

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

* * * **CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH AMIDST APOSTASY** * * *

S.L.H.
Soli Deo Gloria!

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

AUTHOR: Jude (c. 68 AD)

AUTHORSHIP AND DATE. Jude's name in the Greek text is **Ιουδας** (i.e., Judas), which in Hebrew would be Judah (meaning "praise"); it has historically been rendered "Jude" in English translations to distinguish it from the many others having the name Judas in the N.T. (as well as to avoid the negative connotation the name acquired after Judas¹ Iscariot). Jude was the brother of James (the leader of the church at Jerusalem; cf. Act15:13; Gall1:18-19; Jud1), both of which were half-brothers of Jesus (cf. Matt13:55; Mk6:3). James and Jude appear to have been unbelievers in Jesus as Messiah during His lifetime (Jn7:5), but both were clearly converted after His resurrection (Act1:14). Jude was a traveling evangelist, and he had a wife who accompanied him (1Cor9:5).

Since Jude does not mention the destruction of the Temple, the date of the epistle is generally taken as: 1) after 2 Peter (see discussion of the relationship between Jude and 2 Peter below), but 2) before 70 AD; thus, c. 68 AD.

AUDIENCE. Along with Hebrews, James, and 1&2Peter, Jude is considered a Messianic Jewish epistle². The message of Jude is directed especially to Jewish believers during the Church Age. While Jews who believe during the Church Age become members of the Body of Christ (1Cor12:13), they also represent the remnant of Israel during the present dispensation (Rom11:1-5).

THEME OF THE EPISTLE. The theme of Jude is contending for the historic faith delivered by the apostles in the midst of a present and growing apostasy (Jud3-4). Jude describes the false teachers and doctrines³ that, beginning in the 1st century, will "wax worse and worse" (2Tim3:13) throughout the Church Age; Jesus taught that at the end of the present dispensation genuine "faith" would be exceedingly rare (Luk18:8; cf. 1Tim4:1-3; 2Tim3:1-5). The messages of Jude and 2 Peter are very similar, exhibiting considerable overlap in much of their content. As the message

¹ It is intriguing that the one book in the Bible devoted entirely to the subject of apostasy bears the name of the greatest apostate in world history.

² Although the epistle of Jude does not explicitly identify its recipients as Jewish believers, the strong similarity of Jude to 2 Peter suggests they likely had the same intended audience (cf. 1Pet1:1-2; 2Pet3:1). Jude's ubiquitous allusions to O.T. history as well as extra-biblical literature from second Temple period Judaism support the case for a Jewish audience.

³ The false teachers/doctrine especially in view for Jude was incipient Gnosticism.

of 2 Peter is given in the future tense, whereas that of Jude appears in the present tense (Cp., Jud3; 2Pet2:1), it is generally concluded that Jude was written after 2 Peter and alludes to it and/or quotes from it (Jude's quotations from 2 Peter are listed in the APPENDIX). The message of Jude is that **the apostasy prophesied in 2 Peter had begun.**

Jude's placement in the N.T. would appear to be providential, as it serves as a fitting preface to the Book of Revelation; its message of apostasy appropriately sets the stage for the apocalyptic judgments that unfold in the final book of the Bible.

PATTERNS IN THE EPISTLE. Jude makes extensive use of trios or triads (i.e., sets of three); there are 14 such triads in his epistle.

JUDE AND EXTRA-BIBLICAL LITERATURE. One of the strange characteristics of the Epistle of Jude are its allusions to details of O.T. history that are not recorded in the O.T. This has led some to conclude that Jude drew upon extra-biblical Jewish literature from the inter-testamental period, such as *The Assumption of Moses* (Jud9) and *The Book of Enoch* (Jud6,14-15). If true, Jude is not validating the whole of these works as inspired or even historically accurate⁴. Rather, only those portions cited by Jude are validated as true, and they only become inspired Scripture as part of the Epistle of Jude. However, no extant copies of these works pre-date the writing of the N.T.⁵, so it is more likely that they borrowed from the Epistle of Jude in creating and/or revising their fanciful stories.

OUTLINE OF JUDE. The content of the short Epistle of Jude appears to be organized in a chiasmic structure, diagrammed below (adapted from Coder).

- vv1-2: Assurance for the believer
- v3: The believer and the faith
- v4: Apostates described
- vv5-8: Apostasy in O.T. history
- vv9-10: Apostasy in the supernatural realm
- v11: Three ancient apostates
- vv12-13: Apostasy in the natural realm
- vv14-16: Apostasy in O.T. prophecy
- vv17-19: Apostates described
- vv20-23: The believer and the faith
- vv24-25: Assurance for the believer

⁴ None of the Jewish writings produced during the inter-testamental period, even those revered as important historical works (i.e., 1 & 2 Maccabees), were considered inspired, nor were they added to the O.T. canon by the Jews. The Jews themselves did not consider them to be Scripture.

⁵ Fragments of the Book of Enoch were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran, which are dated to the first/second century BC. However, those fragments do not include the portions of Enoch allegedly cited by Jude, and later copies of the Book of Enoch have clearly been revised.

INTRODUCTION

- [1] The humility of Jude is seen in his introduction of himself. He identifies himself as the "brother of James" (Cp., Matt13:55; Gall:19), but stops short of asserting himself to be a brother of Jesus; rather, he calls himself "the servant⁶ of Jesus Christ".

Jude identifies his audience as those who are recipients of God's grace, as evidenced in the work of all three Persons of the Godhead. These believers are "sanctified" (i.e., set apart as chosen) by "God, the Father" (Eph1:4), they are "preserved in Jesus Christ" (an assertion of eternal security; Jn10:27-28; 1Pet1:5), and they are "called" (a ministry of the Holy Spirit; Eph4:4). As it is the Jews who are God's chosen people and the subjects of His election (Rom11:5,28), this address would seem to have Jewish believers particularly in view.

- [2] In contrast to Paul's standard commendation of "grace" and "peace" (e.g., Rom1:7; 1Cor1:3; 2Cor1:2; Gall:3; Eph1:2; Philip1:2; Coll:2; 1Thess1:1; 2Thess1:2), Jude commends his readers to "mercy", "peace", and "love". As his epistle highlights the doctrines and deeds of the apostates, and the coming judgment of God they are certain to receive, it seems appropriate that Jude contrasts their doom with the "mercy" (i.e., the withholding of righteous judgment, though justly deserved) believers receive from God.

WARNINGS AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS

- [3] Jude uses the address, "Beloved", as a signal he is beginning a new section (Cp., vv17,20). Jude originally planned to write on the topic of "salvation", but because of circumstances felt it was "needful" (i.e., necessary) to address the growing apostasy of his day (and that prophesied to come). His exhortation to "the saints" (a generic term for believers of every ethnicity, in every dispensation) is to "earnestly contend for the⁷ faith".

Here, "the faith" is described as being "once delivered", where "once" and "delivered" are both vitally important. First, "the faith" was not invented or devised by men (2Pet1:16), but was "delivered" by divine revelation (2Pet1:20-21). Second, it was given "once" and for all by the prophets and apostles. The last book of the Bible ends with a dire warning against adding anything to God's revelation as "delivered" (i.e., the canon of Scripture is closed; Rev22:18).

- [4] The circumstances that caused Jude to change the subject of the epistle was his recognition that "there are certain men crept in unawares" (i.e., false teachers). The Apostle Paul had warned the Ephesian elders about this very thing (Act20:29-30), and the Apostle Peter had also prophesied this would happen (2Pet2:1); Jude recognizes that it has begun to occur. Jude recognizes three

⁶ Here, "servant" is a translation of the Greek **δουλος**, meaning *bondservant* (i.e., one who out of love for his master had willingly committed himself to a lifetime of service; Exod21:5-6).

⁷ When "faith" is used with the definite article, it denotes the content of faith (i.e., doctrine).

attributes of false teachers. First, they are "ungodly men". By this it should not be presumed they are overtly immoral or wicked (cf. 2Cor11:13-15). Rather, they lack what in the Bible is termed the "fear of God" (Rom3:18), that combination of reverence, awe, and terror of our Creator, to whom we are accountable, that serves as the ultimate check on our behavior (Matt10:28). That such "were before of old ordained to this condemnation" puts them in the same category as Lucifer (Isa14:12-14) and his angels, for which the Lake of Fire was "prepared" (Matt25:41). Second, they pervert the "grace" of "God", teaching that it permits "lasciviousness" (i.e., immorality of all sorts, but especially sexual abandon; Cp., Rom6:1-2; Tit2:11-12). Third, they denied "the **only** Lord God, and our **Lord** Jesus Christ". Specifically, Gnosticism (like Mormonism and all forms of paganism) believed in many gods, so they denied that the God of the Bible was the "**only** Lord"; they also denied the deity of the **Lord** Jesus Christ, even though He "bought them"⁸ (2Pet2:1). These three attributes of false teachers will be illustrated by Jude in the persons of Cain, Balaam, and Korah (v11).

EXAMPLES OF PAST REBELLION JUDGED BY GOD

In Jude 5-7, three examples from history are given of God judging the sin/rebellion of apostates⁹: 1) the generation of Israelites supernaturally delivered from bondage in Egypt that refused to enter the Promised Land (Jews), 2) the angels who sinned before the Flood of Noah (Angels), and 3) the people of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gentiles).

[5] A JEWISH EXAMPLE. Moses' generation of Israelites witnessed the ten plagues visited upon Egypt (Exod7-12), the parting of the Red Sea to allow the Jews to pass through on dry land (Exod14:13-22), and the destruction of the entire Egyptian army that attempted to pass through after them (Exod14:23-31). And yet, in possession of the promises of Jehovah to give them the land of Canaan (Gen15:13-21), and having witnessed His power in bringing the nation of Israel to its border at Kadesh-barnea (Num13:1-30), that generation of Israelites refused to enter the Promised Land (even preferring to return to Egypt; Num14:1-4). God judged this apostate generation of Israelites by condemning them to wander in the wilderness until they all died (Num14:20-38).

The Israelites who died in the wilderness were not unbelievers per se (at least not all of them). They were alive and present at Kadesh-barnea by virtue of the fact that they had applied the blood of the Passover lamb to the doorpost and lintels of their homes in Egypt, as commanded by Jehovah (Exod12:1-13); this was an expression of genuine faith. However, they "believed not" what God had said concerning their possession of the Promised Land (Num14:6-10), which was the sin for which they were judged. God expects His people to believe all that He has said (cf. Rom4:19-21).

⁸ The fact that 2 Peter 2:1 asserts that the work of the Lord Jesus Christ "bought" even unsaved, false teachers is one of the Bible's clearest expressions of so-called Unlimited Atonement (i.e., the substitutionary work of Christ on the cross is not limited to Calvinism's notion of the elect, but has made possible the salvation of all men).

⁹ Not all unbelievers are apostates. Apostates know the revelation of God and willfully turn from it.

- [6] AN ANGELIC EXAMPLE. These "angels" are the "angels that sinned" before the Flood of Noah (2Pet2:4-5); they are called the "sons of God"¹⁰ in Genesis 6:1-4. Jude 7 identifies their sin as "fornication" and "going after strange flesh"; here, the word translated "strange" is the Greek *ἕτερος*, which gives the meaning 'flesh of a different kind'. They left heaven¹¹ (i.e., their "first estate" and "own habitation") in order to mate with human women and produce a hybrid race of "giants" (Heb., *nephilim*; Gen6:4) in a Satanic plot to so corrupt the human race as to preclude the possibility of a Redeemer of humanity, revealed by God as One who would be the "seed of the woman" (Gen3:15; cf. Heb2:14-17).

The giants and the corrupted seed that came from them were destroyed in the Flood of Noah¹². The "angels" who participated in this rebellion were imprisoned "in everlasting chains unto the judgment of the great day", a detail not recorded in the O.T. (but found in 1 Enoch 10:11-15). 2 Peter 2:4 reveals that these fallen angels are currently imprisoned in "hell"¹³ (in Greek *tartaros*, a special compartment in *Hades* that is probably equivalent to "the bottomless pit"; cf. Rev20:1; 1En10:13) awaiting their final judgment and eternal consignment to the Lake of Fire (Matt25:41; Rev20:14).

These "angels" were apostates. Having been in the very presence of the Most High God, and being fully cognizant of His will, they knowingly and willfully rebelled against Him.

- [7] A GENTILE EXAMPLE. The sin of "Sodom and Gomorrah" (there were actually 5 cities¹⁴ of the plain guilty of this sin, Sodom and Gomorrah being the most prominent; cf. Gen19:25; Deut29:23; Jer49:18; 50:40) is "like[ned]" to that of the angels (v6), in that they were both guilty of "fornication" (i.e., unlawful sexual relations) and "going after strange flesh" (i.e., unnatural sexual relations); in the angelic rebellion, it was angels mating with humans, whereas at Sodom and Gomorrah it was homosexual behavior (Gen19:4-5; Lev18:22; Ezek16:40-50). The supernatural judgment upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, destroying them with fire and brimstone from heaven (Gen19:24), is to be forever after an "example" to subsequent generations. Those guilty of this sin in Israel were known as "sodomites" (cf. Deut23:17; 1Kgs14:24), and even in contemporary English the practice is denoted as "sodomy".

According to Romans 1:18-32, the sin of sodomy is the ultimate expression of apostasy. It results not from ignorance of the will of

¹⁰ That the O.T. designation of "sons of God" is used for angels is apparent from Job 1:6; 2:1.

¹¹ 1 Enoch 6:5 asserts this angelic incursion upon the earth occurred "during the days of Jared" (the father of Enoch; Gen5:19).

¹² A key reason Noah was selected by God for preservation through the Flood, to become the new progenitor of the human race, was because his genealogy was uncorrupted (Gen6:9).

¹³ Three Greek words get translated as "hell" in the English Bible: 1) *hades*, which is the temporary abode of the dead under the earth for both the just and the unjust prior to the resurrection of Christ (cf. Luk16:19-31); 2) *tartaros*, which is the place of temporary confinement of the "angels that sinned" (found only in 2Pet2:4); and 3) *gehenna*, which is the eternal Lake of Fire (cf. Matt23:33).

¹⁴ One of these 5 cities was Zoar, which was spared because of the presence of Lot (Gen19:20-23).

God, but from the "suppress[ion] of truth in unrighteousness" (Rom1:18), and it is practiced by those "who, knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom1:32).

CHARACTERISTICS OF FALSE TEACHERS

- [8] Three characteristics of false teachers are identified. First, they "defile the flesh". Since this deed is preceded by "in like manner", it points back to the sins of sexual perversion mentioned in vv6-7. Second, they "despise dominion". In contrast, proper submission to divinely-ordained authorities is evidence of a "fear of the Lord" (Eph5:21): in human relationships (Eph5:21-6:9), in the church (Heb13:17), in society (Rom13:1), and to God (Jas4:7). Third, they "speak evil of dignities". The word translated "dignities" is the plural form of the Greek *δοξα* (i.e., glories). The sense seems to be a lack of respect for heavenly dignitaries (i.e., angels), which is supported by the example given in v9.
- [9] "Michael, the archangel" is given as an example of proper respect for heavenly dignitaries, in this case "the devil". In a dispute with Satan, Michael refused to bring a personal "accusation" against him; rather, he asserted, "The Lord rebuke thee" (Cp., Zech3:2).

The dispute to which Jude alludes was an occasion when Michael "contend[ed] with the devil" over "the body of Moses". There is no account of this in the O.T. However, a few early Church writers make mention of it as being included in a work called *The Assumption of Moses* (which is not extant¹⁵). The reason for the dispute is unknown; however, the LORD Himself buried the body of Moses so that no man would know the location of his sepulcher (Deut34:5-6), and the ministry of Moses on earth was incomplete at the time of his death (cf. Matt17:3-4; Luk9:30-31; and possibly Rev11:3-6).

- [10] Those that "speak evil" of heavenly dignitaries (v8; i.e., those of greater power, knowledge, and authority than themselves) speak about "things which they know not"; they present themselves as experts, but they speak of things about which they are ignorant. What they "know" they have acquired "naturally, as brute beasts" (i.e., their understanding is likened to that of animals); what this means is that since they have rejected revelation from God, they operate only from a human perspective, which is necessarily limited, incomplete, and "corrupt".
- [11] "Woe" is a passionate cry of grief or despair; it expresses a recognition that the judgment of God is required. The three attributes of false teachers (or apostates) mentioned in Jude 4 are illustrated in the persons of "Cain", "Balaam", and "Korah".

The "way of Cain" calls attention to his offering of a bloodless sacrifice (Gen4:3). This is the ultimate example of an "ungodly man"

¹⁵ There are late manuscripts in Latin that contain portions of *The Assumption of Moses* (also called *The Testament of Moses*), but they end abruptly with the death of Moses; the passage cited by early Church writers (e.g., Clement of Alexandria and Origen, known to be extremely unorthodox) concerning the dispute between Michael and Satan over the body of Moses is missing.

(Jud4), one with "no fear of God" (Rom3:18). He presumed he could approach God and find favor with Him on his own terms, rather than on the terms revealed by God. It is the exaltation of human reason above divine revelation. Today, this is the presumption of liberal Christianity¹⁶.

The "error of Balaam" is to compromise God's Word for personal "reward" (i.e., worldly wealth/position/pleasure). Knowing that God would not permit him to curse the people of Israel (Num23:8; cf. Gen12:3), Balaam counseled Balak to entice the Israelite men to commit harlotry with the Midianite women (Num25:1; 31:16), hoping thereby to provoke Jehovah to curse His own people (allowing Balaam to receive his promised "reward"). Today, this error is rampant in the multitude of compromised pastors who preach a prosperity, church growth, and seeker sensitive message to please the unregenerate (cf. 2Tim4:3-4; 2Pet2:3).

Finally, the "gainsaying of Korah" is the opposition of truth (Jn17:17) by religious leaders. To "gainsay" is to oppose/rebel. Korah was a Reubenite who challenged the authority of Moses as God's spokesman (Num16:1-3), whom God had clearly authorized (cf. Num12:1-8). Today, an analogous rebellion is seen in religious leaders who oppose the clear revelation of God in the Bible (e.g., support or condone homosexual behavior, same-sex marriage, transgenderism, female pastors/deacons/teachers, an errant Bible, etc.).

[12] The failures/consequences of false teachers and their doctrines are outlined in vv12-13. As "spots in your love feasts" (cf. Deut32:5), they defile what is intended to be holy and good; whereas elders are charged with feeding the flock of God (1Pet5:2), false teachers "feed themselves without fear [of God]". Like "clouds without water", they cannot satisfy man's spiritual thirst (cf. Prov25:14); they only serve to obscure the sun (cf. Mal4:2). Allowing themselves to be "carried about by winds", they do not provide the doctrinal surety/stability required to bring a believer to maturity (cf. Eph4:13-14). Like trees with "no fruit" or "withered" fruit, they cannot provide the spiritual nourishment a believer needs (cf. 1Pet2:2). The reference to being "twice dead" reiterates that fact that these false teachers are not merely unbelievers teaching error out of ignorance; they are apostates appointed to damnation (Rev20:14).

[13] Like "raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame", all their expended energies produce nothing of spiritual value. As "wandering stars", they cannot be used to find spiritual direction. That false teachers are those for "whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever" again reiterates they are apostates appointed to damnation.

[14] Jude records a prophecy of "Enoch" (which is not recorded in the O.T.). Enoch the prophet is the "seventh [generation] from Adam" (Gen5:21-24; as distinguished from the son of Cain in Genesis 4:17) who was translated from earth to heaven before the Flood for having the "testimony that he pleased God" (Heb11:5); it appears to be virtually a word-for-word quote of 1 Enoch 1:9 when compared to

¹⁶ J. Gresham Machen was correct in his assertion that liberal Christianity is not Christianity at all, but an entirely different religion.

extant manuscripts of the Book of Enoch (however, those manuscripts of Enoch were produced much later than the writing of the Epistle of Jude). It is more likely that the work known as the Book of Enoch was revised/expanded to include this quotation original to Jude. Note that Jude does not refer to this prophecy as a written work (i.e., he does not say, "It is written").

This prophecy of Enoch, uttered before the Flood of Noah, predicts what today is recognized to be the second coming of the "Lord [Jesus Christ]". In that coming He will be accompanied by a multitude of "his saints"¹⁷ (Cp., Rev19:14), which necessarily presupposes a resurrection of the dead and perhaps even a rapture.

Enoch and Melchizedek. Enoch and Melchizedek are obscure figures from the early chapters of the Book of Genesis. More is known about both of them from the N.T. than from the O.T. The O.T. record of Enoch is limited to a blurb in a genealogy (Gen5:18-24), whereas his extraordinary faith is praised in Hebrews 11:5-6, and his prophetic ministry is documented in Jude 14-15. Enoch "walked with God" (Gen5:22), meaning he agreed with God (Amos3:3), and his "faith" (i.e., believing what God had said) "pleased God" (Heb11:5-6). The O.T. record of Melchizedek is limited to a brief encounter with Abraham (Gen14:18-20; also an allusion to his priesthood in Psalm 110:4), whereas his life and priesthood are the subject of three chapters in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb5-7). Thus, the N.T. directs attention to how significant these seemingly minor characters from the O.T. really are. The translation of Enoch becomes a type of the rapture of the Church during the dark days of apostasy, and the priesthood of Melchizedek allows the Lord Jesus Christ to sacrifice Himself for the sins of the world.

[15] According to Enoch, one purpose of Christ's second coming will be to "execute judgment" upon "ungodly sinners [who] have spoken against him" (i.e., apostate, false teachers; Cp., 2Pet3:3-12). In the historical context of Enoch's prophecy, it would have been the sons of God (i.e., angels) and their hybrid offspring (cf. Gen6:1-4) that he viewed as the apostate, false teachers¹⁸.

[16] False teachers can also be characterized as "murmurers" and "complainers" (analogous to Moses' generation of Israelites who were judged; cf. Exod15:24; 16:2; 17:3; Num14:2; 14:29; 1Cor10:10; Jud5), "walking after their own lusts" (i.e., controlled by their own sin nature; cf. Jud19), and "speak[ing] great swelling words" (a prominent characteristic of the Antichrist; cf. Dan7:8; 11:36; Rev13:6). They use people for their own "advantage" (in contrast to the example of Christ; cf. Philip2:3-8).

¹⁷ The term "saints" is used generically to designate believers of every ethnicity and from every dispensation; it is used only of humans, never of angels.

¹⁸ One of the themes of the Book of Enoch is that it was the fallen angels (called the Watchers in 1 Enoch 6-16) who not only interbred with human women to produce the giants (Hebrew, *nephilim*; Gen6:4), but also taught humanity all sorts of forbidden knowledge concerning metallurgy, warfare, astrology, witchcraft, and various occult practices (1En8:1-4); according to Enoch, it was this knowledge that led humanity into utter corruption (Gen6:5).

- [17] Jude's message concerning apostasy is not new; he calls for his readers to "remember" that this same prophetic message was "spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ".
- [18] Note that Jude distinguishes himself from "the apostles" (v17). The Apostle Peter prophesied there would be "mockers in the last time", specifically denying the return of Christ for the purpose of judgment (2Pet3:1-12; Cp., 1Tim4:1; 2Tim3:1-5; 1Jn4:1-3).
- [19] False teachers are "sensual" (Greek, ψυχικός; translated "natural man" in 1Cor2:14) who do not have "the [Holy] Spirit"; they do not understand Scripture or spiritual truth, they are not genuine believers, they are apostates.

EXHORTATIONS TO BELIEVERS

After laying out a very dark picture concerning the arrival of false teachers and the expectation of a growing apostasy, Jude closes his brief epistle with exhortations to believers along two lines: 1) prepare yourself (vv20-21), and 2) minister to others (vv22-23).

- [20] In preparation for the coming of false teachers and times of apostasy, Jude's exhortation to believers is to "build up yourselves on your most holy faith". Though not apparent in English, in the Greek text it is "the faith" (i.e., sound doctrine from the Word of God; Tit1:9). Thus, this "building up" occurs through the continuous study and application of God's Word (2Tim2:15). Furthermore, "pray in the Holy Spirit", since it is the Spirit who illuminates the mind of the believer to the truth of God's Word (1Cor2:12-14).
- [21] Also, "keep yourselves in the love of God". God loves His children unconditionally; however, we are instructed to "abide" in His "love" by keeping His commandments (Jn15:10). Finally, believers are to live in constant expectation of the "mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ" to be practically realized in the Rapture of the Church from earth (cf. 1Cor15:51-57; 1Thess1:10; Tit2:11-13) to experience "eternal life" in heaven.
- [22] The believer's ministry toward others under the influence of false teachers is considered in vv22-23 relative to two degrees of impact: 1) those wrestling with doubts caused by false teaching, and 2) those who have been deceived into believing false doctrine.

The believer's ministry toward those who are troubled with doubts is to "have compassion [toward them], making a difference". The phrase "making a difference" is a present middle participle of διακρίνω (most often translated "doubt"¹⁹), in this context probably better rendered "who are doubting". The believer is to show "compassion" toward those who are struggling with doubts caused by false teaching by providing them with Biblical "answers". This is the ministry of apologetics (1Pet3:15).

- [23] The believer's ministry toward those who have been deceived and have come to believe false doctrine is to "save" them by "pulling them out of the fire" (i.e., saving them from judgment; e.g., Lot; 2Pet2:7).

¹⁹ Compare to Matt21:21; Mk11:23; Act10:20; 11:12; 14:23.

This is to be undertaken "with fear", "lest [we] also be tempted" (Gal6:1) and have our own "garment spotted" by their sin. This is the ministry of evangelism (Matt28:19-20; Mk16:15; Act1:8).

CONCLUDING DOXOLOGY

- [24] Jude ends his epistle with a doxology (vv24-25). God is to be praised because He "is able to keep you from falling" into apostasy. A genuine believer will never fall so far as to lose his salvation (cf. 1Cor3:11-15), because it is God who "keep[s]" the believer secure (Jn10:27-29; Rom8:31-39; 1Pet1:5). Because God secures the salvation of the believer, He will "present you faultless before the presence of his glory" (Cp., Rom8:28-30); for the Christian, this occurs at the Rapture (Jn14:2-3; 1Thess4:16-17; 1Cor15:51-53). It is God's "exceeding joy" to perform this work in the life of a believer.
- [25] It is "God", in the Person of Jesus Christ, who is our only "Savior" (Isa43:11); thus, the epistle ends by reiterating the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Finally, the believer ascribes all "glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever" to God alone. God is in sovereign control of His creation (Heb1:3). The epistle ends with "Amen", which is the transliterated Hebrew word for "truth" (Cp., Isa65:16; Rev3:14).

--- S.D.G. ---

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