

BIBLE COMPANION COMMENTARY: JUDE

JUDE

PREFACE

This commentary is based around the New European Version of the Bible, which is generally printed with brief commentary on each chapter. This commentary is the hard copy of the more detailed commentary found on the *Bible Companion* app.

Are there errors of thought and intellectual process in these volumes? Surely there are. Let me know about them. But don't fail to see the wood for the trees. Never let the wonder of the simple, basic Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Kingdom become obscured by all the angst over correctly interpreting this or that Bible verse. Believe it, respond to it, be baptized into Him, and let the word become flesh in you as it was so supremely in Him.

If you would like to enable the NEV Bible and associated material to remain freely available, do consider making a donation to Carelinks. And please pray that our sending forth of God's word will bring back glory to His Name and that of His dear Son whom we serve.

Duncan Heaster

JUDE CHAPTER 1

:1 *Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those that are called; beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ-* "Called" is better "sanctified" (AV). This sanctification is by the work of the Holy Spirit gift in human hearts (Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 6:11). That sanctification is by association with "the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11). Here as there, we have Father, Son and Spirit associated. These three entities often occur together, and baptism associates us with each of them (Mt. 28:19). The error and blasphemy of the doctrine of the Trinity is in the relationship it claims between the three, and in claiming the Holy Spirit to be a personal God. The doctrine as it stands is seriously wrong, as I have argued throughout *The Real Christ*. But clearly there is a 'trinity' with a small 't', as God, the Lord Jesus and the Spirit are mentioned together many times in the New Testament, both directly together and also the three ideas occur together. Jude 1 is an example. "God the Father" and the Lord Jesus are mentioned along with the sanctifying and 'keeping' work of the Spirit. We are to 'keep' the Lord's ways and commandments, and yet He keeps us by the Spirit. "They have kept Your word... keep [s.w.] [them] by Your own Name... I kept them in Your Name... keep them from the evil" (Jn. 17). Jude will conclude by glorying in the fact that the Lord is able to keep us from falling in spiritual terms (:24). 2 Peter 2 had predicted that there was going to be an arising of false teachers amongst the

Jewish believers whom he had baptized. Jude is full of allusion to 2 Peter, and speaks as if that falling away and arising of mass false teaching had arisen by his time. And yet Jude still writes to the very weak believers as if the Spirit is still active within them and seeking to preserve them unto salvation. We too can only assume the salvation of others and their status "in Christ"; for we cannot condemn them.

Jude, Peter And Corinth

A case can be made that the letters of Peter and Jude were also written to Corinth. Peter visited Corinth, presumably focusing his preaching on the Jewish community, and perhaps he was writing his letters specifically to the Jewish house churches there (1 Cor. 1:12; 3:22; 9:5). The same concerns are apparent as in Paul's letters to Corinth: The need to distinguish between spiritual and unspiritual persons who despised others (Jude 19 = 1 Cor. 2:6 - 3:4; 8:1-3); those who perverted liberty into licence (Jude 4 = 1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23), becoming slaves of sensuality (Jude 8,10,16,23 = 1 Cor. 6:9-20; 2 Cor. 12:21); some eating and drinking abusively at the love feast (Jude 12 = 1 Cor. 11:17-33); refusing the authority of their elders (Jude 8,11 = 1 Cor. 4:8-13; 9:1-12); and both Peter and Paul warn Corinth of the danger of worldly wisdom. Peter's reminder to them about the authority of Paul is very understandable in this case. However, the point of all this is to observe the tenderness of Peter and Jude in writing to the Corinthians ["my beloved..."], whilst at the same time warning them of the awesome judgment which their behaviour was preparing for them. It was the same passionate love for Christ's weak brethren which Paul showed them.

:2 *Mercy to you and peace and love be multiplied*- Jude like Paul and Peter really believed that this wish that others would experience the fruit of the Spirit in their lives would come about.

:3 *Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write to you of our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you, urging you to contend earnestly for the faith which was delivered once and for all to his saints*- Jude gives the impression that he sat down to write a positive missive of encouragement concerning the great salvation he and his readers had in common, but changed course to warn them to defend the faith. We see here a window onto the meaning of Divine inspiration; the will of the writer is not completely obliterated, but rather was worked with by the Spirit.

The Bible speaks of "the faith", "the Gospel", as a set of doctrines, a deposit of truth which has been delivered to the believer (Eph. 4:4-6) – "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3 ASV). That truth cannot be added to nor subtracted from, as the Bible itself makes clear – especially in the appeals of Paul and Peter to maintain the purity of the one faith. This means that a vitally true doctrine cannot become 'added' to that body of truth. Jaroslav Pelikan correctly reflected: "What can it mean for a doctrine to 'become' part of the Catholic faith, which is, by definition, universal both in space and in time?"

We note that the "saints" are the 'sanctified ones' of :1; the same word is used.

:4 *For there are certain people who have crept in secretly, who long ago were designated for condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into a license for immorality, and who deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ*- This parallels rejecting Jesus as Master and Lord with rejecting His moral demands. If He truly is Lord and Master, we simply won't live the immoral life which Jude criticizes. The warnings of 2 Peter 2 about these men had now come true. The language of creeping in secretly suggests a conscious program of infiltration; the same group are spoken of in Gal. 2:4 as being Judaist false teachers. 2 Peter 2 was addressed to Jewish converts, perhaps those Peter had baptized at Pentecost who were now refugees in Asia; so we can assume that it was to this same group that Jude was writing, seeing he uses 2 Peter 2 so consciously. These Judaists were actually appealing to the lusts of the flesh by allowing gross immorality, justified by a tokenistic

obedience to some Jewish traditions. This is why in several of the New Testament epistles addressed to Gentiles, there is warning against the Judaizers. The opportunity to continue in sexual immorality whilst ostensibly having justification by works was very attractive to them. This explains why in Corinth, Ephesus, Thyatira and elsewhere there is evidence that the church meetings were a time of sexual immorality, using prostitutes as part of the worship in the same way as they were used in the surrounding religious cults.

:5 *Now I desire to have you remember (as you know all things already) that the Lord having saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that did not believe-* Israel were therefore “saved” from Egypt, as all those who are baptised are “saved” from sin. If one of those Israelites had been asked, “Are you saved?” their response could have been, “Yes”, but this would not mean that they would *ultimately* be saved. Salvation was a status, but the believers had to abide in it. Baptism, passing through the Red Sea (1 Cor. 10:1,2), was no guarantee of ultimate salvation. It seems that the false teachers were justifying sexual immorality (:4) on the basis of some 'once saved always saved' teaching.

:6- see on 2 Pet. 2:4.

And the angels which did not keep to their own domain, who left their proper abode, He has kept in everlasting bonds, under darkness, to the judgment of the great day- The simple point was that although judgment had been passed upon these individuals, it had not yet been executed in practice. But this was no reason to think that it would not be. The false teachers seemed to be arguing that future judgment for sin was not going to happen; see on :5.

There seems to be the implication in Heb. 9:23 that the Lord's sacrifice somehow cleansed the Angels. We have to emphasize that there were no sinful Angels in Haven at the time of Christ's sacrifice, and probably never have been. However, we have to bear in mind that "His Angels He charged with folly" (Job 4:18); "The Heavens are not clean in His sight" (Job 15:15), and also the possibility that the "Angels that sinned" (Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4) were actual Angels before the present creation. This was a view supported by John Thomas; the fact that there are such strong connections between these Angels and the princes associated with Korah's rebellion does not mean that his view is necessarily wrong.

Jude's other historical examples are capable of being interpreted with reference to more than one past incident, not all of which are recorded in Scripture. Thus the dispute about the body of Moses (Jude 9) could refer to the Samaritans disputing about the people of Israel or Joshua the High Priest (see Zech. 3), or it could refer equally to Michael the Archangel, the Angel of Israel, who buried Moses body, disputing with a group of Israelites who wanted to have Moses' body travelling with them, as those of Joseph and the patriarchs did (Acts 7:15,16 RV). Similarly Jude 14 talks of an incident concerning Enoch which is not detailed in the Bible (cp. Jannes and Jambres in 2 Tim. 3:8 too).

Thus there is no reason why "the Angels which kept not their first estate" of Jude and 2 Peter should not refer to "Angels that sinned" before creation as well as to Korah's company of Num. 16. Psalm 103 is praise for God's forgiveness and mercy to sin. David concludes it by asking the Angels especially to praise God for this (Ps. 103:19-21)- which would be fitting if they too had benefited in the past from God's mercy towards sin. The fact that the Angels had crowns when they are symbolized by the elders in Rev. 4:10 suggests that they had won them through overcoming some kind of tribulation. See on 1 Cor. 6:3; Heb. 9:23.

:7 *Even as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them, these gave themselves over to fornication and went after strange flesh. Such are given as an example. All of them suffered the punishment of eternal fire-* Jude warns the believers that Sodom's punishment was what

awaited those of the new Israel who threw off their responsibilities. In passing, it should be noted that all Jude's examples of Divine punishment involve people who were responsible to God, by reason of knowing His ways. Is Sodom an exception? Perhaps Lot's witness to them made them responsible? The argument of the false teachers appears to have been that future judgment would not come for sin, and having been baptized, they were permanently saved (see on :5 and :6). The "fornication" being practiced amongst the Christian converts was on the basis of religious, spiritual arguments; see on :4. But judgment comes, and Sodom is cited as an example.

"Eternal fire" is symbolic for complete destruction, as in Jer. 7:27. There is no fire burning in Sodom now; but the consequence of the condemnation they received was eternal.

Some versions give the impression that the "these" refers to the 'angels' of the preceding verse 6. The AV translation connects the additional entities to the "cities" surrounding Sodom and Gomorrah. They were full of immorality etc. just as Sodom and Gomorrah were. However I'd be inclined to think that the "these" in view are the subject of the letter, which is defined in :4: "certain people who have crept in secretly, who long ago were designated for condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into a license for immorality". "These" would then refer to the first century false teachers. The "these" would refer to the "these" of :4. If that is so, then we enquire: Are there other references in Jude in the same style where the "these" are the false teachers of :4? Yes. :8 "Likewise also THESE dreamers defile the flesh"; :10 "But THESE revile whatever things they do not see with their eyes"; :11 "Woe to THESE ONES" [Gk., "them" in many English versions]; :12 THESE are they who are hidden rocks in your love-feasts; :14 And to THESE also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied; :16 THESE are murmurers, complainers; :19 THESE are they who make divisions, sensual.

:8- see on Zech. 3:1,2.

Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries- The authority rejected by the false prophets was that of the true prophets, who were speaking God's word in truth. They were "dreamers" in that they claimed to have had Divine revelation in dreams. But their message was awful- the paradox of 'defiling the flesh' is used, a kind of tautology to express how bad they were. The parallel in 2 Pet. 2:10 [see note there] suggests that the "dignitaries" they slandered were local civil authorities, and the example quoted in :9 concerns these too. It would seem that the immorality these false teachers were advocating was so gross that it was even against the local laws. This is how far we can go if we accept the false idea that we are saved whatever our future behaviour; and that God is not a God of judgment. This is the power of ideas; we cannot assume these issues are merely academic. What happened to the 'Christians' to whom Jude wrote is a prime example of where the power of wrong ideas can lead.

:9 But Michael the archangel, when contending with the Devil in dispute about the body of Moses, does not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said: The Lord rebuke you- As noted on 2 Pet. 2:10, the slander of human "dignitaries" was wrong even in its style, because the archangel Michael was at best 'polite' in rebuking the representatives of the local authorities who were resisting the rebuilding of Jerusalem. The implication is that the Angels speak in a soft, gentle way- they do not dare bring a "railing accusation" against the men they operate upon. Similarly the wilderness Angel that gave the Law and pronounced the blessings and curses upon Israel did not do so in a matter of fact 'obey or perish' tone of voice; He "pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt", as He will plead with them to repent in the last days too (Ez. 20:36). The Angel spoke to Moses "as a man speaketh to his friend" (Ex. 33:11)- i.e. in a relaxed, friendly way. It should be remembered that it was in this

tone of voice that the "fiery Law" of Moses was given, rather than in a harsh, judgmental way as is often thought. Similarly Eliphaz had a vision in which he "heard a still voice" (Job 4:16, AV mg.); most visions being associated with Angels, it seems fair to assume this was an Angel's voice- as was the "still small voice" Elijah heard? (1 Kings 19:12).

Jude 9 gives guidance about how to deal with slander and attacks from false brethren. Jude alludes to the well known Jewish legend, *The Testament Of Moses*. In it, the 'devil' slanders Moses, accusing him of having murdered the Egyptian and therefore being worthy of condemnation, and tries to drag Moses' body down to punishment. Jude points out that in the story, the Angel Michael doesn't indulge in justification but rather says that "the *Lord* rebuke thee". And may this be our pattern.

Michael the Archangel's disputing with the Devil about the body of Moses could refer to the Angel that led Israel through the wilderness contending with a group of disaffected Jews. There is no implication that "the Devil" here is an angel; rather does it refer to a group of human opponents whom Angels were against. Seeing that it is stressed that all the Angels are united in doing God's will and are all obedient to Him (Ps. 103:19–21; 148:2; Heb. 1:14), it is not possible for there to be an argument in heaven between angels. Remember that the phrases "Devil" and "Satan" can be used about ordinary men. This Devil is concerned with the body of Moses not the so-called "immortal soul" of men (which is not Biblical teaching anyway). There are many similarities between Jude and 2 Peter 2. Jude 9 has a parallel in 2 Peter 2:11: "Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord". Peter's equivalent of "the Devil" is "them" – implying that the Devil in Jude 9 is not an individual, personal being, but a group of people. 2 Peter 2:10–12 clearly indicates that the "them" was a group of men. As with Jude 6, this verse is in the context of Jude 5 – "I will therefore put you in remembrance". Jude is therefore reminding them of incidents in Israel's history from which they should learn lessons. Thus Jude 9 must be a reference to an historical incident recorded in Scripture. There is no such incident concerning an angel called the Devil arguing with another angel. Michael the Archangel asked God to rebuke, or "forbid", the Devil. If there is a super-human person, power or agency, called the Devil causing men to sin and creating trouble, then there is no evidence that he was ever effectively forbidden, seeing that sin and disaster are progressively increasing.

The reference to the Devil here is incidental. The purpose of the passage is to show that angels speak in a gentle, humble way, even about people they know are in the wrong. They do not show personal vindictiveness, but say "The *Lord* rebuke you". The Judaizers "speak evil of dignities; yet Michael... durst not bring against him (the Devil) a railing accusation", i.e. he did not resort to bitter speaking as they did. Similarly Ex. 33:9–11 says that the angel spoke to Moses "face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend", i.e. In a relaxed, friendly way. It should be remembered that it was with this voice that the "fiery law" of Moses was given by the angel, not in a harsh manner, as can be wrongly inferred from some parts of the narrative. Similarly the "still, small voice" that Elijah heard was probably the quiet, unassuming voice of an angel (1 Kings 19:12 cp. Job 4:16).

There are so many points of contact between this verse and Zechariah 3:1,2 that that chapter must surely provide an historical background to the verse, which would be appreciated by Jude's readers: "And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee; is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"

The most evident similarities are:

<i>Zechariah 3</i>	<i>Jude</i>
--------------------	-------------

The angel of the Lord	Michael the archangel
Satan	The Devil
The Lord rebuke thee	The Lord rebuke thee
A brand plucked out of the fire (vv. 1,2).	Pulling them out of the fire (vv. 9,23).

The context in Zechariah 3 was that of the restoration of the Jews to Jerusalem from Babylon under Ezra and Nehemiah. They were trying to rebuild the temple and re-establish a system of worship there. However, “the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building” (Ezra 4:4), i.e. they acted as Satan / adversaries to the Jews. They are actually called “the adversaries of Judah” in Ezra 4:1. They wrote “an accusation against the (new) inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem” to the king of Persia (Ezra 4:6). The Hebrew word for “accusation” is related to that translated “Satan”. Zechariah 3:8 clearly tells us that the characters of verses 1 and 2 are “men of sign” (A.V. margin), i.e. we have to interpret them. So the satans – the adversaries – stood before the angel along with Joshua the High Priest, who “was clothed with filthy garments” (:3) – without a mitre on his head (:5 implies).

The implication is that the inhabitants of the land, the Satan, were complaining to God, manifested in the angel, that the new Jewish high priest was not really valid, as he did not wear the proper clothes (they had probably been lost during the captivity). The angel tells Satan, “The Lord rebuke thee”, and proceeds to clothe Joshua with a set of priestly clothes and a mitre (:4,5), thus showing God’s acceptance of him. The inference behind the complaint was that God had not really chosen Jerusalem for the Jews to rebuild, and that therefore they were going ahead with their plans without God behind them. But the angel says that “the Lord...hath chosen Jerusalem”, in the same way as He had chosen Joshua to be high priest. Thus Joshua represented Jerusalem. “Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” the angel asks Satan concerning Jerusalem. This is quoted in Jude 23 concerning saving repentant sinners. Thus the angel is in effect saying, “Jerusalem has repented, therefore I have plucked them out of the fire of judgment and destruction; you should not therefore be implying that Jerusalem and the Jews are so sinful that they cannot be restored to their land with Me behind them”.

Jude says that the dispute between the angel and the Devil – those opposed to the rebuilding of the temple – was “about the body of Moses”. This phrase can therefore either refer to the Jewish people generally, in the same way as the Christian church is “the body of Christ” (1 Cor. 12:27) because we look to him for guidance, rather than being in the “body of sin” (Rom. 6:6) because we follow sin, or to Joshua the high priest. Joshua was the “body of Moses” in the sense that “body” can be a figure of speech for a “slave”, e.g. Revelation 18:13; Hebrews 10:5; Psalm 40:6; and Exodus 21:2–6, and Romans 6:6 where having a “body of sin” probably means being a “slave of sin”. The High Priest was thus the slave of Moses.

Another suggestion is that the “body of Moses” was Moses’ literal Body; Michael the archangel was the angel of Israel (Dan. 12:1) who led them through the wilderness in the cloud and fire (Ex. 23:20–21). The dispute may have been between the angel and a group of Jews – “the Devil” – who wanted to take the body of Moses with them. But the angel had buried Moses’ body and would not tell anyone where it was (Dt. 34:6). Remember that the body of Joseph was carried up into Canaan by the Jews (Josh. 24:32) as were the bodies of Jacob and the twelve patriarchs from Egypt (Acts 7:15–16 R.V.); and we know that the bodies of the kings of Israel were used in wrong worship rituals (Ez. 43:7); it is to be expected, therefore, that some of the Jews would also want to take the body of Moses, their great leader, with them. The Jews laid great store by having the remains of their leaders

physically with them – they are condemned for keeping the corpses of their kings in the temple (Ez. 43:7–9).

:10 *But these revile whatever things they do not see with their eyes or cannot examine naturally. They are like the beasts without reason. In these things are they destroyed-* The path of Cain involved reviling what he did not understand (Jude 10,11). He didn't understand, or didn't let himself understand, the principles of sacrifice, and so he reviled his brother and God's commands, he became a true child of the Biblical Devil – because he refused to spiritually 'see' / understand. Their destruction [the same word is used about condemnation at the last day] was ongoing; they were destroying / condemning themselves by their behaviour. They were completely closed to any higher, spiritual reasoning- like animals. "See" is the word for 'understanding'. They used abusive language and had a belligerent attitude because they chose to be without understanding. They reviled "dignitaries" and "authority"; they were so drunk on their own power that they considered themselves above all civil and ecclesial authority. They were so sensual that they were blind to anything beyond that which they could "examine naturally", what was visibly in front of them. And the essence of this error is to be seen in those who reject God and His moral teaching because they say that the evidence for Him cannot be examined naturally, by direct impact upon their own eyes and ears.

:11 *Woe to them! For they went in the way of Cain, and ran riotously in the error of Balaam for hire, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah-* Cain, Balaam and Korah represent a heady mix of lust for money, power and sex. I mention "sex" because this was the method used by Balaam to entice Israel to sin so that they would fall, and thereby he could receive the promised "hire" from Balak. Those men were all within the community of God's people in Old Testament times. The past tense "perished" implies they had already been condemned; but that condemnation was still going to be ministered to them at the last day. They were the living dead, already "perished". Balaam "ran" for reward, so wanting to do Balak's will in order to receive the promised "hire"; and the Angel and donkey tried to arrest him in his headlong rush. He paid no attention, just as the efforts of Jude and Peter to arrest the madness of these men were not being heeded.

The condemned amongst the first century ecclesias "cast themselves away through the error of Balaam" (Jude 11 RVmg.)- and yet it is the Lord who will "cast away" the bad fish in the last day. Yet those He casts away have in fact cast themselves away. Those who lay in wait for others to kill them "lay wait for their own blood, they lurk privily for their own lives" (Prov. 1:11,18). There is a *direct* relationship, in God's judgment, between how we treat others and what will happen to us.

:12 *These are they who are hidden rocks in your love-feasts when they feast with you, shepherds that without fear feed themselves-* These people were present at the breaking of bread meetings, and were in fact the shepherds of the flock. They were leaders of the church. They had no fear of future judgment, and they were solely after their own gratification; in this context the parallel 2 Pet. 2:14 says that their eyes were full of adultery. They clearly had a sexual agenda, and that agenda was realized at the "love-feasts", which in Corinth and Ephesus had been turned into orgies after the pattern of the surrounding religious cults. "Hidden rocks" can also be translated "spots" and this is alluded to in the final encouragement that the Lord through His Spirit is able to preserve His true bride "spotless". This is quite something, given the context. Sincere individuals living under such abusive and insincere shepherds could still be preserved by the Lord, such is the power of the Spirit. Bad environment, even spiritually, doesn't preclude the Lord acting to preserve His own. And clearly enough, if members of these churches were preserved "spotless", without spot, then there is no such thing as guilt by association, somehow acquired by belonging to an apostate church.

Clouds without water, carried along by winds- They appeared to be full of rain / water, a symbol of teaching. But they never dispensed any, and were as if carried along on an endless path to nowhere.

Autumn leaves without fruit- Harvest time had come, but there was just an appearance of leaves, but no fruit. The Lord had cursed the Jewish fig tree exactly because of this. This is another indication that the false teachers in view were Jewish.

Twice dead, plucked up by the roots- 2 Peter 2 and Jude have so often stressed that these men had already been given their condemnation, although the execution of it was yet to come. They would experience "the second death"; we all die once, but those who know God's truth and refuse it shall be resurrected, condemned and thus will die a "second death". But by status, this is how these men already were. They had already been plucked up by the roots- a metaphor used in Mk. 11:20 for the judgment of apostate Israel, but a quotation from Dan. 7:8 about the plucking up by the roots of Gentile powers. These Judaists were effectively Gentiles and would be judged as them.

:13 *Wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame-* "Shame" is the language of the condemned at the last day. They were proudly displaying their condemnation. They were as the wicked of Is. 57:20, a restless sea. Stability and peace, which are fruits of the Spirit and arise from the firm anchor of having the Kingdom hope, were far from them. The indulgence of lust doesn't lead to a happy life, but to this endless restlessness, a sense of movement but going nowhere.

Wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness has been reserved forever- As noted above, they are "wandering" because of the way the flesh ever seeks new fulfilment. The stability of knowing the eternal love of the Lord Jesus and the certainty of future salvation are unknown to such people. "Blackness of darkness" seems a tautology, as was 'even defiling the flesh' in :8; language struggles to adequately deliver the sense of utter tragedy arising from the depth of such utter depravity. Eternal death is blackness, night, utter nothingness with no order. Compared to the infinite activity of the Spirit, eternally.

:14 *And to these also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying: Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of His holy ones-* Jude speaks about the false teachers of the first century. He recalls how Enoch had spoken of how the wicked of his day were destroyed in the flood: "Behold the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones to execute judgment" (Jude 14,15 RV). I suggested on Gen. 8:1 that these "holy ones" were Angels who actually brought about the flood. The Lord's coming with the Angels at the last day will be an even greater fulfilment of this. And yet Jude says that "To these also [i.e. the first century false teachers] Enoch... prophesied" (Jude 14 RV). Enoch's words were primarily addressed to his own generation, but his words ought to be taken as speaking directly to the first century apostates. In similar vein, the Lord said that Isaiah's words to his generation were prophesy "of you" in the first century. The idea seems to be that Jude's prophesy of their condemnation was to be seen as the equivalent of Enoch's condemnation of the immoral false believers of his age in the lead up to the flood.

But there may be a double meaning here. For there was a popular first century BC 'Book of Enoch'.

A rather detailed argument – and yet a very powerful one – that Angels don't sin is actually provided by considering the passages in 2 Peter 2 and Jude which are used by some to prove that Angels sin. We have here what we meet many times in Holy Scripture – a series of allusions to a contemporary, uninspired, popular piece of literature in order to show that it is in fact wrong. This point may easily be lost on us, reading as we do from our distance from the original context. It's been observed that there are many allusions to the popular first century BC 'Book of Enoch' in 2 Peter and Jude. This book claimed that 200 Angels were

expelled from Heaven and then married beautiful women on earth. Peter and Jude allude to it in order to show how wrong it is. In the Book of Enoch, it is claimed that the righteous Angel Michael brings accusation against the 200 supposedly rebellious Angels. But this is specifically alluded to and corrected by Peter and Jude. In the table below are some of the allusions:

Jude	Book of Enoch
“Enoch the Seventh from Adam prophesied” Jude 14	Enoch 60:8
“dry springs” Jude 12	Enoch 48:1,96:6 dried up fountains
“waterless clouds” Jude 12	Enoch 18:5,41:4–5,100:11–12
“reserved for blackest darkness” Jude 13	Enoch 21:3 “darkness shall be their dwelling” Enoch 46:6
“trees without fruit” Jude 12	Enoch 80:3
“plucked up” Jude 13	Enoch 83:4
“raging waves” Jude 12	Enoch 101:3–5
“See the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone and convict the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done’.” (Jude 14–15)	“See the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone and convict the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done” (Enoch 1:9)
“reserved unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6)	Reserved unto the day of sorrow Enoch 45:2

Peter consciously contradicts this by stressing that “angels do *not* bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord” (2 Pet. 2:11), and Jude is even more specific by saying that this is true of Michael the Archangel (Jude 9). According to the Book of Enoch, the man Enoch judges the sinful Angels, but 2 Peter 3 warns that actually Angels will come with Lord Jesus in order to judge *men*. We can now understand why Peter claims that “bold and arrogant these men (the false teachers) are not afraid to slander celestial beings” (2 Pet. 2:10) – i.e. the Angels. The Book of Enoch slandered Angels by claiming 200 of them sinned. As Jude 8 puts it, the false teachers “reject authority and slander celestial beings”. The idea that the 200 Angels had sexual encounters with enticing women was therefore a slander. We need to reflect on the implications of all this – for claiming that Angels sin is actually spoken of by Peter and Jude as if it is serious blasphemy. Those early Christians were returning to their earlier Jewish and Pagan beliefs, which according to 2 Pet. 2:22 is to be seen as a dog returning to its vomit. This is how serious the issue is.

It should be noted that the Book of Enoch and other such writings are frequently alluded to in the Apocalypse – again, to deconstruct them and show a first century readership the *real* meaning of the terms used in the popular uninspired literature of the time. Thus the descriptions of the Heavenly “Son of man” in Enoch 47:3–7 are alluded to in the description of the Lord Jesus in Rev. 1:15–17 (This and many other such allusions are to be found tabulated in Hugh Schonfield, *The Original New Testament: Revelation* (London: Firethorn Press, 1985)).

:15 *To execute judgment upon all and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him-* The judgment of the Lord's second coming will not be a simple destruction of the wicked. Through the condemnation / judgment process, they will be convicted of all their sins, including all their hard words they spoke against the Lord. Such is the Lord's knowledge that words spoken by men in this life will be quoted back

to them at judgment. By their words will men be justified and condemned (Mt. 12:37); see on Mt. 12:36; Lk. 13:28.

Num. 32:23 prophesied of Israel in their time of condemnation: "You will be sensible of your sin when evil overtakes you" (LXX). Truly has Ez. 6:9 prophesied of the rejected: "They shall loathe themselves for their evils which they have committed in all their abominations". Jude 15 would even suggest that the purpose of judgment being executed is to convict the rejected of *all* their ungodly deeds and hard words. Through realising their condemnation they will realize in awful detail exactly *why* this had to be. Our own self-examination now will be stimulated by realising the depth to which we *deserve* condemnation, even though by grace we are saved rather than condemned.

:16 *These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their lusts-* "Murmuring" is the word used of how the Jews murmured against the Lord Jesus (Lk. 5:30; Jn. 6:41,43; 1 Cor. 10:10). The murmuring and complaining by the false teachers was presumably in slander of the faithful teachers. And the terms of course recall Israel in the wilderness, ever murmuring and complaining against Moses and God. They should have been walking after the Spirit, but instead the lusts of the flesh controlled them.

(And their mouth speaks great swelling words), showing respect of persons for the sake of personal advantage- This alludes to how they were false teachers, speaking words which like leaven swelled up into great things. We recall how leaven was used as symbolic of the teaching of the Pharisees. The Greek could be translated the other way around, as if they got people to respect their persons for the sake of personal advantage. They had seized the podium for the indulgence of their own lusts- see on :12. Their teachings were ultimately in order to empower their own self indulgence regarding wealth, power and sex. As noted on :15, these people would be judged at the last day for their words; and those words included the words they were teaching. Hence James warns us to not rush to be teachers, for those who speak the most words [especially publicly] risk the greater condemnation (James 3:1).

:17 *But you, beloved, remember the words which have been spoken previously by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ-* The faithful minority in these churches were not to listen to the swelling words of the false teachers (:16) but rather to remember the words of the true prophets, the Lord's apostles. "Remember" is appropriate to illiterate folk who would only have had the memory of the inspired, spoken words to go on. Maybe the implication is that Jude's readership were initially those of 2 Peter 2, who were the Jews whom Peter had baptized after their hearing the words of the Lord's apostles at Pentecost.

:18 *How they said to you: In the last time there shall be mockers, walking after their own ungodly lusts-* Warning of the great falling away had been a major part of the initial teaching which these converts had received. The records of these warnings appear to have been greatly abbreviated in the Acts transcripts of the apostolic addresses. Clearly there was follow up instruction given after baptism. The mockers were credible enough to become the apparent shepherds and teachers in the congregations to whom Jude was writing. The mocking may have therefore been quite subtle; but the Spirit through Jude exposed it for what it was. The same Greek words for "ungodly lusts" are found in Tit. 2:11,12- it was a denial of God's grace which led to living in such lusts. And the Judaizers had rejected that grace for a form of legalism which allowed them to indulge their own lusts.

:19 *These are they who make divisions, sensual, having not the Spirit-* Being divisive is the supreme testament to the lack of the Spirit; for the Spirit unites. Each heart that has received the gift of the Spirit and allowed it free reign will naturally unite with others who are led by the same Spirit. This is what "the unity of the Spirit" is all about (Eph. 4:3). Division is a

work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20); unity is a fruit of the Spirit. It's as simple as that. Those who are divisive lack the Spirit. We need to each enshrine the principle that we will never, ever divide from those for whom Christ died, His body. If we do, we have not the Spirit and are mere religionists. These people are "sensual", seeing things in natural terms, of the flesh, and without the Spirit. This same kind of language is found in :10 [see notes there]. To divide from others is the natural, animal like way. To unite is counter-instinctive, if we live in the flesh. Unity is of the Spirit. And the natural man cannot receive spiritual things which are spiritually discerned- unless he has the Spirit and is no longer seeking to view life in material, visible, concrete, rational terms (1 Cor. 2:14). The Greek for "make divisions" here means literally to draw a boundary. The Lord Jesus was fundamentally open; He drew no boundaries of exclusion from His table and fellowship. It was men who themselves decided whether to come near to Him or not. All the *angst* about where to draw fellowship boundaries is really arguing about where to draw lines in the sand. The Lord was fundamentally open rather than closed. And as clearly stated here, such drawing of boundaries is not the way of His Spirit.

:20 *But you, beloved, build up yourselves in your most holy faith-* The antidote to all the awful behaviour listed so far is to be built up in the Spirit. The Lord builds us up, edifying us by His Spirit; but we need to respond by doing our part in being open to His work within us. The ideas of holiness and "the faith" recall the opening of the letter; the believers were being made holy by the Spirit, and were to defend the faith. Spiritual growth was on the basis of the basic Gospel they believed, "the faith".

Praying in the Holy Spirit- We receive the gift of the Spirit in our hearts at baptism, but we are to allow this Spirit to teach us and take over our thinking and action. The Spirit in view is the Spirit or mind of the Lord Jesus; it is His psychological entrance into us. This explains the encouragement to pray in or by the Spirit (Rom. 8:26; Eph. 6:18). The contrast is with those who did not have the Spirit (:19).

Who we are as persons is effectively our prayer and plea to God. This conception of prayer explains why often weeping, crying, waiting, meditating etc. are spoken of as "prayer", although there was no specific verbalizing of requests (Ps. 5:1,2; 6:8; 18:1,2,3,6; 40:1; 42:8; 64:1 Heb.; 65:1,2; 66:17-20; Zech. 8:22). The association between prayer and weeping is especially common: 1 Sam. 1:10; Ps. 39:12; 55:1,2; Jn. 11:41,42; Heb. 5:7, especially in the Lord's life and the Messianic Psalms. "The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping. The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer" (Ps. 6:8,9) crystallizes the point. *Desire* is also seen as effectively praying for something (Rom. 10:1; Col. 1:9; 2 Cor. 9:14). Weeping, desiring, waiting, meditating etc. are all acts of the mind, or 'spirit' in Biblical terminology. There is therefore a big association between our spirit or state of mind, and prayer. The spirit (disposition) of Christ which we have received leads us to *pray* "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). "Praying in the holy spirit" (Jude 20) is to be seen in this context. Prayer is part of the *atmosphere* of spiritual life, not something hived off and separate- it is an expression of our spirit. Thus there are verses which speak of many daily prayers as being just one prayer (Ps. 86:3,6; 88:1,2); prayer is a way / spirit of life, not something specific which occurs for a matter of minutes each day. The commands to "pray without ceasing" simply can't be literally obeyed (1 Thess. 5:17). "Watch and pray *always*" in the last days likewise connects prayer with *watchfulness*, which is an attitude of mind rather than something done on specific occasions. This is not to say that prayer *in no sense* refers to formal, specific prayer. Evidently it does, but it is only a verbal crystallization of our general spirit of life.

:21 *Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life-* The work of the Spirit in keeping us in Christ must be responded to by our

freewill efforts to likewise keep or remain in Him. We are to 'keep' the Lord's ways and commandments, and yet He keeps us by the Spirit. "They have kept Your word... keep [s.w.] [them] by Your own Name... I kept them in Your Name... keep them from the evil" (Jn. 17). Jude will conclude by glorying in the fact that the Lord is able to keep us from falling in spiritual terms (:24). We are "looking", in utter confidence, to receive mercy and eternal life at the Lord's return. The parallel in 2 Peter is "looking for... the coming of the day of God" (2 Pet. 3:12). This again suggests that we should be able to be certain that if we die now or the Lord returns now, we will certainly be saved. But we must "keep" or abide in that status.

Jude 20,21 exhorts us: "building up yourselves... keep yourselves in the love of God". The use of the plural 'yourselves' rather than a singular 'thysself' suggests that we are to understand this as meaning that we should build up our community, keep each other in the love of God. Jude had begun by exalting that we are "sanctified by God the Father, and preserved [s.w. 'keep yourselves'] [by God] in Jesus Christ". His conclusion is that we are kept / preserved by God in Christ *insofar as* we, the ministers of Christ, keep / preserve each other. The Greek for 'building up' occurs in Eph. 4:16: "From [Christ] the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, *maketh increase* [builds up] of the body unto the edifying of itself in love". The body builds itself up, *if* each part contributes. If they don't, then there is no building up. Using the same figure, 1 Cor. 3:10-14 speak of us building up God's house, the believers, on the foundation of Christ. And we will be judged for the quality of what is built- our final judgment will be a reflection of the quality of our brethren, in that their spirituality is partly determined by our efforts for them. But Col. 2:4 uses the same word to say that we are built up "in [Christ]... as [according as] ye have been taught... beware lest any man spoil you [through false teaching]. The life of fellowship with our brethren in Christ is what builds us up, if we teach each other the right things. But false teaching means that the house of believers will not be built up. This would have been especially so in ecclesias of largely illiterate members. The point is, we are all builders, each part has something to contribute, and the doing of every ecclesial service must be consciously to the end of building up one another.

:22 *On those who are in doubt have mercy*- As noted on :21, these commands are collective, and they were the more necessary because the shepherds of the congregation were self-seeking and apostate. All the faithful members had to therefore take responsibility for the flock. It is seen as trendy to admit "doubt" about spiritual things; but "doubt" here requires "mercy". It should not be the case. The work of the Spirit convicts and convinces so that doubt regarding the basic existence and saving power of God in Christ is not in doubt. We can hardly have the sure Hope which the Gospel speaks of if we have such doubts. The AV adds: "Making a difference". The context has spoken of those without any conscience who were abusing the flock and bent on indulging their own lusts through the abuse of others. The "difference" was presumably between these types and those who were weak and needed compassion shown to their moral weaknesses.

:23 *And others save, snatching them out of the fire; and on some, have mercy with fear, hating even the underclothing stained by the flesh*- This continues the allusion to Zechariah 3 noted on :9. The Angel just about decided in favour of saving Jerusalem out of the 'fire' of eternal punishment (cp. Jer. 17:27) for her sins- He had "compassion, making a difference" (Jude 22). The "garment spotted by the flesh" must connect with the "filthy garments" worn by Joshua as he came into the Angel's presence.

Likewise an Angel had pulled Lot from the fire (Jude 7)- in this sense, Jude seems to suggest, we can do God's work for him. Likewise we must "make a difference" concerning

some, just as the Angels "contended" [s.w.] for men (Jude 9 cp. 22). The fire of condemnation at the judgment is in a sense already kindled, as the Lord Himself had taught (Lk. 12:49). The weak brother condemns himself by his way of life, and falls into condemnation even now, before the judgment (James 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:6; Tit. 3:11). We see this, and have the power in some cases to save the brother by pulling him out of that fire of condemnation. Surely the point is that we can save our brother from condemnation at judgment day by what we do for him now. See on Rom. 12:20.

The "fear" we are to show is perhaps in realizing that the process of saving these people from out of the fire risks our falling into it; to save someone you have to get close to them. And these people were already condemned, in the fire of Gehenna, as it were. Their clothing was blemished, in contrast to how we are to appear "without blemish" at judgment day (:24). The Lord will keep us from stumbling, however (:24). Jude has several times expressed the idea that the false teachers were so bad that they were condemned already, as it were already in the Gehenna fire. But the faithful remnant could even save some of them, at least potentially. To pull someone out of eternal condemnation is one of the most significant things we can do with our lives. But this can only be achieved by coming close to them in association.

:24- see on Eph. 1:4.

Now to him that is able to guard you from stumbling- God can withhold men from sinning (Gen. 20:6), and His Son can keep us from falling (Jude 24), keeping [s.w.] us from evil (2 Thess. 3:3). This preservation unto salvation is the work of His Spirit in our hearts. It is for this that we pray when we ask in the Lord's prayer to be 'delivered from evil'. We of course must play our part in 'keeping' the faith. But we are empowered to do so by the Spirit- hence Timothy is challenged to "keep [s.w.] that which was given to you, by the Holy Spirit which dwells within us" (2 Tim. 1:14). The strong similarities between Jude and 2 Peter 2 continue on this point too; for the same word is used of how God saved or kept / guarded Noah (2 Pet. 2:5), whilst condemning the world around him for their sin. This 'keeping' refers therefore to God's keeping of Noah spiritually, from falling into the sins of those around him. If his literal salvation from death by drowning was in view, a different verb would have been used.

And to set you before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy- It is only the Lord Jesus who is "without blemish", the perfect Paschal lamb (Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19). There are repeated encouragements that we shall be likewise "without blemish" before Him at the last day (Rev. 14:5), as we are now (Eph. 1:4; 5:27; Col. 1:22). But this is only true because of His righteousness being imputed to us, by grace through faith. This status should bring "exceeding joy" both now (1 Pet. 1:8) and in the last day (1 Pet. 4:13). We shall enter into the joy of our Lord (Mt. 25:21). His joy is above that of all His brethren (Heb. 1:9 s.w.), and yet all that is true of Him shall be true of us.

The idea of "blemish" has been common in 2 Pet. 2 and Jude. The false teachers and wicked shepherds were blemishes upon the church (:12; 2 Pet. 2:13); some were already under condemnation, with their clothes "spotted by the flesh" (:23). Yet the faithful remnant would be preserved without blemish in that they were clothed in the Lord's righteousness.

When all this is finally realized, we shall be awed at the Lord's grace, feeling with those of the parable that we have not done all the wonderful things counted to us. Our amazement and incomprehension at the judgment is brought out in 2 Thess. 1:10, which speaks of the saints 'admiring' Christ in that day, using a Greek word meaning 'to marvel at in incomprehension'. This praise will be on account of our being "presented faultless" before the judgment (Jude 24). The Greek for "presented" is the same word translated "stood" in Lk. 21:36, showing that our angel is able to stand us up in the august presence of the Lord, only

by reason of our faults having been totally covered by Christ's imputed righteousness. Col. 1:22 has a similar message: "...to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable (Gk. 'free from accusation') in his sight". This freedom from accusation explains why none of our bad deeds will be mentioned to us then. One wonders if Paul's appearance before the judgment seat in Acts 25 is described as it is in order to help us imagine this; he has no accusers, and therefore can be acquitted. The idea of being presented faultless before the glorious presence of a monarch was well known in the ancient world. Esther and Daniel's friends had a person assigned to present them faultless before the monarch; and it is the Lord Jesus through the work of His Spirit who can present us faultless before Himself. Our beauty is truly in the eyes of our beholder. He is both the ultimate monarch, and also the one who prepared us for the presentation before Him.

:25 *To the only God, our Saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now and for always in the future. Amen-* The Roman proconsuls were to be called "Saviour". But for Christians, there was only *one* Saviour, the Lord Jesus. The Caesars were frequently called "Saviour"- Josephus thus addressed Vespasian. Hence the radical import of the way that Jude 25 calls the Lord Jesus our *only* Saviour. 'Caesar is Lord' was the cry of the Roman empire. Pliny wrote that he considered refusal to make the customary gesture to the emperor's statue to be a criminal act punishable by death. But "To us there is but one Lord, Jesus" the Christ, i.e. Jesus the Messiah of the despised, weird Jewish race.

Note that God's purpose with us began "before all time"; not just from "the beginning". We were part of His "eternal purpose" in Christ (Eph. 3:11). Our calling and foreknowledge was not just from some 'beginning', but 'before' that; we were always in God's mind, and He existed with that mind from eternity.