

Jude 1-3

Introduction:

There are two types of introductions given when preparing to study any of the books of the New Testament. There are books that were written by Paul where Luke had recorded a detailed historical account of the beginnings of the churches that were receiving the letters in the book of Acts. We know who it was written to, when it was written, where Paul was when he wrote it, and a lot of background information. The second type of introduction has none of these things and is generally based more on uninspired sources outside of the NT and often includes speculation, guesswork and human opinions.

Most introductions deal with the author and his background, the recipients and their background, the time and place of writing, and how the book fits into the framework of the rest of the NT. Some of the books of the NT (such as the letters to Thessalonica and Corinth) have enough background information to spend an entire class laying the foundation. Other books, (like Hebrews, 2Peter and Jude) have little to no information in the Scriptures to lay this groundwork.

One of the interesting paradoxes of Bible study is, the less information we can glean from the Scriptures, the more information is provided in commentaries. Speculation, probabilities and possibilities take over. That is certainly the case with Jude. The sad truth is that we really know almost nothing about the background or the author of this book.

Author

Although the author identifies himself, since there is nothing in the NT written about him, we can only choose between the two possible options, and discuss what we know about them. Evidently at that time, his reputation among those who received the letter was strong enough that this was the only introduction necessary, but since there is nothing the NT to confirm who he might have been or giving us the same information we have, there is little we can do to recreate it. There are Three Jude's (Judas) in the NT. The first was Judas Iscariot, the second was an apostle by the name of Judas, and the third was one of the physical brother's of Jesus.

He chose twelve whom He also named apostles: 14 Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; 15 Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot; 16 **Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor.** Lk. 6:13-16

*Is this not **the carpenter's son**? Is not His **mother called Mary**? And His **brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas**? 56 And His sisters, are they not all with us? Mt. 13:55-57*

*Is this not **the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon**? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him. Mk. 6:3*

Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jn. 14:22

There is no possibility it could be the first, and the possibility it could be the second is based on a translation of the Greek phrase, "*Judas of John*" which either "son of" or "*brother of*" must be added. Yet there are two in this scripture and the KJV translated the first "*James of Alphaeus*" as son of and with not basis or reason the next "*Judas of John*" as "*brother of*." All later translations translated both the same with "*son of*." So the evidence for Judas of James in Acts is very weak.

*And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and **Judas the son of James.** 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and **Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.** Acts 1: 13-14*

The third, and most likely possibility, is also found in Acts. Both Jesus' mother Mary and His brothers, "*James, Joses, Simon, and Judas.*" were all present. While all the historical evidence proclaimed that James and His brother Judas were the author's of the letters that bear their names, the only real evidence we have is that they are both mentioned in Matthew, Mark, and Acts.

Yet it must be acknowledged that it is all circumstantial evidence. James the brother of the apostle John was killed by Herod in Acts 12. Yet another James is at the conference in Acts 15 and mentioned in Gal. 2. If this is the same James that Paul mentioned in Gal 1 as the Lord's brother, then it is clear that he played a very important role in the church at Jerusalem. There is very little reason not to conclude that this is James, the son of Joseph and Mary and Jesus' brother through Mary.

*Then he killed **James the brother of John** with the sword. Acts 12:2-3*

*And he said, "Go, **tell these things to James** and to the brethren." And he departed and went to another place. Acts 12:17*

*And after they had become silent, **James answered**, saying, "Men and brethren, listen to me: Acts 15:13-14*

*On the following day Paul went in with us **to James**, and all the elders were present. Acts 21:18-19*

*After that He was **seen by James**, then by all the apostles. 1 Cor 15:7-8*

*But I saw none of the other apostles except **James, the Lord's brother**. Gal 1:19-20*

*and when **James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars**, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. Gal 2:9-10*

Once we conclude that this is the case, then the next step is to work on the same process with Jude.

- (1) Jude is listed with James as one of the brothers of Jesus.
- (2) The brothers of Jesus were present in the upper room with the 120,
- (3) After the death of the apostle James another James became prominent in the church.
- (4) Jude, though nothing else is written about him, would certainly have been treated with respect as the brother of Jesus and of James.

This is all we have. Many are content with this and accept that Jude was written by Jesus' younger brother and also the younger brother of James. But there are several leaps that must be made. While many have easily made that leap, it appears that some caution should be taken. It could have been the Lord's brother, or, it might have been the Lord's brother.

Time of Writing and Recipients of the Letter

Once again, all we have to go on is circumstantial evidence. Since 2 Peter 2 and Jude follow the same path, and Peter speaks of it as future while Jude as imminent, it is logical to conclude that Jude was written after Peter.

*Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. 4 **For certain men HAVE CREPT IN unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.** Jude 3-4*

*But there were also false prophets among the people, even as **THERE WILL BE FALSE TEACHERS among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.** 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3 By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. 2Pet. 2:1-3*

This may be enough evidence to conclude that Jude was written later than Peter. Since Peter's letter was written about 60-65, Jude would have to be written later than this.

There is nothing in the letter that would help identify who the book was addressed to. Some have concluded that since Jude was a Jew, and those who received the letter clearly knew who he was that the recipients could have been Jews. This makes Judea the most likely place, but it is a very

weak case.

Similarities between Jude and the Second Chapter of Peter

	<u>Jude</u>		<u>2Peter</u>
1	4	certain men crept in	2:1
2	6	False teachers among you	
3	7	angels held in darkness for judgment	2:4
4	8	Sodom and Gomorrah burned to ashes	2:6
5	9	these men arrogantly slander angelic beings	2:10
6	10	Michael did not bring a slanderous accusation	2:11
7	11	these blasphemers are like brute beasts	2:12
8	12	they have followed the way of Balaam	2:15
9	13	clouds without rain, driven by a storm	2:17
10	16	blackest darkness is reserved for them	2:17
11	17	they lust, boast, and flatter	2:18
12	18	the apostles of our Lord foretold	3:2
		in the last days scoffers will come	3:3

(NT Commentary, William Hendriksen)

1 Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,

Jude begins with the exact same term Peter did in his second letter as he identified himself as the author.

Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

As noted in Peter, this is the most comprehensive term in the Greek language to express complete submission. It is the classic word for enslavement and slavery.

*“doulos sundoulos, doule douleuo, douleia. ... All the words in this group serve either to describe **the status of a slave or an attitude corresponding to that of a slave.** ... The meaning is so unequivocal and self-contained that it is superfluous to give examples of the individual terms or to trace the history of the group. ... Hence **we have a service that is not a matter of choice for the one who renders it, which he has to perform whether he likes or not, because he is subject as a slave to an alien will, to the will of his owner...**” (Kittel, Vol 2, p. 261-280; NT:1401)*

To those who are called,

Those who are called are those who have obeyed the gospel. God called us through the gospel (2Th. 2:14). This is the first similarity between Peter and Jude. out of darkness into his marvelous light through the gospel.

*as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through **the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,** 2Pet. 1:3-4*

*as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; 15 but **as He who called you is holy,** you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.” 1Pet. 1:14-16*

*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of **Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;** 10 who **once were not a people but are now the people of God,** who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. 1Pet. 2:9-10*

Those who were not a people and who had not obtained mercy, once called, have obtained both. God called according to His purpose, and through that purpose, makes all things work together for God. (Rom 8:28-30).

beloved in God the Father (ASV / NASB / ESV) ἠγαπημένοις *egapemenois*
sanctified by God the Father, (KJV / NKJV) ἡγιασμένοις *ègiasmenois*

As can be seen, the differences between these words are so slight that it could easily have been a mistake by a scribe. Since both “*being beloved of God the Father*” and “*being sanctified by God*”

the Father” are abundantly testified in the Scriptures, there is really doctrinal issue to be considered here.

The term “sanctified” is used:

To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: 1Cor. 1:2

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that **He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. Eph. 5:25-28**

The term “beloved” is used:

But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, **brethren beloved by the Lord**, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, 2 Thess 2:13-14

knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. 1 Thess 1:4-5

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; Col 3:12-13

While the weight of the evidence lays with “beloved,” the KJV and NKJV based on the TR have kept the former, sanctified.

and preserved in Jesus Christ:

While this word was used in Peter (**reserved in heaven for you**), and is used 70 times in the NT, it is only used in this sense here. The term means to keep and guard in the sense of protecting. Since this is a perfect participle, (as is “beloved”), both being beloved and being preserved are something the Lord did the moment we entered Christ, and will continue to do until the end.

“tereo... **to attend to carefully, take care of**; i.e. a. prop. **to guard**... b. metaph. *to keep, ... to hold firmly*... c. *to observe ...* d. *to reserve*...” (Thayer, p. 622; 5083)

tereo ... **guard, preserve**; hold fast to, keep, follow ... in the NT ... 70 occurrences... is used with its literal meaning — to guard (prisoners) — most often in Acts (24:23; 25:4,21)...” (Exegetical Dictionary NT:5083.)

This was a promise Jesus made to all the sheep who hear His voice and follow Him.

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. 30 I and My Father are one.” John 10:27-30

2 Mercy, peace, and love

While peace was a common greeting of the day and is used in nearly letter in the NT, “mercy” and “agape love” are only used in a greeting a few times in the NT:

To all who are in Rome, **beloved** of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and **peace** from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. 1:7

Grace, **mercy**, and **peace** will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. 2Jn. 3

This is the love that gave His only begotten Son, and the love that Jesus came to reveal to mankind. Without Jesus we could not understand the love of God because it was He who revealed its fullness and depth to us.

that **Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith**; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height — 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Eph. 3:17-19

It is wonderful and refreshing that all of the letters communicating God’s commands through Christ begin by reminding of that God’s first thoughts of us are of love and mercy, wanting to give us peace.

be multiplied to you.

This term is only used in the greetings of 1Peter, 2Peter and Jude. It takes the basic truth of what we understand about God's mercy, peace and love, and multiplies them for our understanding. The more we understand about God through Christ, the more the benefits of these things will be multiplied in our hearts.

plethuno... This verb occurs 12 times in the NT (ca. 200 occurrences in the LXX), ... (Mt 24:12; Acts 6:7; 7:17; 9:31; 12:24; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:2; Jude 2) are passive with the meaning **be multiplied, be allotted in abundance** (so esp. with God as the logical subj.) or mid. (following the intrans. act. sense): **multiply, increase, grow** (e.g., Matt 24:12, (Exegetical Dictionary NT:4129)

3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you

Jude adds his own love to that of God and Jesus Christ. Thus the letter was prompted out of his love, care and concern and was designed and planned by himself and the Holy Spirit who inspired him to act in their best interests. He began with an explanation to them about the concern that had prompted this letter, the energy he was putting forth to write it, and the changing circumstances that brought about a modification in its direction.

He was not just diligently preparing, but was putting forth all and every (*pas*) diligence. There is a lot of emotion and energy behind this word. It speaks first of "*haste and speed*," but also of the "*zeal, earnestness, and seriousness*" that filled his own heart. This term is used when something is important.

spoude (*speudo*,) **haste, speed, ll. zeal, pains, exertion, trouble, c inf., to take pains to do a thing**, ... with great attention to the arms, ... plural, zealous exertions, III. **zeal, earnestness, seriousness, zeal, earnestness, seriousness**, Eur., etc. 2. an object of attention, a serious engagement, IV. *spoude*, as Adv. in haste, hastily, Od., Hdt., Att. 2. with great exertion, with difficulty, hardly, scarcely, 3. **earnestly, seriously, urgently, very busily**, II.; (Liddell and Scott, Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:4710)

It is the tense of this verb when compared to that of the next clause that led the translators of all the versions to include the word while or although. It is clear that while he had desired to go in one direction, events had forced him to modify his original intent.

concerning our common salvation,

The diligence centered and revolved around our common salvation. It was to be about and concerning this theme.

peri... prep., joined in the N. T. with the gen. and the acc. ... and indicating that the person or thing relative to which an act or state is predicated is **as it were encompassed by this act or state**; Lat. **circum, circa; around, about**... I. with the GENITIVE it denotes **that around which an act or state revolves**; *about, concerning, as touching*, etc... a. *about concerning*... b. *as respects* [A. V. often (as) touching]... *with regard to, in reference to*... (Thayer, p. 502; 4012)

All his zeal, energy and intent had been focused on our common salvation. This would be the one hope of our calling, including the blessed state of life after death, our elevated and saved position when the Lord returns (1Th. 4) , our resurrection (1Cor 15), judgment and receiving the eternal kingdom (Mt 25), the heavenly country and the city whose builder and maker is God (Heb 11). Whether elaborations, or a simple enumeration, the change of circumstances required a change in topic and subject matter.

Some would say that there was no change in topic, because any warnings and exhortations regarding our conduct would be included in our salvation, but that seems to be a stretch, and there is no reason to go in that direction. There are enough of passages on our common salvation that it is obvious there is none of that here.

I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you

This is a Greek phrase that we can't easily translate into English. Literally "*I held necessity*" or "*I held it necessary*." He used the general term for possession, "*I have*" or "*I hold*." The basic sense is that when circumstances changed the nature of his possession changed. He had intended to

have a letter about the common salvation, but a sudden necessity forced a change.

“echo... 1. This verb is **used more than 700 times in the NT**,... 2. has a **great breadth of meaning: have, keep, possess; aor.: acquire, take possession; intrans.: be, be situated ...**” (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament NT:2192)

The change was the result of circumstances that had come to him. He had learned that the very things Peter had warned against had not only begun, but they were already there.

*But there were also false prophets among the people, even as **there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, 2Pet. 2:1***

This knowledge had created a necessity. Jude was now compelled by these urgent circumstances to direct his letter in a different direction that he had intended.

anagkastōs adv. from *anágke* (318), **necessity. Of necessity, by constraint.** ... In the NT, the noun *anágke* occurs 17 times, the adjective *anagkaíos*, 8 times, and the verb *anagkázœ*, 9 times, all by Paul. The verb *anagkázœ* in the NT, both in the active and passive, **describes a compulsion or a being compelled which does not rest on the use of outward force** (Matt 14:22; Acts 28:19; Gal 2:3). Luke 14:23 does not intimate the use of force. **The only place where the adv. is used is 1 Peter 5:2, standing in contrast to hekousíœs (1596), voluntarily or willfully.** ...” (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:317)

This change of circumstances led to an exhortation or admonition. This entire letter now centers on this. He is literally “*calling them to his side*” to lovingly warn instruct and teach them about their grave danger. If a cobra had slithered in among them they would not be in any less danger than they were.

“*parakaleo*... I. **to call to ones side, call for, summon**:... II. **to address, speak to**;... which may be done **in the way of exhortation, entreaty, comfort, instruction, etc. hence result a variety of senses**... 1. **to admonish, exhort**;... 2. **to beg, entreat, beseech**; ...3. **to console, to encourage and strengthen by consolation, to comfort**;...4. **to encourage, strengthen**;...5. it combines the ideas of *exhorting* and *comforting* and *encouraging*;... 6. **to instruct, teach**...” (Thayer, p. 482-483; 3870)

to contend earnestly for the faith

Contending is taken from games of competition or war. A battle is raging (Eph. 6:10-17), a race is being run (1Cor. 9:27) and there is a need for all soldiers and athletes to fight a battle and compete in games. (2Tim 2:1-5). Jude is the only one who adds the preposition *epi* to increase its intensity.

epagōnizomai; from *epí* (1909), for, and *agōnizomai* ... (75), **to strive, contend earnestly.** To fight for or in reference to something...” (Jude 3). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1864)

“*agōnizomai*... 1. **to enter a contest; contend in the gymnastic games**... 2. univ. **to contend with adversaries, fight**... 3. fig. **to contend, struggle, with difficulties and dangers antagonistic to the gospel**... 4. **to endeavor with strenuous zeal, strive, to obtain something**...” (Thayer, p. 10; 75)

epagōnizomai signifies “**to contend about a thing, as a combatant**” (*epi*, “**upon or about,**” intensive, agon, “**a contest**”), “**to contend earnestly,**” Jude 3. The word “**earnestly**” is added to convey the intensive force of the preposition. (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:1864)

The battle rages around “*the faith.*” As Paul noted to the Ephesians, there is only one faith. Anything believed, taught or practiced that does not come from that faith. This faith needs to be protected, contended for and fought to keep pure. Only the faith that comes by hearing the word of God is a saving faith. Cain had a different faith than Abel. Cain trusted in himself while Abel trusted God. He being dead still speaks and we must contend for the faith just as he did.

which was once for all delivered to the saints.

This faith does not change, evolve, and can't be modified. No matter how long or how far away, the faith was delivered once and will never be repeated or changed. It was done once. The power of this word is very important here. It was done once and never needs to be done again.

hápax; adv. of time. adverb, once, one time (from Homer down); a. universally: 2 Cor 11:25; Heb 9:26; 1 Peter 3:20 ... like Latin *semel*, used of what is so done as to be of perpetual validity and never need repetition, once for all: Heb 6:4; 10:2; 1 Peter 3:18; Jude 3,5. (Thayer's Greek Lexicon, NT:530)

hápax, Adverb. (a copul., and root *pag*... *pēgnumi* ... Latin *sim-plex*) once, once only, once for all, ...” (Liddell and

The passage that makes this the clearest is found in Hebrews.

not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another — 26 He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once (hapax) at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Heb 9:25-27

Just as the sacrifice was done once and never needs to be repeated, so also the delivery of the faith of the gospel. The inspired writings of the apostles and prophets were delivered once and will never be given again. The term deliver is an important one in this context. It is an intensified form of giving where something is transferred into the possession of another. In this case, God has once for all time entrusted us with the words that create the one faith. Each new generation, will be judged by how they treat what was handed down to them.

“paradidomi... appears in the NT 119 times, with greatest frequency in the Gospels and Acts ... As an intensified form of "give," paradidomi designates the act whereby something or someone is transferred into the possession of another. ... The great breadth of meaning displayed by paradidomi is best divided according to the implied degree of possession and esp. the degree of threat to the existence of the one who or that which is given over: a) entrust/commend/give for safekeeping; ... b) hand over an area of authority/authorize/permit; c) hand over for judgment/punishment... d) deliver/hand over; e) risk one's existence or even sacrifice (esp. as a self-sacrifice...) ... f) hand over to death/destruction.... Jude 3 and 2 Peter 2:21 stress in opposition to the false teachers "the faith that was once for all handed down" and "the command that was given" to Christians. ...” (Exegetical Dictionary, NT: 3860)

It has been entrusted only to the saints, because only the saints have the one faith. Only the saints have entered the narrow gate and are walking the narrow and difficult path that leads to life. But now those walking the broad path have entered in among them and seek to redirect them. They must hold fast and contend and fight for that faith that was once for all delivered to them.

4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed,

The reason (*gar*) for the urgency and the need for the saints to contend earnestly for the faith is now revealed. Not all, but a certain type of person has entered into their midst. This is a very picturesque word. The verb comes from the setting sun or something sinking into the water. Two prepositions “*eis - to enter*” and “*para - beside or along side.*” They have entered beside them and immersed and injected themselves among them. Thus their faith, hearts and motives make them entirely different from the saints contending for the faith, but they have entered in sheep’s clothing. Thus they have entered secretly, slipped in stealthily, crept in unawares. They are there, working and corrupting others in preparation to bring the congregation into their hands.

par-eis-dúō ... from **pará (3844), unto or at the side of, and eisdúō (n.f.), to enter in, which is from eis (1519), into, and dúnō (1416)**, to go down, sink. **To enter in craftily, secretly, without notice, like a thief.** Used of the action of false teachers entering into the church under false claims (Jude 4). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:3921)

pareisdúō ... (according to classical usage trans., cf. *dunō* (see below); **to enter secretly, slip in stealthily**; to steal in; (A. V. creep in unawares): Jude 4 (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, NT:3921)

dunō ... (Mark 1:32 ...), ... to go into, enter; go under, be plunged into, sink in: in the N. T. twice of the setting sun (sinking as it were into the sea), Mark 1:32; Luke 4:40. (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, NT:1416)

What happened to Saul when he sought to join himself was wrong because although they thought he was a threat, he was actually one of them. But the opposite can also happen. Churches need to protect themselves. God has given us examples.

And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. Acts 9:26-28

I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, 2 that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also. Rom. 16:1-2

withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. 2Th. 3:6

These three passages show how important it must have been for the Christians in the first century to assess those who wanted to be among them. Paul’s example confirms it, but so also does his commendation of Phoebe, and his warning to the Thessalonians to withdraw from every **brother**. Without a thorough assessment of each person who wants to enter in among us, how would we know they are a brother or that they are faithful in their in their doctrine and walk.

Without this, those who pretend to be one of us, can slip in and be in our midst, just as they were here. Generally, they will work stealthily, settling in among the weak. So godly Christians have to learn to ask the right questions and to make inquiries. If this doesn’t happen, then slowly and insidiously, they can be led under their power and influence, and a schism can arise before anyone is even aware of it. Paul dealt with this many times. The Galatians were duped and never destroyed by them. Some in Corinth were the same.

But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. 17 And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, 18 who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. 2 Tim 2:16-19

For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11 whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain. Titus 1:10-12

As Jesus noted, sometimes you just have to wait for the fruits. Many are so adept at creeping in and secretly working that they can’t be noticed. But sooner or later, the fruits of their work will be revealed and they will be unmasked.

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Mt. 7:15-16

Older and wiser Christians, who know the basic environment of false teachers and false brethren can ask the right questions to keep anyone from creeping in unaware. That is what Jude intends to do. He actually gives two fruits. The first are the OT false prophets who were unmasked by God himself. Since there are a limited number of ways false teachers can operate, most of them will be quickly unmasked as they follow men like Cain, Balaam and Korah. (Jude 11). The second will be their desire to turn grace into lewdness. Once we are aware of these two “fruits,” they will be much easier to identify and contend with.

who long ago were marked out

These men were marked out a long time ago. Sometimes we have to see the context of a passage to be able to fully understand its meaning. The long ago goes all the way back to Cain and Abel in Genesis and Balaam and Korah in Numbers as Jude makes very clear from his words in 1:11. These are a part of the fruits Jesus spoke of in His sermon!

ékpalai ... "from of old, for a long time" (*ek*, "from," and *pálai* "long ago, of old," Heb 1:1), occurs in 2 Peter 2:3, RV, "from of old" (KJV, "of a long time"); ..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary, NT:1597)

ékpalai ... adv. from *ek* (1537), of, and *pálai* (3819), **anciently, formerly**. Of **old, long since** (2 Pet. 2:3; 3:5). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1597)

“Written beforehand” is another picturesque term. While it had its basic meaning of writing something before something else, it also had another meaning. It is reminiscent of our wanted posters in the old west. If your name and picture ended up on a wanted poster, you were written up beforehand. Anyone who is written up in such a way that they can be identified when they arrive is what this term explains is possible.

prographō **write beforehand/earlier; note ahead; write out publicly** ... There are four occurrences in the NT. The literary meaning in Eph 3:3: "as I have written to you above/before," in reference to earlier statements in the same letter ... , pass. in Rom 15:4: "whatever was written in former days" .. Jude 4: noted beforehand, entered into lists, ..." (Exegetical Dictionary, NT:4270)

prográphō from *pró* (4253), before, openly, plainly, and *gráphō* (1125), to write. **To write before**. ... (I) In reference to time past, **to have written before or at a former time** (Rom 15:4; Eph 3:3). ... **In Jude 4 it means to proscribe, appoint, ordain, post up publicly in writing**. Those who were **summoned before courts of justice were said to be *progegramménoi*, posted up ahead of time**, because they were cited by posting up their names in some public place. ... Those **called *progegramménoi*, those whose names were posted up in writing in some public place, were proscribed as persons doomed to die with a reward offered to whoever would kill them**. (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:4270)

This concept will become more pronounced as the letter progresses, but this is one of the most profound points that Jude makes. By looking at those who lived in “from of old,” we can get a list of characteristics and distinguishing features that will help identify these creepers.

Cain & Abel	Korah	King Saul (sacrifice and Amalekites)	Adam and Eve
Nadab & Abihu	Balaam	Uzziah (incense & became a leper)	Achan

for this condemnation,

Literally, “long ago, marked out, into (*eis* - for this purpose) this condemnation.” God marked them out long ago because rebellion and error do not change. It always begins the same way. A scripture prohibiting something or a truth that hinders something becomes a roadblock to the wicked. Satan in the garden is the perfect example. There was a Scripture that kept him from his purpose, so he had to move Eve to doubt the truth of that Scripture. Anyone who does this is another among his many offspring

Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that **in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God**, knowing good and evil." Gen. 3:4-5

But I fear, lest somehow, **as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ**. 4 For if he who comes **preaches another Jesus** whom we have not preached, or if you **receive a different spirit** which you have not received, or **a different gospel which you have not accepted** — **you may well put up with it!** 2Cor. 11:3-4

But **what I do**, I will also **continue to do**, that I may **cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast**. 13 For **such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ**. 14 And no wonder! For **Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light**. 15 Therefore it is **no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works**. 2 Cor 11:12-15

When Christians are prepared to stand firm against all changes they will be protected, and they will be able to identify those who secretly creep in long before they are made known.

Yet God not only have the characteristics of these people, but He also gave an immediate response that left no doubt. We clearly see God’s verdict of condemnation. The verdict of God as the judge on such people was marked out a long time ago with Nadab and Abihu, the swallowing up of Korah as the ground opened and closed upon him. The killing of Balaam by Israel. The verdict of death was long ago pronounced.

Cain & Abel	Korah	King Saul (sacrifice and Amalekites)	Adam and Eve
Nadab & Abihu	Balaam	Uzziah (incense & became a leper)	Achan

This term, “*condemnation*” refers both to the judge’s verdict, the sentence pronounced and the condemnation that followed. “*commonly denotes the result of an action: the judge’s verdict.*”

“*krima* ... appears 27 times in the NT, ... It **commonly denotes the result of an action: the judge’s verdict**. ... It refers to **divine condemnation** in Rom 2:2,3 (Exegetical Dictionary NT:2917)

krima ... denotes (a) “**the sentence pronounced, a verdict, a condemnation, the decision resulting from an investigation,**” e. g., Mark 12:40; Luke 23:40; 1 Tim 3:6; Jude 4; (b) “**the process of judgment leading to a decision,**” ...” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary NT:2917)

ungodly men,

Adjectives and nouns are always used to define or describe a specific attribute. Generally, if they don’t have the attribute we just don’t use that adjective or noun to describe them. But there are some things that are so far opposed to the quality under consideration that each language has the means to negate it. In English we use the term un- in front of any noun or adjective that it is appropriate to describe a quality that ought to be there, but is not.

In this case, all Christians are godly. Respect and reverential awe are essential in the hearts of all Christians. When those who do not have these characteristics enter in among those who do, we have the perfect scenario for evil companionship to corrupt good morals. The godly hold God in fear, reverence, awe and respect. They trust in the Lord with all their heart and do not lean upon their own understanding (pr. 3:5-7). Their every thought, word and action are carefully assessed, brought out into the light of God’s word to test and approve (1Th. 5:21-22). Those who are ungodly therefore are those who not only have none of these characteristics, but are just the opposite.

Such men and women have no respect or reverence for the faith once delivered to the saints. They have no care or concern about God’s revelations about conduct, conviction, or truth. What is pure and holy and what is common and profane brings no interest at all from them. The ungodly are “*godless, unholy, and profane*” because they are “*destitute of reverential awe towards God,*” They don’t fear God and therefore do the exact opposite of what he commands.

“*asebés*, ... **ungodly, godless, unholy, profane,** ... (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon.)

“*asebés*, ... (*sebo* to reverence); **destitute of reverential awe towards God**, contemning God, impious...” (Thayer, p. 79; 765)

“*asebés*, adjective, from the privative *a* (1), without, and *sebo* (4576), to worship, venerate. **Basically it means godless, without fear and reverence of God. It does not mean irreligious, but one who actively practices the opposite of what the fear of God demands.** ... **asebés is one characterized by immoral and impious behavior.** Often opposite of *dikaïos* (1342), just (Rom 4:5; 5:6). *asebés* also occurs in 2 Peter 2:5; 3:7; Jude 4, 15. (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:765)

But once again, how can such people creep in secretly? Won’t such overt behavior strip the veneer quickly aside? No, these are the hypocrites who can pretend and act in one way in order to secretly

creep in and seek to remove the faith of man. These are the tares, the sons of the evil one, those who cause stumbling. They are in the world and of the world, but seeking to come into the midst of those who are not of this world. They will be gathered out of His kingdom as those who don't belong.

*The **field is the world**, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but **the tares are the sons of the wicked one**. ... 41The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they **will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness**, 42 and will **cast them into the furnace of fire**. Mt. 13:38-42*

who turn the grace of our God into lewdness

This is one area they can never hide if we understand these things. When God speaks against an activity in His Word, it is always forbidden. Once God has identified it as evil and we have proven and tested it and found it to be condemned, nothing can modify or change that thing from darkness to light or from good to evil. God pronounced a woe on these people long ago.

*Woe to those who **call evil good, and good evil**; Who **put darkness for light, and light for darkness**; Who **put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter**! 21 Woe to those who are **wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight**! 22 Woe to men **mighty at drinking wine**, Woe to men valiant for **mixing intoxicating drink**, Isa. 5:20-22*

All who do this in any generation of God's people are guilty of a grievous sin. But these are one step ahead. They have already come up with the perfect plan to circumvent all of this. They speak of the merciful and compassionate God of grace and mercy who is far different than the God who was so demanding under the Old Covenant. They seek to circumvent all the powerful examples that mark out the evil of man so that all can see it. But for these Jesus death on the cross changed everything. Now grace reigns and these things no longer matter. But this is patently and demonstrably false. Listen carefully to Paul:

*For **the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men**, 12 **teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age**, 13 **looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**, 14 **who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works**. 15 **Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority**. Let no one despise you. Titus 2:11-15*

God's grace was never intended to do anymore than give us forgiveness when we fall short as we strive to grow out of these things. We must still hate and seek to destroy all vestiges of them. Anyone who uses God's grace to allow them to freely sin, without remorse or repentance because God's grace covers it all will soon find themselves locked into the terrible slavery of lasciviousness.

That this is a difficult word to nail down is evident from the fact that none of the translations today have the same word in their translation. As we consider the different meanings from these English words, we would all have to agree that each of them is actually a category and not a specific sin or lust. That is as it should be because that is the basic meaning of the original language as well.

who turn the grace of our God into lewdness (NKJV) turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness , (ASV) who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness , (NASU) who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality (ESV) who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality (NIV)
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The definitions below are a composite of how the word was used in the original Greek language, how it was used to translate the Greek OT (Septuagint), and how it was used in the New Testament. After looking at them, I think we would all agree to the basic understanding of the term.

Consider some of the more important elements of its definition. "*behavior completely lacking in moral restraint,*" "*an insolent disregard of decency.*" "*The prominent idea is shameless conduct best described as wanton lawless insolence one who acknowledges no restraints, who dares whatsoever his caprice and wanton petulance may suggest.*"

If we look at the stages of sin as they are revealed in the Scriptures, we will not only find where to place this, but also better understand its meaning.

1. Sin begins with lust and enticement, and in its infancy, it leads to shame and remorse.

But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lusts and enticed. 15 Then, when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Jas. 1:14-15

We see this in the list of all sins. It always begins as a lust and that lust, even in the mind leads to the birth of sin. But as long as it stays within the mind and we feel uncomfortable acting on it or letting others know we feel it, we will remain in sin's infancy. That doesn't make it any safer, but it simply identifies the first step into moral corruption and wicked defilement. In this stage the conscience is still working:

who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) Rom 2:15-16

2. Sin doesn't stay an infant.

The more it is practiced and the more the lusts are fed, the greater the desire and the more degrading the actions. Sooner it comes out into the open. The conscience is still working, and with each new daring step into degradation and evil, it sends out an alarm. But the desires are so strong, the conscience can only protest after the act.

3. When sin becomes full grown, this stage is entered.

The conscience is not longer functioning, the arguments and reasoning have lost any form of truth and lies and rationalizations have reached the level where the sin is reigning. They are now slaves and seeking to enslave others. The very word used here is their means of bringing others back into bondage.

For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. 19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. 2 Peter 2:18-19

drop in but growing silent under the continual onslaught of evil practices. As it becomes full grown, the word used here comes into being.

This full grown stage is where the sin these false teachers who have crept in secretly has reached. Now, looking at the highlights of this definition, it is easier to identify and understand.

Behavior completely lacking in moral restraint	That which is an insolent disregard of decency.
A vices that destroy an individual from within	The prominent idea is shameless conduct.
the sins of the unregenerate who are "past feeling"	Best described as wanton lawless insolence
One who acknowledges no restraints	Comprehensive expression for evil and perversion

aselgeia 1. In the NT *aselgeia* normally has a sensual meaning and refers esp. to sexual debauchery: in addition, the word describes behavior in which sexual debauchery is only one element among many. *aselgeia* is thus a comprehensive expression for evil and perversion. It is one of the vices that destroy an individual from within (Mark 7:22). The perversity of Sodom and Gomorrah (2 Peter 2:7) consisted of it. It is the characteristic of godless paganism (Eph 4:19; 1 Peter 4:3; Jude 4). (Exegetical Dictionary NT:766)

aselgeia ... behavior completely lacking in moral restraint, USUALLY with the implication of sexual licentiousness - 'licentious behavior, extreme immorality.' (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT 766)

aselgeia ... Notes: (1) Broadly speaking, *aischrotes* signifies "whatever is disgraceful"; *rhuparia*, "that which is characterized by moral impurity", *molumos*, "that which is defiling by soiling the clean"; *aselgeia*, "that which is an insolent disregard of decency." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT 766)

aselgeia denotes "excess, licentiousness, absence of restraint, indecency, wantonness"; "lasciviousness" in Mark 7:22, one of the evils that proceed from the heart; in 2 Cor 12:21, one of the evils of which some in the church at Corinth had been guilty; in Gal 5:19, classed among the works of the flesh; in Eph 4:19, among the sins of the unregenerate who are "past feeling"; ... The prominent idea is shameless conduct. ..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT: 766)

aselgeia ... If our Translators or the Latin had impurities and lusts of the flesh exclusively in their eye, they have certainly given to the word too narrow a meaning. *aselgeia*, which, it will be observed, is not grouped with such in the catalogue of sins at Mark 7:21,22, is best described as wanton lawless insolence; *aselgeia* as Passow observes, is very closely allied to the *hubristikos* and *akolastos* being one who acknowledges no restraints, who dares whatsoever his caprice and wanton petulance may suggest. None would deny that *aselgeia* may display itself in acts of what we call 'lasciviousness;' ... but still it is their petulance, their insolence, which this word, ... expresses. ... In a multitude of passages the notion of lasciviousness is altogether absent from the word. Josephus ascribes *aselgeia* and *mania* to Jezebel, daring, as she did, to build a temple of Baal in the Holy City itself (Antt. viii. 13. 1); and the same to a Roman soldier, who, being on guard at the Temple during the Passover, provoked by an act of grossest indecency a tumult, in which many lives were lost ... Other passages, helpful to a fixing of the true meaning of the word, are 3 Macc 2:26; Polybius, viii. 14. 1; Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. v. 1. 26; and see the quotations in Wetstein, vol. i. p. 588. *Aselgeia* then, and *asotia* are clearly distinguishable; **THE FUNDAMENTAL NOTION ... *aselgeia* LAWLESS INSOLENCE AND WANTON CAPRICE.** (Trench's Synonyms NT 766)

who turn the grace of our God into lewdness

After reading the literal uses of this term where the bones of Joseph are carried (transferred) from Egypt to the promised land and Enoch was translated into heaven, its basic meaning of changing the place or the condition is easily seen. When we move this over the spiritual realm, we have the Galatians transferring and translating themselves to a different gospel. Here, those who have crept in secretly among them, will translate the grace, mercy, compassion and forgiveness of God into a way to allow sin to become full grown and destroy them. What a terrible exchange!

metatithēmi; from *metá* (3326), denoting **change of place or condition**, and *tithēmi*... (5087), **to place. To transpose, put in another place and hence to transport, transfer, translate.** Trans. (Acts 7:16; Heb 7:12, the **priesthood being transferred to Christ** or to the tribe of Judah [cf. Heb 7:11,14]; 11:5 of **Enoch who was translated to heaven** [cf. 2 Kings 2:11]; Sept.: Gen 5:24). In the middle, *metatithēmi*, **to transfer oneself, change sides or parties, turn away from someone** (Gal 1:6). Metaphorically, to transfer to another use or purpose, pervert, abuse (Jude 4, "perverting the grace of God into licentiousness" [a.t.]). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: New NT:3346)

metatithēmi **bring to another place, move, transport, change**; mid.: turn away; pass.: be done away with, fall away The verb *metatithēmi* **appears 6 times** in the NT. In 3 of its uses, **the meaning is literal**: Acts 7:16 ... , "they [the bodies of Jacob and the fathers] were transported to Shechem"; Heb 11:5 ... of the translation of Enoch ... In the other 3 occurrences, **the meaning is figurative**: Gal 1:6, ... "that you **so quickly fall away/turn away**"; Heb 7:12, ... "when **the priesthood is changed/undergoes a change**"; Jude 4 "**changing the grace**")... (Exegetical Dictionary NT:3346)

and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The only way these men can do this is to find a secret and tempting way to deny and contradict Jesus. Jesus was too clear and forceful and no one could misunderstand His words in the sermon on the mount and throughout His ministry. But always, as Satan in the garden, men seek for ways that sound plausible enough to deceive. Thus this term in some places can be an outright denial, but in others like here, it can be more subtle. The denial is in the practice, but not in word. They can still proclaim their love the Lord while all the while practicing lawlessness. They contradict and His teachings, thus denying his Lordship as the Christ, but in such a kind way that some do not see the contradiction.

arneomai signifies (a) "**to say... not, to contradict**," e. g., Mark 14:70; John 1:20; 18:25,27; 1 John 2:22; (b) "**to deny**" **by way of disowning a person**, as, e. g., the Lord Jesus as master, e. g., Matt 10:33; Luke 12:9; John 13:38 (in the best mss.); 2 Tim 2:12; or, on the other hand, of Christ Himself, "**denying**" **that a person is His follower, Matt 10:33; 2 Tim 2:12**; or to "**deny**" **the Father and the Son, by apostatizing and by disseminating pernicious teachings, to "deny" Jesus Christ as master and Lord by immorality under a cloak of religion, 2 Peter 2:1; Jude 4;** (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:720)

We see this today whenever anyone simply rejects Jesus words or those of His apostles on any subject. Whether it be the role of women, MDR, or sin, any other doctrine where they, regardless of the justification, do not submit to His commands.

This sums up why he had intended to write of our command salvation, but found it necessary to write that they contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

Jude 5-8

5 But I want to remind you,

He begins, not with new warnings and commands, but by reminding them of what they already knew (but may have forgotten). This is a strengthened word for reminding, strongly inferring that there is nothing new here. They are to remember and call to mind underneath what they already know. This is not new teaching, it is under teaching. Reminding of what is already known is the most powerful way to bring people back to the truth. When you work on the core convictions they have forgotten, it will tug on their hearts strings.

“hupomimneskō... 1. actively, to cause one to remember, bring to remembrance, recall to mind... to put one in remembrance, admonish, of something... 2. passively, to be reminded, to remember...”
(Thayer, NT:5279)

hupomneskō... , from hupó (5259), under, and mimneskō (3403), to remind. To remember, perhaps after hints or suggestions, to put in mind of, remind, bring to remembrance. (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:5279)

though you once knew this,

This is graphic knowledge, taken into our hearts as though we ourselves have seen them. There are many things in the Scriptures that are so clear and evident that there is no way to deny them. They can be ignored, or scoffed and mocked, but if they are believed and trusted, they become a knowledge that is seen, understood and known. The Holy Spirit knew the readers and pricks their heart and conscience with this knowledge.

“eido... lat. video... The tenses coming from eido and retained by usage form two families, of which one signifies to see, the other to know... 1. to see 1. to perceive (with the eyes)... 2. lat. video, to perceive by any of the senses... 3. univ to perceive, notice, discern, discover... 4. to see, i.e. to turn the eyes, the mind, the attention to anything; a. to pay attention, observe... b. ... to see about something i.e. to ascertain what must be done about it... c. to inspect, examine... d. to look at, behold... 5. to experience, any state of condition... 6. to see i.e. have an interview with, to visit...” (Thayer, p. 172-174; 1492)

that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt,

While Peter used **angels, Noah and Sodom and Gomorrah with Lot**, (2Pet. 2:4-9), to point out the terrible consequences of refusing to submit to God, contrasti those who did submit and those refused. He shed that God knew how to keep the wicked under punishment and to deliver the righteous.

Jude used **Israel** in the wilderness, **angels, Sodom and Gomorrah, Cain, Balaam, Korah, and Enoch**. The theme that tied them together began in verse four with *“long ago marked out,”* showing the similarities between those who fell long ago and those who will fall today. He spoke of the terrible consequences of their fall. The specific sins listed are what will mark them out. Israel and the angels knew yet chose to rebel, Sodom’s lasciviousness and wanton disregard for God’s clear mandate in the garden of Eden, of the one flesh relationship of one man to one woman.

The tragic story of Israel is recorded in Exodus and Numbers with the details emphasized again in Moses applications to those still living in Israel after the rest had died in the wilderness. The ten plagues and passing through the Red sea sum up how God saved them. There was no doubt that it was God and not their own power that had brought the salvation. The gratitude was evident, until any deprivation or law they did not want to keep arose. Then their lack of faith, trust and true gratitude and appreciation dissipated. God expressed His feelings many years later.

Who long ago were marked out 1:4

- 5 **Israel** saved from Egypt, did not believe
- 6 **Angels** kept not proper domain – left abode
- 7 **Sodom** ... immorality and strange flesh
- 11 Went in the **way of Cain**
- 11 Run greedily into the **error of Balaam**
- 11 Perished in **rebellion/gainsaying of Korah**
- 14 Of these **Enoch** 7th of Adam prophesied:
convict all ungodly... of ungodly deeds,
committed in an ungodly way, and harsh
things ungodly have spoken against Him.

"O Ephraim, what shall I do to you? O Judah, what shall I do to you? For **your faithfulness is like a morning cloud, And like the early dew it goes away.** Hos. 6:4

God initially tolerated their selfish demands for water, and their faithless statement about wishing they had died in Egypt than to be hungry in the wilderness (Ex 15:22-24; 16:3). The turning point was the golden calf. After promising to keep all that God commanded, they broke it while Moses was on the Mount. The first time they complained after the left Sinai, God began striking them dead, which continued throughout the book of numbers. (Num. 11:1). The final act of rebellion occurred when they arrived at Canaan, sent 12 spies to look over the land, and after the bad report all Israel except Joshua and Calab decided to go back to Egypt. At that moment, God swore in His wrath that none of them would enter His rest.

Although these things are recorded as history in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit referred to it strongly in Paul's words to the Corinthians, comparing Israel's initial call by God to that of the Corinthians and warning them that the same dangers that faced Israel were still facing Christians. They were "*marked out*" and became our examples lest we fall as they did.

*Now **these things became our examples**, to the intent that we should **not lust after evil things as they also lusted**. 7 And do **not become idolaters** as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." 8 **Nor let us commit sexual immorality**, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; 9 **nor let us tempt Christ**, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 **nor complain**, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 **Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition**, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore **let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.** 1Cor. 10:6-13*

This is a very powerful application that all who have read this book would be able to make. God called them, but they allowed various sins to become licentious and it led to their death.

afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

The Holy Spirit himself warned these Christians that there was a direct tie between these first generation servants of God who had been given a law, and all first generation Christians who have been given the gospel. The same dangers face both. All must be deeply concerned not to follow that example. We must not harden our hearts (as these false teachers Jude was combating was seeking for them to do. All Christians must be deeply concerned about not going astray, knowing God's ways, and allowing an evil heart of unbelief to lead us to depart as they departed. God was angry with those who sinned, those who did not obey and those who did not believe. We must also be diligent let we fall according to the same example.

*Therefore, **as the Holy Spirit says**: "Today, if you will hear His voice, 8 **Do not harden your hearts** as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 Where **your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years.** 10 Therefore **I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.'** 11 So I swore in My wrath, **'They shall not enter My rest.'**" 12 **Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;** Heb. 3:7-13*

*For **who, having heard, rebelled?** Indeed, was it not **all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses?** 17 Now **with whom was He angry forty years?** Was it not with **those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness?** 18 **And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey?** 19 **So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.** Heb. 3:16-19*

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. Heb. 4:11-12

6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, Unfortunately, there is nothing in the Old Testament to help us. This is a marking out that stands alone. Peter gives the general "*angels who sinned,*" but this is clearly the more detailed account. Although the details perfectly explain what happened, even the vocabulary itself leaves us with more than one possible understanding. With ambiguity in the words and a complete lack of reference to events, there have been wildly different interpretations of this event. Even the translations testify to the variations.

angels who did not keep	their proper domain,	but left	their own abode,	NKJV
angels that kept not their	own principality,	but left	their proper habitation,	ASV
angels who did not keep	their own domain,	but abandoned	their proper abode,	NASB

angels who did not stay within	their own position of authority,	but left	their proper dwelling,	ESV
angels who did not keep	their positions of authority	but abandoned	their own home	NIV
angels which kept not	their first estate,	but left	their own habitation,	KJV

Whatever the specifics, the real sin and point of comparison with marking out false teachers their real problem started with not guarding, protecting, keeping, and remaining in it. Since the interpretation hinges on this word, it is they did not keep it. God had given them some type of position of authority and power. They held a position of power, but did not “keep” their position. They did not guard and attend to it carefully. They let their guard down and something terrible happened.

“tereo... **to attend to carefully, take care of**; i.e. a. prop. **to guard**... b. metaph. *to keep, ... to hold firmly*... c. *to observe ...* d. *to reserve*...” (Thayer, p. 622; 5083)

tereo ... guard, preserve; hold fast to, keep, follow ... in the NT ... 70 occurrences... is used with its literal meaning — to guard (prisoners) — most often in Acts (24:23; 25:4,21)...” (Exegetical Dictionary NT:5083.)

This word is used many times in the NT and by looking at a few of them we can see exactly what application is being made here. Since they did not keep their responsibilities we must keep ours.

teaching them **to observe** all things that I have commanded you; Mt. 28:20
 Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone **keeps** My word he shall never see death." Jn. 8:51
 If you love Me, **keep** My commandments. Jn. 14:15
 If you **keep** My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have **kept** My Father's commandments and abide in His love. Jn. 15:10
keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, 1Tim. 6:14
 I have **kept** the faith. 2Tim. 4:7-8
 and to **keep** oneself unspotted from the world. James 1:27
 Now by this we know that we know Him, if we **keep** His commandments. 1 John 2:3
keep yourselves in the love of God, Jude 21

There is no doubt that the vocabulary word translated “domain,” “*principality*,” “*position of authority*,” or “*first estate*.” The most definitive description of this term is “*primacy*.” Either in time (the very beginning or origination), or in rank (power, dominion, kingdom, office). Since “*beginning*,” has little context or meaning, it has something to do with their rank, authority, dominion, sovereignty, or exercise of power.

archē ... **occurs 55 times in the NT... archē always signifies 'primacy'** (Delling 479), whether a) **of time:** beginning (origin), b) of place: point of origin or departure, or c) of **rank: power, dominion, kingdom, office.** ... a) Where it is used in the temporal sense of **the point at which something begins**, this point can be thought of as included in the temporal process or as prior, external to, and unaffected by it, i.e., as the origin or principium. b) In a spatial sense the *archē* in the scene in Acts 10:11; 11:5 are the corners of the sheet. c) The meaning which has regard to rank — **authority, sovereignty, or exercise of power**, whether in a neutral or in a personal sense — is made more precise on the basis of each specific context in which the word stands. ... f: **the sphere of one's authority or rule - 'sphere of authority, limit of one's rule.'** ... 'the angels who did not stay within the sphere of their rule' Jude 6. (Exegetical Dictionary NT:746)

***archē* "beginning, government, rule," is used of ... beings who exercise rule, called "principalities";** (a) of holy angels, Eph 3:10, the church in its formation being to them the great expression of "the manifold (or "much-varied") wisdom of God"; Col 1:16; (b) of evil angels, Rom 8:38; Col 2:15, ... **In Jude 6, RV, it signifies, not the first estate of fallen angels (as KJV), but their authoritative power, "their own" indicating that which had been assigned to them by God, which they left,** aspiring to prohibited conditions. (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:746)

Since this is one of the ways that false teachers are marked out, it is important we see what is involved here. Michael was an archangel. This clearly revealed the limits of his authority and dominion. He was a principality as an archangel. Yet he also had a domain in which he must remain. He “*did not dare*” come close to leaving it.

Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" Jd. 9

but left their own abode,

The second element of their “*sin*” was in their “*leaving*.” They *departed* from something. They *left it behind* and possibly *abandoned* and *deserted* it. When Israel thought that abandoning and deserting the wilderness in preparation to enter the promised land would lead them to a better fate in Egypt, the opposite occurred. They could not go back to Egypt, and after abandoning it, they could not go into the promised land. The only thing was to live in limbo in the wilderness until they died. These angels also sought to go beyond the place God has set them.

apoleipō ... b: to **depart from a point definitively**, with the **possible implication of abandoning or deserting** - 'to leave, to abandon, to desert.' 'they **deserted their own dwelling place**' Jude 6. (Greek-English Lexicon NT:620)

apoleipō ... **from apó (575), from, and leípō (3007), to leave, To leave behind.** ... (I) Leave, leave behind, trans. (2 Tim 4:13,20). Pass., to be left behind, remain (Sept.: Ex 14:28). Metaphorically in Heb 4:6,9; 10:26, (II) To desert, renounce (Jude 6; Sept.: Prov 2:17; 9:6). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:620)

It is obvious from the general wording of these things that it was not the intent of the Holy Spirit to give us details, but only general principle. They abandoned their habitation gives no details. The term habitation has two distinct meanings. While the Greeks used this term when speaking of a dwelling place or a habitation, like a house, room, or home, it is only used twice in the NT, and in a more figurative way than the Greeks. All we know and can say is that they left departed, deserted and abandoned the habitation of angels. Where they could go and what the sought is not revealed.

oiketerion "a habitation" (from *oiketer*, "an inhabitant," and *oikos*, "a dwelling"), is used in Jude 6, of **the heavenly region appointed by God as the dwelling place of angels**; in 2 Cor 5:2, RV, "habitation," KJV, "house," **figuratively of the spiritual bodies of believers when raised or changed at the return of the Lord.** ... (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:3613),

oikētērion oikeō a 'to dwell,' 85.67) a place in which one may dwell - 'dwelling place, home.' ... 'angels who ... **abandoned their own dwelling place**' Jude 6; ... 'our desire is to have our dwelling place which is in heaven put on over us' 2 Cor 5:2. (Greek-English Lexicon NT:3613)

This specific group of angels is different from the ones we read about concerned “*the devil and his angels*.” They have not yet been placed in these chains, but the have clearly left the domain and position God had given them.

He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; (2Pet. 2:4)

The vocabulary is nearly identical to that of Peter:

(1) reserved	(2) in everlasting chains	(3) under darkness	(4) for the judgment of the great day
(1) to be reserved	(2) delivered them into chains	(3) of darkness,	(4) for judgment

It is clear in this comparison that Peter and Jude reveal the same basic information. In both these angels are “*reserved*,” “*chains*,” “*darkness*,” “*judgment*.” Jude adds “*everlasting*” to the chains and “*the great day*” for the judgment, but is clearly speaking of the same day. It is not easy to understand the details of this rebellion, but the comparison between Israel and Sodom is identical. God is consistent in all three. The point is simple. What God did to Israel, angels and Sodom He will also do to these teachers and all who are influenced to follow them.

There one very powerful and frightening use of the same word. Those angels that did not **keep** their habitation God has **kept** in everlasting chains. This is a cause and effect we must never forget.

7 as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them

Using Sodom and Gomorrah, The Holy Spirit will now tie the previous two things into a single unit to be applied to the secretive false teachers who have crept in. They will always do at least one of these three things. Therefore He speaks of the same manner as. While some seek to tie it only to the angels, that is neither the context or the purpose of this section. We are seeking to mark out those in error who would seek through deception to destroy.

“*hos*... adverbial form of the relative pronoun *hos*, *he*, *ho*, which is **used in comparison, as, like as, even as, according as, in the same manner as**, etc. ... When thus used *hos* **refers a. to the manner** (‘form’) **of the action expressed by the finite verb, and is equiv. to in the same manner as, after the fashion of, ...c. Hos**

makes reference to a similarity or equality... d. hos so makes reference to the quality of a person, thing, or action, as to be equiv. to such as, exactly like, as it were" (Thayer, p. 680-682; 5613)

hōs how, in what way; as, like; after, while; approximately; when, while ... **occurs 504 times in the NT** ... 2. Introducing the characteristic of something that is of particular importance in the context, whether it be an actual characteristic ... 3. **As a comparative particle indicating the manner in which an action occurs:** 1 Cor 3:15 a: "[be saved] as through fire"; 1 Thess 5:2: "[come] like a thief in the night"; Eph 5:33: "[love someone] as [one loves] oneself"; Col 3:18: "as is fitting"; (Exegetical Dictionary NT:5613)

There were five cities clustered together. The largest or most sinful were Sodom and Gomorrah, but there were three other cities. God destroyed four and allowed the fifth to be spared at Lot's request.

And the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out and joined together in battle in the Valley of Siddim Gen 14:8-9

23 The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. 24 Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens. 25 So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. Gen. 19:23-25

in a similar manner to these,

The Spirit now affirms the parallel between these three events (Israel, angels, Sodom), and that of the false teachers who were working among them. The term "*manner*" is often used of a direction, course, manner or way.

trópos; ... (I) a turn, direction, course, way, ... II. a way, manner, fashion, ... in such wise, ... in one way or other, 2. ... in a manner, ... after the manner ... in its ways, ... in all ways, ... III. of persons, a way of life, habit, custom, ... V. in speaking or writing, manner, (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:5158)

Thus the way, manner, course or direction of these four groups is "*similar*." They have both likeness and resemblance. The resemblance may be of appearance and form, of ability and nature, of comparison like a parable, or of action and thought. Each of these would fit very well in the context here. The false teachers of their day (and ours) are going to work in the same essential way as these three examples.

hómoios ... "like, resembling, such as, the same as," is used (a) of appearance or form ... ; (b) of ability, condition, nature, ... "such like," lit., "and the (things) similar to these"... © of comparison in parables, ... d) of action, thought, etc. Matt 11:16; ... Jude 7. (Vine's Expository Dictionary, NT: 3664).

homoios "Of the same kind," "like"; it should be differentiated from *isos* ... The words are so close that they can often be used interchangeably or combined for added strength ... The word is very common in the NT in a formula which introduces images and parables (Mt., Lk., Rev.), especially in Jesus' parables of the kingdom of God. (Kittel, TDWNT, NT:3664)

The church is a domain, we are in Christ, who is both our Lord and our king. If we go onward and don't remain in His teaching, we have left our domain and habitation just as the angels did.

in a similar manner to these

certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation saved Israel out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, everlasting chains

Sodom... in a similar manner to these, sexual immorality - strange flesh, an example, vengeance

False teachers will always exhibit and produce unbelief in the Scriptures, leaving the proper domain and abode God has left for His people, and moving into sexual immorality and stranger flesh. He will do nearly the same thing in verse 11 with Cain (lack of faith Heb 11:4), Korah (left proper abode of the levitical service) and Balaam (used sexual immorality to bring a curse on Israel).

having given themselves over to sexual immorality

While the events recorded in Genesis infer this truth, the Holy Spirit confirms it here. The men of these four cities were completely under the influence and control of sexual desires that led to a

complete enslavement to this sin. They had fully completely given themselves over to desires of sexual immorality and fornication. It is interesting that it is not found in secular writings as those given to this sin would never see it as excessive.

ekporneuō, a **strengthened form** ... (**ek**, used intensively), "to give oneself up to fornication," implying **excessive indulgence**, Jude 7. (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:1608)

ekporneuō; (the prefix **ek** seems to indicate a lust that gluts itself, satisfies itself completely); the Sept. often for "to go a whoring, 'give oneself over to fornication'" ... Jude 7.... **Not found in secular writings.** (Thayer's Greek Lexicon, NT:1608)

and gone after strange flesh,

The "went away from" "set off" and "departed." This term generally is used when one leaves and departs from one place and goes to another. Since he is no longer where he was, he has departed or gone after.

aperchomai lit., "to come or go away" (**apo** from), hence, "to set off, depart," ... "to go away" (**apo**, "from"), is chiefly used in the gospels; it signifies "to go aside" ... (Vine's Expository Dictionary, NT:565)

aperchomai ... **motion away from a reference point with emphasis upon the departure**, but without implications as to any resulting state of separation or rupture - 'to go away, to depart, to leave.' (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon, NT:565)

The idiom perfectly fits Paul's words in Romans. They exchanged one thing for another, leaving the natural use of the one flesh, to something strange.

For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. Rom. 1:26-27

God created them male and female as one flesh.

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. 23 And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. Gen 2:21-24

Thus only in a one flesh relationship God has joined together do we have the same flesh that God considers proper. Although any other form of fornication would be strange flesh, in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, it would be one step beyond, while beasts would be another step beyond that one.

are set forth as an example,

God has "set them forth." This is the only time in the NT that this term is used to describe an example. The condition of Sodom and Gomorrah can still be seen to this day. The condition of the land before, was like the garden of Eden and after, it is dead and desolate. Nothing can live and nothing can grow there. Sodom and Gomorrah can be ignored and overlooked, but it has been set before the eyes of all who have anything to do with the Scriptures and with God, as all these false teachers would be.

prókeimai, from **pró** (4253), **before or forth**, and **keímai** (2749), **to lie. To lie before, to be laid or set before someone.** (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:4295)

prókeimai, ... **to be set before one**, of meats, ... 2. to lie exposed, of a child, ... to lie dead, 3. to be set before all, as the prize of a contest, ... metaphorically, **to be set before all, be set forth, proposed**, (Liddell and Scott, Abridged Greek Lexicon, NT:4295)

Sodom and Gomorrah have been set forth as examples many different times in the Scriptures. They are a sample, pattern, proof and specimen of God's judgment and condemnation.

deigma ... a **sample, pattern, proof, specimen**, Lat. documentum, ... by way of sample, ... 2. a **place** in the Peiraeus, **where merchants set out their wares for sale, a bazaar**, Xen., Dem. ... (Liddell and Scott, Abridged Greek Lexicon, NT:1164)

The first time is in Deuteronomy to illustrate the condition that Israel would come to after they rebelled against God. It is then used of various nations that God intends will never be inhabited again.

'The whole land is brimstone, salt, and burning; it is not sown, nor does it bear, nor does any grass grow there, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger and His wrath.' 24 All nations would say, 'Why has the Lord done so to this land? What does the heat of this great anger mean?' 25 Then people would say: 'Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt; Deut 29:23-26

And **BABYLON, the glory of kingdoms, The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. 20 It will never be inhabited, Nor will it be settled from generation to generation; Nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, Nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there. 21 But wild beasts of the desert will lie there, Isa 13:19-21**

"EDOM also shall be an astonishment; Everyone who goes by it will be astonished And will hiss at all its plagues. 18 As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah And their neighbors," says the Lord, "No one shall remain there, Nor shall a son of man dwell in it. Jer 49:17-18

"Therefore the wild desert beasts shall dwell there with the jackals, And the ostriches shall dwell in it. It shall be inhabited no more forever, Nor shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. 40 As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah And their neighbors," says the Lord, "So no one shall reside there, Nor son of man dwell in it. Jer 50:39-40

and **turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; 2 Peter 2:6**

as **Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Jd. 7**

suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

The similarity of the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah and that of all who are going to be cast into the lake of fire is set forth many times in the Scriptures. It has become the clearest way to explain what hell is going to be like.

But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Rev 21:8

8 Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh,

"homoiōs ... likewise, equally, in the same way..." (Thayer, p. 445; 3668).NT:3668

homoiōs adverb from *hómoios* ... (3664), **like, resembling.... of equal degree or manner** and denoting **perfect agreement, similarly, in like manner.** To do likewise ..." (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:3668)

For the third time now, the Holy Spirit ties these men to these three examples. First, they were marked out long ago in Israel, angels and Sodom, Second, *"in a similar manner to these"* and now, likewise, equally and in the same way. He lists the similarities: They defile the flesh (like Sodom), reject authority (like the angels), and speak evil of dignitaries (also like the angels see 1:9).

Why they are called dreamers has no real explanation. Jude and his readers knew, we can only guess. Unless they are given by God, all dreams are merely fragments and figments of our own imaginations. Thus it may only be a term of derision given by the Holy Spirit to point out the basis of all their doctrines and teachings. But the end result of all their dreams is to defile the flesh.

Since defilement is something only God can see, the term He uses to describe it helps us see it as He sees it. In this case, it is like the staining of the flesh. It takes a hue of death and disgust. To do the things these men do and teach discolors the flesh, making it looked defiled and disgusting.

maínō ... To **stain with color as the staining of glass, to tinge, pollute, defile.** (I) In the Levitical sense (John 18:28; Sept.: Lev 5:3; 22:5,8). (II) In a moral sense (Jude 8) (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:3392)

mainō ... primarily, **"to stain, to tinge or dye with another color," as in the staining of a glass, hence, "to pollute, contaminate, soil, defile,"** is used (a) of "ceremonial defilement," John 18:28; so in the Sept., in Lev 22:5,8; Num 19:13,20 etc.; (b) of "moral defilement," Titus 1:15 (twice); Heb 12:15; "of moral and physical

defilement," Jude 8. ..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:3392)

We have translated both these words, as often as they occur in the N. T. (*molunō*), at 1 Cor 8:7; Rev 3:4; 14:4; *miainō*, at John 18:28; Titus 1:15; Heb 12:15; Jude 8), by a single word 'defile,' which doubtless covers them both. At the same time they differ in the images on which they severally repose;— *molunein* being properly 'to besmear,' or 'besmirch,' as with mud or filth, 'to defoul;' which, indeed, is only another form of 'defile;' ... Thus Aristotle ... speaks of swine, while *miainein*, in its primary usage, is not 'to smear' as with matter, but 'to stain' as with colour. ... *miainein* is in classical Greek the standing word to express the profaning or unhallowing of aught (anything) (Trench's Synonyms NT:3392)

This is clearly how God would have seen all in Sodom and in Israel.

reject authority,

Like Israel, angels and Sodom, these also do not have any regard or respect for the authority and majesty of God. They act as though the law of Christ had no authority, power or force. Regardless of its authority, they proclaim it invalid, act as if it doesn't exist, set it aside.

atheteo signifies "to put as of no value" (a, negative, (*theton*, "what is placed," from *tithemi*, "to put, place"); hence, (a) "to act towards anything as though it were annulled"; e. g., to deprive a law of its force by opinions or acts contrary to it, Gal 3:15, KJV, "disannulleth," RV, "maketh void"; (b) "to thwart the efficacy of anything, to nullify, to frustrate it," Luke 7:30, "rejected"; 1 Cor 1:19, "will I reject"; to make void, Gal 2:21; to set at nought, Jude 8, RV (KJV, "despised"); the parallel passage, in 2 Peter 2:10, has *kataphroneo*. ..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:114)

atheteo ... 1. In profane Gk. *atheteō* means "to regard as nought," "to declare invalid," "to set aside," e.g., an agreement between cities, ... "declaration of invalidity," ... "to deny one's assent" to something, Polyb., 12, 14, 6; passive "to be stricken" from a list, ... "to act treacherously towards someone," "to break with him," 2. In the LXX *atheteō* has strongly the character of wilful repudiation of an institution and even more so of a person. This may be seen already in the fact that of some 60 instances 22 render ... "to act unfaithfully," ... In the NT *atheteō* means a. "to invalidate a matter," "to declare it invalid," e.g. "in the same way no one annuls the legally effected will of a man nor adds there-to," Gal 3:15 ..." (Kittel, TDWNT, NT:114)

They have no respect for any type of authority. The Lord means nothing to them. They consider themselves to be the final authority and all things are judged by them.

kuriōtes ... , fem. noun from *kúrios* (2962), lord, mighty one. Dominion, civil power, authority or magistracy (2 Peter 2:10; Jude 8); ... Reference is made to evil angelic powers as indicated in 2 Peter 2:11, although not in Jude 9. ..." (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:2963)

and speak evil of dignitaries.

Speak evil, is the general word for blasphemy. It literally means *to speak reproachfully, rail at, revile.* It is an "injurious saying or statement." It includes all "abusive speech," and all words designed to remove respect and good will toward another.

"blasphemeo... to speak reproachfully, rail at, revile, calumniate ... those who by contemptuous speech intentionally come short of the reverence due to God or to sacred things..." (Thayer, NT:987)

blasphemeo "to speak slanderously, impiously, profanely" (*blapto*, "to injure," and *pHEME*, "a saying") ..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT 987)

In secular Gk. *blasphemia* is a. "abusive speech" (misuse of words) in contrast to *euphemia* ... translates *blasphemia* as a "word of evil sound." b. The word means further the strongest form of "personal mockery and calumny." (Kittel, TDWNT NT: 988)

blasphemia, [NT 988] (disparagement; slander; reviling) *blasphemeo* [NT:987] slander, accuse wrongfully; blaspheme *blasphemos*, [NT:989] abusive; slanderous The word group *blasphemia* appears 56 times in the NT: 34 of these are verbs, 18 are nouns, and 4 are adjectives ... When persons are named or presupposed as objects, *blasphemeo* can have the simple meaning disparage, slander, defame (1 Cor 4:13 v.l.; Titus 3:2; cf. Philo Spec. Leg. iv.197), as in secular Greek *blasphemia* likewise means disparagement, reviling, slander, vile gossip ... (Exegetical Dictionary of the NT:988)

Regardless of how God has revealed them, all that is glorious and filled with splendor due to its connection with God is set at nought and spoken evil of. It is in the way of their plans and goals and they must remove its credibility and honor. Thus the authority of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and even the angels are all spoken of in a terrible manner to remove all fear, respect and reverence.

Jude 9-11

9 Yet Michael the archangel,

Since Michael is introduced here in the context of identifying false teachers, we need to look at it as closely as possible and glean as much information as we can. Yet it is a narrow vein of truth and could easily lead us to fall into the same trap as the false teachers it has been used to identify.

There are two Scriptures given to warn us. The general warning in Deuteronomy is to stay within the lines of revelation. We dare not go beyond what is written. The second is a more direct warning about angels. We must not intrude into areas we have not seen. God has given us a tiny glimpse into the angelic realm and there is no way to broaden it without violating both Scriptures.

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law. Deut. 29:29

*Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, **intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind**, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God. Col. 2:18-19*

We are first introduced to the angels in Genesis. First the angel of the Lord sent to speak to Hagar (Gen. 16:7-11), then the two angels sent to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:1, 15), the angel of the Lord telling Abraham not to sacrifice Isaac (Gen. 22:11-15), then the ladder Jacob dreamed about that had angels moving up and down between heaven and earth (Gen. 32:12).

The angel of the Lord is the main character from the Exodus, Judges and Kings. After the captivity, God introduced Gabriel and then Michael in Daniel.

*Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. 16 **And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision."** Dan. 8:15-17*

*Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God, 21 yes, while I was speaking in prayer, **the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.** Dan. 9:20-21*

In the midst of a majestic vision, someone begins speaking to Daniel. It might be Gabriel, but he is not identified. As he speaks to Daniel, he introduces Michael for the first time by name.

*But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and **behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me**, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. Dan. 10:13-14*

*Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. 21 But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. **(No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.** Dan. 10:20-21*

"At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Dan. 12:1

This is all the details we have about them in the Old Testament. The NT opens with Gabriel being sent to Zecharias and to Mary

Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. Lk. 1:11-12

*And the angel answered and said to him, **"I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.** 20 But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time." Lk. 1:19-20*

*Now in the sixth month **the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth**, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. Lk. 1:26-28*

Nothing more is spoken of Michael except for the highly figurative war scene revealed in the book of Revelation.

And war broke out in heaven: **Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.** 9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Rev. 12:7-9

From these passages, we learn that angels have been working with the Lord in His word since the earliest days of Israel and possibly since the very beginning. Only two have been identified by name.

The term archangel is only used here of Michael, but it is also revealed that an archangel will be present at the second coming of Jesus.

*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, **with the voice of an archangel**, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.* 1Th. 4:16-17

The Holy Spirit is revealing something to Jude that occurred at end of Deuteronomy just before Israel entered the promised land. Some have questioned where Jude would have gained this historical information, but it is no different that Moses writing about the creation thousands of years after it had occurred. God can have the Spirit reveal what He want revealed at any time it is needed.

in contending with the devil, when he disputed

It is difficult to measure the extent of their conflict with these two terms. The first has many uses in the Scriptures. It's root meaning is making a distinction and deciding, but when used with reference to our own thinking, it can mean either internal debating with doubt and wavering from one side of the argument to the other. When it involves another, it is the decision to oppose and take the other side of the position.

diakrínō ... from *diá* (1223), denoting separation, and *krínō* (2919), to **distinguish, decide, judge**. To **separate throughout, completely**, In the mid., to **separate oneself**. Particularly, to **separate oneself from...** (III) By implication, to **distinguish, make a distinction, cause to differ** (Acts 15:9; 1 Cor 11:29, "not distinguishing the body of the Lord" ... from common food). In the mid. in James 2:4, "Do you not then make a distinction in yourselves?" ... i.e., are you not partial? ... (V) In the mid. *diakrinomai* To **separate oneself from, i.e., to contend with**. In the NT used metaphorically. (A) To **contend or strive with, dispute with**, ... (Jude 9) ... (Acts 11:2). (B) To be **in strife with oneself, i.e., to doubt, hesitate, waver** (Matt 21:21; Mark 11:23; Rom 4:20; 14:23; James 1:6; 2:4 without taking it as a question, "and if you do this without hesitation" ...) (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1252).

This passage closely resembles the passage where the Jews decided to oppose Peter's view as exhibited in the conversion of Cornelius. The stood in opposition. Yet this opposition was easily set aside by reciting the facts.

*And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, **those of the circumcision contended with him**, 3 saying, "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!" 4 But Peter explained it to them in order from the beginning, saying:* Acts 11:2-5

The differences in views between Michael and Satan were much further apart. Satan had a view of using Moses body in some way. God and thus Michael had a very different view. But how far did it go? Only so far as for Michael to say, "*the Lord rebuke you.*"

The second term also has the same basic meaning. But even less confrontational. It refers to those who speak back and forth giving reason after reason and proof after proof. It can mean dispute, but not as strongly as the previous word.y/

dialégomai; ... from *diá* (1223), denoting transition or separation, and *légō* (3004), to speak. To **speak back and forth or alternately, to converse with, reason, present intelligent discourse**. ... (I) Of an **argument meaning to dispute, discuss**. ... (II) To **teach publicly, discourse, present intelligent arguments**, akin to *lógos* (3056), intelligence, word, to discuss or argue, ..." (Complete Word Study Dictionary, NT:1256)

dialegomai... In classical and Hellenistic Gk. *dialegomai* is mostly used for "**converse**" or "**discussion**": ... In Socrates, Plato and Aristotle there is **developed the art of persuasion and demonstration either in the form of question and answer** (Socrates), the **establishment of the idea by pure thought** (Plato), or the **investigation of the ultimate foundations of demonstration and knowledge** (Aristotle). ... In the New Testament there is no instance of the classical use of *dialegomai* in the philosophical sense. In the sphere of

revelation there is no question of reaching the idea through dialectic. What is at issue is the obedient and percipient acceptance of the Word spoken by God... In Acts, ... used of Paul's addresses in the synagogues (17:2,17; 18:4,19), in the temple (24:12), in the school of Tyrannus (19:9), and to the church in Troas (20:7,9). There is here no reference to "disputation," but to the "delivering of religious lectures or sermons. ... In Jude 9 there is reference to the "disputation" between Michael and the devil about the body of Moses, greater force being given to the term by the addition of *diakrinomenos* ..." (Kittel, TDWNT, NT:1256)

We again have one other verse upon which to gauge the intensity of the conversation. It seems clear from this conversation that they were simply comparing their individual attributes with one another with the intent of revealing who was greater. It doesn't appear it reached any strong conclusion.

Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?" 34 But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest. Mk. 9:33-35

All we can glean from these two words is that Michael stood in opposition against Satan's intent. A discussion of some sort was held, the differences of views shared. But it was kept in check by Michael's respect for God's order. He did not have the right to go above his station. Satan would not yield, so Michael left it to God to take it to the next stage.

about the body of Moses,

The only thing we know about the body of Moses is given at the moment of his death. After God showed him the promised land it is clearly stated that God buried him.

So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. 6 And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day. Deut. 34:5-7

This dispute may have occurred just before or just after this burial. What they dispute was about is not revealed and there is no way to speculate. Satan had something he wanted to use Moses' body to accomplish and Michael was sent to thwart that purpose.

dared not bring against him

The term "*dare*" refers to courage on the one hand and presuming and thus going to far on the other. Joseph had the courage to ask for Jesus body, but Paul was indignant that the Corinthians would dare to go to court against one another. There is risk and possibility of going to far and Michael dared not take that risk.

*tolmáō... dare, trust oneself, have the courage; take upon oneself, presume, bring oneself ... occurs 16 times in the NT, In the Gospels *tolmáō* is used without negation only in Mark 15:43: "Joseph of Arimathea went courageously ... to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus" ... Paul equates *tolmáō* with boldness in the rhetorical question in 1 Cor 6:1: "Does any one of you dare go to law before the unrighteous?" ... Used with negation (not trusting oneself, not daring, not having the courage), *tolmáō* in Acts 5:13 describes the fear of the other Christians before the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Mark 12:34 ... concludes redactionally with "And after that no one dared to ask him any question." ..." (Exegetical Dictionary, NT 5111).*

We don't know what this might infer regarding Satan and Michael. It might mean that Satan has greater authority than Michael, but then again, it may mean nothing more than that angelic beings don't dare to pass judgment, but leave it all to God.

a reviling accusation,

Like Peter, Jude repeats the term blasphemy from the previous verse. The contrast between false teachers and all those among men who dare to bring blasphemous evil accusations and words against others and the angels who do not dare to do it couldn't be more stark. All of us must guard out tongues, lest we be lumped in with them.

They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, 11 whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord. 12 But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, 2Pet. 2:10-12

and speak evil of dignitaries. 9 Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" 10 But

these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, Jude 8-10

but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

Zechariah adds a few more details about how angels have done this. We are not told which angel was involved in this second event, but the outcome was exactly the same.

*Then he showed me **Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him.** 2 And the Lord said to Satan, "**The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?**" Zech. 3:1-2*

This term for rebuke is a very narrowly used word. Although some have presumed to do this, it is truly on God who knows enough and has the authority and right to do this. Not even the angelic hosts are allowed to do it.

*"epitimaō... epitimaō corresponds to the twofold sense of timao, to accord "honor" on the one side, "blame" or "punishment" on the other. In the latter sense the word comes to mean "to blame," "to reprove," both in class. and Hellenistic Gk. It takes on a special emphasis in the LXX in terms of the OT thought of the Word of God which evokes the works of God... **epitimaō becomes a technical term for the powerful divine word of rebuke and threat... God's rebuke shakes heaven (Job 26:11) and moves the earth and the sea (II Kings 22:16; Ps. 17:15; 103:7).** He threatens the Red Sea and it dries up to let the people of God pass over (Ps. 17:15; Is 50:2) His word of command whips up the storm so that men cry to heaven in their distress... **But for the most part God's reproof is directed against men,** ... against the apostate people itself, so that it wastes and perishes... **It is only with restriction that epitimaō is used of human threats and reproof... Again and again human threatening and reproof is shown to be presumptuous and overhasty. Epitimaō is not for man, but for God...** If men have any right of epitimaō among themselves, it can only be in terms of judicial, paternal or fraternal correction... The NT maintains the same tradition by 1. forbidding rebuke except as brotherly correction and 2. **treating effective threatening and reproof as the prerogative of God and His Christ alone.** ... epitimaō is a prerogative of lordship. Primarily, therefore, it belongs to God. ..." (Kittel, Vol 2 p 623-627)*

10 But these speak evil of

What angels dare not do, these false teachers do without any thought, care or concern. The same term "blasphemy" is used to describe any form of evil and corruption of character that they can devise in their mind. They don't even know what they are talking about, but they are bold in their denunciations. This is always a clear sign of a false teacher.

whatever they do not know;

The Holy Spirit uses an adjective to completely cover every aspect of what they "**don't know**" All what they don't know. Whether of space, time, number, importance, measure, that they don't know or understand they still blaspheme and speak evil of it. Whatever tickles their fancy or comes under their observation, if they don't like it or it hinders them, though they know nothing about it, they will still do what angels dare not to do.

"hosos,... a relative adjective. ... used a. of space [as great as]... of time [as long as]... for so long time as, so long as... b. of abundance and multitude; how many, as many as; how much, as much as:... as many (men) as, all who,... I Tim. 6:1 ... c. of importance: how great things, i. e. how extraordinary,... d. of measure and degree, in comparative sentences,... the more... so much the more, a great deal..." (Thayer, p. 456; 3745).

This word knowledge is a term to describe what we learn or come to know and then have a knowledge of. We understand and perceive.

"oida,... 1. like the Lat. novi it has the signification of a present to know, understand; and in the plpf. the signif. of an impf. 1. to know,... 2. to know i. e. get knowledge of, understand, perceive; a. any fact... b. the force and meaning of something that has definite meaning:... c. as in class. Grk., foll. by an inf. in the sense of to know how (Lat. calleo, to be skilled in ...Phil 4:12)..." (Thayer, p. 174; 1492).

This word's primary meaning is to see or perceive with the eyes (Latin - video). This is the knowledge of "perception and discernment," of "discovery and experience."

But these men have done none of these things. They know nothing whatever about it. This would lead wise and sane men to carefully consider the truth before committing themselves, but nothing can stop those who are wise in their own conceits.

and whatever they know naturally,

The same adjective is repeated from the previous verse. This time it is, whether of space, time, number, importance, measure, that they **do know**. He changes the term from the comprehensive term for know (*oida*) to a much narrower concept. These are the things that are simple and easy to understand and they know them well. They know how, are capable of, and are versed in them.

epistamai ... c. inf. **to know how to do, to be able to do, capable of doing**, Hom., Att. 2. to be assured or believe that a thing is, II. c. acc. to understand a matter, know, be versed in or acquainted with, Hom., etc.: -after Hom. to know as a fact, know for certain, know well, Hdt., Att. (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:1987)

The limitation is further established with the term “naturally.” This is a huge concept in the history of Greek philosophy and gnosticism, but used only here in Scripture. For idolaters, what one can learn from nature is the basis of all understanding. Not because they don’t seek elsewhere, but without God to guide them the only thing that can lead them from the known into what they consider the unknown is nature.

phusikōs in **accord with nature** ... Jude 10 uses this adverb in its criticism of false teachers, whom the author exposes — against their own claims — as **false Gnostics who live dissolutely**, deny the Lord Jesus (v. 4), reject authority, and revile angels (v. 8). They thus **show themselves to be profoundly ignorant** (v. 10 a) and **understand God's actions (only) in a natural way, i.e., without gnosis given by the pneuma**: ... Hence they bring destruction on themselves from God (Exegetical Dictionary NT:5447).

like brute beasts,

This is not an insult, but the sad reality. If one rejects the divine nature under the influence of God and His word, this is all that is left. Each man who rejects God simply becomes like an animal. Evolution has convinced multitudes today of this very thing. All men are just like the brute beasts from which they came. The term “*brute*” is actually the term for an inability to reason properly.

álogos; adj. from the priv. *a* (1), without, and *lógos* (3056), reason. **Unendowed with reason, irrational, brute** (2 Peter 2:12; Jude 10); **unreasonable, absurd** (Acts 25:27). ...” (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:249)

in these things they corrupt themselves.

Because of their false knowledge, there is no means for them to stop the corruption that will occur in the heart and soul as a pure and clean infant slowly becomes and adult and chooses those things that will ultimately corrupt and destroy them.

phtheirō ... to waste, pine. To **corrupt, destroy**. Trans. **to destroy, punish with destruction, bring to a worse state** (1 Cor 3:17). To **corrupt, spoil, vitiate, in a moral or spiritual sense** (1 Cor 15:33; Eph 4:22; Jude 10; Rev 19:2). To **corrupt, with the meaning of to subvert or corrupt opinions** (2 Cor 7:2; 11:3;...” (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:5351)

Peter explained this corruption process in a much more detail.

For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. 19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. 20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. 2Pet. 2:18-20

11 Woe to them!

We don’t have a word like this, but Greek, Hebrew and Latin did. It is a word that makes the same sound as the cry of anguish itself. *ou— ai— a cry of anguish* and *despair* on the one side and of indignation and condemnation on the other.

ouaí; **interjection of grief or indignation, ... denouncing misery and pitying it. Woe, alas!** (Matt 11:21; 23:13 f.; Mark 13:17; Luke 6:24 f.; Jude 11; Rev 12:12); ... As an **onomatopoeia (an imitation of the sound)**, a subst., **indeclinable, a woe, disaster** (1 Cor 9:16)... (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:3759).

ouai woe!; ... 1. *ouai* is a NT Semitism (cf. Heb. *hōy, ôy*), but also a Latinism (cf. Lat. *vae*); it is **used as an interjection expressing pain, lament, and esp. a threat in 41 passages in the NT ... In the OT, the cry of woe as lament or esp. as threat is found primarily in prophetic usage** (Hos 7:13; Isa 1:4; 10:5; Jer 23:1; Ezek 24:6; Isa 5:8-22 sixfold woe; with blessings, Isa 3:9-11; Eccl 10:16 ... The NT cries of woe link up with this prophetic

usage. ... "**Jesus**" cries of woe are also applied to cities (Matt 11:21), the **cosmos** (Matt 18:7 a), **individuals** (18:7 b), the **Pharisees** and the **scribes** (Matt 23:13 ff.; cf. Luke 11:42 ff.; ... and **the cry of woe against the betrayer of Jesus** (Mark 14:21)..." (Exegetical Dictionary, NT:3759)

For they have gone in the way of Cain,

As noted in verse four, these three men, are the scope of the words, "*who long ago were marked out for this condemnation.*" There was no doubt in the records of these three men that they were condemned and that their actions were wrong. What we do not learn until this passage is that their lives have been recorded to give us a way, an error and a rebellion that will become a template for all future error. Once we understand these three men and what they did wrong, we will see others in our own generation "*marked out*" like a wanted poster.

The Holy Spirit plainly states that those teacher error who had secretly crept in among them had entered the same "*way*" that Cain chose at the very beginning. This is the common word for a path or a road. It is the same word Jesus used when speaking of the narrow and broad path (Mt. 7:13-14). Since paths lead to destinations, the way of Cain is clearly a destination where no godly person would want to arrive.

hodos ... is found **101 times in the NT** ... The word displays an extremely varied range of meanings. In its basic senses, it refers to a path, road, or street or walking or a journey as an action. The difference can in some cases be difficult to discern (Exegetical Dictionary NT:3598)

hodos ... a threshold, i. a way, path, track, road, highway: ... the course of a river, the path of the heavenly bodies, ..." (Liddell and Scott, Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:3598)

Those the Spirit is identifying have already chosen that way. They have already "*gone*" there (Aorist). They have taken that way, followed and became an adherent of Cain.

"*poreuo*... to lead over, carry over, transfer,... a. prop. To lead one's self across; i.e. **to take one's way**, betake one's self, set out, depart... b. **To follow one**, i.e. become his adherent... **to seek** [cf. English *run after*] anything, 2 Pet 2:10. ... g. To lead or order one's life... To **lead or order one's life**... foll by a dative of the thing to which one's life is given up... I Pet 4:3...to **follow one's moral preferences**..." (Thayer' Greek Lexicon, NT:4198)

Once we know what the Holy Spirit means by the way of Cain, it will be much easier to identify those who are following him instead of Jesus.

The Way of Cain

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the Lord." 2 Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. Gen. 4:1-2

From the creation of Adam and Eve until the birth of Seth was 130 years (Gen 5:3). It was during the early days of Adam and Eve that Cain and Abel were born and grew old enough to bring these sacrifices to God. All we know about their lives is their occupations. Cain was a farmer and Abel was a shepherd.

And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. 4 Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. Gen. 4:3-4

At some point, as time passed, a day arrived when these events occurred. We are not told if this was the first time, nor are we given any information about God's instructions. Cain brought what God had blessed him to produce from the ground and Abel brought from what he produced. They brought offerings from the sweat of their brow in their chosen occupations. But something went wrong.

And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, 5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. Gen. 4:4-5

This is all that was revealed at that time about the sacrifices. Something in Abel or his sacrifice led God to respect him and his offering. Something in Cain or his sacrifice led God to refuse to respect Cain and his offering.

Many have sought to explain exact nature of the problem. But it is clear that from this account, there is not enough information. Since God is no respecter of persons and never shows partiality,

there was a difference, but the specific nature of the issue was not revealed. We can eliminate some of the possibilities.

Some have suggested that the problem was the sacrifice itself. Cain should not have brought a vegetable offering. Yet God later asked Israel for grain offerings.

When anyone offers a grain offering to the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour. And he shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it. 2 He shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests, one of whom shall take from it his handful of fine flour and oil with all the frankincense. And the priest shall burn it as a memorial on the altar, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord. Lev. 2:1-3

Although we could speculate concerning motives or quality, there isn't enough information given to find the specific cause and "*the secret things belong unto God*" (Deut. 29:29). As God looked upon the efforts of both young men, He manifested approval and disapproval, showed regard and no regard, took note and ignored. There was something different in the offerings and it was enough to force our God of mercy and grace to reject Cain's sacrifice.

They knew the outcome immediately and tangibly. God's respect of Abel's offering, led him to respect Abel by some form of obvious acceptance. God also made it clear to Cain that He did not respect his efforts or offering. Although we don't know exactly how God manifested these feelings we have other examples to consider. God showed , regard and respect for Solomon's sacrifices in the Temple and Elijah's sacrifice on Mount Carmel. Everyone knew immediately that God was pleased.

*When Solomon had finished praying, **fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the temple.** 2 And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house. 3 **When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped** and praised the Lord, saying: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever." 2Chr. 7:1-3*

*And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. 37 Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again." 38 **Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench.** 39 Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!" 1 Kings 18:36-39*

God may have done this or something else, but whatever God did, it gave honor and acceptance to Abel and left Cain empty and angry. Clearly something was very wrong with Cain or his offering.

What is equally obvious is that it surprised and shocked Cain. He did not expect this outcome. His anger shows that what occurred did not turn out as we expected or had wanted it to turn out.

And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. Gen. 4:5

There was also a change in his countenance (literally his face) and more specifically the look on his face:

*panim ... In its most basic meaning, this noun refers to the "face" of something. First, it refers to the "face" of a human being: ... In a more specific application, the word represents the *look on one's face*, or one's "countenance": "And Cain was very [angry], and his countenance fell" Gen. 4:5. (Vine's Expository Dictionary OT:6440)*

So Cain had an expression on his face that manifested expectation and anticipation as the sacrifices were being assessed. The emotions are not revealed, but the results were. When God showed his offering no respect, the look on his face (countenance) fell. Something happening within Cain's heart showed on his face. Did he know in his heart that he had not done exactly what God had asked? Was he hoping God would be pleased with his ingenuity? It could have been any of these things. His expectations or hopes were not met. What he wanted to happen did not happen and he was sullen and angry.

Yet in God's question there is a subtle hint that he should have known and really did know.

So the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will you

not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.” Gen. 4:6-7

Both God’s question of “*why are you angry*” and His counsel of “*If you do well*” were a clear condemnation of the sacrifice. Cain had not done well, he should have known that he was not doing well, and he should not have been angry but penitent.

After all, the purpose of offerings is to please God, not to please Cain. When God was not pleased it should have been obvious to Cain that he needed to do something to fix it. God had given clear instructions and Cain had done something that could still be easily fixed, “*if you do well!*” Cain had ignored something in God’s instructions either by leaving something out or adding something in.

Yet it was not too late to fix the problem Cain had created. Without any further explanation God simply told him he still could still do well. God would then accept his offering in the same manner He did Abel’s and Cain’s countenance would then be lifted up. Since God gave no further instructions, He expected Cain to know exactly what he needed to do to change the outcome.

The additional warning revealed God’s insight into the grave danger confronting Cain. His fallen countenance and anger presented two clear but opposite directions on the path he was walking. He could turn around, retrace his steps by repenting and turn back to the path of God and “*do well.*” If he did not turn, he would “*do not do well,*” and it would lead him right to the doorway of sin. Both the desire(lust) he felt at that moment (anger) and the enticement of further alienation from God had come together at this moment.

But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. James 1:14-15

If Cain did not rule over this desire (anger and frustration), sin would use it as an opportunity to enter and rule over him. He must rule over the desire, or sin would rule him. Instead of turning back to the right path in repentance (*if you do well*), his anger would compound his problem. God warned him to take the necessary steps to control it before it controlled him and led him further away.

Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. Gen. 4:8

Cain did not listen to God. He did not “*do well.*” He did not fix the offering. He did not control his desires. The conversation with God was finished. But later, he continued this conversation with Abel. Nothing is revealed here about the nature of the discussion. Only that it so displeased Cain that he rose up against Abel and killed him.

The final conversation between God and Cain showed no remorse for the rejected offering or the murder. He simply went on with his life forgetting both his brother and his God (Gen. 4:9-16). The brevity of the account leaves us with many questions that cannot be answered.

What did Cain do wrong in his offering?
Why did his countenance fall?
Why did he become so angry?
What were he and Abel talking about?
Why did Cain kill Abel?

God does not answer any these questions in Genesis and it is futile to guess. It was not until the writing of the NT that the way of Cain could be understood. But with the revelations given by the Holy Spirit as the NT was being written the answers to most of these questions are obvious. Some of these passages deal directly with Cain and Abel, and others set forth the principles by which we can understand the exact nature of this path that Cain forged and multitudes have followed.

The Essential Difference in the Sacrifice

By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks. Heb. 11:4:

The Holy Spirit revealed in Hebrews that there was only one essential difference between Abel’s offering and Cain’s. That one difference made Abel’s sacrifice “*more excellent*” than Cain’s.

pleion... the comparative of *polus* ... is used (a) as an adjective, “**greater, more,**” ... (b) as a noun, ...Mt. 12:41, “**a greater (than Jonah)**”; v. 42, “**a greater (than Solomon)**”; in these instances the neuter *pleion*, “**something greater**” ...“**more, greater,**” ...is translated “**more excellent**” in Heb. 11:4, of Abel’s sacrifice ...” (Vine’s NT:4119)

When comparing the sacrifices, Abel’s had something greater. It was this that led God to respect Abel and his offering and held him back from respecting Cain and his offering. Cain’s offering was missing something. Abel had an ingredient in his sacrifice that made it greater and more excellent. What was missing? What did Abel have that Cain lacked?

“By faith Abel offered...”

Abel had faith when he offered his sacrifice and Cain did not. It was by this faith that “*he obtained witness that he was righteous.*” It was faith that led God to respect Abel and his offering and it was a lack of faith that led God to reject Cain and his offering. It was faith that made Abel’s offering righteous and it was a lack of faith that made Cain’s offering evil. Faith made Abel’s offering righteous in the same way that as Abraham “*believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness*” (Gen. 15:6). When God speaks and His people trust and act on His word, it is always accounted as righteousness.

Abel’s sacrifice, offered by faith, was well received, and even though Abel is dead, through this accepted sacrifice, “*he being dead still speaks.*” So the account of Cain and Abel is very important and holds a powerful doctrinal significance to us today. Abel is still speaking. He is one of “*the great cloud of witnesses.*” The story of his sacrifice, made by faith, needs to be heard as we enter our own worship and bring our own offerings. Every time we offer our worship to God we should hear Abel’s whisper, “*be sure to make this offering by faith just like I did.*” So in our singing, praying, communion, offering and hearing God’s word we must be using our faith exactly as Abel did with his.

Faith comes by Hearing

Since faith is the only difference between the two sacrifices, it is critical to understand exactly what must be done to offer something by faith. Faith is trust in God, so offering by faith means offering in such a way that we show our faith in God. How did Abel do this?

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Rom. 10:17

Without God’s word there is no faith. Before anything can be done by faith, God first has to speak. Only after God speaks and reveals His will can we hear exactly what He is saying, fully trust it and completely submit with awe and reverence. So now we know! The difference between Abel and Cain was in how they heard and responded to God’s Word. God told them both exactly what He wanted them to do. Abel brought his offering exactly as God asked him to bring it. The reverent manner in which Abel offered it and the complete trust and full submission manifested in the offering itself is what faith brought.

Cain was also told exactly what God wanted him to do. He too had the opportunity to reveal to God his full trust and submission by the manner in which he complied. But what Abel heard, Cain ignored. Abel did all God said and no more, Cain did less than God said or did more. It is that simple. The universal principle of all worship and all offerings we bring to God is set forth here. If we are listening to Abel carefully, then “*through it he being dead still speaks.*” Those of us who are listening to Abel’s testimony and following it’s example are therefore as righteous as Abel was. Listen to Jesus condemning those who are walking the way of Cain.

These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” Mt. 15:8-9

This is exactly what Cain did. He drew near to God with his mouth, but his heart was far from God. His offering was vain because it came from his own heart. It was a commandment of men. Cain twisted or changed the commandment just enough that it was no longer the Word of God he followed. He was following a command, but it was one he had modified and changed into a command of man instead of from God. There was no “faith coming by hearing the Word of God”

in Cain.

Since faith only comes by hearing what God says, Abel heard what God said and did it exactly. He added nothing to the command and dared take nothing away. God gave clear instructions. Abel heard, trusted and brought the sacrifice exactly as God asked him. He fulfilled the principle set forth in Proverbs.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. Pr. 3:5-7

Abel trusted in the Lord with all his heart and allowed God to direct his path. This led him to offer a more excellent sacrifice. Unfortunately, Cain made the mistake of leaning on his own understanding. Cain did not acknowledge God in all his ways. Because he was “wise in his own eyes,” He brought a sacrifice that had been tainted with his own understanding and God.

Cain’s Works were Evil

In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. 11 For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, 12 not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous. 1Jn. 3:10-12

Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the apostle John adds many details to the account in Genesis. First, He reveals that in Cain and Abel we witness the very beginnings of the children of God and the children of the devil. Cain did not practice righteousness and did not love his brother. He was a child of the devil and of the wicked one. NOTE: Cain did not become a child of the devil after he killed Abel. He was a child of the devil and was practicing evil even as he was bringing the sacrifice. All the effort involved (works) in that offering were evil. God showed no respect to Cain or his offering because Cain’s works were evil and he was of his father the devil.

John also enlightens us to the reason God respected Abel and his offering. While Cain’s works were evil, Abel’s were righteous. What Abel brought was exactly right. It met all God’s specifications for what is just and right. Abel’s good works created a strong contrast. His good actions showed even more clearly the evil that Cain had done. In accepting Abel, God showed Cain what was right and gave him a chance to fix his error. Instead of repenting and doing well, Cain chose to destroy the source of his shame. He killed his brother for this one reason. **Because** his works were evil and Abel’s works were righteous.

Abel was Acting as a Prophet

Jesus as the Word, who was with God and was God, was present with God when these sacrifices were brought (Jn. 1:1-3, 14). He knew exactly what had occurred and why God had treated the offerings differently. He also witnessed that final conversation between Abel and Cain in the field. Jesus revealed that this murder was the very first act of persecution. Abel was the first prophet and his blood was shed by an evil person (Cain) because he had preached the truth.

Therefore the wisdom of God also said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,’ 50 that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation. Lk. 11:49-51

While in that field, Abel was speaking to Cain not just as his brother and a righteous man, but as a prophet of God. As with all other prophets, it was no longer Abel who was speaking. It was the Holy Spirit moving Abel to speak His words using Abel’s mouth.

knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. 2Pet. 1:20-21

Abel’s words were not “by the will of man.” He was “moved by the Holy Spirit.” The conversation centered on Cain’s offering. Abel was preaching to Cain, warning him of the evil of what he had done and seeking to get him to repent and “do well.” He was God’s spokesman “reproving, rebuking and exhorting” and Cain stopped him by killing him. Cain’s murder was the first act of

persecution and Abel's death was the blood of the first prophet shed from the foundation of the world.

Foundation of all Worship

Jesus revealed the foundation of all worship God is seeking for us to bring Him. As we carefully consider these words it becomes obvious that Jesus is saying exactly the same thing as Abel who "through it he being dead still speaks."

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." Jn. 4:23-24

God has always sought worshipers who worship in spirit and truth. Clearly this is what Abel was doing since God respected his worship (offering). There is a direct parallel between offering in truth and offering by faith. Remember, faith comes by hearing the Word of God. Truth is also the word of God. "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (Jn. 17:17-18). God's word is truth and faith comes by hearing the word of God. So the faith that comes by hearing the word of God is also the truth of God's word.

When God revealed the truth to Abel, he was a genuine worshiper and his offering in spirit and truth. God sought Abel to be His worshiper and respected him for it. Abel's offering was more excellent than Cain's because it was "by faith," and he was considered a genuine worshiper because it was in spirit and truth.

Cain did not believe the word of God so he did not follow it. He rejected the truth when he refused to trust God and follow His instructions exactly. All today who reject the truth or ignore God's instructions travel the same path Cain first walked. God has marked out these people to give us an important template. Anyone who refuses to worship God in spirit and truth and to fully submit to His instructions in simple trusting faith is not following Jesus on the narrow way that leads to life but is walking the broad way, "the way of Cain."

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. Mt. 7:13-14

Those who also followed Cain

Nadab and Abihu

Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. 2 So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. 3 And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the Lord spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.'" So Aaron held his peace. Lev. 10:1-3

By offering a fire that God had not commanded them they offered profane or strange fire. It was therefore a "command of men" and was vain. In principle, it was identical to what Cain offered. It was not from God's word and they did not have faith when they offered it. They were told how to offer the sacrifice and they did it differently. When Moses saw what happened, he knew immediately what had occurred. He told Aaron that Nadab and Abihu had treated God in a disrespectful manner. They had not treated him as God and had not glorified him by holding His commands in awe and reverence. God had given them the truth, but they ignored His word. God responded immediately revealing He was offended and angered at their sin. This is exactly what Cain did with his offering and what God implied when He said "if you do well."

King Saul

King Saul also followed the way of Cain. Saul had ignored God's command to "go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey." (1Sam. 15:3). He thought he

could honor God more fully by sparing *“the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord your God”* (1Sam. 15:15), but God saw it differently: *“I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments”* (1Sam. 15:11). Saul thought it would make God happy, pleased and honored by adding his own ideas to God’s command. He thus modified God’s word. What he did openly violated *“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding”* and *“Do not be wise in your own eyes.”* Saul did not *“trust in the LORD,”* but did *“lean on his own understanding.”* Through the entire conversation, Samuel could not get Saul to see this truth because he was *“wise in his own eyes.”* Samuel’s final words of warning could have also been the same words Abel used to speak to Cain.

So Samuel said: “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.” 1 Sam. 15:22-23

Though Saul (and Cain) expected God to be pleased with their improvisation or modification, Samuel’s simple question lays everything bare. Could God be pleased with an offering or sacrifice that ignores His commands? Could God ever accept an offering that was not in full submission and truth (in faith)? The answer is that *“to obey is better”* than any sacrifice. No matter how ingenious, anyone who offers a sacrifice that ignores or modifies a command of the Lord is only manifesting their rebellion in their worship. If they then refuse to listen when godly men warn them, they are being stubborn. All that pleases God requires that we *“obey”* and *“heed.”* What God saw in Saul (and earlier in Cain) was *“you have rejected the word of the Lord,”*

Uzzah’s Death

Before the decision was made to move the ark of God, David discussed his plans with *“the captains of thousands and of hundreds, even with every leader.”* No one found any problem (1Chr. 13:1-4). When the day came, *“they carried the ark of God upon a new cart.”* No objections were raised. Yet when the oxen stumbled *“the anger of the Lord was aroused against Uzza, and He struck him because he put his hand to the ark; and he died there before God.”* (1Chr. 13:6-10). At first, *“David became angry because of the Lord’s outbreak against Uzza.”* He could not understand why God would do such a thing. After a time of reflection and study he saw the error. *“Then David said, No one may carry the ark of God but the Levites.”* He saw that they had made the same mistake as Cain and Nadab and Abihu. *“God made an outburst on us, for we did not seek Him according to the ordinance.”* 14 *So the priests and the Levites consecrated themselves to bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel. 15 And the sons of the Levites carried the ark of God on their shoulders, with the poles thereon as Moses had commanded according to the word of the Lord”* (1Chr. 15:2, 13-15).

David read in the Law of Moses that God had commanded the Levites to carry the ark (Num. 4:15). It was an obscure command and had been forgotten. No one had thought to *“seek him according to the ordinance!”* They had not offered this by faith. They had violated a command, and even though they were unaware of it, God saw it exactly as He saw the way of Cain and thus He did not respect them or their sacrifices.

Conclusion

These are but a few of the multitudes who have strayed into way of Cain. Those today who see God’s worship as a means to manifest their own creativity and wisdom are doomed to failure. To obey and heed is what God desires. He seeks genuine worshipers who will worship in spirit and truth following His instructions exactly. He wants more excellent sacrifices offered in faith that comes by hearing, respecting and trusting the word of God. Abel is still whispering to us today. *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and don’t lean on your own understanding.”* Don’t walk on the path of Cain.

Worship is for God. It is the time we draw near to Him to honor, glorify and regard Him as holy and sacred. It is the time to submit, obey and heed. It is not the time for us to *“say, ‘My, how tiresome*

it is! And you disdainfully sniff at it," says the Lord of hosts" (Mal.1:13) Yet many who follow Cain are saying these very things today. They are weary of the five acts of worship. Bored with singing and making melody in their hearts they desire instrument accompaniment. Tired of listening to men as they pray and preach, some long for the voice of a woman. Weary of hearing only the word of God, and untouched by the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine, they want more and different. Those with itching ears, seeking for teachers after their own lusts are simply ignoring the words of Abel and chomping at the bit to follow the way of Cain. Just like Cain did to Abel, anyone who points this out today is "worthy of death." They may not kill, but they will scoff, scorn and reject the wisdom of God.

have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit,

The second clear manner in which the Lord marked these men out is “*the error of Balaam.*” Balaam’s error is exactly what these men have “*run greedily*” into. This verb is very difficult to translate here as is seen by the other translations. “*Run greedily,*” “*ran riotously,*” “*rushed headlong,*” “*abandoned themselves.*”

have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, NKJV
ran riotously in the error of Balaam for hire, ASV
for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam NASU
abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam’s error ESV

All of these are the translations of the basic term for pour out. It is used by Jesus of his own blood “poured out” for the remission of sin. The wine *pours out* after the wineskin bursts, Judas bowels *gushed out*, the Spirit is *poured out* on all flesh. The money changers money is *poured out.*” So how does “*poured or gushed out*” fit this context?

*ekchéō, ekchúnō, ... from ek (1537), out, and chéō (... [2022]), to pour. To pour out. ... Particularly in Matt 9:17; Mark 2:22, "the wine is poured out" (a.t.) means spilled; Luke 5:37; John 2:15, "he poured out the money" (a.t.) means he scattered it upon the ground; Acts 1:18, "his bowels gushed out." ... In the phrase *haima* ([129], blood) *ekchéō* (to pour out) means to shed blood and bring about death through the shedding of blood (Acts 22:20; Rom 3:15; Rev 16:6). ... Spoken of the blood of Christ (... metaphor for His death) shed or poured out as a sacrifice for sin (Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20) ... Metaphorically to pour out, shed abroad, give generously; followed by ... such as the Spirit (Acts 2:17,18; 10:45; Titus 3:6; Sept.: Joel 2:28,29; Zech 12:10). ... Metaphorically in the pass. or mid., to be poured out, spoken of persons, i.e., intrans., to pour forth, rush tumultuously (cf. Sept.: Judg 9:44; 20:37). In the NT, spoken metaphorically of a passion or direction of the mind, to rush into, give oneself up to (Jude 11). ... (The Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1632)*

*ekchéō, ekchúnō, ... appears with its basic meaning when it is said that wine (Matt 9:17 par. Luke 5:37), the coins of the money changers (John 2:15), or the contents of a bowl (God's wrath: Rev 16:1,2,3,4,8,10,12,17) is poured out or spilled out. The phrase "all of his [Judas] bowels gushed out" (Acts 1:18) ... Jude 11 associates with *ekchéō*, ... the idea of a person giving himself or herself to an object or a person: they "abandon themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error." ... (Expository Dictionary, NT:1632)*

The word is used twice in the Septuagint and helps us better see this metaphorical sense:

Then Abimelech and the company that was with him rushed forward and stood at the entrance of the gate of the city; and the other two companies rushed upon all who were in the fields and killed them. Judg 9:44-45

And the men in ambush quickly rushed upon Gibeah; the men in ambush spread out and struck the whole city with the edge of the sword. Judg 20:37-38

Clearly the basic thought here is of someone who is caught up in the emotions of the moment and carried along with whatever passion has completely captured their attention can think of nothing else. All of this was brought about by a desire for “*reward.*” This word was translated profit hire, pay, and gain.

“misthos... 1. dues paid for work; wages, hire... 2. reward: used-of the fruit naturally resulting from toils and endeavors,... -- of divine recompense... a. in both senses, rewards and punishments... b. of the rewards which God bestows or will bestow, upon good deeds and endeavors...” (Thayer, P. 415; 3408)

“misthos... ... pay in the literal sense refers primarily to the wages of a day laborer or a hired hand (Matt 20:8; cf. Luke 15:15-21; John 10:12 f.); ... this corresponds to the usage in the LXX for the wage of a soldier (Ezek 29:18), for the portion of the Levites (Num 18:31) and of the priests (Mic 3:11), and for a worker's pay (Ex 2:9; Deut 15:18). It was a fundamental principle that every worker (Mark 1:20) deserved his wage (Luke 10:7; 1 Tim 5:18). ... Jude 11 (cf. 2 Peter 2:13,15) speaks of the "reward of unrighteousness," which is to be understood as "goods acquired through sin" (cf. Luke 16:9 and Acts 1:18), i.e., it refers to the material rewards of false teaching (cf. 2 Peter 2:3; Titus 1:11). ... things that are promised are given as a reward; thus the image of the hope of individual reward is stressed in the Christian disposition of faith: the reward belongs to the benefits of salvation in Christ....” (Exegetical Dictionary, NT:3408).

All of this revolves around Balaam’s “*error.*” This word is only used ten times in the NT and never as a mistake or blunder. It’s root meaning of wandering and forsaking is always just under the surface. But it is a mental straying or a wrong opinion.

plánē ... akin to *planao* ... 1), "a wandering, a forsaking of the right path, see James 5:20, whether in doctrine, 2 Peter 3:17; 1 John 4:6, or in morals, Rom. 1:27; 2 Pet. 2:18; Jude 11, ... Matt 27:64, where it is equivalent to 'fraud.'" ... is always used in the NT, of mental straying, wrong opinion, error in morals or religion a forsaking of the right path" Errors" in doctrine are not infrequently the effect of relaxed morality, and vice versa..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary, NT:4106)

This wandering is always away from believing the truth and righteousness. It was used by the Pharisees of "the last deception being worse than the first" regarding the disciples stealing the body of Jesus. It comes of deceitful plotting based on trickery and cunning craftiness. It is the delusion of those who do not love the truth and the spirit of error of those who do not hear the NT Scriptures.

command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last DECEPTION will be worse than the first." Mt. 27:64

that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of DECEITFUL PLOTTING, Eph. 4:14

And for this reason God will send them strong DELUSION, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 2Th. 2:11-12

We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of ERROR. 1 John 4:6

Balaam's error must be identified and clearly understood, or we will not be able to mark out those who are pouring, gushing, and rushing into it's reward.

The Error of Balaam

Balaam is introduced by Balak's uninspired description of his reputation. Since Peter identified him as a prophet (2Pet. 2:16), and God spoke through him, we are led to believe that initially he was a good man. His reputation for blessings and curses that led Balak to call him was more likely due, like Jonah, to some task God had given him to go and warn a nation about God's wrath.

Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3 And Moab was exceedingly afraid of the people because they were many, and Moab was sick with dread because of the children of Israel. . . . 5 Then he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying: Look, a people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me! 6 Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed. Num. 22:2-3,5-6

The initial encounter was exactly what God expects of all His servants. At the request for Balaam to come, he told them he must know God's will first. Balaam presented himself to God and God spoke to him openly as he had with Noah and Abraham. Balaam appears to be the last prophet from the Patriarchal age.

God gave him two direct and specific commands and even an explanation so He would know why.

1. You shall not go with them.

2. You shall not curse them.

*** For they are blessed.**

As all godly and righteous servants, Balaam accepted these commands and explanation without question, informed the messengers God would not give him permission to go.

And he said to them, "Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, as the Lord speaks to me." So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam. 9 Then God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men with you?" 10 So Balaam said to God, "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me, saying, 11 'Look, a people has come out of Egypt, and they cover the face of the earth. Come now, curse them for me; perhaps I shall be able to overpower them and drive them out.'" 12 And God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed." 13 So Balaam rose in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, "Go back to your land, for the Lord has refused to give me permission to go with you." Num. 22:8-13

God had promised to bless Israel. Balaam could not help Balak. The truth was that Moab did not

need Balaam. God had no plans to harm them. He had given the land to Lot and they were not to be harassed or contended with. God had already told Moses to leave Moab and Ammon in peace.

Then the Lord said to me, 'Do not harass Moab, nor contend with them in battle, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession, because I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession.' 18 'This day you are to cross over at Ar, the boundary of Moab... 19 And when you come near the people of Ammon, do not harass them or meddle with them, for I will not give you any of the land of the people of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the descendants of Lot ... Deut. 2:8-9; 18-19

Balak seeks to tempt Balaam by offering a greater reward and higher honor, he can set his own.

Then Balak again sent princes, more numerous and more honorable than they. 16 And they came to Balaam and said to him, Thus says Balak the son of Zippor: Please let nothing hinder you from coming to me; 17 for I will certainly honor you greatly, and I will do whatever you say to me. Therefore please come, curse this people for me. Num. 22:15-17

The Conception and Birth of Balaam's Error

This request struck some chord deep in Balaam's heart and soul. By the next morning when he saddled his donkey and began the journey, his heart was already filled with transgression and madness. So we have a very short window in which for all these things to occur.

following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16 but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet. 2Pet. 2:15-16

Since this is the infancy of Balaam's error, we must carefully break it down step by step. We need to trace it back to its very conception:

Two Possible Scenarios

- 1 After the messengers left the first time, Balaam felt some regret and disappointment so when they returned, this second opportunity kindled a much more powerful response in his heart.
- 2 He had not given it a second thought, but their arrival and offer kindled the desire with something so interesting and important to Balaam that it created a temptation.

One of these scenarios had started the process that the Holy Spirit revealed in James. The men brought the enticement, his own desires created the temptation, and the next morning the sin was full grown and nearly brought death.

But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. James 1:14-15

There is one key event that gives us the key not only to Balaam's fall, but in identifying all who follow him. Carefully read the next section and see if you can identify the problem:

Then Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more. 19 Now therefore, please, you also stay here tonight, that I may know what more the Lord will say to me." Num. 22:18-19

The words were right and proper. He said "I could not go beyond the word of God to do less or more." But then he did. When he said "that I may know what more the Lord will say to me," the line was crossed. There was no reason for him to return to God. God had already told him he could not curse Israel because they were blessed. He had already commanded him not to go with them and also commanded him not to curse them. There is only one reason to revisit Scripture in this way. The itching ears are seeking now seeking a loophole.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 2Tim. 4:3-5

He knew the truth. God had given him two commands. When God gives a command we try to get as far away from it, not as close as we can to it. He knew God did not want him to go but now he wanted to go. This is exactly what Paul warned the Romans against, setting up the necessary

provisions to be able to fulfil a lust by getting as close as one can to it:

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. Rom. 13:14

Multitudes of people have followed Balaam here. They know God has forbidden any contact with an activity, but they still seek to get as close as they can to it when they should be fleeing it! God's word is a fence that keeps us from destroying ourselves. If we seek to climb that fence, we are nearing the error of Balaam.

God did not want him to go because it was an impossible task. He would only set himself up for persecution, mocking and the anger of Balaam and his honorable men (which is exactly what happened). He can't curse Israel, he can't do any of the things Balak wants him to do. But here he is asking God to allow him to go.

God's answer is the sad result of Balaam's folly. God would have protected him from all the terrible things that resulted.

This time, God again gave two commands:

- 1. Rise up and go with them**
- 2. Only the word I speak to you — that shall you do.**

And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men come to call you, rise and go with them; but only the word which I speak to you — that you shall do." 21 So Balaam rose in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab. Num. 22:20-21

Why did God allow him to go? We don't have any answers except (1) God will not allow anyone to be tempted above what they are able to bear. (2) God already knew what the outcome would be either way. Perhaps He knew Balaam was going to go anyway, and God still wanted to help him remain faithful. Perhaps, God knew Balaam was going to fall no matter what He did, so He used him as he had Pharaoh as a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction.

What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? Rom. 9:22-24

When he arose in the morning and saddled his donkey, everything had changed. What had been fomenting and working as a desire and temptation had conceived and bore sin. We know this is true for two reasons. First, because God became angry and second because the angel of the Lord became his adversary.

Then God's anger was aroused because he went, and the Angel of the LORD took His stand in the way as an adversary against him. And he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. Num 22:22

As the Holy Spirit revealed through Peter, the enticement, lusts, and sin had filled his heart and he was now filled with madness (from *para*, "contrary to," and *phren*, "the mind"). Literally, he was "beside himself" "out of his mind, and insane. Balaam was succumbing to his greed.

The angel of the LORD was Israel's protector. He spoke to Moses at the burning bush, helped them through the wilderness, was leading them into the promised land. He was "an enemy of their enemies and an adversary to their adversaries."

*And the **Angel of the LORD** appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. Ex. 3:2*

*"Behold, **I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared.** 21 Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him. 22 But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, **then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.** Ex. 23:20-23*

*Then the **Angel of the LORD** came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: "I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you. Judg. 2:1-2*

Balaam had changed positions and was no longer a submissive prophet. Whatever this madness was, it made Balaam an enemy of Israel and the angel sought to kill him. God graciously spared

him and revealed to Balaam the truth about what he was doing through the mouth of a donkey. Remember Peter's words: Balaam "was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained **the madness of the prophet**."

Three different times God allowed the donkey to save Balaam, then came the rebuke:

*Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?" 29 And Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have abused me. I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you!" 30 So the donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden, ever since I became yours, to this day? Was I ever disposed to do this to you?" And he said, "No." 31 Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the **Angel of the LORD** standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face. Num. 22:28-32*

The words are not impressive, but the fact that the donkey was speaking them should have shocked him. Balaam is so angry and beside himself he doesn't even stop to consider the hand of God. God then allowed Balaam to see the Angel of the LORD, with a sword drawn in His hand. The Angel revealed Balaam's position. His way is perverse, the Angel is ready to kill him because of it.

And the Angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to stand against you, because your way is perverse before Me. 33 The donkey saw Me and turned aside from Me these three times. If she had not turned aside from Me, surely I would also have killed you by now, and let her live." Num. 22:32-33

Balaam confessed his sin and manifested his repentance by asking to turn back.

And Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the way against me. Now then, if it is displeasing to you, I will turn back.

Everything changed when Balaam sought to go beyond God's Word. God had told him not to go. If he had stayed home, he would not be in this terrible predicament. He had sown to his flesh when he made the second request, now he would reap corruption.

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. Gal. 6:7-8

He must go and pronounce blessings upon Israel. God had sought to spare him, but he had forced himself into a position where he could only anger Balak or God. Balaam was now under the strict control of the command of God to bless Israel. At the same time he has been hired by Balak and offered the greatest rewards to curse them. By his coming he has agreed to the conditions. So he was unequally yoked.

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 2 Cor. 6:14-16

Yoked to God by command and yoked to Balak by contract. A bitter place to be, but he was placed there by his own lusts. In the end it was Balak whom he angered, as he did exactly what God wanted him to do. Balak's parting words were a lie.

*Then **Balak's anger was aroused against Balaam**, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse my enemies, and look, you have bountifully blessed them these three times! 11 **Now therefore, flee to your place. I said I would greatly honor you, but in fact, the Lord has kept you back from honor.**" 12 So Balaam said to Balak, "**Did I not also speak to your messengers whom you sent to me, saying, 13 'If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the Lord, to do good or bad of my own will. What the Lord says, that I must speak'**?" ... 25 So Balaam rose and departed and returned to his place; Balak also went his way. Num. 24:10-13, 25*

While the account continues without Balaam, he soon returned and was the mastermind behind behind the events that led to the deaths of 24,000 men in Israel. Three passages reveal exactly

what happened next, and why even in its first stages the angel of the Lord considered Balaam an adversary against Israel. The idolatry and fornication that brought the plague on Israel was a scheme developed through Balaam's counsel. He *"taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality."*

Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. 2 They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. 3 So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel. ... 9 And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand. Num 25:1-3,9

Harass the Midianites, and attack them; 18 for they harassed you with their schemes by which they seduced you in the matter of Peor . . . Num. 25:17-18

Look, these women caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the Lord in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD. Num. 31:16-17

But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. Rev. 2:14

Clearly, at some point after their final discussion, as Balaam went his way, the madness returned and there was no donkey to stop it. He succumbed to the temptation of Balak's offer. His love of money led him to stray from the faith and pierce himself with many sorrows (1Tim. 6:10). He taught Balak about stumbling blocks. He used his knowledge of God and his people to destroy them. He taught Balak that if they took the beautiful women of Midian, dressed them seductively and enticed Israel, many would commit fornication and idolatry. Balaam knew God would curse Israel if they were seduced into sin. What a wicked deceitful plan this was! It led the weak in Israel to stumble by putting evil before them, hoping they would fall. That in turn led God to curse Israel and 24,000 died in a plague.

But Balaam did not care about the souls and lives of others. He only cared about the money and reward. He used his knowledge of God, God's Law, and the weaknesses of the children of Israel to devise a way to force God to curse Israel. It is difficult for good and honest hearts to believe there are people who could be like this.

Deceitful, malicious, greedy and evil stooping to destroy the souls of others for money even with a knowledge of God and His will. Balaam reveals the depravity of what greed can do to others. A man will exploit even the souls of men for worldly gain. All unscrupulous men who preach error and use their knowledge of God and his people for their own destructive ends are walking in the error of Balaam.

They zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them. Gal. 4:17

Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Acts 20:30

*And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: 2Pet. 2:3 (ASV)
By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; 2Pet.2:3 (NKJV)*

Balaam did not have long to enjoy his "wages of unrighteousness." One of Moses' final acts before he died was to take God's vengeance on Median and Balaam for these wicked schemes.

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 Take vengeance for the children of Israel on the Midianites. Afterward you shall be gathered to your people. Num. 31:1-2

They killed the kings of Midian with the rest of those who were killed-- Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. Balaam the son of Beor they also killed with the sword. Num. 31:8

What a sordid story! But one God repeated three times in the NT (1Pet. 2:15; Jude 11; Rev 2:14). This is a story we must learn and apply today. There are many teachers today who are walking after this example. People who devise denominations that allow what God has forbidden. People sizing up the weaknesses of others and using lusts as a basis for false teaching that brings fame and fortune to them.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires,

because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 2 Tim 4:3-5

For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. 19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. 2Pet. 2:18-19

8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ... 18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, Col 2:8-9 18-19

There will always be those who:

have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, (NKJV)
for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam (NASB)
abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error (ESV)
they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error (NIV)

We must be aware of such things and protect our own hearts from those attempt to use our own desires against us.

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Titus 2:11-14

The Gainsaying of Korah

Korah was first introduced in the genealogy of Levi. He is Moses' cousin, the son of the younger brother (Izhar) of Moses father (Amram). Kohath was their mutual grandfather.

*16 These are the names of the **sons of Levi** according to their generations: Gershon, **Kohath**, and Merari. ... 18 And the sons of **Kohath** were **Amram, Izhar**, Hebron, and Uzziel. ... 20 Now **Amram** took for himself Jochebed, his father's sister, as wife; and she bore him **Aaron** and **Moses**. And the years of the life of Amram were one hundred and thirty-seven. 21 The sons of **Izhar** were **Korah**, Nepheg, and Zichri. Ex. 6:16-21*

God had honored the entire tribe of Levi by bringing them near to Himself. Among all the tribes of Israel, only the Levites could minister to Him.

*And you shall **give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they are given entirely to him from among the children of Israel**. 10 So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall attend to their priesthood; but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death." Num. 3:9-10*

Among those Levites, God chose the second born son, Kohath to be the closest of all the Levites. From Kohath came Moses, the Lawgiver, Aaron and his sons, the priests who would minister to God, and from the rest came those who would carry all the articles of the tabernacle. Truly they were honored above all the tribes of Israel.

*You shall **put the holy garments on Aaron, and anoint him and consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest**. 14 And you shall bring his sons and clothe them with tunics. 15 You shall anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may minister to Me as priests; for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations." Ex. 40:13-15*

So the main characters that were marked out long ago are clearly described. Moses is the ruler who gave the Law and the God's chosen deliverer. Aaron is High Priest. He and his sons alone were given the role of the priesthood. Korah was a son of Kohath and given the role of ministering in the tabernacle carrying the ark and mercy seat, table of showbread, altar of incense, and golden lampstand. Outside of Moses, God's ruler and Aaron, God's High Priest, Korah is one of the nearest and highest in God's service.

Events Leading up to Korah's Rebellion

(circumstances that led them to have itching ears (2Tim. 4:1-5)

After the children passed through the Red Sea, they came to Mount Sinai in the third month after leaving Egypt. They completed the building of the tabernacle in the first month of the second year and began their journey toward the promised land on the 20th day of the 2nd month.

***In the third month** after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, **they came to the Wilderness of Sinai**. Ex 19:1-2*

*And it came to pass in **the first month of the second year**, on the first day of the month, that **the tabernacle was raised up**. Ex 40:17*

*Now it came to pass **on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year**, that the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle of the Testimony. 12 And **the children of Israel set out from the Wilderness of Sinai on their journeys**; Num. 10:11-12*

Although "It is eleven days' journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea" (Deut 1:2), it is evident that Israel did not make the journey that quickly. Still there is little doubt that the children of Israel arrived at Kadesh Barnea and sent the spies into Canaan well within 2-3 years of leaving Egypt.

Several important things occurred prior to their arrival. First, God began to punish the people for their murmuring. First at Tabera where God sent fire to destroy some of them. Not long after that the mixed multitudes and some among Israel began murmuring about food, and God again struck them dead with a great plague.

*So he called the name of the place **Taberah**, because **the fire of the Lord had burned among them**. Num. 11:3
But while **the meat was still between their teeth**, before it was chewed, **the wrath of the Lord was aroused***

against the people, and the Lord struck the people with a very great plague. Num. 11:33

Not long after this event, Aaron and Miriam murmured against Moses. God then revealed that Moses was a very special servant to God and that He had treated him with great regard. He asked them why they were not afraid to speak against His servant Moses.

*Then **Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses** because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman. 2 So they said, "**Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?**" And the Lord heard it. 3 (Now the man **Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.**) Num. 12:1-3*

By striking Miriam with leprosy and leaving her outside the camp for seven days, God made sure not only Aaron and Miriam understood the terrible sin of murmuring against God's chosen leader.

Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?" 9 So the anger of the Lord was aroused against them, and He departed. 10 And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow. ... So Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not journey till Miriam was brought in again. Num. 12:8-10

When they came to Kadesh and sent the spies into the land the response was disastrous. Due to their murmuring and grumbling, the Lord swore His oath that none of them would ever enter the land of promise. All the generations except for the one that was then under 20 would die in the wilderness. With that oath given, there was not room for repentance.

*And **all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! ... Say to them, 'As I live,' says the Lord, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: 29 The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. Num. 14:2, 28-29***

*So the **Lord's anger was aroused on that day, and He swore an oath, saying, 11 'Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and above, shall see the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they have not wholly followed Me, 12 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the Lord.'** Num 32:8-13*

The next event after all of this is that of Korah. There is no information about how much time passed before it occurred. But even with God's response to all their murmuring and God's oath that they would never enter the promised land but would die in the wilderness, they were not afraid. Not even the leprosy of Miriam after complaining against Moses, swayed them.

Korah (from Levi) gathered 3 leaders (from Reuben) who stood with him started this "gainsaying," and before they confronted Moses they had already swayed 250 of the leaders of all the tribes. These were men whose renown had made them household names.

*Now **Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men; 2 and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown. 3 They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the congregation of the LORD? Num. 16:1-2***

Even though there were all these men, the Scriptures lay the responsibility for the whole thing on Korah.

*he spoke to **Korah and all his company, 6 Do this: Take censers, **Korah and all your company** 8 Then **Moses said to Korah,** "Hear now, you sons of Levi: 16 And **Moses said to Korah,** "Tomorrow, you and all your company be present before the Lord — you and they, as well as Aaron. And **Korah gathered all the congregation against them** at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then the glory of the Lord appeared to all the congregation. ... 32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and **all the men with Korah, with all their goods. 49 Now those who died in the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died in the Korah incident. Num. 16:1- 49 see also Num. 26:9-10; Dt. 11:5-6; Ps. 106:17-18*****

At what they deemed to be the right moment, they all came together against Moses and Aaren. Though the others were held responsible and also died, and even in the Old Testament Korah, Dathan, Abiram were the instigators, but Korah alone received the greatest condemnation. Note

the wording. “Korah and all his company,” “Korah and all your company,” “Korah gathered all the congregation against them,” and “those who died in the Korah incident.”

What is interesting and typical is that they do not confront Moses directly. They start rumors and instigate discontent and anger.

They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the congregation of the LORD? Num. 16:3

The goal here was to separate the prophet and High Priest from God. In their eyes, God had made the entire congregation holy. They were all equally offspring of Israel, and it was only because Moses and Aaron were putting themselves into the positions of leadership that all their problems had come upon them. It was really all Moses' and Aaron's fault that they are wandering in the wilderness. The truth that it was their own murmuring and God's own judgements against them that had brought them to this was conveniently forgotten.

By starting the rumors that Moses and Aaron of “**exalting themselves above**” the rest of the congregation, their own authority began to rise. But since Jude speaks of their gainsaying, we will seek to look at these events through that lens.

antilogia denotes “a gainsaying, contradiction” (anti, “against,” lego, “to speak”), Heb 6:16 (KJV, “strife,” RV, “dispute,”); 7:7, “a gainsaying” (RV, “dispute”; KJV, “contradiction”); 12:3 (RV, “gainsaying”; KJV, “contradiction”), Jude 11 (“gainsaying”). (Vine's Expository Dictionary, NT:485)

Since Korah was the instigator, the guilt is laid at his feet. *the “designated”* for the manner in which he spoke. He “spoke against,” “contradicted,” “disputed,” and was “gainsaying” against Moses and Aaron.

Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases. 21 As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to kindle strife. Pr. 26:20-21

The beginning of strife is like releasing water; Therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts. Pr. 17:14

Cast out the scoffer, and contention will leave; Yes, strife and reproach will cease. Pr. 22:10

As Korah sought to make a distinction between the authority of God and that of his prophets, the rumors and affects of the strive and contention had already spread out to the entire congregation. Blaming the prophet for God's commands is still a direct attack on God's authority, but it is subtle and much more difficult to identify.

By the time Moses heard of it, the people had broken loose from the authority God had given through Moses. It led Moses to fall on his face. He saw the extreme damage Korah's charge would create. This gainsaying created a fire that could have destroyed the entire congregation. There was only want way to stop the terrible consequences of the waters of strife that were now raging through the congregation.

So when Moses heard it, he fell on his face; 5 and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, Tomorrow morning the LORD will show who is His and who is holy, and will cause him to come near to Him. That one whom He chooses He will cause to come near to Him.

God's authority had come through Moses. That should have been made clear through the 10 plagues and at Mount Sinai, but what Stephen revealed to the Jews many years later was still occurring here. They rejected him, but God made him ruler and deliverer.

“This Moses whom they rejected, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge?’ is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush. Acts 7:35

But because Israel doesn't like what God has decreed, they go after the weakest link. They can't accuse God directly, so they accuse and reject Him through his spokesmen.

They Should Have Been Afraid

It had been less than a year that the events in Numbers 10 had taken place. It was not until the second year and the first month that the tabernacle was reared up and made operational.

Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. 2 So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. 3 And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the Lord spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.'" Lev. 10:1-3

These words should still be echoing in their minds as they do ours today. They are still in the second year when Moses gave this command, and it is clear that if they do it they will be in violation in a far worse way than Nadab and Abihu. They are not holy, they have not been called, they are not treating God as holy. To do this is to invite the same death as Nadab and Abihu which is exactly what occurred.

Do this: Take censers, Korah and all your company; 7 put fire in them and put incense in them before the LORD tomorrow, and it shall be that the man whom the LORD chooses is the holy one. You take too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi! Num 16:4-5

Moses strongly warned them that it was they who were taking too much on themselves. So often those in evil will accuse those who are upholding God's authority with the charge that actually fits them. Moses' deep concern for them led him to warn them of their foolishness. God created this plan. He chose Moses and Aaron. He chose the sons of Levi. God had given Korah, Moses and Aaron their respective positions. To seek more was an affront to God's authority.

Then Moses said to Korah, Hear now, you sons of Levi: 9 Is it a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the work of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to serve them; 10 and that He has brought you near to Himself, you and all your brethren, the sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking the priesthood also? Num 16:8-10

The true nature of the rebellion is here set forth. God had given them a very special position. They had been set above the congregation in their closeness to God. Moses and Aaron were doing the portion God had given them to do and Korah and those with him were doing another. They were all working together in the tabernacle and to serve both God and Israel. The only thing God had withheld from Korah was the actual priesthood. Moses' question may have two meanings. Either he is trying to force them to consider the implications of what they were doing if they succeeded. Were they really seeking the priesthood? The second possibility is that God has revealed to him exactly what the end goal is for this insurrection and rebellion. They were seeking to be the leaders of all Israel and set themselves up as the ones who stand between the people and God.

Destroying Respect for God's authority by attacking The Weakest Link

Korah, in his gainsaying sought to move the people away from God's order and plan. His reasoning was cunning and sinister. They focused all their murmuring on Aaron and attempted to lead the people to believe that it was caused by Aaron's weakness. Moses stripped away the guile, gainsaying and contradictions. It wasn't Aaron, and it wasn't against Moses. They had gathered together against the LORD. They were only using Moses and Aaron to vent their displeasure over what God had decreed.

Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the LORD. And what is Aaron that you murmur against him? Num. 16:11

Their problem wasn't with Aaron. He was only **the weakest link** in the chain of their dissatisfaction with God. They had murmured and complained about their circumstances since they had left Egypt. Now they were condemned to wander in the wilderness for forty years until all of them were dead.

All of this was not due to Moses and Aaron. It was a punishment inflicted by God, so they were actually grumbling and rebelling against God's order. But they couldn't get any traction fighting against God so they focused on Aaron.

Moses hoped they would see this before things went any further. They could still be saved if they would repent, and the people would be protected from their terrible influence. Moses pleaded with them to reason with him.

And **Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab**, but they said, *We will not come up!* ¹³ *Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that you should keep acting like a prince over us?* ¹⁴ *Moreover you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up* Num. 16:12-14

Closed Minds / Contempt For Inspiration

This answer revealed the terrible damage Korah’s gainsaying had caused. The people had now completely rewritten their own history of the past few years.

<u>The Lies They Told</u>	<u>The Truth</u>
you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the wilderness,	Slavery in Egypt.
that you should keep acting like a prince over us	Their own actions
you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards.	Revealing God’s will
Will you put out the eyes of these men?	He couldn’t b/c of their sin.
	A false accusation.

Their minds were closed. They did not want to hear anything more from Moses. Conveniently overlooking their own sin and God’s punishment, they blamed it all on Moses. They accused him of acting as a prince over them. It was a lie, but sounded like truth and swayed them and the people. Though God had given him the position and delegated his authority, they blamed him for all their troubles.

Their answer revealed their utter contempt for the Spirit that inspired Moses. They believed that he would attempt to “*put out the eyes of these men.*” this closely mirrors our own idiom: “*pull the wool over their eyes.*” They chose to forget the ten plagues, Mt Sinai, and all that God had done through Moses. They didn’t want to debate the issue with the facts. It was like saying we will not allow you to confuse us with the facts since our mind is already made up.

The Entire Congregation was Swayed

Though they all slept on it, the morning brought the worst possible outcome. The entire congregation had been swayed. They had been persuaded by this gainsaying that all their problems were Moses’ fault. Korah, Dathan and Abiram were now the good guys and Moses and Aaron were the bad guys. The 250 men had the audacity to be standing up right next to Moses with their censers of incense and fire. But even if they got it from off the altar, they were to wrong people. They were acting like they were equal to Moses and Aaron.

So every man took his censer, put fire in it, laid incense on it, and stood at the door of the tabernacle of meeting with Moses and Aaron. 19 And Korah gathered all the congregation against them at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then the glory of the Lord appeared to all the congregation. Num 16:18-19

God was extremely angry with this rejection of Him and His leaders. He was prepared to destroy the entire nation. If Moses and Aaron had not interceded that is exactly what would have happened.

Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the congregation. 20 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 21 Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. Num. 16:18-21

After their intercession for the people, God told them to warn Israel to get away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. It is interesting that as Moses warned them about what was about to occur, the people still had enough fear of Moses to get away from them. But the families of these men were unmoved and stood with them.

Then Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. 26 And he spoke to the congregation, saying, "Depart now from the tents of these wicked men! Touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in all their sins." 27 So they got away from around the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents, with their wives, their sons, and their little children. Num 16:25-27

Moses warned the people that what was about to happen was proof of his authenticity. He was God's genuine prophet. He had done nothing of his own will, but had faithfully served God. If they died a common death then the Lord had not sent him, but if the earth swallowed them alive, then they would know these men had rejected God and not just Moses as they had claimed.

*Then Moses said: **By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will. 29 If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, then the LORD has not sent me. 30 But if the LORD creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the LORD.** Num 16:28-30*

God had told Moses exactly what He was going to do, and just as Moses finished speaking the words, God did not give them any time to react. It happened immediately. These events transpired in this way to create the "written list" or "designation" the description (*proscripti*) or list of characteristics. Thus God "marked out" (NKJV; NASB); "designated" (ESV); "ordained" (KJV); and had it "written about" (NIV). (Jude 11)

*For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were **marked out** for this condemnation, ... 11 ... and perished in the rebellion of Korah. Jude 4, 11*

There was no way to misunderstand God's attitude toward this reasoning. Those standing with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, were swallowed up by the ground. One can only imagine the screaming, the horror and the terror of that event. Then those 250 who were holding censers suffered the same fate as Nadab and Abihu. They were consumed by fire. God made it so clear that there is no way to misunderstand it. Though Jude prophesied that it would be repeated again and again, God's people have a clear fruit to assess false teachers.

*Now it came to pass, **as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, 32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. 33 So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the congregation. 34 Then all Israel who were around them fled at their cry, for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also! 35 And a fire came out from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense** Num. 16:31-35*

After Death His Gainsaying Continued

Although one would think that God's clear wrath and punishment would have brought the people to their senses, their deception and blindness was so complete that even God's divine wrath could not sway them. The children of Israel were convinced that Moses and Aaron were the renegades and Korah was the true servant. They actually blamed Moses and Aaron for these deaths

*On **the next day all the congregation** of the children of Israel **murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, You have killed the people of the LORD.** Num. 16:41*

They still believed Korah! Even after God made the example out of them! God killed them because of their rebellion. Thus the classic argument that a majority of people must be right is destroyed. Even with God's clear response to their rebellion Israel's itching ears and desire to go back to Egypt led them to continue in their rebellion. God was very angry that His people still rejected Him:

***And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 45 Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.** And they fell on their faces. Num. 16:44-45*

A plague made clear God's feeling toward this continued rebellion and ended the matter. When Moses saw the things that were about to happen, he again sought to intercede in behalf of the people.

*So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense on it, and take it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the Lord. The plague has begun." 47 Then Aaron took it as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and **already the plague had begun among the people.** So he put in the incense and made atonement for the people. Num 16:46-48*

This brought favor from God as Aaron stood between the living and the dead, thus again proving that Aaron was God's priest and Korah a wicked sinner. But fourteen thousand died as a result of

this event.

And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped. 49 Now those who died in the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died in the Korah incident. 50 So Aaron returned to Moses at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, for the plague had stopped. Num 16:48-50

The Weakest Link in the Chain

God used Korah to condemn all who contradict his spokesmen. When a false teacher erodes the respect of God's spokesmen in order to gain power themselves they break God's chain of authority at its weakest link and follow Korah. Jesus' contended with such men in the Scribes and Pharisees who told the multitudes he had a demon and was a friend of publicans and sinners. Paul dealt with it when false teachers in Galatia and Corinth sought to undermine his authority.

*For, **His letters, they say, are weighty and strong; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account.** 2 Cor 10:10*

Nothing has changed today. Those who teach error must remove all respect for those whose words condemn them. The error being taught will determine who is attacked. Martin Luther attacked James because he did not agree with his words on faith and works. Women wanting to preach and homosexuals who want to live a lifestyle condemned in the Scripture turn on Paul. They accuse him of being a victim of his culture and thus being swayed wrote those words in error. They conveniently forget his inspiration and that his words are the commands of the Lord. Paul identifies those who reject him in this manner as ignorant.

*If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that **the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.** 38 But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant. 1 Cor 14:37-38*

Even Moses can't escape the scoffing and mockery of those who gainsay like Korah. Those who believe in evolution accuse Moses of being ignorant of the true facts regarding the creation and thus allowed error into the sacred Scriptures. They separate the spokesmen from the one he is speaking for. Since all Scripture is given by inspiration and men spoke as moved by the Holy Spirit such a charge only reveals that Korah is alive and well even up to this very day.

The Weakest Link

As has been well said, no chain is stronger than its weakest link. Thus the chain of command between God and man is no stronger than its weakest link. If all other parts of the chain are still unbreakable, then the weakest link must be strengthened in order for the chain to be unbreakable. The weakest link in the chain of authority is not God or Jesus. Only Atheists and idolaters dare seek to break the chain here because anyone who confesses Christ as Lord God would never allow those links to be broken.

The weak link in the chain of God's authority is the same link Korah sought to break. Jesus told His apostles they would only speak under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. That their words, both oral and written were inspired Scripture having the same authority as His own words.

knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. 2Pet. 1:20-21

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. Jn. 14:26

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. Jn 16:13

But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; 20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. Mt. 10:19-20

Even today, those who seek to break the chain of authority follow Korah. They "speak against,"

“contradict,” “dispute,” and “gainsay” the Bible by attacking it on several fronts.

The Mormons and others “speak against,” “contradict,” “dispute,” and “gainsay” the integrity of Scripture, stating that it has been corrupted and cannot be trusted.

The Catholics and others “speak against,” “contradict,” “dispute,” and “gainsay” the Bible by telling us that God never intended Scripture to be our sole guide. The church needs the Pope to interpret Scripture and tell us what it means. His authority is as great as Scripture and actually greater for if his new revelation contradicts previous Scripture, Scripture is set aside and his words are followed.

The Pentecostal and Charismatic movements “speak against,” “contradict,” “dispute,” and “gainsay” by teaching they have the same inspiration as the apostles and prophets in the first century. Therefore they are as capable of explaining their words as those who wrote them in the first place. They set aside the authority of Scripture because “*the whole congregation is holy*” and are just as capable of knowing and preaching the truth as the apostles. This is also the mode of translation many have sought today giving us inferior translations that no longer teach truth. Note the preface of the ESV which summarizes the difference today between those who still accept the inspired nature of the Scriptures.

*“The ESV is an “**essentially literal**” translation that seeks as far as possible to capture the precise wording of the original text and the personal style of each Bible writer. As such, its emphasis is on “word-for-word” correspondence, at the same time taking into account differences of grammar, syntax, and idiom between current literary English and the original languages. Thus it seeks to be transparent to the original text, letting the reader see as directly as possible the structure and meaning of the original.”*

*“In contrast to the ESV, **some Bible versions have followed a “thought-for-thought” rather than “word-for-word” translation philosophy, emphasizing “dynamic equivalence” rather than the “essentially literal” meaning of the original. A “thought-for-thought” translation is of necessity more inclined to reflect the interpretive opinions of the translator and the influences of contemporary culture.”***

This thought for thought means they can understand the thoughts of the inspired men in the first century and then using their own thoughts(which are equivalent in their eyes) they can tell us what they meant in their own words. Often making their own errors easier to defend by their translation.

The megachurch movement has devised a different approach to breaking the weakest link. They remove the entire concept of inspiration. Paul and Peter were only men, influenced by the age in which they lived. It was impossible for them to rise above the ignorance and prejudice of their age.

Therefore since the world has changed, we have to interpret their words in light of new truth. So Paul’s words about women keeping silent and not taking dominion were penned by a man who was prejudiced against women. Paul’s words about slavery and homosexuality are also scoffed and scorned because our new enlightened thinking cannot conceive of the ignorance and prejudice Paul had when he wrote those words.

Whenever a false teacher erodes the respect of God’s spokesmen in order to gain power themselves they break God’s chain of authority at its weakest link and follow Korah. Those who teach error today must first remove any respect for those whose words condemn and expose them.

The error being taught determines who is attacked.

Martin Luther attacked James because he did not agree with his words on faith and works calling the book of James a *strawy epistle* with no substance.

Women who want to preach and homosexuals who want to continue their lifestyles attack Paul calling him a chauvinist or a homophobe because and therefore feel justified to reject his words.

In their mind they are not rejecting God, just Paul. Those who believe in evolution undermine Moses account of creation. Those who do not believe in miracles attack all the accounts as myths.

It all began with Korah. Yet those words written before continue to have the power to identify even today. Any teacher who attacks the weakest link by contradicting and opposing God's inspired writers does exactly what Korah did and they will perish as he did.

Jude 12-16

Verses 12-14 is full of symbolism with very broad applications. Some of them are similar to passages in Daniel or even Revelation. We will be able to get the general direction and idea of what the Holy Spirit is revealing here, but will have to be content with possibilities and probabilities and be careful with specific applications.

They loosely follow similar words in Peter where he speaks of brute beasts, spots and blemishes, and feasting with you. Also wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, the blackness of darkness.

*12 But these, like **natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed**, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, 13 and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. **They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you**, 14 having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. ... 17 These are **wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest**, for whom is **reserved the blackness of darkness forever**. 2 Peter 2:12-14 , 17*

Jude

spots in your love feasts,
feast with you without fear,
clouds **without water**,
carried about **by the winds**;
late autumn **trees without fruit**,
twice dead, pulled up by the roots;
raging waves of the sea,
foaming up their own shame;
wandering stars for whom is
reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

2 Peter

Spots and blemishes
Carousing in deceptions while they **feast** with you
Wells **without water**
Clouds **carried by a tempest**

reserved the blackness of darkness forever. Reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

These things are both judgments of God and as well as a part of how they can be marked out.

*For certain men have **crept in unnoticed**, who **long ago were marked out** for this condemnation, **ungodly men**, who **turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ**. Jd.
4*

12 These are spots in your love feasts,

This first clause is made up to two vocabulary words with a variety of meanings and the phrase is the subject of speculation and imagination. The first vocabulary word, only used here in the NT has three different possible meanings. The first is its native meaning of rock or reef which is found in classical usage. The second is its tie to *spilos* (spot) as used in 2 Pet. 2. The third is a tie to a "dirty, foul wind, creating a stormy effect on the water. Our translations offer:

"spots" (KJV)

"hidden rocks" (ASV)

"blemishes" (NIV)

"hidden reefs" (NAS, ESV)

spilas found in the NT only in Jude 12, is **generally understood as = "rock," "reef," in accordance with its poetic classical usage**: cf. Kaibel 2251 f. where it is said of a man who had precipitated himself from a rock—
... **Others prefer the rendering "spot," "stain," as if = *spilos* (q.v.), which is found in the parallel passage 2 Peter 2:13**: cf. Lightfoot Revision, p. 152 f. **More recently** A. D. Knox has shown good ground (JTS xiv. (1913), p. 547 ff., xvi. (1915), p. 78) for **taking the word as an adj. with *anemos* understood, "a dirty, foul wind," producing a correspondingly troubled and stormy effect on the water**: cf. Isa 57:20. (Moulton-Milligan, Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament, NT:4694)

Love feasts is especially difficult both in vocabulary and in application. The word itself is *agape*, which is everywhere else translated love. Here because the noun it is in the plural and the verb feast is present those who translate have universally applied it to the feast. But when we search the rest of the NT to find out what this is referring to there is nothing.

We find ourselves in a difficult dilemma because when a symbolic passage is used to create a practice nowhere else found in the NT. Most think this is a clear indication that the brethren got together to take the Lord's supper then had a common meal in which the rich would supply the food

to feed the poor. The KJV translated it "*feasts of charity.*" While the majority of the religious world has proclaimed that this is the authority for Christians to gather together for a feast of love, there is not only no authority for it, the Holy Spirit forbid it. The church in Corinth had been eating a meal before or even during the Lord's supper. Rather than simply correct the abuse and give instructions on the proper way to distribute the food and drink, the Spirit simply swept away the entire practice.

He told them they had houses to eat and drink in, but the church was for eating the Lord's supper. Later he plainly stated that if anyone is hungry he should eat at home. When the church comes together the take the Lord's supper is not the same time when they were eating together.

Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. 21 For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you. 1Cor 11:20-22, 33-34

Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. 34 But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

Others find authority for the practice of a love feast in some of the descriptions of the early church. It is plainly stated that they continued steadfastly in the breaking of bread. But is this the Lord's supper or a common meal.

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Acts 2:42-43

That question is definitively answered exactly the same way as it was in Corinth. They did one thing in the temple and something entirely different from house to house. The eating was not a large gathering, but they ate their food from house to house.

So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, Acts 2:46

The two events do not fit together in any way. The Lord's supper was done when gathered together in one place while the food was eaten at home and from house to house.

while they feast with you without fear,

So what does it mean when it says they feast with you? What is this "*love feast?*" It is better to say we don't know than to create an entire aspect of worship that is nowhere revealed in the clear teachings and examples in the rest of the NT. It could refer only to the Lord's supper as Albert Barnes who said it far better than I can:

The reference is probably to the Lord's Supper, called a feast or festival of love, because:

- (1) it revealed the love of Christ to the world;
- (2) it was the means of strengthening the mutual love of the disciples: a festival which love originated, and where love reigned.

It has been supposed by many, that the reference here is to festivals which were subsequently called "Agapae," and which are now known as "love-feasts" - meaning a festival immediately "preceding" the celebration of the Lord's Supper. But there are strong objections to the supposition that there is reference here to such a festival.

- (1) There is no evidence, unless it be found in this passage, that such celebrations had the sanction of the apostles. They are nowhere else mentioned in the New Testament, or alluded to, unless it is in 1 Cor 11:17-34, an instance which is mentioned only to reprove it, and to show that such appendages to the Lord's Supper were wholly unauthorized by the original institution, and were liable to gross abuse.
- (2) The supposition that they existed, and that they are referred to here, is not necessary in order to a proper explanation of this passage. All that it fairly means will be met by the supposition that the reference is to the Lord's Supper. THAT was in every sense a festival of love or charity. The words will appropriately apply to that, and there is no necessity of supposing anything else in order to meet their full signification.
- (3) There can be no doubt that such a custom early existed in the Christian church, and extensively prevailed; but it can readily be accounted for without supposing that it had the sanction of the apostles, or that it existed in their time.
 - (a) Festivals prevailed among the Jews, and it would not be unnatural to introduce them into the Christian

church.

(b) The custom prevailed among the heathen of having a "feast upon a sacrifice," or in connection with a sacrifice; and as the Lord's Supper commemorated the great sacrifice for sin, it was not unnatural, in imitation of the heathen, to append a feast or festival to that ordinance, either before or after its celebration.

(c) This very passage in Jude, with perhaps some others in the New Testament (compare 1 Cor 11:25; Acts 2:46; 6:2), might be so construed as to seem to lend countenance to the custom. **For these reasons it seems clear to me that the passage before us does not refer to "love-feasts;" and, therefore, that they are not authorized in the New Testament.** (Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database Copyright © 1997-2014 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

If we are going to interpret a symbolic passage that is difficult to understand, it **MUST** fit the rest of the Scriptures.

serving only themselves.

This is a very unusual word in this context. It was used by Jesus after his denial to command Peter to "feed my sheep" (Jn 21:16) It was used of the elders who are shepherds (Acts 20:28-31; 1Pet. 1:5). There may be a reference here to Jesus warnings about being the good shepherd, while those who are hirelings don't care for the sheep (Jn 10:1-16), the wolves in sheep's clothing in Mt 7:13-20, or the savage wolves who would enter in among the sheep.

"poimaino ... (poimen q. v.)... to feed, to tend a flock, keep sheep a. prop. b. trop. a ... to rule, govern: of rulers;... of the overseers (pastors) of the church... b. To furnish pasturage or food; to nourish..." (Thayer p. 527; 4165)

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Acts 20:28-31

These don't care about the sheep, only for themselves.

They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds;

The rest of the verse speaks of two things that bring happiness because of the promise of good things to come. Clouds bring rain and trees bring fruit, but these bring neither. Teachers are supposed to bring all that is necessary for fruit to be produced, but from these there is nothing of any value.

Like clouds and wind without rain Is a man who boasts of his gifts falsely. Pr. 25:14

late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots;

The Lord made it clear again and again that God expects fruit. In the parable of the sower and the vine and the branches, and the parable of the fig tree (Lk. 13:6-9). The most graphic is that of the fig tree that had no fruit.

And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away. Mt. 21:19

These false teachers are like that. What God wants to see from all who are teaching his word is fruit in the lives of those who hear them. These men have no fruit themselves and therefore cannot help others produce it.

But the type of tree these men imitate have no hope of ever producing. Not only are they barren, but they are also plucked up by the roots and therefore never able to produce fruit.

13 raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame;

Again we have things taken from nature that illustrate the terrible waste and worthless nature of these men. God designed the scheme of redemption, sent His son to die for our sins and sent the Holy Spirit to reveal the gospel to give man the power and resources to find their way back to him.

These false teachers come along and using all of the things God has given have created a worthless and less than worthless situation. Nothing they touch can produce anything. The great power of the waves can only bring foam and flotsom upon the beach. The never go anywhere and

never accomplish anything.

wandering stars

The wandering stars for the Greeks were the planets that moved back and forth and for a time seemed random and without reason. Since they were not fixed on any point they could not be depended or relied upon.

for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

This is the only phrase that is identical to what the Holy Spirit revealed through Peter although here he adds the term forever. The phrase blackness of darkness is one of the most fearsome elements of hell. This is the third time the term reserved is used in Jude. Preserved in v 1, did not keep and reserved in verse six. God plans to keep them in the blackness of darkness forever.

14 Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also,

Counting Adam as the first, Enoch is the seventh generation of men as the genealogies of both Chronicles and Luke attest.

Adam (1), Seth (2), Enosh (3), 2 Cainan (4), Mahalalel (5), Jared (6), 3 Enoch (7), Methuselah, Lamech, 1Chron 1:1-3

the son of Enoch (7), the son of Jared (6), the son of Mahalalel (5), the son of Cainan (4), 38 the son of Enosh (3), the son of Seth (2), the son of Adam (1), the son of God. Lk. 3:37-38

It is rather tedious reading among the comments made on this verse. Instead of simply accepting this is the quickest way to identify that this is indeed the Enoch recorded in Genesis, we are led through the figurative use of the term seventh and what possible meaning this might have.

After that, many wonder, where did Jude get his information? It is not recorded in Genesis, nor given anywhere else in the NT. It is a little disconcerting to hear people speak of the myths that he might have drawn from, or the profane and disqualified from the canon, book of Enoch, which since it contains this prophecy had to have been written after Jude and copied it.

Where is the faith in inspiration. Doesn't everyone know that the author of the Bible is the eternal Holy Spirit who first inspired Moses what to write, leaving out Enoch's prophecy the first time, but intending to make it known now, at the proper time. Jesus promised and Paul confirmed that everything he wrote was revealed by the Spirit. So was this.

Having learned that Abel was a prophet from Jesus and Noah was a preacher of righteousness but since there was no Scriptures yet, he had to be a prophet (a mouth for God to utter the words the first time). Now we are introduced to Enoch as a prophet. Some have wondered if Enoch was preaching the same things to the same people as Noah, but since Enoch was translated 69 before Noah was born and thus 659 years before the flood. Some would still be living, but not the majority.

This certainly helps elaborate on the Hebrew writer's words. At his translation the testimony that he was pleasing to God was confirmed. So all the prophecies that he had made were confirmed when God took him.

By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. Heb. 11:5

saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints,

This is a powerful prophesy. Placed here in this context it refers to the second coming of Christ. Whether it also refers to the flood or Egypt or Israel, Babylon and Rome or other judgements of God on these same ungodly is not mentioned or even implied. The term saints, is generally used in the NT of those who are Christians. Those who have been bought with the blood of Christ and are now holy, sanctified and set apart for Him. But in this context it is referring to His angelic hosts just as Jesus revealed.

*So it will be at the end of the age. The **angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, 50 and cast them into the furnace of fire.** There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Mt 13:49-50*

when **the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels**, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 2Th.1:7-8

15 to execute judgment on all,

This is the common word for the events that will occur immediately after the Lord returns.

krisis ... (a) denotes “**the process of investigation, the act of distinguishing and separating**” ... hence “**a judging, a passing of judgment upon a person or thing**”; it has a variety of meanings, such as judicial authority, John 5:22,27; justice, Acts 8:33; James 2:13; a tribunal, Matt 5:21-22; a trial, John 5:24; 2 Peter 2:4; a judgment, 2 Peter 2:11; ... (b) sometimes it has the meaning “condemnation,” ...” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary NT:2920)

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 2Cor. 5:10

It is interesting to realize that this was already being revealed and was known even before the flood.

to convict all who are ungodly among them

The Lord, who records every idle word and writes all that we have done in His books will be unassailable. There will be no arguments or reasons. God will know the verdict and He will convict and prove it to each of us.

“elegcho... 1. to convict, refute, confute, generally with a suggestion of the shame of the person convicted... TINA of crime, fault, or error; of sin... contextually, by conviction to bring to light, to expose... 2. to find fault with, correct; a. by word; to reprehend severely, chide, admonish, reprove... contextually, to call to account, show one his fault, demand an explanation... b. by deed; to chasten, punish...” (Thayer, p. 202-203; 1651)

But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” Mt. 12:36-37

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. Rev. 20:12

There is one specific group among all of these that Enoch singled out. Not everyone is ungodly, because this is a terrible indictment of one’s attitude toward God. These are people who know or know of God and having no reverence or respect for Him actively practices and promotes what God has condemned.

“asebés, ... ungodly, godless, unholy, profane, ... (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon.)

“asebés, adjective, from the privative a (1), without, and sébomai (4576), to worship, venerate. Basically it means godless, without fear and reverence of God. It does not mean irreligious, but one who actively practices the opposite of what the fear of God demands. ... asebés is one characterized by immoral and impious behavior. Often opposite of dikaios (1342), just (Rom 4:5; 5:6). asebés also occurs in 2 Peter 2:5; 3:7; Jude 4, 15. (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:765)

It is important to fully understand the root of this word. The difference between ungodliness and godliness are the Greek prefixes alpha - privative which negates and removes all vestiges of it or eu which expands and proclaims that it is being done excellently and well.

eusebes... from eu, well, sebomia to reverence, the root seb- signifying sacred awe, describes reverence exhibited especially in actions, reverence or awe well directed... the energy which, directed by holy awe of God, finds expression in devoted activity... In the NT it is used of a pious attitude towards God, Acts 10:2,7...” (Vine vol 1, P. 308)

eusebeia... from eu, well, and seboimai, to be devout, denotes the piety which, characterized by a Godward attitude, does that which is well-pleasing to Him... “ (Vine, Vol 2 p. 162).

This specific class of people is the circle that is being drawn around these ungodly false teachers. If there was any respect at all for God and His ways, they would never act the way they do.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. Rom 1:18-20

of all their ungodly deeds

Those who are ungodly will produce ungodly deeds. Their minds, hearts, and imaginations are devising those things that God has condemned. Every new invention and action that leads to further and further ungodly actions will also be revealed, pointed out and condemned.

“ergon... 1. business, employment, that with which anyone is occupied... 2. any product whatever, any thing accomplished by hand, art, industry, mind... 3. an act, deed, thing done: ...”
(Thayer, p. 248; 2041)

which they have committed in an ungodly way,

The root word ungodly is now turned into a verb and speaks of all the actions that an attitude of ungodliness will be accomplished. They are ungodly, producing ungodly deeds and ungodly actions. None of this will be overlooked or ignored. All the terrible things that sinners have done will be recompensed to them.

and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

Many, not content to fight against God in all their actions, speak against and devise harsh and severe words and attribute stiff and unyielding judgments against Him. They impugn His motives, rebel against his commandments, persecute and seek to trouble His followers, and pass terrible words against Him.

“skleros ... hard, 2. of sound, hard, harsh, crashing, ... 3. hard, stiff, unyielding, sturdy, ll. metaph. of things, hard, austere, severe, (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:4642)

NT:4642

“skleros - The adjective derives from the stem sql- “to dry (up),” “to desiccate,” with which “skeleton” is connected; it means “dry,” “arid,” “hard,” “rough,” “unyielding.” ... In the NT it occurs 6 times: a. of things in a transferred sense: ... “hard,” “unpleasant,” “intolerable,” John 6:60; ... “strong,” “rough,” “contrary” winds, James 3:4 ... , a “harsh,” “hard,” “austere,” “strict,” “unmerciful” man, Matt 25:24 (Kittel, TDWNT NT: 4642)

Jude 16 - 22

16 These are grumblers, complainers,

Returning to the present indictments against these false teachers by the Holy Spirit, they are both grumblers and complainers. These are the same emotion that points in two different directions. The first centers on day to day events that are frustrating and disappointing. Instead of enduring they bitterly complain and grumble about it. This was the problem with Israel from the moment that God did not release them from bondage quickly enough and continued throughout the wilderness wandering every time something arose that did not meet their approval or expectations.

goggustēs, masc. noun from *goggúzō* (1111), **to grumble, murmur. A grumbler, murmurer** (Jude 16);... (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1113)

The second word is a more global view. Their entire lot and place in life is unfair they should have more, be better, have greater advantages and higher accomplishments. Life (and God) have been so unfair to them. If things were different they would be in a far better circumstance.

mempsímoiros; adj. from *mémphomai* (3201), **to blame**, and *moíra* (n.f.), **a portion, allotment**. A discontented, complaining person, **one who finds fault with his lot** (Jude 16). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:3202)

walking according to their own lusts;

The lusts and desires that God has commanded be removed from the lives of His people, these make their habitual conduct. Instead of no longer walking in them, these have completely given themselves over to them.

*This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should **no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; 19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. Eph. 4:17-19***

These would be the easily identifiable fruits Jesus described.

*"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 **You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them. Mt. 7:15-20***

True godly people are ashamed of their lusts. Seek to destroy and root them out of their lives and when they do come out into their walk will immediately repent and ask for forgiveness.

epithumia, NT:1939) denotes **"strong desire" of any kind**, the various kinds being frequently specified by some adjective (see below). **The word is used of a good desire in Luke 22:15; Phil 1:23, and 1 Thess 2:17 only. Everywhere else it has a bad sense.** In Rom 6:12 the injunction against letting sin reign in our mortal body to obey the "lust" thereof, refers to those evil desires which are ready to express themselves in bodily activity. They are equally the "lusts" of the flesh, Rom 13:14; Gal 5:16,24; Eph 2:3; 2 Peter 2:18; 1 John 2:16, ..." (Vine's NT:1939)

epithumia epithumeo ... are derived from thumos first "spirit, courage, wrath, sense" (Frisk, Wörterbuch I, 693), then also "passion, passionate desire," ... desire and striving in thumos ... (Exegetical Dictionary of NT NT:1939)

epithumia epithumeo ... are not found in Homer, but they are pre-Socratic, and common later. The words denote the direct impulse towards food, sexual satisfaction etc., and also desire in general. In the first instance there is nothing morally objectionable or even suspicious about them. ... Reprehensible desire is called epithumeo kake (evil) ... In Hebrew and Jewish religion there is condemnation not merely of the evil act but also of the evil will. The Decalogue forbids stealing and the desire for the goods of others, including their wives. ..." (Kittel, TDWNT, NT:1939)

and they mouth great swelling words,

Like everything else about these people, there is no moderation or decorum. They speak like they live and like they teach the Scriptures. Their words come from their hearts. They are immoderate and extravagant. They have no bounds or limits. They are boastful and arrogant and their words are so high and mighty.

huperóγκου (*huper* and *óγκος* a swelling), **overswollen; metaph. immoderate, extravagant...** [A. V. *great swelling words*] **expressive of arrogance...** (Thayer, Joseph Henry, op. cit. p. 641; 5246)

huperóγκου, adjective from *hupér* (5228), over, and *óγκος* (3591), a mass. **Oversized, swollen, boastful. In the NT used only figuratively to refer to a bigheaded or boastful person.** Used also of language (2 Peter 2:18; Jude 16...) (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:5246)

Paul also spoke about such men. Most of the prophets had to deal with them. While humble and godly people express doubts about themselves and leave things in the hands of God, these know all, have all and can do all. Their confidence draws others to them, but because their is nothing but pride and empty conceit expressed by these swollen words, there is nothing to back them up.

For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11 whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain. 12 One of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." 13 This testimony is true. Titus 1:10-13

flattering people to gain advantage.

While flattery normally simply means speaking words to build up others when they are not true. Here it is a much stronger term for amazement. An admiration that exceeds all expectations at the greatness of the one who is receiving these words. They know how to make other feel important.

thaumázō, from *thaúma* (2295), a wonder. (I) Intrans., **to wonder, marvel, be struck with admiration or astonishment** ... In the middle *thaumázomai*, the same as the act. in meaning (Rev 17:8); , to be admired (2 Thess 1:10). Followed by *prósōpon* (4383), person or persons (Jude 16), it means to admire, reverence, respect a man's person, to respect him with special esteem on account of his outward appearance and thus give him undue favor (Complete Word Study Dictionary, NT:2296)

This would have been the guilt of those who praised Herod for his speech.

And the people kept shouting, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" Acts 12:22-23

While such admiration can be a good thing if it is based on truth and for the uplifting and helping, here it is not true and is only being spoken for their own advantage.

17 But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ:

The Holy Spirit now moves the warnings He has given about the false teachers through the prophet Jude to warnings made by the apostles. While the book of Acts is often called the Acts of the apostles, only the work of Peter, James and John are recorded. We don't know anything about most of the apostles. Perhaps the Spirit was referring to some of them to these readers, but we still have their words that were first spoken, then written.

proerēō ... **from pró (4253), before, and erēō (2046), to say, declare. To say before, foretell, speak of in advance.** ... (I) To say, speak, declare before or formerly. ... (II) To say or tell before an event, to foretell. ... (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:4280)

All the words of all the prophets were first spoken to those living in that day and then written for all who would follow.

"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand. Mt. 24:23-25

And as Isaiah said before: *"Unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, We would have become like Sodom, And we would have been made like Gomorrah." Rom. 9:29*

that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, 2Pet. 3:2-3

Although we live nearly 2000 years later, we still have their words to remember. What we have are the writings of four apostles, Matthew (1), John (5), Paul (13), and Peter (2) which represent 21 of the 27 books found in the NT. While those living in that day may have recalled other things, we will always have the "faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." These that were "spoken before" must be remembered.

mimnēskō (allied with *mēnō*, *manthanō* ... to remind: ... to be recalled or to return to one's mind, **to remind oneself of, to remember; ... with a passive significance ... to be recalled to mind, to be remembered, had in remembrance:** (Thayer 3403)

18 how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time

Paul, Peter and John all address these things in one way or another.

Now I urge you, brethren, **note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.** 18 For those who are **such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.** Rom. 16:17-19

For I know this, that **after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.** 30 Also **from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.** Acts 20:29-31

Now **the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.** 1Tim. 4:1-3

For **the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.** 8 And **then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.** 2Th. 2:7-9

For the time will come **when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.** 2Tim. 4:3-5

But **there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies,** 2Pet. 2:1

Beloved, **do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.** 1Jn. 4:1-2

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. 5 **They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. 6 We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.** 1Jn. 4:4-6

For **many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.** 8 **Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.** 2Jn. 7-8

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. 10 **If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him;** 2Jn. 9-11

All of these things and more will be seen in "the last time." This term is just another way of saying "the last days." This is the time that began with Peter's sermon in Acts 2 and will end at the Jesus return and the end of this age.

But this is what was **spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams.** Acts 2:17

But know this, that **in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!** 2 Tim 3:1-6

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; Heb 1:1-3

knowing this first: that **scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,** 2Pet. 3:3-4

While many like to apply this to the last days before the return of Jesus, since He is coming as a thief in the night without any warning, there would be no way for us to know when such last days would come. Since through Joel, the Holy Spirit revealed that what would come in the last days was

fulfilled in the first gospel sermon, that is the beginning of the last days. In Hebrews we are reminded that in these last days Jesus has become God's spokesman. That also started at Peter's first gospel sermon.

who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.

They will mock and scoff at anything they do not agree with or doesn't fit their lifestyle. This is a strong term with the root meaning of sporting and jesting like a child, but never used in a good sense in the NT. It was used mostly of the mockery that was done of Jesus during His trials and crucifixion. We see it today with those who reject the writings of Paul or the inspiration of the entire NT.

empaiktes masc. noun from *empaizō* (1702), **to deride, mock. A mocker, scoffer**, spoken of impostors, false prophets (2 Peter 3:3; Jude 18). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1703)

empaizō ... a compound of *paizo*, "**to play like a child**" (*pais*), "**to sport, jest**," prefixed by *en*, "in" or "at," is used only in the Synoptists, and, in every instance, **of the "mockery" of Christ**, except in Matt 2:16 (there in the sense of deluding, or deceiving, of Herod by the wise men) and in Luke 14:29, of ridicule cast upon the one who after laying a foundation of a tower is unable to finish it. (Vine's Expository Dictionary, NT:1702)

empaiktes "**a mocker**" (akin to *empaizō*), is used in 2 Peter 3:3, RV, "mockers". (KJV, "scoffers"); Jude 18, RV and KJV, "mockers." In the Sept., Isa 3:4. (Vine's Expository Dictionary, NT:1702)

While the term lusts (*epithumos* — placing the strong desires of the *thumos* upon *epi* something) was already spoken of above, this time it is tied to the same ungodliness that Enoch so strongly prophesied against. When looking at the noun (here) with the the verb and the adjective, we see a composite of those who after learning that God condemns it, want it all the more. When something is forbidden, it takes on a character of enticement and excitement. An excitement that is tempered and removed by the godly, but is used with abandon by the ungodly. These are people who actively approve of anything that God condemns and condemn things that God approves.

asebeía, feminine noun from *asebēs* (765), impious, ungodly, wicked. Impiety toward God, ungodliness, lack of reverence (Rom 1:18); wickedness in general, neglect or violation of duty toward God, our neighbor or ourselves, joined with and springing from impiety toward God (Rom 11:26; 2 Tim 2:16; Titus 2:12; Jude 15,18)... (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:763)

asebéō from *asebēs* (765), impious, ungodly, wicked. To act impiously, to sin against anything which should be considered sacred. Without an obj., to trespass, commit an offense. In the Scriptures it occurs in a very strong reference to sinfulness in 2 Peter 2:6 and Jude 15. (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT 764)

"*asebēs*, adjective, from the privative *a* (1), without, and *séptomai* (4576), to worship, venerate. **Basically it means godless, without fear and reverence of God. It does not mean irreligious, but one who actively practices the opposite of what the fear of God demands. ... asebēs is one characterized by immoral and impious behavior.** Often opposite of *dikaíos* (1342), just (Rom 4:5; 5:6). *asebēs* also occurs in 2 Peter 2:5; 3:7; Jude 4, 15. (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:765)

who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them. Rom. 1:32

19 These are sensual persons,

Sensual comes from the Greek word that speaks of the force of life that man shares with animals. For the man, since he also has the spirit the soul can also refer to the eternal part of our being. When it is used as it here, it speaks of those individuals who prefer to share their life force to that of animals.

psuchikós, adj. from *psuchē* (5590), **soul, the part of the immaterial life held in common with the animals, as contrasted with spirit (*pneúma*)** [4151]), only in man, enabling him to communicate with God. **Natural, pertaining to the natural as distinguished from the spiritual or glorified nature of man.** 1 Cor 15:44 refers to a body *psuchikón*, **a body governed by the soul or natural and fallen instinct of man,...** (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:5591)

"*psuchikos*... of or belonging to the *psuche*; a. **having the nature and characteristics of the psuche** i. e. of the **principle of animal life, which men have in common with the brutes**... b. **governed by the psuche** i.e. the **sensuous nature with its subjection to appetite and passion**... a wisdom in harmony with the corrupt desires and affections and springing from them... Jas 3:15..." (Thayer, 677-678; 5591)

who cause divisions,

These are individual who create false horizons around people this making separations

apodiorizō... "to mark off" (*apo*, "from," *dia*, "asunder," *horizo*, "to limit"), hence denotes metaphorically to make "separations," Jude 19, ..." (from Vine's Expository Dictionary, NT:592)

Paul spoke of these and also of what would solve this problem.

*Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you **all speak the same thing**, and that there **be no divisions among you**, but that you **be perfectly joined together in the same mind** and in the **same judgment**. 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that **there are contentions among you**. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "**I am of Paul**," or "**I am of Apollos**," or "**I am of Cephas**," or "**I am of Christ**." 13 **Is Christ divided?** Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 1Cor. 1:10-13*

not having the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, sent to guide and lead God's people into all truth, is essential to being a Christian. If we do not have the Spirit, we do not belong to Christ.

*But **you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit**, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now **if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His**. 10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. Rom. 8:9-11*