

AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, OF

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF

JUDE

This epistle is addressed to all believers in the gospel. Its design appears to be to guard believers against the false teachers who had begun to creep into the Christian church, and to scatter dangerous tenets, by attempting to lower all Christianity into a merely nominal belief and outward profession of the gospel. Having thus denied the obligations of personal holiness, they taught their disciples to live in sinful courses, at the same time flattering them with the hope of eternal life. The vile character of these seducers is shown, and their sentence is denounced, and the epistle concludes with warnings, admonitions, and counsels to believers.

The apostle exhorts to steadfastness in the faith. (1-4) The danger of being infected by false professors, and the dreadful punishment which shall be inflicted on them and their followers. (5-7) An awful description of these seducers and their deplorable end. (8-16) Believers cautioned against being surprised at such deceivers arising among them. (17-23) The epistle ends with an encouraging doxology, or words of praise. (24, 25)

◀ Jude 1:1

Vs. 1-4: Christians are called out of the world, from the evil spirit and temper of it; called above the world, to higher and better things, to heaven, things unseen and eternal; called from sin to Christ, from vanity to seriousness, from uncleanness to holiness; and this according to the Divine purpose and grace. If sanctified and glorified, all the honor and glory must be ascribed to God, and to him alone. As it is God who begins the work of grace in the souls of men, so it is he who carries it on, and perfects it. Let us not trust in ourselves, nor in our stock of grace already received, but in him, and in him alone. The mercy of God is the spring and fountain of all the good we have or hope for; mercy, not only to the miserable, but to the

guilty. Next to mercy is peace, which we have from the sense of having obtained mercy. From peace springs love; Christ's love to us, our love to him, and our brotherly love to one another. The apostle prays, not that Christians may be content with a little; but that their souls and societies may be full of these things. None are shut out from gospel offers and invitations, but those who obstinately and wickedly shut themselves out. But the application is to all believers, and only to such. It is to the weak as well as to the strong. Those who have received the doctrine of this common salvation, must contend for it, earnestly, not furiously. Lying for the truth is bad; scolding for it is not better. Those who have received the truth must contend for it, as the apostles did; by suffering with patience and courage for it, not by making others suffer if they will not embrace every notion we call faith, or important. We ought to contend earnestly for the faith, in opposition to those who would corrupt or deprave it; who creep in unawares; who glide in like serpents. And those are the worst of the ungodly, who take encouragement to sin boldly, because the grace of God has abounded, and still abounds so wonderfully, and who are hardened by the extent and fullness of gospel grace, the design of which is to deliver men from sin, and bring them unto God.

Jude 1:5

Vs. 5-7: Outward privileges, profession, and apparent conversion, could not secure those from the vengeance of God, who turned aside in unbelief and disobedience. The destruction of the unbelieving Israelites in the wilderness, shows that none ought to presume on their privileges. They had miracles as their daily bread; yet even they perished in unbelief. A great number of the angels were not pleased with the stations God allotted to them; pride was the main and direct cause or occasion of their fall. The fallen angels are kept to the judgment of the great day; and shall fallen men escape it? Surely not. Consider this in due time. The destruction of Sodom is a loud warning to all, to take heed of, and flee from fleshly lusts that war against the soul, ^{<001>}1 Peter 2:11. God is the same holy, just, pure Being now, as then. Stand in awe, therefore, and sin not, ^{<001>}Psalm 4:4. Let us not rest in anything that does not make the soul subject to the obedience of Christ; for nothing but the renewal of our souls to the Divine image by the Holy Spirit, can keep us from being destroyed among the enemies of God. Consider this instance of the angels, and see that no dignity or worth of

the creature is of avail. How then should man tremble, who drinketh iniquity like water! ~~18516~~ Job 15:16.

~~18518~~ Jude 1:8

Vs. 8-16: False teachers are dreamers; they greatly defile and grievously wound the soul. These teachers are of a disturbed mind and a seditious spirit; forgetting that the powers that be, are ordained of God, ~~18519~~ Romans 13:1. As to the contest about the body of Moses, it appears that Satan wished to make the place of his burial known to the Israelites, in order to tempt them to worship him, but he was prevented, and vented his rage in desperate blasphemy. This should remind all who dispute never to bring railing charges. Also learn hence, that we ought to defend those whom God owns. It is hard, if not impossible, to find any enemies to the Christian religion, who did not, and do not, live in open or secret contradiction to the principles of natural religion. Such are here compared to brute beasts, though they often boast of themselves as the wisest of mankind. They corrupt themselves in the things most open and plain. The fault lies, not in their understandings, but in their depraved wills, and their disordered appetites and affections. It is a great reproach, though unjust to religion, when those who profess it are opposed to it in heart and life. The Lord will remedy this in his time and way; not in men's blind way of plucking up the wheat with the tares. It is sad when men begin in the Spirit, and end in the flesh. Twice dead; they had been once dead in their natural, fallen state; but now they are dead again by the evident proofs of their hypocrisy. Dead trees, why cumber they the ground! Away with them to the fire. Raging waves are a terror to sailing passengers; but when they get into port, the noise and terror are ended. False teachers are to expect the worst punishments in this world and in that to come. They glare like meteors, or falling stars, and then sink into the blackness of darkness for ever. We have no mention of the prophecy of Enoch in any other part or place of Scripture; yet one plain text of Scripture, proves any point we are to believe. We find from this, that Christ's coming to judge was prophesied of, as early as the times before the flood. The Lord cometh: what a glorious time will that be! Notice how often the word "ungodly" is repeated. Many now do not at all refer to the terms godly, or ungodly, unless it be to mock at even the words; but it is not so in the language taught us by the Holy Ghost. Hard speeches of one another, especially if

ill-grounded, will certainly come into account at the day of judgment. These evil men and seducers are angry at every thing that happens, and never pleased with their own state and condition. Their will and their fancy, are their only rule and law. Those who please their sinful appetites, are most prone to yield to ungovernable passions. The men of God, from the beginning of the world, have declared the doom denounced on them. Such let us avoid. We are to follow men only as they follow Christ.

Jude 1:17

Vs. 17-23: Sensual men separate from Christ, and his church, and join themselves to the devil, the world, and the flesh, by ungodly and sinful practices. That is infinitely worse than to separate from any branch of the visible church on account of opinions, or modes and circumstances of outward government or worship. Sensual men have not the spirit of holiness, which whoever has not, does not belong to Christ. The grace of faith is most holy, as it works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world, by which it is distinguished from a false and dead faith. Our prayers are most likely to prevail, when we pray in the Holy Ghost, under his guidance and influence, according to the rule of his word, with faith, fervency, and earnestness; this is praying in the Holy Ghost. And a believing expectation of eternal life will arm us against the snares of sin: lively faith in this blessed hope will help us to mortify our lusts. We must watch over one another; faithfully, yet prudently reprove each other, and set a good example to all about us. This must be done with compassion, making a difference between the weak and the willful. Some we must treat with tenderness. Others save with fear; urging the terrors of the Lord. All endeavors must be joined with decided abhorrence of crimes, and care be taken to avoid whatever led to, or was connected with fellowship with them, in works of darkness, keeping far from what is, or appears to be evil.

Jude 1:24

Vs. 24, 25: God is able, and as willing as able, to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory. Not as those who never have been faulty, but as those who, but for God's mercy, and a Savior's sufferings and merits, might most justly have been condemned long ago. All sincere believers were given him of the Father; and of all so

given him he has lost none, nor will lose any one. Now, our faults fill us with fears, doubts, and sorrows; but the Redeemer has undertaken for his people, that they shall be presented faultless. Where there is no sin, there will be no sorrow; where there is the perfection of holiness, there will be the perfection of joy. Let us more often look up to Him who is able to keep us from falling, to improve as well as maintain the work he has wrought in us, till we shall be presented blameless before the presence of his glory. Then shall our hearts know a joy beyond what earth can afford; then shall God also rejoice over us, and the joy of our compassionate Savior be completed. To Him who has so wisely formed the scheme, and will faithfully and perfectly accomplish it, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.