The Epistle of
JUDE

Salutation

1Jude, slave of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,[1] to the called, those who have been sanctified[2] by God the Father and preserved[3] through[4] Jesus Christ: **2**May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.[5]

Why he is writing

3Dear ones, while I was really intent on writing to you about the salvation we share, I had a compulsion[6] to write exhorting you to contend earnestly for the Faith[7] once for all committed to the saints. **4**Because certain men, who were marked out for this condemnation long ago,[8] have sneaked in; they are godless, perverting the grace of our God into licentiousness and denying the only Sovereign God,[9] even our Lord Jesus Christ.

Examples from ancient history

5So I want to remind you, though you already know this, that the Lord delivered a people out of the land of Egypt yet later destroyed those who did not believe.[10] **6**And the angels who did not keep their proper domain but deserted[11] their own dwelling He has kept bound in

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[1] Both James and Jude were half-brothers of Jesus (same mother) but were themselves full brothers. Jude avoids any special claim to that half-brotherhood and declares himself a slave.

[2] Rather than "sanctified", about 9% of the Greek manuscripts read 'beloved' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[3] By using words like "called", "sanctified" and "preserved", Jude is emphasizing God's part in our salvation.

[4] "Jesus Christ" is in the dative case, without an explicit preposition, so we are faced with an ambiguous construction—it could be 'by', making Jesus Christ the agent; or if the Father is the agent it could be 'for' or 'in' as well as "through".

[5] The verb is in the passive voice, so these things will be supplied by an outside power.

[6] I believe he is claiming inspiration here.

[7] Wherein might "the Faith" consist? Jude evidently contrasts it with what the "certain men" of verse 4 believe, teach and do, as explained in the following verses. I take it that for Jude "the Faith" refers to the sum of Biblical values, the Biblical worldview or philosophy of life. It has been "committed" to us to put into practice, but also to defend. Who in North America or Europe is 'contending for the Faith', even a little bit? Both those continents are now anti-Christian.

[8] This is one of a very few texts that could be used to defend the doctrine of preterition, or double predestination (that the lost are predestined to be lost).

[9] About 13% of the Greek manuscripts omit "God" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[10] It is not wise to presume upon God's goodness—He demands commitment. Less than half of those who left Egypt entered the promised land.

[11] If they had to 'desert' their domain and dwelling in order to acquire the ability to procreate with women, the implication may be that their decision was irrevocable—they could not go back.

everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.[1] 7So also Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns—who gave themselves up to fornication and went after a different kind of flesh[2] in a manner similar to those angels—stand as an example, undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.[3]

Evil men are in the church

8Likewise these dreamers in their turn both defile flesh[4] and reject authority and slander celestial beings.[5] 9Yet even Michael the archangel,[6] when taking issue with the devil—he was arguing about Moses' corpse[7]—did not dare to pronounce a reviling judgment, but said, "May the Lord rebuke you!"[8] 10But these speak abusively against whatever

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[1] The place is called Tartarus in 2 Peter 2:4. Comparing this passage with 1 Peter 3:19-20 and 2 Peter 2:4-5 and Genesis 6:2,4, it seems clear that certain angelic beings cohabited with women, producing a mongrel race, the *nephilim*. (The phrase 'sons of God' in Gen. 6:2,4 is a translation of the Hebrew phrase *bene-haelohim*—the only other places this phrase occurs are in Job 1:6, 2:1 and 38:7, where the reference is clearly to angelic beings.) This was such a heinous crime that God incarcerated them millennia before the victory of Christ (that would justify the procedure; that is what He went to announce, as mentioned in 1 Peter 3:19). It was also a master stroke by Satan—since the male sperm transmits the human nature (Hebrews 7:9-10, Romans 5:12) and determines the blood of any child, if Satan had succeeded in contaminating the whole race, the Messiah could not be born and Genesis 3:15 could not be fulfilled.

[2] Recall that they wanted to rape the angels. Whatever kind of 'flesh' an angel has when he materializes, it is not human.

[3] Just as 'eternal life' refers primarily to a quality of life, I take it that "eternal fire" here refers to a quality of fire—at the destruction of Sodom God used 'brimstone and fire' (Genesis 19:24), and the eternal Lake contains 'fire and brimstone' (Revelation 20:10).

[4] The Text has just those two words, "defile flesh", which makes it difficult to be dogmatic about the meaning; perhaps the most common interpretation takes it as referring to their own bodies, presumably by unnatural sex.

[5] The Text has 'glories', but because of verse 9 it seems likely that the reference is to angelic beings.

[6] Michael is now "<u>the</u> archangel", the boss angel, the commander of the heavenly army (Revelation 12:7).

[7] Where did Jude get this information? I always assumed that Moses went up Nebo alone (and since he did not return there would be no human witness), but the Text does not actually say so. Could it be possible that Joshua went along? Whether Joshua wrote it or God revealed it to someone, I take it that a written record was made and that Jude had access to a copy in his day. Being true information the Holy Spirit moved him to include it in his letter, which became the only inspired account of those details.

[8] For years I wondered why God included verse 9 in an inspired letter; what difference does it make what happened to Moses' corpse? I now understand that the corpse is a mere prop, the crucial thing being the relationship between the two boss angels—one the leader of the good ones and the other the leader of the bad ones. We understand from Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:12-17 that Lucifer was created the number one angel, but when he rebelled against the Creator, I assumed that he was demoted. In such an event Michael (I assume he was the original number two) the archangel (there is only one) would be superior to Satan and be able to order him away. But the Text says he did not 'dare' to be disrespectful, but had to content himself with appealing to God for help. Against my inclination, I feel obliged to conclude that Lucifer (now

they do not understand, while whatever they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals—by these things they are ruined.[1] **11**Woe to them, because they have taken the way of Cain,[2] have rushed into Balaam's error for profit,[3] and have destroyed themselves in Korah's rebellion![4]

12These men are hidden reefs at your love feasts, joining the feast without fear, caring only for themselves; they are clouds without rain, carried along by winds; they are late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead (having been uprooted); **13**they are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their own shameful acts; they are wandering stars, for whom the black of the darkness has been reserved forever.[5]

14Now even Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men saying: "Look, the Lord is coming with ten thousands of His holy ones **15**to execute judgment on everyone and to convict all the godless among them of all their godless deeds that they have godlessly perpetrated, also of all the harsh things they have spoken against Him—the godless sinners!"[6] **16**These men are grumblers and complainers, living

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Satan) was not demoted—he continues higher in rank than Michael. The same would hold for the other angelic beings that followed Lucifer (Daniel 10:13, 20-21; Ephesians 6:12)—they maintain their original rank. However, what Michael did not dare do, we can. According to Ephesians 1:20-21 and 2:6, we who are in Christ are seated with Him far above all principality, power, etc. (the angelic hierarchy, good and bad). In Christ we are above Satan and may rebuke him directly (but do not forget James 4:7).

[1] Those people were evidently rather crass materialists, controlled by their body's appetites. We have to eat to live, but those who live to eat ruin themselves.

[2] Since people and animals were vegetarians before the Flood, Abel did not raise sheep for food—so why did he do it? It seems to me obvious that God must have given Adam instruction, after the Fall, about the necessity of animal sacrifice to cover their sins. To Cain, the rationalist, that didn't make sense, so he chose to worship God in his own way. When rejected he rebelled against God and even killed his brother; those who choose evil usually hate the good, because the good shows them up.

[3] Balaam prostituted his divine gift for material gain. Not only were there such people in Jude's day, there is no lack of such in ours.

[4] Korah rebelled against God's established order—he wanted to be priest but was not a descendent of Aaron (though he was a Levite). He was not satisfied with the place God had allotted him.

[5] "The darkness" is characteristic of Satan's kingdom. Those who promote humanistic, relativistic, materialistic ideas and values in the church are really 'party-crashers', agents of Satan's kingdom. Jude's description of such people could scarcely be more violent or abusive—they have a special spot reserved in a really black corner of the darkness, throughout eternity. Servants of Satan who pretend to be Christians are too despicable for words.

[6] Since I believe that Jude was inspired by the Holy Spirit in writing this letter, then I understand that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, actually did write a prophecy and copies still existed in Jude's day. Note that this affirms the historicity/accuracy of the Genesis genealogy. If Enoch wrote, Adam also wrote, and their writings were preserved in Noah's Ark, becoming available for use by Moses and others. If the language spoken before the Flood was a type of Hebrew, as I assume, then Jude could easily read it. No copies of this prophecy in Hebrew are known today, though Jews are reported to have used one as late as the 13th century A.D. A few supposed copies (incomplete) in other languages have been found.

according to their own evil desires; they talk big, flattering people to gain advantage.

Exhortation

17But you, dear ones, remember the words that were spoken before by the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: **18**how they told you that in the last time there will be scoffers who live according to their own godless desires. **19**These are the ones who cause division; they are 'soulish', not having a spirit.[1]

20But you, dear ones, building yourselves up in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, **21**keep yourselves in God's love,[2] looking forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ into eternal life.[3]

22Now be merciful to some, making a distinction;[4] **23**but others save with fear, snatching them out of the fire, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.[5]

Doxology

24Now to Him who is able to keep them[6] from stumbling and to present them before His glorious presence without fault and with

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[1] There is no definite article with "spirit", so Jude is probably not referring to the Holy Spirit here. He says that the people being described are characterized by soul, not having a spirit. In which case, the reference is to humanoids, the offspring of demons with women; like it was in the days of Noah (note Genesis 6:4—"**and also afterward**"). Don't forget our Lord's words in Matthew 24:37. If/since there are such humanoids among us today, our total ignorance on the subject is having very serious consequences in the culture at large. For more on this subject, please see my article, "As were the days of Noah", available from my website: www.prunch.org.

[2] This is an interesting concept; we are to keep ourselves in God's love. Two of the means toward that end are given in verse 20.

[3] Our final entrance into eternal life is stated to derive from our Lord's mercy.

[4] Verses 22 and 23 have given all sorts of exercise to commentators (and to copyists who produced Greek manuscripts, before them). Considering the violent description that Jude gives to the godless who have sneaked into the church, he presumably intends that such be identified and excluded without ceremony. So I take it that verses 22 and 23 refer to people in the church who have been influenced by those godless ones, in varying degrees. Some who are still wavering need to be treated with mercy, not harshly (vs. 22). Others have pretty well sold out to the values of the godless and are almost to the point of no return—it will take energetic, if not desperate, action to snatch them from the jaws of hell (vs. 23). You can't 'snatch' without direct contact, and there is the danger of contamination.

[5] 1 John 2:15 says: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." In a similar vein Jude warns against allowing oneself to be contaminated by anything attached to the people who are being rescued—everything about them will be contaminated by Satan's germs.

[6] Virtually all versions in English read 'you', following some 30% of the Greek manuscripts; but the 68% (there are two further variants), including the best line of transmission, read "them", and in the context "them" makes good sense. Jude is assuring his readers that it is worth the effort to snatch people from the very jaws of hell (v. 23), because God is able to secure them (one's natural tendency would be to doubt that). In commenting the parable of the lost sheep, the Lord Jesus affirmed that "there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance." It seems that God gets special pleasure out of

exultation[1]—[25]to God our Savior, who alone is wise,[2] be glory and majesty, power and authority, both now and throughout all the ages! Amen.

cheating the Lake. Remembering that every human being bears the image of the Creator, we can understand why.

[1] This is truly marvelous: someone who was snatched from the jaws of hell is transformed to the extent that he can stand before God "without fault". God Himself will exult (Luke 15:10).

[2] About 8% of the Greek manuscripts omit "wise", leaving 'to the only God our Savior' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).