

Jude 1:1

THE ARGUMENT

Some question there hath been concerning the penman of this Epistle, and some have thought that Jude the apostle was not the man, whoever were;

1. Because he doth not give himself the title of apostle: but that is objected against James too, and hath been already answered.
2. Because the writer of this Epistle speaks of himself as coming after the apostles, Jude 1:17. But what necessity is there for his coming behind them in office and authority, because he doth in time?
3. Because he mentions the contention about the body of Moses, and the prophecy of Enoch, which are no where to be found in Scripture. But when there were divers traditions among the Jews, (whereof this about Moses's body seems to be one), why might not the Holy Ghost assert some that were true (though before doubtful) by this apostle, and make them certain, as well as he doth by Paul the names of *Jannes and Jambres*, 2Ti 3:8, which were known only by tradition; and Moses's quaking and fearing at Mount Sinai, Heb 12:21, whereof no mention had been made in the Scripture? As for the prophecy of Enoch, it seems to have been a tradition too, (for he mentions no writing), and then the same may be said as to the other. Yet if it were a book, and an apocryphal one too, his citing of it doth not make it to be canonical; for Jude might as well cite a passage out of an apocryphal writer, as Paul doth several out of heathen authors, Ac 17:28 1Co 15:33 Tit 1:12. And:
4. Because much of this Epistle seems to be transcribed out of 2Pe 2:1-22, and therefore not to be dictated by the Spirit. But to this it may be said, that though many passages in this Epistle agree with what Peter speaks, yet there is so much difference in the whole, that it is plain they are not transcribed thence. And yet why might not the Spirit dictate the same truths to several penmen, either to be published to several persons, or the same persons at different times? Most of Obadiah's prophecy is to be found in Jeremiah's; Ps 60:1-12 is in a great part the same with Ps 108:1-13, and Ps 14:1-7 the same with Ps 53:1-6; and Paul by the same Spirit wrote many of the same things to the Ephesians, and to the

Colossians. And what is alleged of the ancients questioning the authority of this Epistle, it is not so considerable, as it might be alleged, even out of them, for the confirmation of it.

Sure we may say, the spirit of an apostle breathes in this as well as in others; the same majesty, purity, and efficacy appear in it, and whatever may evidence its Divine authority. It is written to the Christian Jews. The matter of it agrees very much with 2Pe 2:1-22, and the scope is mostly the same, viz. to arm them against those who, by their wicked errors and wicked manners, secretly and slyly brought in, might infect them, and seduce them into the same wickedness with themselves, whereby they might be exposed to the same judgment, which he pronounceth were like to come upon such.

Chapter Summary

Jude 1:1-3 After a general address, Jude exhorteth Christians to constancy in the received faith.

Jude 1:4-19 He foretelleth the punishment of certain false teachers crept into the church, and describeth their evil doctrine and manners.

Jude 1:20,21 He exhorteth true Christians to persevere in the right faith, and in the love of God,

Jude 1:22-23 and to seek the reformation of others.

Jude 1:24,25 He concludeth with ascribing glory to God.

Ver. 1. Jude; called also *Lebbaeus*, and *Thaddaeus*, Mt 10:3.

The servant of Jesus Christ; not only in the general notion, as a believer, but in a more special, as an apostle. Priests and prophets in the Old Testament are peculiarly called God's servants, Ps 134:1-3 Am 3:7; and so are ministers in the New, 2Ti 2:24.

And brother of James; that James who was the son of Alphaeus, Mt 10:3. He mentions his brother to distinguish himself from Judas Iscariot; and his brother rather than his father, because James was most famous in the church, Ac 15:1-41 Ga 2:9 1Co 9:5; as likewise to show his consent with his brother in his doctrine, and to make his Epistle the more acceptable.

To them that are sanctified by God the Father, viz. as the prime efficient cause of sanctification, which he works in believers by the Son, through the Spirit.

*And preserved in Jesus Christ: their salvation, and perseverance, and deliverance from dangers, not being in their own power; he intimates, that Christ was appointed to be their King, and Head, and Keeper, the *Author and Finisher of their faith*, Heb 12:2, and furnished with power for their protection and security, and that by him they were kept unto the salvation purchased for them, viz. by his powerful operation and gracious influence maintaining their faith and union with himself.*

*And called, with an effectual calling, the beginning of their sanctification, before mentioned. The copulative, *and*, is not in the Greek; and the words may be read, sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, as being called; and so *called* may be understood as going before the other two; and then the sense is, to the called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ; or, to them who, being called, are sanctified, &c.*

Jude 1:2

Ver. 2. *Mercy unto you;* which is the fountain of reconciliation, and all the grace vouchsafed you: see 1Ti 1:2 2Ti 1:2 Tit 1:4.

Love; either he means God's love to them, or their love to God and each other.

Be multiplied; mercy in the effects of it, peace in the sense of it, and either the love of God in the manifestation of it, or their love to God and their neighbours in the degrees and exercise of it.

Jude 1:3

Ver. 3. *When I gave all diligence to write unto you:* the apostle here declares the first cause of his writing to them, viz. his own inclination and readiness, according to the duty of his place, (as an apostle), so to do: q. d. Being of myself willing, and earnestly desirous to promote your welfare,

when absent from you, by writing unto you.

Of the common salvation; i.e. those things which concern the salvation of us all in common, or that salvation which is common to us all; there being but one salvation for all believers, and one way to it.

It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you; the second reason of his writing, viz. the necessity of it, in respect of the danger they were in, as follows, Jude 1:4.

That ye should earnestly contend; by constancy in the faith, zeal for the truth, holiness of life, mutual exhortation, prayer, suffering for the gospel, &c.; against those that would pervert the gospel.

For the faith; the doctrine of the gospel; *faith* is taken for the object of faith.

Which was once; either, once for all, because it was delivered by all the apostles as the only unchangeable rule of governing their lives, and obtaining salvation, to which nothing is to be added, and from which nothing is to be taken away; or it implies, that it was therefore delivered to them that they might never forsake it, and that if they do, they miss of their salvation, as being never like to have another way made known to them.

Delivered unto the saints; viz. by God, not invented by men.

Jude 1:4

Ver. 4. *Who were before of old ordained;* Greek, forewritten, i.e. of whom it was formerly written, or foretold, viz. by Christ and his apostles; or rather, it is to be understood according to our translation, *before ordained*, viz. in the eternal counsel of God; God's decree being compared to a book, in which things to be done are written down. This the apostle adds to prevent any offence that might be taken at the wickedness of these seducers; and therefore lets these saints know, that though such men crept in unawares to them, yet it was not without the providence of God so ordering it.

To this condemnation; or, judgment; and it may be understood, either of a

reprobate sense, to which they who thus perverted the gospel were given up by God, according to his preordination; or of that damnation he decreed should follow upon their wickedness, in making shipwreck of the faith themselves, and subverting others. This seems best to agree with 2Pe 2:3.

Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness; abusing the doctrine of the grace of God, and benefits of Christ revealed in the gospel, especially the doctrine of Christian liberty, to the encouraging themselves and others in the vilest lusts, 2Pe 2:1.

And denying the only Lord God: either this may be understood of the Father distinctly from Christ, expressed in the following clause, and *only* is put in not to exclude either of the other Persons of the Trinity from being God, but to exclude idols and false gods: or it may be understood of Christ, as well as the words following; not only because there is but one article in the Greek relating to the whole sentence, but because it seems best to agree with the parallel place, 2Pe 2:1, which is most generally understood of Christ; and because the heresies of those times, which Jude cautions these saints against, struck especially at the Godhead of Christ, which he therefore the more expressly asserts.

Jude 1:5

Ver. 5. *Though ye once:* this may be joined either with the verb following, *knew*, according to our translation, and the sense is, though ye knew this certainly, as the word *once* is taken, Ps 89:35, or perfectly and thoroughly, or once for all; or rather, with what goes before, and the words may be read, I will yet once (*viz.* while I am in this tabernacle) put you in remembrance of this, though you know it; as 2Pe 1:12.

Having saved the people; the people of Israel.

Afterward destroyed them; *viz.* in the wilderness, by plague, fiery serpents, &c.

That believed not; he sets forth the Israelites' unbelief, as the original of all their disobedience and rebellions, and the great cause of their destruction. See Heb 3:17-19 4:2.

Jude 1:6

Ver. 6. *Kept not their first estate;* in which they were created, their original excellency, truth, holiness, purity, Joh 8:44, as well as dignity.

But left their own habitation; viz. a heavenly one, from whence, though they were righteously thrust out by God, 2Pe 2:4, yet they may be truly said to have left it themselves, in that they voluntarily rebelled against the law of their creation, and committed that sin which they knew would certainly be punished with such a dejection.

He hath reserved in everlasting chains; into which, Peter says, they were delivered.

Jude 1:7

Ver. 7. *The cities about them;* Admah and Zeboim, Jer 49:18 Ho 11:8.

In like manner, as Sodom, and Gomorrah did, likeness of sin inferring likeness of punishment.

Strange flesh; margin, other flesh; he means male flesh, which is other than what God appointed for that use they made of it; or, as we render it, *strange flesh*, i.e. that which is strange, improper, and unfit for such an end. It is the description of the unnatural filthiness of the Sodomites, Ge 19:5; see Ro 1:26,27.

Are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire: eternal fire may be joined either:

1. With *example*, and the words thus placed, are set forth for an example of eternal fire, suffering vengeance; and the meaning is, that the vengeance they suffered in being destroyed by fire, is an example, or type, of eternal fire, that of hell: or
2. With *vengeance*, according to our reading; and then the sense is, they

*are set forth for an example, (viz. to those that after should live ungodly, 1Pe 2:6), suffering the vengeance of eternal fire; the vengeance they suffer is an example to deter others from the like wickedness. This fire is called *eternal*, either because of the still continuing effects of it, or rather, because it was a type or representation of the fire of hell, and to those miserable Sodomites the very beginning of it, they being brought by these temporal flames into everlasting burnings.*

Jude 1:8

Ver. 8. *Likewise also;* notwithstanding so many judgments of God upon others, which should have kept them from the like sins.

These filthy dreamers: either this may be taken properly, and joined to the next clause, *defile the flesh;* and then it may note the impurity of these wretches, who dreamed of what they loved, and acted over that filthiness in their sleep, to which they were so much addicted when awake: or metaphorically, and so they are called *dreamers*, as having the sense of their minds overcome and laid asleep by their sensual pleasures; or being like men in a dream, deluded by their absurd, though pleasing imaginations.

Defile the flesh: this notes all those lascivious practices, to which, like the Sodomites, they had given themselves over; and whereby they defiled themselves and others: *the lust of uncleanness*, as it is in Peter.

Despise dominion; in their minds, judgments, desires, they reject, make void, and abrogate civil government, as a thing not fit to be.

Dominion; not only governors, but government itself.

And speak evil of dignities; either spiritual governors, or rather, civil, called *dignities*, because of the honourable titles given them, and gifts bestowed on them: see 2Pe 2:10.

Jude 1:9

Ver. 9. Michael the archangel: either this is understood of Christ the Prince of angels, who is often in Scripture called an Angel, or of a created angel; and that either:

1. One of the archangels: Da 10:13, *Michael* is called *one of the chief princes*, which though the word archangel be not found in the plural number in Scripture, may well imply a plurality of them; for what is one of the chief princes among the angels, but an archangel? Or:
2. A principal angel, or one that is chief among others.

When contending with the devil; it may be meant either of Christ contending with the devil, as Mt 4:1-25, in his temptation, and Zec 3:1,2, and Re 12:7; or rather, of Michael, a created angel.

He disputed about the body of Moses:

1. If *Michael the archangel* be meant of Christ, then *the body of Moses* may be taken figuratively, for that body whereof the Mosaical ceremonies were shadows, Col 2:17, i.e. the truth and accomplishment of the law given by Moses; that accomplishment was to be in Christ, who is represented by Joshua, Zec 3:1-10: him Satan resists in the execution of his office, and by him strikes at Christ, whose type he was, and whom he afterward opposeth in the execution of his office, when he was come in the flesh. Or:
2. If we take *Michael* for a created angel, which agrees best with the parallel place in Peter, then the body of Moses must be taken properly, (as most take it), and the dispute seems to be: Whether Moses's body should be so buried as to be concealed from the Israelites? De 34:6, it is said God *buried him*, (which might be by the ministry of Michael the archangel), and that *no man knoweth of his sepulchre*. The devil opposeth the angel, desiring to have the place of his burial known, that in after-times it might be a snare to that people, and a means to bring them to idolatry. And this seems very probable, if we consider what work the devil hath made in the world with the bodies of saints and martyrs, and how much idolatry he hath brought in thereby. This

passage Jude, most probably, had (as was observed in the argument) from some known tradition among the Jews, the truth of which we are now sure of, because certified here concerning it.

Durst not bring against him; or, could not endure, (as the Greek word is often taken among profane writers), or find in his heart, not from fear of punishment, but by reason of the holiness of his own nature, and to give an example to us. And this sense agrees to the scope of the place, whether we understand it of Christ, or of a created angel, Heb 12:3 1Pe 2:23.

A railing accusation: see 2Pe 2:11.

But said, The Lord rebuke thee; i.e. put thee to silence, restrain thy insolence, hinder thy design, &c.: hereby the angel refers the cause to God.

Jude 1:10

Ver. 10. *But these speak evil of those things which they know not;* the same as 2Pe 2:12; unless this be more generally to be understood of all those spiritual things whereof they were ignorant.

But what they know naturally; without reason or judgment.

In those things they corrupt themselves; debauch and degrade their natures by extreme sensualities, whereby they bring destruction upon themselves: see 2Pe 2:12.

Jude 1:11

Ver. 11. *Woe unto them!* This is either a lamenting the misery that was to come upon them, or a foretelling it come, not a wishing that it might: see Mt 11:21 1Co 9:16.

For they have gone in the way of Cain; followed his manners, and fallen under his punishment. Their likeness to Cain, both as to their actions and the event of them, seems to be implied in this and the following clause, as well as it is plainly in the last. Cain hated his brother, and slew him; they

hate their brethren, and by their pernicious doctrines and deceits, murder their souls, and probably stir up persecution against their persons.

And ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward; covetousness, to which being excessively addicted, or, as the Greek implies, poured out, they did for the sake of filthy lucre corrupt the doctrine of Christ: see 2Pe 2:15.

And perished in the gainsaying of Core: Korah, (whom he here names alone, as being the ringleader of the rebellion, in which others joined with him, Nu 16:1), affecting the priesthood, rose up seditiously against Moses and Aaron, and perished in the attempt. These imitate him in their rebellion against Christ himself, the state and order of whose church they seditiously disturb, as well as that of the civil state, in despising dominion, and speaking evil of dignities, and that to their own destruction.

Jude 1:12

Ver. 12. *These are spots:* see 2Pe 2:13.

In your feasts of charity; feasts used among the primitive Christians, to show their unity among themselves, and promote and maintain mutual charity, and for relief of the poor among them.

Feeding themselves without fear; unreasonably cramming themselves, without respect to God or the church.

Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; empty, making a show of what they have not, Pr 25:14; and inconstant: see 2Pe 2:17.

Trees whose fruit withereth; he compares them to trees, which having leaves and blossoms, make a show of fruit, but cast it, or never bring it to maturity, or it rots instead of ripening; so these here make a show of truth and holiness, but all comes to nothing.

Without fruit; without any good fruit, (which only deserves to be called fruit), brought forth by them, either in themselves or followers, who never get any real benefit by them.

Twice dead; wholly dead; dead over and over; dead by nature, and dead by that hardness of heart they have contracted, or that reprobate sense to which God hath given them up.

Plucked up by the roots; and so never like to bear fruit, and fit only for the fire; it notes the incurableness of their apostacy, and their nearness to destruction.

Jude 1:13

Ver. 13. *Raging waves of the sea;* not only inconstant as water, but unquiet, turbulent, restless, that cannot cease from sin.

Foaming out their own shame; that wickedness whereof they should be ashamed; *like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt,* Isa 57:20.

Wandering stars; either planets properly called, or rather meteors called running stars, inconstant in their motion, uncertain in their shining, making a little show, but presently vanishing; such was the doctrine of these, which had a show of light, but a deceitful and inconstant one.

To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever; the thickest darkness, viz. that of hell; they would be counted lights, but are themselves cast into utter darkness, 2Pe 2:17. As blackness of darkness shows the horror of their punishment, so its being reserved for them shows the certainty of it.

Jude 1:14

Ver. 14. *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam;* either to distinguish him from Enoch the son of Cain, or to show the antiquity of the prophecy.

Prophesied; he doth not say wrote, and therefore from hence it cannot be proved that there was any such book as Enoch's prophecies, received by the Jews as canonical Scripture; but rather some prophecy of his delivered to them by tradition, to which here the apostle refers, as a thing known among them; and so

argues against these heretics from their own concession, as Jude 1:9. So here; q. d. These men own the prophecy of Enoch, that the Lord comes to judgment, &c., and they themselves are in the number of those ungodly ones, and they to whom the prophecy is to be applied.

Of these; not that he did directly and expressly prophesy of them in particular; but that his prophecy of the destruction of the world for the same kind of crimes whereof they were guilty, did reach them, and so he foretold what should befall them as well as others.

With ten thousand; innumerable multitudes; a definite for an indefinite.

Of his saints; holy angels, Mt 16:27 Da 7:10 Zec 14:5 2Th 1:7 Re 5:11. Believers likewise may be here included, as attendants upon Christ when he comes to judgment.

Jude 1:15

Ver. 15. *To execute judgment upon all;* either upon all the wicked in general, who afterwards may seem to be distinguished into different sorts, or else the Greek preposition $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha$ is put for $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota$, and the word *all* is to be understood of all universally, good and bad; and the words may be read, to execute judgment over all, i.e. to judge all.

And to convince all that are ungodly among them: if we take the words in the latter sense mentioned, then he distinguisheth those that are to be judged into good and bad, and the Lord comes to execute judgment over all, having convinced the wicked among them; but if in the former, the *ungodly* here may be taken for those that are more notoriously so, those that have obstinately rejected the gospel, or wickedly perverted it, or persecuted the saints, &c.

Which they have ungodly committed; i.e. with an ungodly mind, willingly, delightfully, perseveringly.

Their hard speeches; i.e. blasphemous, irreverent, against God, his truth and ways.

Which ungodly sinners have spoken against him; he executes judgment,

though upon all the wicked, yet especially upon these *ungodly sinners*, i.e. that are such both in their words and deeds *against him*, in his truths, ways, ordinances, people, &c., and therefore are the worst of sinners.

Jude 1:16

Ver. 16. *Murmurers, complainers*; either these two words signify the same thing; or *murmurers* may be meant with relation to God's decrees, laws, providences, and his ordinations in the church or state, 1Co 10:10; and *complainers*, with respect to their own condition, with which they were discontented.

Walking after their own lusts; minding neither the law of God nor man, but making their lusts their law, and being wholly subject to them, led by them, 2Pe 2:10.

And their mouth speaketh great swelling words: though they were mere slaves to their own lusts, yet they would speak big, and use high and exotic strains in their language, that they might be applauded and admired: see 2Pe 2:18.

Having men's persons in admiration because of advantage; flattering and magnifying the greater and richer sort of men, not considering what they were, so they could gain them to their party, or get gain by them.

Jude 1:17

Ver. 17. Especially Paul and Peter: see Ac 20:29 and 2Pe 3:2, besides the places in the margin. From this passage it appears that this Epistle was written late, and, likely, after the other apostles, except John, were dead.

Jude 1:18

Ver. 18. *Told you*; whether in their preaching or writing.

Ungodly lusts; Greek, lusts of ungodliness; a Hebraism; the vilest lusts.

Jude 1:19

Ver. 19. *These be they who separate themselves;* viz. from the true doctrine and church of Christ, as being in love with their carnal liberties, and loth to come under the yoke of Christ's discipline.

Sensual; or carnal, or animal, 1Co 2:14; such as are mere men, and have no higher principle in them than human nature, which, left to itself, and being destitute of the sanctifying Spirit, is generally overpowered by sense, and inclines to fleshly lusts.

Having not the Spirit; the Spirit of God, by which they should be led, and to which they so much pretend; having neither the light, nor grace, nor comfort of the Spirit.

Jude 1:20

Ver. 20. *Building up yourselves;* he compares them to a house, which is to be built up, whereof faith is the foundation: the same metaphor is used, 1Co 4:9 Eph 2:20-22 1Pe 2:5.

Most holy; so he calls faith, as being the means of purifying their hearts, and working holiness in them; and in opposition to the false faith of the heretics he warns them against, which did consist with so much impurity.

Faith; this may be understood either:

1. Of the grace of faith; and then that is compared to the foundation, as being the first and principal grace in a Christian, and of greatest necessity and use; and then they are here bid to build themselves up in other graces which follow upon faith, as 2Pe 1:5. Or:
2. Of the doctrine of faith, that on which their faith itself is founded; and then the meaning is, that they should not rest satisfied in what measure of faith they had already attained, but still be improving it, and making further progress in it, not only hold fast the truth of the gospel, the right

foundation on which they had begun to be built, but get themselves, by the due study and meditation of the word, more and more confirmed in the belief of it.

Praying in the Holy Ghost; i.e. by the assistance of the Spirit, who teacheth what to pray for, and how; from whom faith, fervency, and all praying graces do proceed. Ro 8:26,27: *The Spirit maketh intercession (prays) in us,* to note the excitations of his grace; here we are said to *pray in the Holy Ghost,* to note the concurrence of our faculties.

Jude 1:21

Ver. 21. *Keep yourselves in the love of God;* i.e. in love to God, or that love whereby ye love God; this implies love to each other, as the cause doth the effect.

Looking for; viz. by hope: and so in these two verses we have the three cardinal graces, faith, hope, and charity.

The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life; the merciful or gracious sentence of Christ the Judge, whereby he puts believers in possession of eternal life, Mt 25:34. This reward of eternal life is promised, but being promised freely, and out of mercy, it is called *mercy*, 2Ti 1:18, the effect being put for the cause.

Jude 1:22

Ver. 22. *And of some have compassion;* use them gently, mildly reproving and admonishing them, that thereby ye may gain them.

Making a difference: he makes two sorts of offenders, or misled brethren, who might be restored; and that they might, they should be dealt with in different ways, and suitably to their respective conditions and circumstances; the former, who might be discouraged with roughness, should be handled with more tenderness and compassion.

Jude 1:23

Ver. 23. *And others;* those that are further gone, not so easily reducible, and in great danger.

Save; i.e. labour to save them, as instruments under God.

With fear; by more severe courses, sharper reprehensions, setting before them God's judgments against obstinate sinners, 1Co 5:5.

Pulling them out of the fire: it is a proverbial speech, Zec 3:2: the sense is, that as they that are in the fire, and like to be destroyed by it, must not be gently exhorted to come out of it of themselves, but speedily and forcibly pulled out, in consideration of their eminent danger; so they that are more stubborn sinners, being in apparent danger of being destroyed by the fire of their lusts, and being as it were in the mouth of hell, must be more harshly and severely dealt with, by setting the Lord's terrors before them, 2Co 5:11, and inflicting church censures on them.

Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh: it is an allusion to that ceremonial law, Lev 15:4,17, where he that touched a defiled garment was himself defiled. The sense is, either:

1. That where there is danger of infection from heretics and obstinate sinners, all converse with them, and any thing whereby the contagion of their doctrine or manners may reach us, is to be avoided: or:
2. That when we reprehend others, we should do it with suitable affections, and though we would save themselves, we should hate their vices, and any thing that promotes them or savours of them.

Jude 1:24

Ver. 24. *Able to keep you from falling;* from stumbling in your spiritual course, and so able to make you persevere to the end.

Before the presence of his glory; or, his glorious presence, i.e. before himself, Eph 5:27. Having exhorted these saints to perseverance in the

faith, he now tells them in whose strength they must stand, and to whom they are to give the glory of it.

Jude 1:25

Ver. 25. *To the only wise;* only wise infinitely, and of himself.

God our Saviour; either God, who is sometimes called by this title, 1Ti 2:3 Tit 1:3 3:4; or rather Christ.

Be glory: see 1Pe 4:11 5:11.

And majesty; or, magnificence, Heb 1:3 8:1: it seems to signify the height and excellency of God's glory.

Dominion and power; authority, and right to govern, which here is ascribed to God, as well as strength or sufficiency for it.