

Basic Training Bible Ministries

“The How and Why of Contending for the Faith”
A Study in the Book of Jude



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Book of Jude

Introduction and Background

The little book of Jude is seldom read, and rarely preached—much to the loss of the Body of Christ. Whereas today many messages and ministries are trumpets giving an uncertain call (1Co 4:8), this small book is a clear call to believers in Jesus Christ to enter the invisible war raging from the beginning of time. In the age-old campaign of Satan against God, the issue is always truth or deception (Joh 8:44–45). Thus, Jude confronts the deceivers of his time with the timeless truth of the good news of life in Christ, and challenges those who have received this life to “*contend earnestly [struggle valiantly] for the faith.*”

A casual reading of Jude with 2 Peter 2, suggests that one author utilized the other in his writing. This should not be surprising, as it was clear to early prophets and apostles that they were writing Scripture (cf. 2Pe 3:15–16). Therefore, it would be no more out of place to quote, paraphrase, or amplify other contemporaries than it would be to quote the Psalms or Isaiah. Most commentators and scholars seem to take the position that it was Peter who copied from Jude, which to me is highly unlikely. Rather, it appears that Jude took elements of 2 Peter and expounded on them, expanding on Peter’s earlier revelation. In fact, consider the comment of one author regarding Jud 17–18. Here Jude urges his readers to remember the warnings of the Apostles that “*there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.*” The commentator said, in essence, “These words are not found in any New Testament book.” I wonder if he ever read 2Pe 3:3–4.

“Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming?’”

This appears to be a clear use of Peter’s earlier writing, therefore Jude would have written later. Since he speaks of “*the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints*” (v. 3) as something of the past, it may be he was writing after both Paul and Peter had been martyred. The exact date is impossible to fix with certainty.

Theme: “*Contend ... for the faith,*” Jud 3

As we will see, this word implies the believer’s personal struggle, or “agony,” as opposed to the more extensive word used by Paul in 1Ti 1:18, which speaks of the united campaign of the saints. The same word used here is also used by Paul in 1Ti 6:12 and 2Ti 4:7. We as believers need to learn how to “hold our ground” regarding the fundamental truths of the Scripture when we are confronted by the many deceptions of our age. Jude will give us specific instruction on how this is to be done.

Outline:

- I. Author's Greeting, vv. 1–2
- II. Jude's Call to Battle, vv. 1–4
- III. The Character and Doom of Deceivers, vv. 5–16
- IV. Victorious Tactics of the Saints, vv. 17–23
- V. Doxology, vv. 24–25

Overview of the Book:

Jude begins with a greeting in which he identifies himself (v. 1a), reminds his readers of the assurance of their security in Christ (v. 1b), and expresses his desire for their continued growth in God's mercy, peace, and love (v. 2).

He then explains the necessity that brought him to write this epistle, exhorting them to “*contend earnestly for the faith.*” This faith has been “*delivered*” to believers by God's gracious revelation “*once for all,*” and is therefore complete and not to be added to (v. 3). However, false teachers have “*crept in*” to the church—men of godless character—who were teaching that grace implied lawlessness, and also denying the deity and sovereignty of the Lord Jesus (v. 4). Jude reminds them that it was the “*Lord*” (referring to Jesus, v. 4) who delivered Israel, and destroyed those who did not believe. In like manner, He judged the angels of Gen 6:1–2, as well as Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. 5–7). These historical examples portend the doom of the present heretics.

He then reveals the character of these evil men, highlighting their sensual perversion, repudiation of authority, and maligning of angelic beings. Their loud boasts are the result of their abysmal ignorance, and their conduct is bestial in nature. As always, ignorance and arrogance go hand-in-hand. They combine the errors of a religion of human good, without the cross (Cain), compromising of ministry through money-lust (Balaam), and rejection of Jesus Christ as High-Priest (vv. 8–11).

Jude follows this condemnation with five figures from the natural realm, each designed to emphasize their destructiveness (vv. 12–13). He concludes the section on the false teachers by referring to a prophecy of Enoch, contained in an Apocryphal book called First Enoch, about the judgment at the Second Advent (vv. 14–16), which will include these “*grumblers.*”

In verses 17–23, Jude returns to his theme, giving us detailed instructions on how we are to “contend for the faith.” Three commands, accompanied by four participles, provide us with the winning tactics of our spiritual warfare:

- First, we must “*remember the words ... [of] the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (vv. 17–18). Refer to 2Pe 3:1–18.
- Second, “*Keep yourselves in the love of God*” (vv. 20–21). This is abiding in Christ (Joh 15:1–13). How do we do this? Jude gives three steps:
 - 1) Build yourself up in your faith (v. 20a). This means Bible study and application to daily life.

- 2) Pray in the Holy Spirit (v. 20b). Compare Eph 6:18 with 1Jo 5:14–15.
 - 3) Keep looking for His endless supply of mercy (v. 21). The phrase “*unto eternal life*” implies using God’s gracious provisions (mercies, Rom 12:1), in order to live with eternity in mind. Another way of saying this is “Lay up treasure in heaven” (Mat 6:20).
- Third, we must tirelessly work to “*save*” some through compassion, and others through fear (Jud 22–23). These are the key to Jude’s “Spiritual Survival Kit” for contending for the faith in the last days.

The book concludes with one of the best known doxologies in the New Testament (vv. 24–25), in which Jude gives all praise to the God-head—Father, Son, and Spirit—for His power to deliver and preserve us for His kingdom. His final refrain exalts God in three areas, which we might apply as follows: to the Father, for His plan of salvation (He is wise/omniscient); to God the Son for His redemptive work in incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection (His glory and majesty); and to God the Spirit for His authority and power through the Word of God.

I. The Author’s Greeting, Jud 1–2

Jude identifies himself, comforts his readers by reminding them of their spiritual status and security, and points them to the potential for increased growth and blessings, even in turbulent times like today.

A. What we learn about the author

His name is Jude, short for Judas. He has a brother named James, and he is a “slave” of Jesus Christ. Only Judas, the half brother of our Lord fits this identity (Mat 13:55; Mar 6:3). Some have suggested the Judas of the apostolic band (“*not Iscariot*,” Joh 14:22). However, in Luk 6:16, where this disciple is called “*Judas of James*,” the phrase indicates “*the son of*,” not “the brother of.” In identifying himself only as a “slave of Jesus Christ” we see the humility of this man Jude, who had a physical relation to the Lord. Like James, he apparently did not believe until after the resurrection (Joh 7:5). What is valuable to him is his spiritual relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. What we learn about the recipients

Jude identifies them with words filled with love and comfort. There is a variant in the Greek texts here; in earlier manuscripts the word “beloved by God” is used instead of “*sanctified by God*.” Using the NKJV, note the three divine undertakings, as they relate to the Trinity:

1. The Work of God the Holy Spirit

These believers are “the called ones.” This refers to the effective work of the Holy Spirit in convicting (Joh 16:7–11) them of the truth of the Gospel. Since Jesus Christ is the “*Elect One*” (Isa 42:1), all who are in Him by grace through faith are called “*the elect*” (Rom 1:7; 1Co 1:2; Eph 1:3).

2. The Work of God the Father

The word “*sanctified*” means “set apart.” At the moment of regeneration, believers are removed from the kingdom of Satan, and the realm of death, and placed into light and life in Christ (1Co 15:22; Col 1:13). Our spiritual separation is the result

of the plan of God for believers from the beginning (1Pe 1:2; Heb 10:10). It is interesting that in searching the New Testament references to sanctification, it is attributed in various passages to each member of the Godhead.

3. The Work of God the Son

The word “*preserved*” means to be “kept.” The perfect tense implies “kept once for all.” The same idea is seen in 1Pe 1:4–5, though the word used here is translated in verse 4 as “*reserved*,” and a different word is used in verse 5, expressing the same idea. Note three words translated “keep/kept,” all speaking of the believer’s security:

- a. In 2Ti 1:12, Paul says “*He is able to keep what I have committed to Him*” The word is *phulasso*, a military word meaning “to set a guard over.”
- b. In 1Pe 1:5, he speaks of those “*who are kept by the power of God*,” using *phroureo*, another military word meaning “to watch over, to stand guard.”
- c. Here in Jude he uses *tereo*, used for watching over valuables, or of a parent’s watchcare over a child.

C. The author’s desire for the recipients

The phrase “*be multiplied to you*” is the optative mood, expressing a wish or desire. Note the similar idea in 2Pe 1:2, where Peter indicates that this multiplication comes through increased knowledge of God through Jesus Christ by growing in His Word. Also, see 2Pe 3:18, which complements the means of multiplying God’s grace provisions. Spiritual growth will multiply three things in the believer’s life:

1. Mercy

In his later years, the Apostle Paul became much more conscious of the value of mercy (1Ti 1:2; 2Ti 1:2; Tit 1:4). We might distinguish mercy from grace by saying that where grace is infinite and universal in its offer, mercy is personal and is what has been received by grace. The more we grow, the more we appropriate God’s grace and make it a personal possession. This may be said to be “mercy multiplied.” It is the powerful expression of God’s compassion on undeserving sinners.

2. Peace

Inner peace is the birthright of every child of God (Joh 14:27; Rom 5:1). However, the enjoyment of that peace is experienced by few. The reason is that His peace is but one of the many manifestations of His abiding presence and power, known and experienced only by those who consistently abide in Him through obedience (Joh 14:21, 23). But, obedience is the fruit of growing in grace and truth, and walking in the power of His Spirit (Rom 8:1–4; Gal 5:16).

3. Love

Christianity is a spiritual love relationship between the Savior and the saved. Since “*we love Him because He first loved us*” (1Jo 4:10, 1Jo 4:19), it is only by grasping—through His Word first, then in our experience—the magnitude of His love, that we increase in our love for Him in return. Like Mary in Luk 7:47, our love increases in proportion to our realization of the vastness of His love for us in Christ.

II. Jude's Call to Battle, Jud 3–4

Apparently while working hard on a larger treatise concerning the “*common salvation*” (cf. 2Pe 1:1, “*like precious faith*”) possessed by all believers in Christ, Jude was compelled, both by external dangers and internal conviction by the Spirit, to switch gears and write this small epistle, urging believers to personally engage in resisting certain false teachers/teachings and defend the apostolic faith. Five great truths stand out in these verses:

- A. All who believe/trust in Jesus Christ share equally in the standing (Rom 5:1–11; Gal 3:26–29), and blessings (Eph 1:3, 6) of our so great salvation, verse 3a.
- B. Every believer is called to be a “*good soldier of Jesus Christ*” (2Ti 2:3), and as such must learn to “*contend ... for the faith.*” The verb *epagonizomai* comes from the same root found in 1Ti 6:12 and 2Ti 4:7 translated “*fight.*” It is intensified here, the preposition *epi* adding both force and direction, that is, against false doctrine. The verb is present middle infinitive, meaning “continuous, personal struggle” in order to obtain the object of Jude’s exhortation and so fulfill the will of God in our lives.
- C. The faith which we possess is characterized by three qualities:
 - First, it is “*the faith,*” a revealed body of truth, centered in the identity of the Person of Jesus Christ (the God/man), and His work accomplished by incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection.
 - Second, this faith has been given “*once for all,*” indicating that it is a finished product. Contrary to modern ideas of “prophecies” and “utterances” from God, nothing is to be added or detracted from it.
 - Third, this faith has been “*delivered to the saints,*” implying both a gracious gift from God, but also a message entrusted to us for safekeeping. Consider Paul’s boast, “*I have kept the faith*” (2Ti 4:7).
- D. The most dangerous threat to any congregation, and the Church as a whole, are men who “[creep] *in unnoticed.*” The word *pareisduomai* means to “slip in alongside,” and has a “sinister and secretive” connotation [Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament, Jud 4]. This threat to the early Church is rampant in our generation. We are overrun with pastors, Bible college and seminary professors, Bishops, Priests, etc. who pose as biblical experts, but who deny both the Person and work of Jesus Christ. The only reason they have “slithered in” is to distort and destroy the faith delivered through the apostles.
- E. These men are “*ungodly,*” that is, “without God.” They are unregenerate, unsaved. Their tactic is two-fold:
 - First, they want to distort God’s grace into a system of unrestrained lawlessness. The word “*turn*” means to “transpose,” or to replace one thing with something totally different.
 - Secondly, they “*deny*” or repudiate the identity of our Lord Jesus Christ. The structure of the Greek here declares that “*the only Lord God*” and “*our Lord Jesus Christ*” are one and the same person.

The condemnation of these men, Jude says, was “*long ago ... marked out.*” The word *prographo* in the perfect tense means it was “written before” in the Scriptures, and therefore stands true forever. In other words, the Bible anticipates their coming by prophetic revelation from ancient times. Jude will demonstrate this by ancient examples of judgment (vv. 5–7), by the evidence of similar characteristics of former false teachers (vv. 8–11), and by direct prophetic utterance regarding their doom (vv. 14–15).

III. The Character and Doom of Deceivers, Jud 5–16

In this section, Jude confirms his statement in verse 4 that the judgment on ungodly men, especially spiritual deceivers, was foretold in the Bible and will be executed by God in His perfect time. This section should be read in connection with 2 Peter 2, of which I am convinced is both a commentary and expansion.

A. The Certainty of God’s Judgment, Jud 5–7

These examples demonstrate that God, Who is righteous and holy, must by His nature and will—in His time—judge the ungodly. These examples illustrate the judgment of God on unbelievers (ungodly), but in the first instance, could also include His extreme chastisement of reversionistic believers (cf. 1Co 10:1–12).

1. The Exodus Generation, Jud 5

The “*Lord*” here refers to Jesus Christ (verse 4). When Israel departed Egypt, they were accompanied by a “*mixed multitude*” (Exo 12:38). The same term is used in Neh 13:3 to distinguish between Jew and Gentile. Even among the people of Israel, there were those who believed in the Lord (Exo 4:32, Exo 14:31), yet later failed to trust Him in their trials in the wilderness (Deu 1:30–35, Deu 9:23; Heb 3:12, Heb 3:19). So “*those who did not believe*” could include both unsaved people, and apostate believers. It is not uncommon in our own time to see men who once taught Scripture accurately, who have been led away into error—whose “ministries” follow the patterns given in verse 11.

2. The Infiltrating Angels, Jud 6

The angels referred to here are the “*sons of God*” mentioned in Gen 6:1–2. In 1Pe 3:19, they are called “*spirits in prison,*” and in 2Pe 2:4 “*the angels who sinned [who are] cast down to hell [Tartarus].*” The essence of their sin is that they were fallen angels under Satan, who “*left their own abode*” to infiltrate mankind, in the hope of making a pre-emptive strike against the incarnation of “the Seed of the woman” (Gen 3:15). If they could pervert the entire race, Christ could not come in the flesh, and the plan of redemption would fail. The judgment of God—in the form of the flood—assured the coming of Jesus Christ and His victory on the cross.

3. Sodom and Gomorrah, Jud 7

The “*as*” at the beginning of this verse draws a parallel between the fallen angels of verse 6 and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, which is enforced by the phrase “*in a similar manner.*” In both cases, there is a departure from a God-given “*domain,*” and there is a gross perversion of sexuality. God’s judgment on them stands as “*an example ... of the vengeance of eternal fire.*” This should be a warning to us in this present age, when homosexuality is presented as an

“alternate lifestyle.” Even our so-called “conservative” leadership has abandoned their stand against this, not realizing that correct political principles without biblical foundation are just as corrupted as those of the opposite side. In other words, to be “politically correct” while accepting spiritual error is to be flat wrong!

B. The Depravity of Their Motives, Jud 8–11

The “*likewise*” beginning verse 8 relates the former examples to deceivers in Jude’s day. Behind the actions of these deceivers lies a motive for self-exaltation. This self elevation inherently involves a rejection of God’s way, a love of the things of the present world, and a revolt against all true authority.

Jesus said that the tongue reveals the condition of a man’s heart (Mat 12:34–37). James informs us that the tongue cannot be tamed by human effort (Jam 3:1–8). Thus these “dreamers,” deluded by their own “revelations,” defile their bodies, repudiate authority, and speak in harmony with the condition of their heart. Like Lucifer of old (Isa 14: 12–14), they think to exalt themselves even over angelic majesties (literally “glorious ones”).

Jude quotes from an Apocryphal book called “The Assumption of Moses,” well known at his time, in which Michael the Archangel contends with the devil over the body of Moses. It has been suggested that the devil wanted the body to later “resurrect” and use as a disguise for the antichrist, or some such purpose. We would be wise not to dwell too much on what we do not know. Jude’s point is that even Michael dared not revile against the devil, but in essence, left vengeance in the hands of God (Rom 12:19). But in contrast to the wise and knowing way of the Archangel, these “*speak evil of whatever they do not know,*” and like “*brute beasts ... corrupt themselves*” to the point of self ruin.

Their driving motives are seen in Jud 11, where three biblical parallels are given. As Cain rejected the need for blood sacrifice, so they reject the sufficiency of the cross of Christ. As Balaam compromised for the sake of profit, so do they, “*peddling the Word of God*” (2Co 2:17). And as Korah rejected God’s appointed high-priest, so they have rejected the “*one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus*” (1Ti 2:5).

C. The Hypocrisy of Their Methods, Jud 12–13

Five figures are used to illustrate both their unfruitfulness and their destructiveness. They cannot produce benefit or blessing—all they bring is ruin and devastation into the lives they touch.

1. The “*spots*” literally means “hidden reefs” on which ships are destroyed. At the love feasts of the early Church, they “*feast ... without fear*” or reverence. The love feast was a prelude to the Lord’s Table or Communion, for which they had no regard. They “[serve] *only themselves,*” literally, “shepherding only themselves.” Observe pastors at a “fellowship dinner” or “potluck.” How they

conduct themselves when it is time to eat says much about them. Remember that disregard for others betrays irreverence for Christ.

2. Like “*clouds without water*,” they promise much but cannot supply. They are unstable, “*carried about by winds*” (cf. Eph 4:14; 2Pe 2:17). It is amazing to listen to the inconsistencies of many modern preachers. Some, in the same lesson, will at one moment declare that salvation is “by grace through faith,” in Christ alone. In the next breath, they have switched to the necessity of good works to ensure one’s place in heaven, or declare that having received eternal life (which never ends) as a gift, one must beware of sinning and losing their salvation. They are the “blind leading the blind” (Mat 15:14). For clarification in this area, I highly recommend *Back to Faith*, by Fred Lybrand.
3. They are compared to “*trees without fruit*,” a figure often used by Jesus (Mat 21:33–40). They are “*twice dead*” in that they not only do not have fruit, but are being “pulled up by the roots,” they have no capacity to bear anything of value. When the foundation of one’s life is self, nothing of lasting value is even possible.
4. Their instability is further amplified as they are likened to “*raging waves of the sea*.” They cannot guide themselves, but only react to external forces. In their agitated state of existence, all they can produce is evidence of their own shame, like seaweed washed upon the shore. Note the parallel thought in Isa 57:20–21.
5. Finally, they are likened to “*wandering stars*.” We would call these “comets.” The word *planes* is where our word “planet” comes from. Or we might compare the “shooting star” that blazes for a time, and then is extinguished forever. For such men there is “*reserved the blackness of darkness forever*,” a description of hell that implies isolation, total absence of light, and endless misery.

D. The Prophecy of Their Doom, Jud 14–16

Here Jude refers to another Apocryphal book, “First Enoch,” which was highly regarded in Jude’s time. The fact that Enoch “*walked with God*” (Gen 5:21–24), and that he was “*the seventh from Adam*” (a symbol of divine perfection), gave this book great credibility. In it, Enoch anticipates the Second Coming of Jesus Christ “*with ten thousands [or a myriad] of His saints*.” I take these to be the raptured believers of the Church Age (1Th 4:13–18), who comprise the “*armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean*” (Rev 14:19). To me, their garments speak of believers, not angels, “*for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints*” (Rev 19:8).

The judgment seen here is on the “*ungodly*,” repeated four times for greater emphasis. These are those who are without God, because they rejected Him, in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ (1Ti 3:16). The flow seems to be that out of their ungodly state come ungodly deeds and ways, which are consistent with their ungodly words. Again, “*out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks*” (Mat 12:34). This is reinforced in Jud 16 where their “*great swelling [self exalting] words*,” all motivated by self-lust, combined with empty flattery, are calculated to “*gain advantage*” or personal profit of any kind.

IV. Victorious Tactics of the Saints, Jud 17–22

Having surveyed the existing landscape of spiritual error and deception, and the motives, words, and actions of the false teachers, Jude now gives us his inspired strategy for contending for the faith. This involves three commands, in conjunction with corresponding actions that will assure us of maintaining the high ground of spiritual victory. Keep in mind that the central thought of the following paragraph is “*keep yourselves in the love of God*” (Jud 21).

A. Hold fast to the revealed Word of God, Jud 17–19.

1. The word “*remember*” comes from *mimnesko*, and means to “call to mind.” The aorist imperative carries a sense of urgency due to the nature of the threat. The passive voice reminds us that biblical recall is a ministry of the Holy Spirit (Joh 14:26, Joh 15:13). Therefore, recall of God’s Word comes as we submit in humility, desire to obey Him, and dedicate ourselves to study the Word in the first place. We cannot expect to remember what we will not review. One of the greatest challenges facing pastors today is not only to teach the truth accurately, but to encourage believers to get into the Bible themselves, relying on the teaching ministry of the Spirit of God.
2. The concept of “*the faith*” for which we are to contend is defined as that which was “*spoken [and written] ... by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” This is “*the faith once for all delivered*” (Jud 1) to us. How much confusion and error would be avoided simply by sticking to the written Word of God. In it we have been foretold (refer here to 2Pe 3:1–9) the coming of these last days’ mockers. They do not even realize that their denial of Christ’s soon return is in itself an evidence of the truth of prophecy, and of the imminence of His return. The unsaved state of these deceivers is evident in that they are “*sensual [literally, “soulish”] ... not having the Spirit*” (cf. Rom 8:9–11).

B. Maintain spiritual fellowship with the Lord, Jud 21.

1. The word “*keep*” is *tereo*, which we saw earlier in verse 1. It means “to guard something of value, to keep it safe.” Again, the aorist tense with the command carries a sense of urgency. The active voice indicates that our personal volition is essential. We must “*choose today whom [we] will serve*” (Jos 24:15). To “*keep ... in the love of God*” is equivalent to “abiding in Christ” as Jesus set forth in Joh 15:1–13. We do this by “*walk[ing] in the light*” (1Jo 1:7), and “*walk[ing] in the Spirit*” (Gal 5:16). When the Word of God and the Spirit of God have their rightful place in our lives, a unique relational bond is built between us and our Lord (Joh 14:21–23). This is to “[*dwell*] *in the secret place of the Most High* [and to] *abide under the shadow of the Almighty*” (Psa 91:1). In fact, due to our unique standing in Christ, we can experience this to a degree unknown even to David.
2. Three participial phrases amplify just how to guard this priceless relationship:

- a. First, we must persist in “building ourselves up on our most holy faith,” (v. 20). This continues the earlier idea of diligent and consistent study and application of the Word of God to life. In other words, we must keep growing (cf. Eph 4:13–16; 2Pe 3:18).
- b. Second, our Bible study needs to be combined with effective prayer, “*praying in the Holy Spirit*” (cf. Eph 6:18 with 1Jo 5:14–15). This is prayer that agrees with His mighty intercession on our behalf (Rom 8:26). The product is the “*effective prayer of a righteous man*” mentioned by James (Jam 5:16b). In Bible study, God speaks to us, revealing His will. In prayer, we respond to Him, declaring our dependence upon His Spirit to enlighten (Eph 1:17–20) and empower (Eph 3:16–20) us to do His will.
- c. Third, we need to live in anticipation of His return, and of our eternal destiny, verse 21. The idea of “*mercy ... unto eternal life*” is not some vague “hope” that we will get there. Neither is it a plea for mercy to keep from some sin that would keep us from eternal life. Rather, the meaning is that we daily look expectantly for the “*mercies of God*” (Rom 12:1) which enable us to “*lay hold on eternal life*” (1Ti 6:12, 1Ti 6:19). This is the idea of living with eternity in mind (2Ti 4:8), so as to claim the “*prize*” (Phi 3:14) of eternal reward for our high and holy calling.

C. Diligently labor to win the lost to faith in Christ, Jud 22–23.

1. The central thought of these verses is the command “*have mercy.*” This speaks of a continual, volitional action of seeking men through the love of Christ. Only as we seek and receive God’s mercy on us (v. 21), do we see the great privilege of being a channel of His mercy to others.

*“For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus:
that if One died for all, then all died [were dead].” 2Co 5:14*

To be compelled by the love of Christ is to become His instrument, through which to “*seek and save that which was lost*” (Luk 19:10). To the lost, His mercy offers the gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. To the believer, His mercy calls us to join Him as a co-worker (2Co 6:1).

*“And He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves,
but for him who died for them and rose again.” (2Co 5:15)*

2. Two methods of dealing with men are given. The phrase “*making a distinction*” is a present participle that modifies “*have compassion.*” It might be translated “*making a difference.*” Some men are won by being shown grace and mercy. As said by the Apostle Paul,

*“And the servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all ...
in humility correcting those who are in opposition,
if perhaps God will grant them repentance,*

so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil ...” 2Ti 2:24–26

3. There are others, however, who may only be reached through fear. These are so callous and “seared in conscience” (1Ti 4:2), that they must be “snatched out of the fire,” the literal meaning of *harpazo* (the same verb translated “*caught up*” in 1Th 4:17 for the Rapture). The condition of this person is perilous, and only the fear of imminent judgment may break through his self-centered lifestyle. In such a case, the believer involved must exercise extreme caution, “*hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.*” We hate the sinful lifestyle, not the sinner. But in humility, we also recognize the danger of getting entangled or defiled ourselves. We must never forget that we cannot change people, only the Spirit of God can do that (Joh 16:7–11). We can only confront them with the truth of their eternal peril, and of the gracious offer of life in Christ.
4. In conclusion, all believers are to pray for the lost (1Ti 2:1–6). However, only those who “*contend ... for the faith*” according to Jude’s instructions, will be effective in actively reaching souls with the Gospel message. This requires a working knowledge of the Scriptures (Jud 17), consistent personal maintenance of a life of fellowship with the Lord (Jud 20–21), and the discernment needed to know how to approach people who differ, not in their spiritual deadness, but in their spiritual callousness (Jud 22–23).

V. **Jude’s Doxology, Jud 24–25**

As Jude began the book with the encouragement of our security in Christ (Jud 1b), so he concludes on that same theme. His praise is offered to “*Him who is able,*” the verb *dunamoo* speaking of “inherent power.” The verb form implies that He is always able. God’s power, as displayed in His undertakings on behalf of men, is a common theme in Scripture, and a theme worthy of our careful examination (you might begin with Mat 19:26; Rom 14:4; 2Co 9:8; Eph 3:20; Heb 2:18; Heb 7:25, Heb 11:19). The passage in Eph 3:20–21 is worth noting:

*“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think,
according to the power that works in us,
to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations,
forever and ever. Amen.”*

A. **What He is able to do:**

1. He “*is able to keep us from stumbling.*”
The word “keep” is *phulasso*, the idea of setting a guard over. We should keep in mind that while He will guard us against evil, He will not overrule our own decision making or conduct. If we are to be kept from stumbling, we must be “*looking for [His] mercy*” (Jud 21), that is, depending on His power. Peter deals with this in the verses leading up to 2Pe 1:10.

2. He *“is able to present us faultless before His glory.”*
It is a fearful and humbling thing to consider standing in the presence of a just and holy God. However, as we depend upon Him to live lives of fellowship and fruitfulness, confess and correct areas of sin in our lives, and utilize His provisions for cleansing and refining (2Ti 2:21), we can anticipate standing before him confident and without shame (1Jo 2:28). The victory of this belongs to Him, and not to us.
3. He is able to present us to Himself with exceeding joy:
 - a. This jubilation is the result of having been a *“vessel of honor ... useful to the Master”* (2Ti 2:21).
 - b. This will include the winning of crowns (1Co 9:24–27; Phi 4:1; 2Ti 4:8; 1Th 2:19; Jam 1:12; Rev 2:10).
 - c. It will involve rewards illustrated by *“gold, silver, precious stones”* (1Co 3:11–15).
 - d. To this believer, in varying degrees—according to faithfulness—the words will be spoken, *“Enter into the joy of your Lord”* (Mat 25:23).

B. Why He is able to do it

The mighty works of our God are always a reflection of His Person. What He does speaks of who He is, and yet all the glorious deeds of *“God our Savior”* put together cannot fully proclaim His majesty. It is worth noting that this is the eighth use of the title *“God our Savior”* in the New Testament (Luk 1:47; 1Ti 1:1, 1Ti 2:3, 1Ti 4:10; Tit 1:3, Tit 2:10, Tit 3:4, and Jud 25). By this phrase, each member of the Trinity is included and honored for His unique part in our redemption. The five attributes of wisdom, glory, majesty, dominion, and power are all manifested in His gracious plan of salvation for sinful men.

By His infinite wisdom, God planned His campaign of redemption before the world began. Throughout the Old Testament, He displayed His glory by repeated visible manifestations of His invisible nature, and especially through the revelation of His Word through the prophets. His majesty was set forth by the incarnation of His Son, who *“being in the form of God, thought equality with God not a thing to cling to”* (Phi 2:6) and in His humiliation showed that true majesty is a matter of holiness, not pomp and circumstance. By His death, burial, and resurrection, He, as the God-man, secured His dominion—not for Himself—but to be shared with His beloved Bride forever. And by His almighty power, He will bring all things to the conclusion of His perfect purpose, for the eternal blessing of those who believe in Him.

May our praises ring to Him, both now, and in the halls of eternity forever! Amen!