

**A PERSONAL
VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY**

HEBREWS

BY SHARON CRAVENS

Jude 1:1 Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:
Jude 1:2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

Jude introduces his letter with a statement of his position—he is a servant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James. I understand that both Jude and James were Jesus' brothers on earth (sons of Mary and Joseph). Jude was quick to communicate that the importance of his position before the Lord was as His servant—not his blood connection.

He is addressing this letter to a group of believers—sanctified (made holy), preserved (guarded, watched over) and called by the Father through the Son. He wishes them mercy, peace and love (agapao—unconditional love) in abundance. (Frankly, everything available from God is available in abundance. Dixie made a good point when we were talking this morning—our blessings from God **flow**, just keep on coming—as the old song says: “Praise God from whom all blessings flow.”)

Jude 1:3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

In this verse Jude states that he would rather be writing about the salvation we share. I think, like most of us, it is a lot easier to share with one another and others when we are able to focus on our joys, blessings, and in general offer encouragement. But Jude is burdened with an urge to exhort and remind them to “contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” (contend = agonize earnestly in defense of) He is warning his friends to be active in their faith. It's when we get lazy and try to rest on our laurels that we become more susceptible to false teaching. When you are in the Word and using the truths of the scripture in your life, you are most prepared to recognize the truth. The word “once” indicates “once for all” in the Greek. Our faith is founded on the fact that when Jesus died, was buried and resurrected, He conquered sin for all eternity in that one series of events. The truth that was entrusted to the believers then is the same truth entrusted to believers now. God's truth will always be the same.

Jude 1:4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jude felt this urging of the believers to stay active was necessary because “ungodly men” were infiltrating communities of believers. (1/10) I liked the way J. Vernon McGee described this as creeps who crept in. He also observed (my paraphrase) that the church is being destroyed by the enemy from within—not from those on the outside. Persecution from without always strengthens the body of believers.

This infiltration was not unexpected; God knew they would come and His judgment was certain. They were manipulators of the truth regarding God's grace. They were proponents of immorality and denying Jesus as the Christ.

(2/06) I was just thinking when reading through this time of how important it is for us to be “spiritually aware.” These men are able to infiltrate the body of believers because the believers are not spiritually alert or are just plain apathetic.

Jude 1:5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

Jude 1:6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

Jude 1:7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Then Jude reminds them of historical truths concerning God’s power and protection of the Jews—but also how He punished sin. He delivered His people out of Egypt and later destroyed those who didn’t believe Him able to fulfill His promise. Even the angels who abandoned their heavenly home and positions (they came and procreated with the women on earth) are bound in darkness awaiting the final judgment. The people of Sodom and Gomorrah followed their natural desire for sin, immorality and perversion; and God destroyed them by fire—examples of the judgment to come.

Note from Bruce Lackey: “Unless this experience is described in Genesis 6, we have no record in scripture where angels changed their sphere of action or manner of existence.”

(2/06) The words “even as” in verse 7 jumped out at me this time through. The Greek for this phrase states “in that manner.” That seems to be making a direct connection between the sin of the angels and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, which would again support the deduction of Genesis 6 being an account of the angels procreating with women (going after strange flesh, flesh that is different from their own).

I also thought this time through about the possible connection between these angels who are “reserved...unto the judgment of the great day” being linked to the “locusts” described in Revelation 9.

Jude 1:8 Likewise also these *filthy* dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

These godless men (still in reference to the “certain men” of verse 4) “polluted their own bodies, rejected authority and slandered celestial beings” as the NIV states it. (The first two seem quite obvious, but the third gave me pause—How can we “slander celestial beings?”) Actually, when I look at the Greek for “dignities,” the KJV makes the best sense. The word is “doxa” and means “dignity, glory, honor, praise and worship.” In my mind this means that they spoke evil of good things—things deserving of honor, praise, and worship—the things of God. That’s what godless men do.

Note from Bruce Lackey: "Rejection of authority in one area will lead to the same thing in all areas of life."

(1/10) I think my notes from 2Peter will be useful at this point.

"Mark Hitchcock made the reference back to the "dignities," which he identified as fallen angels, and this makes better sense to me. Even fallen angels still occupy a higher position in the creative order than man, as I referenced in the previous verse. He pointed out how so much of false teaching today is directed toward assuming authority over spiritual powers that only God possesses. Paul understood this truth as recorded in his letter to the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 12:7-9 "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

He knew that he had no authority over this emissary of Satan and that it was to God's authority that he must appeal for release—and eventually yield for strength to endure."

Jude 1:9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

In this verse the example is given regarding how the archangel Michael disputed with the devil over the body of Moses. (This would have been important to prevent the people from making his body an object of honor that in human weakness would have developed into worship and who knows what after that. Satan will use anything to take our focus off God.) Michael was careful not to make his own statement regarding his assessment of Satan's purpose; he left that as God's prerogative and said so—"The Lord rebuke thee." (I pray, God, that You forgive me of the many inaccurate assessments I've made of others instead of just loving people and letting You handle rebuke.)

(5/08) Michael was also giving deference to Satan's position in creation as indicated by the following verses from Ezekiel.

Ezek. 28:12-14 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. **Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God;** every precious stone *was* thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. **Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth;** and I have set thee *so*: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

He respected the position without being deterred from right action. He determined to do God's will and leave it to God to rebuke and punish the one seeking to abuse his position of authority. This is a very important principle for every Christian to understand when responding to ungodly authorities in our own lives.

Jude 1:10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. Jude 1:11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

These types of men operate on natural instinct rather than intelligent understanding. If they don't understand anything (cannot accept it as reasonable to their own way of thinking), they speak abusively against it. The things they do understand by natural instinct (which is rooted in our sinful nature) are the very things that destroy them (the things of the world and the flesh). Jude says "Woe unto them!"

"gone in the way of Cain" – Cain slew Abel out of jealousy that turned into anger. God had accepted Abel's sacrifice and not Cain's. Cain had decided to do things his way instead of God's way. (See journal on Genesis 4.) The sin nature will always lead one to ungodly choices.

Balaam's error was greed. He was a person who practiced the art of divination, being able to reveal secrets and tell the future. Some of these men were making a profit from gullible people using the same methods as Balaam.

"perished in the gainsaying of Core" – gainsaying = disobedience, rebellion; Core = Greek spelling of Korah. I had to go back and read this in Numbers 16. Korah was a son of Levi who resented the fact that Aaron and his sons were given the priesthood. He thought Moses was playing favorites (practicing nepotism) by appointing Aaron to this position. (5/08) By questioning Moses he was questioning God's authority in appointing him as their leader.

God became so angry that He caused the earth to open up and swallow Korah and his two friends and all their possessions. Like Cain, they didn't like God's direction/instruction. Men who deny God and disobey Him are essentially already doomed; their destruction is as sure as what happened to Korah.

(1/10) Interesting comments from J. Vernon McGee (my paraphrase): Cain believed in God, but felt he should be able to sacrifice according to his own desires rather than obeying God. That is so descriptive of the attitude of so many in America today. They want to come to God on their own terms—not on His. They will perish just as surely as did Cain, Balaam and Core.

Jude 1:12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

Jude 1:13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

“feasts of charity” = meals of fellowship in the church preceding communion

A “spot” is a blemish or flaw on what would otherwise be perfection. These men participate in their love feasts with absolutely no guilt or misgivings. They aren’t participating with sincere hearts of obedience; they are there for selfish reasons. They are individuals operating outside of God’s purpose (clouds without water/rain), outside of God’s direction (carried about by winds), as good as dead and no benefit to society (trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit), and no foundations on which to base a successful ministry (plucked up by the roots).

“twice dead” – I assume this is saying that their physical death and spiritual death are both certain. (1/10) McGee shared a quote from Moody that applies here: “Those who are born once will die twice. Those who are born twice will die only once—if at all.”

“raging waves of the sea” – They are uncontrolled, but have a definite negative impact on others (foaming out their own shame).

“wandering stars” – I think of stars as having a position and giving light. These men have claimed a position in the church and then gone astray leading others with them (stars also provide direction by their position). Instead of giving the light of truth, they have strayed/wandered and are perverting the truth. Their punishment will be eternal darkness—total separation from God (The Light) forever.

Jude 1:14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

Jude 1:15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

These men form a part of the throng of the ungodly that Enoch (the 7th from Adam) prophesied about. (This prophecy comes from the book of Enoch. Although not a part of the inspired canon of scripture, this statement represents truth since the Holy Spirit inspired Jude to use this quote.) He foretold that the Lord would come with “ten thousands of His saints” (holy ones) to judge all (those not saints, unbelievers) and to convince/convict ALL the **ungodly** of ALL their **ungodly** deeds done in an **ungodly** way AND of ALL the harsh words they have spoken against Him. (The impact words here are **all** and **ungodly**. You can’t be godly without the love of God in your life.)

Jude 1:16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling *words*, having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage.

These men are murmurers (grumblers) and complainers (finding fault). Many Christians struggle in this area. I know I tend in that direction myself when dealing with “other Christians.” They don’t meet my expectations, so it’s easy to find fault and complain rather than respond with love and prayer and an effort

to help make things right. I think I have grown much in this area, but the tendency is still there. I pray God's continued work in my life to be more Christ-like in my responses. The fact that this behavior is ungodly should be motive enough not to want it seen as a part of your testimony.

Back to these godless men, grumbling and faultfinding are a way of life for them. They "walk after their own lusts." They are boasters (speak great swelling words) and full of pride. They flatter others to their own advantage; their motives are selfish.

Jude 1:17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Jude 1:18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

Jude 1:19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

Then Jude reminds the believers of what Christ had warned them. He had told them that in the "last times" there would be mockers, false teachers. (I think every generation of believers since the time of Christ has felt they were in the "last times" and that Christ would return in their day. Christ said that He could come at any time and it would be soon. Soon, of course, is a relative term.) Because Satan is the god of this world and the sin nature is in all of us, there will always be scoffers and people who follow their ungodly desires. This fact should keep all believers alert since we don't know the time of His return. I think as the time nears, these will become more predominant characteristics of the world at large rather than in "pockets of humanity" or in certain regions.

These (still in context regarding those "certain men" in verse 4) are the men who would divide the believers and cause splits in churches. They follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit (the believer's compass, counselor and companion). These mockers would base their choices and beliefs on things that are *sensual*, according to their physical senses and desires rather than according to spiritual sense and desire as led by the Holy Spirit. (1/10) I can't help but make connection with the growing emphasis on personal experience over the word of God in much of the church today.

Jude 1:20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

Jude 1:21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

After the long, detailed words of warning, Jude closes with words of advice and encouragement. They are to "build yourselves up on your most holy faith." For our faith to grow and be strong, we must nurture it with the Word and interaction with the Lord. They should "pray in the Spirit." This means prayers that are centered in God's will concerning God's choices in our life and full of praise and worship for the Father and the Son along with repentance regarding the areas in which we fail/come short of the glory of God. They were to "keep themselves in the love of God," to be as Christ-like as possible in their responses

and actions toward others. (1/10) The only standard acceptable for defining these actions is God's word.

They were to live in hope, looking for the mercy of the Savior in bringing them into eternity. I can see this with two areas of emphasis—1) The fact that He provided the way of salvation is mercy in itself; it allows the believer to escape the punishment deserved by his sin. 2) Being taken into eternity out of the struggle with the sin nature here on this earth will be a mercy in itself! To experience the blessedness of an eternity with Christ—certainly not what we deserve!

Jude 1:22 And of some have compassion, making a difference:

Jude 1:23 And others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

As God shows us mercy, we are to show others mercy. There will be those who doubt, and we are to show them love and understanding as Jesus did Thomas (John 20). We are to lead as many to the truth as possible which will "pull them out of the fire" of hell. Others are so deep in sin that even though you want to be merciful, you need to be careful not to let them bring you down to their level.

(2/06) I stopped at the last part of verse 23 this time through. Scripture tells us that we are to avoid even the appearance of evil.

1Th. 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Matthew Henry states it this way, "Avoid all that leads to sin or that looks like sin." The reference to a spot in the garment brings to mind the thought of leprosy, and there was an interesting quote in Easton's Dictionary that I think is appropriate to ponder here.

"Leprosy was 'the outward and visible sign of the innermost spiritual corruption; a meet emblem in its small beginnings, its gradual spread, its internal disfigurement, its dissolution little by little of the whole body, of that which corrupts, degrades, and defiles man's inner nature, and renders him unmeet to enter the presence of a pure and holy God' (Maclear's Handbook O.T)."

(1/10) Jude seems to be saying that some people need to hear fire and brimstone preaching that will scare them into accepting God's gift of salvation. The Joel Osteen's of today seem to have no understanding of this truth.

Jude 1:24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

Jude 1:25 To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

As Jude closes, he uses words of wonderful truth and encouragement. He gives praise to the one who is "able to keep you from falling." We are secure in our position in the Savior. He will present us to the Father "faultless." When we are seen through the cover of the shed blood of Jesus, we are perfect. I need to remind myself of that more often. It's easy to get bogged down in our shortcomings when the need is to stay focused on not quitting, to keep on trying. It's a wonderful incentive to know we are being seen through the blood of Jesus.

Because of that, He will present us with great joy—His sacrifice was not in vain. Though rejected by many—it provides eternal life and fellowship for so many of His special creation. He is the **only** God. Though man may try to equate others to Him, they will never measure up. **He is God—the one and only.** He is our Savior—the one who provided a way for us to escape the hell we deserve. He is deserving of all glory (perfection in His nature and holiness), majesty (His position of kingship), power (His absolute control of the laws and created things/beings of the universe) and dominion/authority (the position of righteous judge). We have this all represented through the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. This same Jesus was before all, is now and will be evermore. This is too much for us to really comprehend. We may understand the words, but can we really fathom the full truth of which they speak.

Amen. (It's true; I believe it.)