

**Notes & Outlines**

# **JUDE**

**J. Vernon McGee**

## JUDE

**WRITER:** Judas

Jude (this is the English form of the name Judas) was the brother of James (see notes on Epistle of James) and was also a half brother of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 13:55).

**DATE:** A.D. 66-69

**THEME:** Assurance in days of apostasy.

The word for *keep* occurs 5 times (see verses 1, 6, 21, 24).

### REMARKS:

Jude was intending to write an epistle regarding our “common salvation” when the Spirit detoured him to write concerning the apostasy. It is a graphic and striking description of the apostasy. What was a little cloud the size of a man’s hand in Jude’s day is, in our day, a storm of hurricane proportions — because we are in the apostasy of which he foretold. It is a question now of how much worse it can become before genuine believers are taken out by the Rapture.

Jude gives the only record in the Scriptures of the contention over the body of Moses. Also, only Jude gives the prophecy of Enoch.

Jude affords a fitting introduction to the Book of Revelation.

### OUTLINE:

#### I. OCCASION of the epistle, verses 1-3

A. Assurance for believers, verses 1, 2  
(*Sanctified, kept, called*)

B. Change of theme to apostasy, verse 3

#### II. OCCURRENCES of apostasy, verses 4-16

A. Inception of apostasy, verse 4

B. Israel in wilderness in unbelief destroyed, verse 5

C. Angels rebelled; kept in chains, verse 6

D. Sodom and Gomorrah sinned in sensuality; destroyed by fire,  
verse 7

E. Modern apostate teachers identified, verses 8-10  
(*Despise authority*)

**F. Cain, Balaam, and Korah are examples of apostates,** verse 11

**G. Modern apostate teachers defined and described,** verses 12-16

### **III. OCCUPATION of believers in days of apostasy,** verses 17-25

**A. Believers warned by apostles that these apostates would come,**  
verses 17-19

**B. What believers must do in days of apostasy,** verses 20-25

#### **COMMENT:**

**I. OCCASION of the epistle,** verses 1-3

**A. Assurance for believers,** verses 1, 2

**v. 1** — Jude identifies himself as a servant (bond slave) of Jesus Christ. He was a half brother of our Lord, according to the flesh, and the brother of James (see notes on James 1:1; also Matthew 13:55, Acts 1:14). A servant of Jesus Christ is a higher position and relationship than being a half brother.

“Sanctified by God, the Father” should read *beloved of God the Father* (see John 17:22, 23).

“Preserved” is translated elsewhere *kept* (see John 17:11, 12). Two ways of preserving are by vinegar and by sugar. There are saints today who seem to be preserved in both elements. However, the perseverance of the saints is by His grace, which preserves or keeps them. “They overcame...by the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 12:11).

“Called” — God does not call us because of ability, effort, talent, or character. Whom He calls He keeps (see John 15:16).

**v. 2** — “Mercy” proceeds from His grace.

“Peace” is the result of experiencing the grace and mercy of God.

“Love” is the motivation for all God does.

**B. Change of theme to apostasy,** verse 3

The Holy Spirit detoured Jude from writing on some theme of the faith in order that he might sound a warning of the impending apostasy. Apostasy is a departure from “the faith,” the apostles’ doctrine (Acts 2:42). What was a cloud the size of a man’s hand in Jude’s day is now a storm of hurricane force that fills the land.

## II. OCCURRENCES of apostasy, verses 4-16

### A. Inception of apostasy, verse 4

Jude sounds a warning that already apostates had entered the fold of the church (Acts 20:29-31; 2 Timothy 3:6; 2 Peter 2:1; Galatians 2:4).

“Ordained” is *written beforehand*.

Note the 3 marks of apostates:

- 1) “Ungodly men” are unconverted; leaving God out.
- 2) “Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness” which is *blatant immorality; shameless sin*. They arrogantly and proudly flaunt sin publicly. In Jude’s day Gnosticism taught that the body was essentially evil, that all matter was evil, and the spirit alone was good. As a result, it did not matter what a man did with his body; he was free to satisfy the lusts of the body. It was a perversion of grace. (See Galatians 5:13; Romans 6:2; Acts 20:29; 1 Peter 2:16.)
- 3) “Denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” (see 1 John 4:3; 2 John 7).

### B. Israel in wilderness in unbelief destroyed, verse 5

Jude lists 6 examples of apostasy in the past and the judgment of God upon them. There were 3 groups and 3 individuals.

- 1) Israel at Kadesh-barnea refused to enter the promised land. God judges men and nations for their sins (see Jeremiah 32:19). Unbelief is sin (see Romans 14:23).

### C. Angels rebelled; kept in chains, verse 6

- 2) This judgment of angels probably took place in some pre-Adamic age, although many good men identify this with the “sons of God” mentioned in Genesis 6 (see 2 Peter 2:4). The judgment for angels is special and separate. Though it is difficult to be specific here as to details, the important feature is that the sin of angels does not escape the judgment of God.

### D. Sodom and Gomorrah sinned in sensuality; destroyed by fire, verse 7

- 3) Defiled flesh, perversion, sodomy, and gross immorality (“new morality”) have been judged in the past as a warning to modern man.

## **E. Modern apostate teachers identified, verses 8-10**

**v. 8** — Jude identifies apostate teachers:

- 1) “Dreamers” (omit *filthy*) indicates that they live in an unreal world, probably having drug-induced dreams.
- 2) “Defile the flesh” connotes base and abnormal immorality.
- 3) “Despise dominion” is to reject authority.
- 4) “Speak evil of dignities” is protest against rules and those in authority (e.g., revile police).

**v. 9** — This is a most remarkable verse. Satan is a fallen creature and an avowed enemy of God. Yet Michael, when contending about the body of Moses, would not bring a sentence that would impugn the dignity of Satan. Michael even respected the position of Satan. Clement quotes from an apocryphal writing dealing with the funeral of Moses. When Michael was commissioned to bury Moses, Satan opposed it on the grounds that, since he was the master of the material and matter, the body belonged to him. Michael’s only answer was, “The Lord [the Creator] rebuke thee.” Satan also brought the charge of murder against Moses. Also it is suggested that Satan wanted to hinder the later appearance of Moses at the Mount of Transfiguration.

**v. 10** — Two different words are translated “know” here. The thought is that the apostates protest against that about which they do not have absolute mental comprehension; but they follow what they know by instinct, like an animal.

## **F. Cain, Balaam, and Korah are examples of apostates, verse 11**

“Woe” is *ouai*, a wail of sorrow or denunciation.

“Way of Cain” characterizes an apostate who is religious but who denies he is a sinner — yet who could be redeemed only by the sacrifice of life and shedding of blood.

“Error of Balaam” was in that he thought a holy God must punish Israel (see author’s *Reveling Through Revelation*, vol. 1).

“Gainsaying of Korah” was in that he contradicted the authority of Moses and intruded into the office of priest — and died. He was a rebellious man.

## **G. Modern apostate teachers defined and described, verses 12-16**

This is a vivid, graphic, dramatic, frightening description of apostates of the last days.

**v. 12** — “Spots” are *hidden rocks* that wreck a ship — make shipwreck of faith (1 Timothy 1:18, 19).

“Feeding themselves” is *shepherds that feed themselves* — a true shepherd feeds the sheep. Milton aptly described this situation. “The hungry sheep look up and are not fed.”

“Clouds...without water” means that they look as if they are filled with the Word of God, but they are empty and dry.

“Trees...without fruit” — Jesus said, “By their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:20).

**v. 13** — “Raging waves” are *wild waves* — unashamed.

“Wandering stars” means *lawless*, following no course.

**vv. 14, 15** — There is no record in the Old Testament of this prophecy by Enoch. This is for the church. True believers will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17); make-believers will be judged. The organized church will go into the Great Tribulation. At the Rapture this apostate church is ruptured — the true believers leave, the make-believers remain.

**v. 16** — Apostates are:

- 1) “Murmurers” — they mutter their complaints.
- 2) “Complainers” is literally *blamers of their lot; discontented*.
- 3) “Walking after their own lusts” means they live to satisfy their craving and overweening desires.
- 4) “Speaketh great swelling words” is addiction to flowery, extravagant, and exaggerated language.
- 5) “Having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage” means that they do not look to God but to men for help and advancement (see James 2:1-4).

### **III. OCCUPATION of believers in days of apostasy, verses 17-25**

#### **A. Believers warned by apostles that these apostates would come, verses 17-19**

**vv. 17, 18** — “Beloved” means *loved of God*.

“Remember” — believers are constantly urged to remember (see author’s book, *Reveling Through Revelation*). Believers should know the Word of God.

“Mockers” live to satisfy their own passionate desires. They cause divisions, live for self, and do not have the Holy Spirit (see Romans 8:9).

**B. What believers must do in days of apostasy, verses 20-25**

- v. 20** — 1) “Building up yourselves on your most holy faith” means to study the Word of God. Both Paul and Peter urged this for the last days (study — 2 Timothy 2:15; know the holy Scriptures — 2 Timothy 3:15; preach the Word — 2 Timothy 4:2; take heed — 2 Peter 1:19).
- 2) “Praying in the Holy Spirit” (see Ephesians 6:18; Romans 8:26, 27).
- v. 21** — 3) “Keep yourselves in the love of God” — God loves the believer with an everlasting love, but the believer can get out of fellowship with the Lord by sinning. We cannot prevent the sun from shining, but we can put up a parasol to keep the sun from shining on us.
- 4) “Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ” means that every believer will be taken out at the Rapture because of the mercy of God and not the merit of the believer.
- v. 22** — 5) “Of some have compassion, making a difference” means to have compassion on some who are in doubt. Some folk are honest doubters and need help and counsel in these days.
- v. 23** — 6) “Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire”(compare Zechariah 3:2). We can only glean in days of apostasy. There is no wholesale turning to God that we can see. A revival is possible, but only the Holy Spirit can bring it.
- 7) “Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” means that while we are pulling some brands out of the fire, we do not adopt their methods or drop down to the level of those who satisfy the flesh.

**vv. 24, 25** — This is one of the great benedictions of Scripture. A literal translation would be: Now unto Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you (make you stand) before the presence of His glory blameless with great rejoicing, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory, majesty, might, and authority before all time, both now and forever. Amen.

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Coder, S. Maxwell. *Jude: The Acts of the Apostates*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1958.
- Ironside, H. A. *Exposition of the Epistle of Jude*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.
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- McGee, J. Vernon. *2 and 3 John and Jude*. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 1991.
- Wolff, Richard. *A Commentary on the Epistle of Jude*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960.
- Wuest, Kenneth S. *In These Last Days*. (2 Peter, 1, 2, 3 John, and Jude in the Greek New Testament for the English Reader.) Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1954.

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