

visit Gaius. **Peace to you:** Peace should come to the heart of Gaius in view of the fact that the apostle was coming (Compare 1 Pt 5:14; Ep 6:23). On the other hand, there was certainly no peace of mind for Diotrephes. **Our friends:** There were those in the company of John who were also known by Gaius. John

here seeks to bring comfort to the heart of Gaius by reaffirming the fellowship he maintains with the church. John also knew brethren who were disciples in the area of Gaius. Gaius must seek fellowship with those who are faithful. He closes by asking Gaius to greet them on his behalf.

The Letter Of Jude

Author

The inspired writer of this New Testament letter is Jude, the brother of James and half brother of Jesus. The name "Jude" was a common Jewish name which means "renowned."

In the New Testament there are at least nine individuals who had the name "Jude" (See Mt 10:4; 13:55; Lk 3:33; 3:26; 3:30; 6:16; Jn 14:22; At 5:37; 9:11; 15:22; Jd 1). The name was used to refer to two of the Christ-sent apostles (Jn 14:22). The Jude who wrote this letter was the brother of the prominently known James of Jerusalem (At 15:13; Gl 1:19; 2:9). James was the son of Mary and Joseph after the birth of Jesus (Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3). It is believed that this James was the author of the book of James. Jude, his brother, was the inspired writer of this book. Both were the half brothers of Jesus, since Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit.

Date

In verses 14,15 Jude speaks of the coming of the Lord as an encouragement for his readers. The sense of his quotation of the prophecy of Enoch is that the coming of the Lord was imminent. The Holy Spirit certainly did not deceive either Jude or his readers into thinking that the Lord was coming in His final coming within their lifetime. Therefore, the coming of the Lord to which Jude refers in verses 14,15 was probably to the coming of the Lord in time in judgment upon national Israel. Because of Jude's similar message as 2 Peter, we would assume that both Peter and Jude wrote sometime in the middle or latter 60s, possibly between A.D. 65 to 67.

Theme

The theme of this short letter is expressed in verse 3. Jude was about to write to his readers concerning the common salvation that we have in Christ. However, there seems to have been an urgent danger of apostasy. It was so urgent that the Holy Spirit changed the desires of Jude in order to deal with the apostasy. The apostasy about which Jude writes was at hand. His readers were dealing with those who arrogantly believed and behaved in a manner that was threatening the peaceful relationships that the disciples enjoyed with one another. Therefore, Jude writes in order to reveal that God will judge those who influence the church for evil. He thus writes to preserve the church for eternal life. The fact that Jude changed the theme of his message indicates that the subject of this letter is of great importance concerning the nature and fellowship of the church. The harsh nature of the letter indicates that God considers the fellowship of the church with great seriousness.

Purpose

Arrogant religious teachers who had created a religious behavior after their own desires had come into the fellowship of the disciples. The origin of these individuals is not known, though some have speculated that these may be Judaeo-Gnostic teachers. Since John writes concerning the presence of antichrists among the disciples of the saints (1 Jn 2:22), Jude possibly writes to the same group. This group of false teachers could very well be Judaeo-Gnostics who had infiltrated the church, and thus, were denying the incarnation of Jesus as the Christ. They had accepted Jesus as a good teacher, but they denied the incarnation. They therefore denied the foundation upon which the gospel is based.

This letter is direct and leaves no doubt concerning the judgment that is awaiting false teachers who are of the nature that is described in this letter. In writing to reveal the sure judgment of apostate teachers, Jude also writes in order to encourage the righteous to maintain their faith. They must remain faithful in the midst of a movement of false religionists who have turned the grace of God into unrighteous behavior.

1 ¶ Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are loved by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ.
 2 ¶ Mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.

3 ¶ Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write to you about our common salvation, I felt it necessary to write to you, exhorting that you earnestly contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

INTRODUCTION

1 Bondservant: This translation is from the Greek word *doulos*. Reference is to one who is born into slavery. From the days of his youth, Jude knew Jesus only as his "older brother." However, his knowledge of Jesus went from unbelief in the early days of Jesus' ministry to the writing of this statement. As his brother James, he now sees himself as the slave of the Lord Jesus Christ (See Js 1:1). **Brother of James:** Jude and James would actually be the half brothers of Jesus, for Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit. They were not Christ-sent apostles, though James is called an apostle (Gl 1:19). He was a church-sent apostle as all those who were sent forth by the church to accomplish the outreach of the church (Ph 2:25). **Loved:** In the finality of all things, the church that God has loved will be called out of the world for eternal dwelling. All Christians have been called out of the world through the gospel (2 Th 2:14; see Rm 1:7; 1 Co 1:26; 1 Pt 1:15). However, their calling is more than coming into the fellowship of others who have obeyed the gospel. Their calling has eternal implications. God will elect out of the population of all the world of all history those who have responded to Him through obedient faith. Therefore, as the called of God, God has through His foreknowledge known that He will call us out of the world in the end for habitation in the new heavens and earth (See comments Rm 8:29,30; Ep 1:7-14). The church is now called, though the calling in relation to the church's present existence is yet in the future. All who have responded to the gospel of God's grace by faith have been washed at the point of baptism by the blood of the sacrificial Lamb (At 22:16; 1 Co 6:11). Some Greek texts use the word that is translated "beloved" or "loved by God." The reference would thus be to the attitude of God toward those who have submitted to the gospel. He has sanctified them in order that they be presented pure and without blemish (vs 24). **Preserved:** This same Greek word is translated "keep" in verse 21. One is kept by the Lord when he keeps himself in the love of God (Compare Jn 17:11,12,15; 2 Tm 1:12; 1 Pt 1:5; see comments Jn 10:27-29). One is thus kept by God when he keeps himself in obedience to God. All Christians, therefore, have the responsibility of keeping themselves in a right relationship with God. They must walk in the light of Jesus and give themselves to faith that works through love (Gl 5:6; see Ep 2:10; Ph 2:12; 1 Jn 5:21). Their preservation in Christ is conditioned on their faithfulness to their calling. As Jude continues through his brief letter, he will identify those Christians who did not allow themselves to be kept by the love of God, and thus, remain sanctified. **2 Mercy, peace and love:** God so loved the world that through His grace He extended mercy to those who were deserving of wrath (Jn 3:16; see comments Ep 2:1-10). Such was an act of grace, for no man deserved the cross (Rm 5:8). God's act of mercy, therefore, should stimulate the same in the hearts of every believer. In fact, a believer is identified by mercy, peace and love that is generated in his heart because he has recog-

nized the same that has come to him from God. The more one recognizes the mercy, peace and love of God, the more such is multiplied in his own heart (See comments Mt 18:22-35; see 1 Pt 1:2; 2 Pt 1:2; 3:18).

PURPOSE FOR WRITING

3 Our common salvation: Jude's original intention was to address the subject of our common salvation. It was a common salvation in the sense that all Christians have obeyed the same gospel, and thus, are of the same community. Their common salvation has brought them into the one body of Christ (See At 2:38-47). Therefore, there is oneness among all those who have obeyed the gospel. It is a oneness that is the blessing of God. It is not the work of men. **I felt it necessary:** Though Jude's original intention was to write concerning the unity of the church, he was moved to address the problem of apostasy. It was an apostasy of those who had denied fundamental beliefs and behavior. They were influencing the church through their close association with the church. The news of the threat of false teachers with wicked lives who were infiltrating the church motivated Jude to write this stern letter in order to stem the influence of such teachers. The word "necessary" is from the Greek word (*anagka*) that refers to being constrained. The immediate danger of the influence of the false teachers had constrained Jude from writing concerning the common salvation. He saw the danger of apostasy in the church, and thus, he wrote with urgency to correct the problem. **Contend for the faith:** The Greek word here (*agonizomai*) is the word from which the English word "agony" originates. It is with great agony that Jude writes. The burden of the apostasy is upon his shoulders, and thus, he faces the danger of the apostasy with stern words of exhortation. His letter portrays the nature of one who is at war with the scheming devices of the devil (See comments 2 Co 10:3-5; Ep 6:10-20). **The faith:** The article "the" is used with the word "faith," and thus, reference is to more than a simple mental recognition of God and His Son Jesus Christ. Emphasis is on the totality of all that God has revealed to man through Jesus. This would be the revelation of the *Logos* (the Word), and the totality of all that Jesus brought for the salvation and behavior of man (At 6:7; 13:8; Gl 1:23; Ep 4:5; 1 Tm 4:1; see comments Jn 1:1-14). In other words, the very foundation upon which Christianity is built is here under attack by those who were questioning the incarnation of the Son of God. **Once for all delivered to the saints:** Through the revelation of Jesus and the inspiration of the apostles (Jn 14:26; 16:13), the Word and all truth has been delivered to the saints (Compare Gl 1:11; 2 Tm 3:16,17; 2 Pt 1:3,21). The revelation of the divine *Logos* (Word) has brought to us all truth that God would have us know and by which we should live. Through the Spirit-inspired apostles, all truth was delivered to the saints (See comments Gl 1:6-9; Rv 22:18,19). Therefore, by the time Jude inscribed these words, God had determined that all truth had been revealed to the church that He de-

4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who were long before marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

5 ¶ But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

sired the church should have. There was nothing left to be revealed. All religions, therefore, that claim to have received more truth from God are simply proclaiming that which is false. Jude is affirming that by the time he wrote this letter, all truth had been revealed. The very purpose of the letter, therefore, was to counter the affirmation of those false teachers who claimed to have more truth. The Gnostic teachers claimed that through self-realization they discovered inner enlightenment which they affirmed was the evidence of their salvation. In their claim they exalted themselves, and thus, they arrogantly assumed that they could live without sin while living outside the law of God. But Jude countered by saying that all truth had once and for all time been delivered to man. He used the word *hapax* ("once for all") to emphasize the fact that there was no more truth to come. The same word is used in other contexts to emphasize the finality of an act (See Hb 6:4; 10:2,10; 1 Pt 3:18). In God's act to have all truth revealed to the church, He finalized such by the time this letter was written. **4 Certain men have crept in:** These who had come into the community of the church were as the false brethren about whom Paul spoke in Jerusalem (See comments Gl 2:4). They had come in with unconverted hearts, and thus, they brought in a life-style that was not in submission to the lordship of Jesus (See 2 Tm 3:1-7; 2 Pt 2:1,2). Jude says that they came in "unnoticed," or secretly. Paul said that false teachers came in secretly in order to spy out the liberty which we have in Christ (Gl 2:4; 5:1,2; see Rm 16:18; At 20:29,30). Paul addressed judaizing teachers who bound where God had not bound (At 15:10; Gl 1:6-9; 5:1). Jude and John addressed false teachers who loosed where God had not loosed (1 Jn 1:6-9). One group of false teachers taught too much and the other too little. However, both groups were false for their adding and subtracting from the faith that has once and for all time been delivered to the saints (See comments Rv 22:18,19). **Marked out for this condemnation:** It is not that these false teachers were individually predestined to be false teachers, and thus condemned to hell. Emphasis here is on the fact that such teachers as a group were spoken of long before they came into the fellowship of the church (See Mt 7:15-20; Rm 9:22; 2 Pt 2:1). In other words, the prophecy of these teachers was long before made in view of the fact that the Holy Spirit knew that they would come (See comments Mt 24:11,12,23-25). It is not that specific individuals were named in prophecy. Jesus and the apostles spoke of the movement of apostasy that would come. At the time Jude wrote, the apostasy was already in progress. **Ungodly men:** Jude now identifies the nature of these men. Throughout the remainder of the epistle, therefore, he will give us a definition of what God considers "ungodly men." Since these men had no reverential fear of God, their lives were conducted contrary to the will of God (See 1 Pt 4:18; 2 Pt 2:5,10; 3:7). Their evil behavior was the result of their lack of response to the loving grace of God. The lack of fear of God did not motivate them to be obedient to the commandments of

God. Their lack of reverential fear of God resulted in two things. (1) **Turn the grace of our God into lewdness:** Paul questioned, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" (Rm 6:1). And so were some doing, not only in Rome but also in the audience to which Jude writes. These false teachers thought that grace was a license to sin. When one understands grace from a legalistic mind, he assumes that grace releases one from law. Since we are saved by grace, he erroneously assumes that God will cover all sin. On the contrary, it is grace that establishes law. Law is established in the one who walks by faith in the grace of God (Rm 3:31). Law is established because the obedient son cries out "Abba, Father" in his realization that he cannot direct his own paths. He thus cries out for the guidance of the Father. The Father responds with direction, and thus, law is brought into the life of the one who responds by faith to the grace of God. However, if one seeks grace from the standpoint of legalistic thinking, he assumes that grace frees him from law, and thus, he is under no moral direction from God. Those in the context of Jude's readership erroneously assumed such. Their wrong assumption moved them to turn the grace of God into lewd behavior (See 1 Co 6:9-18; 2 Pt 2:16,18,19; 1 Jn 2:4; 3:7-10). They lived a lascivious ("licentious") life that was characteristic of Gnostic antinomianism. In other words, they claimed to live in Christ while living a life that was contrary to the law of Christ (See Rm 3:5-8; Gl 5:19; 1 Pt 4:3; 2 Pt 2:18). (2) **Deny the only Master and Lord Jesus Christ:** The Greek text here would probably read better with the variant that does not have the word "God." They were deceivers who denied that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh (2 Jn 7; see 1 Jn 4:3; Ti 1:16; 2 Pt 2:1). These deceivers were denying the very foundation upon which Christian behavior is established. If Jesus is not who He said He was, then there is no reason to live the godly life. If Jesus were not incarnate and risen from the dead, then our faith is vain (See comments 1 Co 15:12-19). The totality of Christian faith stands on the fact that Jesus is the Christ and Son of God. If Jesus were anything less, then there is no foundation upon which our faith can stand.

THE JUDGMENT OF GOD

In this section of inspiration Jude uses the example of three situations where God rained down judgment upon those who worked against His will. These were judgments in time wherein God gives us warning that He will not forego just judgment of those who live contrary to His will.

5 I want to remind you: It is certain that Jude's readers had an intellectual knowledge of the illustrations of judgment he is about to relate to them. However, their fear had subsided in reference to the judgments. Therefore, their motivation to obedience had grown cold. Jude here seeks to remind them of things they already knew in order to stir up seriousness in their minds concerning the determination of God to bring all things into judgment (See 2 Pt 1:12,13,15; 3:1; compare 1 Jn 2:20).

6 And the angels who did not keep their first domain, but left their proper abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.

7 Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication and going after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

8 Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignitaries.

9 But Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil and disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you."

10 But these speak evil of those things that

Destroyed those who did not believe: God delivered the nation of Israel out of over four hundred years of captivity (Ex 12:51; 14:21-30). He worked great miracles through Moses in order to accomplish this work. However, Israel's weak belief did not move them to obey the will of God (See Nm 14:26-38; Ps 78:10-24; 106:26; see comments 1 Co 10:1-12; Hb 3:16 - 4:2). One may believe in God. However, unless one's belief moves him to obedience, his belief is useless in reference to salvation (See comments Jn 8:44; Rm 10:16; Js 2:14-26). Therefore, though Israel was delivered from captivity, God would not allow those of weak faith over the age of twenty to enter into the land of promise. **6 Reserved in everlasting chains:** See comments 2 Pt 2:4-9. These angelic beings gave up their proper habitation for which they were created. In some way and on some occasion they free-morally sinned, and thus, were delivered to punishment unto the day of judgment. "Chains" is here metaphorical of their confinement. They will not escape. As everyone who rebels against God, there will be no escape from the judgment of God (See Rv 6:17; 20:10). **The great day:** Peter surely has in view the judgment of the final day of history, after which the devil and his angels will suffer their final fate (See comments Mt 25:41; see Jn 6:39,40,44,45; 11:24; 12:48; 2 Pt 3:7-12). God cast these angels down from their realm of proper habitation, and thus, he will cast down any false teacher who denies the incarnation of the Son of God. **7 Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire:** Sodom, Gomorrah, and their sister cities, Admah and Zeboim (Dt 29:23; Hs 11:8), suffered the fire and brimstone of God's judgment (See Gn 19:24,25; compare Is 1:9; 13:19; Jr 23:14; 29:18; Am 4:11; Mt 10:15; 11:24; 2 Pt 2:6-8). These cities had given themselves over to the fulfillment of the lusts of the flesh, and thus, given up any moral standard in their societies. **Strange flesh:** They gave themselves over to unnatural sexual practices as sodomy, homosexuality and lesbianism (See Rm 1:26,27; 1 Co 6:9; 2 Pt 2:7,8). All such abnormal sexual behavior resulted from corrupted minds that had given up God's moral standards. They rejected God, and thus, God rejected them and brought upon them judgment in time in order that they not infect the society of Israel. **Eternal fire:** Jude uses the Greek word *aiōnios* in reference to the fire that was brought down upon these wicked cities. It is not that the burning fire of the cities continues unto this day and without end. Emphasis is on the result of the fire that consumed the cities. The results could not and never will be changed. The "eternal" fire was temporary. The result of the fire is without end. The fire that consumed them resulted in unending consequences that shall never be undone. Such is

Jude's warning to all who would stray from the righteousness of God (See comments Mt 25:46; 2 Th 1:7-9).

DESCRIPTION OF THE WICKED

8 Jude now continues with the evil behavior of the religionists of verses 5-7 who have denied the lordship of Jesus in their lives by living contrary to the faith that was delivered to them through Jesus. **Dreamers:** These religionists had manufactured religious beliefs after their own imaginations. They had created a god after their own image, and subsequently, constructed a religious behavior that would conform to their own desires (See comments Mk 7:1-9; Cl 2:20-23). Their corrupted minds led them to devise a religion full of corruption (2 Pt 2:10). Herein is the course most religious people have followed in the world. In their ignorance of the God who will bring judgment upon the wicked, and the word by which He will judge, they devise their own religiosity. Their religion, therefore, conforms to the disciplines of men and not to God. Such was the practice of Old Testament false prophets who convinced the people to follow after their own religious inventions (Dt 13:1-3; Hs 4:6). In this context, similar false teachers had deceived themselves into believing that God's grace would give them a license to sin (vs 4; see Rm 6:1). Jude here mentions three of their corrupted behavioral practices. **Defile the flesh:** The Gnostic believed that since the spiritual part of man had no dealings with the material world, the flesh could be defiled without sin. And thus, in their desire to religiously fulfill the lust of the flesh, they gave themselves over to creating religious beliefs that condoned the fulfilling of the lust of the flesh (1 Co 6:18; see Rm 1:18-32; 2 Pt 2:2,10,18). **Desire dominion:** Once one becomes the authority for his own religious behavior, he has established himself as authority above all other authorities. In their spiritual arrogance, the false teachers of this context show contempt for authority. But such was contrary to the servanthood nature of Christianity (See Mk 10:35-45; Rm 13:1; Ep 5:21; Hb 13:17; 1 Pt 5:5,6). **Speak evil of dignitaries:** In their religious self-righteousness, they openly spoke out against all other authority (See Ex 22:28; 2 Pt 2:10). The word "dignitaries" here could be translated "glorious ones" or "celestial ones." Reference could be to slandering angelic beings about whom they claimed to have a special knowledge. **9 Michael the archangel:** Jude now compares these self-appointed authorities to the behavior of Michael. As the archangel, Michael is the chief of the heavenly angels (1 Th 4:16; see Dn 10:13,21; 12:1,7-9; Rv 12:7; 13:4). However, though he is the exalted one among all angels, he did not bring any slanderous accusations against Satan in his dispute concerning the

they do not know. But what they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.

11 Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain and have run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in

the rebellion of Korah.

12 ¶ These are spots in your love feasts when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear. *They are* clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, plucked up by the roots, twice dead.

body of Moses. Jude reasons that if Michael is of such a nature even in reference to Satan, then certainly the railing arrogant religionists about whom he speaks in this context will by no means escape the judgment God has reserved for them. **The body of Moses:** There is no revelation concerning what took place on this occasion when Moses died (See Dt 34:6). It could have been that Satan wanted to have Moses' body buried where people would venerate his tomb, and thus, have the tomb become a center of their religion. But God does not construct religions around the tombs of the saints. Any religion that focuses its reverence on the tombs of its leaders is a religion that is worldly born and earthly confined. With Christianity, emphasis is on an empty tomb. It is on empty tombs that will come in the future as a result of an empty tomb outside Jerusalem (See comments Rm 6:3-5). **The Lord rebuke you:** And so the Lord will at the end of time pronounce the end of Satan and his angels by condemnation to a fiery hell (Mt 25:41; see Zc 3:2). **10 Things that they do not know:** There are those in the religious world today, as the Gnostics of the first and second centuries, who speak of things concerning the spirit world about which Jude says here they know nothing. One of the first evidences of false religion is the proclamation of prognosticators and seers of those religions who proclaim that they have been touched with the spirits of the unseen world. The fact that they make such claims is evidence that they have devised either emotional or mental imaginations that have originated from their own excited minds. Jude affirms that such wizards and witches know nothing about that which is beyond the physical and mental limitations of the human being (Compare Zc 3:2; 1 Co 2:14; Cl 2:18; 1 Tm 1:7; 2 Pt 2:12). Unfortunately, the world is populated with masses of people who are willingly carried away with the speculative dreams of those who refuse to be directed by the word of the Son of God (See comments 2 Th 2:10-12). **Like brute beasts:** These religionists about whom Jude speaks are no better off in understanding the spirit world than the beasts of the field (2 Pt 2:12). They can only know that which empirically comes to them through the senses of men (Compare Ep 4:22; Ph 3:19; Cl 3:1-8). The senses of men are limited to the physical world in which we live. Therefore, it is not possible for the senses of men to perceive that which is of the spirit world unless God so chooses to reveal Himself in a way that can be perceived through the senses. Because these religionists about whom Jude writes satisfy their religiosity after animal emotions, they behave as such by corrupting themselves after the lusts of the flesh. Jude is simply stating that they think and act like brute beasts.

CONDEMNATION AND DESTRUCTION

11 Woe to them: When God pronounces a woe upon those who have given up His direction, only destruction is their end. In order to emphasize the sure

judgment of these wicked religionists, Jude gives three historical illustrations when God brought judgment upon those who rejected Him. **The way of Cain:** The way of Cain could refer to one of two sins or both that Cain committed. He did not offer sacrifice according to the will of God, for he offered the fruit of his field instead of a blood offering (Gn 4:1-9; see Hb 11:4). When God honored the blood sacrifice of his brother Abel, he sinned by being jealous of his brother. His jealousy was carried into action in that he murdered Abel (See 1 Jn 3:12). As a result, God brought judgment down upon Cain by cursing him among men. **Error of Balaam:** The sin of Balaam was that he sold his prophetic gift for profit (Nm 22-24; 31:16; see 2 Pt 2:15; Rv 2:14). His judgment was that he died among the enemies of God's people (Ja 13:22). **The rebellion of Korah:** Korah rebelled against God's appointed authority over Israel (Nm 16:1-35). He and those who gave themselves over to his rebellion were subsequently swallowed up by the earth and perished. Jude's point in these three illustrations of God's judgment upon the wicked is that jealousy, greed and rebellion will reap the punishment of God. The wicked will not go unpunished.

12 In the following metaphors, Jude reveals the character of the type of false teachers about whom he is discussing. The nature of their religious beliefs has resulted in their being what he here describes. **Spots in your love feasts:** Spots refers to stains or hidden rocks. They are as a stain on a beautiful garment or hidden reefs that without warning destroy sea going vessels. These false religionists conceal themselves behind a pretense of fellowship among the brethren (2 Pt 2:13). Their outward appearance is appealing, but inwardly they are as dead men's bones (See comments Mt 23:27,28). **Love feasts:** The love feast of the first century was a common meal that Christians had together in order to celebrate their fellowship in Christ. The meal was usually on a Sunday when Christians journeyed from great distances in order to meet with the saints (See At 2:46; 20:11; 1 Co 11:17-22). During this feast the Lord's Supper was served in order to celebrate the covenant Christians have with God. **Without fear:** Paul defined such leaders as savage wolves (At 20:29,30). Those to whom Jude refers are after the nature of the religious politicians who manipulated disciples for their own selfish ends. They were leaders who served their own appetites. They did so without a conscious fear of God's judgments upon those who would seek to steal the sheep of God by drawing away the disciples after themselves (See Is 56:11; Ez 34:2,8,10; Jn 10:11-13; 2 Pt 2:13; see comments Gl 4:17). **Clouds without water:** These presumptuous leaders gave the promise of great things. However, they were spiritually empty. As clouds over dry land, they gave promise of a refreshing rain, but were driven away by the winds (See Pv 25:14; 2 Pt 2:17; compare Hb 13:9). **Trees without fruit:** These were autumn trees according to the Greek word. They were

13 They are raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

14 ¶ Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, “Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of His saints, **15** to execute judgment on all, and to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds that they have commit-

ted in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

16 ¶ These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts. And their mouth speaks great swelling *words*, flattering people to gain advantage.

17 But you, beloved, remember the words that were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,

trees that should have produced fruit, but the fruit never came (See Lk 13:6-9). **Twice dead:** The fruitless trees were first dead because they would not produce fruit. They were made dead a second time because they were plucked up by the roots (Mt 15:13). Presumptuous and self-righteous religionists are dead after the same manner. They are dead because they do not bring forth the fruit of the Spirit (Gl 5:22,23). They are dead again in relation to the work of God when they are rooted up by trials that blow them away into apostasy (See comments Mt 13:3-9,18-22). **13 Raging waves:** As the waves of the sea deposit wastes on the beaches, so these religionists spew out jealousy, greed and selfish ambition among the brethren (Compare Is 57:20; see Ph 3:19; 2 Pt 2:18). **Wandering stars:** In comparison to the eternal purpose of God and the influence of righteous leadership, these counterfeit leaders in the church appear for a brief moment as a meteor, then vanish from the stage of life. Their pompous life among those whom they sought to be exalted, is soon forgotten, and the righteous carry on after the nature of their King. As a burning meteorite soon vanishes into the nothingness of darkness, so will those who presume to lead God's flock with impure and unholy hearts (See Mt 25:41; 2 Pt 2:17).

PRONOUNCEMENT OF THE JUDGMENT

14,15 Enoch was the seventh descendant from Adam (Gn 5:18,21-24; Hb 11:5). It is stated that he walked with God, and thus was righteous in his ways. His prophecy to which Jude here refers was never recorded in the Old Testament. By inspiration it is here written. Since Enoch lived before the flood of Noah's day, the prophecy certainly had reference to that judgment of God in time upon the wicked of Noah's generation. In a secondary sense, Jude uses the prophecy to refer to the judgment of Christ upon the wicked of Jude's readers. It must be mentioned also that in the apocryphal Book of Enoch a similar statement is made to the statement that Jude writes in verses 14,15. If the prophecy of Enoch had been passed down from generation to generation until it was inscribed in the Book of Enoch, Jude could have quoted from the Book of Enoch as Paul quoted from uninspired writers (See At 17:28; Ti 1:12). It is certain that the apocryphal Book of Enoch was not an inspired book. However, this did not mean that there were not some true statements in the book. If Jude's quotation here is directly from the Book of Enoch, at least we would know that the writer of the Book of Enoch made a correct summation of the situation before the flood of Noah's day. **The Lord came:** It is not that this is the final coming of the Lord at the end of

time. It is the same coming about which James spoke in James 5:7,8 (See comments). It was the coming of the Lord in time in judgment upon national Israel (See comments Mt 24). It could have also had reference to a coming of the Lord in judgment as upon the Roman Empire (See comments in introduction to Rv). Jude's reference to the coming of the Lord means that judgment is to be executed (See Jn 5:27). Jesus will come at the end of the world to execute final judgment (Mt 25:31,32; At 17:30,31; Rm 2:6-8; 2 Co 5:10; Rv 20:11-15). However, He has come in time in judgment, especially on the Jewish State and Roman State, both of which persecuted the church of Christ in its infancy. **Harsh things:** Judgment is based on the wicked behavior of individuals against the Lord. Every idle word is noted by God (Mt 12:36). Every evil deed is known (2 Co 5:10; compare 1 Sm 2:3; Ps 31:18). Judgment is based on wicked behavior, and thus, God accounts to the unrighteous all those evil things that they have done which are contrary to His will. One's evil deeds manifest a wicked heart. Therefore, by one's wicked speech he identifies his heart as wicked.

16 Murmurers, complainers: Peter warned that scoffers would come in the last days (2 Pt 3:3). Those who are of a pure heart do not grumble and complain. They look on the positive side of things (See comments 1 Co 13:4-7). The contrary to the loving nature of the righteous are those who walk with selfish ambition in order to please themselves and satisfy their own lusts (See 1 Jn 2:15). **Flattering people for the sake of advantage:** Out of the mouth of those who have selfish ambition come the words of flattery in order to accomplish one's own selfish ends (See Pv 28:21; At 10:34,35; Js 2:1-4). But one must not be deceived by such pompous talk, for such talk is only for selfish gains (Compare Lv 19:15; Pv 24:23; Am 5:12; 2 Pt 2:3,14).

EXHORTATION TO THE FAITHFUL

17,18 Remember: In order to remain on the right course one has to choose to be a disciple of Jesus. We must always remember from where we came and from whom we were born (vs 1; Jn 3:16; Gl 3:26,27; 2 Pt 3:2; see comments Rv 2:4,5). In this context, Jude stirs his readers to remember the prophecies of Jesus and the apostles concerning the coming of those who would be mockers (See Mt 24:24; At 20:29,30; 1 Tm 4:1-3; 2 Tm 4:1-9; 2 Pt 1:12,13; 3:1; 1 Jn 4:1-3). Both Jesus and the apostles warned of mockers (“scoffers”) who would ridicule the beliefs and behavior of the disciple (1 Tm 4:1; 2:1; 2 Pt 3:1-4). **In the last time:** At the time Jude wrote, these scoffers were in existence, and thus, the prophecies of Jesus and the apostles had been fulfilled.

18 that they told you there would be mockers in the last time who would walk after their own ungodly lusts.

19 These are worldly-minded ones who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.

20 ¶ But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,

21 keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ

unto eternal life.

22 ¶ And on some who are doubting, have compassion.

23 And others save, pulling *them* out of the fire. And on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

24 ¶ Now to Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present *you* faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

The presence of the scoffers in the environment of Jude's readers indicated that the "last time" was in existence. The statement here by Jude concerning the last times was certainly not a deception of the Holy Spirit to lead them to believe that Jesus' final coming was imminent. It was the last days of national Israel, not the last days of earth history. It was a period of great mockery of Christians. However, through the destruction of national Israel in A.D. 70, this element of persecution would be removed from the Christian's environment (See comments Mt 24). As God's flood in Noah's day destroyed the ungodly mockers of Noah and his family (vss 14,15), so the destruction of national Israel would silence the ungodly Jewish mockers of the Christian's faith in Jude's day. **19 Worldly-minded:** This same word is used in 1 Corinthians 2:14 in reference to the uninspired man. In this context, reference is probably to the one who is not led by the Spirit of God (Compare Js 3:15). These were teachers who did not follow the directions of God as given through the inspired truth of the apostles and prophets. They followed after their own natural reasoning, and thus, followed the instincts of nature rather than the righteousness of God. If Jude's reference here is to the miraculous gifts, then the thought is the same. Both John and Paul used the presence of the miraculous gifts among the disciples as evidence that God was working among them (See Rm 8:14; Gl 3:2,3; 1 Jn 3:24; 4:13; compare Mk 16:17-20; Hb 2:3,4). **Cause divisions, not having the Spirit:** It was the nature of their religious beliefs that division was bred (See comments Gl 5:15; Js 4:1,2). The fact that they led members away after themselves planted the foundation upon which division was caused (See comments At 20:29,30; see Pv 18:1; 2 Pt 2:1,2). When leaders seek to maintain a following of disciples for themselves, they are sectarian in their attitudes, and thus, the occasion for division among the disciples. **20 Building yourselves up:** It is the responsibility of every Christian to keep himself in the love of God, and thus spiritually grow (Cl 2:7; Ph 2:11-13; see At 20:32; 1 Th 2:13; 2 Pt 3:18). **Praying in the Holy Spirit:** Since the early Christians did not have the written word of God to direct them in prayer (1 Jn 5:14), the Holy Spirit through the gift of prophecy guided them in prayers (See comments Rm 8:26,27; 1 Co 11:4,5; 12:3; 14:14,15; Ep 6:18). The apostles first had Jesus to personally teach them how to pray according to the will of God (Lk 11:1-4). Before the written word was completed and delivered to the early church through epistles as Jude, the Holy Spirit directed prayer in a manner that was pleasing to God. Today, Christians do not need direct direction in prayer for they are directed by the word of God in order to pray according to the will of

God. **21 Keep yourselves in the love of God:** It is the responsibility of each Christian to maintain his or her faith. The Holy Spirit will not subject one to His control in order to destroy the free-moral choice of any person. Therefore, the responsibility for faithfulness and spiritual growth rests upon the shoulders of those who have given themselves over to serve God (See Jn 15:9,10; Ph 2:12; Js 1:27). **Looking for the mercy of our Lord:** It is grace that produces the mercy that all of us must have in reference to our salvation (Compare Js 2:13). Our sin against God deserves judgment. Law demands that we be punished for violation of law. However, mercy steps in and triumphs over judgment because of God's grace. Because we walk by faith in the grace of God, we can look forward to the mercy that Jesus, our judge, will have in reference to our sin (See Ti 2:13; Hb 9:28; 2 Pt 3:12). **Eternal life:** This is the final hope of all those who have put their faith in a merciful God. It is for this life in the presence of God that all Christians hope (See comments 2 Co 5:1-8). It is because of this hope that Christians exercise patience in this world of hardship and persecution (Compare comments Js 4:7,8). **22 Have compassion:** Since God will have judgment without mercy on those who have shown no mercy (Js 2:13), then it is necessary that we exercise mercy toward those who sin against us (See comments Mt 18:22-35). **23 Others save:** Disciples have a responsibility toward one another (See comments Gl 6:1,2; see Rm 11:14; Js 5:19,20). Jude warns that with some apostates one must take extreme caution in rescuing them from their state of condemnation. One must be cautious lest he also be tempted and drawn away by the influence of the apostate (See Rm 16:17,18). **Out of the fire:** We must seek to restore those who have fallen from grace to the point of being lost. The end result of their present state at the time Jude wrote, was that they would be lost to hell if they died (Mt 25:41; Rv 20:15; see Zc 3:1-4). The souls of those who have fallen have been stained with sin, and thus, must be restored to walking in the cleansing blood of Jesus if they would be saved (See comments 1 Jn 1:7-9).

CLOSING

24 To Him who is able to keep you: In verse 21 Jude said that it is the responsibility of the saint to keep himself in the fold of God (Ep 3:20; 1 Jn 1:6-10). There is no contradiction here. One must keep himself in the realm of grace wherein God keeps him (See comments Jn 10:28,29; see Jn 17:12,15; Rm 8:38,39; 16:25; Ep 6:10-18). It is thus possible for a child of God to fall from the grace of God if he allows himself to step outside God's grace (Compare 1 Co 10:12,13). **Present**

25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

you faultless: Those who have kept themselves in the light are continually cleansed by the blood of Jesus (1 Jn 1:6-9). They are thus without blemish as viewed through the blood of Jesus (Ep 5:27; Cl 1:22; 1 Pt 1:19,20; 3:14). **25** This doxology is certainly to God,

the Son, who is our Savior. In the broader sense, it is addressed to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit since God is one and acts as one in reference to the salvation of man. Since God is one, there can be brotherhood throughout the world with His sons.

Revelation

Author

Though some have questioned the Johanine authorship of Revelation, most Bible students have accepted John, the apostle, as the inspired author. He identifies himself as John in 1:4,9. He was a Jew, the brother of James the apostle (See Mk 10:35). James was the first apostle to be killed (At 12:2). It is believed that John was the last apostle to die. It is believed that John died at an old age in Ephesus at the end of the first century. (See "author" in the introduction to John.)

Date

There has been a great deal of discussion among Bible students concerning the date when this book was written. Some say it was written in the 60s during the reigns of Nero and Vespasian as Caesars of Rome. Others affirm the traditional date of A.D. 95 or 96. This latter date is supported by most church writers of the second and third centuries. Consider also with this the fact that it is unlikely that the churches discussed in chapters 2 and 3 would have digressed so much in so little time if the book had been written around A.D. 69,70. Compare Ephesians 1:15, which was written around A.D. 61, with the state of the church in Ephesus as described in Revelation 2:4. Their spiritual state as described in 2:4 does not seem to be the their spiritual condition as described in Ephesians 1:15. Compare also the lukewarmness of the church in Laodoecea (3:15,16). This city was destroyed by an earthquake during Nero's reign, but had been rebuilt and was prospering by the time John wrote (3:17). Consider also the fact that it was the practice of Domitian to exile religious and political leaders. Tradition says that John was exiled to Patmos around the end of the first century. What John says in 1:9 seems to indicate that he was suffering from such an exile at the time he saw the visions.

We would not rule out the early date. Some Bible students have affirmed that John saw the visions before A.D. 70 but recorded them after the event of the destruction of Jerusalem. This date is held in conjunction with the view of some students that the beast and false prophet in Revelation refer to Judaism and not the Roman Empire. This is at least one view that should be considered. However, the extent and nature of the persecution that was launched against the church that is portrayed in the book seems to reach far beyond the persecution of the Jews against the early members of the church. The political and economic onslaught that the beast and false prophet launched against the church seems to be much greater than the Jewish persecution that was only regional and was always controlled by the laws of the Roman government. The Jewish persecution of the church was small in comparison to the persecution that was launched against the church by the Roman Empire.

In chapters 13 and 17 John seems to speak of kings and kingdoms as a chronology in order to identify the date of writing (See comments of 13 and 17). If reference in the context of these two chapters is to the Caesars of Rome, therefore, then the one who was in power at the time of writing was Vespasian who was Caesar from A.D. 69 to A.D. 79. Therefore, it would have been during his reign that Revelation was written. In view of the turmoil that prevailed throughout the Empire during Rome's destruction of the Jewish State that led up to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, it could be concluded that the letter was written in A.D. 69 or 70.

Theme

The theme is expressed in 17:14. Throughout the revelation, John portrays the victorious Christ over all evil power (1:18; 2:8; 5:9,10; 6:2; 11:15; 12:9-12; 14:1,14; 15:2-4; 19:16; 20:4; 22:3). He is pictured as leading the church into victory over Satan and all obstacles that Satan can place in the way of Christian faithfulness (17:14). It is the theme of Jesus throughout the visions to reassure the persecuted saints that they have a greater future than the hostile environment in which they were