Jude

Salutation

1:1 From Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are called, wrapped in the love of God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ. 1:2 May mercy, peace, and love be lavished on you!

Condemnation of the False Teachers

1:3 Dear friends, although I have been eager to write to you about our common salvation, I now feel compelled instead to write to encourage you to contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

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1 tn Grk “Judas,” traditionally “Jude” in English versions to distinguish him from the one who betrayed Jesus. The word “From” is not in the Greek text, but has been supplied to indicate the sender of the letter.

2 tn Though δοῦλος (doulos) is normally translated “servant,” the word does not bear the connotation of a free individual serving another. BDAG notes that “servant” for slaves is largely confined to Biblical transl. and early American times...in normal usage at the present time the two words are carefully distinguished” (BDAG 260 s.v.). At the same time, perhaps “servant” is apt in that the δοῦλος of Jesus Christ took on that role voluntarily, unlike a slave. The most accurate translation is “bondservant” (sometimes found in the ASV for δοῦλος), in that it often indicates one who sells himself into slavery to another. But as this is archaic, few today understand its force.

3 sn Undoubtedly the background for the concept of being the Lord’s slave or servant is to be found in the Old Testament scriptures. For a Jew this concept did not connote drudgery, though it was not nearly as urgent as the letter he found it now necessary to write.

4 sn The term “faith” has a variety of meanings in the NT. Here, the faith refers to the doctrinal content embraced by believers rather than the act of believing. Rather than discuss the points of agreement that Jude would have with these believers, because of the urgency of the present situation he must assume that these believers were well grounded and press on to encourage them to fight for this common belief.

5 sn The adverb once for all (ἵππος, hapax) seems to indicate that the doctrinal convictions of the early church had been substantially codified. That is to say, Jude could appeal to written documents of the Christian faith in his arguments with the false teachers. Most likely, these documents were the letters of Paul and perhaps one or more gospels. First and Second Peter may also have been among the documents Jude has in mind (see also the note on the phrase entrusted to the saints in this verse).

6 sn I now feel compelled instead...saints. Apparently news of some crisis has reached Jude, prompting him to write a different letter than what he had originally planned. A plausible scenario (assuming authenticity of 2 Peter or at least that there are authentic Petrine snippets in it) is that after Peter’s death, Jude felt that the present crisis deserved another, shorter piece. The crisis, as the letter reveals, is that the false teachers whom Peter prophesied have now infiltrated the church. The letter of Jude is thus an ad hoc letter, intended to confirm the truth of Peter’s letter and encourage the saints to ground their faith in the written documents of the nascent church, rather than listen to the twisted gospel of the false teachers. In large measure, the letter of Jude illustrates the necessity of clinging to the authority of scripture as opposed to those who claim to be prophets.

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7 tn Grk “while being quite diligent to write to you,” or “while making all haste to write to you.” Two issues are at stake: (1) whether σπουδή (spoudē) here means diligence, eagerness, or haste; (2) whether ποιομενοσ γράφειν (poioimenos graphtein) is to be taken conatively (“I was about to write”) or progressively (“I was writing”). Without knowing more of the background, it is difficult to tell which option is to be preferred.

8 tn Grk “I had the necessity.” The term ἀνάγκη (anankē, “necessity”) often connotes urgency or distress. In this context, Jude is indicating that the more comprehensive treatment about the faith shared between himself and his readers was not nearly as urgent as the letter he felt it now necessary to write.

9 tn Grk “encouraging.” Παρακαλών (parakalw) is most likely a telic participle. In keeping with other participles of purpose, it is present tense and occurs after the main verb.

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For certain men have secretly slipped in among you—men who long ago were marked out for the condemnation I am about to describe—ungodly men who have turned the grace of our God into a license for evil and who deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Now I desire to remind you (even though you have been fully informed of these facts) of what he is about to tell them (you have been fully informed of these facts) may imply that they were familiar with 2 Peter. In 2 Pet 2:4ff., the same illustrations from the OT are drawn. See the note on the following phrase once for all.

Some translations take ὐμάς (hapat) with the following clause (thus, “[Jesus,] having saved the people once for all”). Such a translation presupposes that ὀμας is a part of the ὑιοῦ (hoyi) clause. The reading of NA27, ηγετὴ ὑιοῦ (hogeni hoyi) kurios hapax, suggests this interpretation (though with “Lord” instead of “Jesus”). This particle is found before λαον (laon) in the ὑιοῦ clause in Ἰησοῦς 630 1241 1243 1503 1739 1846 1881 pc co. But ὀμας is found before the ὑιοῦ clause in Ἰησοῦς 665 915 2298 eth Cyr Hier Bede}. As difficult as this is to reconcile with the text of Jude, the earlier and better witnesses (pc A B C* mg 630 81 1241 1243 2344 vg pc) have the intriguing reading ὕιος. The shorter reading is thus preferred on both internal and external grounds.

The Greek term for Master (δεσπότης, despotēs) is the same term as the author of 2 Peter used (2 Pet 2:1) to describe his Lord when he prophesied about these false teachers. Since this term, in Jude, is used only ten times in the NT, the verbal connection between these two books at this juncture is striking. This is especially so since both Peter and Jude speak of these false teachers as denying the Master (both using the same verb). The basic difference is that Peter is looking to the future, while Jude is arguing that these false teachers are here now.

The terms “Master and Lord” both refer to the same person. The construction in Greek is known as the Granville Sharp rule, named after the English philologist-linguist who first clearly articulated the rule in 1798. Sharp pointed out that in the construction article-noun-κοι-noun (where κοι = “and”), when two nouns are singular, personal, and common (i.e., not proper names), they always had the same referent. Illustrations such as “the friend and brother,” “the God and Father,” etc. abound in the NT to prove Sharp’s point. For more discussion see ExSyn 270-78. See also Titus 3:9 and 1 Peter 2:1.

The term “knowing all things.” The subject of the participle “knowing” (ἐπείσως, eidos) is an implied ὑιοῦ (homas), though several ancient witnesses actually add it. The πάντα (panta) takes on an adverbial force in this context ("fully"), intensifying how acquainted the readers are with the following points.

That Jude comments on his audience’s prior knowledge once for all) that Jesus, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, later destroyed those who did not believe. 1:6 You also know that the angels who did not keep within their
proper domain but abandoned their own place of residence, he has kept in eternal chains in utter darkness, locked up for the judgment of the great Day. 1:7 So also Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring towns, since they indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire in a way similar to these angels, are now displayed as an example by suffering the punishment of eternal fire.

1:8 Yet these men, as a result of their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and insult the glorious ones. But even when Michael the archangel was arguing with the devil and debating with him concerning Moses’ body, he did not dare to bring a slanderous judgment, but said, “May the Lord rebuke you!”

1:10 But these men do not understand the things they slander, and they are being destroyed by the very things that, like irrational animals, they instinctively comprehend.

1:11 Woe to them! For they have traveled down Cain’s path, and because of greed have abandoned themselves to Balaam’s error; hence, they will certainly perish in Korah’s rebellion.

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1 tn Grk “who did not keep their own domain.”
2 sn The idea is that certain angels acted improperly, going outside the bounds prescribed by God (their proper domain).
3 sn There is an interesting play on words used in this verse. Both angels did not keep their proper place. Jesus has kept them chained up in another place. The same verb keep is used in v. 1 to describe believers’ status before God and Christ.
4 sn In 2 Pet 2:4 a less common word for chains is used.
5 tn The word ἑκάς (zaphos, “utter, deepest darkness”) is used only five times in the NT; two in 2 Peter, two in Jude, and one in Hebrews. Jude 6 parallels 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 13 parallels 2 Pet 2:17.
6 tn The words “locked up” are not in Greek, but is expressed in English as a resumptive point after the double prepositional phrase (“in eternal chains in utter darkness”).
7 tn Grk “as.”
8 tn Grk “the towns [or cities] surrounding them.”
9 sn Grk “strange flesh.” This phrase has been variously interpreted. It could refer to flesh of another species (such as angels having lust after human flesh). This would aptly describe the sin of the angels, but not easily explain the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. It could refer to the homosexual practices of the Somodites, but a difficulty arises from the use of ἑτέρος (heteros; “strange,” “other”). When this is to be distinguished from ἄλλος (allus, “another”) it suggests “another of a different kind.” If so, would that properly describe homosexual behavior? In response, the language could easily be compact: “pursued flesh other than what was normally pursued.” However, would this find an analogy in the lust of angels? (such would imply that angels normally had sexual relations of some sort, but cf. Matt 22:30)? Another alternative is that the focus of the parallel is on the activity of the surrounding cities and the activity of the angels. This is especially plausible since the participle ἐκπόρνευσαν (ekporeusan, “having indulged in sexual immorality”) and ἀπελθοῦσαν (apelthousan, “having pursued”) can conduce with “cities” (πόλεις, poleis), a feminine plural noun, rather than with So-dom and Gomorrah (both masculine nouns). If so, then their sin would not necessarily have to be homosexuality. However, most likely the feminine participle are used because of constructio ad sensum (construction according to sense). That is, since both Sodom and Gomorrah are cities, the feminine is used to imply that all the cities are involved. The connection with angels thus seems to be somewhat loose: Both angels and Sodom and Gomorrah indulged in heinous sexual immorality. Thus, whether the false teachers indulge in homosexual activity is not the point; mere sexual immorality is enough to condemn them.
10 tn Or “in the same way as.”
11 sn The reference is now to the false teachers.
12 tn Grk “dreaming.” The participle ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι (enypniazomenoi, “dreaming”) is adverbial to the pronoun ὑπνοι (houtoi, “these”), though the particular relationship is not clear. It could mean, “while dreaming,” “by dreaming,” or “because of dreaming.” This translation has adopted the last option as Jude’s meaning, partially for syntactical reasons (the causal participle usually precedes the main verb) and partially for contextual reasons (these false teachers must derive their authority from some source, and the dreams provide the most obvious base). The participle ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι was sometimes used of apocalyptic visions, both of true and false prophets. This seems to be the meaning here.
13 tn Most likely, the authority of the Lord is in view. This verse, then, echoes the indictment of v. 4: “they deny our Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”
14 tn The construction with the three verbs (“defile,” “reject,” and “insult”) involves the particles με, δι, δι (men, de, de). A more literal (and pedantic) translation would be: “on the one hand, they defile the flesh, on the other hand, they reject authority, and on another hand, they insult the glorious ones.”
15 sn The glorious ones refers to angelic beings rather than mere human beings, just as in 2 Pet 2:10 (on which this passage apparently depends). Whether they were good or evil, however, is difficult to tell (hence, the translation is left ambiguous). However, both in 2 Pet 2:11 and here, in Jude 9, the wicked angels seem to be in view (for not even Michael insults them).
16 tn The word “even” is not in Greek; it is implied by the height of the contrast.
17 tn According to Jewish intertestamental literature (such as 1 En. 20), Michael was one of seven archangels.
18 tn The sentence structure is a bit different in Greek. Literally it reads: “But Michael the archangel, when arguing with the devil and disputing.”
19 sn Or “they should naturally comprehend.” The present tense in this context may have a conative force.
20 tn Or “they have gone the way of Cain.”
21 tn Grk “for wages.”
22 tn The verb ἔκχεω (ekcheo) normally means “pour out.” Here, in the passive, it occasionally has a reflexive idea, as BDAG 312 s.v. 3 suggests (with extra-biblical examples).
23 sn Or “in.”
24 tn Grk “and.” See note on “perish” later in this verse.
25 tn The three verbs in this verse are all aorist indicative (“have gone down,” “have abandoned,” “have perished”). Although the first and second could be considered constative or ingressive, the last is almost surely proleptic (referring to the certainty of their future judgment). Although it may seem odd that a proleptic aorist is so casually connected to other aorists with a different syntactical force, it is not unparalleled (cf. Rom 8:30).

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1 sn BDAG 312 s.v. 3. suggests (with extra-biblical examples).
1:12 These men are
dangerous reefs
to your love feast,
feasting without reverence,
feeding only themselves. They are
waterless clouds, carried along by the winds; autumn trees
without fruit—twice dead, uprooted; 1:13 wild sea waves,
spewing out the foam of their
1 tn Grk “these are the men who are.”
2 tn Though σπιλάδες (spilades) is frequently translated “blemishes” or “stains,” such is actually a translation of the Greek word σπιλαίος (spilaios). The two words are quite similar, especially in their root or lexical forms (σπιλαίος [spilaios] and σπιλάς [spilas] respectively). Some scholars have suggested that σπιλἀδες in this context means the same thing as σπιλαίος. But such could be the case only by a stretch of the imagination (see BDAG 938 s.v. σπιλαίος for discussion).
3 tc Several witnesses (A C 1243 1846 al), influenced by the parallel in 2 Pet 2:13, read ἄπατους (apatous, “deceptions”) of love-feasts (αὐλαίαις, “love-feasts”) in v. 12. However ἄγαπας has much stronger and earlier support and should therefore be considered original.
4 sn The danger of the false teachers at the love feasts would be especially pernicious, for the love feasts of the early church involved the Lord’s Supper, worship, and instruction.
5 tn Or “fearlessly.” The term in this context, however, is decidedly negative. The implication is that these false teachers ate the Lord’s Supper without regarding the sanctity of the meal. Cf. 1 Cor 11:17-22.
6 tn Grk “shepherding themselves.” The verb ποιμαίνω (poimaino) means “shepherd, nurture [the flock].” But these men, rather than tending to the flock of God, nurture only themselves. They thus fall under the condemnation Paul uttered when writing to the Corinthians: “For when it comes time for you to eat, each one goes ahead with his own meal” (1 Cor 11:21). Above all, the love-feast was intended to be a shared meal in which all ate and all felt welcome.
7 sn “They are” is not in Greek, but resumes the thought begun at the front of v. 12. There is no period before “They are.” English usage requires breaking this into more than one sentence.
8 tc In 2 Pet 2:17, Jude’s emphasis is slightly different (instead of waterless springs, they are waterless clouds).
9 sn The imagery portraying the false teachers as autumn trees without fruit has to do with their lack of productivity. Recall the statement to the same effect by Jesus in Matt 7:16-20, in which false prophets will be known by their fruits. Like waterless clouds full of false hope, these trees do not yield anything even if they are expected.
10 sn Twice dead probably has no relevance to the tree metaphor, but has great applicability to these false teachers. As in Rev 20:6, those who die twice are those who die physically and spiritually. The aphorism is true: “born once, die twice; born twice, die once” (cf. Rev 20:5; John 3, 11).
11 tn Grk “wild waves of the sea.”
12 sn When thinking of waves casting up their own shameless deeds shame,wardwayward stars for whom the utter depths of eternal darkness have been reserved.
13 sn Nevertheless, the tenor of v. 15 is plainly seen, regardless of the translation.
14 sn An apparent quotation from 1 En. 1:9. There is some doubt as to whether Jude is actually quoting from the text of 1 Enoch; the text here in Jude differs in some respects from the extant text of this apocryphal book. It is sometimes suggested that Jude may instead have been quoting from oral tradition which had roots older than the written text.
15 tn “And” is not in Greek, but is supplied for the sake of English style.
Exhortation to the Faithful

1:17 But you, dear friends – recall the predictions foretold by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. For they said to you, “In the end time there will come scoffers, propelled by their own ungodly desires.” These people are divisive, worldly, devoid of the Spirit. But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith, by praying in the Holy Spirit, maintain yourselves in the love of God, while anticipating the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that brings eternal life.

Have mercy on those who waver; save others, coupled with a fear of God, hating even the clothes stained by the flesh.

Final Blessing

1:24 Now to the one who is able to keep you from falling, and to cause you to stand, rejoicing, without blemish before his glorious presence, to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time, and now, and for all eternity. Amen.