

# JUDE

## WARNING AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS

The writer of Jude, evidently not an apostle, calls himself a "servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James." Which James? There were two whose brother he might have been, the son of Alpheus and the brother of our Lord, and the general opinion is in favor of the latter.

### SALUTATION (VV. 1-2)

The first division is the salutation. Notice the Revised Version: "them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ." Why kept for him? How much this suggests as to His coming glory and the part believers will take in it?

### CONTEND FOR THE FAITH (VV. 3-4).

What is that object as stated in verse 3? Notice that according to the Revised Version the faith delivered to the saints was delivered "once for all." "Faith" here is to be taken in the sense of that body of Christian doctrine which forms the substance of the truth concerning "our common salvation." It is used synonymously with Gospel. This was delivered to the body of the church, at the beginning of its history as a complete revelation in itself (Revelation 22:18-19). It is a sacred deposit to be preserved in its integrity, defended and earnestly contended for. The necessity for this defense is seen in verse 4. "Foreshadowed" in that verse should be "forewritten," i.e., the false teachers referred to had been predicted as coming in among the flock. Our Lord had spoken of them, and so had all His apostles. The nature and outcome of their teaching as suggested by "lasciviousness" is particularly noticeable.

### FALSE TEACHERS (VV. 5-7)

The third division deals with the false teachers, and we have first, a revelation of their punishment (vv. 5-7). From this their position as professed disciples would not save them any more than it saved the

Israelites brought out of Egypt, when they afterward sinned against light (v. 5); or the angels referred to in Peter's epistles and Genesis (v. 6); or Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7). Do not fail to observe the class of sins prominent in these instances, especially the two last-named, and their relationship to lasciviousness already spoken of. While the erroneous teachings were intellectual, yet their power was augmented by carnality of the grossest kind.

### **THE WAY OF CAIN, BALAAM AND CORE (VV. 8-13)**

The description of the teachers follows (vv. 8-13). Observe in verse 8 that they not only defile the flesh but speak evil of dignitaries, by which may be meant both civil and ecclesiastical superiors. There is a strange illustration in verse 9 that throws light on Moses' burial, recorded in Deuteronomy. Why that mystery? Why should God have buried Moses, and kept the place a secret? Why should Satan have desired possession of that body? Did his foreknowledge of what should take place on the mount of Transfiguration (~~400~~ Matthew 17) have aught to do with it? And further, shall we say with some, that Moses in the flesh is to be one of the two witnesses named in Revelation 11, and did Satan seek thus to frustrate God's purposes concerning the last days? And then the contention of Michael, how that brings to mind the teaching in Daniel concerning him as the prince that stands for Israel! What a bearing all this has on the teachings of the New Testament about the dominions, and principalities and powers of the air (see Ephesians 6).

Further analysis of these teachers is afforded in verse 11. With what three Old Testament individuals, each conspicuous for his self-willed and rebellious spirit, are they compared? We might not believe that such could have any standing in the Christian church were it not that we discover their successors at the present day. Read verse 12 in the Revised Version. "Spots in your feasts of charity," should be "hidden rocks in your love feasts." These "love feasts" were the Christian gatherings on the first day of the week for the "breaking of bread," and the presence of such would-be leaders in those assemblies suggested the perils of hidden rocks to mariners. What care were required to avoid disastrous contact with them. "Feeding themselves without fear," should be, "Shepherds that without fear feed themselves." It is characteristic of the heretical teacher that he is thinking of himself rather than the flock.

Six terse descriptions of these teachers may be given as follows: visionary (vv. 8-9); ignorant (vv. 10-11); deceptive (vv. 12-13); ungodly (vv. 14-15); selfish (vv. 16-18); schismatic (v. 19).

## **JUDGMENT UPON THE UNGODLY (VV. 14-16)**

The description of the teachers is followed by a reference to the foreknowledge of them (vv. 14-16). Here is a quotation from Enoch in verse 14, on which we say a word. There is an apocryphal book in which it is found, but it is thought to have been of a later date than Jude, and that its author probably quoted from our epistle. How interesting to learn that Enoch, before the deluge, had his mind carried out in the Spirit to the Second Coming of Christ! And how perfectly his words agree with the later prophets, concerning that event!

## **THE TRUE CHURCH IN CONTRAST (VV. 17-25)**

The reference to the false teachers gives way to a description of the true church in sharp contrast with the false (vv. 17-25).

It begins with a caution (vv. 17-19). To which of the apostles is he here referring, do you think? How does he describe these ungodly persons who have found their way into the visible church? That word "sensual" is "natural" or "animal." in the margin of the RV. It is a case of unregenerated Christians with whom the church is still plentifully supplied.

The caution is followed by an exhortation (vv. 20-21). "Build," "pray," "keep," "look" are the four corner posts defining the possessions of the Christian life. What is peculiar about the exhortation to pray? In Romans 8 we have revealed that the Holy Spirit prays in us, but here we are to pray in Him. Are these contradictory teachings? Is it not true that the Holy Spirit is our life, and also our spiritual atmosphere? In what are we to keep ourselves according to this exhortation? Does this mean God's love to us or our love to Him? How better can we keep ourselves in His love to us, and the consciousness of our love to Him than by building ourselves up on our most holy faith, and praying in the Holy Spirit? What do you suppose is meant by "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life"? In the light of the previous teaching about the appearing of His glory, may it not refer to that?

The exhortation is followed by instruction concerning soul-winning (vv. 22-23). The Greek text, especially in verse 23, is obscure, but the teaching calls for compassion on our part, and an effort to save the sinner while hating the sin.

The benediction and ascription follow. What two things is God able to do for believers in His Son? No wonder that we should ascribe unto Him through Jesus Christ "glory and majesty, dominion and power throughout all ages."

### **SUPPLEMENTAL**

Jude is particularly a Scripture for these times, and has been called "a picture of the last days," and "a preface to Revelation," as it shows the drift of the apostasy which makes the awful judgment of the book necessary. It refers to all the more important articles of the Christian faith:

1. The Trinity, inasmuch as we have God the Father (v. 1), Jesus Christ the Son, in several verses, and the Holy Spirit (v. 20);
2. The Deity of Christ, Who in half a dozen verses is called Lord;
3. The historicity of the Old Testament, whose miraculous events are used to illustrate the teaching and give point to the warnings as though they were actual occurrences (vv. 5-11);
4. The existence and power of a personal Satan against whom even the archangel himself dare not bring a railing accusation (v. 9);
5. The existence of angels and spirits (vv. 6-7);
6. The certainty and fearfulness of future retribution (vv. 6-7, 13);
7. The Second Coming of Christ (vv. 14-15).

### **QUESTIONS**

1. How is the author of this epistle distinguished from some others?
2. Name the seven main divisions of it.
3. How is "Faith" (v. 3) to be understood?
4. What different ideas are suggested by the mystery in verse 9?
5. What was said in the lesson about verse 14?
6. Name the four corner posts of the Christian life?
7. What makes this epistle particularly applicable to, or useful in, these days?
8. What seven important articles of the Christian faith does it emphasize?