

JUDE'S HANDBOOK

on

CHANGE AGENTS

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## Hey Jude

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Because of the 19<sup>th</sup> century B.C. patriarch Judah ben-Jacob and the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. patriot Judas Maccabeus, the name “Jude” (or “Judah”—Hebrew spelling; “Judas”—Greek spelling) was a popular one among Jewish parents. Even Joseph and Mary had a son with that name (Matthew 13:55). It was not until the infamous Judas Iscariot that the name’s popularity plummeted.

As he began his inspired epistle, the New Testament prophet writes, “Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James” (v. 1). This self-identification informs us of two significant relationships in Jude’s life:

**His spiritual relationship with Jesus.** As foreshadowed in Exodus 21:5-6, Jude had volunteered to be a slave to Jesus. He chose to live in self-determined submission of another’s will. Unlike many a devotee to Islam, he had not been “converted” by a carnal sword ready to slit his throat; rather, he had been constrained by the love of Christ as the sword of the Spirit cut his spiritual heart into godly sorrow which prompted his repentance and resulted in his common salvation through baptism (1 Peter 3:21). Because of his spiritual relationship, Jude sought to be sure that whatever he did in word or deed was joyfully done in submission to and accordance with the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Colossians 3:17).

**His physical relationship with James.** It is impossible to know for certain whether this is James the apostle or James the half-brother of Jesus. However, because of the

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apostle James' early martyrdom (Acts 12:1-2) and the recognition of James the half-brother of Jesus as a pillar in the early Jerusalem church (cf. Galatians 2:9), the most likely possibility is the latter.

If this identification is correct, Jude—like his sibling, James—is another subtle, yet distinct proof of Jesus' resurrection. During His ministry, Jesus' flesh-and-blood brothers did not believe in Him (John 7:1-9); later in their lives, they did. In between these two opposite periods in their lives, the resurrected Christ appeared to James (1 Corinthians 15:7) and quite possibly to Jude (1 Corinthians 15:6).

Once he and his brother had experienced the common salvation found in Christ, Jude and James (cf. James 1:1) no longer regarded Jesus according to their flesh-and-blood connection to Him. “Even though we have known Christ, according to the flesh, yet now we know Him *thus* no longer” (2 Corinthians 5:16) was their mindset.

Jude's introduction of himself to his readers is a testament to his spiritual mindedness and is historical proof that the phrase “blood is thicker than water” ought not be true of any disciple of Jesus, not even one who is His half-brother.

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## **Called, Sanctified, and Preserved**

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Jude's beautiful threefold description of his readers is: "those who are called, sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Christ Jesus" (v. 1). This is the blessed state and glorious standing of all the participants in the common salvation found in Christ. What breathtaking beauty is embedded in each descriptor!

**Called.** The God of heaven has called/invited every creature to an eternal mansion in heaven. Through the gospel all are invited to enjoy the blessing of salvation—forgiveness of the guilt of past sins, ongoing freedom from the practice of besetting sins, and eternal transformation which erases the scars of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14). Those who labor and are heavy laden are invited to come to Jesus for rest (Matthew 11:28). The thirsty need to come to Him and drink (John 7:37).

To accept this gracious invitation, the penitent believer needs to "arise and be baptized, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16), for "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). Once the Savior's invitation has been accepted, it is most fitting for the called to walk worthy of their calling (Ephesians 4:1).

**Sanctified.** The God of heaven adds all His children to His family. He has no step or illegitimate children. That collection of saved persons—God's house—is called the church (1 Timothy 3:15). It has been set apart, i.e. sanctified, for a specific function. It is to be a holy temple in the Lord (Ephesians 2:21) with the explicit purpose of offering up spiritual sacrifices to God (1 Peter 2:5). As God's own special people, the sanctified are to proclaim His praises because He has

called them out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

To live as God intends, the sanctified must sanctify the Lord God in their hearts (1 Peter 3:15). There is to be an unrivaled affection for their Father who has granted them every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3) and who promises an incorruptible, undefiled, imperishable inheritance (1 Peter 1:3-4). As His bride, the church is to have an unrivaled affection for Jesus, her bridegroom (Ephesians 5:22-24). Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts and living soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age (Titus 2:12) befits the sanctified who have sanctified the Lord God in their hearts.

**Preserved.** God's family matters to Him. Christ loves, nourishes, and cherishes His bride. God has invested all of heaven's spiritual treasures in earthen vessels. Therefore, the Father seeks to protect and preserve His family, and Jesus seeks to protect and preserve His bride. Thus, it is only fitting for the called and sanctified also be described as preserved. They are carefully watched over and guarded.

To ensure spiritual victory, God has outfitted each member of his family with spiritual armor (Ephesians 6:10-20). With the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, feet shod with the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit properly worn and used, all the fiery darts of the wicked one can be quenched and all the wiles of the devil can be withstood. You can be more than conquerors through Him who loved you (Romans 8:37), and an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom will be supplied to you (2 Peter 1:11).



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The called, sanctified, and preserved's final invitation will be to a blessed marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9). They will be granted to be arrayed in fine linen—clean and bright (19:8) and will forever be citizens of the holy Jerusalem (21:9-10).

How blessed are “those who are called, sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Christ Jesus”!

## **“Sanctified” and “Preserved” and the Perfect Tense**

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According to Ray Summers in his book *Essentials of New Testament Greek* (p. 103), English translators have a robust challenge trying to adequately convert the Greek language's perfect tense. The English language does not have a tense of “completed action”; the Greek language does.

In New Testament Greek, the perfect tense involves three ideas: 1) an action previously in progress 2) has come to a point of culmination and 3) now exists as a completed result. Its purpose, therefore, is to indicate a completed action or process with a resulting state of being.

The translation of *gegraptai* in Matthew 4:4 is an excellent example of this tense. Most English translations read “it is written.” Because of the perfect tense, the meaning is much richer. It indicates that the written word of God is the result of a process (i.e. the revelation of God's will to inspired men over centuries) which stands authoritative and complete, never to be edited, abridged, or amended.

In like manner, the use of the perfect tense with the verbs “sanctified” and “preserved” in Jude 1 indicates to its original readers that their present state of spiritual well-being is the culmination of actions initiated by the Father and the Son. They are enjoyed by those who share the common salvation, because they answered the call of the gospel by meeting the conditions of faith, repentance, confession, and baptism found in its invitation.

When it comes to getting a sinner out of his lost and guilty state and into the realm of all spiritual blessings (i.e.

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sanctified) and then keeping the saved one saved (i.e. preserved), the Father and the Son have the perfect plan.

*“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen” (Jude 24-25).*

## **Mercy, Peace, and Love Multiplied**

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Jehovah is both good and severe (Romans 11:22). He who is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29) and into whose hands it is fearful to fall (Hebrews 10:31) also delights in mercy, compassion, and forgiveness (Micah 7:18-19). Whether you experience God's goodness, or His severity depends upon your choices and behavior (Romans 11:22).

To those who have answered Jehovah's invitation of sonship via the common salvation in Christ and thus have called upon the Lord in harmony with His immutable requirements, He has sanctified and they are preserved in Jesus Christ (Jude 1).

This body of people—designated in the Bible as “the church”—enjoys all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3), including divine mercy (i.e. God's pity and compassion), peace (i.e. spiritual rest and well-being because they have been reconciled to God), and love (God's personal, attentive, wise, and holy concern for their best spiritual interests).

In his words, “mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you” (v. 2), Jude expresses his ceaseless desire for his readers (then and now). It is a prayer for an ever-increasing blessing of the abundant life (John 10:10) found only in Christ.

To enjoy such, you must “keep yourselves in the love of God” (Jude 21).

## **A Change of Plans**

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*“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you, exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).*

It is not sinful for humans to make plans. God planned and purposed the salvation of sinners before the foundation of the world and predestined that those who answered the call of the gospel would become His sons and heirs (Ephesians 1:4-5).

It is sinful for humans to make presumptuous plans—to determine a certain course of action without acknowledging dependence upon God for life and/or acknowledging His right to veto or amend our plans as He knows best. To believe our plans about the future are superior to God’s providence when the future becomes the present is arrogant, foolish, and evil (James 4:13-16).

As Jude’s epistle was in the planning stage, he envisioned it to be a treatise about the glorious salvation common to his readers and him. However, by the time of its composition, Jude had to change his plans.

This is a persistent challenge to your faith—to live your life purposefully by making plans and then willingly adjusting your intentions to accept and trust in God’s benevolent providence as tomorrows become today.

Because of Jude’s willingness to change his plans so to providentially address the vital spiritual needs of the hour,

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we have an epistle which challenges us to contend earnestly for the faith.

## **A Common Salvation**

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The term “*Koine* Greek” may be something you have heard but may be unsure as to its exact meaning and importance.

The Greek adjective *koinos* (from which *koine* is derived) denotes the idea of “common or belonging to several”; it stands in contrast to something which is unique or individually owned.

The phrase “*Koine* Greek” is designed to emphasize the fact that the Greek language used by the New Testament writers was the language of the common man in the first century A.D. Because of the worldwide conquest of Alexander the Great in the fourth century B.C., the Greek language became the language of the world and remained the *lingua franca* throughout the first century A.D.

Just as a nation’s coin is common currency among its people, so *Koine* Greek was the common linguistic currency among earth’s inhabitants during the writing of the New Testament. This is most important to know because it clearly demonstrates how earnestly God genuinely desired all people in the first century A.D. to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:3-4).

When Jude uses the word *koinos* in verse 3, he uses it to describe that salvation God desires for all people. A “common salvation” indicates that people of all races, nationalities, and cultures are saved by the same acts of obedience—faith in God and the gospel (Hebrews 11:6), repentance which turns away from sin and to Jesus (Luke 13:3, 5), confession of faith in Christ, the Son of God (Acts 8:37: Romans

10:9), and baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16).

God has no unique or individual plan of salvation for you or a small sect of people. We are all called by the one gospel to faith in the one God and obedience to the one Lord via the one faith and the one baptism. This obedience adds us to the one body (i.e. the church) and gives all the one hope as we read and heed the word of God which was revealed and inspired by the one Spirit. This is what you must do to call upon the Lord and enjoy the common salvation of which Jude wanted to write about more.

Your conception and birth are according to God's physical laws of procreation, and thus you share a common heritage with the rest of humanity. In like manner, your spiritual conception and birth are according to God's spiritual laws of regeneration. Thus, you share a common salvation with all those who have likewise been called out of the world by the gospel.



## **Contending Earnestly**

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Jude intended to write his beloved brethren about the wondrous blessings of their common salvation, but he had to change his plans because of the distressing truth which had come to light: the once-for-all-delivered-to-the-saints' faith was under attack by clandestine foes—ungodly men—who sought to pervert the grace of God and deny the authority of deity over humanity (vv. 3-4).

This real and present danger of apostasy was yet another sad chapter in history's accounting of spiritual warfare. One tragic chapter was written in the days of Moses when those saved out of Egypt were forever lost in the wilderness (v. 5); another horrific chapter was recorded when angels sought to rebel against God's authority (v. 6); a third gruesome chapter culminated in the utter destruction and complete disappearance of Sodom and Gomorrah around 1900 B.C. (v. 7).

To protect his dearly loved fellow heirs of God's grace, Jude wrote to exhort his brethren to "contend earnestly for the faith":

- like a soldier engaging in intense hand-to-hand conflict.
- like a runner seeking to win the race.
- like a passionate athlete strenuously striving to win the contest.

Such effort is essential to all who desire to fight the good fight, finish the race, keep the faith, and be given the crown of righteousness from the righteous Judge (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

## **Contend Earnestly for...**

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Some people will contend earnestly for nearly every opinion they have. Others will contend earnestly for extraordinarily little if anything.

A willingness to engage in verbal conflict over matters involving your opinions or manmade religious traditions and teachings is not what Jude exhorted his beloved readers to have.

A willingness to engage in verbal conflict over “the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (v. 3) is what Jude exhorts us to have.

Since we did not live in Jude’s era, it ought to be impossible to confuse our opinions with the faith delivered in the first century A.D. There are nearly two millennia between the two.

Since almost all of today’s manmade religious traditions and teachings were non-existent in Jude’s day, it ought to be equally impossible to confuse them with the faith delivered in the first century A.D.

Biblically speaking, there is only one faith (Ephesians 4:5). It is “the faith” (Jude 3). It is found in the word of God (Acts 13:7-8).

Like Elymas the sorcerer, there are those who seek to turn others from the faith (Acts 13:8). They are full of all deceit and fraud; they are the offspring of the devil; an enemy of righteousness who ceases not in seeking to pervert the straight ways of the Lord (Acts 13:10). Later in his epistle, Jude will call these ungodly men: dreamers, spots (i.e. stains) in your love feasts, clouds without water, fruitless autumn trees, raging waves of the sea, and wandering stars for

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whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever (vv. 8, 12-13).

Beware of and contend earnestly with these ungodly men who seek to turn the grace of God into license to sin and deny the authority of the only God and Jesus Christ (v. 4).

## **The Singularity of THE Faith**

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*“Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1-3).*

The “faith,” not “faiths” identifies the unique singularity of THE faith.

Unlike the plurality of false and contradictory teachings generated by evil (i.e. “the doctrines of demons”—1 Timothy 4:1), the Godhead of the one Father, one Lord, and one Spirit only produces one faith (Ephesians 4:4-6).

Though there are many faiths in this world, THE faith is the one body of doctrine revealed from heaven that bound and loosed on earth what had already been bound and loosed by God (Matthew 16:19). Nothing else contains the common salvation.

## **The Contents of THE Faith**

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*“Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1-3).*

To be saved by God's grace through your obedient faith (Ephesians 2:8) you must hear the faith, the word of God (Acts 13:7-8). According to Romans 1:16-17, it is in the gospel of Christ that the righteousness of God is revealed from faith (i.e. THE faith, or God's word) to faith (i.e. my trusting, obedient response).

THE faith is not found in some still small voice in the night, or goose bumps in the dark, or a nervous stomach attributed to the Holy Spirit.

The entire contents of THE faith are found in the New Testament section of God's word.

## **The Ability of THE Faith**

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*“Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1-3).*

“Our common salvation” identifies the unique ability of THE faith.

THE faith is about salvation for all, not social justice, global warming, overpopulation, or even positive thinking.

Therefore, it contains facts which must be known and accepted, promises which must be trusted, warnings which must be heeded, and commands which must be obeyed, if you are to enjoy the common salvation offered by Christ.

THE faith is the power of God to salvation for everyone.

## **The Finality of THE Faith**

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*“Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1-3).*

“Once for all” identifies the distinctive finality of THE faith.

By the time the first century A.D. was completed, God’s revelation of the faith which offers the common salvation was also completed.

Through the many infallible proofs of miraculous confirmation, the perfect and final covenant of God was certified once for all time. There is no promise of or need for continued revelation after the once-for-all faith was delivered to Jude and his fellow first century saints.

To contend that additional revelation was given to any others than the eight apostles and prophets who penned the New Testament is to call Jude a liar, the Spirit of truth (John 16:13) who inspired his writing a liar, and the God who cannot lie (Titus 1:2) a liar.

## **The Origin of THE Faith**

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*“Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1-3).*

“Delivered” identifies the unique origin of THE faith.

THE faith did not originate with Jude or his fellow penmen. They were not the source of THE faith; they were the delivery personnel. As Jesus informed Peter, whatever was bound by Peter and his fellow apostles had already been bound in heaven and whatever was loosed by them had already been loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:19, 18:18—literal translation).

Because of THE faith’s divine origin, we can know with great confidence that we are not following cleverly devised fables (2 Peter 1:16).



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## **The Trustees of THE Faith**

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*“Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1-3).*

“The saints” identifies the unique trustees of THE faith.

As used in the New Testament, saints are not dead people; they are the living “who are called, sanctified (or “sanctified” by God” (Jude 1).

Just as the written words of the Law were entrusted by Moses to the priests (Deuteronomy 31:9), so God has entrusted His new covenant to its priests—i.e. all Christians.

Just as the ancient kings of Israel were to have their own personal copy of God’s law so they could read it all the days of their lives and then live righteously (Deuteronomy 17:18-20), so God’s royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9)—as trustees of His word—ought to search the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:11).

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## **The Requirements of THE Faith**

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*“Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1-3).*

Once identified, every unique and precious jewel is guarded zealously by its owner. How much more ought this to be true about the spiritual treasure called “THE faith.” The brilliant facets of its singularity, its contents, its ability, its finality, its origin, and its trustees combine to make it a most unique and priceless fortune.

What then does this worthy gift from God require of us?

- Contend earnestly for it.
- Refuse to allow overt and covert change agents to pervert it.
- Vigorously oppose them.
- Willingly engage in spiritual dialogue with those who seek to turn the grace of God from its divinely intended preventative of sin (Romans 6:1-2) into an unrighteous license to sin.
- Strenuously oppose those who deny the existence and sovereign authority of God in the home, in the church, and in the world.

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- Courageously contradict those who deny the absolute authority Jesus has to govern every word and deed of His people (Colossians 3:17).

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## **The Methodology of Change Agents**

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Regardless of whether a change agent of the 1<sup>st</sup> century or 21<sup>st</sup> century is under consideration, the inspired writer Jude's portrait of them is indelibly etched in Scripture in just one verse:

*“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 4).*

The methodology of change agents is to be as clandestine as possible—“crept in unawares.”

Few change agents are as brazen as the ones presently afflicting the house of God. The method of most is to try to avoid detection for as long as possible. Like termites which covertly weaken and destroy a structure's foundation and its supporting pillars, a change agent's method is to come in by a side door (*pareisduno*) and stealthily weaken and destroy the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15).

When THE faith is subverted, the salvation it offers is destroyed too.

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## **The Motivation of Change Agents**

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In addition to their covert methodology, Jude exposes the perverse motivation of these “ungodly men.”

Like a wolf in sheep’s clothing, a change agent seeks to camouflage his true character. This is essential because he is a sensual/carnally minded person, who causes divisions, not having the Spirit (Jude 19).

A change agent lacks *asebes*, a genuine reverence for God. Therefore, his doctrine (i.e. his message) reflects his irreverence for God and his lack of devotion to Him. A change agent's fundamental motivation is selfish and self-centered in focus. He is completely unlike a godly man—one who is devoted to God, has a Godward attitude, and seeks to do that which is well-pleasing to God (i.e. he fears God and keeps His commandments).

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## **The Message of Change Agents**

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Not only does Jude expose a change agent's methodology and motivation, he also identifies the poisonous content of his message—"turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness and denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ." Perverted grace and a disdain for God's legitimate authority are the twin pillars of the message of these apostates.

The grace of God that brings salvation to all men teaches a denial of ungodliness and worldly lusts and a life of sobriety, righteousness, and godly living in this present age (Titus 2:11-12). Any teaching on the grace of God that explicitly or implicitly teaches a Christian to continue in sin that grace may abound is a false doctrine. It is "CERTAINLY NOT!" true (Romans 6:1-2 NKJV). The purpose of God's grace is not to excuse sin, but to eliminate it. A change agent's message is that grace gives you liberty to sin; the Bible's message is that grace gives you liberty from sin.

The ultimate poison in a change agent's message is his denial of the Lordship (i.e. authority of) a Christian's Father and Savior. Although an earthly child is to obey his father in all things (Colossians 3:20) and Christ was obedient to His Father to the point of death (Philippians 2:8), a change agent teaches that a child of God does not have such an obligation to his/her spiritual Father. Although wives are to submit to their own husbands in everything (Ephesians 5:22-24), the spiritual bride of Christ (who serves as the example for human marriage—Ephesians 5:32) has no such obligation to her husband, they teach.

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Because of a change agent's ungodly attitude toward and ultimate irreverence for God, his message is that grace gives a Christian freedom from God's authority as his/her heavenly Father and Christ's authority as his/her spiritual husband. Such a message is Satanic to the core.

These messengers of Satan "were before of old ordained to...condemnation." Rightly so.

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## **Perverting God's Grace—Part One**

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God's grace is amazing.

Every wondrous facet of its beauty and winsomeness is radiant in its splendor. Without God's grace humans are eternally doomed, hopelessly lost, forever sentenced to everlasting pain and misery.

Because the father of lies is alive and well, change agents seek to pervert the grace of God into a license to lawlessness and sin (Jude 4). How far afield this is from the intended purpose of grace—i.e. to motivate holy and obedient living (Titus 2:12-14) which abstains from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11).

As explained in Jude 5-7, such a presumptuous perversion of God's grace ignores three clear facts of history; therefore Jude writes:

*“But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe” (Jude 5).*

It is a perversion of the truth to believe and teach that God's grace excuses unbelief and disobedience.

To demonstrate this fact Jude reminds us that the Lord saved Israel by His grace out of Egypt. He redeemed them from slavery. There can be no doubt about it: they were freed from bondage; they were God's holy and chosen people (Exodus 19:5-6). Such grace and deliverance, however, did not excuse any of Israel's subsequent unbelief and disobedience.



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Those who refused to obey God were destroyed. Incidentally, this word translated “destroyed” is also found in other New Testament passages, such as 2 Peter 3:9, Luke 13:3, and John 3:16. Clearly, this word as used in these three latter passages has reference to a person’s eternal destiny.

It is true that once you become a child of God, you will always be a child of God. But, according to Jude 5, it is not true that once you have been saved, you will always be saved.

The grace of God does not excuse unbelief and disobedience.

Only spiritual perverts teach otherwise.

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## **Perverting God's Grace—Part Two**

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God's grace is amazing. However, it is a perversion of the truth to believe and teach that God's grace excuses presumption.

As explained in Jude 6, this perversion of God's grace ignores the following angelic activity:

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

At some point in the past there were angels who refused to stay within their God-given, God-authorized sphere of responsibility and service. They presumed upon God; they sought to do some thing(s) that God had not authorized. His response to their presumption was swift and severe: “He has reserved (them) in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.” If this is God's response to the sin of presumption when done by angels, who would be so foolish as to presume to believe and teach that His grace will excuse the sin of presumption when committed by humans?

The grace of God does not excuse presumption.

Only spiritual perverts teach otherwise.

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## **Perverting God's Grace—Part Three**

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God's grace is amazing. Continuing in sin after being redeemed is Certainly NOT! (Romans 6:1-2) amazing.

Presumptuous perversions of God's grace ignore three clear facts of history. Of the third historical event, Jude writes:

*“as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 7).*

It is a perversion of the truth to believe and teach that God's grace excuses immoral behavior.

Divine vengeance upon the immoral and perverse Sodomites was so severe that God destroyed the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim (Deuteronomy 29:23), plus the vegetation around them (Genesis 19:25), AND He is presently punishing them with “the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 7). This was done “as an example.”

Clearly this example teaches us that God's grace does not excuse this, or any other, immoral behavior.

Only spiritual perverts teach otherwise.

## **What a Tombstone!**

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*“as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 7).*

Throughout the world millions of tombstones mark the place where the earthly remains of a departed soul have been buried. These grave markers come in all shapes, sizes, and descriptions. Some are hardly more than a meager “x” on the ground. Others are ostentatious in the extreme.

On a desolate location near the Dead Sea, the God of heaven has placed a momentous monument of His own. It marks the spot where Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim once stood. It stands as an unceasing example of God’s holy wrath and just punishment of ungodly, immoral human behavior.

The divine purpose of this grave marker is to solemnly remind humanity that the vile passions and debased mind which result from rejecting God, His goodness, and His authority are serious and deadly.

What a tombstone!

## **Two Somber, Immutable Bible Truths**

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*“as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 7).*

It takes an abundant amount of perverse imagination and hermeneutical gymnastics to try to use the Bible to defend homosexuality. Some have tried and have been unsuccessful every time.

The Bible writers—Old and New Testament alike—have consistently, clearly, and forcefully denounced this degenerate practice.

Though Jude only uses one sentence, he plainly states two somber, unchanging truths about this practice of vile passions.

**Homosexuality is immoral.** The Greek word *porneia*—which is the root of the verb used by Jude’s inspired quill—denotes all illicit sexual behavior. It includes all sexual expression which defiles the marriage bed—premarital sex, adultery, incest, bestiality, pedophilia, rape, and both persons involved in a homosexual liaison (see *malakos*—“homosexuals,” and *arsenokoites*—“sodomites” in 1 Corinthians 6:9 NKJV).

**Homosexuality is unlawful.** One way that Bible writers identify an unauthorized activity or person is with the word “strange.” The children of Israel were commanded to not offer strange sacrifices (Exodus 30:9). Nadab and Abihu—two sons of Aaron who were priests—were destroyed by fire

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from Jehovah because they used strange (KJV) or profane (NKJV) fire—fire which God had not authorized them to use (Leviticus 10:1-2). When counseling his precious offspring on how to live as a spiritual success in this world, Solomon frequently warned his beloved son of strange women—adulteresses—who would lead him into a path of ruin (cf. Proverbs 5:3, 20; 6:24; 7:5; 23:27 in KJV).

It makes absolutely no difference how many legislative bodies or judicial courts affirm it; homosexuality is unlawful in God's eyes. Not only do homosexuals receive "in themselves the penalty of their error" (Romans 1:27) in this life, they will also suffer "the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7) in the life to come.

Immoral and unlawful.

Two somber, sobering, immutable Bible truths.

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## **The Vengeance of Eternal Fire**

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Neither Jesus, Jude, nor any of Jesus' other bondservants ever minimized or trivialized the facts of hell's existence and horrors.

Hell exists because of Jehovah's pristine holiness. It is God's holiness that gives heaven its splendor and beauty. It is God's holiness that gives hell its torment and anguish.

Since the Garden of Eden, God has been revealing His just and fearful wrath against all human ungodliness and unrighteousness. Repeatedly in the New Testament, readers are earnestly warned of Gehenna's everlasting, unquenchable fire which God has prepared for the devil and his angels.

According to the Bible's final book, the lake of fire—i.e. the second death—will be the unceasing punishment for all of God's human and angelic enemies, and of His foes named death and Hades (Revelation 20:11-15). This lake which burns with fire and brimstone will be the permanent prison of all the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars (Revelation 21:8).

Jesus tells of a rich man who had experienced a foretaste of the tormenting vengeance of eternal fire (Luke 16:19-31). Because of the agony and anguish he was experiencing, the man sought to warn his five living brothers lest they also die as impenitent sinners. His request was denied because his brethren had the written word of God to persuade them.

Like the rich man's five brothers, we have God's written word to persuade of the existence and vengeance of eternal fire.

Has it?

## **Dreamers**

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*“Likewise, also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries” (Jude 8).*

Dreams were one of God's diverse manners of communicating His authoritative word to humanity during the 1,600 years He used to complete the revelation of the Scriptures. Abimelech the king of Gerar, Jacob, Joseph, Pharaoh, Solomon, Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel, and Joseph of Nazareth all received a divine message in a dream.

However, not everyone who claims to have received a revelation from God via a dream is telling the truth.

In the 23<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Jeremiah, there is an extended denunciation of the then-current batch of false prophets and false teachers.

*“I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in My name, saying, ‘I have dreamed, I have dreamed!’ How long will this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart... Behold, I am against those who prophesy false dreams,” says the LORD, “and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness. Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore, they shall not profit this people at all,” says the LORD (vv. 25-26, 32).*



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In Zechariah's day, those who envisioned lies and told false dreams—thus giving false comfort—were stoutly condemned and warned of God's impending punishment upon them (10:2-3).

There is one telltale characteristic of every fraudulent spiritual dreamer: He is never content with simply obeying God's written will (Deuteronomy 13:1-5).

The teaching of a phony spiritual dreamer permits the defilement of the temple of God (i.e. your body—1 Corinthians 6:19), rejects the authoritative written word of God, and is irreverent toward holy things.

His "dreams" are spiritual nightmares.

## **Dreams**

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Nightmares are not pleasant experiences.

Several years ago, I was awakened by my daughter in the early morning hours. Shortly before, she had dreamed I had suffered a heart attack and died. Her dream was so believable, she refused to disbelieve it until she had conclusive proof I was still alive.

Dreams can be quite vivid, realistic, and convincing, but this does not make them true.

In like manner, spiritual falsehoods recounted by false teachers (i.e. spiritual dreamers) can be quite vivid, realistic, and convincing, but this does not make them true. It does not mean they are in harmony with God's written, revealed will, and if they are not in harmony with God's written, revealed will, they are not true (John 17:17).

Spiritual dreamers have convinced some that salvation occurs once someone has recited the "sinner's prayer." Should you ask for the Bible's book, chapter, and verse(s) location for this prayer, you quickly discover that this teaching is a dream, not truth.

Spiritual dreamers have convinced some that prayers can and should be addressed to departed "saints" or Mary the mother of Jesus. Should you ask for the Bible's book, chapter, and verse(s) location to document this, you quickly discover that this teaching is a dream, not truth.

Spiritual dreamers have convinced some that mechanical instruments of music are authorized in New Testament worship of God. Should you ask for the Bible's book, chapter, and verse(s) location to demonstrate this, you quickly discover that this teaching is a dream, not truth.

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Spiritual dreamers have convinced some that baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace. Should you ask for the Bible's book, chapter, and verse(s) location to prove this, you quickly discover that this teaching is a dream, not truth.

Spiritual dreamers have convinced some that Jesus built His church on the apostle Peter. Should you ask for the Bible's book, chapter, and verse(s) location to substantiate this, you quickly discover that this teaching is a dream, not truth.

Believing the dream of a false teacher instead of God's written word will result in an eternal nightmare.

**BEWARE** of these dreamers and their dreams!

## **A False Teacher Unmasked**

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Like his serpent forefather, a wolf in sheep's clothing ever strives to mask his true spiritual degeneracy.

Because of his skilled practice of evasion, accurately discerning his ulterior motives is supremely challenging for us. For an inspired penman like Jude, however, there is no challenge. In one sentence this bondservant of Jesus removes the veneer of sheep's clothing and reveals the ravaging wolf under it. That sentence reads:

*“Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries” (v. 8).*

**A false teacher values the carnal over the spiritual.** The pollution of sin which fleshly lusts generate when they are indulged is of greater interest and importance than spiritual purity and heavenly treasures. Therefore, grace is taught as a perverted excuse to sin, not as a Scriptural motive for eliminating it.

**A false teacher despises God's authority and rebels against it.** Living as a bondservant under the complete authority of God as described and proscribed in Colossians 3:17 is anathema in his heart of hearts. How dare Jehovah fail to realize and respect his foolish, inflated sense of self-importance!

**A false teacher is sacrilegious.** He has not a proper reverence for holy beings and holy things, nor has he a rightful recognition of others who have authority superior to his. Because fearing God and keeping His commandments is the

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whole purpose of human existence (Ecclesiastes 12:13), he is a colossal spiritual failure.

By their smooth words and flattering speech, false teachers are an ever-present danger to the undiscerning (Romans 16:17-18).

I pray you won't become the prey of these spiritual predators.

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## **The Seriousness of the Sin of Irreverence**

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*“Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’” (Jude 9).*

There are few, if any, holy things treated with much reverence in our crooked and perverse generation. Because of this, it is most easy and convenient to minimize the seriousness of the heinous sin of irreverence.

Because the event mentioned above has not been preserved in Scripture and is far beyond the scope and knowledge of any secular historian, only an inspired writer would know that Michael the archangel disputed with the devil about the body of Moses.

Jude’s somber and solemn points about the seriousness of the sin of irreverence need to be driven home in every heart.

The holy archangel Michael, even when disputing with the Evil one over who had the rightful authority over Moses’ body, did not rail against him in a profane or presumptuous way. It was beneath the office and dignity of such a holy being.

What a contrast to every generation’s spiritual dreamers/change agents! They are not heavenly or genuinely holy beings (like an archangel). Unlike Michael, their disagreement in matters of authority is not with the devil but with the sovereign, holy God, and they have no fear of presuming to use authority in spiritual matters Jehovah has not given them. “Woe to them” (Jude 11) and to their kindred spirits!

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When it comes to reverence for holy things and God's sovereign authority in spiritual matters: Are you like the archangel Michael or the devil and his change agents?

## **Three Dark Truths**

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A change agent's veneer of smooth words and flattering speech does not fool the God of heaven. All the sheepskin in the world cannot camouflage this dreamer's true self before God. All things are naked and open to His eyes (Hebrews 4:13). According to Jude 9, these false teachers "speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves." Woe to them (Jude 10).

Behind the façade of their spiritual piety are three dark truths. These are:

**A change agent is a blasphemer.** The Greek verb *blasphemeo* in this verse is translated "speak evil." Because the present active indicative conjugation of this verb is used by the Holy Spirit through Jude's quill, a continuous state of being is what He is declaring to be true.

One way a dreamer's arrogance and irreverence can be clearly seen is in his smug attitude of "If I do not know it, it is not worth knowing." Should you dare to disagree with his high opinion of himself and his knowledge, you need to be prepared to be on the receiving end of an angry spiritual hog as he tramples spiritual pearls under his feet and seeks to tear you in pieces (see Matthew 7:6).

**A change agent has extraordinarily little genuine knowledge.** Because the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7) and the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10), and a spiritual dreamer is irreverent toward holy things (Jude 8-9), he actually has limited knowledge in spiritual matters. He does, however, have a wealth of knowledge in worldly matters. To help him hide these two



alarming facts, he will usually seek to accumulate high-sounding titles and impressive appearing degrees.

Yet, a pig with lipstick on it is still a pig.

**A change agent is spiritually corrupt.** The law of sowing and reaping governs the spiritual world just as it does the material realm. A person who sows haughtiness, irreverence, and carnal-mindedness (instead of humility, reverence, and spiritual-mindedness) will always reap spiritual corruption.

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked in this: Everyone gets to choose what they sow; no one gets to void the harvest which foolish choices produce. Neither you, I, nor any change agent is the exception.

## **Cain, Balaam, and Korah**

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In illustrating the perverseness of spiritual dreamers, the inspired penman writes of the examples of Cain (Genesis 4), Balaam (Numbers 22-24), and Korah (Numbers 16) in Jude 11. He writes:

*“Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.”*

Before considering each apostate dreamer individually, focus for a moment on what exactly it was that these irreverent, ungodly men sought to change so to deserve the spiritual infamy they are given by God in His word.

It ought to be most sobering to note the following:

- Cain sought to be a change agent of God's authorized worship.
- Balaam sought to be a change agent of God's revealed will.
- Korah sought to be a change agent of God's authorized leaders of His people.

Rather than reverencing God, His august holiness, His universal sovereignty, and His immense glory like the archangel Michael (see Jude 9), change agents have no fear of attacking God's authorized worship, His revealed will, and His clear instructions on who has been delegated the authority to be leaders of His people.

Twenty centuries later, change agents are still behaving like they did in Jude's day. Truly, there is nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

## **The Way of Cain**

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*“Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah” (Jude 11).*

Cain, the first newborn baby on planet Earth—became humanity’s first full-fledged change agent once he grew into adulthood. Discontent with God’s authorized worship, he irreverently sought to worship the great I AM so to please himself, not Jehovah.

Though we do not know for sure all the specific instructions God gave to Cain and Abel about worshipping Him, we do know that He gave them some. (Since Abel’s worship was done by faith (Hebrews 11:4) and faith can only come by hearing and obeying God’s word (Romans 10:17), God must have told them what He wanted.)

Instead of the way of Cain, Abel lovingly submitted his will to God’s way, and the Lord respected him and his offering (Genesis 4:4).

**The way of Cain** was to reject God’s requirements and presumptuously substitute what he liked instead, and “God did not respect Cain and his offering” (Genesis 4:5).

**The way of Cain** was to become angry with God and His authority over him (Genesis 4:5-6) instead of repenting.

**The way of Cain** was to nurse his ravenous pride (Genesis 4:7) instead of humbly submitting to God’s right to command him.

**The way of Cain** was to wish evil upon his brother and become so enslaved to the bitterness produced by his

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wounded pride that he murdered his righteous brother (Genesis 4:8).

NOTE carefully: **The way of Cain** began with a rejection of God's authorized worship.

BEWARE of the way of Cain.

## **The Error of Balaam**

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*“Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah” (Jude 11).*

As documented in Numbers 22-24, the life of Balaam is another sad chapter in the history of covetousness and compromise. The love of money—the root of all kinds of evil—is what prompted the prophet to go when God said to stay, and to argue with a donkey and lose.

**The error of Balaam** springs from a greater love for wealth than truth. The wages of unrighteousness (2 Peter 2:15) were of greater value in his heart than treasure in heaven.

**The error of Balaam** transformed a spokesman of God into a hireling who ultimately sought to tickle the ears of King Balak for his own personal profit (Jude 11).

**The error of Balaam** resulted in his offering evil counsel to a wicked king so that the loyalty and holiness of God's people were heinously compromised and then they were justly punished (Numbers 25:1-18, 31:16).

**The error of Balaam** culminates in aiding and abetting someone to place a stumbling block in another's path. “It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:6).

Beware of the error of Balaam.

## **The Rebellion of Korah**

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*“Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah” (Jude 11).*

The words and actions which brought about the death of the change agent Korah are found in Numbers 16. With 250 followers, Korah with Dathan and Abiram accused Moses and Aaron of being presumptuous, self-promoting elites. “You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?” (Numbers 16:3).

**The rebellion of Korah** arises in a heart puffed up with an overestimation of self and one’s importance.

**The rebellion of Korah** is fueled by the horrific spiritual malady called envy.

**The rebellion of Korah** seeks to overtly reject God’s inherent right to structure the leadership of His people as He wishes.

**The rebellion of Korah** presumes to create a religion void of obedience to God’s authority and His expressed will.

**The rebellion of Korah** aims to satisfy a lover of himself with a form of godliness while denying its power and rejecting true godliness which is profitable in all things.

**The rebellion of Korah** has no working knowledge of the seriousness of the sin of presumption.

The rebellion of Korah ended most abruptly:

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*“...the ground split apart under them, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. So, they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly” (Numbers 16:31-33).*

Beware of the rebellion of Korah.

## **The Scriptures' Hall of Infamy**

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Hebrews 11 has often been called "The Scriptures' Hall of Fame." In similar fashion, Jude 11 could easily be dubbed "The Scriptures' Hall of Infamy."

*"Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah" (Jude 11).*

The examples of Cain, Balaam, and Korah have been recorded for our admonition and learning (1 Corinthians 10:11). When studied and applied appropriately, they can and will make us wise unto salvation (2 Timothy 3:15).

It is because of this ilk of ungodly men that Jude wrote his epistle of exhortation (Jude 3-4). The change agents threatening the faith in Jude's day were just as dangerous and doomed as Cain, Balaam, and Korah were in their day. The change agents threatening the faith in *our* day are just as dangerous and doomed as Cain, Balaam, and Korah were in their day.

- Change agents who advocate the way of Cain by seeking to presumptuously substitute their preferences in worship in the place of God's revealed will are dangerous and doomed.
- Change agents who run in the error of Balaam by speaking words which compromise the uniqueness and holiness of God's people are dangerous and doomed.



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- Change agents who, like Korah, choose the path of rebellion against God's prescribed leadership in the home and in the church are dangerous and doomed.

Presumptuous worship. Indistinct, unholy living. Perverted leadership. These life-sized displays are found for your investigation and learning in the Scriptures' Hall of Infamy.

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## **The Sobering Peril of Spiritual Dreamers**

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*“These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever” (Jude 12-13).*

Compressed into five vivid word pictures, Jude graphically describes the sobering perils false teachers/change agents are to themselves and others.

**They destroy Christian fellowship and brotherly love:** They are spots (or hidden rocks—ASV) in your love feasts.

In the first century, Christians ate together (Acts 2:46, 20:11). Regardless of whether these meals were potlucks where everyone brought a dish or were dinners furnished by wealthier Christians for their destitute brothers and sisters, they were called “love feasts.” They were intended to be a time of pleasant social interaction which would strengthen the bonds of fellowship and brotherhood.

Like a hair in a sumptuous dish, change agents are spiritual pollutants—“spots”—which can and will destroy the brotherly kindness and love which prompt these occasions.

Like a dangerous reef just below the waterline in a river, these spiritual dreamers are a covert and sure peril to the love and unity of God’s people.

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Even though these occasions of eating together are intended to encourage unselfishness and greater, more fervent brotherly love, spiritual dreamers use them for self-serving purposes. They were so successful in their efforts that church historians state these meals were discontinued by the fourth century because the change agents had selfishly turned them into ungodly debaucheries.

Spiritual dreamers pollute and shipwreck Christian fellowship and brotherly love.

They destroy faith by creating false hope: They are clouds without water.

A thirsty land—parched by heat and arid conditions—longs for a gentle refreshing rain. Anticipation builds as rain clouds move from the horizon to overhead. These hopes, however, are dashed when the clouds move away without leaving a drop of moisture.

Change agents speak great swelling words which are smooth and impressive. Because people are pointed to a faith in them instead of God, their words—when believed—ultimately cultivate a spiritual cancer of disappointment and disillusionment. Instead of offering an anchor to the soul which is steadfast and sure, they promise much and deliver nothing of substance or benefit.

Spiritual dreamers subvert Biblical hope and then blow out of town.

They sabotage good works and spiritual maturity: They are late autumn trees without fruit.

Fall is harvest time in an apple orchard. Imagine the barrenness an orchard would have in the autumn if every tree were dead from the roots up. Instead of fruit, all you could

see would be branchy skeletons which need to be turned into firewood.

Because of the toxin of their false teaching, change agents kill off the root of spiritual growth. They destroy the fruits of obedience and good works which are essential to Christianity. Good soil has been poisoned.

Spiritual dreamers decimate spiritual growth.

**They thrive on “making waves”:** They are raging waves of the sea.

One of the soothing appeals of an ocean's beach is the sound of ever moving water. Regardless of whether the tide is ebbing in or out, a steady roll of waves breaks upon the shore. Each wave leaves behind its own personal deposit of seaweed, shells, and other aquatic odds and ends.

Like the ocean, change agents always strive to have something astir. They crave the attention that unrest brings. Their ravening egos need constant sympathy and recognition.

But all this only results in spiritual flotsam. Nothing holy or spiritually beneficial comes from these spiritual prima donnas.

Spiritual dreamers foment unnecessary division.

**They are doomed rebels:** They are wandering stars headed for a spiritual black hole.

A wandering star is an anomaly. Typically, the lights in the firmament of heaven—the sun, moon, and stars—are most predictable in fulfilling their assigned task of marking days, seasons, and years.

A wandering (or shooting) star may briefly light up the night sky and impress the few stargazers who are watching,

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but its brief moment of fame is quickly over, and its eternal oblivion is irreversible.

Change agents—like Cain, Balaam, and Korah (v. 11)—get to do their own thing for a while, but their notoriety is temporary, and their infamy is eternal. Once they depart from this life, they are forever in a spiritual black hole with no possibility of return.

Spiritual dreamers are ungodly rebels without a noble cause.

## **God's Judgment on the Ungodly**

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*“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, 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” (Jude 14-15).*

Just as space has black holes which irresistibly draw objects into its pitch-black darkness forever, so the Creator of space has “reserved the blackness of darkness forever” for the ungodly. The truth of God’s judgment on the ungodly has been revealed since the days of Enoch, who was born about three hundred years prior to Adam’s death.

God’s timeless warning of His judgment on the ungodly requires somber consideration by every generation since Enoch’s. God’s pronouncement to the patriarch several millennia ago contains seven noteworthy characteristics.

**God’s judgment is certain:** “Behold the Lord comes...” Just as you can be assured of death—because of your separation from the tree of life—you can be equally sure of God’s judgment. Death is your final earthly appointment. After it is kept, there is the judgment (Hebrews 9:27). Death and judgment have been divinely joined, and no man can sever them.

The steady beat of “and he died” echoes through the Scriptures’ first book of genealogy. Adam died (Genesis 5:5). Seth died (Genesis 5:8). Enosh died (Genesis 5:11).

Cainan died (Genesis 5:14). Mahaleel died (Genesis 5:17). Jared died (Genesis 5:20). Methusaleh died (Genesis 5:27). Lamech died (Genesis 5:31).

Just as sunset will inevitably follow today's sunrise, God's judgment will immediately accompany your death.

**God's judgment is irresistible:** "Behold the Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints..." The Old and New Testaments alike testify that God's judgment will involve a heavenly posse of immense and irresistible force. At the end of human history, the Lord Jesus will be "revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (2 Thesalonians 1:7-10).

Astronomers state that a black hole is formed when a dying star explodes and creates a gravitational pull so strong that anything within its "event horizon"—other stars, cosmic matter, and even light—are irresistibly pulled into oblivion, just like tiny specks of dust are consumed by a giant vacuum cleaner.

No king, no great man, no rich man, no commander, no mighty man, no slave, no free man (Revelation 6:15) will escape God's judgment. All humanity—from the smallest of the small to the greatest of the great (Revelation 20:12)—will be judged by God. There will be no exceptions. There will be no partiality (Romans 2:11).

**God's judgment is purposeful:** "to execute judgment..." When Jesus came to earth as a baby in Bethlehem, He came with heaven's offer of pardon for condemned spiritual criminals. In an invitation which seems almost too good to be true, He came not to be served but to serve and give His life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). He came as the Lamb of God to bear the guilt of your sin (John 1:29).

And He did.

When He comes again, He will return as the Lion of the tribe Judah (Revelation 5:5). As the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Only Potentate, He will gather all nations before the throne of His glory and separate the righteous from the unrighteous (Matthew 25:31-46). His sheep (the righteous) will be welcomed into the final phase of the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world, and they will enjoy eternal life. The goats (the unrighteous) will be sent away from Him into the everlasting fire, and they will be punished with eternal retribution. Righteous judgment will be executed.

**God's judgment is universal:** "to execute judgment on all..." From the Garden of Eden to the end of time, no one will ever be exactly like you. You are fearfully and wonderfully made in God's image, and because of God's immense creativity and power, you are unique. You are exceptional.

Your personal exceptionality, however, does not make you a personal exception to God's judgment.

Like every other member of the human race, you will appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive just recompense for the things you have done in life, according to what you have done, whether good or evil (2 Corinthians 5:10).



Because of your creation, you are special. Because you are God's special creation, you are accountable to God for the life you live. There are no exceptions, not even for you or me.

**God's judgment is convicting:** "to convict all who are ungodly..." Since the Garden of Eden, Satan has ever sought to sow doubt in the trustworthiness of God's word. Repeatedly the devil's strenuous efforts have resulted in a bountiful harvest of unbelief and disobedience.

The rich man was certain his five brothers would listen to Lazarus if someone from the dead came to warn them of the torment the ungodly experienced after death (Luke 16:27-28). Abraham knew better. He also knew that God was no respecter of persons (Romans 2:11). Therefore, he declared that God's written word was sufficient for the germination of faith which would prompt repentance, obedience, and righteous living (Luke 16:29-31).

Two haunting convictions will be forever seared into the conscience of the ungodly when they are judged: 1) God does indeed say what He means and means what He says; and 2) They believed the father of lies on this matter instead of the One who cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

These convictions will torment the ungodly forever.

**God's judgment is comprehensive:** "of all their ungodly deeds..." Nothing is hidden from God. He "will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil...for there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known" (Ecclesiastes 12:14; Luke 12:2).

From the first to the final ungodly deed performed by any ungodly person, God's holy wrath will be executed.

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No skeleton of sin in any closet of your heart or life will be exempted.

*“There is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:13).*

**God's judgment is thorough:** “all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” Not only does God's judgment fall on the entirety of your ungodly deeds—from the first to the final one—it is also executed upon your words and the way they were said.

*“Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops” (Luke 12:3).*

Jesus' loving and wise counsel is:

*“I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!” (Luke 12:4-5).*

God's judgment is thorough.

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## **A Wise Fear of God's Judgment**

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The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10). Since it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:31)—who is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29)—the fear of the Lord's judgment is the beginning of wise living. It is wise because:

God's judgment is certain.

God's judgment is irresistible.

God's judgment is purposeful.

God's judgment is universal.

God's judgment is convicting.

God's judgment is comprehensive.

God's judgment is thorough.

From the days of Adam and Enoch, humanity has been warned of the spiritual black hole awaiting the ungodly when they fail to repent of their sinful ways before they die.

*“Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him” (Jude 14-15).*

Are you living wisely?

## **The Seriousness of Ingratitude and Discontentment**

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*These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts (Jude 16).*

Spiritually speaking, a chronic complainer and faultfinder has an “I” problem and is deathly sick. He most certainly faces the wrath of God upon his ungodly mindset and mouth once his wretched life on this earth is completed.

The persistent faultfinder who is ever grumbling and complaining does so for one simple reason: he is living his life in pursuit of his own ungodly lusts.

At the very root of his miserable life and horrific mindset is pride. God’s grace is not enough for someone as important as him. God’s providence is insufficient for someone who is deserving of more, better, and greater. Life is never easy, comfortable, or convenient enough for him.

Jehovah has no sympathy for such a pathetic spiritual ingrate.

As the apostle Paul notes in the “Old Testament examples written for our admonition” section of 1 Corinthians 10 (i.e. verses 6-10), God destroyed complainers. He ended their miserable stay on earth by the destroyer (1 Corinthians 10:10). The same death angel which struck down the Egyptians’ firstborn sons and animals (Exodus 12:23) also eliminated those grumbling, complaining, ungrateful, discontented Israelites in the wilderness outside of Egypt.

Beloved, “do all things without complaining and disputing” (Philippians 2:14).

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## **Beware of the Danger of Flattery**

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*“...they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage” (Jude 16).*

Flattery is a losing proposition. It harms both the hearer and the speaker.

Springing from a heart of insincerity, it is a grotesque, yet often subtle, counterfeit of genuine praise. Perverted by an evil ulterior motive, flattery is a most effective spiritual weapon in the arsenal of the ungodly.

Flatterers often are successful in gaining an advantage over the targets of their insincere speech. The swelling words uttered by their mouths are designed to swell the heads of those whose ears hear their feigned praise.

*“A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet” (Proverbs 29:5).*

BEWARE of the danger of flattery.

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## **Five Unflattering Truths about Flattery**

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Flattery is intended to swell the head and disarm the unsuspecting.

Because most humans would prefer ruination by flattery over salvation by criticism, great swelling words of emptiness are quite potent, especially when employed by an immoral seductress (Proverbs 2:16; 7:5, 21) or an ungodly change agent (2 Peter 2:18; Jude 16).

The unvarnished truth about flattery unmasks its hypocrisy and (hopefully) diminishes its seductive powers.

- Flattery is not a characteristic of faithful, godly preachers like the apostle Paul (1 Thessalonians 2:5).
- A flattering mouth works ruin (Proverbs 26:28).
- Flattery is an attribute of those whose mouths are faithless (i.e. unrighteous) (Psalm 5:9).
- Flattery is a form of lying/talebearing (Proverbs 20:19).
- Self-flattery is a common trait of the wicked who foolishly has no fear of God in his heart (Psalm 36:1-2).

God's wise advice is simple: "Do not associate with one who flatters with his lips" (Proverbs 20:19).

## **The Bible's Anticipation of Error**

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One of the many infallible proofs of the Scriptures being authored by the omniscient, Almighty God is its anticipation of error. Jude demonstrates this with these words:

*“But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts” (Jude 17-18).*

In the past two millennia, not one single religious error has arisen which cannot be refuted by what is found written in the New Testament by its inspired penmen.

Jude specifically writes of change agents (v. 4) who ultimately seek to destroy the faith which blesses us with a common salvation in Christ. A remembrance of the apostles' doctrine is the remedy to these flattering spiritual dreamers.

While in Miletus at the close of his third missionary journey, the apostle Paul warned the Ephesian elders of an approaching attack by savage wolves arising from within them. He predicted the coming of spiritual shepherd(s) who would speak perverse things and create an apostate movement away from God's intended organization and government of each autonomous local congregation (Acts 20:29-30). Paul's ceaseless warnings for three years while with them coupled with God and His word after his departure from them were the divine remedy to this approaching spiritual disaster (Acts 20:31-32).

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Peter writes of scoffers who deny the second appearing of Christ because they have embraced uniformitarianism, an essential tenet of the false theory of evolution and the seed of the noxious weed called modernism (2 Peter 3:3-4). The remedy for this error is found in being “mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of...the apostles of the Lord and Savior” (2 Peter 3:2).

The Holy Spirit via the apostle Paul gave Timothy and us a specific list of falsehoods which would be taught and embraced by those who have departed from the faith: the forbidding of marriage and the commanding of abstinence from certain foods. This is because they have given heed to deceiving spirits instead of the Spirit of truth; they have embraced the doctrines of demons and have rejected sound doctrine (1 Timothy 4:1-3). To avoid such spiritual darkness, Timothy needs to be “nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine” which he has been carefully following (1 Timothy 4:6).

Every past, present, and future false doctrine was anticipated in the Bible; therefore remembering the words which were spoken by the New Testament's apostles and prophets is the only sane and safe course of action.



## **The Ungodly vs. the Godly**

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Though the genuine and the counterfeit may have some similarities, there are distinct and definite differences between sheep and wolves in sheep's clothing.

Jude states eight clear, identifiable characteristics which will enable anyone who is so inclined to discern between the ungodly and the godly. He wrote:

*“These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.” (Jude 16-19).*

- The ungodly are grumblers; the godly are contented.
- The ungodly are complainers; the godly are thankers.
- The ungodly live according to the unholy will of Me, Myself, and I; the godly seek the holy will of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- The ungodly mouth swelling words intended to flatter; the godly speak the truth in love.
- The ungodly seek to exploit others using the cloak of religion; the godly seek to save others using the sword of the Spirit to rescue them from the fire of eternal damnation.

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- The ungodly irreverently mock and disdain God's word; the godly reverently hear and do God's word.
- The ungodly are sensual people who are infested with a spirit of selfishness and self-will; the godly are spiritual people who hunger and thirst for God's righteous will.
- The ungodly cause division and offenses contrary to the apostles' doctrine; the godly seek the unity which comes from a steadfast continuance in the apostles' doctrine.

God clearly has no difficulty identifying His sheep!

## **Beloved**

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A distinct characteristic of Jesus' disciples is brotherly love. It is the badge of discipleship (John 13:34-35). According to 1 Peter 1:22, brotherly love is to be sincere, fervent, and pure.

Three times in his short epistle, Jude addresses his readers as "beloved." Like Solomon in the book of Proverbs, Jude desires to impart wise, helpful, and relevant counsel to his readers. Therefore he writes:

*Beloved... contend earnestly for the faith... remember the words spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ... keep yourselves in the love of God building up on your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit (vv. 3, 17, 20-21).*

In this, Jude is hardly alone.

Paul wrote:

*Beloved, do not avenge yourselves... flee from idolatry... be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord... let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit... stand fast in the Lord (Romans 12:19; 1 Corinthians 10:14, 15:58; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Philippians 4:1).*

James wrote:

*Beloved, do not be deceived... let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath (James 1:16, 19).*

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Peter wrote:

*Beloved, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul... do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you... do not forget that the Lord is not slack concerning His promise... be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless... beware lest you fall from your own steadfastness" (1 Peter 2:11, 4:12; 2 Peter 3:8-9, 14, 17).*

John wrote:

*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God... do not imitate what is evil, but what is good" (1 John 4:1; 3 John 11).*

Obviously, Jude's, Paul's, James', and Peter's exhortations demonstrate that genuine brotherly love entails more than warm, fuzzy feelings.

*"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God" (1 John 4:7).*

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## **How Spiritually Mature are you?**

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By divine design, there is a difference between the values and attitudes of a young child and those of a mature adult. A child speaks, understands, and thinks differently than an adult, and when he has matured, he puts away childish things (1 Corinthians 13:11).

Etymologically speaking, the Greek verb “mock” (*empaizo*) is derived from a preposition (*en*) and a verb (*paizo*); together these words literally mean “in a childish way.” Spiritually speaking, a mocker is someone who values and views God’s word in a childish way (i.e. without reverence and sobriety).

Instead of receiving God’s word with meekness and engrafting it into his heart, a mocker considers it a toy to be played with and entertained by/laughed at. It was this very irreverence for God’s spokesman Elisha that got forty-two youths killed by two females bears (2 Kings 2:24-25).

The spiritually immature—who desire to walk according to their own selfish, foolish, and ungodly lusts (Jude 18)—fail to value and view God’s word with the appropriate reverence and submission. They are sensual people who cause division and are void of a spiritual mindset (Jude 19).

Your spiritual maturity can easily be gauged by your attitude toward the Scriptures: Does your heart (like the Psalmist—Psalm 119:161) stand in awe of God’s word?

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## **The Truth about Mockers/Scoffers**

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*“...there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit”  
(Jude 18-19).*

Thomas Paine. David Hume. Robert Ingersoll. Robert Owen.

Lauded by this world as great and noteworthy, intellectually speaking, God describes them as petulant and childish, spiritually speaking. Mockers/scoffers (the same Greek word is used to translate both English words) ridicule and reject God's word because it denies them a lifestyle of self-indulgence in ungodly and worldly lusts.

Be not deceived: Atheism, Skepticism, Agnosticism, Anti-supernaturalism, Modernism, and Postmodernism are embraced because of the license to sin each philosophy permits. It is NOT because of credible evidence or of intellectual honesty.

That is the truth about mockers/scoffers.

## **Those who Cause Division**

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Apostasy from the faith occurs in two ways—by loosing something God has bound or by binding something God has loosed.

This is a departure from sound doctrine because the inspired apostles were the men God specifically chose to bind on earth what had already been bound in heaven and to loose on earth what had already been loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:19; 18:18). Therefore, continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42) is the fundamental hallmark of the New Testament church.

Since this faith was once for all delivered to the saints in the first century (Jude 3), there is absolutely no need for anyone to bind or loose nor draw lines of fellowship where God has not. Yet, it is this very thing which change agents do. These sensual persons “cause divisions” (Jude 19).

The word employed by Jude is quite graphic. *Apodiorizo* is comprised of two prepositions—*apo* and *dia*—and the verb *horizo* (from which we get the English word “horizon”). When compounded together, these components create a word which designates someone who draws an unauthorized boundary line through the church and divides God's people according to this presumptuous line of fellowship.

Truly such ungodly, carnal people do not have a spiritual mindset (Jude 19). They are spiritual black holes (Jude 13).

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## **Not Having the Spirit**

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*“These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit” (Jude 19).*

The Spirit of God is essential to unity. The gloriously good and pleasant fruit of unity is only enjoyed by those who seek to walk worthy of their calling. Lowliness, gentleness, being longsuffering, bearing with one another, and endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:1-3) are essential to unity.

Biblical unity which the Spirit of truth provides and Christians are to keep is based upon the truth. It is not gained at the expense of truth. The same truth which sanctifies Christ's disciples (John 17:17) as the one body is the one faith which provides the common salvation and was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

As so clearly demonstrated in the first four chapters of First Corinthians, sensual people cause divisions. Having a partisan (1 Corinthians 1:11-12), carnal (1 Corinthians 3:1-4), petty spirit which does not receive the spiritual things revealed by the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:6-15) results in contentions and schisms, not the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16).

Unity prevails when the members of Christ's body do nothing from the sensual motives of selfish ambition or conceit. Instead, in lowliness of mind they esteem others better than themselves; they are ever on the lookout for the interests of others (Philippians 2:3-4).

Ungodly change agents draw lines of fellowship God has not because they walk according to their own lusts and



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mouth great swelling words (Jude 16). This creates division and destroys unity.

Every time.

## **Keeping Safe**

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When applied to spiritual matters, “Safety First” is Biblical.

Spiritual safety matters to God because they who are called and sanctified by the Father are preserved (i.e. “kept, watched, guarded from loss or injury”) in the Son (Jude 1).

Spiritual safety matters to God’s children because they are to keep themselves in the love of God (Jude 21).

To stay safe spiritually speaking, God’s children must do these essential things:

- **Be ever watchful for change agents who pervert the gospel of Christ** (Jude 4-19); these spiritual dreamers are spots in their love feasts, clouds without water, autumn trees without fruit, raging waves of the sea, and spiritual black holes (Jude 12-13). Because of this, they know these heretics are nothing but bad news.
- **Build themselves up in the most holy faith;** they read, study, rightly divide, meditate upon, and engraft God’s word into their heart.
- **Be prayer warriors;** they pray without ceasing and do so according to the Holy Spirit’s instructions in the Holy Scriptures.
- **Be focused on spiritual matters;** they are ever looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life (Jude 21). Hope is heaven’s secure anchor for the soul.

*“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy*

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*Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God,  
looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus  
Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 20-21).*

## **Building Yourself Up**

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Jesus' final illustration in the sermon on the mount is rooted in the truth that every person is a house-builder. Some are wise; some are foolish (Matthew 7:24-27).

Spiritual growth and development are fundamentally a personal responsibility. The prophet Jude recognizes this truth when he wrote:

*“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith (v. 20).*

The faith (Jude 3) provides a firm foundation on which a wise builder can forge an obedient life which withstands life's storms. This structure cannot be built for you by sub-contractors; it cannot be inherited from your ancestors; it cannot be purchased pre-manufactured and then transferred into your possession.

You must build it.

“Therefore, beloved, I commend you to God and the word of His grace which is able to build you up” (Acts 20:32), so that you build yourself up on the most holy faith.

## **Your Most Holy Faith**

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In the New Testament, the word “faith” is used primarily in two interrelated ways. The faith (Jude 3) is that body of information revealed by God in the New Testament which provides salvation for all who obey its commands. The only fitting response to the faith is faith—i.e. joyful, obedient trust which is fed by the unshakable conviction of Jesus’ identity as the Christ, the Son of God.

In Jude’s exhortation of “building yourselves up on your most holy faith” (v. 20), it would appear he is using “faith” in the second sense—your personal response to the Holy Scriptures revealed by the Holy Spirit via holy men of God. What a lofty vision of the type of faith we can have and ought to pursue.

- **A most holy faith** is one which is free from doctrinal impurities.
- **A most holy faith** is one which is unstained by spiritual and moral impurities.
- **A most holy faith** is one which sees ungodliness, worldliness, materialism, sobriety, righteousness, and godliness in Biblical, black-and-white terms.
- **A most holy faith** is one which ever seeks to be pure of the stains of fear, doubt, and worry.
- **A most holy faith** is one which strives to live by a godly spirit of power, love, and a sound mind.
- **A most holy faith** is one which diligently pursues virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love so that spiritual growth and fruitfulness inevitably result.

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- **A most holy faith** is one which loves God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength and loves your neighbor as yourself.

**A most holy faith** is a most worthy pursuit.

## **What are You Waiting for?**

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For many children, the first 24 days of December seem to last forever and ever. And, even though I never pursued ironclad scientific proof, I am pretty sure that as a child there were several Christmas Eves which lasted a couple of centuries apiece.

Though few of us may be waiting as passionately as a child on Christmas Eve, all of us to some degree have someone or something we are looking forward to.

The thoughtful child of God is “looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 21). Because of this, he is building himself up in his most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, and keeping himself in the love of God (Jude 20-21). Therefore, he is living obediently to Christ’s commands (John 14:15).

He is not waiting for some fictitious “pie in the sky”; he is not looking for a spiritual mirage; he is not seeking a figment of his deluded imagination.

Like a sleepless child on Christmas Eve, a Christian is looking to receive to himself his very own victor’s crown, soldier’s laurels, son’s welcome home, and wedding banquet. He is waiting to enjoy the final riches and ultimate fulfillment of God’s glorious mercy—eternal life in the eternal city.

What are you waiting for?

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## **God's Instructions on Rescuing Sinners**

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*“And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh” (Jude 22-23).*

Sinners come in all shapes, personalities, and circumstances. Jude identifies two basic types—those who are lost and do not want to be, and those who are lost and are enjoying the passing pleasures of sin.

Of note in Jude's inspired counsel is the fact that he does not in any way endorse the idea that effort should not be made to save both types of sinners. Jude's counsel is not: focus all your efforts on this type and completely ignore the other because it is impossible to save them.

Effort is to be made to save both types of sinners. How one goes about expending that effort may vary depending upon which type is being approached.

The first type may only need a compassionate, plain-spoken teaching of the truth so that they learn the way of the Lord more accurately—like those Peter taught in Cornelius' house (Acts 10) or like those Paul taught in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7).

The other type is going to require a different strategy. Their hearts will not be won in a single battle with their sin, nor will Satan surrender them quickly and easily. Because their lives have been defiled by sensual living, they will require prayer, persistence, and focused instruction on righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come—like Felix (Acts 24:25).



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Regardless of the type of sinner involved, God still offers them His mercy and eternal life through His Son. Therefore, every effort to rescue the perishing is imperative.

## **He is Able**

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Few benedictions in Scripture are more succinct and pregnant with comfort than Jude 24-25. Here is it written:

*“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.”*

Verse 24 names two of Jesus' greatest blessings for any of His disciples—the prevention of apostasy in this life and the absence of blemishes in the life to come.

The good Shepherd is able to safely guide every one of His sheep to the eternal fold when they are focused on keeping themselves in the love of God (Jude 21). What power and concern He has for those who belong to Him!

The glorious Savior is also able to so complete His work of sanctification that every one of His redeemed ones can stand before the glorious, holy God without fault or flaw. What power He has for those who belong to Him!

All of this is because He is able.

## **Our Savior**

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The deity of Jesus permeates the New Testament—from Matthew to Revelation.

It is upon the impregnable foundation of Jesus' deity that the church is built (Matthew 16:16-18). It is because of Jesus' deity and atonement that He "is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

Jude describes the incomparable Savior with this seven-fold description: "to God our Savior, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen" (Jude 25). Briefly note the uniqueness and perfection of our Savior, the incarnate Christ:

- **He is God.** Our Savior was part of the "Us" and "Our" when God said, "Let Us make man in Our image" (Genesis 1:26).
- **He is Savior.** His stepfather Joseph was solemnly instructed to call Mary's firstborn child "Jesus" because His purpose on earth was to save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:20-21).
- **He alone is wise.** God alone is the only Being in our universe who could devise a plan whereby He could be uncompromised in His holiness and justice and yet be able to justify sinners through our Savior. "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God" (Romans 11:33).
- **He is glorious.** Though he leaned on His breast during the Last Supper, the disciple who Jesus loved fell at His feet as a dead man when he espied the glorified Savior (Revelation 1:12-17).

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- **He is majestic.** According to the innumerable heavenly host, our Savior's majesty is worthy to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing (Revelation 5:12).
- **He has dominion.** With His coronation in heaven, our Savior was seated at His Father's right hand, "far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:21-23).
- **He has power.** All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to our Savior (Matthew 28:18). He is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15). It is His voice which will call all the dead from their graves (John 5:28-29). It is His words which will on the last day judge all who reject Him (John 12:48). It is His throne before which all nations will be summoned for divine retribution (Matthew 25:31-46).

Jesus is not going anywhere. Time and chance will not erode one iota of our Savior's identity, character, or glory. It is for "both now and forever." Amen.

A wonderful Savior is Jesus our Lord!



The background of the cover features a silhouette of a person kneeling in prayer, with their hands clasped together. The person is positioned in the lower half of the frame, facing left. The background is a misty, sunlit forest with tall trees and a soft glow of light filtering through the fog. The overall mood is contemplative and spiritual.

# POURING OUT YOUR HEART TO GOD

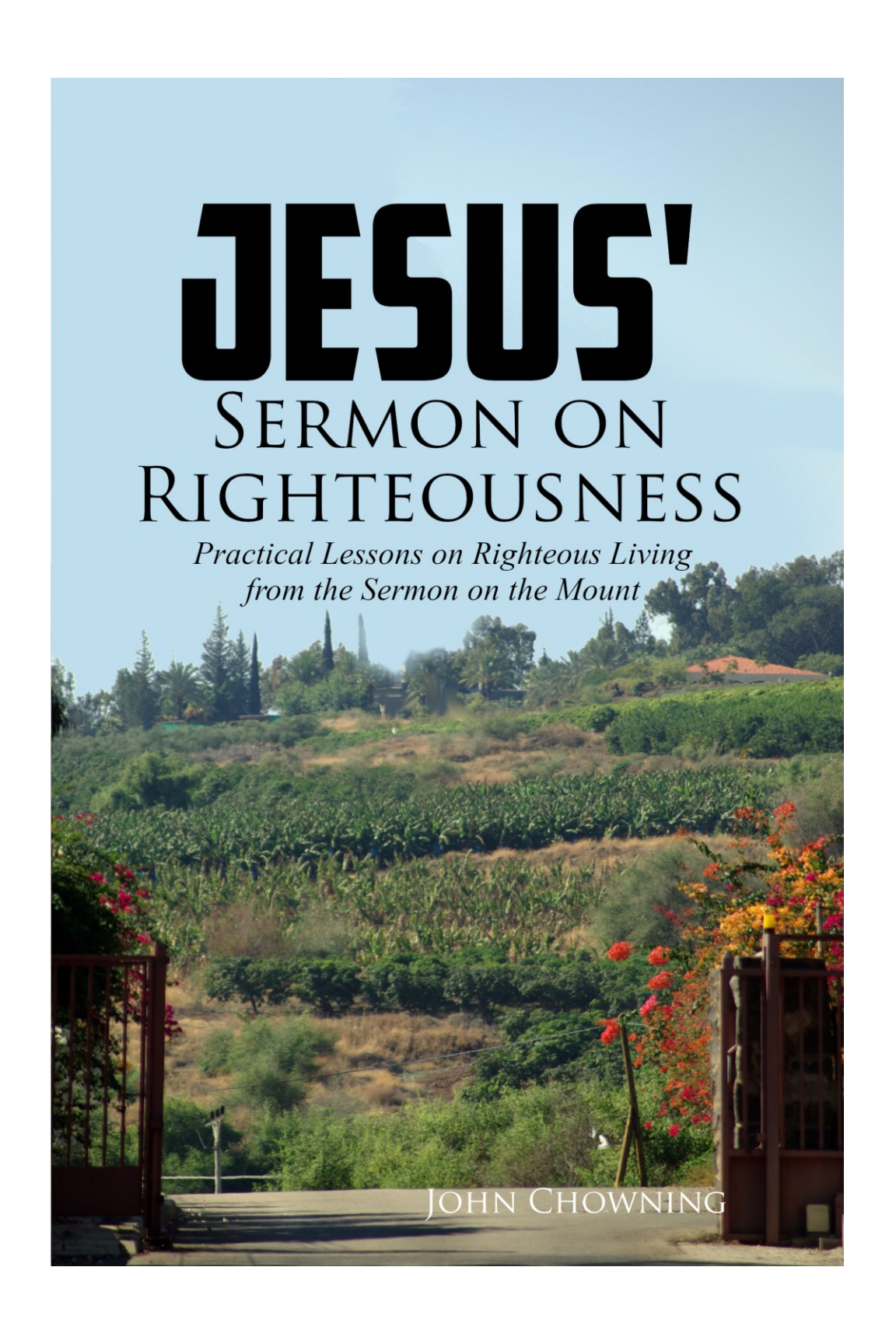
*A Devotional Study of the Psalms*

JOHN CHOWNING



*Looking to*  
**JESUS**

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# JESUS'

## SERMON ON RIGHTEOUSNESS

*Practical Lessons on Righteous Living  
from the Sermon on the Mount*

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