

# Jude Notes

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## ***Greetings (vss. 1-2)***

- Jude does not identify himself as the half brother of Christ. Jude's calling of himself a servant implies that what he is about to write is what His Master wants him to say. He also calls himself "a brother of James," the half brother of Jesus who wrote the letter of James and became an elder of the church in Jerusalem. The writer of this epistle was the half brother of Christ, called "Judas" in Mark 6:3. The resurrected Christ was seen by James, another half brother (1 Corinthians 15:7), so undoubtedly both James and Judas became Christians about the same time.
- "Servant" denoted being owned and rendering absolute, selfless submission to someone, in this case to Jesus as Lord.

## ***The Reason For Writing (vss. 3-4)***

- Jude tells his "beloved" that he wanted to write a letter concerning "salvation," but he abandoned his theme and warned Christians of the false teachers now in the church. "Contend" basically refers to the intense effort in a wrestling match (1 Corinthians 9:25). The specific form here shows that the Christian struggle is to be vigorous and continuous. "The faith" is the body of truth or doctrine revealed by God (Acts 2:42; Romans 6:17; Galatians 1:23). Jude stresses that this faith has been entrusted "once for all." This means there would be no further revelation from God.
- Jude now explains the reasons why he was compelled to write. Jude recognized that he was a watchman for the truth (cf. Ezekiel 3:16-21), who could not simply watch in silence as his readers slipped into error.
- Jude's warnings were not hypothetical; ungodly men had secretly crept in among Christians. In extrabiblical Greek the word described the cunning craftiness of a lawyer who, through clever argumentation, infiltrated the minds of courtroom officials and corrupted their thinking. Their condemnation was written of long ago and would be similar to what would be written of in the next section. Evidently their understanding of grace and perhaps of the forgiveness of sins led them to feel free to indulge in all forms of sexual depravity. The doctrines these false teachers held amounted to a denial of the true God and of the Savior in His nature and work.

## ***Reminders From The Past (vss. 5-7)***

- As Peter did in 2 Peter 1:12, Jude states that his readers already know what he is about to say but that he will remind them of it. The first

example is Israel, who experienced the great display of God's grace in the exodus from Egypt and received His care in the wilderness. Yet they disbelieved. The angels also rebelled from their given duties and were reserved for the judgment.

- In vs. 6, the sin of homosexuality in Sodom and Gomorrah is described as "going after strange flesh" which means, "contrary to nature." It was especially deviant conduct from the God-ordained designed for human sexuality (cf. Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:9-10). Their destruction furnishes a powerful warning against all of that kind of conduct and a demonstration that punishment will come upon the ungodly.

### ***The Ungodly Persons (vss. 8-19)***

- Jude calls them "dreamers" because they who hold these doctrines sustain the same relationship which dreams do to good sense. Their doctrines came from the imagination. They were phony visionaries. In the Old Testament, the term "dreamer" was virtually synonymous with false prophets (Deuteronomy 13:1-5; cf. Jeremiah 23:25-32).
- Jewish literature tells of a struggle over Moses' body (cf. Deuteronomy 34:5-6). Michael refused to condemn the devil, but referred the dispute to the sovereignty of God. So if he had respect for celestial powers, how much more should the human false teachers do so. Rather than having superior knowledge as they claimed, the false teachers had only brute animal knowledge.
- The "love feasts" have been notoriously difficult to interpret. We know from an examination of the New Testament that "love feasts" were not common meals. At least two explanations satisfy the context of Jude without doing violence to the rest of the New Testament which bears upon this subject. Jude's "love feasts" could refer to the continual life of the Christian as he lives in the love of God and His truth. This seems to be Paul's use of the term "feast" in 1 Corinthians 5:8. Jude could be warning Christians of the apostates who pretended to love God, His truth and the brethren, but who were in fact harmful "rocks" among them. Or, Jude could simply be referring to the Lord's supper. It is a feast the church has been commanded to observe (Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34). We partake of the "table of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 10:21) to remember His death for our sins (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:26). Under this explanation, Jude is warning of false brethren who crept in secretly, and although they were partaking of the Lord's supper with them, their error was in fact dangerous to their spiritual well-being.
- In vss. 12-13, Jude piles six figures on top of one another to describe the false teachers. These descriptions are very close to what is stated in

2 Peter 2. Next, Jude quotes from the book of Enoch, the last surviving Jewish pseudepigraphical writings. Enoch's prophecy does not give any new information, but is simply a general description of the return of the Lord in judgment. Since it was accurate, it was acceptable for Jude to use it to bolster his argument (cf. Acts 17:28; 1 Corinthians 15:33; Titus 1:12).

- Vs. 16 completes Jude's denunciation of the false teachers as "murmurers" and "complainers." They gave unlimited indulgence to their appetites and passions and they paid special attention to those from whom they could derive benefit.
- How are Christians to act in light of this situation? They are to remember the word of God as given by the apostles. Christ promised that mockers would come, and now they had appeared. Again, Jude returns to a three part pattern of describing false teachers. First, they divide brethren. Second, they follow sensual impulses. Third, they do not have the Spirit, in spite of all their vaunted claims and teaching.

### ***Exhortation For Christians (vss. 20-23)***

- The repetition of "beloved" redirects attention back from his opponents to the Christians. Now he gives them a fourfold exhortation for their spiritual profit. First, Christians are to build themselves up. We do this by having fellowship with the Lord and His people, and by continuing in our studies of the gospel of Christ. Second, Christians are to pray in the Holy Spirit. This simply means that we pray according to the Spirit's will as set forth in the written word. Third, Christians are to keep themselves in the love of God. Those who depart from Christ depart from the love of God. Fourth, Christians are to look for the mercy of Jesus Christ. This mercy is ultimately manifested when Christ returns.
- Mercy must be shown to those who were doubting or hesitating. The teaching and example of the false teachers have caused them to be uncertain about the truths of the gospel. There are others who Jude pictures as slipping into the eternal fire but are rescued from error by Christians. Jude uses extremely graphic, coarse language to highlight the degree of danger involved in this type of work. We must always use fear or caution to those who are deep in immorality, lest they, like an infection, spread to those who try to help (1 Corinthians 5:6).

### ***Doxology (vss. 24-25)***

- Jude closes with a wonderful benediction, emphasizing the power of Christ to keep His own. "Keep" means "to guard" or "to watch over."
- Only God has the power to prevent us from yielding to temptation (Romans 1:16). If we do not give in to temptation, we will stand before

the Lord's glorious presence unblameable and with abounding joy  
(Romans 5:1-4; Colossians 3:4; 1 Peter 5:10).