.	1-2, 24-25.

Outline

I Initial Greeting (1-2)

II The Sin and Doom of Godless Men (3-16)

II.a Jude's Appeal: Contend for the Faith (3-4)

II.a.i The urgency of the defence (3)

II.a.ii Description of the false teachers and their teaching (4)

II.b Immoral Character and Consequent Judgment of the False Teachers (5-16)

II.b.i Judgment reserved for the false teachers (5-7)

II.b.i.1 The analogy of Egypt (5)

II.b.i.2 The analogy of the rebellious angels (6)

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II.b.ii Nature of the false teachers (8-13)

II.b.ii.1 The false teachers are blasphemers (8-10)

II.b.ii.2 The false teachers are motivated by greed (11)

II.b.ii.3 The false teachers exemplify depravity with impunity (12-13)

II.b.iii Judgment on the false teachers revisited (14-16)

II.b.iii.1 Description of the judgment (14-15)

II.b.iii.2 Further reasons for judgment (16)

III A Call to Persevere (17-23)

III.a On the apostolic warnings (17-19)

III.b On the antidote to the false teachers (20-21)

III.c On showing mercy (22-23)

IV Doxology (24-25)

Summary of Jude

The epistle of Jude is often referred to as a general letter as it is not designated to a particular individual or church, but to a group of believers who have perhaps recently come to faith in Christ, most likely through Judaism but readership probably includes Gentiles as well.

The main thrust of the letter is a stark warning against the dangers of false teachers, who were coming into churches, often from within the leadership of an established church, and were posing extreme dangers to the eternal destinies of many believers by perverting the truth of the Gospel with their own heresies. It seems they did so for their own status or material gain, but they may have been under the influence of dark powers.

Jude uses historic instances to show that God will not let the guilty go free, whether they are the fallen angels, lived in Sodom and Gomorrah, or just individuals who wanted a better status, such as Cain, Balaam and Korah. He also introduces an ancient prophecy from Enoch to confirm the type of coming that will herald in the Day of Judgement.

The main weapon a believer has to combat these false teachers is to stay close to the teaching of Jesus given to them by their apostles, to persevere in the faith, to remain in true brotherly love, and to pray fervently to God, earnestly seeking his will through the Holy Spirit.

He concludes the epistle on a high with one of the great doxologies in the Bible, giving God the type of praise he truly deserves and requires from us.

I Jude 1-2 - Initial Greeting

Jude's opening address is typical of a NT epistle but does not explicitly identify his intended readership. However, many scholars believe they were primarily Jewish, or Gentiles with an association to Judaism in the past, and thereby having a knowledge of OT Scripture, Jewish myths and their traditions.

¹ Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James,

To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ:

² Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

Jude was a common name for Judas or Judah, and it is likely he was named after his forefather the Patriarch Judah, son of Jacob. However, it is ironic that he should also bear the name of the great betrayer, Judas Iscariot! There are actually four other men called Judas in the NT. Iscariot has already been mentioned and there was another apostle Judas son of James, known also as Thaddæus (Matthew 10:3), see comments made on Luke 6:16. This Judas is referred to again in the early church: <<*When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphæus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James*>> (Acts 1:13). Another, otherwise unknown,

Judas is referred to in an instruction given by the Lord to Ananias in Damascus: <<*The Lord told him, “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying”*>> (Acts 9:11), and following the Jerusalem Council: <<*Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, two men who were leaders among the brothers*>> (Acts 15:22), which provides a brief mention to the fourth Judas. Nothing more is known of him either but many commentators believe that Judas was the brother of Joseph or Justus Barsabbas, who had apostolic candidature in Acts 1:23.

Although he is the brother of Jesus, Jude identifies himself as his servant, Greek *doulos*, which means slave or bond servant, but here it is a title of great honour that acknowledges Jesus as Lord and Christ.

He is also the brother of James, who plays a major role in the NT, such as at the Jerusalem Council: <<*When they finished, James spoke up: “Brothers, listen to me”*>> (Acts 15:13), Paul’s final visit to Jerusalem: <<*The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present*>> (Acts 21:18), and recounting his first visit to Jerusalem after coming to faith in Christ: <<*I saw none of the other apostles – only James, the Lord’s brother*>> (Galatians 1:19).

Jude could have called himself the brother of Jesus providing he met the criteria laid down for the title: <<*He replied to him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” Pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother”*>> (Matthew 12:48-50).

There are many references to various James in the NT. By this time, the only James who could be identified by name only without further description was James the Lord’s brother and prominent church leader.

Called. Many of the NT authors use terms such as called, elect, predestined and foreknown in relation to those who are in Christ Jesus. There is a lot of debate on this issue, especially with regard to issues of human free-will and its apparent conflict with Scriptures, such as: <<*And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved*>> (Joel 2:32a), <<*He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned*>> (Mark 16:15-16), and: <<*The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life*>> (Revelation 22:17). Whatever we make of called, justified, sanctified, etc. we can be sure that it is not of our own abilities, achievements or personalities; it is purely through the grace of God. We can also be certain that: <<*The Lord will fulfil his purpose for me; your love, O Lord, endures forever – do not abandon the works of your hands*>> (Psalm 138:8). Some translations prefer the term sanctify in this verse which tends to be read as ‘to make holy or to purify and being set apart for God’s use and unique service’.

Sanctification does not mean to purify or to make sinless, but to set apart something for God and for His service. Sanctification is being set apart from sin

unto God. Some scholars hold that a believer has past, present, and future sanctification. Each of the three aspects of sanctification is distinctly different, and each refers to time. Every Christian can say, 'I have been sanctified; I am being sanctified; I will yet be sanctified'.

Words like foreknew and predestined seem to contradict the idea of humans having free will to choose God and then how to live their lives for God, but with some element of their own input. I personally believe that God has given us free will to make choices, right or wrong, and then to live with the consequences. God, of course, has a plan for our lives but he can also accommodate the choices we make. To understand this we need to try to think of it from God's perspective, which for humans is impossible, of course. Unlike humans, God is not bound by any of the dimensional constraints; especially time. We tend to think in terms of time as the past, present and future; then perhaps on into eternity - a long time. But try to imagine that eternity is not a long time at all but just an instant. As God is outside of time he sees everything in that instant. Therefore, he knows what choices we make long before we make them and therefore it can be said that he foreknew them.

Loved or beloved in some translations is the Greek participle of *agapaō* that shows the intimate relationship between God the Father and the readers. It also shows that God has set his special love on them for salvation. At the outset of his letter to Christians who are threatened by false teachers, Jude reminds them that they will be kept and preserved by God's power from falling away. The introduction thus anticipates the confident and joyful conclusion in Jude 24-25.

Kept by Jesus Christ. Jude states that believers are also kept or preserved by Jesus Christ. The Greek word used is *tereo* that is an intriguing word. In the aorist tense it denotes a continuing action of watching, guarding and keeping one's eye on something. This stresses the absolute security of the believer in Jesus Christ.

Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance. These are all key attributes that are found in the very essence of God. John bestows these same graces upon his readership: <<*Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love*>> (2 John 3).

II. Jude 3-16 - The Sin and Doom of Godless Men

Jude goes into some detail of the problems that are facing this group of believers during the 1st Century AD, which has stood the test of time to apply throughout church history. Although the warnings are stark, Jude always seems to leave the reader feeling hopeful for the future, if they avoid the pitfalls and remain faithful to God through Jesus as the Christ.

II.a Jude 3-4 - Jude's Appeal: Contend for the Faith

Jude strongly urges his readers to contend for the faith against the subversive false teachers.

II.a.i Jude 3 - The urgency of the defence

The dangers are real and ever present. The watchwords are vigilance and perseverance.

³ Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

Dear friends or beloved, the Greek *agapētos*, is a familiar term in NT letters. Jude, like Peter, writes in this way to emphasise his strong personal concern, see also v.17 and v.20. Peter uses this expression six times, see 1 Peter 2:11 and 4:12, and 2 Peter 3 verses 1, 8, 14 and 17. It is also used by James about Paul and Barnabas when he wrote to the church in Antioch, following the Jerusalem Council: <<***So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul***>> (Acts 15:25). Paul uses it with regard to those in Corinth and Philippi, it is used in Hebrews, and the apostle John uses it in first epistle too.

Although Jude was very eager to write about the salvation we share, their common bond, the urgent need to contend for the faith took precedence over even the exalted theme of salvation, therefore he had to write to them as a matter of priority. There is no better way to defend the faith than to share it with others in truth as Paul confirms: <<***I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ***>> (Philemon 6).

The faith, that is, the known and received body of truth about Jesus and salvation through him, had been once for all entrusted to the saints, referring to all Christians. In other words, by the time that Jude wrote his letter, the faith had already been fixed and established in the apostolic teaching of the early church, and therefore could not be changed. It was, however, under attack and in need of defence. On this issue Matthew Henry writes: ‘The apostles and evangelists all wrote to us of this common salvation. This cannot be doubted by those who have carefully read their writings. It is strange that any should think they wrote chiefly to maintain particular schemes and opinions, especially such as they never did nor could think of. It is enough that they have fully declared to us, by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, all that is necessary for everyone to believe and do, in order to obtain a personal interest in the common salvation’.

Although the NT documents had not yet been collected into a complete canon of Scripture, by this time the foundational NT teachings were circulating in oral form through the apostolic circles. In addition, some NT documents had already begun to circulate among the churches: <<***After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea***>> (Colossians 4:16).

A further implication of this verse is that, after the writings authorised by the apostles were included in the NT canon, nothing more could ever be added to Scripture, since the content of the faith had been delivered once for all. This is at odds with the teachings of other religions such as Mormonism and Islam, which

hold that the NT writings existing today contain corrupted teachings, and that additional authoritative teachings came from God later, e.g. the Book of Mormon or the Qur'an, both of which contradict the NT at many points. This conclusion also differs from the Roman Catholic view that official church tradition, in addition to Scripture, also has absolute divine authority. Since the letter of Jude was included in the NT canon, his letter must also have received early apostolic endorsement for inclusion, and everything in Jude's letter is in complete accord with apostolic teaching and writings of the early church, and with the faith once for all entrusted to the saints.

II.a.ii Jude 4 - Description of the false teachers and their teaching

Jude briefly describes the false teachers, their methods and distasteful character.

⁴ For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

Slipped in among you or crept in unnoticed. Jude begins his account of the false teachers, i.e. certain men, by describing the devious way they have slipped into the church. They began by acting like Christians and operating subversively, some had even become elders of their church. Peter, too, speaks of their covert methodology: *<<But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them – bringing swift destruction on themselves>>* (2 Peter 2:1). John offers a similar warning and advises his recipients of the consequences: *<<Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully>>* (2 John 7-9), and to Gaius he writes: *<<Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God>>* (3 John 11).

Written about translates Greek *prographō*, which also means designated or identify beforehand.

The false teachers did not take God by surprise, for he predicted their coming and their condemnation long ago before they even existed. Jesus had warned: *<<Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves>>* (Matthew 7:15), and: *<<At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect – if that were possible>>* (Mark 13:21-22). He could also have warned against wolves in shepherd's clothing!

They change, that is, pervert, twist and distort, God's grace, especially his free forgiveness of sin, into a license for immorality or sensuality, and they deny the Lord, Jesus Christ, apparently using the Gospel teaching about grace as an excuse for ungodly living: *<<Why not say – as we are being slanderously reported as*

saying and as some claim that we say – “Let us do evil that good may result”? Their condemnation is deserved>> (Romans 3:8), <<What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? >> (Romans 6:1), and: <<Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction>> (2 Peter 3:15-16).

II.b Jude 5-16 - Immoral Character and Consequent Judgment of the False Teachers

Jude employs biblical and traditional analogies to document the certainty of judgment for the false teachers. He also describes the debased morality that characterises this group, for which they have already been eternally condemned (see v.13).

II.b.i Jude 5-7 - Judgment reserved for the false teachers

Jude applies examples of judgment from the whole of biblical history in his polemic against the heretics.

Just as Jesus and the apostles, through the Holy Spirit, performed miracles to promote understanding and acceptance of the Gospel for others, rather than the sole benefit of the recipient of the miracle, so too judgemental punishment is as much a warning to others as it is the just rewards for those who are being punished.

II.b.i.1 Jude 5 - The analogy of Egypt

The Exodus from Egypt was seen by the Jews as their first salvation by God and they eagerly awaited their second salvation that would come with their Messiah, who they failed to recognise and then rejected.

⁵ Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe.

Jude reminds his readers that they already know about God’s judgment, but apparently their sense of its certainty has waned. All good biblical teachers continually remind their listeners of what is being taught as we so easily forget even the basics. Examples are: <<*But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you*>> (John 14:26), <<*Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also*>> (John 15:20), <<*I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me*>> (Romans 15:15), <<*Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you*>> (Philippians 3:1), and: <<*So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know*

them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things>> (2 Peter 1:12-15).

The Lord, Greek *ho Kyrios*, which is found in some Greek manuscripts is used in some English translations, including the NIV. However, most of the oldest and most reliable manuscripts have *Iēsous*, which is Jesus.

Jude refers them to the Exodus account as a reminder. The Lord Jesus delivered his people out of the land of Egypt, refer to Exodus Chapters 1-15 for the full account. This may seem puzzling to us, because the name Jesus is not applied to the Son of God in the OT. It is a prime example of the apostolic understanding of the OT, according to which the Son of God, in his eternal divine nature, was active in the world from the beginning of creation, long before his incarnation: <<*And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself*>> (Luke 24:27), <<*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it*>> (John 1:1-5), <<*“I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”*>> (John 8:58), <<*For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him*>> (Colossians 1:16), <<*But about the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the sceptre of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.” He also says, “In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end”*>> (Hebrews 1:8-12), and: <<*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete*>> (1 John 1:1-4). He was also considered to be with the Israelites in the desert. For example, when they were provided miraculously with water from the rock at Meribah: <<*For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ*>> (1 Corinthians 10:1-4).

It was Jesus then that judged and destroyed those Israelites who escaped from Egypt but failed to keep trusting in God, and therefore they did not reach the Promised Land: <<*Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert*>> (1 Corinthians 10:5), and: <<*Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief*>> (Hebrews 3:16-19).

II.b.i.2 Jude 6 - The analogy of the rebellious angels

Jewish tradition and writings say that Satan led about one third of all the created angels into apostasy, which are probably those referred to here, although another option is offered in the comments.

⁶ And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home – these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.

The heart of Jude's next comparison are the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but apparently rebelled against God's authority and sought to be equal to him. God has kept these beings in everlasting or eternal chains ever since. Some scholars think this refers to the original fall of angels from heaven. Others think Jude is referring to the sin of angels in Genesis 6:1-4 <<*When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. Then the Lord said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years." The Nephilim were on the earth in those days – and also afterward – when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown*>>. See comments made on 1 Peter 3:19. This view is strengthened by Jude's citation of 1 Enoch 1.9 in vv.14-15, which contains much discussion on the fall of these angels.

Abandoned their own home. Angels are natives of heaven and they were created to serve God in any way he wills them to. It will one day be the home of all the souls of human believers too.

The great Day refers to the day when Jesus returns to claim his inheritance and to judge all the human inhabitants of the world, both the dead and the living: <<*But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven"*>> (Mark 14:61-62).

II.b.i.3 Jude 7 - The analogy of Sodom and Gomorrah

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah came about because of gross sin, especially sexual depravity, by its inhabitants in the days of Abraham.

⁷ In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

As with the unfaithful Israelites and the rebellious angels (vv.5-6), so also the people of Sodom and Gomorrah received the judgment of eternal fire, see Genesis Chapter 19. Smoke was still rising from the site of Sodom and Gomorrah some 2,000 years later in the 1st Century AD, according to Jewish historian Philo, see On Abraham 141, and Life of Moses 2.56. It is also recorded in Wisdom of Solomon 10:7, and this was taken as a physical symbol of eternal divine judgment.

Gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion refers to the homosexual activity of Sodom: <<*They called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them”>> (Genesis 19:5). The Greek is literally ‘went after other flesh’, meaning other or different than the sexual immorality with women that Jude had just mentioned, and recorded also by Paul: <<*Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion*>> (Romans 1:26-27). The judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah in history functions as a pattern or a foreshadowing planned by God, of the eternal judgment to come: <<*Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come*>> (Romans 5:14).*

There is a story of similar depraved behaviour in Gibeah, when the local inhabitants were going to treat a visiting Jebusite in the same way: <<*While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, “Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him”>> (Judges 19:22). Although he escaped, it cost the life of his concubine, who was gang raped by the men. This type of activity has nothing to do with sexual gratification but is an attempt to destroy a person morally and psychologically for the sake of the power these people would feel because of their perverse actions.*

II.b.ii Jude 8-13 - Nature of the false teachers

Jude turns his attention to the immoral character of the opponents of Christ, carrying forward the analogies of vv.5-7. Peter had warned of them and their eternal reward: <<*In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping*>> (2 Peter 2:3).

II.b.ii.1 Jude 8-10 - The false teachers are blasphemers

The title of this section is not an accusation but a simple statement of fact. It is not a title that any decent person would want applied to them and the outcome

for them is dire: <<*But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin*>> (Mark 3:29).

⁸ In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings. ⁹ But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” ¹⁰ Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals – these are the very things that destroy them.

These dreamers refers to the false teachers, as does these men. They are led astray by relying on their dreams or more likely their delusions, thus mistakenly following subjective experiences that they claim are from God, but which lead them to disobey God’s written and spoken Word, for they: <<*follow their own ungodly desires*>> (v.18).

Following their dreams, they are sexually immoral, i.e. pollute their own bodies, reject authority, and blaspheme or slander celestial beings, possibly evil angels, see comments on 2 Peter 2:10b-11. The authorised version refers to them as filthy dreamers, reminding readers of the true nature of sin, how it defiles us and that it is so repugnant to a holy and pure God.

Reject authority. This again will bring them into dispute with God for it is he who has established church leaders and the civil authorities: <<*Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves*>> (Romans 13:1-2), and: <<*This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority*>> (2 Peter 2:10). In fact, Paul takes it a stage further: <<*Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men*>> (Titus 3:1-2).

Their actions are polluting their own bodies, and those who join them. Again, this is imagery that provides understanding of just how God must view such people. Paul speaks of how it should be for disciples of Christ: <<*Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God*>> (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Even the archangel Michael did not speak to the devil flippantly, or blaspheme him, when he disputed with him over the body of Moses. This event is not recorded in the OT but was well-known to the Jews at that time. We do have an account of the death of Moses: <<*And Moses the servant of the Lord died there in Moab, as the Lord had said. He buried him in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is*>> (Deuteronomy

34:5-6), but whatever story Jude is referring to has been lost to history. In any case, Michael, understanding his own place in God's design, did not pronounce a sentence of condemnation on the devil but left that to God's authority, simply telling the devil, the Lord rebuke you. This demonstrates the exclusive power and authority of Jesus Christ, something the false teachers deny (v. 4).

The body of Moses. There are various suggestions over this passage by a number of scholars. Some hold that Satan was striving for a public and lavish funeral befitting a national leader, with a well-marked, ornate tomb, knowing that this would draw many to flock to it in reverence as many pilgrims do to holy sites associated with various faiths today. This is a form of idolatry of course, and would not have been pleasing to God. Others contend that the term is symbolic of the Jewish Church in the same way that the Christian Church is the Body of Christ; both of which Satan would love to destroy, or lead astray at least, something more fitting with Jude's warnings.

The Lord rebuke you is also used by the OT prophet but the words are those of the Lord: <<*Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. The Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?"*>> (Zechariah 3:1-2).

Michael is one of only two archangels identified by name in Scripture, the other being Gabriel: <<*The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news"*>> (Luke 1:19). It would seem they are going to be prominent at the Second Coming of Jesus: <<*At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people – everyone whose name is found written in the book – will be delivered*>> (Daniel 12:1), and: <<*For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first*>> (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

That the archangel Michael would not bring slandorous accusations against the devil was not because he feared him, although he was fully aware of his evil power, but he knew that God was a much more powerful force for good. More importantly, there was no need for him to act in any way other than that expected by God, for he had truth on his side and to get into needless arguments, or act improperly, can only bring disrepute and harm to the image of God and faith in Christ Jesus. Anyway, Michael was fully aware that Moses was a fellow servant of God with him, and he would want to support Moses for that reason, therefore it was more than sufficient just to say the Lord rebuke you.

Whatever they do not understand includes true biblical doctrine about God, angels and demons, and human sin and forgiveness through Christ. What they understand by instinct, like animals, is how to follow their bodily instincts and feelings, flouting God's moral standards. If for someone whose conscience is not trained and governed by God's Word follows subjective feelings and desires, he will ultimately be destroyed by his own sinful compulsions.

The point of vv.8-10 is the false teachers' refusal to submit to rightful authority, and it should not be understood as denying that Christ gives believers authority over demons.

Jude's use of a story from non-biblical literature, some believe a lost section of a work called Testament of Moses, does not indicate that Jude thought the book was inspired. Elsewhere in the NT, writers quote uninspired sources to make a point and show that they can contain truth, even if it is not from a divine source. For example, Paul appears to quote from a hymn to Zeus by Epimenides of Crete, circa 600 BC: <<'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring'>> (Acts 17:28), and: <<Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons">> (Titus 1:12).

II.b.ii.2 Jude 11 - The false teachers are motivated by greed

Their greed may be for worldly wealth and possessions but often it is their lust and greed for power and influence over others.

¹¹ Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.

Woe to them! Jesus denounced woes on teachers during his incarnate ministry: <<Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to>> (Matthew 23:13), and on whole towns, where the inhabitants failed to respond to his teaching, which was frequently accompanied by miraculous signs and wonders: <<Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes>> (Luke 10:13).

Cain (Genesis 4:5-8), Balaam (Numbers 22:5-7), and Korah (Numbers 16:1-3 and 16:31-35), were all characterised by their dissatisfaction with the place they occupied, although in the case of Balaam it was mostly financial gain that he sought, and so they engaged in rebellion against God, greedily seeking selfish profit or gain at any cost. They characterise many of the aspects of human nature that are unpleasant and displeasing to God.

II.b.ii.3 Jude 12-13 - The false teachers exemplify depravity with impunity

Those who are deliberately misleading God's people for their own gain are considered to be of the worst type of human character. They act as if they are exempt from punishment, something else that leads others astray.

¹² These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm – shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted – twice dead. ¹³ They are wild waves of the

sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.

Jude compares the false teachers, these men, to blemishes, or hidden reefs in some translations, that are wild waves that will suddenly destroy them like ships that come too near. Of such men the prophet concludes: <<*But the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud*>> (Isaiah 57:20). James speaks of any who doubt God's Word as being in this category: <<*But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does*>> (James 1:6-8).

These opponents of the Gospel constitute concealed dangers because they participate in the love feasts, including the Lord's Supper, thus acting as if they were Christians.

Shepherds who feed only themselves. God has said: <<*Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock?'*>> (Ezekiel 34:2). They do not shepherd and care for others but only look after themselves.

They are like waterless grey clouds, promising rain that never falls. King Solomon wrote: <<*Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of gifts he does not give*>> (Proverbs 25:14). Without the refreshing water of God's Word and his grace, nothing will grow. They promise fruit but are like fruitless trees. If a person shows the potential to come to faith then Jesus will feed him: <<*Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?' " "Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilise it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down'"*>> (Luke 13:6-9), if not he will cast him aside: <<*Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered*>> (Matthew 21:19).

Twice dead appears to mean that they are spiritually dead in this life and will certainly be condemned to the second death in the life to come: <<*But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars – their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death*>> (Revelation 21:8).

They are like wandering stars, possibly meaning planets that give misleading guidance to travellers; at least to those who do not have a divine map of where they are heading firmly imprinted in their hearts.

Foaming up their shame. The heretics' sexual permissiveness shows that they are in spiritual darkness. Their eternal condemnation in the gloom of blackest darkness has been reserved forever. Job uses the term to refer to a deep mine: <<*Man puts an end to the darkness; he searches the farthest recesses for ore in the blackest darkness*>> (Job 28:3).

II.b.iii Jude 14-16 - Judgment on the false teachers revisited

Jude turns his primary focus back to judgment, using an extra biblical Jewish work, 1 Enoch, which dates 2nd or 1st Century BC, to make his point. The use of extra biblical literature does not mean that any of these literary works are authoritative words of God in the same category as Scripture, see comments on vv.8-10. Jude is simply drawing from 1 Enoch another example of judgment, which means that, in at least this specific instance, 1 Enoch 1.9 contains truth, even if it is not divinely inspired truth.

II.b.iii.1 Jude 14-15 - Description of the judgment

Jude reminds his readers of the certainty of the Day of the Lord that will be when Jesus returns to claim his rightful inheritance and to judge the living and the dead, as confirmed by Paul: <<*For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead*>> (Acts 17:31).

¹⁴ Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: “See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones ¹⁵ to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

Enoch, the seventh from Adam does not necessarily imply that Enoch was literally the seventh generation descended from Adam; it may mean simply that he is the seventh one listed in the line of Adam in the Genesis narrative, see Genesis 5:18-24. The Chronicler confirms this: <<*Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah*>> (1 Chronicles 1:1-3).

Jude describes the coming of the Lord as Enoch prophesied, and he quotes from 1 Enoch 1.9. Again, with regard to this particular statement, Jude is citing the content of 1 Enoch as true and prophetic of the return of the Lord.

The Lord will return with hosts of angels, and possibly the souls of the elect, to convict all the ungodly. Paul confirms this is his understanding too: <<*God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus*>> (2 Thessalonians 1:6-8). Enoch, and thus also Jude, focuses on blasphemy against God, spoken against him, and the opponents' denial of Jesus Christ (vv.3-4).

To convict. For punishment, not for repentance: <<*When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment*>> (John 16:8).

Jude places great emphasis on the ungodliness of those judged, using ungodliness, the Greek word *asebeia*, vs. godliness, Greek *eusebeia*. Godliness was one of the virtues that Peter encourages believers to: <<*For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love*>> (2 Peter 1:5-7).

II.b.iii.2 Jude 16 - Further reasons for judgment

This is another example in Scripture that shows how man often fails to appreciate all that God has given and would rather believe, and even boast, that what they have is due only to their own skill and endeavour. The psalmist writes: <<*Why do you boast of evil, you mighty man? Why do you boast all day long, you who are a disgrace in the eyes of God?*>> (Psalm 52:1). Paul applies condemnation just as strongly: <<*For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?*>> (1 Corinthians 4:7).

¹⁶ These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.

Jude applies the citation from 1 Enoch, see vv.14-15, to the false teachers - these men, probably using this list of vices to focus on some of their more pronounced and obvious misbehaviours.

Grumblers calls to mind the wilderness generation: <<*Moses also said, "You will know that it was the Lord when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the Lord." Then Moses told Aaron, "Say to the entire Israelite community, 'Come before the Lord, for he has heard your grumbling.'" While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the Lord appearing in the cloud. The Lord said to Moses, "I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, 'At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God'">> (Exodus 16:8-12). There were also many of Jesus' disciples who complained when they found that following him was not such an easy option: <<*On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you? What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has**

enabled him.” From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him>> (John 6:60-66). There remain many grumblers in church today!

This sadly is true of faultfinders too, who seem to want to disrupt the work of the church and undermine leaders by always looking for negatives in what is being done or not done, rather than making a positive contribution to advance the Kingdom of God in their community. Having to find fault in churches seems to be something that is in the heart of so many church goers who do not display joy in their own lives either.

To gain advantage probably refers to financial gain or to take positions of power and authority in the assemblies, and ties in with an earlier mention of greed, v.11.

III. Jude 17-23 - A Call to Persevere

The conclusion of Jude’s letter continues to highlight the false teachers, only now with a view toward the proper response of believers to them.

III.a Jude 17-19 - On the apostolic warnings

Jude redirects the readers’ attention to their own knowledge of apostolic predictions concerning the last days.

¹⁷ But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. ¹⁸ They said to you, “In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.”

Dear friends is again beloved and emphasises Jude’s personal concern for the readers as well as God’s love for them.

Jude reminds them of what the apostles had foretold concerning the emergence of ungodly scoffers within the church during the last times. These apostolic warnings were probably oral, but such warnings were part of the common stock of early Christian preaching: <<*I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them*>> (Acts 20:29-30), <<*The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer*>> (1 Timothy 4:1-5), and: <<*But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them*>> (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

These critics often come from within, having become part of the church by clandestine means and acting as if they were true Christians. But they are led astray by following their subjective feelings and ungodly desires that are contrary to the Word of God (v.8).

¹⁹ These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.

These are the men indicates that the scoffers described in v.18 are the very false teachers that Jude is warning against. These who follow mere natural instincts, Greek *psychikos*, which means unspiritual, worldly, or of this world, cause divisions, i.e. divide you, within the church over many things, but especially over issues of morality and doctrine. They are unbelievers like the natural person, also Greek *psychikos* of 1 Corinthians 2:14 (ESV), <<*The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned*>>.

Who divide you. Division in the church is one of the saddest aspects that can occur in the lives of believers, but so frequently does. Often it comes about from minor differences of opinion, which is just what these men look for. However, there are always going to be those that fall away from the truth to follow the smoother way that is on offer: <<*The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron*>> (1 Timothy 4:1-2). But we know that Christ will prevail: <<*And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it*>> (Matthew 16:18).

That they do not have the Spirit, the Greek *mē echontes*, meaning devoid of, is another indication that these opponents are unbelievers, which Paul describes: <<*You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ*>> (Romans 8:9). This fits with the repeated statements affirming their designated: <<*condemnation as written about long ago*>> (v.4). Paul also confirms that: <<*He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it*>> (Titus 1:9), and: <<*They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience*>> (1 Timothy 3:9).

III.b Jude 20-21 - On the antidote to the false teachers

The way to minimise the influence of the scoffers is to live proactively as a follower of Christ, that is: <<*contend for the faith*>> (v.3).

²⁰ But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.

Pray in the Holy Spirit. That is, in the sense of praying in harmony with the Holy Spirit and by His leading, rather than according to one's own agenda, however well intended that may be: <<*In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes*>>

for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will>> (Romans 8:26-27), <<And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints>> (Ephesians 6:18). The context here suggests the idea of praying in the Spirit in a general sense, rather than the specific sense of speaking in tongues described in 1 Corinthians 14:14-19.

²¹ Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

Keep or guard yourselves in God's love is the main clause in vv.20-21 and is modified by the two participles build and pray in v.20 and the participle wait in v.21. Christians keep themselves in God's love by growing strong doctrinally, persevering in prayer, and waiting for the Lord's coming.

Wait for the mercy of our Lord. This does not mean that it is OK for believers to simply spend their lives going to church on a Sunday and not engaging in any kingdom work. Believers are called to extend the Kingdom of God, which can only be achieved by them becoming actively involved and by living by the reality of their salvation.

Christians are to keep themselves in God's love, and vv.1-2 and vv.24-25 teach that God keeps them as well. Ultimately, God promises to keep and preserve the faith of his own people, so that no true believer will ever lose his or her salvation. Jesus' own words support this: *<<My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one>> (John 10:27-30), and: <<I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name – the name you gave me – so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled>> (John 17:6-12).*

The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. This is not the idea or thought of a mere mortal but based on eye witness testimony from the Lord himself: *<<Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me">> (John 14:6), and then Peter, when he was filled with the holy Spirit, told the Sanhedrin: <<Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved>> (Acts 4:12).*

III.c Jude 22-23 - On showing mercy

The church is called to show grace and mercy to everyone, even its opponents, perhaps especially its opponents: <<*Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head"*>> (Romans 12:19-20).

²² Be merciful to those who doubt; ²³ snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear – hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

To save, Greek *sōzō*, some people, i.e. to lead them to faith in Christ, involves snatching them out of the fire, meaning they were close to the fire of God's wrath and judgment. God has shown how he has judged Israel in the past, and how he has shown them mercy, yet they still rejected him: <<*"I overthrew some of you as I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. You were like a burning stick snatched from the fire, yet you have not returned to me," declares the Lord*>> (Amos 4:11).

Others who are caught up in immorality should also be shown mercy, but with fear, lest the faithful Christian be influenced to do evil by the person he is trying to restore. A true disciple is really his brother's keeper in such situation, despite the claims of Cain: <<*Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"*>> (Genesis 4:9).

Hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh, supported by: <<*Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes." Then he said to Joshua, "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you." Then I said, "Put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord stood by*>> (Zechariah 3:3-5), implies hating the sin and everything connected with it; but the sinner himself should be treated with mercy rather than hatred: <<*But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you*>> (Matthew 5:44), and: <<*But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you*>> (Luke 6:27).

IV. Jude 24-25 - Doxology

As Jude ascribes all glory, majesty, dominion and authority to God, he reminds believers of what God is doing for them as they await Christ's return. It is one of the most elegant doxologies in the entire Bible.

²⁴ To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy –

This is a great statement of faith especially for those who have not seen Jesus in the way that Jude had seen him, certainly before his resurrection: <<*Though you*

have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy>> (1 Peter 1:8), although that will one day change: <<Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen>> (Revelation 1:7).

Just as the false teachers are kept by God for judgment: *<<if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment>> (2 Peter 2:9), so also he has infinite power to keep from falling those who have put their faith in him.*

By falling Jude means falling into sin or error, Greek *aptaistos*, which means without stumbling. If such falling is left unchecked it will eventually lead to falling away from the faith. Yet Jude says God will never let his own fall away but will keep them by his grace.

Jesus will present the Christian without fault or blameless, that is, with no stain or residue of sin, before his glorious presence, the *Shechinah* or brightness that surrounds the very presence of God and visibly manifests his holy character. This can only be effected by God's power, through Jesus Christ the Lord. The only possible response to the work of God on behalf of believers is great joy, Greek *agalliasis*, and also means exultation, which suggests an exclamation of joy and praise.

Only Jesus, as the Christ, can present believers before God's glorious presence, because he has paid the price, the full ransom, and has therefore fulfilled the Father's will: *<<And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day>> (John 6:39), for Jesus, in person and then through his Holy Spirit, has prepared them all: <<While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled>> (John 17:12), for: <<Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power>> (1 Corinthians 15:24). On that day: <<He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away>> (Revelation 21:4).*

²⁵ to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

This is one of the most beautifully phased doxologies in the Bible. It compares with the one that John would later hear in the throne room of heaven itself: *<<In a loud voice they sang: Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!>> (Revelation 5:12).*

The only God. There is only one God, who redeemed all mankind once for all, his one and only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ and he is our only Lord and Saviour. This is another clear Scripture that identifies the divinity of Christ: *<<Simon Peter, a*

servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours>> (2 Peter 1:1), and: <<while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ>> (Titus 2:13). The apostle Thomas had recognised Jesus as God after his resurrection: <<A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed”>> (John 20:26-29).

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus is the mediator through whom the person who trusts in him is able to give praise and thanksgiving to God. The church praises God through Christ, saying, to God be glory, here in the sense of great honour, majesty, Greek *megalōsynē*, i.e. he is greater than all, power, Greek *kratos*, his dominion or sovereign reign has no boundaries, and authority, Greek *exousia*, he rules over all creation. In other words, may the praiseworthiness of God, who is as gracious as he is great, be fully acknowledged in his people’s adoration of him.

Before all ages means before the beginning of creation: <<*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*>> (Genesis 1:1), and suggests that time began when God created the material universe: <<*So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life – not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time*>> (2 Timothy 1:9), and: <<*Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God’s elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness – a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, and at his appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Saviour*>> (Titus 1:1-2).

Now and forevermore shifts the focus into the present and then into the infinite future.

Amen, that is, let it be so: <<*He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus*>> (Revelation 22:20). Amen indeed!