

Jude

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Summary: *Jude writes to urge believers to 'contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints' (v. 3) because certain people have infiltrated the community who pervert grace into licentiousness and deny Jesus Christ as Lord. Jude marshals a barrage of Old Testament and Second Temple examples of divine judgment — the exodus generation, the fallen angels, Sodom and Gomorrah, Cain, Balaam, Korah — to demonstrate that such false teachers face certain destruction. The letter reaches its rhetorical peak in verses 14-15 with a direct quotation from 1 Enoch prophesying judgment on the ungodly. After warning that the apostles predicted such scoffers would come, Jude closes with practical instructions for the community and one of the most magnificent doxologies in all of Scripture (vv. 24-25).*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Jude is unique in the New Testament for its explicit citation of 1 Enoch (vv. 14-15), a Jewish apocalyptic text that was widely read but never accepted into the Hebrew canon. The citation is introduced with the formula 'Enoch prophesied' (eprophēteusen), treating the text as genuine prophecy without necessarily endorsing the entire book as canonical. Verse 9 alludes to the Assumption of Moses (or a related tradition) regarding a dispute between the archangel Michael and the devil over the body of Moses — a tradition not found in the Old Testament. These references demonstrate that early Christians drew on a wider literary and theological tradition than the Hebrew Bible alone. The doxology (vv. 24-25) is among the most liturgically influential passages in Christianity.*

Translation Friction: *Jude's use of non-canonical sources raises hermeneutical questions. The 1 Enoch citation (vv. 14-15) is presented as prophecy, and the Michael-and-Moses tradition (v. 9) is presented as historical event. Neither claim requires that 1 Enoch or the Assumption of Moses be treated as canonical Scripture; ancient authors regularly cited non-canonical sources to make theological points (cf. Paul quoting pagan poets in Acts 17:28 and Titus 1:12). We render the Greek as given and note the sources without adjudicating their canonical status. The relationship between Jude and 2 Peter 2 (which shares much of Jude's content but omits the non-canonical references) remains debated — most scholars see Jude as the earlier text.*

Connections: *The faith 'once for all delivered' (v. 3) anticipates the concept in Hebrews 9:26-28. The fallen angels (v. 6) connect to Genesis 6:1-4 and the Enochic tradition. Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7) echo Genesis 19. Cain, Balaam, and Korah (v. 11) draw on Genesis 4, Numbers 22-24, and Numbers 16 respectively. The 1 Enoch citation (vv. 14-15) comes from 1 Enoch 1:9. The Michael-Moses dispute (v. 9) is attributed to the Assumption of Moses. The doxology (vv. 24-25) has influenced Christian worship from the patristic period to the present.*

¹Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: ²May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. ³Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. ⁴For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. ⁵Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe, ⁶And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under deep darkness for the judgment of the great day — ⁷Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to sexual immorality, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. ⁸Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. ⁹But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you.' ¹⁰But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. ¹¹Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for profit to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion. ¹²These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding only themselves; waterless clouds swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; ¹³They are wild waves of the sea, churning up the foam of their own disgrace. They are wandering stars, for whom the deepest darkness has been reserved forever. ¹⁴It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, 'Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, ¹⁵To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly in the midst of them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken opposed to him. ¹⁶These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; their mouth speaks boastful words, and they show favoritism to gain advantage. ¹⁷But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁸They said to you, 'In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.' ¹⁹It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. ²⁰But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹Keep yourselves safe in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. ²²And have mercy on those who doubt; ²³Others rescue with be afraid, pulling them out of the flames. Hating not even the garment spotted by the physical nature. ²⁴Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, ²⁵Indeed, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and authority, both now and ever. Amen.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Jude identifies himself as *doulos* ('servant, slave') of Jesus Christ and *adelphos* ('brother') of James — almost certainly James the brother of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13, Galatians 1:19). Like James, he does not claim the title 'brother of the Lord,' instead defining his identity through service. The recipients are described with three perfect participles: *ēgapēmenois* ('having been loved,' permanently loved), *tetērēmenois* ('having been kept,' preserved and guarded), and *klētois* ('called'). The SBLGNT reads 'beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ,' though some manuscripts read 'sanctified' (*hēgiasmenois*) instead of 'beloved.'
2. The greeting triad — *eleos* ('mercy'), *eirēnē* ('peace'), *agapē* ('love') — is unique to Jude. Most epistles use 'grace and peace' (Paul) or 'grace, mercy, and peace' (Pastorals). Jude substitutes 'love' for 'grace,' anticipating the letter's concern that grace is being perverted (v. 4). The optative *plēthyntheiē* ('may it be multiplied') is a prayer-wish for abundance, not merely presence.
3. Jude had planned a general letter about salvation but was compelled by circumstances to write an urgent warning instead. The verb *epagōnizesthai* ('contend, fight for, struggle on behalf of') is an athletic or military term — the faith requires active defense, not passive reception. The phrase *tē hapax paradotheisē tois hagiois pistei* ('the faith once for all delivered to the saints') treats the Christian faith as a fixed deposit (*paradosis*) entrusted to the community, not as something still being developed. The adverb *hapax* ('once for all') emphasizes finality and completeness.
4. The verb *pareisedysan* ('crept in secretly, slipped in by the side door') describes infiltration, not open attack. These people are *hoi palai proگرامmenoi* ('written about long ago,' 'designated beforehand') for judgment — their condemnation was anticipated in Scripture and tradition. Their two-fold offense: (1) *metatithentes* ('changing, perverting, transforming') God's grace into *aselgeian* ('sensuality, licentiousness, moral abandon'); (2) *arnoumenoi* ('denying') Jesus Christ as *despotēn kai kyrion* ('Master and Lord'). Grace that permits immorality is not grace but its perversion.

5. The first of three Old Testament examples of judgment. Some manuscripts read 'the Lord' (kyrios), others read 'Jesus' (Iēsous) — the SBLGNT follows manuscripts reading kyrios, but the variant 'Jesus' (found in significant early manuscripts) would mean Jude identifies the pre-incarnate Christ with the God who led the exodus. The point is stark: being saved once does not guarantee final salvation — the exodus generation was delivered from Egypt but destroyed in the wilderness for unbelief (Numbers 14:26-35, 1 Corinthians 10:1-12).
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 14:26-35 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The second example: fallen angels who abandoned their archēn ('position, domain, sphere of authority') and their oikētērion ('dwelling, habitation'). This draws on the tradition of Genesis 6:1-4 as elaborated in 1 Enoch 6-16, where angelic 'Watchers' descended to earth, took human wives, and were imprisoned as punishment. They are kept (tetērēken, a perfect tense indicating ongoing state) in desmois aidiois ('eternal bonds/chains') hypo zophon ('under deep darkness/gloom') awaiting final judgment. Even supernatural beings face consequences for transgressing their appointed boundaries.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 6:1-4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The third example: Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19). The phrase ekporneusasai ('having given themselves over to sexual immorality') and apelhousai opisō sarkos heteras ('having gone after other/different flesh') describe the sexual transgression. The phrase sarkos heteras ('different flesh') connects the sin of Sodom to the angels of verse 6 — both transgressed the boundaries of their nature. The cities prokeintai ('are displayed, lie before us') as deigma ('example, sample, specimen') of divine judgment — their destruction is a visible preview of eschatological punishment.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 19. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Jude now applies the three examples to the present infiltrators. The participle enypniazomenoi ('dreaming') suggests they claim visionary authority for their behavior. Their threefold offense mirrors the three examples: (1) sarka miainousin ('they defile the flesh') — like Sodom; (2) kyriotēta athetousin ('they reject lordship/authority') — like the exodus rebels; (3) doxas blasphemousin ('they blaspheme the glorious ones') — like the fallen angels. The 'glorious ones' (doxas) most likely refers to angelic beings, whether good or evil.
9. This episode is not found in the Old Testament. Ancient sources attribute it to the Assumption of Moses (also called the Testament of Moses), a Jewish pseudepigraphal work largely lost. The argument from the lesser to the greater is: if Michael the archangel — the highest of angels — would not blaspheme even the devil but deferred judgment to the Lord, how much less should mere humans blaspheme angelic beings. The phrase epitimēsai soi kyrios ('May the Lord rebuke you') echoes Zechariah 3:2, where the Lord rebukes Satan in a heavenly courtroom scene. Jude uses a non-canonical source to make a canonical point about restraint and deference to divine authority.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 34:5-6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Zechariah 3:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The contrast is between two kinds of knowledge: what they do not understand (ouk oidasin) they blaspheme, and what they know instinctively (physikōs epistantai) — like animals driven by appetite — destroys them. The comparison to aloga zōa ('unreasoning animals, creatures without logos') is severe: they have rejected the capacity for rational moral thought and now operate purely on instinct. The verb phtheirontai ('are being destroyed, are corrupted') is in the present tense — their destruction is already underway.
11. Three more Old Testament examples in rapid succession, each introduced with a different verb: (1) tē hodō tou Kain eporeuthēsan ('they went in the way of Cain') — Cain's 'way' represents hatred and murder of a brother (Genesis 4); (2) tē planē tou Balaam misthou exechythēsan ('they poured themselves out into the error of Balaam for hire') — Balaam represents the corruption of prophetic office for money (Numbers 22-24, 31:16); (3) tē antilogia tou Kore apōlonto ('they perished in the rebellion of Korah') — Korah's rebellion represents challenging divinely established authority (Numbers 16). The aorist tenses treat their destruction as already accomplished — prophetically certain.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 22-24. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. A torrent of metaphors describes the false teachers: (1) spilades ('hidden reefs' or 'blemishes') at the agapais ('love feasts,' communal meals of the early church) — they are a concealed danger; (2) they feast aphobōs ('fearlessly, without reverence') and poimainontes heautous ('shepherd only themselves') — an echo of Ezekiel 34:2's condemnation of selfish shepherds; (3) nephelai anydroi ('waterless clouds') — they promise rain but deliver nothing; (4) dendra phthinopōrina akarpa ('fruitless late-autumn trees') — past the season for bearing fruit; (5) dis apothanonta ('twice dead') — dead by nature and dead by judgment; (6) ekrizōthenta ('uprooted') — permanently removed.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 34:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

13. The metaphor cascade continues: (5) *kymata agria thalassēs* ('wild waves of the sea') that foam up their own shame — their sin is not hidden but publicly visible like sea foam; (6) *asteres planētai* ('wandering stars,' the root of English 'planet') — in ancient cosmology, wandering stars were irregular and unreliable, unlike the fixed stars that guided navigation. For these wanderers, *ho zophos tou skotous* ('the gloom of darkness') is reserved *eis aiōna* ('forever'). The six metaphors move from earth (reefs, trees) to sea (waves) to sky (stars), encompassing the entire cosmos in condemnation.
14. Jude introduces a direct quotation from 1 Enoch 1:9, a Jewish apocalyptic text dating to the third-second century BC. Enoch is identified as *hebdomos apo Adam* ('seventh from Adam'), following the genealogy of Genesis 5. The formula *prophēteusen* ('prophesied') treats the Enochic text as genuine prophecy — a notable use of a non-canonical source with prophetic authority. This does not necessarily mean Jude regarded the entirety of 1 Enoch as Scripture, but he treats this particular prophecy as divinely inspired truth. The Lord's coming *en hagiais myriasis* ('with his holy myriads/ten thousands') depicts a theophany accompanied by an angelic army.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The quotation from 1 Enoch 1:9 is characterized by the relentless repetition of 'all' (*antas/pantōn/panta*, four occurrences) and the cognate forms of 'ungodly' (*asebeias/ēsebēsan/asebeis*, four occurrences). The judgment is universal (*kata pantōn*, 'against all') and the ungodliness is both in action (*ergōn asebeias*, 'works of ungodliness') and in speech (*sklērōn*, 'harsh things spoken against him'). The fourfold repetition of *aseb-* roots hammers the single point: ungodliness in every form will face divine reckoning.
16. Five characteristics: (1) *goggystai* ('grumblers, murmurers') — echoing Israel's grumbling in the wilderness; (2) *mempsimolroi* ('malcontents, fault-finders,' literally 'blamers of their lot/fate'); (3) following their own desires; (4) their mouth speaks *hyperogka* ('swollen, pompous, arrogant things'); (5) *thamazontes prosōpa* ('showing admiration for faces') *ōpheleias charin* ('for the sake of benefit') — flattering people for personal gain. The portrait is of people who simultaneously complain about everything and flatter those who can benefit them.
17. The tone shifts from denunciation to direct pastoral address. The imperative *mnēsthēte* ('remember') calls the community to anchor themselves in apostolic teaching. The phrase *tōn rhēmatōn tōn proeirēmēnōn* ('the words previously spoken') suggests the apostolic era is viewed as a completed period — the apostles spoke 'beforehand' (*proeirēmēnōn*), and their words now function as authoritative prophecy. This may suggest a date after the first generation of apostles.
18. The apostolic prediction is summarized: *ep' eschatou tou chronou* ('in the last time/period') there will be *empaiktai* ('mockers, scoffers') who follow their own desires. Similar predictions appear in Acts 20:29-30, 2 Timothy 3:1-5, and 2 Peter 3:3. The present situation is not a surprise but the fulfillment of what the apostles foresaw. The community should be prepared, not panicked.
19. Three final descriptions: (1) *apodiorizontes* ('those who make boundaries, those who cause divisions') — they fragment the community they have infiltrated; (2) *psychikoi* ('natural, worldly, soul-ish') — the same word James uses (3:15) for wisdom that is 'earthly, unspiritual'; (3) *pneuma mē echontes* ('not having the Spirit') — the definitive diagnosis. Despite any claims to spiritual insight, they lack the Holy Spirit entirely. The contrast between *psychikos* (natural) and *pneumatikos* (spiritual) echoes 1 Corinthians 2:14-15.
20. The contrast is emphatic: *hymeis de* ('but you'). While the false teachers destroy, the community is to build. The participle *epoikodomountes* ('building up') uses construction imagery — the faith is the foundation, and believers are the structure being raised upon it. The faith is called *hagiōtatē* ('most holy'), the superlative reinforcing the sacredness of the deposit they have received. Prayer in the Holy Spirit (*en pneumatī hagiō*) distinguishes them from the false teachers who are *pneuma mē echontes* ('without the Spirit,' v. 19).
21. The main imperative in this section: *tērēsate heautous en agapē theou* ('keep yourselves in the love of God'). The verb *tērēsate* ('keep, guard, maintain') echoes verse 1 where believers are *tetērēmenois* ('kept') by God — there is a divine keeping and a human keeping that work together. The participle *prosdēchomenoi* ('waiting for, expecting') turns their gaze to the future: the mercy (*eleos*) of Jesus Christ at his return, which leads *eis zōnē aiōnion* ('to eternal life'). The letter's emotional arc moves from urgent warning to confident hope.
22. The textual tradition for verses 22-23 is notoriously unstable, with manuscripts preserving two-fold, three-fold, and other arrangements. The SBLGNT follows a reading that distinguishes two or three groups. The first group: *eleate diakrinomenous* ('have mercy on those who are doubting/wavering'). The participle *diakrinomenous* can mean 'doubting' or 'disputing' — these are people caught between faithfulness and the false teachers' influence. They need compassion, not condemnation.
23. The remaining groups require more urgent action: (1) some must be *sōzete ek pyros harpazontes* ('saved by snatching them from the fire') — a rescue operation from imminent destruction, echoing Zechariah 3:2 and Amos 4:11; (2) others require mercy with *phobō* ('fear, caution'), while *misountes* ('hating') even the *chitōna* ('inner garment, tunic') that has been *espilōmenon* ('stained, spotted') by *sarx* ('flesh'). The image is of a garment so contaminated by sin that even it must be avoided — the rescuer must be careful not to be contaminated by the very person being rescued. The pastoral wisdom is nuanced: different situations require different approaches.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Zechariah 3:2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Amos 4:11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. The great doxology begins. After a letter focused on danger, Jude turns to the One who can *phylaxai* ('guard, protect, keep safe') believers *aptaistous* ('without stumbling') — the very security the false teachers threaten. The verb *stēsai* ('to stand, to present') before *katenōpion tēs doxēs autou*

('before the presence of his glory') is an eschatological courtroom image: God will present believers amōmous ('blameless, without blemish') — the same word used for sacrificial animals without defect (cf. Ephesians 1:4, 5:27). The final note is en agalliasei ('with exultation, great joy') — the presentation is not somber but jubilant.

- 25.** The doxology ascribes four attributes to God: doxa ('glory'), megalōsynē ('majesty, greatness'), kratos ('might, dominion, sovereign power'), and exousia ('authority, right to rule'). The temporal scope is comprehensive: pro pantos tou aiōnos ('before all the ages' — eternity past), kai nyn ('and now' — the present), kai eis pantas tous aiōnas ('and unto all the ages' — eternity future). God's sovereignty spans the totality of time. The mediation dia Iēsou Christou tou kyriou hēmōn ('through Jesus Christ our Lord') ensures that the doxology is christologically grounded. The final amēn seals the prayer and the letter. This doxology has been used in Christian worship from the earliest centuries and remains one of the most recognized benedictions in the church.