

(1) - The human instrument used of God to write this letter identifies himself simply as **“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.”** There were several men named **“Jude”** (or Judas) mentioned in the New Testament. There was Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of Jesus, and this Judas was exposed as a false apostle. There was the true apostle, Judas (*Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13*), who was called Thaddaeus by Matthew and Mark. Some say he was the human author. There was another **“Jude,”** who was the younger **“brother of James,”** and, therefore, the younger half-brother of Jesus. He was a son of Mary and Joseph (*Matt. 13:55*). Our Lord was the son of Mary and was conceived by God the Holy Spirit without the aid of man (*Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:21-23; Luke 1:35*). Joseph and Mary had other children. The writer of this epistle was probably the Apostle Jude, however, we know God Almighty is the ultimate author of all Scripture, and the human writers were merely instruments to record the inspired Word of God (*2 Tim. 3:16-17*). He identifies himself as **“the servant of Jesus Christ.”** This was a common way for the apostle, and all believers, describing themselves as willing, loving, bond-servants of Christ. A true **“servant of Jesus Christ”** is not forced into slavery under the bondage of law, but one whose debt to the law has been fully paid by the Lord Jesus Christ and who has been given a heart of faith in and love for Christ (*Matt. 11:28-30*). A true **“servant of Jesus Christ”** serves the Lord, not motivated by law and legal fear, but motivated by grace, love, and gratitude.

This is a general epistle written for the whole church. He identifies them as **“sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.”** **“Sanctified”** means to be set apart from the world by God. The Bible reveals a three-fold sanctification for the elect of God: (1) **“Sanctified by God the Father”** before the foundation of the world when He set His people apart in sovereign electing grace and gave them to His Son putting all the responsibility of their salvation upon Him; (2) **“Sanctified in Christ Jesus”** (*1 Cor. 1:2; cf. Heb. 10:10,14*) when He redeemed all of God’s elect from their sins by His death on the cross as their Representative, Surety, and Substitute; and (3) **“Sanctification of the Spirit”** (*2 Thess. 2:13-14*) when God’s elect are set apart by the Holy Spirit in the new birth bringing them to faith in Christ and true repentance.

“Jude” describes believers as those who are **“preserved in Jesus Christ.”** This is the eternal security of the saved by the grace of God in Christ. Believers will persevere in the faith and cannot lose salvation, not because they are better than others, and not because of their own power and/or goodness, but because they are kept by the power and grace of God in Christ (*John 10:27-30; Php. 1:6; 2:12-13; 2 Tim. 1:12; Jude 24-25*). He also describes believers as those who are **“called”** effectually and invincibly by the Holy Spirit into the kingdom of God. This is the internal work of the Holy Spirit to bring God’s elect to Christ for all salvation. This is the calling of the Gospel as the **“power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth”** (*Rom. 1:16*), and which gives believing sinners assurance of their election by God (*1 Thess. 1:4-5; 2 Pet. 1:10*).

(2) - **“Mercy”** is an attribute of God exercised towards His people in and by the Lord Jesus Christ. It refers to compassion and kindness given them because of law and justice satisfied by Christ for them (*Gal. 6:14-16; Eph. 2:4-10*). **“Peace”** is the established relationship between God and His people, again, based on the blood and righteousness of Christ (*2 Cor. 5:18-21; Col. 1:19-21*). God is reconciled to His people, and they are reconciled to Him on the ground of their sins imputed to Christ and the merits of His righteousness imputed to

them. There is true eternal peace with God and from God for us in Christ, the Prince of peace. “Love” is the divine love that is freely bestowed upon God’s elect from eternity in Christ, and which provides all requirements for their salvation in and by the Lord Jesus Christ (*1 John 4:8-10*). It is the free, undeserved, and unearned “love” of God to them from which they cannot be separated (*Rom. 8:35-39*). Jude prays that these spiritual graces within a believer’s heart will “be multiplied,” i.e. abound, increase, and grow in their hearts and lives.

(3) - “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you” - Jude recognizes the love of God for His people in Christ, and he expresses his own love for them in grace and truth of God. He also expresses his earnest desire to write this letter and encourage them in matters “of the common salvation.” This is the “salvation” that all true believers have in “common.” Denominationalism has given rise to the heresy of pluralism which says there are many ways to God, many ways of salvation, and many ways to gain eternal life. This is heresy. There is ONE SAVIOR Who is the same for all who are saved. He is Jesus Christ, God manifests in the flesh. There is ONE WAY OF SALVATION, and it is by God’s free and sovereign grace based on the shed blood and imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no true salvation by the works and/or wills of men. There is ONE GOSPEL, and it is the doctrine of Christ. This doctrine (teaching) involves the truth of His glorious Person as God and man without sin. It also involves the accomplishment of His work as the Surety and Substitute of His people. He was crucified for them, and He was raised from the dead because He secured the complete salvation of all for whom He lived, died, and arose. There is ONE NEW BIRTH by God the Holy Spirit whereby He imparts spiritual life, knowledge, and graces to make sinners willing to believe in Christ and turn from dead works and idolatry. There ONE TRUE MOTIVE FOR OBEDIENCE, and it is the love of Christ for us and the gratitude we have for Him and what He has done for us.

“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 found it necessary to write to the church to encourage believers to “contend for the faith.” “THE faith” refers to the doctrine of Christ, all the truths revealed by God concerning Himself, His Son, and the great salvation He freely and fully provides for His people by His grace. It is Gospel truth and all things related to the glory of God in Christ. It is the body of Christian truth that identifies and distinguishes all that separates true Christians from the world. To “contend” is to guard and defend it against all opposition (*2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 3:15*). Like an athlete who trains for the Olympics, we are to strive to become skillful in God’s word of righteousness so that we can boldly and rightly defend “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (*cf. Heb. 5:12-14*). The doctrine of Christ was revealed and handed down to the saints, and it cannot be changed. When men seek to add their ideas, definitions, and opinions, or when they seek to detract from it, they reveal themselves to be false preachers and false professors (*Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Cor. 11:3-4,13-15; Gal. 1:6-9*). There are some who deny this necessary part of Christian ministry and witnessing by saying we are not sent to defend the Gospel but only to proclaim. We as witnesses of Christ certainly do not want to make the ministry nothing more than debates and arguments, in proclaiming the truth we must sometimes defend it against the attacks of unbelievers. We defend it, not with our own arguments and opinions, but with the Word of God as did the Apostle Paul when he disputed with the unbelieving Jews (*Acts 17:17*).

(4) - The church here on earth up to the second coming of Christ will continually be plagued with and attacked by the enemies of Christ, His church, and His Gospel. There are enemies outside the church, such as the world that stands in opposition to truth, and there are enemies within the church, such as false preachers and false professors. Satan works in and with both these enemies in his warfare against the church. We are assured by our Lord that the true spiritual church (true children of God, chosen by God before the foundation of the world, redeemed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, regenerated, called, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit) can never be defeated by these enemies (*Matt. 16:18-19; John 16:33; Rom. 8:35-39*). The gates of hell cannot prevail over the true church because it is built by (and upon the Rock) Christ Jesus. However, we as true believers in Christ are commanded by God to be on our guard against the attacks and deceptions of Satan and to “*contend for the faith*” (*Jude 3*) in the face of all enemies. We must “*try [test] the spirits [all who claim to speak truth by the Spirit of God]*” (*1 John 4:1*) by the Word of God. We must study God’s Word so as to be skillful in the word of righteousness and not be deceived by Satan and his ministers. This is part of a professing Christian’s responsibility to examine himself and not be exposed as a false professor and s (*2 Tim. 2:15; 3:14-17; Heb. 5:12-14*).

The Lord taught in the parable of the sower and the seed the difference between true believers and false professors (*Matt. 13:18-23*). He warned us to beware of false preachers who would come in sheep’s clothing (*Matt. 7:15-20*). John exposed false professors who fell away from the Gospel of God’s grace in Christ as those who had never truly been converted (*1 John 2:18-19*). Paul warned the Ephesian elders that false preachers would arise from within the visible church and try to draw people away from Christ to themselves (*Acts 20:28-31*). This is the reason Jude was inspired to write this short epistle - “**For there are certain men crept in unawares.**” Notice how these “**certain men**” came in secretly and deceptively without being noticed. They do not wear signs saying, “Danger: False Teacher.” They do not openly deny Christ. They claim to be Christians. Their false teaching is subtle - disguised as and mixed with truth (*2 Cor. 11:13-15*).

“**Who were before of old ordained to this condemnation**” - Such false preachers and false professors were literally marked out “**before of old ... to this condemnation.**” The sovereign purpose and will of God is not destroyed or even dissuaded by the presence of these false believers. They do not take our Lord by surprise. They are part of God’s sovereign foreordination from the beginning. This seems unjust and unfair to most people, but it is neither unjust nor unfair as their “**condemnation**” is due to their own sin and depravity. Like Pharaoh of old, they are “*vessels of wrath fitted to destruction*” (*Rom. 9:17-22*). God merely leaves them to themselves and their own devices. If God saves any of us, He will do so in His sovereign mercy in making us fit for glory in and by the Lord Jesus Christ, because He has put away our sin by the sacrifice of Christ, made us to be the righteousness of God in Christ, and given us spiritual life from Christ. If He condemns any of us, He will do so in justice and truth because of our sin and rebellion.

Notice how Jude describes these false professors as “**ungodly men.**” This describes unbelievers because they do not fear God and have no real interest in His glory in Christ. They are rebellious against God and His Christ. They are against the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, “**turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness,**” which is sensuality. It describes those who are completely turned over to fleshly desires and wantonness. Many people would limit this to preachers who claim to believe salvation by grace through Christ but who

promote immorality under the umbrella of grace. Although it is true that any preacher who excuses or promotes immoral behavior claiming that it is fine for believers to act this way because grace covers all their sin is a false preacher, we will see later in this epistle that Jude is talking about something altogether different and more deceptive. **“And denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ”** - Whether in doctrine or in deed, no matter what they claim, such false preachers deny the glorious Person and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. If it is in doctrine, preaching salvation in some way, to some degree, at some stage, by the works and wills of men, they deny the truth of the Gospel Christ. If it is in deeds by promoting immoral conduct, they deny the power of Christ to work in His people and motivate them to fight against the flesh and the lusts thereof.

(5) - The Hebrew children were chosen by God, delivered from Egypt, and given so many temporal blessings by God, yet the vast majority of them were destroyed because of their unbelief. Jude’s point is that no amount of earthly privileges and temporal good, no mere profession of religion, can replace true genuine Holy Spirit-wrought faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Saving faith knows and believes the truths that identify and distinguish Christ from counterfeits. True faith brings a sinner to repentance of dead works and idolatry. True faith brings a person to follow Christ as motivated by grace, love, and gratitude (*Eph. 2:8-10; James 2:14-26*). These false professors claimed to be God’s children and claimed to believe in Christ, but their claim was hypocrisy. Like the unbelieving Hebrews, they too were unbelievers.

(6) - The **“angels”** who fell with Lucifer (Satan) did so because they exalted themselves and sought to be above God. For a time they enjoyed the glorious presence of God, but they **“kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation.”** Not wanting to be subject to God, they rebelled and were turned out of heaven. They are now **“reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.”** Because of their rebellion their destiny is eternal damnation and death. These false professors would not submit to God’s revealed Word in Christ, and they would not be subject unto Him in their character and conduct.

(7) - These false professors would be no better off than **“Sodom and Gomorrha”** which were destroyed by God because of their idolatry and immorality. Although the sinfulness of these false believers may have been cloaked with religion and outward professions of some truth, and although they may have appeared righteous unto men, their end would be the same as those who openly committed acts of gross immorality. This comparison does not prove that they were false Christians who were involved in open immorality like Sodom and Gomorrha. Consider how the prophet Isaiah compared the religious Jews of his generation to be no better off than Sodom and Gomorrha (*Isa. 1:10-15*). The point is that any life without Christ, whether it is in religion or not, is a life of evil and idolatry. Unless we are found in Christ, having been washed from all our sins by His precious blood, and having His righteousness imputed to us, we are no more deserving of salvation, blessedness, and heaven, than the most immoral sinners. Unless we have spiritual life given us and imparted to us by the Spirit of God, we are not godly in our knowledge, thoughts, and desires, no more than men consider as the worst of sinners.

(8) - In verse 4 Jude wrote that false preachers had “*crept in unawares*” into the church introducing heresies intended to draw professing believers away from the Gospel of God’s grace in Christ. In verses 5-7 he compared false preachers and their followers to the unbelieving Hebrews, the fallen angels, and Sodom and Gomorrha. Now he writes “**likewise, also**” (“*in the same way*”) in God’s sight these false preachers were guilty of the same sins even though in a religious way. God views self-righteous, works-based religion as an abomination including any act of supposed morality, charity, and/or obedience that rivals or denies the glory and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ (*Gal. 2:21*).

Jude describes them as “**filthy dreamers**” because their teaching was not the Word of God and salvation by God’s grace in Christ. Their teaching was of their own evil imaginations. They preached lies in the name of Christ (*2 Cor. 11:13-15*). Like the unbelieving Hebrews, they “**defile the flesh**” by preaching idolatry. The god they preached was an idol who accepted the works of men for salvation. Like the fallen angels, they “**despise dominion**” hating God’s authority and way of salvation by Christ alone (*cf. John 3:19-20*). They refused to submit to Christ as the Lord our righteousness. Like Sodom and Gomorrha, they “**speak evil of dignities**” which refers to Christ and His true ministers who preached the one and only true Gospel of God’s grace in Christ without compromise (*John 15:18–16:3*).

(9) - There is much disagreement over this verse, but the main point Jude makes is that all matters of contention are to be settled and all false teachers rebuked by God’s Word as our final authority. This centers around the Gospel truth of the glorious Person and finished work of Christ (*cf. 2 Cor. 11:2-4*). Here we see “**Michael the archangel when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses.**” Who is Michael, and what exactly was this dispute with the devil? I believe that Michael is none other than our Lord Himself. I first came to this view when I was preaching through the Book of Daniel and read about Michael in *Daniel 10* and *12*. Read *Daniel 10:13* - This does not mean “one among many.” It means “first among the princes” and having the preeminence. The main reason I take this view is because of the work attributed to Michael in *Revelation 12:7-11*. I believe this gives us some insight as to who “**Michael the archangel**” really is. The word “**archangel**” is used only five times in the Bible (*Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1; 1 Thess. 4:16; Jude 9*). In each case it is singular. There is and can only be one archangel, and He is “**Michael**” both in our text and again in *Revelation 12:7*. The word “angel” means “messenger, and can refer to the angelic beings who are messengers of God and protectors of God’s people. “*Gabriel*” is one named in the Bible who brought messages from God to Daniel, Zecharias, and to Mary. His name means “man of God” because he appeared in the form of a man. “Angel” can also describe men who are messengers of God, such as John the Baptist in *Matthew 11:10* and the elders (or pastors) of the seven churches in *Revelation 2 - 3*. The Lord Jesus Christ is called the Angel of the Lord, the preeminent Head and Chief Messenger of God, who appeared to people in the Old Testament. He is called “*the Angel of His presence*” (*Isa. 63:9*), by whom we are saved. He is also called the Angel of the covenant (*Mal. 3:1*).

So angels are described as messengers of God. Michael, however, is revealed as a warrior who engages in spiritual combat (*Rev. 12:7-9*). The name “Michael” signifies “one who is like God” and can be translated “one who IS God.” As the word “Archangel” means “chief or head of the angels,” we need to realize that nowhere in the Bible do we find any notion of a hierarchy among creatures in heaven. The hierarchy of heaven is simply this -

JESUS CHRIST IS THE HEAD AND EVERYONE ELSE IS UNDER HIM! It is clear also that the work described in *Revelation 12:7-9* is the work of Christ himself (*John 12:31-32; Rev. 20:1-3*). Christ bound Satan and cast him out. The accuser who held the Gentile world in bondage, idolatry, and ignorance throughout the Old Testament era was cast out by Christ, so that he could no longer deceive the nations. By His death on the cross Christ opened the way for the Gospel to be preached to the whole world, so that He might gather His elect from the four corners of the earth (*John 12:32; Rom. 11:25-26*). So I believe that Michael the Archangel is our Lord Jesus Christ who is, as our God-man Mediator, “*Head of all principality and power*” (*Col. 2:10*).

Jude writes that Michael contended with the devil as he “**disputed about the body of Moses.**” Some believe this refers to Moses’s actual dead corpse and that Satan tried to hinder the burial of Moses’s body in order to use it to promote idolatry enticing people to make it a shrine and worship it. This is sheer speculation as there is no other Scripture to support this. I believe the best explanation is that “**the body of Moses**” refers to the body of law given to Moses by God. This would refer to Satan’s attempts to keep the law of Moses in force after it had been totally abolished by Christ when He fulfilled all righteousness for His people on the cross. Satan inspired the unbelieving Jews to pervert the law of Moses and turn it into a system of works for salvation (*John 8:44; Rom. 9:31–10:3*), and he inspired them to impose the law on Gentile believers (*Acts 15:5-29; Gal. 2:16-17*). The reason Satan wants to keep the law of Moses in force is because it is a condemning law (*2 Cor. 3:6-11; John 5:39-47*). As the accuser of brethren Satan desires to bring sinners under the law for condemnation. The Gospel states there is NO CONDEMNATION for sinners who are IN CHRIST (washed in His blood and clothed in His righteousness). Satan’s goal is to keep sinners from seeing the glory of God in Jesus Christ (*2 Cor. 4:3-6*).

I believe that because of the work described in *Revelation 12* that this contention in **Jude 9** can be connected to show how Christ is our Advocate to turn back the accusations of Satan against the ones who stand before God in Christ’s righteousness imputed. We see another example of this in *Zechariah 3:1-5*. The Angel of the LORD here is our Savior and Advocate, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is not an angelic being. He is called “the Angel of the LORD,” because he is God’s Messenger, the Angel of the covenant. This One who is called, “the Angel of the LORD” in *verse 1*, is Jehovah himself. We know that because he is called, “the LORD” (Jehovah) in *verse 2*. The Lord Jesus Christ is our Advocate and Intercessor (*Heb. 7:24-27; 1 John 2:1-2*). Here, as in **Jude 9**, He does not bring any “**railing accusation.**” As our Advocate, He pleads only righteousness according to the demands of the law which He fulfilled. He leaves Satan in silence and leaves Moses (the law) unable to condemn His people (*Rom. 8:1, 33-34*).

So the answer to any false teacher who seeks to make salvation conditioned on sinners is “**the Lord rebuke thee.**” In contending for the faith, we are not to bring “**railing accusation(s)**” (blasphemous arguments such as slander). Our weapon of defense is not an evil tongue but the pure and powerful Word of God. Whenever we speak slanderous arguments or accusations, we become tools of Satan, not of God. Satan is the “*accuser of the brethren*” (*Rev. 12:10*), and the only reasons his accusations do not stick is the “*blood of the Lamb*” as set forth in the testimony of God’s Word (*Rev. 12:11*). Satan is turned back as God’s Word meets every attempt and accusation with the power of God in Christ the Lord.

LESSON 4 - EXPOSING FALSE PREACHERS Jude 10-13

A famous preacher was once asked how we as true believers are deal with false preachers, false believers, and their false doctrine. He answered by using the analogy of a crooked walking stick. He said, "If a man is trying to walk with a crooked walking stick, I don't have to tell him over and over again that the stick is crooked. All I have to do is lay down a straight stick beside his, and he will see that his stick is crooked." The point this famous preacher was trying to make is that we as true believers do not have to go around pointing out the error of others. We just have to keep preaching truth, and they will see their error. My question is this - Is this the way God's word instructs us in dealing with false preachers, false believers, and false doctrine? Are we never to point out, expose, their doctrinal errors if these errors are matters of life and death? God's Word most certainly instructs us to preach to preach the truth constantly. Our desire is that our witness for Christ be positive and not a negative ministry of pointing out and dwelling on false preachers and false doctrine. But there are times when it is honoring to God, good for God's people, and wise for us to expose false preachers (*Rom. 16:15-16*) and point out the exact nature of their false doctrine. This is what Jude, as he is inspired by the Holy Spirit, is doing in the short epistle.

(10) - False preachers speak their lies out of ignorance. They are ignorant of the true nature and reality of their own sin and depravity (*Rom. 3:10-20*), and they are ignorant of the true nature and reality of God's salvation by grace in Christ (*Rom. 10:1-4*). Their preaching and teaching is the product of "**what they know naturally**" in their carnal minds (*Rom. 8:5-8; 1 Cor. 2:14*). All that sinful man knows by nature is salvation in some way at some stage by the works and wills of men - salvation conditioned on sinners. This is a false gospel. As far as salvation and spiritual matters are concerned, this makes them no better than "**brute beasts**" which live and die by their own natural instincts rather than the Word of God. Even in the things of salvation and religion, "**they corrupt themselves**" by working iniquity upon iniquity and sealing themselves and other into false refuges of religion (*Prov. 14:12; 16:25; Matt. 7:21-23; 23:15*). This is why we must be born again by the Spirit of God (*John 3:3-7*). Left to ourselves we will rise no higher than "**brute beasts**" and religious corruption.

(11) - "**Woe unto them!**" - This is God's judgment upon them as His judgment is against all who are not found saved by His grace in Christ. Our only hope not to be under such "**woe**" is to be washed in the blood of Christ and clothed in His righteousness imputed (*Php. 3:7-10*). Jude exposes and explains their error by using three Old Testament examples of men under the judgment of God's wrath. His audience would be familiar with these examples.

"**For they have gone the way of Cain**" - This is the way of salvation by the works of man, which, after being rejected of God, brings forth envy and hatred towards the true people of God (*1 John 3:12*). Cain hated and murdered Able because God revealed that Cain's righteousness was no good. Abel's righteousness was the blood of the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the imputed righteousness of Christ. Cain refused God's Word; by the grace of God, Abel believed (*Heb. 11:4*).

"**And ran greedily after the error of Balaam**" - This is the spirit of compromise, either in doctrine or conduct, for the purpose of gaining money, popularity, or worldly acclaim

and approval (2 Pet. 2:12-16). **“Balaam”** led others into adultery and idolatry for his own selfish gain.

“And perished in the gainsaying of Core” - This is the same as **“Korah”** (Numbers 16) who contradicted, or opposed, Moses, God’s true servant and prophet, and challenged Moses’s authority as God’s appointed leader. Korah also rejected Aaron whom God appointed to be the high priest of Israel. Korah and his company were destroyed under the wrath of God for their **“gainsaying.”** Jude brings this in to show how these false preachers oppose the true ministers of Christ.

All of these, **“Cain, Balaam, and Korah,”** showed that they had no fear of God, no respect for God’s honor and authority, and no value for God’s way of salvation by grace through the promised Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

(12) - False preachers and false professors have no fear of God, no love for Christ, and no love for the brethren or the truth. They are **“without fear”** (cf. Rom. 3:18). The *Book of Proverbs* says so much about Godly fear which shows itself by faith in Christ, submission to Him as the Lord our righteousness, and resting in Him for all salvation (Heb. 4). **“These are spots on your feast of charity”** - This is a metaphorical way of describing the worship services of God’s people. Whenever the church met together to worship, to take the Lord’s Supper, and/or to enjoy the fellowship of brethren, these false professors were **“spots”** (blemishes) on such assemblies. False Christians are welcome to come into our worship services and hear the true Gospel preached. We pray for their salvation. But they are never to leaders in the church or to spread their false message within the local assembly of believers.

They are **“clouds without water, carried about of winds,”** i.e. empty of any real benefits of the water of life in Christ and the Word of God. They may look big and impressive, but they are of no spiritual benefit for the people of God. They are tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine because they are not indwelt by the Holy Spirit and a real knowledge and love for God’s Word. They are **“trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots”** - The fruit that they do bear is not the fruit of salvation for sinners which can only come by the preaching of the true Gospel of God’s grace in the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 7:15-20). God will not use false preachers preaching a false message to bring forth fruit unto God. It can only result in fruit unto death (Rom. 7:4-5). They have no fruit of the Holy Spirit within, and their preaching promotes nothing but spiritual death and condemnation. This is the way of any who do not preach the Gospel of Christ and His righteousness alone.

(14) - They are **“raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame”** - Their pride is great and their words are loud, but they are empty of substance and stability. They are **“wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever”** - They are like shooting stars which burn bright for short time but no lasting light. They will perish in the darkness of death and hell for ever. Where Christ is not exalted and preached, there is nothing but condemnation.

(14-15) - The title of this lesson is taken from *Jude 17* and the truth revealed in *Jude 9* that shows how we as believers are to withstand the onslaughts of Satan and his ministers (contend for the faith) by invoking the words (doctrine, teaching) of the Lord Jesus Christ - *“the Lord rebuke thee.”* This drives us to defend ourselves through Christ who is our one and only Mediator and Advocate and by the words of our testimony which is the Gospel of God’s grace in Christ (*cf. Rev. 12:7-11*). **“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam”** - Jude uses **“Enoch,”** the son of Jared, as an example for us. It is recorded in *Genesis 5:18-24* that Enoch walked with God and was translated. He is said to be the seventh generation from Adam in the line of Seth. Evidently this prophecy of Enoch was handed down from age to age, so the Apostle Jude, by divine inspiration, refers to it. Enoch **“prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all”** - This is a prophecy of the second coming of Christ and the final judgment. It was not Christ’s first coming, which was intended to seek and to save, to establish the only righteousness upon which God could be just to justify the ungodly. This is for divine judgment. God’s righteous judgment shall fall **“upon all”** by the standard of HIS righteous law (*Acts 17:31*).

Jude’s whole point here is that God’s righteous judgment will expose the condemnation and the evil deeds even of these false preachers and false professors. The final judgment will be a declarative judgment (*2 Cor. 5:10-11*), and the one issue to which all will have to answer is this: Do you have a righteousness that answers the demands of God’s law and justice? Any who plead anything other than Christ and His righteousness imputed will be judged as **“ungodly”** and condemned. At that time they will not be able to defend themselves or plead their works because they will be convinced **“of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him,”** i.e. against Christ. We need to understand that all **“deeds,”** even the most sincere, moral, and religious efforts, performed by sinners without Christ, without grace, are **“ungodly,”** iniquity (*Matt. 7:21-23*) because they do not measure up to the requirement of the righteousness of the law found only in the Lord Jesus Christ (*Rom. 5:20-21; Php. 3:7-10*).

(16) - The motive of such false preachers and false professors is to gain the approval and applause of men for their own selfish **“advantage.”** It could be their desire for money, for fame and popularity, or to gain a following for themselves. They are described as **“murmurers”** and **“complainers”** because they cannot be satisfied with the clear, consistent preaching of the Gospel of God’s grace in Christ. Like the false preachers described in *2 Corinthians 11*, they desire to corrupt the minds of their hearers away **“from the simplicity that is in Christ”** (*2 Cor. 11:3*). They walk **“after their own lusts”** whether it be the unlawful desire for material gain or for fame, admiration, and acceptance. Their **“lusts”** is seen in seeking to glorify the flesh rather than glorying in Christ and His cross alone. Their method is in speaking **“great swelling words,”** which may sound so pious and reverent but in reality it is only flattery meant not to honor and glorify God but to honor and glorify men (*John 8:44*). They are concerned more for the honor which comes from men than they do for the honor of God. Again, there is no fear of God before their eyes. They will say all manner of evil against God’s preachers and God’s people who contend for the faith and will not compromise the Gospel.

(17-18) - As God's true children, we may be disturbed by the scoffing and complaining of these false preachers, so Jude exhorts us to remember what Christ had already revealed by the apostles concerning the last days and these false preachers, the spirit of antichrist, who would emerge on the scene (*cf. 2 Pet. 3:2-3; 1 John 4:1ff.; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-4*). The apostles had written and preached many times that in the last days false preachers would come in the name of Christ, professing to believe the true Gospel, but not abiding in the doctrine of Christ. They would promote a spirit of false love and false humility which would give credibility to the salvation of those who either ignorant of or not submitted to Christ, His righteousness imputed as the only ground of salvation, and, therefore, promote sinners in seeking to establish a righteousness of their own, against the promise of God. They would refuse to tell the world that its deeds were evil, because that is offensive to self-righteous religionists who are seeking righteousness by deeds of law. This is their own worldly lust, what comes naturally to self-righteous, self-loving, religiously proud sinners.

(19) - **"These be they who separate themselves"** - Such false preachers and false professors avoid fellowship with true believers because of their self-righteous, judgmental attitude towards others. They think they know more than others to the point that they refuse to have fellowship with others. They are like those described in *Isaiah 65:5, Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou.*" The Lord says of them, *"These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day."* They are described as **"sensual"** or "worldly-minded," meaning they judge things by outward appearance, walk by sight and not by faith which is based on God's testimony alone. They profess to know and love Christ, but their claim is false. They have **"not the Spirit,"** which means they have never been born again by the Holy Spirit. They lack spiritual life and knowledge given in regeneration and true conversion. We can see then how serious this charge against them is, but we must consider the eternal consequences of a false profession of Christ. All who have been born again by the Spirit of God love Christ and love His people (*1 John 3:14-19*).

(20-21) - As true Christians, we must realize that everything we are in salvation, spiritual and eternal life, and everything we do pleasing to God, is all by the power, goodness, and grace of God in Christ (*Gal. 2:19-21*). No part of salvation can be attributed to our own goodness or power. We have no goodness or power but that which we have by virtue of Christ's shed blood and righteousness imputed, and we have no power to believe but FROM CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT Who imparts spiritual life in the new birth and indwells us continually in our walk of faith. It is totally by God's grace in Christ that we are saved, preserved, and glorified. However, God in His wisdom, by His power, and for His glory has given us both the mind and the means of grace by which He preserves us unto glory. It is from this mind and by these means that all of God's elect will, without fail, persevere in the faith. The mind of grace is stated in the word "**beloved**," which identifies the true people of God. It is in a saving view of God's love for us in sending Christ into the world to save us from our sins that we are given the mind, the heart, of grace (*1 John 4:6-17*). The Holy Spirit sheds this love abroad in our hearts so as to draw out our love to Christ (*Rom. 5:3-5*). He uses this love to motivate us to use all means of grace, obedience, and worship (*2 Cor. 5:14; Rom. 12:1-2*). The means are described in the following exhortations -

"Building up yourselves on your most holy faith" - Our standing before God and our state in the world as sinners saved by grace is all of Christ and is not the product of our own efforts. Christ is the Savior of sinners and the Builder of the church (*Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:9-10; Eph. 2:8-22; 1 Pet. 2:1-7*). As Christ crucified and risen (the glory of His Person and the success of His redemptive work) is the object of our "**most holy faith**," the word of God is the foundation of this "**faith**" (*cp. Rom. 10:17*). Jude is speaking of believers growing in grace and in knowledge of Christ, becoming skillful in the word of righteousness so as to be good stewards, able workmen and disciples of Christ so that we can contend for the faith (*2 Tim. 2:15; 3:14-17; Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:1-9; 2 Pet. 3:18*). True "**faith**" grows as we attend unto the preaching and teaching of God's Word and in the active fellowship of other believers.

"Praying in the Holy Ghost" - True godly prayers is not the cause or ground by which we merit or earn God's favor and blessings. It is the means by which we seek and enjoy God's favor in Christ and blessings by Christ (*Heb. 4:14-16*). True prayer is an expression of faith as we seek God in and by the Lord Jesus Christ and upon the basis of His merits alone. It is an expression of submission and worship as we pray, "Thy will be done." It is an expression of humility as we recognize that we are totally dependent upon God in Christ for our whole salvation.

"Keep yourselves in the love of God looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" - We are to keep our minds, our hearts, our focus, our desire upon the "**love of God**" in Christ by keeping Christ and Him crucified ever before us (*Heb. 12:1-2*). As we seek to live our lives for His glory and according to His Word, we are to be reminded continually that Christ alone is our righteousness before God (*Php. 3:7-9*), that His blood alone cleanses us from all sin and unrighteousness (*1 John 1:7-2:2; 4:17*). We cannot and must not look to or within ourselves for salvation, forgiveness, righteousness, eternal life, and glory. Our whole salvation, our lives as Christians, is all "**the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.**"

(22) - "**And of some have compassion, making a difference**" - This is literally "*And have mercy on some, who are doubting*" - We as God's people must be taught in every area, that even though the power of spiritual life, grace, faith, and love are implanted within our hearts in conversion, these graces do not act and grow apart from the power of the Holy Spirit and the means God has appointed for our spiritual growth and preservation. Our minds must be continually renewed by teaching from God's Word. God's Word is spiritual food for our souls. These graces implanted in our hearts by the Holy Spirit insure that when we hear God's teaching, we will receive and bow to God's word, but not without a struggle with the flesh. Jude is teaching that when some of our brethren, who are either weak, unskillful, or simply young in the faith, are brought to doubt by the subtle deceptions of false

preachers, we are to be kind, gentle, merciful (compassionate) in dealing with them as brethren in Christ. No true believer is in a state of unbelief, but because of the remaining presence, influence, and contamination of the flesh, unbelief is still within all true believers. This unbelief is what causes us to doubt. This is *“the sin which doth so easily beset us”* (Heb. 12:1). It is unbelief, and we must fight it because it is a major battle in the warfare between the Spirit and the flesh. The way to fight such doubt is to encourage on another in continually *“looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith”* (Heb. 12:2).

(23) - “And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire” - Again, we know salvation is not by the power and devices of men, not even the best of men, and not even believing men. Salvation is of the Lord by His grace in and by the Lord Jesus Christ. We must, however, seek the salvation of others by preaching the Gospel of God’s grace in Christ, by warning them of dangers believers face in the world, and by pointing them to the means of persevering in the faith. The meaning here is the same as Paul wrote in *1 Timothy 4:1* - *“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”* Paul was exhorting Timothy to take care concerning the teachings of the Gospel, and by doing this he would save himself and those whom he taught, not from eternal wrath, but from false teachers and their damnable doctrines and compromises. We are saved from wrath and from sin by the death of Christ on the cross. We are saved from darkness and brought into light by Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit in the new birth. From then on we are continually saved (delivered) by Christ from our enemies and all that would oppose us here on earth by the means of the preserving grace of God which He has given us and by which He delivers us. Believing ministers and brethren are used of God as instruments of deliverance for each other. It is God who ultimately pulls us “out of the fire” that would burn us up, but God may use a dear pastor, elder, or brother to accomplish this.

“Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” - We who are saved by God’s grace are righteous in and by the Lord Jesus Christ. This is symbolically described here as a **“garment”** we wear (cf., *Isa. 61:10; Rev. 19:7-8*). This is a common biblical metaphor used to describe Christ’s righteousness imputed to His people. By the grace of God it covers, protects, and preserves us against all the accusations Satan and his ministers can throw at us. Clothed in Christ’s righteousness we cannot be charged with the debt of sin so as to be condemned. Clothed in His righteousness we cannot be separated from the love of God in Christ. Many false preachers attack this glorious doctrine claiming that it teaches a “pasted on” righteousness and, therefore, cannot be real or substantial without some kind of righteousness within. This is a denial of the preaching and the power of Christ crucified.

First of all, they are confused to the point of attacking a metaphor. This metaphor does not mean that the imputed righteousness of Christ is some kind of literal outer coat we wear without any work of God within. Imputed righteousness shows that we are legally justified before God and not guilty so as to be condemned. We are legally righteous IN GOD’S SIGHT! Our sins have been purged by the blood of Jesus Christ (*Rev. 7:14*). This legal justification based on Christ’s righteousness imputed demands that all who are justified by His grace receive the gift of spiritual and eternal life from Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit (*Rom. 5:21–6:18*). Christ’s does a work within His people, and this work is the fruit of His work on the cross for His people. His righteousness is pure, without any contamination of sin or the works of men. The **“garment spotted by the flesh”** is a metaphor that describes the false teachings of men when they seek to add their own works to Christ’s righteousness. This knowledge and love of grace is put within our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and we put Christ on by faith and confess Him openly as we would proudly wear a beautiful garment. This is not sinful pride in ourselves, but it is our being proud of Christ - boasting in and of Him (*Gal. 3:26-29; 6:14; Php. 3:7-9*). As believers who know our sinfulness, we do not want this garment contaminated by man’s works and false doctrines. We do not even want it confused with any work within us, because we desire that all glory goes to Christ. So we are to love Christ and hate all that would deny, oppose, or confuse the issues of salvation by God’s grace in Him.

LESSON 7 - GOD WHO IS ABLE Jude 24-25

(24) - Jude closes his epistle by a doxology (praise to God) for salvation, from beginning to final glory, by grace through the Lord Jesus Christ. **“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling”** - Salvation is all of God’s power and grace in Christ. God has engaged every attribute of His nature to save His elect and bring them to final glory in and by Christ. Our perseverance in the faith is conditioned upon His power to keep us from falling. It is HIS preserving grace that keeps us from total apostasy. It is HIS faithfulness to His promises to us in Christ by which we are secured for eternal life. God is faithful to fulfill His promise to bring us to glory and present us holy and without blame in Christ with great joy. This is that joy of perfect fellowship with God in Christ, of freedom from the presence, power and influence of sin, which will be realized in final glory.

“To present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” - We who believe are already **“faultless”** (unblemished) as we stand in Christ legally and judicially. His righteousness has been imputed to us, and we are complete in Him. He is the Lord our Righteousness, and *“as He is, so are we in this world”* (1 John 4:17). But as we are in this present world, in this body of death, we are still sinners within ourselves. We are yet contaminated and influenced by the flesh, but we cannot fall unto damnation because God preserves us by His grace in Christ. His ultimate purpose is to **“present you faultless,”** totally free from the remaining contamination and influence of sin that still plagues us here on earth. In glory, not only will be perfect in Christ legally, but we will be perfectly conformed to His image in every way. We will be totally free from the presence and influence of sin.

(25) - **“To the only wise God our Savior”** - Literally, *“through Christ Jesus our Lord”* - God has purposed to glorify Himself in the salvation of His people by the Lord Jesus Christ. Herein, God is both a just God and a Savior. The doctrine of salvation reveals the wisdom of God and the glory of the Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) engaged to save His people completely and eternally by Jesus Christ. It reveals how God is just to justify the ungodly by the death of Christ on the cross.

“Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” - Christ has the preeminence because He, by His obedience and death to establish righteousness, has earned it. This righteousness magnifies the grace of God because it reveals and honors every attribute of God’s redemptive character in the full, free, eternal salvation sinners. God’s truth and faithfulness to fully punish each and every sin of all His elect is revealed. The fact that God’s forgiveness of sin is always based on full satisfaction to His justice is revealed. God’s holiness in receiving only those who are truly righteous in His fellowship and family is revealed. The true nature of His love and grace are revealed in providing what His holiness and truth demanded for our salvation.

As we conclude our study of this short epistle, consider the reasons that true believers, truly justified sinners who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ and born again by the Holy Spirit, cannot lose salvation.

(1) True believers are part of an everlasting covenant of grace all conditioned on Christ Who is the Surety of the covenant. This is how David could express confidently on his death-bed the assurance of salvation and glory - *“Although my house be not so with God; yet He hath made*

with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although He make it not to grow.” (2 Sam. 23:5) As the Lord Jesus Christ is the “Surety of a better testament” (covenant) (Heb. 7:22), “wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” (Heb. 7:25) True believers are not self-saved people. They are the creation of God in Christ, the fruit of what Christ accomplished on Calvary (Eph. 2:8-10).

(2) True believers are preserved by God’s sovereign grace and power in Christ. This is not only expressed in our lesson from **Jude 24-25**, but also in other passages of Holy Scripture - *“Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:” (Php. 1:6); “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Php. 2:12-13); “For I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” (2 Tim. 1:12)*

(3) True believers can never lose salvation because they can never be charged with sin (*Rom. 4:6-8; 8:31-39; 2 Cor. 5:21*). Though there is much sin in us and done by us, yet God cannot and will not charge us with sin or condemn us for it. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to destroy, purge, remove, and take away all the sins of His people; and He has done it (*John 1:29; Heb. 1:3; 9:26; 1 John 3:5*). All the sins of God’s elect were laid upon Christ. He bore them in His own body on the tree, endured and satisfied the wrath of God for them, and bore them away. The Son of God redeemed us from the curse of the law, made an end of our sins, and justified and sanctified us by His blood. God almighty has, through the effectual atonement of Christ, so thoroughly blotted out our sins that He does not hold them against us.

(4) True believers can never lose salvation because Christ stands as their Advocate, Mediator, and Intercessor (*Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1-2*). As long as Christ is on the throne, as long as He stands for His people, they can never be lost, forsaken by God, or brought under His wrath. His work as Advocate and Intercessor is based upon the merits of His righteousness worked out on the cross (*Heb. 10:19-22*).

(5) True believers can never totally apostatize (fall away) from the faith or totally leave Christ as those described in *1 John 2:18-19* because of the ever-abiding presence of the Holy Spirit and the permanent imprint of God’s Word upon their hearts (*Eph. 1:13-14; 1 John 2:20-27; 3:9*). Salvation is not an isolated even, but a life-time of grace, faith, and love to Christ. All who are truly saved have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and so have been given a new heart and a new spirit.