

EPISTLE OF JUDE

(Lesson 14) - Pastor Joh. W. Matutis

www.nnk-berlin.de

E-Mail: pastor@matutis.de

Concerning the studying

I **recommend** you to read through the respective book in the bible at first. Our manual is the bible. And then to go through one or two pages of the material every day, which implies to also look up and read the given bible scriptures to become thoroughly acquainted with the subject. Another suggestion would be to use this material as one's regular devotion.

If you would like to **obtain a degree (certificate) at the end of the seminar**, you need to answer the **test questions** at the end of each lesson and send or email it to us with your full name and address. And now I wish you lots of joy and spiritual profit during your bible study.

Pastor Joh. W. Matutis

MISCELLANEOUS

The Epistle of Jude is probably one of the least known texts of the New Testament. Even the name of the author is a little alienating because we have to think of **Judas Ischariot** who betrayed Jesus. But the **Judas** who wrote this letter is someone else. He calls himself a „servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James“.

The **Epistle of Jude is very interesting literature** – not only because it is one of the shortest letters of the New Testament. This text is perhaps one of the least read scriptures of the bible. This might be because of the strange content, but yet it has a lot to reveal to nowadays bible readers. It is a harsh letter of opposition.

Jude 17 definitely points to the post- apostolic era. The Epistle of Jude is probably older than the 2nd Epistle of Peter, because Peter seems to refer to it and extend it in some ways.

The church father Origenes says about this letter: **"Only a few lines but abundance of strong words of divine grace"**.

Jude seems to be a lover of **trilogy**. He often uses „**triads**“, which consist of single words or whole sentences, in order to share divine truth:

- Judas - Jesus – James (Verse 1a)
- called – loved – sustained (Verse 1b)
- mercy – love – peace (Verse 2)
- Atheism – shamelessness – denial of Jesus Christ (Verse 4)
- Israelites in the desert – the angels – the people of Sodom and Gomorrah (Verses 5-7)
- to blemish flesh – despise authority – mock glory (Verse 8)
- Michael – devil – Moses (Verses 9-10)
- Cain - Bileam - Korah (Vers 11)

Jude utilises three well-known personalities of the Old Testament who are considered negative examples.

It was assumed that the Epistle of Jude is one of the last inspirational letters. However, he fits into the canon of scripture right **before the book of revelation** because whereas Jude speaks of the filthiness and apostasy of the Christian confession of faith, **Revelations prophecies the judgment** in detail. **Theologically** Jude represents a **harsh polemic against heretics**. Jude is dealing with Gnostic heretics (false teachers) in the Palestine, Jewish Christian churches.

False teachers had crept into the churches. It criticises the passivity of the church, even though the intruders could be exposed by their wicked deeds and insolent speech (Jud 15). For the author it is a scandal that the church would still let those false teachers partake in the **communion** and fellowship (Jud 12). In many churches they used to fast before the communion service and would stay together to eat after service.

The false teachers used these **fellowship meetings** to spread their views and poisoned the peaceful atmosphere and misused the holy assemblies. Also Paul dealt with this issue (1 Cor 11,27-34). When he speaks of **unworthy** (1 Cor 11,27), he is referring to people who would come drunk or bloated with food to the „Lord's supper“ and this would be very **unworthy**. It was a sign of very **selfish** behaviour and disrespected the meaning of the communion. The Lord's supper was supposed to symbolize the unity of the body of Christ. Before God we are all the same, the poor and the rich. This is also referred to in 1 Cor 11,29. Therefore Jude speaks of this abuse. The false teachers misused their grace to lead an extravagant and indulgent life, denied God as the „only king“ and Jesus Christ as Lord (Jud 4).

Their attitude is called „godless“ (Jud 4), their self-indulgence as „sexual libertinism“ (promiscuous lifestyle). They are called dreamers (Jud 8), who claim visions and dreams of revelational sources for themselves and are characterised as false prophets.

The **main reproach**, that they despise the sovereignty of God is repeated. In addition they blaspheme „supernatural powers“, the angels. They blaspheme everything they do not know (Jud 10). Because of their behaviour and lifestyle they do not understand spiritual things. Like **Cain, Bileam and Korach** they rebelled against the order of God (Jud 11) and spoke falsely about God (Jud 15).

The letter of Jude is a harsh approach against the **godless intruders** of the church. The **false teachers denied God as the only God** (4.8,25) and rebelled therefore against the Jewish – Christian confession of faith (Deut 6,4ff.) of monotheism. Inclusively the false teachers therefore denied Jesus Christ as Lord (Jud 4) and only intermediate / advocate (Jud 25) as well as the angels (Jud 8) ab.

Also the Corinthian church (1 Cor 5 - 6) was facing similar problems with their adversaries. Therefore **their behaviour can be called godless** (Jud 15,18), which the author does 6 times in this short letter. For the author it is all about the **Godhead** of only one God (monotheism), which requires foundational reverence and obedience toward God and His divine order for people and the world (21,24), while godlessness despises and ignores the only God and His order of creation.

Jude wrote a **polemic letter of combat**, which addresses **the true Christians** in the churches. They are directly addressed as the „**beloved of God**“ (Jude 1.3,17,20). The **false teachers** are referred to as so godless (Jud 4.15,18), that he thinks a change of mind is impossible. Therefore he focuses all of his energy and attention to the church who still remembers her identity in the time before the false teachers came in. He calls them to break off contact with all those who spread those teachings and to distance themselves from them completely. The knowledge alone, that they are wrong and false is not enough anymore. They consequently have to remember their foundation (Jud 20) – their most holy faith. Jude lived at a time when Christianity was under severe political opposition from Rome as well as **aggressive spiritual infiltrations of Gnostic apostates and libertines**, who spread the seed of confusion so much that the consequence was a harvest of theological confusion.

Maybe these were the forerunners of Gnosticism who came to blossom about 25 years later and were opposed by the apostle John in his letters. Apart from John, who lived till the end of the 1st century, all other apostles had died as martyrs. Therefore Christianity was assumed to be struck down and vulnerable. He „**judges**“ the apostates and urges the believers to fight for their faith. He calls the church to watchfulness and to defend the biblical truth without compromise. He **describes** simply the godless character and the wicked deeds of the apostates (Jud 4.8,10,16,18,19). Furthermore he illustrates the vanity of their doctrines by the use of parables from nature (Jud 12.13). However, he does not enter an instructive discussion.

He only calls the church to fight for the truth in the midst of this spiritual combat. Therefore this letter is the only book of the NT which deals exclusively with the battle **against apostasy, the falling away** from true biblical faith (Jude 3,17). **Apostates** are also referred to as in the texts in 2Thess 2,10, in Hebr 10,29, in 2 Petr 2,1-22 and in 1 Joh 2,18-23. Jude compares the church with a building, just like Peter (1 Petr 2,5) and Paul (1 Cor 3,16). The **ancient Christian foundation** is and remains the message of the prophets and the apostles (Eph 2,20-22). For Jude the appearance of the false teachers and mockers is already „**the time of the Last Days**“ (Jud 18) which refers to the time between the incarnation of Jesus and His return (Act 2,17 / Hebr 1,2).

It is interesting how freely Jude deals with **apokryphical literature**, which he uses without worries to undermine his arguments. It shows how few verbal inspirations came from the bible and how few the dictated word of God – such a thing would be strange to every evangelical Christian or even seem „unchristian“. This also shows us **that the Septuaginta, the translation of the Greek N.T.**, contains a lot more of apokryphical books than most of the Protestant bibles. And even if they are contained then those texts are in the best case referred to as "**Apokrypha**" and hidden between Old and New Testament.

Apocrypha

Here is a short overview over the essential literature between the both testaments:

The prophet **Maleachi** ministered around 400 b.C. And was the last prophet of the OT – and then came 400 years of „silence“. In that time the OT was put together and translated into the Greek (between 280 -150 b.C.). The Old Testament apocrypha consist of 14 books.

The individual apocryphal books:

- **Esra** – it deals with the same material as the canonic book of Esra and Nehemia and the two books of Chronicles. It originated in the time 100 b.C. and is the work of several apocryphical authors. In Ch. 3-14 Esra deals with the apocalypse and Ch11-12 is about the „eagle - vision“, which deals with the Roman Empire and the coming of the Messiah. The Chs 15-16 were obviously added very late (around 270 AD).
- **Tobit** – is an account of the year 150 b.C. - religious poetry.
- **Judith** – originated in the 2nd century b.C. Judith was a faithful, religious woman of Bethulia, a pseudonym for Sichem. She saved the city from the army of Holofernes.
- **Additions to Esther** – was written in the Greek language and belongs to the canonical book of Esther.
- **Wisdom of Solomon** – one of the most attractive and interesting books of the apocrypha, written ca. 50b.C.
 1. Chapter: Ch 1.1-6,8 – book of eschatology. It presents the truth of eternal life by opposing the destiny of the righteous by the destiny of the unrighteous.
 2. Chapter: Ch 6,9-11,12 – a praise of wisdom, beautifully and expressively verbalized.
 3. Chapter: Ch 11.2-19,22 – is a historical review of Israel in Egypt and in the desert, interrupted by a discussion about the origin of the wickedness of idol worship.
- **Jesus Sirach** – it consists of 51 chapters and belongs to the wisdom literature of the Hebrews. It was written 175 b.C. The author is Jesus Sirach (50, 27). One of his grand-sons translated the Hebrew original into the Greek in 132 before Christ.
- **1. Maccabees** – is considered a historical and literal work of high quality. It reports about the wars of the Maccabees. It starts with the riots of Modin (167 b.C.) until the murder of Simon Maccabean (134 b.C.)
- **2. Maccabees** – is much like the 1st book but of lesser historical value. It represents a mystical exaltation of the Jewish riot against Greek Paganism.
- **Baruch** – claims to be authored by the assistant of Jeremiah in Babylon. It repeats words of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and other prophets. The book contains prayers and confessions of Jews in exile and promises of restoration.
- **Song of the three men in the fiery furnace** – this is an apocryphal amendment of the canonical book of Daniel (Dan 3,23). It is a psalm of thanksgiving.
- **Bel and the dragon of Babel** – those are legends that mock idol worship. It is the third apocryphal amendment of the Book of Daniel.
- **The prayer of Manasse** – is supposedly a prayer of a godless king of Judah, when he was brought to Babylon as a captive of the Assyrians. It was added after 2 Chr 33,19.

The Pseudepigrapha

Besides the Apocrypha there are also other texts – the Pseudepigrapha – those are books with false headlines. Those are religious texts which were put together under a wrong name in the time between 200 b.C. and 200 AD. They were written under the names of famous people of the OT such as Adam, Henoch, Noah, Moses, Zephaniah, Baruch etc. The **Pseudepigrapha** were never considered canonical. These scriptures were contentwise apocalyptic, instructive and legendary.

The most important Pseudepigrapha:

- **Assumption of Moses** – contains an alleged proclamation of Moses to Joshua. The book was written by a Pharisee 15 AD. It is a protest against the growing secularisation of the Pharisees in his time.
- **Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah** – consist of three parts: the martyrdom of Isaiah, the visions of Isaiah and the testament of Hiskia. The long lost testament of Hiskia (2.13-4,18) gives us a revelatory insight into the inner constitution of the Christian church at the end of the apostolic age. The visions of Isaiah (Ch.6.1-9,40) tell us in what way the Christians of the 1st century believed in the trinity of God, the incarnation of Christ, the resurrection and Ascension to heaven.
- **Book of Enoch** – is a fragmental work and consists of revelation that allegedly Noah and Enoch received concerning the coming of Christ and the future judgment. Jude is quoting parts in his letter.
- **The book of Jubilee** – divides world history in eras of Jubilees of 50 years each (comp Lev 25,8-12). The author of this work is a Pharisee (153-105 b.C.). He wants to save Judaism of the destructive effects of Hellenism by exalting the law and presenting the forefathers of the Jews in a certain light that makes them seem sovereign and above reproach.
- **Sibylline Oracles** – they originated in the times of the Maccabeans. They report about the downfall of the Empires and the coming of the Messianic era. In their form they are similar to the oracles of the Greek Sibylles. The ancient Sibylle of Kumae appeared for the first time in the year of 500 b.C. with Heraklit of Ephesus.
- **The psalms of Solomon** – consisting of 18 psalms in the middle of the 1st century b.C. Perhaps they were authored by a Pharisee whose name is unknown. They tell of the coming of the Messiah.
- **The testaments of the twelve patriarchs** – they tell of the alleged speeches of the 12 sons of Jacob. They are inspired by the descended words of Jacob (Gen. 49) . The work was authored in the 2nd century b.C.

The **ancient Christian churches** knew and used the Jewish Apocrypha, thus their thoughts influenced the scriptures of the New Testament, just like here in Jude for example.

The letter of Jude is **very expressive** in language and style and has the most **extensive vocabulary** of the New Testament when measured by its length. The church father Origines says in his commentary: „Jude wrote a letter with few lines but full of words of heavenly grace.“

Jude is directly **opposing false teachers**, who deny the heavenly power and authority of Jesus and tried to tempt the church into extravagant lifestyle. Therefore they cannot but expect a strict judgment. The Christian churches should stick together and especially when it comes to celebrating the communion service – and leave the judgment of the false teachers up to God.

AUTHOR

The author calls himself „**Judas, servant of Jesus Christ, a brother of James**“ (Jud 1). He does not call himself an „apostle“. The **Epistle of Jude** is called after his author (V. 1), who was one of the four **half-brothers of Jesus** (Mt 13,55 / Mk 6,3). Being **the fourth shortest book of the N.T.** – (Phlm, 2 Joh and 3 Joh are shorter) – the letter of James is the last of 8 pastoral letters. The letter does not quote directly from the OT but definitely contains at least 9 indications to it. The **name »Jude«** was widely spread, at least **eight other people** in the NT carried this name, but it is generally assumed that not other Jude but the brother of Jesus is the true author of this letter.

He must not be confused with the **apostle Judas**, the son of James (Lk 6,16 / Act 1,13). Jude called himself the **»brother of James«**, who was leading the Jerusalem Council (Act 15) and who was another half-brother of Jesus (V. 1; comp. Gal 1,19). He **uses the same greeting** like James in his letter (comp Jam 1,1), and he **calls himself not an apostle!** (V. 1), but rather even made a difference between the apostles and himself (V. 17).

In the beginning Jude rejected Jesus as Messiah (Joh 7,1-9), but he converted together with another brother of the Lord after the resurrection of Christ (Act 1,14). This letter was acknowledged as inspired by God and admitted in the official canon (170 AD) – firstly because of the relationship between Jude and Jesus, because he was an eye-witness of the resurrection and secondly because of the content of the letter. We have reason to believe that Jude did not write 62 AD. He simply introduces himself as „**the brother of James**“. If James would already have suffered the martyr death of the Sanhedrin, it would not be plausible for him not to mention it at that point. It is remarkable that this letter lacks any indication of persecution or anecdote of the Jewish war or the fall of Jerusalem.

When the author of **Jude calls James his brother**, he does so because James played a very important role. The New Testament knows many disciples called Jude, resp. Judas. But who was the author of this letter? It surely cannot be the apostle Judas Thaddaeus, since the author distinctively distances himself from the apostles. **James was not an apostle** (Vers 17), but one of the disciples. Just like his other brothers, James at first did not believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God (Joh 7,5). After the resurrection of Jesus Christ he came to faith and also proclaimed the gospel (Act 1,14 / 1 Cor 9,5). Therefore it seems that the Jude who simply calls himself a servant of Jesus Christ is at the same time also a biological brother of Jesus (Mat 13, 55 / Mk 6, 3).

We know that at first he did not believe, like his brother James (Joh 7, 5), **and later became a Christian**(Act 1, 14). He was married and served the church as itinerant preacher or missionary. That he himself would be hesitant and reverend toward Jesus and his relationship with him. He was a simple man with a fiery spirit and filled with prophetic zeal, but behind this harshness there is a warm and loving heart – notice how many times he uses the word "**beloved**" (verse 3,17,20). We do not hear much about the doctrines of the ones he opposes but we understand that their appearance is interpreted as **a sign of the Last Days** and that they have no morals. There are also many indications that point to non-canonic, apocryphal traditions (for example the battle of archangel Michael with Satan, etc); which the author uses for his argumentation. He seems to be strongly influenced by the Pharisee Jewish-Christianity and he is fighting for a holy church. The author deals with the perceptions and foundations of the Libertains in so much detail, like the apostle Paul with the Judaists in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians. He compares them with wicked people of biblical history (Jud 5-7,11). He wants to awaken the fear in the church members.

RECIPIENTS

The recipients are not called by name, they are simply addressed „**the called who are sanctified by God, the Father and sustained in Jesus Christ**“. God called them from afar to become partakers of His church through the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ through the „**servants of Christ**“. „Servant“ was also a title of honor in the OT (Jos 24,29 / Ex 14,31 / Job 1,8; 2,3 / Is 42,1; 52,13). In the NT the servant was **the authorized**, who shares the message of God. The blessing in V. 2 tells us that mercy, peace and love are already provided by God. These attributes are supposed to be strengthened and multiplied in the believers.

The salvation of the recipients of this letter was not in danger but the false teachers, who preached a false gospel and lived according to it tempted the ones who were not saved and urgently needed to hear the true gospel. Jude wrote an urgent call to the Christians to declare war to any form of heresy. He was talking to the Christians who were not fallen into temptation but yet needed to be strengthened. This kind of approach toward this confusion lets us assume that it was not just for one particular area (comp V. 4). Since the author assumes **thorough knowledge of the OT and Jewish traditions among the readers** we can assume that he is addressing churches where the Jewish Christian members were a majority (Jud 5-7,9,11,14,18).

The allusions of Jewish literature like the book of Enoch (V.14) and the Assumption of Moses (V.9) as well as other Jewish stories (V. 9,11) support the impression that the recipients were **educated and literate** Jewish Christians. The letter of Jude is a writing that is addressing Christians without naming a certain place. The issue of Jude is the fight for faith in the face of people who came into the church and then denied the **reign of Jesus Christ** and behaved „godless“. They were referred to **as mockers of angelic powers**. Since this letter is not addressing a certain person or a certain church, but rather all of Christianity this letter is counted among the **seven general ("catholic") epistles**. The recipients of the epistle were the „**called**“, who were loved by the Father and purposed and sustained for Jesus (Jud 1). This „catholic“ (= general) approach still addresses a certain people. The readers are warned against people who are living in the church (Jud 4) and even participated in the communion celebrations (Jud 12) even though they did not live according to Christian doctrine (Jud 8-16).

COMPOSITION

The epistle must have been written about 69 AD since Jude is referring to the prophecies of Peter (1.Petr) which was written around 66 AD. Some years before the composition of this letter James had died as a martyr. The recipients all probably heard the apostles preach personally (Jud 17). The fall of Jerusalem is not mentioned with one word, otherwise it would probably be so between verses 5-7. Since Peter seemed to know this letter it cannot be written after his death in AD 69. The place of composition is unknown.

The doctrinal and moral decay that this letter evolves around (V. 4-18), has a lot of similarities with the **2nd Epistle of Peter** (2,1 – 3,4). For several reasons we assume that Peter wrote his letter before the Epistle of Jude. In the **2nd Epistle of Peter** the threat of false teachings is in the future (2 Petr 2,1,2; 3,3), while the **Epistle of Jude** deals with them at present tense (V. 4,11,12,17,18). Furthermore it refers to texts from 2nd Peter 3,3 and confirms that this statement was made by an apostle (v. 17,18). Since Jude does not mention the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70), even though the letter of Jude was probably written after 2nd Peter (ca. AD 68-70),

it is most likely that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. Even though Jude traveled with many other brothers and their wives (1 Cor 9,5), it is assumed that he wrote this letter in Jerusalem. We don't know who were the believers that Jude is addressing in this letter, but facing the Jewish illustrations in this letter it should be Jewish Christians. Without a doubt he was addressing believers in a region where false teachers were at work. Jude saw a **very threatening crisis of the church coming** where it would be a problem of life and death, a falling into heresy of the church. Yet the place of composition is unknown, and indication could be the assumption of Clemens Alexandrinus that it might be Alexandria, but also Palestine because of the name „**Jude**“ and the use of the Apokrypha.

AUTHENTICITY

It is understandable that such a short letter that was not even written by an apostle was not spread as fast as others, but it does not lack historical testimonies. In the old church history we encounter the letter with Tertullian, Clemens of Alexandria and Origenes. Hieronymus acknowledges the letter but also indicates that there could be a reason against catholic acknowledgement because of the use of non-canonic texts: the Jewish „ascension of Moses“ (V. 9) and the „book of Henoch“ (V. 14 ff.). But why should Jude not be allowed to refer to such texts? Also Paul used incidents that are not recorded anywhere in the holy scripture, yes even of Gentile authors (2 Tim 3, 8 / Tit 1, 12). Jude quotes non-canonic pseudepigraphical (which means the true author is other than claimed in the text) sources like 1st Henoch (V. 14) and the Ascension of Moses (V. 9), in order to underline his point. We also have to trust the guidance of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim 3,16 / 2 Petr 1,20,21), that he was inspired by the divine spirit and used resources with truthful information. Thus he did not do anything that Paul did not do (comp. Act 17,28 / 1 Cor 15,33 / Tit 1,12).

Furthermore the **Epistle of Jude includes 9 historical illustrations of the OT**, the exodus (Jud 5), the rebellion of Satan (Jud 6), Sodom and Gomorra (Jud 7), the death of Moses (Jud 9), Cain (Jud 11), Bileam (Jud 11), Korah (Jud 11), Henoch (Jud 14,15) and Adam (Jud 14). After the 4th century the church tradition in general had no longer doubts concerning the authenticity of the Epistle of Jude.

PURPOSE AND GOAL

This is already clear from the beginning (Jud 3-4): exhortation to keep the pure faith and warning against false teachings that had entered the church with heresies. You can sense the inner desperation of the responsible shepherd and author, who is concerned about the moral decay of his church members and the degradation of Christianity among the Gentiles.

Jude 3 tells us that Jude actually wanted to write about salvation but the Holy Spirit inspired him to change the topic. The special conditions forced him to deal with the problem of heretics (Jud 4). In the church troublemakers had entered the scene. This could have been „**travelling prophets**“ and missionaries (2 Joh 10), of which there were a lot in that time who tried to sneak into the churches by force or secretly.

The Gnostics, respectively Libertines were the current occasion that Jude used to call the saints to fight the good fight of faith.

The Epistle of Jude is very short, like a „flyer“ and is a call to fight against the heretics. It is addressing Christians in order to warn them of the false teachers who strayed from the truth.

We only get to know very little as to who exactly those heretics are and what kind of doctrine they taught. But according to the remarks of the author, what they practiced, believed and taught was wrong. They actually despised the divine order and commandments of God. They justified their attitude with alleged revelation from the realm of the spirits, who actually had nothing to do with God.

The author just calls them „dreamers“ (fantastics). They actually acknowledge the sovereignty and power of Christ, but they „blaspheme“ it, (Jud 4,8,10,16). They do that by smiling down on every good and true thing of God, discredit and deny the truth. They even think they do not have to submit to anybody, being free spirits but at the same time also deny their obedience to the creator.

The **characteristic of the false teachers** in this letter is „rebellion“. This is what we also understand through the OT images that the author uses (Korah, Bileam, Lucifer etc.). This despise of the order of God is followed by immorality and sexual sin. Therefore the author calls the Christians to fight for their faith, which was given to the saints once and for all (Jud 3). He also points to their most holy faith, which the church is built upon in order to keep building them up (Jud 20). Jude wants to protect the saints of this spiritual pestilence which is spreading. All who stray from the apostolic teaching, the faith and practice thereof are not of God and will be judged on the day of Judgment with darkness and eternal fire.

Jude describes the story of the decay of faith from the beginning to end. It deals with ambitious angels, complacent Cain, the corrupt Sodomites, the rebellious Israel, the greedy Bileam, arrogant Korach and the decay of faith in his own time as well as the time to come like our time now. All in all we see **three judgments** over mergers of evil people and **three judgments** over single, wicked people.

CONTENT AND ARRANGEMENT

- greeting and blessing Vers 1- 2
- fight for the truth Vers 3- 4
- punishment in history Vers 5- 7
- characteristics of false teachers Vers 8-13
- prophecies over false teachers Vers 14-16
- perseverance in faith Vers 17-23
- blessing Vers 24-25

The key word : „preservation“

The key verse : „*To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy...* (Jud 24).

SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS

The stylistic similarities with the Epistle of **James** cannot be denied. Perhaps the brothers had the same talent for writing (compare their doxology) and a rough ascetic side. The style of speech of Jude is powerful, passionate and full of drastic images (comp for ex. Jud 12-13.)

The similarities in content we can find in 2nd Peter (comp. Jud 4-16 and 2 Petr 2,1-19 and Jud 17-18 and 2 Petr 2,2-3). Furthermore we find **indications and references of the OT** in the letter of Jude which confirm the content of the OT and give a New-Testament and salvation historical view and interpretation thereof.

- The disobedient and unbelieving Israelites die in the desert. Vers 5 (4 Mos 14, 35)
- The wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrha are consumed by fire Vers 7 (1 Mos 19)
- The sin of Cain Vers 11 (1 Mos 4, 8).
- Bileam's spirit of mammon Vers 11 (4 Mos 22-24)
- The rebellion of Korach Vers 11 (4 Mos 16)
- The God-fearing Henoch Vers 14-15 (1 Mos 5, 21-24)

And also this letter **gives unique insight into eternity** (resp. indications of eternity)

- The fallen angels are kept with eternal chains until the day of judgment (chains and fire) (Vers 6,
- The archangel Michael fighting with the devil about the corpse (Mos V.9).
- The prophecy of Enoch about the return of Christ and the coming judgment (eternal life) (Vers14-15,21)

Jude clearly names the characteristics of a true Christian.

- Holding fast to the word Vers 17
- faithful despite mocking Vers 18
- spiritual attitude Vers 19
- fellowship and prayer Vers 20
- remaining in the love Vers 21
- mercy Vers 22
- being a helper Vers 23
- victorious Vers 24

DETAILED INTERPRETATION

Jude 1 - Die **recipients are called ones, beloved** of God, **sustained** through unity in Jesus Christ. They are kept in Jesus Christ as a precious gift, that was given by God the Father. The first verse contains **three names**, that are closely related with each other.

We assume that **Jude**, the author, was a biological brother of **James** and both were half-brothers of **Jesus** Christ. They also had two other brothers: Simon and Joseph. These four brothers believed only after resurrection and

Ascension in Jesus Christ, not before that (Jo 7,5 / Mt 12,46-50 / Act 1,14 / 1 Cor 9,5). **James and Jude** are not only related by biological relationship but also spiritual brotherhood. Therefore **James** is his brother in even two ways. Both brothers had a direct and close relationship with Jesus. Jude wants to serve Jesus **as slave** and as **brother** his brothers. Service for Jesus and ministry to the brothers cannot be separated from each other. You cannot serve God without serving your neighbour. If we love God we will never really know for all of our life. But if we love a brother or a neighbour we can experience every day.

Jude calls himself a „slave Jesus Christ“. He felt like the apostle Paul, who calls himself a slave of Christ (Rom 1,1). He does that because Jesus died for the ones who belong to Him and He ransomed them at a high price (1 Cor 6,20) and pulled them out of the power of darkness (Col 1,13), and because He has good intentions for His flock. To be a slave of Jesus Christ and to belong to Jesus Christ with all that you are, which means that you are completely available to Jesus. Jesus can use him and make him work according to His will.

Because **as slave you would have no claims or rights**. What was especially impressive at that time was a pleasure for Jude. He belonged to Jesus and served Him without holding anything back. „**Jude**“ means „**praise**“. Therefore this letter also ends with "**praise**" (V.25). The **second key word** in the first verse is „**called**“. God has called every single human before the foundation of this world. This word relates to the past. The **second term** is also „**loved**“ - which is related to the present. And the third term „**preserved**“ is related to our future.

At the same time the applied greek terminology has **two meanings**, because it can mean: **We are preserved for or by Jesus**. And this way the perspective embraces the present until the day when Jesus returns (Jud 24 f.). The called are the ones who are loved by God and He preserves His beloved until they reach the goal of perfection. The story of **salvation** is kept short. It contains a constant enhancement of God choosing people for Himself.

In this Epistle we do not find a word of praise for the Christians. Jude only deals with the things that are important before God. **To act like Jesus** and not mere human works are important. Jesus called them, and because Jesus chose them they belong to Him (2 Petr 1,10). Church in the Greek means: „**the ones who were called out**“. Jesus calls people out of this world and into His church. This is how they become His (Rom 8,30 / 1 Thess 1,4). **The one who is called can deny the call** because Jesus would never force anybody. Therefore all, also James, **freely became slaves** of Jesus Christ.

Jude 2 – The greeting begins with „**mercy, peace and love**“, the most important terms of the New Testament and faith. With these three words Jude describes the work of God's grace, because without this merciful love and grace our redemption would be unthinkable. „**May God give you much mercy, peace and love** ...“ This kind of greeting and blessing is on one hand a request to God and on the other hand a promise of God. This is how earlier the blessings of God were laid upon the people (Numb 6,22-27), so that the people would live with the blessing of God and serve Him. Sometimes the word „**mercy**“ is translated by „**grace**“. It describes the mindset of the strong to bind himself to the weak and then carry his burden (comp Is 43,24 / Ex 34,6 / Ps 51,3; 78,38 / Neh 9,17 / Ps 25,6; 103,8; 145,8 + 9 / Is 63,9 / Joel 2,13). God is called the „**merciful**“. To Him we also ascribe the great goodness (Ex 34,6 / Luk 1,50,78 / Rom 12,1 / 2 Cor 1,3), which would let people „**receive the undeserved**“. So it is with the word "**peace**" - it is exclusively a **gift of God**, a central term of the bible (O.T.). It is a part of the covenant of God with people, a **onesided act and gift of God**. „**Shalom**“ in the Old Testament is referring to a condition of the best possible conditions of life by the hand of God. Because only with God health, wealth, freedom and security can unfold. There we do not use words as weapons and there is also peace in a political – military sense.

The Old Testament proclaims peace as a part of the original plan of God. **Peace is a gift of God**, yes even more: God Himself is peace: „**The Lord is peace!**“, (Ju 6,24). The spiritual dimension of peace will only manifest in **Jesus Christ** where peace is **no longer a condition but a person** in which it manifests (Eph 2,14).

Jesus does not only bring peace but He is peace! This peace is solely based on the substitutionary work of redemption of Christ through the condition of peace between God and the sinner which ended the exclusion from the Father's house! Through this **peace-making** on the cross of Jesus the sinner was saved and: „We have peace with God through our God Jesus Christ (Rom 5,1 ff.). This peace tells us more than 20 times : „mercy be with you, and peace of God, our Father and of our Lord Jesus Christ.“

„**Peace**“ always had something to do with **the relationship** of a man with God (Lev 17-26). Only then a man, a people or a city is doing well (Gen 37,14 / Ex 18,7 / 2 Sam 11,7 / Jer 15,5).

In addition it is one of the prerogatives **of a king of the Old Testament**, to care for the production and procurement of peace in political areas etc. Salomos's reign was prolonged because he had peace with all his neighbouring countries (1 Kin 5,4). Therefore the faithful prophets of the OT always preached that the troubles and distress were also in relation to national and political extend because of **Israels separation** from God and because they did not fear God. The false prophets prophesied peace but their statements proved to be lies (Jer 14,14; 27,9-

14,16). For the prophets and not only for the time of exile and post-exile Shalom more and more became an eschatological term, one of the key words of yearning for a future where God would intervene and finally bring peace. This is where the famous words of Isaiah 2:4 apply: that a time will come where the people will turn their swords to plowshares and their spear to reaping hooks.

This condition of peace will only manifest „in the Last Days„ according to the prophets: this can be taken literally and means after the historical time. Today and then this refers to **the coming kingdom of the Messiah**. Therefore the great peace will not become a reality in this life (Is 2,2). Where law and works are predominating, we only find failure and death. **Where grace rules there is mercy** (Eph 2,4 / Hebr 4,16), **peace** (Rom 5,1) and **love** (Rom 5,5) in fullness.

(Jud 3) – Without the infinite love of God our salvation would be unthinkable; therefore the author tells us three times that we are „**God's beloved**„ (Jud 3,17,20). Every time when Jude addresses the true believers in directly, he calls them „beloved“. He speaks about the „divine love“. This love has nothing to do with our earthly love that we know. It is selfless, unconditional and perfect. It is merciful, compassionate and eternal. Therefore Jude can still address the readers who did not act loveable as „beloved“ (1Joh 4,19).

In the church it is not about sympathy or antipathy, but only the love of God that will also require us to love each other (1Thess 2,8). It was important to Him to write about **their mutual salvation**, because anyone who needed to be saved was – without a doubt – in danger.

When Jude already wrote a couple of lines he realized that there was something that had already begun to disturb the peace and planted its seed. In the further course of the letter it was about the „**sustaining and preserving of salvation**“.

Our salvation is exclusively a work of God, which can be seen in the **doxology of God** in Rev 7,10.19,1 etc. There we can see that our salvation is only grace to God. He is the One who acts. God Himself saved us (Tim1,9). Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners (1Tim 1,15). He did not come to condemn the world but to save it (Joh 3,17). But we must always agree with God's actions and let Him „**save us**“, respectively hold on to His salvation. Therefore Timothy is supposed to watch the doctrine he preaches so that he would save others (1Tim 4,16).

Jude puts together **two incidents that happened at different times: God's help** during the exodus and then also God's judgment of a part of those „**saved**“. Jude wants to show by this example: „**Once saved**“ does not mean „**always saved**“ (Numb14 / Ez 18,24; 33,12)! Jude wanted to warn against certain teachings of the end time that would promote **lukewarmness**.

It is up to us and our lifestyle if we would receive God's blessings or His curse (Deut 11,28). After Jude **emphasises the thought of salvation**, he changes the topic through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which is exhortation to hold on to faith. Such spiritual correction of topic is a **sign** of the work of the Holy Spirit (com.1Cor 9,16 / 2Petr 1,21).

In the New Testament there are **different levels of exhortation** – from comforting encouragement, to encouraging calls, to conviction, to rebuke of thought up to serious rebuke or even threatening charges. **But all kinds should be inspired by the Holy Spirit** and to be motivated by wanting the best for your neighbour (com. Act 11,23 / Rom 12,1,8 / 1Cor 1,10 / 2Cor 10,1 / 2Thes 3,12 / 2Cor 5,20 / 1Thess 4,18 / Hebr 3,13;10,25 / 2Kor 2,7 / 1Thess 5,11 / 1Cor 14,3).

The rebuke and exhortation cannot be separated by category. It is important what it exhorted, **in this case it exhorts to salvation** (Act 2,40 / 2Cor 5,20):

- to stay with God with a firm heart (Act 11,23),
- to keep the faith (Act 14,22),
- to sanctification of our body (Rom 12,1),
- to unity (1Cor 1,10),
- to love (2 Cor 2,5),
- to honorable lifestyle (Eph 4,1) and
- to intercession (1Tim 2,1).

Such exhortations bring rich blessing and communicate great power, it also revives the hope (comp .2 Cor 7, 4-13 / Rom 15,5).

There will perhaps never be a time on earth when we don't have to fight. **At first the fight** to come to faith and then to keep the faith.

The hardest fight to fight for the apostles was the **fight for pure doctrine** which was to be passed on to the church. Surely **faith always carries a fight with it**, because the enemy of God wants to destroy and tempt (Eph 6,12). It is a fight **against sin in us and around us** (Hebr 12,4). Also the mission is a battle, against disbelief (Phil 1,27), and also the faithfulness of the church (Col 2,1).

Somebody used to say: **the best always wants to be fought for. Actually Jude wanted to write about salvation and redemption**. The Holy Spirit changed his mind and changed the original concept. In the whole course of salvation history we see how God always changed the course and directed His servants to do something other than what they planned or thought in the beginning. This is what the bible calls **“guidance”**. Children of God are only children of God when the spirit of God is guiding them and is allowed to guide them (Rom 8,14). Every man needs guidance. If not of God, then from somebody else. Just like Saul was seeking guidance – but when God remained silent, he got help from somebody else, for example a fortune teller (1Sam 28 / 1Chr 10,13). Or you go to sects and heretics, just like some did who were addressed in the Epistle of Jude.

God wants us to know what He wants. His word exhorts us to know His will. Anyone who does not understand what God's will for his life is, is called a fool in the bible (Eph 5.17 / Col 1.9). It is a great privilege to know the will of God because God holds all the details of our life in His hand (Dan 5,23b / Pro 20,24 / Jer 10,23).

Some thoughts how miraculously and wisely God guides us:

- God guides by the word of God** - (s. Joh 16) – The Holy Spirit guides us in all truth if we study the whole truth (s. also Ps 119,105 / Eph 5,17ff. /Joh 15,15 / Gen 18,17 / 2Petr 1,19 / Jos 1,8 / Ps 19,8-12)
- **God guides us through circumstances**, by closing doors and opening others (comp. Act 27. 28;8,4;16,1ff. / Gen 20,6;26,7-11 / 1Sam 25,26.33.34).
 - **God guides us through our thinking**. He forms our thinking by constant reading and meditating on His word (comp 1Sam 9,6,16; 1Kin 12,1-15 / 2Chr 10,1-15 / 2Kin 14,8-14 / 2Chr 25,17-20; 36,22.23 / Esra 7,27 / Ps 119,36 / Phil 2,13 / 2Petr 1,20.21 / Act 16,10).
 - **God guides us through other people**, for example the counsel of mature Christians (s. Pro 11,14;12,15; 15,22;20,5;24,6 / Ps 77,21 / Act 8, 26.9). Paul received guidance from Ananias – emotions such as being in love, ambitions, pride, etc should not be confused with guidance. We should always question ourselves and ask : Why do I think I should go in this direction? (Ps 139,23) – Because you can never mistrust your own motives enough.
 - **God guides us by giving us an impulse in our heart**, for example an inner urging or inner peace (Col 3,15). **Don't do anything when you have doubts**. When the time of action has come there will be light.
 - **God guides us by dreams, visions and revelations** (Act 12,16).
 - **God guides His children step by step**, for example by **revelations** (Gen. 12,1 etc.). The first church had the „guiding presence of the Holy Spirit“. The OT people of God (Israel) received guidance by a pillar of fire and a cloud.
 - **God leads those who follow Him** (Mt 16,24).
 - **God does not guide us against our will**. He does not force anybody to follow Him. Never under pressure. **God does not push us!** Demons push us!! (1Cor 12,1ff.). Never make a decision under time pressure (Ecc 3,25,26). But also do not wait too long (Jam 1,5-6). Make a decision where you can really see the light of God. Only act when you have inner peace with the decision (Col 3,15). Let the peace of Christ be your referee (comp. Phil 4,6-7).

The ways of God are holy. They are always something special. Unique and one of kind. For the natural man it is hard to grasp and understand. God Himself determines our path and knows what and how much we can bear (Ps 32,8 / Ex 13,21-22 / 2Petr 1,3 / Ps 144).

God guides us through teaching, knowledge and awareness. He guides us through storms, depths, crisis and battles. He guides us by allowing us or others to make mistakes (Rom 9,9-33 /s.a. Joseph). He takes us through tribulations and opposition and through encouragements and discouragements. If God wants to take us somewhere he knows what awaits us on the journey, what we will have to face and he also finds ways and means to take us through it until the end. Therefore **Jude** also receives the **„prophetic assignment“** to tell the believer where and what dangers they have to be aware of. Thus the inspiration of the Holy Spirit turns this letter into an **„apologetic (defending a doctrine) text“ about the fight of faith**. The Epistle was written with the purpose to exhort the Christians to fight for the foundation of Christianity which was given to them as an office.

Right in the beginning Jude emphasises the **scriptures and confessions** that were given to the church. Peter also wrote in his second letter (2,21): “For it would have been better if they did not know the way of righteousness, than to know it and turn away from the holy command that was given to them.” He was referring to the scriptures and confessions that also apostle Paul is referring to (1Cor 11,23 o.15,3). It always matters to **sustain** it because the foundation of faith is depending on it.

Even in the beginning of Christianity there were massive **confrontations with heretics**. **Almost every book of the New Testament** is either an answer or a recation to one of the many heresies.

(Jud 3.4) – The occasion of the Epistle – The church situation and the performance of the false teachers is the actual occasion of the letter. The fellowship and communion services at church were opportunities for the church members to gather and for the heretics to spread their teachings. But they lived an immoral lifestyle and were wicked – sometimes even with the excuse that the grace of God would allegedly cover them. They even denied that Jesus Christ is **the only Lord**. Those were teachers who lied and pretended to be honest and authentic on the surface, but actually planned to lead the people of God astray (comp. Mt 7,15 / Act 20,29 / Gal 2,4.5/ 1Tim 4,1-3 / 2Petr 2,1.20 / 1Joh 2,18-23).

Those false teachers were led by Satan and probably pretended to be evangelists (com. 2Cor 11,13-15 / 2Pt 2,1-3 / 2Joh 7-11). They were especially dangerous because they were so »**sneaky**«.

● **Jude mentions that they sneaked in**. But how? They did not enter through the **door**, that Jesus speaks about (Joh 10,1), but **came through another door** and for different reasons. They did not want or look for **forgiveness**. They denied the legitimate door to Jesus and the church is repentance and confession of sin. They did not appreciate the precious **blood of Jesus**. Such people use the church as „**footsteps**“.

● These invaders were actually „**outcasts**“, that threatened to poison the church and therefore should actually be sent out. Therefore Jude **felt forced** to mention to them a very urgent and frustrating topic and its possible effects.

● It seems like the Epistle of Jude did not originate from an **early phase of the first church** because it states that false teachers had sneaked into the churches „**without notice**“ (com. Gal 2,4 / 2Cor 12,21 / Phil 3,18 / 1Joh 2,18; 4,1 / 1Cor 4,17,18).

● In a few words Jude describes very drastically the **evil workers** who crept into the church. They practiced „**immorality**“, **which had an effect upon their personality**. „Immorality“ poisons every area of life. In addition they are reckless and disrespectful and have no sense of shame. Nothing is holy to them. **Sin is always without shame** and without restraints. Sin knows no limits and is boundless (s. a. Rom 3,13 / 2Cor 12,21 / Eph 4.19).

Ancient authors such as **Platon** described this attitude with the terms „**insolence**“ and „**lawlessness**“.

- **Demosthenes** uses the picture of „the **brutality of a man**“ and depicts the „arrogance“ of Philipp of Macedonia.
- **Basilius** said it is the part of the soul that does **not want to be chastised** and defines this as the „**willingness to give in to temptation**“.
- **Plutarch** uses **Alkibiades**, who totally disregarded civil modesty and public opinion.
- **Josephus** used it to describe the reckless **queen Jezebel** and describes the scandalous act of a Roman soldier who relieved himself **publically in the temple area during a feast** which did not only cause public nuisance, but also contaminated the holy place, which was even worse.

And **this is how Jude describes the invaders**.

- They are „lustful“ and „immoral“ in their actions and are driven by their carnal desires, impulses and emotions – and therefore the good and the voice of God on the inside of them is quenched.
- They are brutal, insolent, offensive and violent. They have no thoughts and empathy for other people.
- Since they do not care much about opinions of others and of God, they are cold and indifferent toward others.
- They **pervert the grace of God** and deny the Son of God. Under the **pretense** of Christian liberty they interpret **the divine grace as permission for their trespasses** and devotion to carnal desires, since the flesh is not of or for God. Therefore they also deny the **resurrection of the body** (1Cor 15).

The dangerous about them is that they do all of this with words like grace, love and freedom. According to their opinion or understanding everything is allowed (com. Rom 6,1 / 1Cor 6,12). They **apply** grace to their immorality. The author reminds the readers of **three examples of judgment** from the time **before the settling down of Israel** and the time before the law.

He recalls ...

- the destiny of the people of **Israel**, who did not believe in Him during the wandering in the wilderness (comp Numb 14,11.21-23.26-35 / Ps 95,8-11).
- and the **angels** (comp. Gen 6,1-4) and the interpretation by the apocryphical Book of Enoch 6f.;10,4-6).
- And the **men of Sodom** and Gomorra (Gen 19,4-25). They wanted to commit fornication with the angels who visited Lot's house.

The examples show that such who fall from faith will not be spared. They have not passed the test and the end will be terrible. Three things are claimed against the dreamers who allegedly had revelational visions: they defile the flesh, despise the Lord and mock spiritual beings (= angels – here the fallen angels). With a prophetic call to repentance their moral defilement is described with the help of three persons of the Old Testament:

- Cain (1Mos 4,3-8)
- Bileam (4Mos 22-24)
- Korach (Mos 16)

The Epistle of Jude is „**an Epistle of exhortation**“, which wants to encourage a courageous attitude. Even the approach „**my beloved**“ (Jud 3) is a call to all believers who have good intentions and want to keep up the right faith, but are troubled by the scheming of the heretics.

How does this start? People who were once with us and then go away automatically turn to enemies who openly oppose the truth and are therefore even worse than such who never heard of Jesus. Especially about such people Jude is reporting in his letter. Paul says: “even from your own men „**wolves**“ will arise “ (Act 20,29-30 / 1Tim 1,3,7,19; 6,3-5).

The defilement of a church always **starts on the inside** through people who either forsook their faith or have never truly been a believer.

There are so many who only have the **appearance of a God-fearing person** but actually deny the power of God (2Tim 3,5 / Col 2,23). Often the churches and other believers are to blame when they receive new members into their church without testing them thoroughly but only judging them after their skills with words and outside appearance. Such people should not be taken in and carry church offices. They are only servants of Satan, whom he infiltrated into the church (com.2Cor 11,13-14 / 2Thess 2,9 / 1Tim 5,15). When Jude wrote his Epistle the wolves were already at work. Therefore he does not say that they will come one day but that they already sneaked in.

„**Certain people had sneaked in** ...- the false teachers are not mentioned by name and also not what they taught. But from the arguments of the author we find out about their corrupt heresies. After Jude had described the **begin of evil** he continues to describe the character of evil (Jud 4-10). To him false teachers are „**wicked**“ people whose names are long written in the Book of judgment.

Since the readers know whom he talks about, we dont have more detailed information. Before Jude speaks about theological thesis of the enemy in Verse 18 and 19, Verse 4 already reports wrong ethics, immorality and excesses (Jud 7,8,13,16).

This **libertinism** destroys the unity of the church (Jud 19) and caused division. Jude also describes the **spiritual back round of** the false teachers (Jud 16). **They are such who are disappointed with their destiny** ... just like the people in the desert were (Jud 5 / 1Kor 10,10). They rebelled against the will of God and do not approve of God and His guidance.

They live in inner rebellion. Just like Korah (Numb 16) they rebel against the divine authority and question publically if the apostle (in this case Aaron and Moses) are truly God-appointed and God-devoted leaders. In their eyes Aaron and Moses were not flawless, therefore Korah wanted to claim authority. He undermined thier authenticity and stirred up the others against them. According to Numb 16,30,31 **not only Korah was crushed** but also all those who had agreed with him. They did not only despise Aaron and Moses, but God who had appointed them (comp. Mt 2,30-32).

The typical with the wicked people and the **denial of the reign of God** and **Jesus Lordship** by their deeds and actions, even when they confess Him as Lord. But this then is only a mouth confession, because their **actions are louder than words**.

They are not atheists by theory but practically. They live as if there was no God and as if nobody could rule over them. This spiritual attitude comes along with a denial of the Holy Scripture or misinterpretations or even reinterpretations (2Petr 1,21).

In the Gentile world there were many lords – godheads, demons, angels, powers and authorities, so that each would worship the ones they preferred at that time (Rom 8,38). In general they acknowledged that there are certain powers **but not ONLY Jesus Christ**. Therefore they looked for signs of grace and approval not in obedience and the fruits of the spirit but (Gal 5,22), **deep thoughts or dreams /visions**.

(Jud 4) – false teachers sneaked into the church and gained access through a non-biblical way. They are hypocrites instead of **saints**. They are "unbelievers" and "phony believers" in contrast to the real believers. Jude said that they secretly **sneaked in**, similar to Simon the wizard (Act 8,13,18-25). For Jude they are something like parasites. In order to get a clear concept of this evil, let us all remember that the **apostel John** already wrote about those who went **away from us but have never been of us** (1Joh 2,19). Also Jude tries to track the traces of evil by speaking of such who are **not of us**. In Verse 4 he says that they are wicked. There is still this important difference that the wicked people that **John speaks about have gone from us**, while the wicked that **Jude** talks about **sneaked in**".

The **characteristics to recognize** those single people or even a group are not easy to figure out. They are **characteristics** that can only be discerned after a long time and examination. The first thing we notice in the descriptions of Jude is the lack of „**reverence of God**“ and then a lack of „**sanctification**“. This can be seen in the terms like shameless, excesses, immorality, lack of charity and **denial of the person Jesus Christ**. They deny "**our only Lord**". It is the arrogant denial of any authority. They do not deny the name of Christ, but they don't want to **submit to its authority** (s.a. Luk 19,14,27). Therefore they are determined to do only their own will and react with unwillingness to any law, limitation or restriction and want to continue to live like they did before. Therefore Jude reminds them of **3 awful examples of history** and proves where this can lead us.

- Korah and the people of Israel missed the privileges and advantages of Egypt and rebelled against God (Jud 5).
- The angels who did not maintain their holiness were not the ones who were involved with the fall of Satan but it deals with the second fall of the angels (Gen 6.1-2). The cause for the fall of Satan was his arrogance and pride. Satan and his angels were allowed to roam the earth and tempt the people and so on. The secret of the second fall of the angels was lust which caused them to leave their dwelling place and did not maintain their original substance (Jud 6). Due to their fall they were locked in darkness with eternal chains until the great day.
- In Sodom and Gomorrah lust and wickedness caused their destruction (Jud 7).

Jude proves that perdition always starts with lust and leads to rebellion against the authority of God. Rebellion against God always leads to leaving the position that God gave us and claiming sth else for ourselves. This is followed by a fall which results in judgment of God.

- Israel lusted for return to Egypt and sinned against God.
- The angels lusted and left their angelic positions that God had given them.
- The people of Sodom and Gomorrah lusted and left the natural order that God had ordained.

(Jud 5-16) – Judgment of the invaders.

Jude writes: "**I want to remind you,**" - this strong emphasis has a deeper meaning. The „memory“ is supposed to „**strengthen**“ and „**encourage**“ (Ps 71,15-17) just like for example communion (1Cor 11,23,26). It is so important to be reminded of God. It is the **special assignment of the Holy Spirit** next to the glorification of Jesus to remind them of Jesus message (Joh 14,26). There is no work of God, no matter how glorious, that cannot be lost or forgotten by sin.

(Jud 5-7) – The believers have to maintain their new condition. What they have learned and experienced has to be continuously cared for and preserved. Jude says that even one third of the angels did not maintain their position. Also the people of Israel failed during the wandering in the wilderness (Numb 13,14 / Hebr 16-19 / 1Cor 10,5-10) and forgot about their God.

The word „**Egyptland**“ it is a typical **Old Testament** terminology (Exod 12,41 / Lev 11,45 / Is 19,19) and therefore also an indication that the Epistle of Jude was addressing **Jewish Christians**.

(Jud 5-10) – A first preaching about the destiny of the wicked. „Even though you know all those things I want to remind you: even when the Lord had delivered the people from Egypt he destroyed all who did not believe later (Jud 6). The angels who disregarded their nature and left their sphere were punished with darkness til the day of judgment (Juda 7). Also Sodom and Gomorrah were an example: In a similar way they practiced iniquity and wanted to mix with beings of other nature, therefore they were punished with eternal fire.

(Jud 8) - The invaders are despisers and mockers of glory and powers. The people of Israel (Korah) are quoted as despisers of the God-appointed leadership of Aaron and Moses. Then the immoral people of Sodom and Gomorrah and finally the angels who rebelled against God.

The „**apostates**“ are called „**dreamers**“. They are not realists. Their life lacks foundation. They are only idle (Eccl 5,6). Where there are dreams there is idleness and much talk. Instead of holding fast to the reported apostolic revelations they would rather devote themselves to **uncontrollable dreams** (comp Jer 23.23).

The false teachers are claimed to be wicked and in denial of the Sovereignty of God.

But since the word: „**blasphemy**“ is always applied to God in the Old and New Testament we must be aware that this means dishonoring God. **Wicked** people according to the bible are people who had forsaken God even though they one knew them. It is also used for the unbelievers (Deut 9,4 / Is14,5).

The wicked does not deny the existence of God. But they seek to get rid of Him in order to escape the punishment and not think of it (Ps 10,4,511,13). Because they have forsaken the source of life, they are unhappy and have no peace on the inside (Is 48, 22; 57,21). The wicked shake all their lives (Job15,20); their conscience will threaten them the whole time (Pro 21,1), because their wicked actions displease God (Ps 5,5; 45,8), and in the bottom of his heart he expects the judgment of God (Rom 1.18).

Even though the wicked perish, God is not pleased in the death of evil man (Ez 18,23), but the divine Father would rather want them to live and convert. Jesus also died for the wicked (Rom 5,6), to pay the ransom for their justification (Rom 4.5).

Actually the wicked have something like a „**personality disorder**“, which is a **distorted relationship with their creator** and do not live the life they wanted to. **Fornication and harlotry** must be interpreted spiritually and have nothing to do with moral or sex. There is someone who knows God and then denies his knowledge of God and therefore his actions will bring upon himself the judgment of God. In a more thorough examination we will find that the people who are introduced in Rom 1 V.18 – 3,20 show the same characteristics as those in Rom 9-11 where it is also about how Israel forsook the Lord.

The **sin of Israel** was spiritual harlotry and fornication that caused God's wrath upon them. The text in Hebr 12,16 says: „...And let no one among us be a **fornicator or godless like Esau**.“ Esau knew God and still denied his God-conscience and therefore became unholy and received judgment. **Esau and the godless have one thing in common**. God introduced Himself to both and they rejected Him. There are no exceptions, neither in Rom 1,18 – 3,20 nor in Röm 9–11.

God introduces Himself to all of them, there is none who does not know God. All reject to serve God.

Therefore they became enemies and received their deserved judgment. The judgment of **pharao** was in order to manifest the power of God and to glorify Him. In the same sense the judgment of the **Jews** happened to glorify God. No matter how a man lives, if he is saved or gets lost, **the righteousness of God** is always manifested and He is always glorified.

The godless is not someone who denies God, but rather a person who willfully disregards and disrespects God and only acknowledges his own opinion as a me. Therefore the bible continues to call the believers to grow strong, so that they will not be moved by every wind of teaching (Eph 4,14).

Therefore **the world of the godless knows no righteousness** because it is a world of willfulness and egoism. Since the enemies are godless there is no way that their visions are revelations of God. Essentially: **The devil is the father of the godless**. He knows exactly that there is a God, but he does not want to have anything to do with it Him and fights against God with all that he has. The lifestyle of the godless exposes them as children of Satan. The godless **deny** the Lordship of God and deny this consciously by calling out to the Jews: „We don't want this Jesus to reign over us (Luk 19,14,27). In Jud 5.6.7 we see three terrifying examples with spiele mit dem unerbittlichen Gericht, und sie sollten die Adressaten vor den Irrlehrern warnen.

The **arrogance of the false teachers is exposed**. They mocked the **glory of the angels** and acted according to their instincts and desires like animals. Such a behaviour can only lead to death. Jude denies his enemies any spiritual insight. They deny Jesus Christ (Jud 4), and also deny (Jud 8) the sovereignty of God. Jude hits his enemies hard when he claims that they have no **understanding**.

While Michael did not dare to mock the devil, the apostates mock everything they don't understand. They do not have much understanding. They only follow their **animalistic instincts**. Their reasonability is not any better

than that of animals. Instead of understanding what is above them, they only understand what is below, just like animals. With this argument Jude exposes the Gnostic claim of a higher, special revelation ad absurdum. The knowledge which defiles their flesh is basically just as destructive as the sin of sodom.

Archangel „Michael“ - „Who is like God?“ The name of the heavenly being Michael is definitely of Jewish-Hebrew origin. In the Jewish mythology archangel Michael is the **head angel of God** who is especially watching over Israel (Dan 10,13.21;12,1) and leads the army of holy angels (Rev 12,7).

This **argument about the corpse of Moses** cannot be found anywhere else in the bible except in the Epistle of Jude. Michael had to fight against Satan, because God told him to. Something similar Michael does in Dan 10,13.

„**Devil**“ is another name for **Satan**, which means as much as »**author of confusion**« (comp Rev 12,9.10). Moses died on the mount of Nebo in Moab without ever reaching the promised land and was buried in a place that now man knows (Deut34,5.6). Perhaps this argument took place when Michael buried Moses. Therewith Satan was supposed to be kept from misusing the corpse for any diabolic purposes which are not explained in detail. Maybe Satan wanted to give the corpse of Moses to Israel and make it an idol for their worship. God sent Michael to make sure that the corpse would be buried.

This is reported in the pseudepigraphical book **The Ascension of Moses**. In the NT Christian revelation of John (Rev 12,7) Michael appears in eschatological context as the defeater of Satan who falls down into hell.

In the **apocryphal book of Enoch** (1,20) Michael is called fourth of seven archangels and patron saint of Israel and described merciful and patient (2,40).

The apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus describes an image of Michael as the keeper of the gates of paradise. Michael is also related to as „**angel of countenance**“ who is in charge of keeping the chronicles of world history according to the **apocryphal book of Jubilees** (Jub 1,27), but was then charged to write down the history of creation and Moses (Jub 2,1).

In the text scrolls of the **Dead Sea** that were found in 1947 Michael is called the „**prince of light**“ who is leading the heavenly forces of God against the evil powers under Belial. He is also called „**vice-king of heaven**“.

The author of the **Jewish Midrash texts** interpreted the name Michael often as biblical angelic beings that were not mentioned by name such as ...

- the cherub who is keeping the gate to paradise (Gen 3,24),
- the angel who went to Sodom in order to rescue Lot (Gen 19,1ff.),
- the angel who saved Isaac from the sacrificial death (Gen 22,11ff.),
- the angel who fought with Jacob (Gen 32,25ff.),
- the angel who was blocking the way of Bileam's donkey (Numb 22,22),
- the prince over the „army of the Lord“ (Jos 5,13–15),
- the angel who destroyed the army of the king of the Assyrians (2Kin 19,35) and
- the angel who saved the three young men from the fiery furnace (Dan 3,20).

In Judaism Michael is often mentioned together with Gabriel as protective angels of Israel. In the book of Daniel the angel Gabriel turns to Daniel with a Vision and said: „There is not one who supports me but Michael.“ (Dan 10,21). In the eschatological accounts of Daniel **Michael has a key function** for the people of Israel. „And in this time Michael, the great prince, will appear on behalf of the sons of Israel.“ (Dan 12,1) Furthermore the Jewish and Christian tradition also assumes Michael to do other service for God. He keeps the heavenly books and executes judgment.

The **history of the fall of angels** is deeply rooted in Jewish thinking and went through a special kind of development throughout the years.

The original report is in Gen 6,1-5 where the **angels are called the sons of God** which is usually the case in the Old Testament. In the book of **Job** the sons of God are appearing before the Lord and Satan was also among (Job 1,6;2,1;38,7).

These angels came to earth and tempted the daughters of man. Out of this alliance came forth the gender of giants. The fallen angels had taught the daughters of man the art of witchcraft and gave them a certain power.

This is also the origin of the giants that all men feared (Numb 13,32), since they also committed all kinds of crime, especially toward God and man – for example Goliath.

Also the **prophet Ezekiel** explains the fall of angels (Ez 28,15-18), that did not maintain their original condition and left their “place of authority” and entered foreign terrain (1Petr 4,15 / Rom 12,7 / 1 Cor 9,17).

(Jud 7) – This apparently deals with „homosexuality“

In the New Testament homosexuality is also mentioned in 1Cor 6,9-11 / 1Tim 1,9f. and in Rom 1,18-28. The basic doctrine rejecting homosexuality is from Numb 18. Homosexuality is not a part of the God-given order of creation.

The **sins of Sodom and Gomorrah** was undeniably the **homosexual behaviour** of the people there (Gen. 18,19). Jude says **they committed fornication** and want to pervert the other flesh, even though Lot offered them his daughters. **They willfully wanted to mix with beings of other substance** such as the angels who visited Lot.

God destroyed Sodom and Gomorra, Adama and Zeboim by sulfur and fire. (Gen 19,23-29 / Deut 29,23 / 2Petr 2,6). **Archeologists** found thick city walls, a cemetery of thousands of people and a Canaanite temple with altar close to the Dead Sea where we suppose Sodom had been. The city was covered by a 2m dust layer - indications for the fire from above. **Zoar** (Gen 19,19-23) was also found – not burned, and also 3 other cities from the early bronze age, the era of Abraham. Close to that they also found a burned out oil basin, a crater full of sulfur and salt, which might have caused an explosion and a rain of fire and sulfur.

The destruction of this city is used in the bible over **20-times** as illustration for the judgment of God in the era of Abraham and Lot (comp.Gen 18,22–19,29). The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah happened **about 450 years after the flood.**

The **destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah served as an intimidating example** of what happens to people who turn away from God to follow their desires and lust. The destiny of the unbelievers in those cities is a foretaste of the destiny that waits for those who deny the truth of God and ignore his warnings. What was once a great green valley turned into a **valley of ashes** and should be a warning to all those who do not fear God.

Jude points it out and mentions the **two main judgments of the wicked** – the flood and the downfall of Sodom and Gomorrah, one by water and the other one by fire. Both were the means and tools of the power of God, which God predestined for destruction and death of the wicked.

(Jud 8-19) – A vivid description of the character of the apostates.

The people of Sodom and Gomorra had defiled the flesh, which means that they „**contaminated**“ or „**spoiled**“ themselves. The applied verb also appears in texts like Tit 1,15) and in Hebr 12,15. In other words they debased themselves by their behaviour and because they denied „**God's sovereignty**“ over their life.

The sentence: “they **mock the celestials**” is perhaps referring to the **denial of Jesus, that He came in the flesh**“ - a denial of the Messiah-ship. God gave Jesus all the glory and placed everything (Joh 1,14;17,22) and all under the rulership of Jesus (1Joh 4,2).

God gave Jesus all the power (comp Mt 28,18 / Dan 7,13 / Act 7,55 / Rev1,12-16;14,1;15,8; 21,11,23 / 1Petr 3,22).

The character of those who fall from faith always decreases in a drastical way:

- It starts with immorality and lust. (Verse 18.19)
- corrupt thoughts. (Verse 8.10)
- Impatience and thirst for power. (Verse 8.16)
- Spirit of blasphemy and disrespect. (Verse 8.18)
- Arrogance. (Verse 8.10.16)
- Hypocritical. (Verse 12.13.19)
- Serious threat to others (Vers 12)
- They complain all the time (Vers 16)

These apostates will have to suffer **the worst judgment** of all (Hebr 10,26), because they chose the same way as Cain, Bileam and Korah. Their way of Cain was to rebel against the revealed will of God to bring a worthy sacrifice (Gen 4,1-15 / com. Hebr 11,4 / 1Joh 3,12).

(Jud 8 – 10) - tells us what rules and determines the corrupters of Christianity – the lust of the flesh. They are no longer guided by the revelations of God, but by lower instincts. They are as fools and driven by their **corrupt, immoral and competitive dreams**. Therefore they also mock any kind of authority that would be in the way of their goals.

Their whole thinking, speech and actions are called „dreaming“, because it grows out of a conditions of confusion of the human soul. This leads to abnormal fantasy, illusions, hallucinations and confused senses. **The mind of those people** was already not receptive for the truth of the word of God. They have misled illusions of perversions and even claim those would be dreams or visions of God.

Those people who have **fallen back into the natural and visible** are not able to discern the things of God or of other spirits, nobody knows the thoughts of God but the spirit of God (1Cor 2,11). Especially because they are not gifted in the area of spiritual discernment and therefore mock and condemn any authority from above or below.

Therefore they discriminate, condemn every work of the Holy Spirit and commit the **„unforgivable sin“**, the **„blasphemy of the Holy Spirit“** (Mt 12,31-32 / Mk 3,28-31) in which they blaspheme the spirit of God and call the works of the Holy Spirit a work of Satan.

The mentioned **unforgivable blasphemy** is a sinful act that relates the power and work of Jesus, which is of the Holy Spirit, with the work of Satan.

More about blasphemy in Mk 2,7 / Ex 22,28 / Lev 24,10-16 / Ez 35,12 / Joh 10,33-36 / Acts 6,11.

The Pharisees related a visible sign – a miracle on behalf of suffering people, that Jesus worked through the Spirit of God to demonic powers and even accused Jesus to be **obsessed by demons** instead of filled with the Holy Spirit.

Therefore a continuous rejection of the Holy Spirit, even though He constantly tries to bring us to faith in Christ, can lead us to unforgivable **„blasphemy“** of the Holy Spirit, which probably also the false teachers that Jude refers to did.

The Pharisees had seen **undeniable proofs of the mighty power of God for His good works** (Mt 12,31-32), and still claim that it would be of the devil (Mt 12,24 / Mk3,30).

The term **„blasphemy“** can generally be described **“rebellious disrespect”**. We would use this term to refer to such sins as **cursing God** or wilfully **degrade things of God**. This includes **giving God credit for bad things** or denying good things that we should thank Him for.

Jesus does not emphasise sin but „blasphemy“ of the Holy Spirit. He does not speak of sinning or rebelling against the Holy Spirit but expressly of **„blasphemy of the Holy Spirit“**. This does not refer to people who do not hear or quench the Holy Spirit - such as Ananias and Saphira, who lied to the Holy Spirit (Act 5,3). This trespass was a serious thing, but it was not blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Even though they were judged on the spot and gave up their spirit – Ananias and Sapphira were not lost forever. Their eternal salvation, their acceptance before God was not questioned by their sudden death in any way (comp. 1Cor 11,29-32 / 1Joh 5,16.17).

Sometimes God has to **take someone's life** in order to protect him from eternal death (condemnation). Paul speaks about **Hynemaues and Alexander**, who had suffered shipwreck in their faith (1Tim 1,19-20). He handed both **over to Satan**, so that they would be disciplined and stopped to blaspheme – with the intention that they would recognize their failure and repent (2Tim 2,25 / Tit 3,10). They probably used to be responsible leaders of the church (2Tim 2,17 / Act 19,33 / 2Tim 4,14). But it does not tell us that they committed the **„unforgivable sin“**.

The same applies to the **magician „Elymas“**, who resisted Paul in Cyprus and who was in turn smitten with **„blindness“** for a time (Act 13,6-12), even though he was also a false prophet in addition.

The Pharisees slandered Jesus and the Holy Spirit consciously and despite their knowledge. They knew the scriptures and had received revelations and divine proclamations of Jesus, such as the voice of God from heaven (Act 2,22,23 / Luk 3,21,22 / Mk 1,9-11 / Mt 3,13-17 / Joh 1.32,33). And they also knew exactly that Jesus' miracles only blessed the people and that He did not do them out of His own strength but that God worked through Him. But this is exactly what the stubborn Pharisees claimed not to be so. They were not able to deny the

miracle itself. They all had seen it with their own eyes. But they denied that the miracles happened through divine power of the Holy Spirit. They claimed: "**He casts out the demons by no other than Beelzebub, the most powerful of demons**" (Mt 12, 24). This is a terrible, pointless claim and also a lie. For which demon would want to do good or be able to do so. In their hate towards the Lord Jesus they did not fear to call the power working through Him by the name of the demonic prince Beelzebub, even though they knew the truth. **This was no quick or thoughtless speech**, but rather slander that came from a cold heart. They ascribed the wonderful work of the Holy Spirit through Jesus to the filthy devil. And that was indeed blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

This **blasphemy of the heavenly spirit happened despite their knowledge that the Holy Spirit was in Him and worked through Him**. Their hate toward Jesus made them blaspheme the Holy Spirit on purpose in order to deceive others. It was the peak of their constant denial of the apparent truth, that the message of Jesus was approved by heaven and justified.

Even more so was the complete denial of His person as Messiah and Son of God. Therefore Jesus said that this **sin will not be forgiven**. Whoever ascribes the signs and wonders of the Lord Jesus **to the devil** and therewith rejects Him "in whom the fullness of God lives incarnated" (Col 2, 9), cannot be forgiven of sin.

(Jud 9-10) – The false teachers are not afraid to slander - God, Satan and angelic beings. Their whole attitude is in contrast even with the attitude of the archangel Michael.

The archangel Michael stuck to the instructions of God. This even went so far that he did not allow himself to profess his opinion of Satan because he would have considered it condemnation and presumption. He left the judgment up to God. Instead of condemning such a powerful **authority as Satan**, Michael rather pointed to the ultimate and sovereign power of God and therewith followed the example of the angel of the Lord (Zach 3,2).

(Jud 11-16) – A second sermon on the destiny of the wicked.

In **(Jud 11)** judgment and perdition are announced by the term '**woe**'. It is the same style of Jesus' seven woes over the scribes and Pharisees (Mt 23.13-38 s.a.7,15;10,17;16,12 / Lk 20,46).

This is what also the **three new examples**, the three negative characters from the OT, aim at and serve as equivalents of wicked people in the Epistle of Jude.

Der **Neider und Mörder Kain** galt der frühjüdischen Deutung zugleich als warnendes Beispiel der Rebellion gegen Gott und als Verführer zu Schwelgerei und allerlei Bosheit.

Cain **symbolises** the life of ministry of a church and should demonstrate how invaders spoil the church from the inside. The path of Cain (Gen 4 / 1Jh 3,12 / Hebr 11,4) started with **false worship** and ended in the murder of his brother Able out of jealousy.

The path of Cain was the path of natural religion. This kind of religion leads to ignore divine revelation and reject the cross and the blood of Jesus. The sinfall is is considered a myth.

Cain was a **religious man** because he did build an altar and brought sacrifices, but his religion was according to the thoughts of a fallen man and not according to revelation of God. His human – natural religion lead him to ignore sin and despise God's way of atonement.

He tried to draw near to God based on His own works and imaginations. The true child of God, his brother Able, became subject of his persecution and murder.

Cain symbolises a religion of self-righteousness and self-redemption. It is the path of a man without God. The generation of Cain procreated quickly. He built cities and was striving to make his life as comfortable as possible (Gen 4,13,16-17,21). The sounds of the flute and lute was supposed to suffocate the bad conscience concerning his murder of Able. In the family of Cain we can find the beginning of Art, Science and culture, the attempt to bring back the beauty of heaven and lost paradise.

Wickedness and greed characterize **Bileam** in the account of his life according to Numb 31,8.16.

Bileam (Numb 22; 25,1f;31,16 / Rev 2,14) became a **false prophet**, because of his greed. He was one of the **most wicked people** of the Old Testament. He was hopeless prey to his evil desires. His love of money was so deep that he would not even let go upon divine warning and would attempt to curse the people of God.

He wanted to curse Israel because he was going to get paid for it. This is how he made a **business with his gifts**. After his curses on the people of God did not work he gave the negative counsel to tempt the people of Israel.

A modern repetition of Bileam's scheming can be found in Rev. 18,12-13. Here they do not even shrink back to trade human souls.

Korach was considered the leader of the rebellion against Moses (Numb 16) and was a character who wanted to overthrow church order and authority. The **group around Korach** (Numb16) **desired a priesthood that was not for them** to have.

Whenever the the life of ministry in a church is crossed by **false worship, false prophecy** and false assumptions of "**priesthood in general**" the church will be defiled and perish.

The sin of Korach was two-fold:

- on one hand he **openly rebelled against** Moses and Aaron,
- on the other hand he **was not satisfied with his own position** and wanted to claim the position of **priestly intercession** which was for Aaron (Numb 16,3,9-10).

He wanted to degrade Moses and Aaron to **the level of the rest of the Israelite community**, and exalt himself to the position of Aaron. This **rebellion against Christ** is the bottom of the apostasy and leads to becoming a man of sin who resists and exalts himself above God and all that is worthy of honor so that he would **enthroned himself on the throne of God** presenting himself like he was **God**" (2Thess 2,3-4).

Jude says: „**Woe**“ to those who are like **Cain, Bileam and Korah**. He emphasizes that the false teachers **walk in the ways of Cain** and that they are **authoring their own** religion. They also look upon others with jealousy and contempt or even hate them and become murderers of the brethren, just like Cain's works were wicked and those of his brother righteous (1Joh 3,11).

Cain was jealous of **God's grace** towards Able (Gen 4,4-8). Jude wants to show to his readers that **spiritual jealousy** always leads to unjustified religious crimes, such as persecution etc.

Pretending to be a minister of God Bileam encouraged the people to **sin** and at the same time tried to gain profit from their trespasses (2Petr 2,15-16 / Numb 22,21-31). Jude does not **explain the details of Bileam's sin**, he only says that he was „**a lover of money**“. In the beginning he was trying to resist the temptation and God warned him, but then he did not act according to his knowledge.

Korach schemed a **riot** against Moses and Aaron because he did not acknowledge the God-given authority (Numb 16) and did not want to (s. a. Numb 12,1–8). He turned against the special position that God gave to Moses. **His rebellion was therefore against God Himself**.

The **Greek version** of the New Testament also uses the word "**hamartia**" for sin. In the letters of the apostle Paul alone this word is mentioned at least 60 times.

It simply means: „**To miss the mark**“ and was used for example with reference to **javelin throwing or when you lost your way**. It represented **failed goals, hopes or plans**. It always has a negative meaning such as failure, default and bad success.

But they do not express heavy trespasses that cannot be corrected and improved the next time you try, etc. **The Hebrew original**, however, mean „**rebellion**“ (riot) against God, authorities, etc.

When Jude talks about sin he does not think in the Greek sense of the word, but rather in the **Hebrew**, the original language and thoughts of the **revelations of God**.

When you study the New Testament diligently you will come to the same conclusion. Sin is not only to „**miss the mark**“ or some kind of mistake according to the Greek vocabulary, but a "**condition**" of rebellion which results in multiple sinful behaviours.

It is the same with Paul. He **personifies sin** and speaks of an **evil power** that enslaves man. Jesus did also not redeem us from some mistakes or trespasses but rather from „**rebellion**“ against God – He reconciled us with

God and made us one with Him. Thus our single sins, trespasses, mistakes and short-comings are no longer kept as a **record**“ (Rom 4,8); and must not be our „**burden**“ anymore, for all sins are now „**washed away**“ (Act 22,16 / Hebr 1,3 / 2Petr 1,9 / 1Joh 1,7 / Rom 4,7 / Rev 1,5), and are set free from sin (Rom 6,18,22; 8,2). Jesus gave us „**freedom**“ so that we no longer have to be „**enslaved**“ to sin (Hebr 9,26).

Everywhere in the New Testament the forgiveness of sin is demonstrated as **the redemption of man** from sin (Mt 9,2-7 / Mk 2,9-12 / Lk 7,47-5 / Act 2,38-40;10,43-48 / Col 1,13-14 / 1Joh 2,12).

This is the terrible progress of evil which defiles Christianity. It begins with the way of Cain – the path of religion that ignores revelation and is established by natural thoughts of people – and leads us to the failure of Bileam, who turned religion into business which then becomes rebellion like Korah's.

Jude draws out the character of an apostate -

1. he is wicked (V. 4)
2. morally defiled (V. 4)
3. denies Christ (V. 4)
4. defiles the flesh (V. 8)
5. he is rebellious (V. 8)
6. despises the holy angels (V. 8)
7. he is a dreamer (V.10)
8. without knowledge (V.10)
9. corrupt (V.10)
10. dissatisfied (V.16)
11. complains about his destiny (V. 6)
12. striving for self-fulfilment (V. 6)
13. speaks arrogantly (V.16)
14. a flatterer (V.16)
15. a slanderer (V.18)
16. causes division (V.19)
17. worldly mindset (V.19)
18. does not have the Holy Spirt (V.19)

(Jud 12) - The false teachers are a stain of the church. They even participated in the „**breaking of bread together**“, related to communion.

Especially during **the love feast**, many things happen unnoticed and slander, offenses or other things are exchanged in the course of intimate fellowship and conversations. Also in the first church there were tensions and problems involved with the sharing of food (Act.6,1).

Many **church divisions** are not created in a public discussion but rather in privacy. Since the false teachers were in the midst of them they were especially dangerous. They acted super spiritual and acted like sheperds, but they were only seeking a flock for themselves (comp Ez 34,8-10).

The **love feasts** were "**fat pasture**" (good opportunities) for them. The **apostates** succeeded to participate in **the love-feasts** which were the most intimate religious feasts of the believers and probably also participated in **communion**. Without shame they mingled in the church and „**grazed themselves**“, by distinguishing themselves, and presented themselves bold and charismatic.

They were only „**self-centered**“, but without spiritual substance. Spiritually dead and without bearing any spiritual fruit the church had nothing to give and nothing to say. These seducers escaped into **highly spiritual thoughts** and gave themselves to strange ideas. In the end the only cared for their own pleasures. In the NT such people are called **hypocrites**. No sin is judged harder in the NT than „**hypocrisy**“ (comp Mt 6,2,5,16;15,7; 22,18; 23,28; 24,51 / Mk 7,6;12,15 / Lk 13,15).

These „hypocrites“ are like „cliffs“. The word „cliff“ in the OT terminology would be a stumbling stone (Is 8,14) and corner stone that would be rejected (Ps 118,22 / Mt 21,42 / Act 4,11 / 1Petr 2,6,7 / Eph 2,20). Jesus and the corner stones of His life such as – birth, Gethsemane, Golgotha, resurrection, ascension, judgment as act of mercy of God – they have rejected and those things are not the center of their faith.

With strong images Jude described those Christians who counted themselves among the church members and said: „They even participate in the communion and are **only a burden for the church**.“

Jude uses **many metaphors** (images), to demonstrate his opinion of those wicked defilers of the church. He quotes images of nature with whose help he can vividly expose and judge them.

At first he uses **four comparisons to nature** to show, how the heretics really are and that their lifestyle is wicked and opposing God's order.

He compares them to ...

- „**Clouds not bearing water**“, that deceptively pretend to bring rain. Clouds that look like they will give you a refreshing shower, but in reality are without water and only tossed to and fro by the wind.
- **Late fall trees who do not bear fruits**, which means trees who looked good but finally do not deliver fruit because they are dead in two ways: by nature first, and then they will be uprooted and burned in the end.
- **Waves of the sea that only wash up dirt**. They are as „**wild waves of the sea** ...“, they make a lot of noise and foam“ (Is 57.20). A lot is going on, much is moving with noisy sounds, it seems very promising. But the result is only mud and foam that even brings up dirt to the shore. **Those apostates are only windbags**, who leave behind nothing of use or help or spiritual nourishment.
- „**Stars that lead you astray**.“ Like „false stars“ that just light up like a comet and then disappear in the darkness of the universe. Such **falling stars** move at the speed of light through the sky, light up for a short moment and then disappear. They **shine but give no light** and cannot show a **direction**. If someone would follow them he would be led astray. **Real stars** on the other hand help a sailor to keep the direction and reach his destination (comp. Dan 12,3). The „**religious comets**“, however, are very short-lived, of no use and in vain. They will lead weak Christian astray from the right path and pretend to be something they are not. God will not suffer seducers.

(Jud 14) - ... Enoch, the seventh after Adam... In the bible there are no „coincidences“. Everything has its certain divine purpose and message for us.

It would have been enough to say „**the seventh after Adam**“ without a name attached. The bible also reports another „**seventh after Adam**“: **Lamech** – this man was of the **family of Cain**, that grew increasingly wicked. Lamech was self-centered and a revengeful man (Gen 4,23.24). Enoch was different.

The seventh after Adam is his sixth offspring (Gen 5,21f.,24). The **number seven**, always a number with meaning in the bible. For example:

- the sabbath is the **7. day** (Gen 2,2), that was a day honored by God as a day of rest (Exo 20,10).
- Every **7. year** was a year of release (Deut 15,1).
- **Moses** belonged to the **7. generation** after Abraham.
- The **number 7** is the number of divine perfection, which means that His work in us is finished.
- There are also the **7 gifts of the spirit**.
- Therefore the **number 7** plays an important role in the book of Revelation, for example the **7 lampstands** (1,12) or the **7 seals** (5,1ff.).

Enoch prophesied the appearance of the Lord Jesus and spoke of a judgment that He would one day execute (Jud 14.15). The father of Enoch was named Jared. Jared means „downfall“ and represented the moral decay which already took place in early human history.

Enoch was born when **Adam was 622 years old!** And Adam lived another **308** years after his birth! Enoch was taken by God **57 years** after the death of Adam, which means at the age of 365 years.

In such an evil time his father Jared named his firstborn son Enoch, which means **insider**. This name was suitable because we gain great insight from the prophecies of Enoch.

Peter and Jude quote the words of Enoch in the New Testament. We know that **Methusalah** was his firstborn son (Gen 5,21.22). His birth brought a turn-around in the life of Enoch and he began to walk with God (Gen 5,24) and started to lead a different life.

In the meaning of the name „Methusalah“, who even became **969 years** old, is a prophetic message which says: **“He dies and it is coming”**. In the year he died the flood came.

God took **Enoch, His righteous one** away from evil and its consequences in the form of a flood (Is 57,1), so that he did not have to see the catastrophe.

In the time of Enoch the wickedness of the people must have increased heavily.

In the line of Cain **Lamech**, the seventh after Adam, was already especially violent (Gen 4.17-24). **775 years after Enoch's death** wickedness and sin had to be stopped by the flood.

Enoch had prophesied that God would judge the wicked in the midst of „**His holy ten-thousand**“ .

The **holy ten-thousand** are the heavenly hosts. Hebr 12,22 speaks of ten-thousand messengers. In Mt 25,31 we read: »When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory« (s. a. Dan 7,10 / 2Thess 1,7,8).

Enoch was an antediluvian prophet. **Through his intensive walk with God** he saw the judgment of his generation and beyond that the **return of the Lord**. The „**holy ten-thousand**“, that Enoch saw are the 144 000 sealed believers that would be saved from the time of tribulation (Rev7). Those people are the people of God (Rev7.3).

In the 1. Book of Enoch (48,1-5) we already find the title of Jesus – Son of man – which is mentioned in all the four gospels: „*At that hour, that **Son of Man** was given a name, in the presence of the Lord of the Spirits, the Before-Time, even before the creation of the sun and the moon, before the creation of the stars, he was given a name in the presence of the Lord of the Spirits. He will be a staff for the righteous and saints, so that they could lean on Him and would not fall; He will be the light and hope of all those who are weary at heart. All those who live on the dry land will bow down before Him and worship and praise the name of the Lord of the spirits. For this purpose He was chosen and hidden from God, before the foundation of the world, and He will be with Him until eternity ...*“ . (comp with Lk 2,32 / Joh 1,1-10 a. Phil 2,5-11).

The quoted passage of the **Book of Enoch** shows that Adam and his sons knew that the Son of man would be the Messiah bringing salvation (Gen. 3,15).

Enoch, was already able to speak of the coming things of the kingdom of God and to prophesy. Jude revealed what the Old Testament did not reveal, the prophecies of Enoch.

This **antediluvian prophet** said: „Behold, the Lord has come in the midst of His holy thousands, to bring judgment upon all ...“ (Jud 14.15). **It is the first, known prophecy of humanity.**

This prophecy is remarkable in every way. It is the earliest we know of, **God probably gave it to Enoch while Adam was still alive**, surely shortly after his death at the latest. It announces the appearance of the Lord Jesus. In his prophetic vision Enoch saw the Lord already present to judge, for he said „**Behold, the Lord has come**“ . He saw it with the inspired eye of a prophet.

The flood was only **part of the fulfillment** of the warning of Enoch of the coming judgment of evil. But the perfect fulfillment of it will happen when the Lord returns in the midst of his holy thousands (Zach 14,5 / 1Thess 3,13 / 2Thess 1,8).

The man of God who mourned over the widely spread wickedness of his days, was allowed to see that righteousness would have the victory and all evil things will receive the deserved judgment. He himself was taken from this wicked world long before the day of judgment.

Enoch is a prototype of our rapture. It says: "he walked with God", and „he was no more“. „God took him away.“ He was taken so that he would not see death. He could not be found because God took him and brought him to a different place. (com. 1Thess 4,15-17).

Enoch was taken away from this world (com. Col 3,4 / Phil 3,21). God did not take him in wrath but with pleasure.

(Jud 15) – To judge all things and punish evil because of the wicked deeds and bold speeches that sinners had held against God. The judgment which was **prophesied by Enoch in times of distress** will be executed by our Lord and God, also for the opponents of Jude – because of their evil deeds and wicked speeches (Jude 4.8.10).

Enoch already prophesied Christ's second coming and the coming judgment before the flood (1Thes. 3,13). The »**holy ones**« could refer to angels or believers. Since the Lord will return accompanied by angels (Mt 24,31;25,31 / Mk 8,38 / 2Thess 1,7) as well as believers (Col 3,4 / 1Thess 3,13 / Rev 19,14) it could also refer to both (com. Zach 14,5).

Since in Jud 15 the **center of attention is judgment**, it supposedly refers to angels who were often charged to execute judgments. The believers will have a **judgmental role** when the Lord returns to earth (1Cor 6,2) on the great day of judgment (Rev 19,14); angels however are the executors of God's judgment when Christ returns (s. Mt 13,39-41.49.50; 24,29-31;25,31 / 2Thess 1,7-10).

Christ comes to judge, and then He will prove to the „**hypocrites**“ and „**apostates**“ that their **deeds and works, thinking and speech** were wicked and disrespectful. But in this judgment it is not just about punishment and reward, but God will convict the sinner and convince him of his unrighteousness (Joh 16,8ff.).

It is noticeable, that **judgment will not be based on disposition** (Mt 5,22ff.; 28 u.a.), **but only according to their works**, which originate from the heart.

The **divine judgment** means especially the „**rebuke**“ based on divine righteousness according to God's standards. God's **standards are right**. Therefore judgment can also mean execution of righteousness in the form of **merciful healing**. Also the word punishment does not always have to be understood in a negative way, it can also be subject of a positive purpose.

The judgment of God must always be viewed **in relation to the mercy, faithfulness and love of God** (Lk 11,42).

Just like the wrath of God is only **jealous love**, the judgment of God is also an act of God's **jealous love**.

No judgment without salvation and no salvation without judgment, this is what the prophets had proclaimed.

- **Salvation without judgment** was preached by the false prophets and
- **Judgment without salvation** was the message of the fanatics.

Judgment must never be separated from God's salvation. Only the „trine God“ - the **creator** and **saviour** – is and remains the **judge** of the world (Joh 5,22 / 2Thess 2,11-12). God paid a high price for the people who were lost (Is 43,24).

(Jud 16) - „These people are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage. “.

The false teachers are „**grumblers, faultfinders, etc.**“ like the Jews in the desert (Jud 5).

- They are critical of God's **creative power** in general (Jud 4.8)
- just like **against any kind of order** in heaven (angel doctrine) and on earth (life according to the Thora revealed in the scripture).

The „**great and lofty words**“ should refer to their claim of **their spiritual gifts** (Jud 19) and their visions (Jud 8) as well as their arrogance towards God's sovereignty and of the angels (Jud 8-10).

The desires of the false teachers are the anthropological aspect of their wickedness. **Someone without God is by himself and without support**. The false practices of the heretics is traced back to a heretical image of God. With those explanation Jude lays the foundation of the **call** to his readers to take a stand against the wicked men and their practices.

How to deal with false teachers

- No theological disputes with them. It is in vain.
- Christians should fight for the faith that was preached to them (Jud 3).
- Any going astray from Christian faith is denial of Christ (Jud 4).
- Christians should build themselves up in their most holy faith (Jud 20).

(Jud 16) – The false teachers do as they please, speak idle words and practice idol worship of self. This way they **cover up** their miserable condition with a false and deceptive appearance, talking big things and flatter the people in order to secure their position of power.

(Jud 17-23) - To fight for the faith, that the apostles preached. False teachers are teachers who contradict the apostolic doctrines, which is the word of God.

The first Christians remained faithful to the „**apostolic doctrine**“ (Act 2,42).

What does this mean for us?

- The apostles are all mentioned by their names in the word of God (Mt 10.2-4 / Lk 6.13-16 / Act 1.15-26 / Rom 1.1).
- All apostles were Jews.
- They were called by Jesus Himself (Gal 1.1).
- They had experienced the 3,5 years of Jesus' work on earth.
- They were eye-witnesses of Jesus (Act 1.21-22 / 1Cor 15.8 / 2Petr 1.16)! Since the appearance of the resurrected Jesus ceased after His Ascension, the time of the apostles is also limited.
- **Paul, who was called to be an apostle to the Gentiles** a little bit later, says about himself that he was the last one who saw the Lord Jesus (1Cor 15.8). This could imply that there are no apostles after Paul. That Paul really saw the resurrected Jesus with his own eyes is confirmed by the three days he went blind after the incident, which therefore cannot have been a vision or a dream (Act 9.9 a. 22.11-14 u. 26.16 / 1Cor 9.1).
- **The apostle that Jesus chose** (Lk 6.13 / Act 1.22-23.9.15), were confirmed by God with signs and wonders in the beginning of the time where the transition between the old and new covenant took place (Act 2.43. 5.12 / 2Cor 12.12).
- Only the apostles had the authority to call themselves elders (Act 14.23. 20.28 / Tit 1.5).
- After completion of the biblical canon and the end of the era of the apostles there are no other apostles mentioned. On the contrary, we are even warned of new apostles (2Cor 11.2-15 / Rev. 2.2). In the word of God there are no instructions to appoint apostles or acknowledge them.
- **The apostle Paul** had the task to complete the word of God concerning doctrine (Col 1.24-25). God entrusted the teaching of the gathering believers (ecclesia) to the apostle Paul. The other apostle realized that it was inspired by the Holy Spirit and received this teaching. The apostle John concluded the word of God (Rev 22.18-19). There is no justification for any further apostles. Rev. 22.18-19 deals with the last exhortation of God to the people.
- **Since Christians remained faithful to the doctrines of the apostle** (Act 2.42 / Eph 2.20), **acceptance** of new apostles in this time of temptation would be too dangerous since they could go beyond the word of God. This could lead many astray. Christians should therefore remain in the teaching of the holy scripture that God gave us, confirmed and preserved for us. Only when Christians remain in the teaching of the holy scripture alone they can make sure to stay under the apostolic-prophetic oversight, which is under the covering of the word of God Himself.

(Jud 17-19) - „Remember the words of the apostles. A church is all about unity. All should have come to a **„common revelation of the Son of God**„ (com. Rom 12,16 / Eph 4,4). The apostle had warned their followers of the apostates, so that the believers would be prepared and not surprised (comp. Acts 20,28-31 / 1Tim 4,1.2 / 2Tim 3,1-5; 4,1-3 / 2Petr 2,1-3.4 / 1Joh 2,18 / 2Joh 7-11). Also the word of God warns and protects us (Act 20,31 / 1Kor 4,14). In Jud 18 it is obvious that the warnings were repeated several times.

Christians should not be shocked to discover that „**wolves**“ are among them (Act 20,29-30 / 1Tim 4,1 / 2Tim 3,1-5; 4,3-4 / 2Petr 2,1-3; 3,3). They had been warned by the apostles „**in time**“. Also Jesus pointed this out (Mt 13,25) and never claimed that His church would be **perfect**.

In His vineyard not all co-workers are faithfully submitted to Him (Mt. 21,28-41). He also spoke of „hirelings“ (Joh.10,12,13).

“Remember!” - he emphasises how important this message is. Jesus said: **“Whoever listens to you, listens to me”** (Lk 10,16).

The term „**last days**“ (comp 2Tim 3,1) is marking the time between the first and the second coming of the Messiah (2Tim 3,1 / 2Petr 3,3 / 1Joh 2,18).

The characteristic and typical **marks of the last days** will remain and be repeated in every generation until Christ returns.

Jude sees in his spirit how the devil will try to destroy the „**unity of the body of Christ**“ in the last days: therefore remember the words of the apostles of Jesus Christ, our Lord who proclaimed that (Jud 18): **“In the last times there will be scoffers** who will follow their own ungodly desires.”_ An essential characteristic of the seducers is that they are scoffers – scoffers of Jesus.

The word that is used for: **“mocking”** is mentioned several times in the salvation story, as well as in the announcement of suffering (Mt 20,19) as also in the story of the suffering (Mt 27,29.41 / s.a. Hebr 6,6).

They mocked Jesus by rejecting Him, Who gave Himself for them. **"No pain could be deeper for someone who loves than being rejected with arrogance and scoffing."**

(Jud 19) - „They will destroy the unity, because they are carnally minded people who do not have the spirit“. The appearance of the false teachers is supposed to signalize to the believers that they are living in the last days, since all phenomenons are pointing it out. Judgment is at hand, therefore it is time for the believers to separate themselves from the wicked.

The false teachers claim to have the spirit. This pneuma (spirit/breath/air) is a requirement for their enthusiastic self-presentation. Jude assumes that only the church, the true believers, have the Holy Spirit and are therefore the only true pneumatics, especially since they also live according to the love of God and Jesus Christ (21) **True faith proves by works** . „By their fruits you shall know them“ (Mt 7,16).

(Jud 20-21) - The concept of the Christian church - „...**build yourself up** in your most holy faith, pray in the Holy Spirit, stay in the love of God and wait for the mercies of Jesus Christ, our Lord, unto eternal life.“

Jude thinks of the establishment of the **eschatological temple**, the church of Jesus, where every one is supposed to contribute something to the growth of the church. This image is in contrast to the activity of the false teachers.

While the latter divide and destroy, the readers are supposed to build up the church. And they are supposed to **start with themselves**. It says : **"build yourself up"**. Because a real foundation can only be that of the apostles and prophets (Eph 2,19-22), supported by the corner stone, called Jesus Christ.

The church must have a foundation. On this **solid foundation** the whole temple building is established. True believers have a solid foundation in Jesus Christ and (1cor 3,11) a corner stone (Eph 2,20).

God gave **the truth of Christian faith** (vgl. V. 3) **to us through the teachings of the prophets and apostles** (Eph 2,20), so that Christians can build themselves up in their word (Act 20,32).

The **"beloved"** are the living stones, who work together despite of interpersonal problems.

The church is a construction area and not a theatre. This means that building a church is not something for entertainment, playing games or a place of rest. It is hard work and commitment is required. It is about unity and not competition. The believers, the spiritual people, are not supposed to be separated or competing against each other, like the **"carnally minded people"** (the false teachers), but rather build so that they grow together in unity.

„And pray (preferably) **in the Holy Spirit** ...“. Jude contradicts the false teachers who leave everything, especially prayer, up to the Holy Spirit. They should pray in the Holy Spirit the way he taught them (Apg 2.4). the Holy Spirit must always be the author and origin of our spiritual activity so that we would continue in the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy spirit started in the flesh in order to complete His work in the spirit. The Holy Spirit awakens in us the ability to pray and brings us into relationship with God.

He **gives us a desire to pray**. He ushers us into the presence of God and opens our mouth so that we can tell God all that is moving us on the inside. Only this deep way of prayer is acceptable to God (Eph 6,18), prayer which is inspired by the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.

Everything else is **„shallow prayer“**, that does not reach God at all. **„... Pray in the Holy Spirit“** - this is not a call to some kind of ecstatic **prayer practice**, but rather a simple challenge to pray fervently according to the will and power of the Holy Spirit, the same way as we pray in the name of Jesus (comp. Rom 8,26.27). A **true worship of God**, respectively true prayer is effected **by the initiative** of the Holy Spirit (Joh 4,23 / Rom 8,26,27).

Just like nobody can **come to the Father** when the Son Jesus does not draw them, nobody can come to God without the Holy Spirit (Joh 6.44;12,32). Nobody can come to Jesus, unless the Father draws them. Nobody can call Jesus Lord without the help of the Holy Spirit (1Cor 12,3).

Thus **our whole salvation** and **fellowship with God** is undeserved grace of God and a mutual work of the „triune God“. Therefore Jude encourages his readers to wait upon the Lord and His salvation, as a church as well as individually (comp. Lk 21,28).

(Jud 21) - „... Await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ“. God has assigned the day of judgment to Jesus Christ. If the believers remain faithful and follow the instructions of scripture they can expect salvation on the day of parousia.

Even the faithful Christians will only escape judgment based on the „mercy“ of the Lord.

When Christians expect the mercy of Jesus, they will also stay away from false teachers and their teaching. Center of our Christian faith is glorious hope in our future with Jesus Christ. Jesus did not have **world – or social political goals**. He brings us divine mercy. In it rests the whole work of salvation of Jesus. The mercy of the Father is His unique gift of grace.

'**Waiting**' – describes the eschatological **expectation**. It does not refer to **passive waiting**, but rather a lifestyle of eschatological hope. The **gospel** that the believers received from the apostles is **still the foundation** of church order and life. Upon this foundation should the Christian church build her eschatological temple. A church life that is established upon this original foundation will provide the right spiritual and moral stability that can pass the test of the last day crisis. When the believer **prays through the Holy Spirit** instead through **the human soul** (respectively not through the mind) they will realise the true charismatic nature of church as opposed to the false claims of the false teachers with regard to inspiration.

(Jud 22-23) – This four instructions are helpful to stay on a path that leads to eschatological salvation.

To fight for the true faith means to resist the influence of false teachers and not to let go of the commitments to Christian obedience.

- ◆ (Jud 22) - „be merciful!“
- ◆ (Jud 22) - „have mercy upon those who doubt!“;
- ◆ (Jud 23a) - „save others by snatching them from the fire!“;
- ◆ (Jud 23b) - „to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.!“

„**Be merciful with those who doubt...**“ The words of the apostates had caused much confusion, where many believers probably started to doubt. Those who were afflicted with doubts should not be insulted or criticized. They were rather supposed to be treated with love and mercy, as gentle as the Lord Jesus would deal with them.

The church was supposed to care for the **doubters** who are confused and rebuke them in love. The others, however, who do not only doubt but are almost lost should be saved by snatching them out of the fire. Those Christians are so threatened that they can only be saved from judgment like a piece of wood out of the fire that the heretics had ignited (Jud 7.13).

These Christians are extremely **threatened**, and therefore the church is also **challenged**. Among the third group the church cannot accomplish much. But they should have mercy mixed with fear. With this third group of Christians where the false teachers belong to, the church should not stay connected to.

(Jud 24) – What God does for us. Through Jesus and the Holy Spirit God keeps us from falling. The Epistle is especially addressing the ones who are kept for Jesus Christ (Jud 1).

The psalmist **describes a misery** that God protected him from, the slipping of his feet (Ps 56,13; 66,9; 73,2; 91,12; 94; 116,8). God's ability to keep us from falling is referred to in the following psalms: Ps 121,3-8;140,5;141,9. New Testament references that God preserves the Christians are: 2Thess 3,3 / Joh 17,11.15 / 1Ptr 1,5 among others.

God wants to keep the readers of the Epistle of Jude, so that they would not follow the sinful ways of the false teachers and lose their salvation. But also: all readers must themselves become an active part of the process: „sustain yourselves in the love of God“ (21).

God can sustain us, so that we will not fall from true faith despite all the tempting messages we might hear (Rom 11,11 / 2 Petr 1,10 / Jam 2,10; 3,2).

God, however, does not always keep us from temptation from sin so that we would be perfect and not in need of Jesus' forgiveness. But Jesus saves us from falling from faith (Joh 10,29).

(Jud 25) - In Judaism it was common, to close a prayer or the sermon **with a praise of God**, which means with a doxology. Jude cannot close his letter without a praise of God inspired by the Holy Spirit. The church should know that God still has the victory, no matter how present the false teachings may be that have invaded the church. Jesus alone can sustain the church for Himself.

(Jud 25) – Jude closes his letter with a doxology, to Jesus Christ, our God and heavenly Saviour. His indescribable greatness, power and strength, His majesty and might are visible in the things He does.

In this **last passage of his letter** Jude is praising God and therewith **ends this serious, exhortive letter with a praise** and great confidence in the church of Jesus who is expecting their risen Lord and worships Him.

God is an eternally active God, who is still involved with His creation work. Therefore we can be sure that despite of danger and need in our personal walk of faith and of the church God the Almighty is sovereign over space and time. This encourages us and gives us serenity to look into the future, for He is already there.

Test questions

1. What does Jude compare the false teachers to?
2. According to what did the false teachers live and act?
3. Why is he judging them so hard?
4. What did Enoch prophesy?
5. Could Enoch be called a prophet and why?
6. What kind of text is the Epistle of Jude?
7. How many and which „trilogies“ are contained in the Epistle of Jude?
8. Why and for what does God preserve us?
9. Which sins are seriously rebuked in the NT?
10. Why did the devil fight for the corpse of Moses?
11. Should we read the biblical Apocrypha?
12. What is the divine judgment for?
13. What is an „unforgiveable sin“ and why?
14. What is praying „in the Holy Spirit“?
15. How does God guide us?
16. How should we deal with doubting and struggling believers?
17. What became clear and amazing to you when you studied this epistle?

Please send the answers to pastor@matutis.de

•or to the church bible school, PO box. 65 06 65, D-13306 Berlin

•or turn them in at the book table at the church.

If you would like to **obtain a degree (certificate) at the end** of the seminary, you need to answer the test questions at the end of each lesson and send or email it to us with your full name and address.

This Bible-Study-Material is copyrighted. application, duplication etc. only with permission of the initiator
Please write a short message.

[Pastor Joh.W.Matutis, Postf.65 06 65, D-13306 Berlin, oder pastor@matutis.de](mailto:pastor@matutis.de)

Nest lesson – 3 Epistles of John

And now may the Lord bless you richly with your bible studies.

May prayers are with you.

Pastor Joh.W.Matutis