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Jude (Full Book)



Jude - Steve Gregg

Summary: This comprehensive book by Steve Gregg, delves into the topics discussed in the book of Jude and its parallels with 2 Peter. Gregg explores the skepticism of Jude, one of Jesus' brothers, and how his experiences shaped his perspective on faith and persecution. Drawing on biblical references and the concept of grace, Gregg emphasizes the importance of fighting for one's faith and remaining faithful amidst trials. He also explores the use of apocryphal literature and references to fallen angels in Jude's teachings. Overall, this in-depth analysis offers valuable insights into the themes and messages conveyed in the book of Jude.

Transcript

Now we're looking at the book of Jude and I'm in a slightly awkward situation because we just went through together in this class 2 Peter, which has a lot of parallel material to Jude. But there might be some who would listen to this lecture in the future who have not listened to the 2 Peter lectures and just want to listen to Jude. What that means is the repetition that I would avoid for this group that's present here, I cannot entirely avoid because I talked a lot about the false teachers in 2 Peter.

And Jude's going to say the same things about them. And so I'm going to have to at least make a few observations along the same lines that our present classroom has heard not very long ago, like earlier today. Just for the sake of those who just want to study Jude and pull it down off the off the internet and want to listen to the Jude lecture.

However, I will say I'm not going to give an introduction to Jude because I did give an introduction to both 2 Peter and Jude, which anyone who just listens to this recorded study could pull down and listen to the introduction. As you know, Jude is the brother of Jesus. He doesn't say so.

He calls himself a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James. But Jesus had four brothers named for us in the Gospels. James was the oldest, Jude, Simon, and Joseph were the four brothers.

And he had some sisters. We don't know how many or what their names were. So Jesus

came from a large family and his brothers, James and Jude, eventually wrote books of the Bible, though during Jesus lifetime, they didn't believe in him.

The Bible says in John chapter seven that his brothers did not believe in him. However, we are told in first Corinthians 15 that after Jesus rose from the dead, he appeared to James, his oldest brother, who thereafter did believe in him and may have had a role in convincing the other family members. Because when we come to the day of Pentecost, only 40 days after Jesus ascended into heaven, excuse me, 10 days after Jesus ascended heaven, 50 days after the resurrection, the mother of Jesus and her children, the brothers and sisters of Jesus were there in the upper room as well.

So they seem to have come to be believers after the resurrection. It is probable that Jude does not identify himself as a brother of Jesus, partly out of humility, partly maybe out of shame that he doesn't seem worthy to be connected like that to Jesus since he had not even been a believer. When the other disciples were following Jesus, Jude was a skeptic.

And he was a late comer to faith. And this may be why he doesn't identify himself as the brother of Jesus. Also, of course, I mean, let's face it, in the early church where Jesus is viewed as God, anyone who speaks of being his brother, even though everyone knew that Jude and James were the brothers of Jesus, that just might seem like a title that should be reserved for nobody, you know, nobody should call themselves the brother of Jesus, even if they are.

Because they would only be half brothers anyway. And the half that they were was they shared the same mother, but different father, because God was Jesus' father. Anyway, it's interesting to note that in Eusebius' history, the offspring of Jesus' brothers, I don't remember if it was the offspring of Jude or just the brothers of Jesus in general, the grandchildren, I think, of the brothers of Jesus after the brothers of Jesus were dead, were brought on trial before one of the emperors who was persecuting the Christians at the time.

And they were viewed as probably the descendants of the brothers of Jesus were viewed as probable inheritors of the rulership of the church by the emperor. The emperor assumed these guys were the ringleaders of the church because they were the descendants of Jesus' own brothers. But when they saw that their hands were all calloused and that they were farm workers, they let them go.

They figured like these guys aren't very influential, but they were impressed that people who had actually a hereditary connection to Jesus Christ himself didn't live privileged lives in the church. I mean, they were respected, but they were just laborers like anybody else. Leadership in the church, of course, as Jesus said, is servanthood.

And the way up in the kingdom of God is the opposite direction of the way up anywhere in a human institution. You go down to get up, you go down to serve in order to be great

because that's what Jesus did. He was the greatest of all, and he made himself lowest of all.

In fact, when you consider that he came down from heaven down to here, that's quite a descent. And then he went down further, it says in Philippians 2, even to submit to the death of the cross. So Christ is the ultimate servant and the ultimate Lord, the leader.

So James and Jude see themselves as servants of Jesus. They don't call themselves brothers of Jesus. Both James and Jude in their epistles identify themselves as a servant of Jesus Christ.

And Jude says, and a brother of James. To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ, mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. Now, like in Peter's epistle, he talks about these things being multiplied to you.

Mercy and peace and love are the qualities that he wishes on them. A break from the norm, usually it's grace and peace. Grace here is substituted with mercy, and then love is added on.

These are Christian qualities that he wishes for his readers to increase in. And he describes them as those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved. They're called, sanctified, and preserved.

God calls you to Jesus, and then he sanctifies you, sets you apart for himself, and then he preserves you in Christ. Preserves you as long as you have faith. Remember what Peter said in 1 Peter 1.5. He says that we're kept by the power of God through faith, ready to be revealed, unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

So we are being preserved, but it's by our continued reliance upon him. Those who abandon him deliberately and rebelliously and don't want to be his followers anymore, he can't preserve them because it's a mutual thing. It's a relationship.

When you've got a grown child who doesn't want to stay home, you can't make him stay home. And God can't make people stay loyal to him, but he can preserve those who wish to be with him. And so this keeping power of God also comes out in the end of the book, in verse 24, when he says, to him who is able to keep you from stumbling.

So in times of trial and persecution, Christians often wonder, will I be able to stay faithful under persecution, under trial, under pressure? Will I fall away? And Jude says, well, no, you're preserved in Jesus Christ, and God is able to keep you from falling. But he also says in verse 21, keep yourselves in the love of God. I was once debating a pastor up in Oregon.

We had a formal debate in his church. He challenged me. We're debating on the subject of eternal security.

In fact, the debate is on our website in part. It wasn't entirely recorded, but the part that's recorded is at the website. And in the debate, I remember he said, there's no place in the Bible that says to keep yourself.

God, it will keep you. And he was, of course, advocating an unconditional eternal security, that once you're saved, there's no possible way that you can fall away. And he was saying, the Bible doesn't require you to keep yourself.

I thought, well, he's just in the heat of the debate for getting some rather well-known scriptures, like this one, verse 21, keep yourselves in the love of God. Or the last verse in 1 John, it says, keep yourselves from idols. Christians have to keep themselves from certain things.

We're commanded to do that. But he is able to keep us from stumbling. Obviously, there's an implied reciprocity in the relationship.

We want to stay with him, and he helps us to do that. He enables us supernaturally not to fall away, even in persecution. We were talking the other night outside about some were wondering if under torture, whether they could hold up and not deny Christ.

I dare say you can, if you choose. That doesn't mean you're strong. God is strong.

We don't have to bring strength into the picture. We just have to bring faith, childlike faith. Just trust God.

We're kept by the power of God through faith, Peter said. And so Jude also talks about, we keep ourselves, but God keeps us. We just keep ourselves in God's care.

And that means we continue to trust him. And we continue to not abandon him, really. And as we make that commitment, he gives us all the strength to stand up to whatever may challenge our perseverance.

Now in verse 3, he says, Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you, exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness, or licentiousness, it says here. I think, doesn't the King James say lasciviousness? I'm used to that.

Both words are rather unusual words in modern English. Just means moral laxity. And they deny the only Lord God in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, he said, I actually was diligently planning to write you a letter on something else, not this. I was planning to simply write you a friendly letter concerning our common salvation. This would have been an upbeat kind of a letter.

We're all saved. We're all happy in Jesus. I wanted to write you a nice letter celebrating our common salvation and just encouraging you to keep at it.

But he said, something happened before I got the letter sent. I found out that there have been some false teachers creep in among you. And I felt like I'd better change the direction of the letter I'm writing from a general kind of happy fellowship letter to a strong warning and something to help you to avoid the danger of these teachers that have crept in.

He says, I found it necessary to exhort you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. Now, the faith is a term that is used for simply Christianity. The faith.

In the early days of the church, faith was simply a reference to believing in Christ and believing Christian doctrine. But in later times, the term the faith came to be used to speak of the body of belief of the Christian church. The theological norms that had come to be more or less established in the second generation of Christians or even before.

Paul talks about the faith in his later letters. Jude refers to the faith. You need to contend for the faith, meaning Orthodox, true Christian doctrine, which had been established and was now summarized as simply the faith.

And it had to be contended for because someone was fighting against it. That is in the church. Somebody was trying to undermine true Christian beliefs and true Christian practice.

And so he said, I'm going to have to urge you guys to fight. I didn't want to write a letter about fighting, but you're going to have to fight. There's a battle you're facing that I did not know about when I first planned to write to you.

When I heard about it, I realized this is the direction my letter is going to have to go. For certain men have crept in unnoticed. Now it says they were long ago marked out for this condemnation.

This is a kind of line that our Calvinist friends like to point to as sort of a predestination kind of line. These people were long ago predestined to be wicked men like this. However, he doesn't say they were predestined before the foundation of the world as if God predestined.

He doesn't say who marked them out. I believe that we will find that it was Peter who marked them out, identified them, that is, in his letter. I believe Jude is going to recall Peter's second epistle and especially the second chapter where Peter had warned that there will be false teachers among you.

Peter talks about this in the future tense. He describes those teachers in detail and the

description of these false teachers is given by Jude in the same detail that Peter used. It seems clear that Jude is going to be giving something of a sermon against false teachers using 2 Peter chapter 2 as his text.

As preachers normally use scripture for their text, he's taken the scripture written by Peter and Peter warned that there would be these teachers. Jude says they've arrived. They have crept in.

They are here. They were identified long ago apparently by Peter's letter. Peter certainly seemed to identify the same people he describes here.

It does not necessarily mean they were predestined before they were born to be false teachers, but they were identified or marked out previously. So it shouldn't be a surprise that they've arrived. We were warned about this some time ago.

They're ungodly men who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness. Now turning the grace of God into moral laxity, into moral misbehavior, is something that did not end in the first century. There are churches whose teachings about the grace of God practically do this.

And although these churches don't necessarily seek to encourage bad behavior or sin, their theology, the way they teach it, gives very little ground for forbidding. I think they kind of hope their church members will behave, but they don't have any theological basis for making them do so because their teaching about grace is that grace means you don't have to do anything. Grace means it's all of God.

Grace means that there's no works involved in the Christian life. Grace to them is the opposite of any kind of moral behavior requirements because grace means getting saved when you don't deserve it. In fact, the more you sin, the more you don't deserve it and the greater the grace.

Because Paul said in the end of Romans chapter 5, he said, when sin entered, grace abounded. And then Paul asked the question in Romans 6, well, shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound? What does he mean by grace abounded? When sin comes along, God's grace, God's forgiveness of that is much more striking. If God forgives people who are pretty well behaved anyway, well, that's nice for him to forgive their little sins.

But if someone's a real criminal and he forgives them equally, then his grace shines by the contrast much more. Just as a gem shines more brightly when you put it against a dark setting, a dark background. The gem of God's grace shines more against the contrast of really dark, sinful people whom God forgives.

Now, the Bible does teach that no matter how dark your past is, God forgives. And that's the amazingness of his grace. Grace means undeserved favor.

And let's face it, some people are quite obviously undeserved. Others were all undeserving, but some people just live their life in a scandalous, criminal, sinful way. And when God forgives them, they often are trophies of grace.

In fact, they usually get to on a speaking circuit in the church or write a book, a best-selling book. I came out of being a satanic high priest to being a Christian comedian. That was Mike Warnke, but he turned out to have a false testimony.

He wasn't a satanic high priest. He just sold a lot of books. A lot of times these guys don't.

It's interesting that the grace of God is so extolled that people think they have to lie about how bad they were so that their story will be praised. Yay, you were really wicked. You're a hero because you're a criminal.

When I was actually first in the ministry, of course, most of the people in the Jesus movement had been hippies and other kinds of people who had disregarded Christianity and had been promiscuous drug users and all kinds of things. I was the only guy I knew preaching in the Jesus movement as a young person who didn't have a drug background. I didn't have a hippie background.

I had a Baptist youth group leader background. I grew up very straight, very nerdy. That's actually why I grew my hair out so no one would know.

That sounds like a joke, but it's true. I thought if these people know I've never used drugs, they'll never listen to me because everybody who was getting saved in those days were hippies. I was a virgin, never used drugs, never been drunk, never done anything very bad.

I'd never done anything very good either. Frankly, I was just kind of bland until I came to be filled with the spirit. The thing is that I often was embarrassed by my testimony that I had not been a bad boy before I got saved.

Everyone else I knew had been bad. People used to give what we called their drug ammonies. You get a bunch of new Christians together.

They all talk about how many hits of acid they dropped before they were Christians, how many times they shot mainline heroin or something. They'd sit around and just kind of compare trophy war stories, I guess. I never had anything like that to say.

I didn't actually wish that I had done those things, but I kind of wished that it would never come up that I hadn't done them. That's why I changed my appearance from being a nerdy Baptist youth leader to being countercultural. Everyone assumed I took drugs.

I didn't have to say anything. I remember a few times when I got up to speak in front of a

crowd to give my story, my testimony. I'd say, I'd like to begin my story by telling you that before I was a Christian, I had been in the Hell's Angels.

We had robbed and raped and killed. I killed several policemen before I was a Christian. I was strung out on heroin and just about every kind of drug you could imagine.

Weekends, I was just bombed out of my head with every kind of drinking, every kind of booze I could get my hands on. I can't remember how many women I had even in a single weekend. I was just totally a wreck.

Then I came to Jesus. I'd like to start my story that way, but I can't because I didn't do any of those things. Then I tell them what my real story was.

The fact that I felt like I had to start my story like that, even with the deception, which I gave away before very long, but I told them it wasn't true. They thought, oh, this is a good testimony. This guy's worth listening to.

He's used a lot of drugs. He was a real criminal. You see, in that environment, people honored those who had sinned the most because it was such a trophy of grace.

I remember as a Baptist before the Jesus movement even started, just when I was in my young teens, some guys from Teen Challenge, they weren't hippies. They were just down and out kind of druggies that had gotten saved through Teen Challenge, which is a Christian rehab type ministry. They came to our church and spoke to our youth group.

They looked pretty straight, but when they told how much drugs they had used before they got saved, I thought, wow, someone can use that many drugs and become a Christian? This was before the Jesus movement. You wondered if you could become a Christian without taking drugs, almost, when you heard people's testimonies. I remember being very impressed.

These guys had been heroin addicts, and their lives had been totally ruined. They were saved right out of the gutter by coming to Christ. That was impressive to me as a sheltered Baptist kid.

I'd never known anyone who'd used drugs, to tell you the truth, when I was about 14. And so I know that stories about dark, dark, sinful past and the grace of God, forgiving and restoring, were impressive. And in the Jesus movement, many people either taught this way or gave the impression somehow that if you have a lot of sin, the grace of God is so much more wonderful and so much more visible and glorifies God so much.

And so I could hardly understand why then shouldn't we just go out and sin, that grace may abound. And I knew Paul said we shouldn't do that, and I didn't ever go and do that. I just thought, theologically, how do we argue against that? Well, the problem is that the grace of God was not being presented in many cases in a biblical way.

These false teachers that Jude talks about are changing the grace of God into moral license. They are interpreting grace to mean permission to sin, really, almost the desirability of sinning, so that grace looks good by contrast. But see, that's the smallest part of grace, I think, in the New Testament.

Grace is not just God's unmerited favor. Grace is God's own nature given to us so that we become more like him. And by the grace of God, Paul says, I am what I am.

By the grace of God, I do the things I do. By the grace of God, I've accomplished these things. And it's the grace of God working in me.

By the grace of God, I endure this thorn in my flesh. The grace is sufficient. God is able to make all grace abound to you so that you'll have all sufficiency in all things, Paul said.

Grace isn't just God's kindly attitude toward people who don't deserve it. Thankfully, it is that, but that's the smallest part. Once you have been forgiven, which is what we usually think of grace doing, you're forgiven, though you don't deserve to be.

Well, okay, now he gives you grace, and he gives more grace, and you are to live a grace-filled life, just like Jesus did. The grace of God is not simply a ticket or a permit to live badly and go to heaven when you're done. It is a call to live and become like God in your behavior, in your values, in your habits, in your speech.

Remember, Paul said, let no corrupt communication come out of your mouth, but only what is good to the use of edifying that it may minister grace to the hearers. He said that in Ephesians 4. In Colossians, he says, let your speech be with grace seasoned with salt. Grace is a character trait that comes out when you speak and when you act and interact.

And of course, it also means that when people offend you, you forgive them, just like God forgave you. Grace does that. That's graciousness.

It's being filled with grace. And so the teachers that divorce grace from this part about change, changing who you are, changing how you live, and they only talk about the grace of God as the part that even though you sin, God forgives you, that's grace. If that's all people learn about grace, and that's not all the Bible says about it, but in many cases, it is all that some preachers say, it does essentially turn the grace of God into license to sin.

And it becomes difficult to find any theological arguments against sinning. With that kind of understanding of grace. Now Jude said that that's false teachers who turn that around like that.

And frankly, I know of, there's one person I won't mention his name. He's a teacher in Texas who, and you probably don't know, he's not one of the famous teachers. There's a lot of ministers in Texas.

And you might think I'm, I can think of some people you might think I'm thinking of, but it's not. This is someone who's, this is somebody who is not very well known now, but was pretty well known in the seventies who he taught a doctrine he called super grace. He felt like he had a better revelation of grace than others.

And he taught super grace. He had kind of a cult following. He was a military guy, a retired military, or maybe not even retired, but he was, he claimed that he knew the Greek New Testament better than anybody else.

And he had discovered things about grace that other people don't know. And basically it seems like he taught that when you reach the place of super grace, it means you can do whatever you want to, and even sin. And I know that there was a group of his followers in Santa Cruz where I lived.

And there's another group of them in another town I visited. Once I ran into there, these guys who were the followers of this man, and every one of them was cussing, smoking, you know, fornicating. I mean, they were just about as worldly as anyone could be.

And yet they were proud of it. They were proud of being more aware of what grace was like than anybody else. But to them, grace was just licensed to sin.

Now that teacher, I would say, fits the description of the false teachers that Jude is warning about. And therefore, his warning to his original readers in the first century would be applicable to many teachers in modern times as well. And it says, in doing so, they're denying the only Lord God, this is the end of verse 4, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

They're denying God. Now, in all likelihood, they weren't saying there is no God. That's one way to deny God, like an atheist.

But they're probably denying God in another sense, the way that Paul speaks about in Titus chapter 1. Titus chapter 1, Paul's also talking about certain false teachers, different ones than the ones Jude's talking about, different setting, different time. But in Titus chapter 1, verse 16, when he's talking about these false teachers that Paul's warning about, he says, they profess to know God, but in works, that is in their behavior, they deny him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work. Now, these people, with their mouth, they profess to know God.

They claim to be Christians, but their works deny him. Now, Jesus said, if you deny me before men, I will deny you before my Father, which is in heaven. And what do you suppose is more important to him, that you deny him with your words or with your works? Well, which is better? Doesn't matter.

Denying with either one is denial. You may say that you're a follower of Jesus, but if your works prove that you're not, then you are claiming him falsely, and everyone knows you are. In fact, it's all the worst, because they know you're saying you're a Christian.

Then it just cements in their mind, Christians, they're all hypocrites. They talk a good talk, but they all live just like everybody else does, no better. They're not better than anyone else.

And so, you can deny Jesus and deny God without verbally doing so. This doesn't mean that these false teachers were saying, ah, guys, there's no God, let's, you know, stop being Christians. They were in the church, insinuating their influence in the church, and atheism isn't likely to take hold in the church that well, but a doctrine that turns the grace of God into license might very well take hold, but it's a denial of God.

It encourages people to be disobedient and to deny God in their works, and the lordship of Christ in their works. In verse 5, it says, but I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people, meaning Israel, out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe, and the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own habitation, he has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of that great day, as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them in similar fashion to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Now, these three examples, he says, you know these stories, I'll remind you that you already remember, you know this, you know these stories, they're familiar, but let me just remind you that Israel, when they came out of Egypt, were saved.

They were saved out of Egypt. They had been slaves, just like you were slaves of sin. They came through the Red Sea and were saved from that, just like you've been saved by coming through the waters of baptism.

Jude doesn't make all those parallels, but Paul does in another place in 1 Corinthians 10. He talks about how the Jews coming out of Egypt passed through, that they were baptized in the Red Sea, in the water, and they were baptized in the cloud, which would be like baptism of the Holy Spirit. Paul's talking in 1 Corinthians 10 about things that Israel went through when they came out of Egypt that resemble the Christian life, and Jude is on the same page here.

These people were saved, but it says, the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt afterward destroyed those who did not believe. Moses had a bunch of rebels on his hands, and only a small remnant of those who came out of Egypt really remained faithful to God. Only two of them actually survived long enough to go into the promised land 40 years later.

Even Moses didn't go in. But the point here is that there's about three million Jews came out of Egypt with Moses. Two of them were still alive 40 years later to go into the promised land.

The rest were wiped out because of their rebellion against God. Now he's saying, don't let these people cause you to do the same thing. You've been saved, but don't go the way that makes God want to have to destroy you.

And he says, the angels who did not keep to their proper domain, but left their own habitation. He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day. Now we encountered this same example in 2 Peter 2 and verse 4, where it says, the angels who sinned he has cast into Tartarus in chains to await the judgment of the great day.

Now when we were talking about 2 Peter, I mentioned that we're not sure exactly what he's referring to here. There is no story in the Old Testament about angels falling, though the New Testament mentions it two places, here and in 2 Peter. But 2 Peter and Jude are related to each other.

Jude is almost certainly using 2 Peter as his source for his sermon. And therefore, these two references to it really amount to one, Peter's reference to it. There are questions as to what he's referring to, but most scholars would agree that he's referring to something in the book of Enoch.

First Enoch talks about the angels coming down and marrying women in the days before the flood. Now we do know that the Bible, Genesis chapter 6, says the sons of God married the daughters of men. And the book of Enoch, written thousands of years later, actually claims that the sons of God were angels.

But the book of Enoch is not written by Enoch, and it's not written by an inspired writer at all. It's just a religious book written by a guy with some religious ideas. But because the Jews and Christians read the book of Enoch a lot, examples from it could be drawn.

Now in the course of going through Jude, I'm going to have to point out to you at least three times, if not more, that Jude calls upon the testimony of we call apocalyptic, apocryphal literature. It is apocalyptic, but apocryphal is the better word for it. Apocryphal means hidden.

The Roman Catholic Bible has some books in it that the Protestant Bible doesn't. They're called the apocrypha. They have like seven books in their Old Testament that aren't in the Protestant Old Testament, and we call them the apocryphal books.

But there are more apocryphal books that neither the Catholics nor the Protestants have in their Bible. Enoch is one of them. The Catholics don't have Enoch in their Bible, neither do the Protestants, but it's an apocryphal book that was a religious book written by the Jewish writers on religious themes but not inspired, but popular, popularly read for edification.

And Jude refers to Enoch twice as if authoritative. One of those places appears to be here

talking about the angels that sinned, and the other place is later in the epistle where he actually quotes Enoch in verse 14, where he says, now Enoch the seventh from Adam prophesied about these men, and he quotes him. That's actually from the book of 1 Enoch.

So Enoch is not a biblical book, not an inspired book, and yet Jude quotes from him once and alludes to him another time. Then there's another apocryphal book that's not part of the scriptures that he alludes to, because he later on in verse 9 says, yet Michael the archangel in contending with the devil when he disputed about the body of Moses dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said the Lord rebuke you. This contesting with Satan on the part of Michael the archangel over the body of Moses, it's not in the Bible.

It is in another book though. It's in a book called The Assumption of Moses, another Jewish apocryphal book that's not inspired. Now because Enoch and The Assumption of Moses are not inspired books, and yet Jude quotes from them as if they were authoritative, this use of the apocryphal books by Jude is one of the reasons that his book was kept out of the Bible for a long time.

Remember I told you that it wasn't until almost the year 400 that Jude was accepted as belonging to the New Testament scriptures, and one of the biggest drawbacks was his use of these apocryphal works. Now obviously he finally was admitted into the Bible, and so how did they get over this? How did they get over this problem that was such a problem for so long? I honestly don't know how they argued about this in 397 AD when they finally decided to put him in, because I don't have transcripts of their meetings, but I'll tell you why I would accept it. The same reason I accept 2 Peter, who also alludes to Enoch, and that is, and I said this when we were talking about 2 Peter, that it's a very common thing for preachers to quote not only the Bible but other religious literature if it's fitting for their sermons.

Many times preachers will quote from something that's not inspired, not even true, but it's so well known that the listeners even know it's not inspired, not true, but they are familiar with it as literature. I remember someone giving a sermon once about how difficult it is to get rid of the guilt of sin. He talked about how Lady Macbeth, after she conspired in the death of her husband, felt she always had his blood on her hands, and she was continually trying to wash her hands, but she could never get this the sense of guilt off her hands.

This was told as if everyone knows the story. Of course, it's from a Shakespearean, you know, play that isn't true, but you wouldn't have known it if you were someone who didn't know about the story of Macbeth. If you were a visitor from another culture entirely and listening to a sermon saying, oh, who is this Lady Macbeth who did this? You know, I mean, as if, I mean, the story's told as if it's true because the preacher knows,

the audience knows it isn't true.

He knows it's popular literature. I mentioned earlier that people often give sermon illustrations from Pilgrim's Progress or the Chronicles of Narnia or from lots of books that are popular religious fiction because they are so well known that the majority of the people in their audience are expected to know those stories and they have good things to illustrate the sermon. I mean, the story of Lady Macbeth not being able to wash the guilt off her hands is a really great sermon illustration of how hard it is to get rid of guilt, you know, on your conscience.

The story's not true, but it still is a great illustration. Why not? Why not use something like that? And so also the stories in the Book of Enoch and in the Assumption of Moses, which Jude uses, I think they were just in popular Christian fiction and everyone knew it was Christian fiction, but he refers to them because they're good examples, sermon illustrations for what he wants to do. And therefore it should not be thought that by quoting these apocryphal works that Jude is somehow endorsing them to be included in the canon of scripture.

And it doesn't mean he's mistaken about them. It just means he knew these stories, his listeners knew these stories, everybody knew these stories in those days and they're good stories to make his point. So he uses them.

It's not necessary to assume that he thought they were true or that any of his readers did either. So after he mentions the angels who did not keep their proper domain, he says in verse 7, as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them in similar manner to these, in similar manner to what? To the angels? That's what many people think he's saying. We'll see what impact that has.

Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them in similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Now, in similar manner to these seems to refer back to the fallen angels. And so some have made an issue of the fact that Jude says that the Sodom and Gomorrah sin of going after, sexually going after the wrong partners, basically going after strange flesh, is similar to what the angels did.

And therefore in comparing Sodom and Gomorrah's sexual perversion with the behavior of the angels sinned, many say, see Jude is telling us that the angels was that they had sexual sin, like Sodom and Gomorrah's sin was. It was them going after the wrong partners. They're going after, you know, sons of God going after daughters of men.

Now it is possible that Jude is saying that since he is probably referring to the book of Enoch, which does give that story in that manner, as if the angels went after human partners. Remember, the Bible itself doesn't say that ever happened. It does tell a story that's more vague, which Enoch interpreted that way.

What the Bible actually does say in Genesis 6 is the sons of God married the daughters of men. And if the sons of God means angels, then Enoch is right. But not everyone thinks that it's referring to angels.

Could be. But Enoch simply gives his interpretation and Peter and Jude quote Enoch. And if he is quoting Enoch, then it does speak of sexual misbehavior on part of the angels.

And therefore, the comparison with Sodom and Gomorrah may be just that exact. On the other hand, when he says in like manner, he may be speaking generically that just like the angels who sinned were punished. So also Sodom and Gomorrah who sinned got punished.

What is in like manner to them is not their particular sins, but the fact that they didn't get away with it. The fact that they sinned and then were judged. Now, it does say about Sodom and Gomorrah that they suffer the vengeance.

It says they are set forth as an example, verse 7, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Now, it says that what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah is an example to other sinners to beware, not to go the same way they did. What is it that was seen in this judgment? Well, they suffer the vengeance of eternal fire.

Now, eternal fire sounds like hell. The problem is though, if these people are in hell, who can see them? How can it be an example? How could any sinner look on and say, oh, those people are in hell? I mean, you'd have to take that by faith. And people who take such things by faith are not usually the ones who are trying to reach, you know, to stop their unbelieving ways.

It seems that in saying they are an example, it means that what happened to them visibly serves as an example to other sinners who might think they could get away with that kind of thing. God showed everybody that that can't happen. He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, subjecting them to eternal fire.

But that would be a reference then to the visible fire that came from heaven, the fire and brimstone that burned up the city, and which isn't there anymore. So why would it be called eternal fire? This is something that has puzzled a lot of people, but suffice it to say, he has to be talking about the visible fire that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Since for one thing, they aren't yet in hell.

At least they're not yet in the lake of fire, the eternal fire, because that hasn't happened yet. It's after the resurrection that the wicked will be thrown into the lake of fire. The people of Sodom and Gomorrah might be in Hades, but nowhere in the Bible is Hades said to be eternal.

Hades is temporary. Hades is going to be thrown into the lake of fire according to Revelation chapter 20, in verse 14, I think it is, says, death and Hades are thrown into

the lake of fire. So Hades isn't permanent.

Hades isn't eternal fire, and nobody's in the lake of fire yet because Jesus hasn't come back yet and had the judgment, and after that people will go there. So in what sense did Sodom and Gomorrah suffer the vengeance of eternal fire? Jude must be referring to the fire and brimstone that came out of heaven as itself eternal fire. It doesn't mean that it's still burning, but it comes from God, and God is eternal.

In Hebrews 12, it says, our God is a consuming fire, and he's eternal too. His wrath is like a fire, and he's eternal. So it's from an eternal source.

What flashed forth against Sodom and Gomorrah burning them up was a little spark of that eternal fire of God's wrath, which is not yet manifest in general, but that was just like a little manifestation of it coming down and destroying them. In other words, eternal in this case would mean something like from God, and the word *Ionios* is the word in the Greek that is used here, and there are many Greek scholars who say that *Ionios* is a Greek word that really only pertains to God, and anything that is said to be *Ionios* must mean it's from God. It doesn't really speak of it being everlasting necessarily.

It's just of divine origin. Now, this is only one of several meanings of *Ionios*, and we can't be sure that it always means this in scripture, but it seems to mean that here. This is fire from God.

It's eternal fire. It's *Ionios* fire. It's divinely origin fire, but it doesn't mean necessarily that it burns forever, although we think of the word eternal that way.

That's not what the Greek word *Ionios* necessarily means. Eternal, therefore, is not necessarily a great translation. It is a very common translation.

It's very common in our English Bible to translate *Ionios* as eternal or everlasting. Unfortunately, scholars tell us that's really only one possible meaning of the word some of the time, but most of the time it means something else, and so it's a little confusing reading that this is eternal fire that consumes Sodom and Gomorrah, but if we understand *Ionios* here, eternal means of divine origin. It was a fire from God, and that's all that's being said about it here.

Likewise, that is similar to those who are judged, the angels who sinned and the Israelites who sinned and the people who sinned in Sodom and Gomorrah. Likewise, also these dreamers, verse 8, defile the flesh, reject authority, speak evil of dignitaries. This is almost verbatim from 2 Peter 2. Yet Michael, the archangel, in contending with the devil when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not to bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, the Lord rebuke you.

Now again, I said this story about this contest between Michael and Satan comes from a book called *The Assumption of Moses*, which is not an inspired book, it's not part of the

Bible. The story is not found in the Bible. It may have never happened.

It could very well be mythical, but nonetheless a good illustration of what he's talking about from religious literature. He may not be affirming that this is true any more than a preacher's affirming that Lady Macbeth is real when he gives that illustration I gave earlier. It's just a great example of the point he's making.

In the religious literature, where there's a story about Michael in a contest even with Satan himself, Michael doesn't even diss Satan. He treats him with dignity, not that Satan is good, but Satan has rank. He acknowledges that Satan has a rank similar to his it would appear.

Therefore, rather than speaking down to Satan, which Michael apparently cannot do, he says, the Lord rebuke you. In other words, instead of talking like he's better than the devil, although he is morally better certainly, but as if he outranks the devil, he doesn't act that way. He just talks like God outranks both of us, the Lord rebuke you.

This would be sort of like saying that if you feel like you need to criticize someone that is at the same level you are. There's no reason to talk down to them as if you're at a higher place than they are. I mean, even Michael didn't do that with Satan.

Michael and Satan apparently would seem to be fairly equally matched because in the book of Revelation, Michael and his angels are at war against the devil and his angels. Although Michael wins in Revelation 12, verses 7 through 9, it seems like it's a protracted battle. It seems like it takes a while to win.

It's not like it's a slam dunk. Michael is probably about the same rank as Satan in the overall scheme of things, just on opposite sides. Sometimes we think of the devil as the opposite of God, but there is no opposite of God.

I guess everything is the opposite of God because God's the opposite of everything. He's eternal, nothing else is. He's universally, you know, everywhere, nothing else is.

God is not like anything. There is no evil force that is opposite and equal to God. Satan's contrast would not be with God, but with Michael more.

Michael would be more at the level. Michael's just an archangel. Actually, Michael's the only being in the Bible that is called an archangel, and this is where he is called that.

Even Michael, the archangel. Now, the point he's making here, we're curious to know, well, what is that story actually? What in the world were they contesting over the body of Moses about? We don't know because the book, the Assumption of Moses, from which this comes, is lost. No one has it.

It was still around in the fourth century when Eusebius wrote, and he's the one who tells

us this story, and Jude came from that book because he had a copy, but he doesn't tell us the story, and we don't have the book anymore. So, we just have to be curious if we happen to be and never know the answer to that unless someone ever finds an ancient copy of the Assumption of Moses. So far, no one has found one yet.

So, we don't know what the story is really about. The point that Jude is making is that if even Michael, dealing with someone as unscrupulous and scoundrel-like as Satan, still treated him with the deference that his rank deserved and just invoked God, who is above them both, the Lord rebuke you, then it certainly seems out of place for these people who are said to be speaking evil of dignitaries to be acting, you know, to be not recognizing the rank of these people that they're abusing. Now, the people they're speaking evilly of might be the apostles or might be other legitimate church leaders, but these false teachers are not above them in rank, and yet they speak, you know, reviling words toward them and so forth, which is just not the way decent folks talk.

Even angels, when dealing with the devil, don't do that. But, verse 10, but these speak evil of whatever they do not know. Peter said they speak evil of what they don't understand, but it's obviously a similar thought here.

And whatever they know naturally is brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves. Woe to them, for they have gone the way of Cain and have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit and have perished in the rebellion of Korah. Now, you remember that Peter, in 2nd Peter, talked about Balaam and that his sin was that he wanted to make money off of his religious ministry, and that's what these people are like, but the way of Cain and the way of Korah are also mentioned.

Cain, he wanted to innovate. God wanted people to bring animals for sacrifice. Cain thought, well, I'll just bring some plants.

How's that sound? Why not? I can do it my way. God may say he wants it such and such, but I want it this way, this is the way I'm going to do it. These are people who reject God's method of worship, God's ordained manner of the Christian life, and just kind of innovate their own.

Just make it up as they go along. Ignore God's instructions and do it their way. That's what Cain did.

Balaam loved the wages of unrighteousness, 2nd Peter 2 says, and so he was like a mercenary, a religious mercenary. That's not okay. If you're serving God, you need to serve God because he's God, not because you're getting paid for it.

And he says they perished in the rebellion of Korah. Korah was, of course, the character in the book of Numbers who rebelled against Moses and Aaron and said, hey, you guys aren't any better than me. I should be on your rank too.

I should be the leader here, and the earth opened up and swallowed him. So these people are like that, rebellious against the proper authority and selling their ministry and innovating the Christian life like Cain, making up his own forms contrary to what God has said. These are spots in your love feasts.

Peter said that too. The body of Christ, the church is the body of Christ. These are blemishes on the body.

They don't belong there. The love feasts were the worship times. In the early church, they ate a meal during their worship.

They didn't have theater seating like we have in our churches. It wasn't a bunch of people looking at the backs of other people's heads and staring at someone on stage being entertained. It was more of a community environment.

We don't know exactly how they conducted their gatherings, but we know that the love feast was a major part of it. That's where they took communion. When they took communion, it was over a meal.

It was part of a whole meal. That's why Paul said to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 11 that some of them were being inconsiderate at the love feast, and some were going away drunk, and some were going away hungry. Some were getting too much, and some were getting too little, because you could do that at church.

I mean, you shouldn't. It was forbidden, but I mean, it was possible because it was a meal. It was not like what we think of as a sit-down, theater-style church.

At the love feast, these guys are like blemishes in the body. While they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves, they're clouds without water, carried about by the winds, late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots, raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame, wandering stars for whom reserve the blackness of darkness forever. Now, these images, some of them are like those that you find in 2 Peter 2, and some are Jude's own.

He's adding to the list of the ones that Peter used. The idea here is that they promise much and deliver little. They're like trees that are supposed to have fruit, but they don't have any fruit.

They're like clouds. They're supposed to have water, but they don't have any water. People look to them for something, but they can't deliver it because they're not spiritual.

They present themselves as spiritual leaders in the church, but they're not spiritual. They've got nothing to offer in a spiritual way. He says, now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, verse 14, prophesied about these men also saying, behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly

among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which the ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

That word ungodly appears quite a few times. Jewish tradition holds that Enoch invented writing. Now, Enoch lived a lot earlier than modern scholars thought writing was invented.

In fact, at one time, scholars said Moses couldn't have written the first five books of Moses because writing wasn't invented yet in the 15th century BC when Moses lived. But they know better now. They now have found whole libraries written 2,000 years before Christ, 500 years before Moses' time.

In Abraham's time, the laws of Hammurabi were written, and they have whole libraries from Ur of the Chaldees and so forth that date 2,000 years before Christ. So they know that there was writing much earlier than they fairly recently thought. But the Jews have a tradition that writing was invented much earlier even than Abraham's day by Enoch.

I don't know why they think that, but maybe because they consider the book of Enoch, you know, is a sample of some of his writing. However, most knew that he didn't write it. Now, Jude said that he didn't say Enoch wrote this.

He said Enoch prophesied about these. It so happens that the prophecy that Jude quotes is found in the book of Enoch. I've got a copy of it.

You can buy that anywhere in a bookstore, the book of Enoch. This prophecy is actually found in the book of Enoch. So he appears to be quoting the apocryphal book of Enoch, and he sounds like he's saying Enoch wrote it, or at least Enoch prophesied these things.

And he actually said Enoch the seventh from Adam. Enoch was the seventh generation from Adam. So it sounds like Jude is saying this historical Enoch, the seventh from Adam, actually said these words.

On the other hand, as I said earlier, he may not be saying this is historical. The book of Enoch opens with the character writing it, calling himself Enoch the seventh from Adam. In other words, the whole title, Enoch the seventh from Adam, comes from the book.

Jude might not be affirming that these words were spoken by the real Enoch, who is really the seventh from Adam, but the man who wrote a book calling himself Enoch the seventh from Adam, the guy who wrote that book, he prophesied this. Now, there is an alternative that some Christians have taken. Some believe that the historical Enoch really did prophesy these words, but he didn't write the book of Enoch.

But these words were actual prophecy that Enoch gave that was preserved, perhaps orally, as many prophecies and things were preserved orally, and that later whoever wrote the book of Enoch simply incorporated a well-known prophecy that had been orally

preserved from the real Enoch and wrote a book around it that wasn't authentic. This is one way of having your cake and eating it, too. It's one way of saying Enoch was not, I mean, Jude was not saying the book of Enoch is really written by him, but that prophecy is really from him.

The prophecy was added to the book by someone who was aware of a well-known and well-preserved prophecy that Enoch made. This is all speculation. I have no difficulty with the idea that Jude is simply quoting Enoch the seventh from Adam, wink, wink.

You know Enoch the seventh from Adam, the guy who wrote that book, who said he was Enoch the seventh from Adam, he said this. And we know it is found in that book, and it's a book about judgment. Now, if Enoch had really given the prophecy, the judgment he predicted was probably the flood.

You know, Enoch had a son named Methuselah. Methuselah's name, many scholars say, means when he is dead it will come. And Methuselah died the year of the flood.

So Enoch the prophet, when his child Methuselah was born, gave him a name that means when he dies it'll come. And then Methuselah lived 969 years, and he died, and the flood came that year. If you read Genesis 5 and do the math, you'll find that the flood came the year Methuselah died.

Now that means Enoch really was a prophet. He really did, in fact, predict the flood. He did predict a worldwide judgment.

He even predicted that his son would die the year that it was coming. Now, therefore, even if Enoch didn't write this prophecy, it's a prophecy such as he might have made because he did, in fact, predict a judgment. The way it's worded here is the Lord comes with his 10,000 of his saints to execute judgment on all and convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

Seems to have had a limited vocabulary that early in history. Had to use the word ungodly a great deal. We would have other synonyms probably thrown in there just not to be so repetitious.

In any case, these people read the book of Enoch. Whether they thought Enoch had written it or not, it was an influential religious classic. It's a little bit like if somebody quotes from Thomas Akempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, or A.W. Tozer.

We know that they're not scripture, but they're inspiring Christian literature that, frankly, when you hear them say, well, that does sound right, not necessarily that it's inspired, but I can't deny what he's saying is right. And you would take instruction from it even if it's not scripture. Likewise, what Enoch is quoted as saying here is true.

Enoch may not have really prophesied it, the real Enoch, but it is a true prediction. God is going to do this. There is going to be a judgment of the world.

Now, let's finish this up as quick as we can here. Verse 16, these are murmurers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts, and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

How? They told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons who cause divisions, and they don't have the Holy Spirit. They're not Christians, really.

Now, when he says, remember how the apostles told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their lusts, it seems almost certain he's referring to Peter in 2 Peter chapter 2, or excuse me, chapter 3 and verse 3. 2 Peter 3.3, Peter says, knowing this first that scoffers will come in the last days walking according to their own lusts. It's almost the prediction. And Jude says, the apostles told us this was going to happen.

He's referring, no doubt, to Peter. He says apostles, plural. Maybe other apostles said it too, but we know Peter did.

Maybe Peter's the only one who put it in writing. It may have been something that was a common warning that the apostles gave. Now, it says in verse 20, but you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Now, building yourselves up on your most holy faith. The word build up is the same meaning as to edify. The word edify comes from the word edifice or building.

And as the verb, it means to build up, like you build a structure, like a contractor builds a building. It says you need to build yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit. Now, I don't know to what degree Jude is thinking the same way as Paul when he uses this kind of language, but it's rather, it'd be negligent not to point out a verbal parallel.

When you look at 1 Corinthians chapter 14, in 1 Corinthians 14, Paul is talking about the gifts of the Spirit and particularly speaking in tongues and prophecy as gifts. He's sort of comparing the relative value of these two gifts. And he says in verse 4, 1 Corinthians 14, 4, he who speaks in a tongue, meaning in who speaks the gift of tongues, edifies himself, that is builds himself up.

But he who prophesies edifies the church. Now, lots of people said, you see, speaking in tongues is bad and prophecy is good because prophecy edifies the church. Paul kind of

puts down those who speak in tongues.

They're just edifying themselves. And sometimes people say, therefore, Paul says it's not good to speak in tongues because you're edifying yourself. And I think a lot of people don't know what the word edify means.

A lot of people think edify means glorify. I've heard people say, we just want to edify you, God. Well, no, that's not the right use of the word.

Maybe glorify God, but not edify. Edify is to build someone up, to make them, in the case of a human, stronger, spiritually stronger. And he says, he that prays in an unknown tongue or speaks in an unknown tongue edifies himself, he builds himself up.

Now, Jude said, build yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit. If you'll look also in 1 Corinthians 14, verse 14, 1 Corinthians 14, 14 and following, Paul says, for if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it? What is the result? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding.

In other words, if I pray in tongues, I'm praying with the spirit. I'll do that, but I'll also pray in my known language so I can understand what I'm talking about. In any case, what's interesting is that Paul speaks of praying in tongues as if that's praying in the spirit.

And he says, if you pray in tongues, you build yourselves up. Jude says, build yourselves up, praying in the spirit. Now, it's possible that Jude does not mean pray in tongues when he says pray in the spirit.

Jude might not be using the term the way Paul uses it, but it does seem that those who do speak in tongues and do edify themselves, build themselves up, they can't be said to be going in violation of what Jude said. Jude seems to encourage self-edification, build yourself up. And he says this can be done through praying in the spirit.

Paul said this is done by praying in tongues. So there may be a deliberate parallel here to what Paul is saying about tongues in 1 Corinthians 14. But then he says in verse 21 here, Jude 21, keep yourselves in the love of God.

How do you do that? I mean, does that mean keep yourselves in such a condition that God will love you? That can't be because God loves unconditionally. I think what he means is the church is supposed to be living in an environment of love. The love of God is supposed to basically permeate the life of the Christian community.

And you need to keep cultivating that environment. Keep the church operating in the environment of God's love. That is that God's love is manifested.

God's love is the whole spirit of the Christian life and the Christian community. I think

that's what he means. Rather than keep yourself somewhere where God will love you, because God will love you no matter where you are, it might do you no good.

God loves sinners who are going to hell too. So I mean, it doesn't necessarily mean that God loving you means it's going to go well for you, but he does love you. And I don't think you say keep yourselves in the love of God, meaning God loves those who are within this small range of behavior.

Keep yourself in that range of behavior. I think he's saying maintain the love of God among yourself as the spirit of your community, as the environment that you're living in, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And on some, now this is a very difficult two verses, and by the way, different translations do very different things with these two verses, because the Greek words in this text are very difficult.

The sentences are not quite complete in the Greek. Some of the words are ambiguous, and sometimes the manuscripts don't agree completely. These two verses we're about to read are rendered very differently in different translations.

But it says here in verse 22 and 23, and on some have compassion making a distinction, but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh. Now, if you look in commentaries, you'll get a lot of different opinions about what these verses are saying. I'm going to go ahead and expound them as they stand.

If it turns out they mean something else, we may never know. But the way it stands, it sounds like he's saying this. When you're reaching out to people for Christ, trying to win people to Christ, you need to make a distinction between different approaches for different situations.

He says you need to make a distinction there in verse 22. And on some people, you reach out compassionately. In others, you just kind of show mercy to them.

You just befriend them. You sidle up next to them. They're lonely.

You comfort them. You put an arm around them and become their friend. This is one way that you can sort of ease somebody into the faith.

But there's another type of person that you would save with fear, if at all. Now, to save with fear doesn't mean you use fear tactics on them. It doesn't mean you scare them into salvation.

It means that you have fear as you reach out to save them. You do so with fear in your heart, knowing that this is a dangerous situation. Now, some people you don't have to fear.

Some people you can just be friends with and bring them right into the kingdom

eventually. Just show compassion on them. But you have to make a distinction.

Some people you can't get that friendly with because they're dangerous. Not dangerous in the sense they'll kill you. They're dangerous in the sense they'll corrupt you.

There's something about the environment they're in that you have to snatch them out of there as if you're snatching something from a fire, trying to make sure your fingers don't get burned. Like if you, you know, when you're standing by a fire throwing something, you realize something you threw in was something valuable. It was a letter you didn't want to lose.

You reach in to get it out before it burns. You kind of have to do that delicately and carefully because you don't want to get burned when you're snatching something from the fire. Some people, winning them for Christ is like pulling them out of fire because they're almost, I mean, they're living so, I don't know, I don't know what their condition is.

I guess you have to make the distinction yourself. But some people to go where they are to reach them is morally or spiritually dangerous for you to go there. And you need to, in such a case, don't just count on being their friend and, you know, hanging out with them and such.

But you're going to have to kind of snatch them from their environment without getting yourself burned. He says hating even the garment that's stained by the flesh. This is comes from the old Jewish idea that at certain times of the month a woman was unclean because of her period.

Or other conditions could make someone unclean. Leprosy or some other kind of condition, even even attending a funeral could make you unclean. But if you're unclean, the clothes you wore were considered unclean.

It's a ceremonial thing. You had to wash them, even though they might not have really gotten dirty. It's more of a ritual.

It's not really about sanitation. But if you, if someone who was not unclean touched your clothes when you were unclean, then you would, the clean person would become unclean by contact. Contact with a garment that was unclean would ceremonially defile the person who touched it.

Again, it had nothing to do with hygiene, had nothing to do with cleanliness. It had entirely to do with symbolic rituals and so forth. But the point here is from the idea that if someone had an unclean garment, you would not even wish to touch it if it's going to defile you.

And he says that when you reach out to some people, you need to be careful that you

don't become defiled by contact. That you are, you're in their world trying to reach them, but you're trying to snatch them out. And you're going to try to get in and get out without touching those things that will make you compromise or that'll cause you to be defiled.

It's strange imagery, and I said verses 22 and 23, even in the Greek, the scholars have rendered them very different ways because the sentences are not really quite normal as they have come down to us. Now Jude probably wrote very normal sentences, but of course the manuscripts become corrupted through time in some ways and a few words drop out or get substituted. And this is one of those places that scholars really aren't quite sure what Jude was saying.

But the overall impression I get is he's saying in reaching people, you need to not just have a one size fits all approach. You need to use some discretion here. Make a distinction between different approaches for different people.

Some people just have compassion on them. Other people, beware. Contact with them may be spiritually dangerous and you want to reach them, but you're going to have to be a little bit gingerly about it and conduct yourself in a way that you can possibly reach them and get them to safety without getting yourself burned or defiled.

Verse 24, now, and this is a kind of a closing benediction such as you might have at the end of a sermon or at the end of a church service. Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. To God our Savior who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power both now and forever.

Amen. A lot of times church services end with the pastor saying something like this over the congregation. It's a little bit like the Aaronic benediction.

Its contents are different, but it's the same concept as when God said through Moses that Aaron should bless the people on a regular basis saying, the Lord bless thee and keep thee and the Lord cause his face to shine on thee and give thee peace. The Lord be very gracious unto thee. It's just kind of the way that you kind of formally close a religious meeting or in this case a sermon.

I believe Jude wrote a sermon based on second Peter preaching to these people to beware of the false teachers and to avoid compromise with them. Now verse 24 in this benediction, however, has content that reveals of course the idea that the early church was quite confident that God could keep you from stumbling and he could make sure that you are presented faultless before him on the day of Christ with exceeding joy. This is the Christian expectation, but of course he's made it very clear this presupposes that you don't do the kinds of things that prevent God from keeping you from stumbling.

If you go out and reach for these people who are in the fire and get yourself burned because you're being careless, if you don't keep yourself in the love of God, if you don't observe what you're told to do here, well there's some consequences for that. But if you are basically fulfilling the basic requirements of trusting God and seeking to follow Jesus, then God will give you his ability. He'll preserve you so that you will not stumble and he'll present you faultless before his presence, the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

And so this is a very strange book. It's strange in that it quotes a number of books that aren't authoritative, at least Christians don't recognize as authoritative. It's strange in that it's got some passages that it's hard to know how they're supposed to be rendered.

It's strange even in that we don't know very much about the author except that he's one of the brothers of Jesus, but this is about all we know about him. But it is in the Bible and I think it probably belongs there, not that I'm the one to make that decision, but if I were in the council I probably would have included it too. My vote would have been for it.

In any case, it doesn't tell us very much that isn't already in 2 Peter, but it may represent to us a good example of an expository sermon based on a chapter from the apostolic writings, such as a lesser church leader like Jude might give.