

Jude John Karmelich

1. This lesson covers the one chapter book of Jude. It's one of the shortest books in the bible. If you didn't know, it's right before the book of Revelation. It's located between the apostle John's three letters and again Revelation, which John also wrote. What I pondered is why is Jude in the bible and why is it placed between John's writings? While the order of bible books is debated, having it right before Revelation is a good spot for it. That's because this short book focuses on what we, as Christians should be concerned about waiting for Jesus' return. To put it another way, Revelation deals with Jesus' return. To have a book with an important warning to the church, right before all that occurs is a perfect location for a small book like this. If you're concerned what it is we should be concerned about, hopefully I'll answer that question in my introduction. The rest of the study is details to explain why this is such an important issue, and what we should do about this issue.
2. Several of the commentators I studied liked this title: It is based on the fact that the book of Acts is often referred to by a longer title, "The Acts of the Apostles". Using that fact, many pastors joke that Jude can be referred to as "The Acts of the Apostates". The more I studied this little book, the more I began to realize that's the perfect title for this lesson on Jude. The word "apostates" is just a fancy way to describe people who hang out with Christians but are not true believers. This book tells of the ultimate fate of Apostates. Jude gives apostate examples including a Jewish example, a non-Jewish example and even angelic beings that are apostates. The point is that apostates will exist among believers with the ultimate goal of wanting to make believers into non-witnesses for Jesus. That's why both demonic creatures and people simply with bad intent will infiltrate among believers. The point for you and me is to understand why they're here, how to recognize them as well as what to do about them. It's also a great little guide on correcting any false views we might be holding as believers.
 - a) As most of you know, I hold the view of "Once saved, always saved". If it was possible for me to mess up my salvation, I'm sure I'd do it by now! The issue as always isn't about our salvation as much as it is being a good witness for Jesus. The reason "apostates" infiltrate the church is whether they realize it or not is to try to make us ineffective witnesses for the God we serve. Studying little books like Jude help us to recognize them within gatherings of believers. Jude helps us to realize any errors we might be making so we can reach out to them as we go through our lives. I'm reminded of a classic Christian line, "When we as Christians get older, we may not sin as much, but our guilt over sin grows because we're more aware that our sins do displease the God we serve!" We may not be guilty of being an apostate, but as we grow in faith we realize more ways we've been displeasing to God.
 - b) OK by now, you're thinking, how do I recognize an apostate and how do I know I'm not a part of that list? This lesson will make that obvious and when I discuss the text itself as I normally do in a second, you can put your mind at ease. Let's start with the basics: To be a Christian means that one believes Jesus is God, believe Jesus died for every sin you have ever committed or ever will commit and equally as important, that Jesus is Lord, one who is in charge of our lives. If one believes that one can be assured one is not an apostate. We may not know who the apostates are among us, as we can only judge the behavior we see. It is not our job to judge eternally, but it is our job to judge the behavior of those among us as we as Christians work in unity to make a difference for Him.
 - c) If all of that confuses you, hang tight. Let me start going over this chapter, and it'll explain a lot better why this is a significant issue and why we should care about it.
3. To describe this chapter, let's start with the author. He is a half-brother of Jesus. The Gospels tell us that Jesus half brothers didn't believe in Him until after the resurrection. Mark 6:3 tells us that Jesus had four half brothers after He entered the world. We know at least two of them did accept Jesus as God, as His half brother James, became the Jerusalem church leader as mentioned a few times in the book of Acts.

a) As to Jude, the first mention we get of him outside the fact he was a half brother of Jesus is here in his letter. His name is the same as "The Judas" who betrayed Jesus. We know it's not that Judas as he killed himself in the first chapter of the book of Acts. History implies that Jude was a common name at that time based on the leader of the Maccabean revolt, a big historical event where the Jewish people for a short time overthrew the Greek leaders. It is what the celebration of Hanukkah is all about. Anyway, I'm getting off topic, but all I wanted to say is the name Jude was common in that time era. As to this Jude we still have writings of early church leaders going back to the Second Century AD who acknowledge this letter as being "bible worthy" and quoted as such. They also swear that this Jude is the one who wrote it. In this letter Jude doesn't get haughty to claim, "Hey it's me, the brother of Jesus"! Instead, he refers to himself as a slave of Jesus, which should be the desire of all Christians. He does call himself a brother of James, as he was well known as the leader of the Christian church in Jerusalem by the book of Acts.

i) Now that I've beaten to the death the "who" issue. Let's focus on when. It appears that Jude makes reference to Peter's 2nd epistle. The short version is Peter warned of apostates coming to "mingle" with Christians. Jude's letter effectively announces it's started! History records that Peter died around 66AD. Therefore most scholars date this book about 65 AD. There's no mention of the Temple destruction, which occurred in 70AD. That event would have been mentioned if this book is written after that. Bottom line, Jude was written about 65AD give or take a year.

ii) That leads to the where. Most likely from Jerusalem, but we can't be certain of that issue. Since James lived in Jerusalem, it figures that his brothers lived there or still in Israel somewhere. Jude makes references to several apocrypha books that were popular at that time. These are books that are not part of any early biblical cannon but were recognized as popular in that time. Just because a book is "fake" does not mean it can't contain some elements of truth. For example, one of the books that is quoted is about Moses. No, Moses didn't write it. My only point is it does contain some truths that Jude quotes in this book. My point is Jude is "Jewish" here which is an indication that he wrote to an audience familiar with those writings. There is no specific audience the letter is addressed to other than "fellow Christians". It's an indication that Jude meant this as a letter to be circulated!

4. OK, I've beaten the who, why, when and how to death. We know it is here to discuss the danger of having false believers amongst believers. The issue isn't about nonbelievers in the world. It's a warning about having false believers among Christian fellowships and the danger of it. With that said, let me run down the rest of this letter quickly.

a) After Jude explains who he is and the fact he originally wanted to write about salvation, it became obvious that God wanted him to write about false believers amongst them. A way to recognize them is they deny Jesus as Lord of our lives and use their freedom in Christ as an excuse to do whatever they feel like doing!

b) Then Jude uses three examples of those who were "apostates". What is interesting is Jude uses a Jewish example, an angelic example and a non-Jewish example. I think it's his way of saying those who turn from God can come from anywhere, including fallen angels as well as people who simply don't want to live as God desires they live.

i) The Jewish example is about all the Israelites who left Egypt with the Exodus. The "apostate" was about the fact most of them refused to trust God's plan to conquer the Promised Land, a metaphor for trusting God with all aspects of our life.

ii) The Angelic example names a group of angels that are "chained up" for judgment to come in some future day. I'll argue it refers to a story from Genesis Chapter 6. It is a debated topic. It is something I will explain in more detail in this the lesson.

iii) The "Gentile" Example is the Sodom and Gomorrah story about individuals who're an example to us of God's judgment when we refuse to live as He desires.

- iv) Yes I'll give far more details about these stories in this lesson. The point to realize is there are always people and spiritual forces that don't want to live as He desires. These three examples show the kind of people and demonic beings that do desire to mix among us in order to draw us away from His desire for our lives.
 - c) If all of this isn't strange enough, we also get a discussion about the fact a top "good" angel told Satan "God rebuke you" as opposed to rebuking Satan on his own. What's underlying that point is we're not to mess with powers and authorities (even demonic ones) that are greater than ourselves based on our own ability to fight them! The point's that who don't trusting in God "try to do it themselves".
 - d) Jude then says these people are the "blemishes at our love feasts". It's his way of telling us that those who aren't interested in living as God desires likes to hang out among believers in order to draw attention to themselves and get others to turn away from God.
 - e) In summary this little book is meant both as a warning to what we Christians have to deal with as well as a reminder that we're to reach out to such people despite their refusal of a trust in God to guide every aspect of their lives.
 - f) The letter ends with a "doxology". That's a fancy way of saying, despite all of this, God is going to watch out for us and bless our lives in spite of these dangers. That's how it ends.
5. Still confused? Great. Hopefully that'll encourage you to read the rest of this lesson! So lets start on the verse-by-verse commentary as we discuss what to be on the watch out for both in our own lives and those who are "hanging out amongst us".
6. Jude, Chapter 1, Verse 1: Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James,
- a) First realize this is only a one-chapter letter. When I say, "Chapter 1" realize, that's it!
 - b) As I said earlier, Jude doesn't "pull rank" and say "Hey, I lived in the same house as Jesus most of my life, so what I say is pretty important!" Stop and think what would it take for you to believe your brother is God? Even if you saw Him do a miracle, you might think he has a great gift, but still that doesn't men He's God Himself! I'm sure that's why it took the resurrection to get his half brothers (at least two of them) to believe in Jesus as God.
 - c) While the issue is debated, my view is after Jesus was born, Joseph and Mary had a whole bunch of children after that. Mark Chapter 6 says Jesus had four brothers and at least two sisters. Some argue those kids came from a previous marriage, but most scholars argue it was Jesus half brothers and sisters that came from Mary and Joseph.
 - d) So why mention James? Part of the reason is James was the more famous brother then. He was the church leader in Jerusalem. The Book of Acts gives a bunch of men named James including one of the 12 apostles. However the apostle James got killed early in Christian history and became the first martyr for Jesus. That's why scholars argue and I agree that this Jude is the full brother of the early Christian church leader named James.
 - e) As I stated in the introduction, Jude is the same name as "Judas", but Judas dies in the first chapter of Acts, which is another reason why it's not that Judas.
 - f) OK, enough about who Jude is and isn't. Let's see what he actually has to say.
7. Verse 1b: To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ:
- a) The second part of Verse 1 tells us who the letter is written to. Because this Jude can claim he's the full brother of James the leader of the Jerusalem church, he had the authority that I'm guessing with his brother's backing to write a general letter to all believers. He wanted to write a letter to anyone who was a Christian willing to read it. It's not like Jude thought that God inspired him with a letter so pay attention! As his letter made the rounds and it got copied it was eventually deemed "bible worthy". Remember that the bible cannon was not formalized until a few centuries later. We have to this day the writings of early church leaders who quoted this letter and deemed it "bible worthy". The underlying point is this letter became bible worthy and was accepted as being from the half brother of Jesus.

8. Verse 2: Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.
- a) That's Jude's way of saying "Hope all is well". Jude's about to get into a tough topic, so it's a good idea to start by saying in effect, despite the problems I'm about to bring up, I want there to be peace amongst believers.
 - b) Let me discuss the three key nouns of this verse. First is mercy. It's much more than being forgiven of a sin or a group of sins. It's about our life still going on because God allowed it to happen. Not because we deserve it, but just because He's forgiving and merciful by His nature. Peace is a common Jewish greeting. It's an all-encompassing peace in that there is nothing we're worrying about at. In Paul's letters, he always states that God's grace comes before His peace. I think Jude is saying something similar by saying His grace is necessary for us to have that peace. Then once we embrace that peace, we can be filled with His love so to share that love with others.
 - c) Anyway, Jude wants us to realize we have all of that as believers and all we need to do is accept it as fact. Yes we all have problems and issues we have to deal with. The worst of our problems will only last at the most one lifetime. God's mercy, peace and love will last for eternity. We can choose to be miserable or choose to accept those free gifts and enjoy the time we have and use it as a witness for Jesus. That's why Jude is writing to us!
 - d) Which reminds me, keep in mind that this letter isn't just for first century Christians. It is also for you and I to take personally and apply to our lives. As we get into all the intense issues of this letter, try to keep the fact that we're loved by God and He wants to fill all of us with His grace, mercy, peace and love as we go through the issues of life!
 - e) With that positive thought stated, time to get started on the heart of the letter itself!
9. Verse 3: Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.⁴ For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.
- a) Verse 1 focused on who the author was, "Jude".
 - b) Verse 2 focused on whom this is written to: All Christians.
 - c) Verse 3 and 4 explain why he wrote it. Verse 3 tells us what was Jude's original intent to write this letter. It was as if he was thinking, "I'd love to write a letter to all Christians on the issue of what being saved is all about". Then God "struck him in the head, and said I got a better idea". No it wasn't literally that way, but however it was Jude got inspired he changed the theme from "common salvation to "apostates" in the church.
 - d) The key warning of this letter is in effect that not everyone who hangs around with those of us, who believe Jesus is God and died for all our sins and believe He's in charge of our lives, holds that view. So if they don't believe that, what's their motivation to be with us in the first place? One reason is to draw people away from Jesus. Another reason is for them to proclaim their false views and draw believers away with them. The third is the desire for power. Some people like the idea of ruling over others even if they don't share the views of those they are ruling over.
 - e) OK, nonbelievers have been around the church for 2,000 years. I'm saved, they're not, why should I care? First it's to realize that not everyone who claims to be a Christian is saved. Most of us know that. The other reason is so we can be guard for nonbelievers. It doesn't mean we have to be paranoid about everyone around us. It's to realize that nonbelievers will always be around the church. We have to be aware of that as well as be willing to try to draw them to Jesus, as that's what we're called to do as believers!
 - f) So how do we recognize them? Jude tells us in Verse 4. It becomes obvious by what they believe and how they act. An apostate could make the false claim, "I'm covered by Jesus' blood, therefore I can go have sex with whoever I want whenever I want" as an example!

- i) What I'm getting at is to be a Christian means that we choose to live by God's rules. It doesn't mean we're free to go sin whenever we want and however we want. Yes we're forgiven, but that's not a license to freely sin all we want. That's what Jude is warning against. Apostates can believe Jesus is God but have the false view that it means we're free to go sin however we want at any time we feel like it!
- ii) Doesn't the text also say they deny Jesus is Lord? Yes. However false believers do not wear buttons saying, "I'm a false teacher, come follow me!" We must judge the actions of Christians in order to know if they belong to one of us. Does that mean we're the "sin police"? Yes and no. We're not to follow them around looking for a violation and saying, "You did that, out you go!" On the other hand if a Christian's telling us how proud they're cheating on their spouse or stealing from others, that is an indication of a false believer or at the least an unrepentant sinner.
- iii) If there is one thing too many churches are guilty of, it's being too "relaxed" on sin. Too few churches are willing to call out people who refuse to live as the bible does require us to live and hold people accountable. After a lot of years, I do believe in churches that have formal memberships simply for the reason members will then be accountable to each other for how they live as believers! That doesn't mean the other members of a church can follow you home and apply a "white glove test" to every aspect of our lives. However, if something becomes obvious, Jesus lays out how that person is to be approached (See Mathew 18: 15-18). I'll explain that more later in this lesson.

g) Meanwhile, I have a few more things to say about these verses before I move on. The text says that certain men "whose condemnation was written about long ago" (I'd argue that it applies to women as well). This is one of those cases where a perfect God knows all things but we as humans don't. Therefore, we may not know who is an apostate, but God knows them and He'll judge them on His timing. Since we don't know, Jesus said our "marching orders" is to be a witness to all people. It's Jude's way of saying, "No matter how hard we try, some people won't make it to heaven and they're doomed but just don't realize it yet!"

- i) That leads to the classic question: Why would the God who created us, send some to hell forever? Even if someone murdered millions, wouldn't a "trillion years" in hell be sufficient? That misses the point. Hell is for people who don't want to live under God's rules. Hell is for people who want to live however they want. Sin is a proof of one's choice. To paraphrase an old Jewish expression, "Hell is a place to realize God's in charge after it's too late to do something about it!"
- ii) Coming back to these verses, the point is to realize that just because some people who do hang around with Christians are not saved. That's Jude's point here. How can we tell if we're not one of them? That leads back to the fundamentals of a trust in Jesus as God, He died for our sins and He's fully in charge of our lives. We want to live as a witness for Him, as that's what He designed us to do in the first place!

10. Verse 5: Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe.

- a) Verses 5 through 7 are each examples of apostates. Verse 5 gives a Jewish example. All of the people that left Egypt were called, but few are chosen. That's a quote from Jesus from Matthew 22:14. A quick bit of biblical history for my newer readers. When those Israelites left Egypt, God told them to conquer the land of Israel. They sent spies in to check out the land. The spies brought back a report that said in effect, "It's too hard, we'll lose". Most of the Israelites believed that bad report and refused to trust God. The punishment for their failure to trust God was the famous 40 years of "wandering in the wilderness" with almost everyone of that generation dying in that wilderness. It was the next generation that got to enter and conquer the Promised Land. OK enough history, why does Jude mention all this when it comes to the topic of apostasy? So glad you asked!

- i) The answer is those Israelites were "called but not chosen". They refused to trust in God to guide their lives and paid the consequences. Does that mean all of them are now in hell? No idea. That's "above my pay grade". What it does mean is God demands us to live by His rules, not to earn our salvation, but to be His witnesses to a lost and dying world. The bonus is, it's the best way to live. What if we mess up?" Welcome to the club. We acknowledge God's way is right and ours is wrong as we turn from that sin. That's what God desires of us.
 - ii) One has to remember that a key issue of the entire bible is how to be a good witness for God. Yes of course, the story of Jesus is interwoven throughout the bible. Still I would argue that much of the bible is designed to show us how to live and not to live as a witness for Jesus! Teaching about "apostates" is so we can recognize who is not being a good witness for Jesus. We're to be a good witness to them, but still not consider them "one of us".
 - iii) Jude uses this example first as if to say, "Just because someone is born Jewish does not mean they're automatically saved, even before Jesus came on the scene!" Jude gives us this example first as if to say, "Even if someone who's Jewish claims to be a Christian one still has to be careful about apostasy. When someone claims they've given their lives to Jesus, I say great, welcome to the family. Then I want to watch their behavior, not to expect perfection, but simply a desire to live as God wants us to live. OK then, with that point made, let's move on to example #2.
11. Verse 6: And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.
- a) Whenever you think the bible can't get any stranger, it usually does! My first question is if a demonic angel showed up in a Christian fellowship (in human form), how can we know and what can we do to stop it? Not much. Jude's telling us it is a possibility that we must accept. Again all we can do is watch behavior.
 - b) That leads us back to this verse itself. It appears some angels "ticked God off so much" to a point where they are chained up until some permanent judgment day. So why not just send them to hell "now" for whatever they did? Why are they chained up? How did Jude know all of this? All great questions that have been debated for millenniums by scholars.
 - i) First let me state that what I'm about to state here is my opinion. There are many a scholar who holds different views. If you don't see it the way I see it, that does not mean you're not saved. I'm teaching a debatable topic here. I'll try to make this as brief as I can. The view is before the flood, demonic angels embodied men with the purpose of having sex with women. Their goal in effect was to rid the good people of the world by creating a race of people embodied with these bad angels. All this is based on Genesis 6. The theory is that a reason God picked Noah to survive the flood is his genealogy didn't have this "corrupt race" in it's line. (See Genesis 6:9.) All this how God wanted to rid the world from the "mixed race corruption".
 - ii) There's a lot more details to it. But the essence of the theory is that bad angels did corrupt the human race and that's why God had to chain them up. Peter mentions the same judgment in 2nd Peter 2:4. Were Peter and Jude basing their information on the same source? I'd say yes. Without getting any weirder than I already have, let's just say, that angels weren't exempt from being punished for trying to corrupt believers. Even if I'm totally wrong on this theory the true point is even angels can work to draw Christians away from true fellowship.
 - iii) To state a classical Christian line, "Demons can't take away Christian salvation, but they'll do all they can to make us a bad witness for God"! Whatever these demonic angels did do, I can assure you the goal was to corrupt the human race to limit the number of people who are saved. How it was done, has been debated since then!

- iv) Keep one more thing in mind before I move on. Satan's well aware he has a limited time to rule on the earth. That rule ends when Jesus returns. No one knows when the day or hour is, but it is based on the fact that there is only "x" number of people who will be saved. When "x" is there, Jesus returns. That's why it's Satan's goal to make as few people saved as possible and make believers a bad witness for Jesus.
 - v) Once you accept that, a lot of bad stuff in the world makes a lot more sense.
 - vi) Speaking of bad stuff, let's look at the next verse.
12. Verse 7: In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.
- a) Now we move from a debated story, to one of the most famous in the bible. If you have a doubt that the issue was homosexuality, let's just say the Hebrew makes it very clear. Let me take on the popular question, "Why do Christians hate homosexuals so much?"
 - i) The first answer is we don't. We simply consider the act to be a sin. All of us are guilty of sin, with the only difference is Christians desire to turn from it.
 - ii) A great way to explain this is, to ask do you believe the bible is the word of God or not? If the bible said salvation requires me to stand on my head 30 minutes a day, I would be doing it. If the bible says homosexuality is a sin, I avoid it, period.
 - iii) But I thought Christians are not under the law. That's true, but we are supposed to be a good witness for Jesus and that means avoiding sin as much as possible.
 - iv) But won't homosexuals say they can't help themselves? I believe it. I would argue our hearts can grow to a point where we can't turn away from it. I'm positive that it's a strong urge. However, the issue is salvation. If one believes Jesus is God, we must do what He commands even if that means turning from something we enjoy!
 - v) What about the argument that not all Old Testament sins are considered sins by us Christians? The answer is we use the New Testament as a guide for our lives. The other day I heard an analogy I like. It's like our tax code. It's always changing. We can't do our taxes based on the laws of 100 years ago, we have to do it based on the current laws of the moment. It's the same for Christianity. The New Testament is a guide as to what's a sin to be observed and verses like this one in Jude shows us in effect "homosexuality" is still on the books!
 - b) With that speech out of my system, let's get back to the verse. Why did Jude bring up this issue here and now? The answer is those living in Sodom and Gomorrah didn't care about living as God desired and turned to homosexuality. Even if you say these gentiles did not know about Jewish law, I'd argue that they knew God told Adam and to Noah that it was His desire to "fill the earth and multiply". The point being is one can't have children while engaging in homosexuality behavior.
 - c) For those that care, most scholars argue that the location of Sodom and Gomorrah was on the southeast edge of the Dead Sea and is now buried by that sea. Anyway, those towns got destroyed as an example of, "Don't mess with God, you'll lose badly!"
 - d) Let me wrap all this up by taking a step back and looking at the big picture. Jude stated a well accepted fact that most of the Israelites that came out of Egypt were then sentenced to die in the wilderness as they failed to trust God. Then we got a verse about angels who didn't want to do what God designed them to do and they're chained up for judgment. In the last verse we read of a non-Jewish judgment on people who refused to live as God did mean people to live as a witness for Him.
 - i) In all three cases, the issue is about those called to be a witness for God, who failed to be such a witness. The underlying point of this letter is such unbelievers will be amongst us: All three cases are those who were near or among Israelites and failed to live as God called them to live. For us it's all a warning that they're amongst us!

- ii) The issue isn't about being scared of demons or even rampant homosexuality. The issue is what we allow amongst our Christian fellowships. Most of us know how it is a big debate issue in many denominations to allow practicing homosexuals to be a part of our community. My point is these issues are alive today. As to demons, it is not something we can recognize as they don't have "demon" nametags. It's about being aware that false believers mingle amongst us! It doesn't mean we have to be scared. We are still required to be a witness to all people! Jude is saying, we need to be aware "they're amongst us" and watch believers behavior.
 - iii) But wait, there's more! Verse 8:
- 13. Verse 8: In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings. ⁹ But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" ¹⁰ Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals--these are the very things that destroy them.
 - a) Let's start with the word "dreamers" in Verse 8. Remember we're discussing nonbelievers who exist amongst Christians. Let me put it this way: One way you can tell you are part of a cult is the leaders rely upon dreams even when it contradicts God's word. Almost all of the major cults have leaders who report dreams that told them things contrary to what is plainly written and taught in the bible. The point being that a way we can spot such a nonbeliever is their emphasis on their dreams.
 - b) Next the text says they pollute their own bodies. Let me give a fairly famous example. In the second and third century a popular cult was called the Gnostics. The short version is they believed spiritual is good and the body is bad. Therefore a lot of them engaged in all sorts of sexual sins thinking in effect what we do with our bodies is irrelevant as the body is bad! The point is a way to tell an apostate is they don't care about their behavior. They think "We're saved, so they can do whatever they want whenever they want". Obviously this is a false view and one that's to be avoided in Christian fellowships.
 - c) Let me point out something relevant. If you asked a religious Jewish teacher what do you consider the worst sin, they'd say in effect, "Doing evil in God's name". The reason Jude is making such a big deal about apostates in the midst of Christian's is in effect they're doing just that "evil (as in sin) while claiming to be a true believer in Jesus. Now you know why this is such a big deal, let me get back to these verses.
 - d) Next we get a strange story that's not in the Old Testament about Satan and Michael (one of the top good angels) battling over Moses dead body. Why would they do this? Back in Deuteronomy (34:6) the text states that no one knew where Moses was buried. What God didn't want was for Israel to make a shrine out of Moses' dead body. That's why we read here of Satan and Michael arguing over what to do with that body. The point Jude's making is it was God's will for Moses body to remain hidden. Satan wanted to do what God forbade. But doesn't Satan want to oppose God? Yes, and that's why the text says, "The Lord (i.e., Jesus) rebuke you." The point is we don't have the power to rebuke Satan but Jesus does. For that reason I've never liked it when Pentecostals claim to cast out Satan in their own name, as opposed to trusting in God's name!
 - i) The point of all of this leads back to dealing with nonbelievers hanging around in Christian groups claiming to be believers. Ways to tell them apart is they rely on their dreams, they claim to rebuke Satan based on their own powers and do reject how the bible teaches we are to live as Christians.
 - ii) OK then, should we run in fear? Should we be the "church police"? The reason we get all of this is so we can recognize them and using the method Jesus stated in the Gospel of Matthew to confront them. I'll explain that next. The short version is we should get them out of our Christian fellowship. Now let me explain how.

- iii) Jesus taught that when we confront someone claiming to be a true believer. First it is a matter of confronting them "one on one". If they refuse to change or consider it a sin, then we should repeat the process with one or more witness. If that person's still not interested in changing, then we bring it up to the local church to have that person "expelled" until they change. What if that person joins the church down the church down the street? The answer is that's their problem or if we can, warn that church what the issue is. (That's all based on Matthew 18:15-18.)
 - iv) For what it's worth I've been involved in my share of church controversies. There's always debatable issues and that's a separate topic. This is the issue of someone in a situation who's definitely in sin and they still want to come to church. To give an example, it'd be someone having an affair on their spouse, but refuse to end it and still want to come to church functions. Meanwhile, if you think I'm hard on those who hang around with Christians, let's look at what Jude says next:
14. Verse 11: Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.
- a) One of the things to grasp about this short little book is that it sweeps over much biblical history as if the reader is already familiar with lots of bible stories. That's why Jude's best appreciated with some prior bible knowledge of other stories. Verse 11 covers stories we get from Genesis and Numbers. Let me explain them briefly and then I'll show how they tie to Jude's them of nonbelievers mixed in with the lives of believers.
 - b) Let's start with Cain. He was one of the children of Adam and Eve. Apparently he made a sacrifice to God that wasn't much of a sacrifice. He was ticked off at his brother Abel as this guy made a sacrifice that was accepted by God. The short version is Cain got so mad he ended up killing Abel. The point as it relates here to Jude is Cain obviously knew who God was being a child of Adam and Eve, therefore he was "hanging around" with people who believe in God. However he didn't want to give the best of what he had to God, he's angry at his brother for doing it right. In Christian vocabulary, think of it as the fact we've dedicated our lives to serving God and fully committed to Him. Bottom line is Cain went on to suffer badly for turning from God.
 - i) While I'm in the neighborhood, some ask where did Cain and Abel get wives? If you read Genesis 5:4, Adam and Even lots (dozens or hundreds) of children.
 - c) The second story is Balaam. He was a non-Israelite prophet. A Moabite king hired him to curse the Israelites. (Moab is part of Jordan today). Balaam was hired to curse Israel while they were working way from Egypt to Israel. Balak saw them as a threat and desired a big curse as the Israelites outnumbered his people. Obviously Balak's knowledge of God was limited, but he desired to prevent the Israelites from getting to the Promised land. Balaam had true powers from God. He refused to go against his "power source". Since he couldn't condemn the Israelites because God told him not to, he then recommended to this king to entice the Israelite men with pretty Moabite women to draw them away from God. What is the underlying point is Balaam knew about God but was an apostate by his actions!
 - d) The third story is Korah's rebellion. This is told in Numbers Chapter 16. The short version is he was a priest and didn't like his role and wanted to be in charge. He died along many who joined him in a rebellion against Moses.
 - e) What all three stories have in common is they are all people who had some knowledge of God and His desire to rule over our lives. All three in their own ways rebelled against the plans of God even though the evidence of His existence was evident to them. The reason we get these stories here in Jude is to emphasize the fact that all through history there are people who are aware of God's presence yet work to prevent His will from being done. In the case of Cain, he refused to accept the fact that God's in charge. Balaam refused to deal with God's plan for the Israelites to go where God wanted them to go. Korah didn't want to accept the leadership that God appointed as the leader.

- f) All of this means that there are nonbelievers all around us and yes they want to be around Christians. Why? Remember Satan's goal for believers: To make us bad witnesses for God as we go through our lives. Satan's time on earth is limited to the day when Jesus returns to rule. Therefore, making believers bad witnesses for Him "slows down" that day. Jesus is going to return when a specific number of people get saved. To slow down the number of believers, Satan works to have nonbelievers in our midst. Believe it or not, that fact will lead perfectly to the next verse.
15. Verse 12: These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm--shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted--twice dead.¹³ They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.
- a) Let me start here with a little church history. In the early church days, they had big meals together as a church. It was the early version of the church "pot luck". History records do show they stopped doing those feasts for a while due to apostates causing problems when the nonbelievers being a part of it in those days. My point is Jude was being practical as well as philosophical.
- b) Jude uses some nature examples to describe what these people are like. He describes them as clouds that don't produce rain or trees that don't produce fruit. He compares them to a wild sea wave that can do major damage and "shooting stars" that will disappear forever after we see them. What's hard to accept is the fact that many of the people we encounter in life will not live forever in God's presence. Like these negative images, this life is all the joy they'll ever get. As bad as a problem as it is for them to intermingle with us, they'll be forever banned from God's presence for refusing to live as He desires. It is a hard reality, but one we must accept. Obviously we don't know who's saved and who's not so God is calling us to be witnesses to all in spite of how they act when they're around us!
- c) Meanwhile Jude himself wants to give us warnings about what's their eternal destiny!
16. Verse 14: Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones¹⁵ to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."¹⁶ These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.
- a) You can't find any bible passage that lines up with Verse 14. History records that Jude is quoting some non-biblical source. It the reminder that other books can contain truths but the book itself is not "God inspired".
- b) One can see how one can spend many a lecture discussing Jude. He covers history from the earliest bible stories to the "end times". Enoch was the great grandfather of Noah as well as seven generations from Adam. He is one of the few bible characters who simply got taken to heaven without actually dying. It's God's way of showing that we won't all die, but some people will just be taken to heaven when the "wrap up" occurs. Bottom line was even in his day, there were many nonbelievers in God. Enoch in his own way, was a witness for God saying in effect, "Repent, everyone will be judged by God for how they're living." It's Jude's way of saying the "ungodly" always existed and always be around us!
- c) In fact, notice the emphasis on "ungodly". Jude uses that word (in Greek) four times in a single verse (15). He's emphasizing the fact that whatever they're doing, it isn't God's will for them to act the way their acting.
- d) Verse 16 tells us how to spot them. They grumble and find faults in everything. They go after evil desires (think sin), brag about themselves and flatter others to gain to things. In other words the way to spot them is "life is all about them!" For us Christians life is about putting the needs of others in front of our own needs. For those of that belief, they falsely argue, "I'm saved, I can go do what I want when I want. Watch me as I live as I desire."

17. Verse 17: But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. ¹⁸ They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." ¹⁹ These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.
- a) Jude quotes the apostles without saying which ones. He's probably referring to 2nd Peter 3:3-7 that says, "Scoffers will come in the last days". Jude's main point is that the apostles warned scoffers will come and Jude's now saying, "Too late, they're here!" That's why he said apostates were at their "pot lucks". Is the church today full of hypocrites? Of course. I know of people who've done some horrid things, haven't repented but still go to church every Sunday thinking they're something special. Little do they know what a bad witness they are and who is avoiding church because of them! At the least it's a reminder to us of the fact we go to church to honor God, not because of the people in that church.
 - b) Before I move on, let me address those who say, "Hey, it's been 2,000 years, Jesus will not return. It's a myth." Here's how I view that. From the time of Adam and Eve until Noah was roughly 2,000 years. From the flood until Abraham (the first Jew) was roughly 2,000 years. From Abraham to Jesus was another 2,000 years. What makes us think we're able to alter God's timing just because it's been 2,000 years? Personally I see this as a pattern, but when Jesus returns is His business not mine. Mine is to be a good witness for Him to the day when that happens or the day I enter heaven, whichever comes first!
 - c) With that said, let's get back to the scoffers themselves. Verse 18 says a way we can tell if someone is a "scoffer" (another word for apostate) is they follow their own desires. I used the example of adultery earlier in the lesson. They could also steal or think it's no big deal to say violate one of the commandments because they'll falsely argue, "I'm saved, why is it I can't do whatever I want?" That reminds me, the only one of the 10 Commandments that is debated whether or not it's binding on Christians is the Sabbath. Some argue yes, while others argue no. The New Testament never bluntly states the Christians are to keep it, so it is a debated topic. Meanwhile, back to Jude.
 - d) The next way Jude says we'd recognize them is they "follow their instincts and don't have the Holy Spirit to guide their lives". Jude is saying they were never saved to begin with!
 - e) Again, all we can do is judge behavior. As I stated earlier, a big mistake most churches do make is failure to have accountability of its members to each other. Most of the problems I've seen in churches has to do with people getting away with blatant sin as they are never kicked out of the church (until they repent).
 - f) The good news is we're done with the bad news! The rest of the verses in this chapter will focus on believers and what we're to do about all of this!
18. Verse 20: But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. ²¹ Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.
- a) Notice the first thing Jude doesn't say is figure out who they are and then go beat them to a pulp!" Instead Jude focuses on what we should be doing first, praying. Realize when he wrote this there was no organized bible. Many were illiterate. Bible reading did exist but it was whatever letters and books they could get their collective hands on. It was essential for them to pray then as it is for us to pray now.
 - b) The one mistake I see many Christians make is they consider prayer their "wish list". For example we start praying for people we know who are hurting in some way. Realize that in the New Testament Paul (who wrote most of the New Testament letters) never had any requests for healing. He prayed a lot for people to grow in their faith and he thanked a lot of people for helping him in ministry. I'm not saying we shouldn't pray for those who are hurting. I'm saying prayer is far more than that. I personally begin with what I'm grateful for. It changes my mood. I'll sometimes pray the Lord's Prayer as that's what Jesus told us to do. If there are sins to confess, I do. I always try to find ways to express my gratitude to God. After all of that is often when I work on my "prayer list".

- c) The reason I'm stating all of that, is that's what Jude means by "Praying in the Spirit". It is not a fancy way of praying. It simply means we let the Spirit be a part of our prayer life.
 - i) How do we do that? Sometimes I have silent moments in prayer as I wait for God to lead me. As I always preach, I can't force God to speak to me. He's God and I'm not. Still, I want to give Him the opportunity to interfere with my prayer life, so in that since I pray in the Spirit. Over and above, that praying in a formal manner as when we recite the Lord's prayer, or stating things we are grateful for, or when we confess our sins are all ways of "Praying in the Spirit". There's nothing formal that we must do to pray that way. There's no special feeling that comes over us. It's the fact that we acknowledge Him as God, show our gratitude, express ways that He's right and we were wrong (i.e., confessing sin) and asking Him to intervene in our world to help those who are hurting. My point is all of that is praying in the Spirit!
 - d) That leads to Verse 21. It starts by saying to "Keep ourselves in God's love". That simply means we're continuing to trust in the fact He's God (and we're not) and trust in His love to guide our lives as we live as a witness for Him. Then Jude mentions "mercy" in context of eternal life. It's Jude's way of saying as long as we're trusting that Jesus is God, He did die for all our sins and He is Lord of our lives, no matter how badly we mess up, God had mercy on us and will bring us ever lasting life. Yes I know I'm preaching to the choir here but it's important to grasp that!
- 19. Verse 22: Be merciful to those who doubt; ²³ snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear--hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.
 - a) Remember when I said a half page back in effect, "Should we figure out who the apostates are and go beat them up?" The problem with that line of thinking is it goes against what's the "Great Commission" for Christians. That's to go into the world and make disciples of all nations. (Based on Matthew 28:19). The essential idea is we never know who is going to be saved. Therefore, we witness to all people realizing we'll never bat 1000 or 0 to use a baseball analogy. Some will get it and some won't.
 - b) The point is as we accept the fact that apostates are all around us and we have to accept it, we also need to be a good witness to them. For example, if we encounter someone who is believing they could do whatever they want because they're saved. We can show them a passage like 1st Corinthians 5:1, where Paul told that church to kick out a member who at that time was sleeping with his mother in law! The point is behavior matters for believers and hopefully we can convict people of their sins so they too will be a witness for Jesus.
 - c) The reference to "Fear hating" is not about us, but about living in fear of God's judgment. I would say it should be the motivation to turn from sin! But if we're saved, why should we fear God's judgment? For the believer it has to do with being a good witness for Him here and now. It's also about eternal rewards and not losing them based on bad living. For the nonbeliever it's about getting them to see the error of their ways and turn to God. That is what Jude meant by those sinning when he wrote "Even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh" in Verse 23.
 - d) The idea of being a witness is far more than saying, "Go believe in Jesus now let me be for the rest of our lives!" Christians are supposed to work as a team to encourage each other to be a witness for Him. That's why I've been stressing accountability in this lesson.
 - e) Now that I've beaten that over your head, we can go on to the "doxology" of this letter:
- 20. Verse 24: To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy-- ²⁵ to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.
 - a) For those who don't know a "doxology" is a blessing. It's like going to church and the last thing the pastor says is "May God bless your week as we live as a witness for Him". That is what these last few verses are.
 - b) This doxology essentially says God will preserve as we'll be a witness for him forever!

- c) Keep in mind these verses are not saying we'll be perfect. They're saying God can and will guide us so that we can and will use our lives as a witness for Him. He will lead us down the path that He wants us to go. I'm not saying it won't be easy or painless. Most of those who did great things for God suffer in the bible. What makes us think we'll be exempt as we use our lives to make a difference for Him? The point is as we go through life, even in the times when life isn't going well, He'll be there to guide us and make us a good witness for Him if we're willing to let Him. That's the main point of Verse 24. The verse ends with a reminder that we can have great joy in our lives no matter what.
 - d) The book ends with the reminder that Jesus is in charge of our lives, now and forever. It's a reminder that we might as well start serving Him now as that's what we'll do forever. If that's the case, why don't I just wait until I die to serve Him? First you'll miss out on living a joy filled life by doing that. Second, you might die suddenly and not get that chance. It is a matter of thinking, if you can't live for Jesus now, what makes you think you'll be able to live for Him for eternity?
 - e) Bottom line, Jude uses this 25-verse letter to say, "Here's what to watch out for until Jesus returns (apostates among us) and here is how to be a witness for Him despite those issues in our churches. With that said, I'm running long, so let me wrap this up in prayer.
21. Heavenly Father, we don't know why You've picked us, but we're grateful that you have. Help us to recognize areas of our lives that are not pleasing to you. Help us to be grateful for all that You have given us and help us to be joyful as we go through our lives. All of us have problems. What You desire is a good attitude as we go through our lives so we'll be a witness for You by the way we do live our lives. Help us to have a good attitude about dealing with nonbelievers amongst us and realize this life is the only joy they'll get for eternity. Help us to be good witnesses as we interact with them and lead them to you. May their hearts be open to Your truth. We ask all of this in Jesus name Amen.
22. If interested, the next page is a bibliography I used to prepare for this study!

Supplement: Bibliography

"If I have seen further, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants." (Isaac Newton)

Without prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, all these commentaries are useless. My prayer as I prepare these lessons was for God to show me the things He wanted me to learn, and second, the lessons He wanted me to pass on in my writings. I have quoted many sources throughout these lessons. If any of these writers appeal to you, I invite you to read or listen to them further via the places listed below. I have also quoted other sources not listed, and those names are usually listed in the lessons. These other authors were usually quoted from the materials listed below and taken from those sources.

First and foremost, the greatest commentary on the bible is the bible itself. Here are the bible versions I use in preparation of my lessons. I mostly quote The New International Version (NIV), Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society; The New King Deuteronomy Version (NKJV), Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.; The King Deuteronomy Version (KJV) (no copyright on that version); the English Standard Version. (ESV). The copyright information for the ESV is in point #5 below. The Living Bible (TLB) Copyright © 1971, 1986 by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL 60189; "The Message" copyright © 1993 by Eugene H. Peterson. All rights reserved. All the bible text used in these lessons (except the ESV) is taken from Parsons Software: Electronic Edition STEP Files Copyright © 1999, Parsons Technology, Inc., all rights reserved and from Zondervan Reference Software (32-bit edition) Version 2.6, Copyright © 1989-1998 The Zondervan Corporation.

Here are the commentaries I have referenced over these lessons. The specific commentaries on the books of Jude are listed first, and then bible-wide commentaries. They're listed in alphabetical order by author. The reference to audio commentary means the information was gathered via the Internet in MP3® Format, unless otherwise stated: My apology if I have quoted someone else and I have forgotten to include them here.

1. Commentary on Jude by Jon Courson. It is in book form from Harvest House Publishing. It is also available in MP3® format at <http://www.joncourson.com/>. I listened to the audio format.
2. Commentary on Jude by Bob Davis. They are available for free in MP3® format at <http://northcountrychapel.com/studies/>.
3. Commentary on Jude by David Guzik. It is available for free in audio and text format. The web address is http://www.enduringword.com/library_commentaries.htm Mr. Davis quotes a lot of famous authors from the 19th and 20th Century and sometimes I used some of those quotes.
4. Commentary on Jude by Chuck Missler, available at K-House Ministries 1-800-KHOUSE1. The web address is <http://www.khouse.org>. Chuck's is also on Youtube!
5. Commentary on Jude by John MacArthur. They are available for free in MP3® format at <http://www.gty.org/resources/sermons> and then click on that book. The English Standard Version Study Bible; Copyright (2005-2009) The Standard Bible Society. The version itself is copyrighted 2008 by Crossway Bibles, a publication of "Good News Publishers". Chuck Missler and John MacArthur did a long series of messages on Jude. Recommend them highly.
6. The Expositor's Bible Encyclopedia, Zondervan Publications, (via CD-ROM 1998 release). This is a multi-volume encyclopedia with notes on every bible verse. It is available through Zondervan. Paperback books are published on individual Bible books from this same source. The actual text that is copied and pasted is taken from this source.
7. The MacArthur Study Bible with commentary by John MacArthur Nelson Bibles (1997) ISBN: 0849912229.
8. I also refer sometimes to J.P. Moreland apologetic ministry which is at www.jpmoreland.com and Greg Koukl's apologetic ministry, which is Stand to Reason at www.str.org
9. I also quote Dennis Prager a Jewish (non-Christian) Old Testament bible scholar!