

3H Bible Learning Student Notebook
Journeying through Jude: A Faith Worth Fighting For
Session One

Let's Get Acquainted (Verses 1, 2)
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I. Let's Get Started!

**If you were to pick your "all time" favorite book what would it be? And in one or two sentences what message was it sending you that got your attention?

Well Jude is trying to get your attention.

II. Discovery Time

A. What is Jude trying to tell us?

You are about to embark on the study of one of the most neglected books of Scripture yet one of the most timely for the day and age in which we are living. Jude's "straight talk" is absent of any spin and comes quickly to the point. Yes his language, at times, is harsh and certainly not "politically correct," but in the end it is a message of hope. Jude gets down in the trenches where Christians are battling to defend the purity of the faith and struggling to live it in their everyday lives. He takes on false teachers which would desire to "update" or pervert the gospel message. He gives vivid illustrations of where their rebellion to the apostles' (Bible's) teaching leads them and all who become their disciples. Jude presents step by step instructions on how to avoid falling prey to these teacher's deadly teachings. Then He enlists us in the fight to defend the faith and in the rescue operation of lovingly ministering to those who have been influenced or are even fully involved in the false teacher's ways and teachings. He ends by reminding us that we will never be alone. Indeed, all along the journey we will be under the umbrella of God's protection and preservation. We are in a battle we will win!

B. Who's this guy Jude? (Verse 1a)

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James,
What **two things** do we learn about him from this verse?

1. He was a brother of James who was the brother of our Lord.

But there is something puzzling. **Why doesn't Jude tell us he is Jesus' brother?** Most of us would be shouting that all over town. Well, perhaps Jude is just plain humble or **he wants to stress that he has a spiritual relationship with Jesus not just a biological physical relationship.** You can be a "blood brother" and yet not a "spiritual brother." The fact that my dad was a great Christian doesn't necessarily make me one!

2. He wants us to see him as "a _____ of Jesus Christ." There has been a big change in his life. He has come all the way from believing Jesus was out of his mind to believing that he is both God and Messiah (John 7:5; Mark 3:21, 31). **He has come into the heavenly family in the same way we do - by surrendering to Christ as his Savior and new boss!**

C. To whom is Jude writing? (Verse 1b)

"To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ:"

Who are the readers? What is different about this from other letters in the New Testament?

****Did you notice the three descriptions of the readers in verse one?**

All of us have a particular style of writing that we use when we write letters or send e-mails, and Jude isn't any different. ****What might be some identifying features of your writing that make it unique from others?**

Jude has a habit of using "triplets, triads, or groupings of three." Right away, in the first verse, he uses a "grouping of three" to describe Christians - people in the family of God. He describes his "church family" as the "**called,**" "**loved by God the Father**" and "**kept by Jesus Christ.**"

****Have you ever received a text message or a phone call that grabbed your attention or stopped you dead in your tracks? Have you ever received a summons to appear in court? Perhaps you can share this experience with the group.**

Well Jude is describing his church family as those who have received a "divine summons - a life changing heavenly phone call or text message." They are the "**called.**" Before the world began (Ephesians 1:4) **God had a dream and you and the church are the fulfillment of it. God couldn't wait for the day when he gave you a special invitation to become a part of his family.** *Romans 8:30 tells you that this calling has future ramifications (notice the past perfect tenses in this verse). Those whom God "called" he also "justified" and in his mind have been "glorified." God sees you as a completed work (Philippians 1:6). In his mind, it is as if you have already stepped on heaven's shore.

Jude's second description is that the members of his church family are those "**who are loved by God the father.**" You constantly live in the sphere of God's love. **You are not only strengthened by God's love within you, but are also protected by a love that surrounds you on every side, at every turn and in every situation.** You can never be separated from that love (see Romans 8:31-39)!

This is not a "sunny weather" love that lasts as long as you don't stumble or fail, it is a love that continues and remains with us forever.

But wait, Jude isn't finished yet! He is building his description to a fitting climax. All along our journey from the day when God summoned us to salvation till the moment when we see Christ face to face, we are not only loved by God the Father, we are "**kept by Jesus Christ.**" We have the **double protection of both the Father and the Son.** This description of Jude's church family is especially important since they are under the influence and teaching of certain itinerant false teachers who are at that very moment in their midst (we will discuss this later).

****Do we in our modern day churches face any false teaching from which we need God's protection? Can you give me an example?**

Well here are a few. Today we see contemporary teachers peddling their false doctrines of "**cheap grace**" (an emphasis on grace that excludes or marginalizes responsibility and obedience on the believer's part - see James 1:19-27; 3:14-26), **religious pluralism** (There are many ways through many different faiths to the one God) and **legalism** (I can earn my salvation through keeping a list of rules or I am a better Christian than you since I obey the strict letter of the law). As we saturate our lives with the study of God's Word and regular conversations with God (prayer), **Christ will protect us from falling prey to these teachers.**

Group Work

Jude is using a prayerful greeting which was common in ancient letters. And yes, he again uses a triplet to pronounce a threefold blessing. Further, he wants them to receive these three blessings in multiple doses to the point where they are saturated or filled to capacity by them. He wants them to get a good soaking! There is an idea here of an increasing (or growing) abundance. **Answer and discuss the following questions** (Write down some thoughts that really got your attention.):

a. What are the three blessings?

b. What is meant by each of them?

c. **What are three examples of how we need to receive (or do receive) a growing portion of each in our everyday lives?** (Your group will be looking for a total of up to nine examples -three specific examples of mercy, three of peace and three of love. They should illustrate how we need to experience God's mercy, peace and love in our everyday lives. You may also mention times when we need mercy, or to experience peace and love from others.)

If you get stuck, this might be helpful from our 3H Bible Learning Commentary:

A Prayer for Divine Blessing (2)

This prayerful greeting was common in ancient letters. Jude continues once again in with a second triplet in his threefold blessing. Jude asks that "**Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.**" Edwin Blum summarizes it well: "Mercy is his (God's) compassion; peace is his (God's) gift of quiet confidence in the work of Jesus; and love is his (God's) generosity in granting us his favors and meeting our needs."¹²

God's mercy is the compassion that drives him to pity us in our need and to act to meet that need. It was God's pitying love that caused him to act and to give his Son for our salvation in order that he might be able to withhold from us deserved punishment. We see his mercy not only in his bringing us into an intimate relationship with Jesus, but also in his day by day forgiveness when we come to him with a grieving and repentant heart. And perhaps we will see the greatest expression of his mercy when we stand before him in judgment and gain entrance into heaven because of the saving work of God's Son. Jude is praying that God will extend great mercy to his readers as they face the daily danger of slipping away from the Gospel and following after error.

God's peace is a state of spiritual health or well-being. We have an inner peace and confidence that comes from our deliverance from being God's enemy to becoming God's friend (Romans 5:1, 2, 10). Thus the "peace of God" comes from our

"peace with God (Philippians 4:4-8; Romans 5:1). As we trust in Christ and daily study his Word, God will give us the strength to remain faithful to him even when those all around us (and yes at times some in our churches) are unfaithful and disobedient to the truth. He will carry you through!

The third blessing in the triad is "love." This love has a prominent place in Jude's conversation (1:1, 2, 21). Interestingly, as a Jewish Christian, Jude includes "love" in his blessing in contrast to the fact that we do not find it in any other Jewish greeting. This can possibly be attributed to the fact that it was a prominent theme and part of the conversation of the early church. It is the central focus of Jude's newfound faith. One has only to skim the pages of the New Testament to see this at once. As Wayne Grudem writes, "God's love means that God eternally gives of himself to others."¹³ God's love certainly involves emotion but it goes far beyond that in actions. He constantly seeks the welfare of others. This love brings a secure feeling and a solid-state of mind as we look forward to tomorrow and ultimately to the future. God has only begun to shower his love upon us. It will erupt in a torrential downpour at Christ's coming that will never reach its apex throughout all eternity. Our life journey involves an increasing understanding of what it means when we say, "Jesus loves me!" And whether it is tough love or tender love it is still love nevertheless! Every day is another opportunity to be "surprised by love!"

III. Lesson Wrap-Up

*At our next session we will be looking at verses three and four and asking, "So what's the problem?" We will discover what the big deal was for them and how it is also a big deal for us today.

*Your **assignment for the next lesson** is to read the book of Jude at least twice, first from the *New International Version* and second from a paraphrase like, *The Message*. You may have questions as you read, so write them down or e-mail them to your teacher or leader. We will answer them as we go through the course either individually or to the whole group. Use the space here for any thoughts that the Holy Spirit impresses on your mind as you read.

Session Two

So What's the Problem? (Verses 3, 4)

I. Let's Get Started!

****** Have you ever been in a situation where you intended to do one thing and then something very urgent came up that completely altered your plan (like a vacation, a weekend activity, attending a sports event, choosing a school, taking a new job, going out on a special date, etc.)? What was it that turned your plan upside down and how did you feel and act?

II. Discovery Time

****** Well Jude is undergoing a difficult situation like that!

A. What was the occasion for writing?

"Dear friends, **although I was very eager to write you about the _____ we share, I felt I had to write and urge you** to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints (Verse 3)."

Dick Lucas and Christopher Green comment (3H Bible Commentary):

"Jude has been wanting to write a letter to his dear friends in this beloved church for some time, but circumstances have arisen which mean that he has had to put pen to paper with greater urgency than he intended...Although he had initially intended to write about the *salvation we share*, his subject has become *the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints*...Perhaps we should think that where he intended to write a more general letter, the one he actually wrote is more concentrated, dealing with only one aspect of salvation. The new subject for his letter is the action he wants them to take. He not only wants them to have faith, but to contend for the faith. The reason is the emergence in the church of a group of people who are having a deadly influence on the lives of the ordinary Christians."¹⁵

Bauckham writes:

A majority of scholars understand this verse to mean that "Jude had been intending to write one letter, a general treatment of the Christian faith, but interrupted this plan to write another letter which the urgent necessity of the moment required... The contrast is simply between the letter he had been planning, probably at considerable length, on a general theme, and the short letter to which he turned his attention instead, when the news from the church(es) required a letter specifically about the danger from the false teachers."¹⁴

B. What is this "salvation we share" and "_____ " for which we are to contend?

1. ** "Imagine that a friend, after attending a Christian concert or service, asks you what the talk about **salvation and faith** was about?" How would you answer them? To put it another way, if you were given the task of writing an up-to-date dictionary of Christian terms meant to be used by people of another religion or those who are "unchurched," What would you write? How would you define "salvation" and "faith?"

2. **What does Jude mean?

Perhaps Jude **had intended** to write a **comprehensive treatment** of the **common blessings of salvation that we all share**. Certainly **these blessings would include** our past deliverance from the guilt of sin (justification), our present deliverance from the domination and control of sin (sanctification), and our future deliverance from the very presence of sin when we see Christ (glorification). Notice that it is important that we think of "**our salvation**" and not obsessively about "**my salvation**." It is a **common faith and blessing that all believers together share** as the body of Christ. It is this blessed hope and common salvation that would have strengthened his readers and strengthens us for the days ahead.

Second, what is "**the faith**" for which we are to contend? It seems best to see it as the **simple gospel message** which demands faith from all who hear it. It is this message that Paul beautifully summarizes in First Corinthians 15:1-11 and it is this message that was preached throughout the New Testament world. It is this gospel (as Jude writes his letter) that is being perverted and undermined.

3. **"What is it about the simple gospel message and your faith that gets you through difficult times or face persecution?" Now think globally. What is it about the gospel and their faith that give strength to Christians in China, North Korea, the Sudan, or Kenya? Can any one of you share a story about a specific person who has suffered persecution in one of these lands and how their faith got them through it?

C. What does Jude mean when he says to "_____ " for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the Saints?"

**Perhaps the following will be helpful:

Have you ever seen a high school, college, or Olympic wrestling match? This is the picture in Jude's mind as he describes an ongoing earnest and strenuous struggle for the faith. This is what it means "to contend."

This same struggle for the gospel continues in our day. There are those who **attack the deity of Christ, his complete perfect humanity and/or his claim to be the only way** and ultimately the only source of truth and life. **There are those who reject elements of biblical teaching or lifestyle that are culturally frowned upon as not being "politically correct."** (Can you think of a few?) But Jude calls us "to proclaim the faith, the whole faith, and nothing but the faith with the help of God."

This gospel message was passed down by the apostles to the churches as a sacred trust. **It was not a faith that they came up with on their own.** This gospel message is "once for all" in that it has finality to it. **It cannot be changed and therefore allows for no additions or subtractions.** Each generation is responsible to faithfully transmit it. **There is no such thing as a new or better gospel.** Further, **it is not the gospel of any one local church,** but is the prize possession of believers from every tribe and tongue and nation.

Finally we contend for it **not simply by defending it but also by living it.** It is absolutely necessary to verbally oppose false teachers, but it is equally necessary to promote "the good news of victory" through our actions. As we will see, this is the clear teaching of verses 22 and 23. As English preacher G. Campbell Morgan reminds us: "The final argument for faith in the world is not the argument of words, but the argument of life."¹⁷

D. What does a false teacher look like?

"For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only sovereign and Lord (verse four)."

Group Work

Discuss and answer the following:

1. What five descriptions of the false teachers do we discover in verse four? (If time permits, you may make a brochure entitled: "False Teachers Uncovered?")

2. Do we see anything like this happening today? Give some examples.

****The following from the commentary might be helpful in completing your assignment:**

"For certain men... have secretly slipped in among you." With these words, Jude gets to the heart of their problem. As Mayor suggests, the words "certain men" were often used with contempt and disdain toward a specific group of people that would have been well known to the readers.¹⁸ Jude gives us three descriptions of them. **First**, these men have "wormed their way in" (New English Bible) or infiltrated the church in some way. They are portrayed as sneaky or crafty.

Second, they are men **"whose condemnation was written about long ago."** The precise meaning of this phrase has been hotly debated. It seems best to understand their condemnation as having been prophesied in the Old Testament and perhaps also in the Book of Enoch. This interpretation is supported by the verses that follow (Jude selects nine Old Testament examples). Also a clearer understanding of this sentence of condemnation is unfolded and illustrated in verses 5-19.

Third, they are **"godless."** Jude uses the expression "ungodly" six times indicating that this is the preeminent description of their character. As Kelly writes, it is a word which "crystallizes his view of the heretics."¹⁹ Jude immediately follows by **giving two reasons why these are ungodly men.** For starters, **they cheapen God's grace** by making it **"a license for immorality."** The word for "immorality" is a rather broad term covering many different forms of unrestrained immoral conduct. It is often spoken of as flaunted shameless sexual sin (First Peter 4:3; Romans 13:13; Second Corinthians 12:21). **It seems that they are teaching an "antinomian" (anti-law) - free to do whatever you wish - gospel."** They teach and practice what Paul warns against in Romans 6:1. Perhaps they assume that God's saving grace allows them to sin freely and without any restraint. After all, the more they sin the more God can exercise his grace and forgiveness and the more he forgives the more gracious God appears to be. This is a gospel free of holy living. **It defies God's purpose in the gospel which is to save sinners - not to promote sin.**

They are also "godless" in that they "deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord." Bauckham summarizes beautifully noting that "Although they claimed to be followers of Jesus Christ, Jude says that by rejecting his moral demands they are in fact disowning him as their Master and repudiating his authority as Lord."²⁰

One cannot rightly believe the gospel without recognizing Christ's absolute ownership and kingship over their lives. It is almost certain that this is a denial both of behavior and belief. **Bad behavior is almost always the result of bad theology. What you believe determines how you behave.**

What is shocking about all of this is that these people were probably itinerant teachers who traveled about to various congregations in the early church (or they could have risen from within the community itself and later quietly brought in heretical teachings from outside²¹). **How could they have promoted a lifestyle that could hardly be differentiated from the pagan society around them? Were they not mouthing the same Christian terminology, quoting the same scriptures, singing heartily the same praise songs and celebrating the same Eucharist? Why they should have been ashamed of themselves! Does any of this sound familiar?**

Do we not see some of the same thing today? As Lucas and Green write: "We should be shocked too as we realize that he is talking about people who may write Christian books, speak at Christian conferences and sound very convincing and liberating. Jude was denouncing their friends and their heroes - and therefore perhaps some of our friends and our heroes - as anti-Christian pagans."²²

Lesson Wrap-Up

*When your group has finished and if you still have time, **your teacher may ask you to share (with the whole "church family") from your group discussion time one thought that was especially meaningful to you.

*At our next session we will be looking at verses five, six, and seven. We will discover some very important and very interesting lessons from biblical history.

*Your **assignment for the next lesson** is to read the book of Jude again concentrating on verses five, six, and seven. Please also read Numbers 14, Genesis 6:1-8 and Genesis 19:1-29 during your daily time with God. You may have questions as you read, so write them down or e-mail them to your teacher.

Part Two: Warning - Danger Ahead!
 (The Ungodly and the Prophecies of Doom)
Session Three
 Open Your History Book! (5-7)

I. Let's Get Started!

******What is the value of history? Why in the world do you or did you spend all that time in school studying it? Was there any history lesson that was especially meaningful to you? Why?

******When you look back at your own personal history or the history of your family, can you recall any experience or event that really taught you something?

II. Discovery Time

A. The need for reminders

History is a great reminder. Jude readily recognizes our constant need for reminders. Sometimes we **simply forget**, but most often we need to be reminded of the **seriousness of God's call for faith in and obedience to the gospel**. Tragedy waits for those who disown or deny Christ as Lord and Master and his command to live a holy life. Unbelief and disobedience most certainly will bring dire consequences not only in the present but at the "judgment on the great Day (verse 6)" following Christ's Second Coming. **Grave danger lay ahead not only for these false teachers but also for all those who followed after their false gospel.** *But we must also remember, that **great blessing and inner peace and joy lies ahead for all who obey the gospel and the leading of the Spirit of God in their lives.**

Jude illustrates the truth of this judgment from a number of historical examples. Divine judgment upon those who rebel against God is not something new.

B. We need to remember some very clear examples from the past.

1. Unbelieving Israel

Though you already know all this, I want to _____ you. The Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe (verse 5)

The idea is that through the apostle's teaching they have been fully informed. They have certainly heard these Old Testament stories but have not understood fully or taken these stories seriously. They had neglected to apply them to their present situation. Perhaps their familiarity with them had lulled them to sleep or maybe they were busy applying them to everyone else but themselves.

How often we have to be reminded to not pass quickly over the old familiar stories or see them just as good lessons to share with our children. What blessings we miss and what discipline we often receive because we do not allow the principles and lessons of these stories to be applied to the day to day activities of our lives. But oh what blessing when we do!

**** For example,** what truth can you glean for your life today and tomorrow from "David and Goliath," Daniel and the Lion's den," or "Israel in the Red Sea?"

******Here are some thoughts on verse 5 from the commentary.

The same God who miraculously led the nation of Israel through the midst of the Red Sea was the same God who judged their unbelief (Numbers 14) when they complained and refused to go into the Promised Land. They refused to believe that God could deliver them from the giants in the land in the same way that he delivered them from Pharaoh. **Consequently, the same generation he delivered became the same generation that he destroyed.** Unbelief and rebellion against God's Word brings serious consequences in any generation. **Jude reminds both his readers and us that the same fate that overtook apostate unbelieving Israel is the same fate that will come to apostate "Christians."**²⁴ (By apostasy we mean a deliberate repudiation and abandonment of the Gospel preached by the apostles that they had once professed. This particular person professed to be "Christian" but in reality was never genuinely a Christian. They had all the exterior trappings of being a Christian without the inward reality of a vibrant living faith.)

2. Fallen Angels

And the Angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home - these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day (verse 6).

******Who are these angels? (back to our commentary) Historically, two main views have been held by scholars concerning the identity of these angels. **One view** is that Jude is referring to the fall of the angels from heaven when they rebelled along with Satan (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:11-19). Their sinful pride caused a civil war in heaven which led to these evil angels being cast out and being sentenced by God to eternal doom. In this view pride is the central cause of their fall. **A second view** is that Jude is referring to Genesis 6:1-4 when certain angels left heaven to cohabit with women and were therefore responsible for the

corruption of the human race at the time just before the flood (This was how the account of the "sons of God" in Genesis 6:1-4 was universally understood until around 150 A.D. Our point is that this is how the original readers of this letter would have understood it.).²⁵ Many scholars hold to the latter view since it was the view of ancient Judaism and the early Christian church. Here the angel's sin is primarily their unlawful and lustful intercourse with women.

These angels abandoned their proper home. They were not satisfied with the positions and place that God had assigned to them. They rebelled against the responsibilities that God had given them and left their privileged position. They wanted to be what they wanted to be, where they wanted to be and to do what they wanted to do.

Consequently, **"these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day."** They who lived in the brilliant splendor of the glorious light of heaven are now in the blackness of darkness. They who had the freedom of serving God throughout heaven are now kept confined and imprisoned in eternal chains from which there is no prospect of deliverance - no escape! Certainly the punishment fits the crime. Further, their present judgment will be followed by an even more frightful final judgment and existence in the Lake of Fire (See Revelation 20:7-15) forever.

****Lucas and Green comment, "The application is clear: the people who infect the churches in the way Jude will describe must not think that they can get away with their rebellious behavior forever. If even angels are subject to God's judgment, despite their most strenuous attempts to rebel, what chance do human rebels have?"²⁷ How often we too rebel against the place and situation where God has placed us or allowed us to be. In our stubbornness we go our own way and do our own thing and discover that our rebellion leads to inevitable sadness and misery. The very sin that lured us with the prospect of freedom is the very sin that in reality enslaves and imprisons us. Such sin becomes even graver when our rebellion is against surrendering to Christ's Lordship and the demand of holy living for all who are his disciples (First Peter 1:15, 16).**

3. Sodom and Gomorrah

In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire (verse 7).

****What kind of picture comes to your mind when you hear the words "Sodom and Gomorrah?" What kind of feelings do you get?**

Jude's third example is perhaps the most graphic and catastrophic of all the Old Testament illustrations. We find it referenced throughout the Scriptures

(Deuteronomy 29:23; Isaiah 1:9; 13:19; Jeremiah 23:14; 49:18; 50:40; Lamentations 4:6; Hosea 11:8; Amos 4:11; Zephaniah 2:9; Matthew 10:15; 11:24; Mark 6:11; Luke 10:12; 17:29). Jude begins, "In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion."

The phrase, "**In a similar way**" connects the sin of these cities with the sin of the angels. The phrase "**gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion**" is more literally rendered "indulged in gross immorality (or extravagant sexual lust) and went after strange flesh." (New American Standard Version) ²⁸ Jude is saying that there is a striking similarity between the sin of the angels and the sin of these cities. Just as the angels went after "strange flesh" in engaging in sex with women, so the men of Sodom and Gomorrah went after "strange flesh" in their lustful desire to have sexual relations with the angels (The angels are described as men in Genesis 19 and therefore the sin can be forcefully argued as an unnatural or homosexual passion. The men of Sodom certainly thought the angels, at least at first, to be men. It looks like an attempted gang rape.). Both clearly crossed God's established boundaries and committed wicked acts.

Both sins were considered hideous enough to bring about and to "**serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.**" God's rain of fire and brimstone upon these cities has served throughout history as an unforgettable reminder that it is a frightening thing to suffer the judgment of an angry God. It is also an inescapable picture of the future "fiery lake of burning sulfur" into which all those who rebel against God will be "thrown alive." (Revelation 19:20)

D. Our personal sin and our need for and promise of forgiveness

Group Work

1. Make a list of what you believe and society believes are the most deadly or depraved sins (5).

2. Now look closely at First Corinthians 6:9-11 and Proverbs 6:16-19. What sins are found in the Scriptures that are not on your list from question one.

Some thoughts to ponder:

It is a dangerous thing to downplay your sinful attitudes and actions while railing at the attitudes and actions of others. We can, and should, decry sin for what it is. All the sins in this list are deplorable. Yet we must judge or discern without having a judgmental hypocritical spirit. We often compare our sins with the most depraved of others and consequently do not see our sins as equally grievous to God.

Notice the list in the Corinthian passage - **all of which habitual unrepentant practice brings eternal consequences.**

3. Ask yourselves, **"Is there any sin that God will not forgive if we come to him with a humble and broken spirit seeking to turn from that sin and to live in obedience to God?"**

Look at the following Scriptures for an answer. What are they teaching?

I John 1:7, 9; Ephesians 1:7, 8; First Corinthians 6:11; Jeremiah 31:34; Micah 7:18-20

All sins are forgivable when you come to God deeply saddened by your sin and seeking to turn from it and to obey God. God is constantly giving **"second chances"** to those who sincerely confess and repent. If we are to forgive **"70 times 7 (Matthew 18: 21, 22)** for the **same offense** against us, does not God go the same and even **a much greater distance** for us!

Lesson Wrap-Up

***When your groups have finished and if you still have time, ** share (with the whole "church family") from your group discussion time one thought that was especially meaningful.**

***Our next session we will be looking at verses 8, 9, and 10. We will discover how these three illustrations apply not only to the false teachers in Jude's day but to our day as well.**

***Your assignment for the next lesson is to read the book of Jude again looking closely at verses 8, 9, and 10 (You may want to look at them in several translations or paraphrases). Bring in newspaper clippings, magazine articles, or the lyrics of songs that are illustrations (examples) of what these verses are talking about.**

Session Four

Anything Sound Familiar? (8-10)

I. Let's Get Started!

**Think of your favorite commercial. Why is it your favorite? What particular need does it identify that is appealing to you?

** What newspaper clipping, magazine article, or the lyrics of a song from your homework assignment did you find that is an illustration (example) of what these verses are talking about?"

II. Discovery Time

A. "Why do false teachers and cults seem to so quickly get a following?"
(Take notes from the PowerPoint.)

B. Why does Jude refer to these false teachers as dreamers?

These false teachers are dreamers in that they support their libertine version of the gospel by falsely claiming that they have received this revelation directly from God through dreams. Kugelman describes these teachers as "dreamers who pay more heed to their pretended visions than they do to God's Word."²⁹ Bigg describes them as false teachers or prophets "who support their evil doctrines by pretended revelations."³⁰ They claim to be unchallengeable because of these dreams. In addition, the term "dreamers" seems to also refer to men who are out of touch with reality. They essentially are living in a dream world.

This is one of the chief characteristics of a false teacher. They claim to have a direct pipeline to God from which they have received "new revelation." Often this revelation is said to have been received from a vision or dream. The problem is

that their "dreams" change the gospel message and attack the identity of Christ as it is found in Scripture.

C. Just exactly what kind of man are they?

In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings (verse eight).

Jude begins, "**In the very same way,**" or more literally translated "yet in the same way also (Bauckham, p. 55)." Jude embarks on a detailed description of these false teachers that have infiltrated the church to which he is writing. **His point is that even though these present apostates were well familiar with these Old Testament examples** (unbelieving Israel, fallen angels, and Sodom and Gomorrah), **they arrogantly ignored their warnings and flaunt their participation in the very same sins.** They have not learned these very important lessons from history (History can be a wonderful teacher if we allow it to be. It is filled with lessons of wise behavior to be imitated and foolish behaviors to be shunned.).

****Ask,** Can you think of any examples of people from history **who rose above difficult circumstances to make a positive contribution to society?**

"These dreamers: 1) pollute their own bodies, 2) reject authority and 3) slander celestial beings." First, they "defile the flesh (New American Standard)." Just like the angels and the men of Sodom and Gomorrah they pollute or defile their own bodies by engaging in sexual sin - perhaps even homosexuality. Here "bodies" refers most definitely to the physical body but could also include the polluted mind that leads to the defilement of their bodies.

They "**reject authority.**" Just like all three of the historical examples they reject God's authority. Verse four implies that the authority of Christ as Lord is primarily in view here. This is precisely what some do today when they teach a doctrine of religious pluralism -that Christ is not "the only way, the only source of truth, and the only road to eternal life (John 14:6)." Perhaps they too rejected what had normally been understood as the biblical standard declaring it to be culturally bound and in need of a new modern present day interpretation.³² False teachers have habitually refused to submit to the Scriptures (especially the traditional understanding of its teachings) throughout the centuries. They reinvent its message.

They "**slander celestial beings.**" These teachers in their immorality and lawlessness slander or insult the heavenly angels who were the givers of the Law of

Moses (Acts 7:38, 53; Galatians 3:19; Hebrews 2:2) and also rail at the Jewish understanding that the angels were the guardians of the law and watched over its observance (*Jubilees* 1:27-29; Josephus, *Antiquities* 15. 136; Hermas. *Similitudes* 8:3:3). As Michael Green writes, "The false teachers would thus be guilty of irreverence towards God's messengers, the angels, just as the men of Sodom had been toward the angels who visited them."³³ Bauckham writes:

"They understood Christian freedom to mean freedom from moral authority and therefore from the authority of the angels. No doubt they aligned the angels with the forces of evil from whose power the Christian was delivered, and accuse them of imposing the Law out of envy and malice toward men. In other words, their slandering of the angels was a way of detaching the Law from God and interpreting it simply as an evil."³⁴

** "Can you name some particular cultic groups and give examples of some of their teachings that illustrate the above behaviors?"

D. What was the Angel Michael's attitude in contrast to these false teachers?

But even the Archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" (verse nine)

Jude references a well-known oral tradition or story of his day. We do not find this brief account anywhere in the Old Testament, but it would have been well known to these teachers who studied the apocryphal literature of that day. Bauckham in his *Excursus: The Background and Source of Jude 9* gives strong evidence from several of the church fathers and modern-day scholarship that Jude's source was the *Assumption or Testament of Moses*.³⁵

Note: Jude, in verses 9 and 10 and again in verses 14 to 16 gives information that we do not find in the Scriptures. This is not all that unusual for biblical writers. In Acts 17: 28 Paul references pagan Greek poets whom we know to be Cleanthes, Aratus and Menander. He calls the Cretan poet Epimenides a "prophet" in Titus 1:12. **Biblical writers often quoted books that would have been well known to their readers in order to make a point. We do the same thing today when we reference *Pilgrims Progress* or the classic works of Charles Dickens, the poetry of Longfellow, or the writings of C.S. Lewis in our messages or teaching. Whether Jude believed this story to be true or not, he is using it to make his argument.

In this story, when Moses died God sent the angel Michael to bury his body. But the Devil disputed with Michael arguing that because Moses was a murderer (see Exodus 2:12 where Moses killed the Egyptian) he was unworthy of an honorable burial - especially by the Archangel Michael himself. In addition, how could God allow such a sinner into his presence? *The Testament of Moses* describes this accusation as slander and relates how Michael, not tolerating the devil's slander, said to him, "May the Lord rebuke you, Devil!" This was an appeal to God to assert his authority over Satan and dismiss Satan's case against Moses. Consequently, the devil was silenced and he quickly left enabling Michael to take the body away for burial.³⁶

Jude's point is that Michael refuses to join Satan in his accusation against Moses. He is not willing to make himself judge and jury in regard to Moses' sin or even in regard to Satan and his slanderous accusations. Michael could not, on his own authority, denounce the devil's accusations. Instead, Michael submits himself to the Lord God - who alone has the right and wisdom to render a just verdict. Michael stands in sharp contrast not only to the devil, but to these false teachers who proclaimed themselves both judge and jury over the angels through whom God had given the law. In their arrogance, "They used language of good angels which Michael would not use of a bad one."³⁷

We too must be careful in our accusation against others. Our determination about the rightness and wrongness of others is not on the basis of our own authority. Any loving rebuke that we might give must be based upon our appeal to the clear teaching of Scripture and the God who wrote it. He alone is the final judge!

**** "What is the difference between judging (discerning) whether the actions of others are good or bad and having a judgmental spirit?"**

E. How are these men foolish?

Group Work

1. Read verse ten. What is Jude saying (You may use the material from the commentary below for help)? **How are we sometimes just like them?** (Give to her three examples.)

"Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals -these are the very things that destroy them." (Verse ten)

Jude exposes their foolishness in both **how they respond** to things that they do not understand and second to things they do understand. These men revile and attack things that they know nothing about. They are quite deficient in their understanding of the angels' role as mediators and ministers of the Law of God. This attitude and lack of knowledge becomes even more appalling when we understand that it is quite probable that they claimed through their dreams to have special knowledge and insight into the angelic world. Yet their attitude is directly at odds with the angels' deep respect for the Law. Like the men of Sodom, engrossed in their lawless immorality, they fail to recognize the angels for who they are.

These men failed to understand the proper relationship between "law and grace," and "faith and obedience." When they were faced with these difficult concepts, **instead of waiting for further illumination and understanding**, they immediately responded with inflammatory rhetoric and marched off trumpeting their own interpretation as the only valid one. I can hear their cries of "You Pharisees!" "You legalists!"

We still hear the same cries today. Saints who believe that true faith results in love and obedience to the rules and guidelines of Scripture are decried as too narrow, out of touch with the times and judgmental. "Oh", they say, "If these traditionalists would only get in step with a new progressive understanding of the gospel! Their morality and standards belong to the ages of the past. We, the enlightened, have discovered a new much more liberated Jesus!"

The false teacher's foolishness is also seen in how they respond to the things that they do understand. They have far too high a view of themselves and what they know. At odds with the special knowledge they have claimed to have received from their dreams, they are in reality functioning on the level of animals - consumed by their basic instincts. Albert Barnes describes them as irrational unreasoning animals governed by their instinctive desires for food and sex.³⁸ William Barclay adds that they have allowed the instincts that they share with the animals to dominate them. Consequently, their gospel is a gospel consumed with the flesh. They have lost all sense of an awareness of spiritual things³⁹

The foolishness of these dreamers will ultimately bring about their demise. The very things they believe have brought them freedom will ultimately destroy them and imprison them in hell throughout all eternity. All this talk of "forward thinking and morality" is the imagination of "dreamers" who are not only out of touch with reality, but also out of touch with God.

2. Give two or three ways showing how a wise teacher or a believer would think and act in contrast to what you just read (It is time to be positive and hopeful!)

Lesson Wrap-Up

*If you still have time, **share (with the whole "church family") from your group discussion time one thought that was especially meaningful to you.

*Our next session we will be looking at verse 11. We will discover valuable lessons from three rebel leaders.

*Your **assignment for the next lesson** is to read the book of Jude again looking closely at verses 11 (You may want to look at it in several translations or paraphrases). Use a Bible dictionary, Bible handbook, etc. to find out some information about the three people mentioned. You may also want to write down your first impressions when you think of these three people.

Session Five

Three Rebel Leaders (verse 11)

I. Let's Get Started!

** If you were to think of your **favorite leader** or a **"rebel leader,"** who would it be? What makes them your favorite or why do you see them as a rebel? (Note: you may choose any one from the Bible, church history, American history, modern-day politics, world history, or your own personal family history.)

OR

** Who is someone that you would love to "walk down the same path" that they walked or someone that you would like to avoid walking in their steps at all costs? Why do you feel this way?

II. Discovery Time

A. What does it mean to walk in "way of Cain? (11a)"

"Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion (verse 11).

Jude now moves from groups of sinners (Israel, angels, Cities of the Plain) to one group consisting of individual sinners (Cain, Balaam, Korah). His emphasis seems to be narrowed in that he focuses not only on "groups of people who were living immoral lives" but on **"certain false teachers who were teaching others to live immoral lives."** **In this way they followed in the footsteps of the three rebels he names.**

Once again, as in the first group, Jude does not give them in strict chronological order and once again he seems to arrange them so as to build to a climax. His first example is Cain, the son of Adam and Eve, who murdered his brother Abel out of **jealousy over a sacrifice** (see Genesis 4). In this act he became the first murderer. Hebrews 11:4 implies (by the repetition of the word "faith") that God accepted Abel's sacrifice because he came believing whereas he rejected Cain's sacrifice because it was **offered in unbelief and with improper motive. Perhaps God had asked for an animal (blood) sacrifice instead of the bloodless "fruits of the soil" that Cain brought.**

It is important to God both what we bring (offer up to him -our bodies, our praises, our sacrifice of worship) and the attitude in which we bring it. God loves the offerings of those who come to him with a humble and grateful heart. It gives him great pleasure to bless them for their faith and obedience.

Even though God directly intervened and confronted Cain concerning the seething jealousy and anger inside of him, Cain ignored God's admonition: "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do what is wrong, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it. (Genesis 4:7)." Instead he allowed his anger to fester into rage and the consequent murder of his own brother. In this he became an example of one who is evil and ignores or rebels at God's warnings (see First John 3:12). Even though God gave him a second chance to do what was right, Cain refused. Consequently, the rest of his life is a vivid example of what happens when you refuse to admit and learn from your mistakes.

** What is your reaction when someone points out something you have done wrong? Do you have a hard time admitting making mistakes? Is there jealousy in your relationship with someone? What steps should we take when someone legitimately points out failure or weakness in our lives?

It is also interesting that Jude's readers would probably have been familiar with the teaching of Josephus (*Antiquities* 1: 52-66) that Cain was guilty of greed, violence and lust, the great corruptor of mankind, and became an **instructor in wicked practices. Cain's role of leading and instructing others in the way of wicked practices fits well with Jude's description of his opponents.

B. What does it mean to walk in the way of Balaam (11b)?

Jude further describes his opponents as imitating and following after the error of Balaam. This prophet was consumed by greed and determined to curse Israel so that he might get the money that had been offered to him (Numbers 22-24). But not only was he willing to sin in order to gain wealth, he was also willing to teach others to sin (compare Numbers 25:1-3, 31:15, 16 and Revelation 2: 14).

Revelation clearly states that he "taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality." It is this teaching that Jude has in mind as well as their utter abandonment and maddening rush toward monetary gain. The *NIV Life Application Study Bible* (p. 231) states:

"He did not believe in the Lord as the only true God. His story exposes the deception of maintaining an outward façade of spirituality over a corrupt

inward life. Balaam was a man ready to obey God's command as long as he could profit from doing so. This mixture of motives -obedience and profit-eventually led to Balaam's death."

Again we see that motives are just as important as actions!

****How are we sometimes like Balaam? ****Further, "If God were to come to you and to promise to grant you any request that you asked, what would be your honest answer? (This question could have a very positive and life-enriching answer.)

C. What does it mean to walk in the way of Korah (11c)?

* Group Work*

1. ****** Read aloud the following:

The road Jude's opponents travel culminates in the dead end of judgment. All who follow it will end up, as Korah did, being "destroyed." (See Numbers 16) Their open opposition to God's divinely appointed leaders (the apostles and their message and/or the leaders in their churches) mirrors Korah's opposition to Moses. Like Korah, they wanted to assume the spiritual leadership and stirred up the people in an attempt to do so. They resisted and desired to remove God's divinely constituted authority. But also like Korah, they will be destroyed by God - that is suffer eternal loss in separation from the very God they claimed to know. Let this be a caution to us when we seek to undermine, subvert or openly oppose God's established authority in the Church. The *NIV Life Application Study Bible* (p. 221) states:

Korah's story gives us numerous warnings: (1) Don't let desire for what someone else has make you discontented with what you already have. (2) Don't try to raise your own self-esteem by attacking someone else's. (3) Don't use part of God's Word to support what you want, rather than allowing its entirety to shape your wants. (4) Don't expect to find satisfaction in power and position; God may want to work through you in the position you are now in.

1. ****** What are your thoughts and reactions to what you just read?

2. **What are some **common reasons** for opposing church leadership? Is there ever a time when it is right to do this? What are some **positive ways** in which we can support our church leaders (try to be specific as opposed to general in your ideas)?

Lesson Wrap-Up

*When your groups have finished, and if you still have time, share (with the whole "church family") from your group discussion time one thought that was especially meaningful to them.

*At our next session we will be looking at verses 12 and 13. We will discover the meaning of some vivid verbal snapshots that Jude gives describing the false teachers.

* Our **assignment for the next lesson** is to read the book of Jude again looking closely at verses 12, and 13 (Bring in one snapshot or picture from a memorable experience in your life with an underlying caption or explanation to display on a table. If you have artistic ability you may want to draw one of Jude's vivid word pictures and bring it in for display or bring a photograph from nature picturing something in these two verses.)

Session Six

Takin Pictures (verses 12, 13)

I. Let's Get Started!

****** You have heard it said that a picture is worth a thousand words. Who was your favorite teacher? If you were to use a picture or scene from nature to describe them, what would it look like? What one or two traits (or characteristics) could be used to define them?

II. Discovery Time

A. Taken a look at the "teacher's photographs"

Six vivid word pictures or verbal snapshots make it strikingly clear that these present-day apostates embody the same rebellious spirit as their Old Testament counterparts. **"These men are:**

1. "Blemishes (or hidden reefs - ESV, NASV, Bauckham, Plummer, Mayor, Reicke, Green, Kelly) at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm" (12a)

Immediately we run into a debate as to exactly what the first verbal snapshot or word picture is. The NIV sees the Greek word as meaning a dirty blemish or spot (in conjunction with Jude's use of the verb in verse 23 and Second Peter 2:13) while the English Standard Version follows the most natural meaning of the Greek word - hidden reefs. Green and Lucas comment, "In either case, by their presence at the church meetings these people present a severe danger of either wreckage or pollution by their unashamed, unloving activity."⁴⁰ The idea then is either they are defiled, stained, and morally filthy at the very core of their being or they are deceptive - spiritually shipwrecking the unwary church member.

These men participated in the church's love feast, a meal that included the celebration of the Lord's Table, irreverently with no fear of the consequences of their sinful teaching and lifestyle. They behaved as if they were autonomous -that is their own masters and a law unto themselves. Their spiritual arrogance showed disrespect and lack of submission to the Lordship of the very Christ they celebrated in the Eucharist (Communion or Lord's Table).

2. "Shepherds who feed only themselves" (12b)

*Instead of feeding the flock, they are feeding themselves. Instead of nurturing and tending to the needs of the parishioners through teaching the Word, their prime interest was stroking their own egos and fulfilling their own agenda. Ezekiel 34: 2-4 aptly describes them - "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured." *It is probable that Jude is referencing this passage and alluding to these false teachers making a good living off of the church and at the same time neglecting its needs. Was this not the same as the sin of Balaam who hired out his services merely for financial gain?

3. "They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind;" (12c)

This is the **first of four snapshots from nature**. These teachers are like clouds in a time of drought which promise rain but never deliver. Quickly they come and go with the wind. They appear offering so much hope, but they never produce. Instead of their teaching bringing showers of blessing from the life-giving Word, in reality it is void of the Spirit's living water offering nothing to nurture the soul.

4. "Autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted - twice dead! (12d)

This word picture reaffirms the analogy of the "waterless clouds." Just as you expect to pick pears and apples from trees in the fall, so you would expect these trees to be fruitful. But like the fig tree that Jesus cursed (Luke 13:6-9), these trees are barren and fruitless. When you come expecting succulent fruit, you are sadly disappointed.

So it is with these false teachers. They come offering a spiritual life that is liberating and freeing when in reality they have no life at all. Inside they are lifeless and dead. They are "twice dead" in that they are still dead in their sins (having never been given new spiritual life by the Holy Spirit) and have already been condemned to the "second death" - meaning eternal separation one day from God (see Revelation 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8). Their future is certain because of their obstinate unbelief and refusal to believe the gospel as given by the apostles. Like Korah they will perish! The picture here of an uprooted tree is a common description of judgment (see Psalms 52:5; Proverbs 2:22).

5. "They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame;" (13a)

This picture is of wild raging waves of the sea crashing against the shore and leaving debris, scum and filth on the beach. Jude may very well be referring to Isaiah 57:20, 21 which describes the wicked as being "like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud. There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked." Just as the sea is restless, cannot be tamed, and leaves its unsightly litter on the shore so these false teachers (in their lawlessness) pollute all that follow their shameless ways and teaching.⁴¹

6. "Wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever." (13b)

These false teachers are like **shooting stars** which suddenly appear in the night sky and then quickly disappear in the darkness never to be seen again. These men come promising new light or revelation, but in reality will eventually be lost in the blackness of the darkness of hell forever. They throw into confusion and ultimately lead their followers toward the same dark eternal existence predicted for them.

Blum offers a different understanding of the "wandering stars." He writes, "The ancients called the planets wandering stars because of their (seemingly erratic) movements. The reference here could be to meteors, shooting stars, comets, or planets; **the planets** is the most likely meaning. An unpredictable star would provide no guidance for navigation; so false teachers are useless and untrustworthy."⁴² Just as they had gone off course in their teaching so all that follow them are led astray.

Michael Green summarizes, "In these two verses, then, Jude has evoked a swift, bold picture of the man he is castigating. They are as dangerous as sunken rocks, as selfish as perverted shepherds, as useless as rainless clouds, as dead as barren trees, as dirty as the foaming sea, and as certain of doom as the fallen angels."⁴³

Group Work

1. **Review quickly** the six word pictures that we have covered describing a false teacher.
2. **Create and discuss** six of **your own word pictures or snapshots** describing a **godly teacher**. You may paint a picture of any type. You may want to create pictures that are opposites of Jude's in order to coincide with such a teacher. Feel free to use your notes in understanding more fully the verbal snapshots of a false teacher in order to create a contrasting picture. **Or** you may simply want to create a **list** of contrasting descriptions of a godly teacher to show how they differ from a false teacher.

Lesson Wrap-Up

*At our next session we will be looking at verses 14, 15 and 16. We will discover who Prophet Enoch was and how this man from the very beginning of time has a message that amazingly speaks to the issues of our generation.

* Your **assignment for the next lesson** is to read the book of Jude again concentrating on verses 14, 15 and 16. (In reading the book again and again, we are training them that constant repetition is needed in order to get a comprehensive understanding of a biblical book or any subject for that matter.) Do some research on Enoch in a Study Bible or look him up in a Bible dictionary.

Session Seven

Ancient Words from Prophet Enoch (Verses 14, 15, 16)

I. Let's Get Started!

**If you were to write the resume of a "man or woman who walked with God" what would it include?

OR

**What would be the job description of a "man or woman who walked with God?"

OR

**What kind of text messages would an adult or teenager who "walks with God" send? Give several examples of their content.

II. Discovery Time

A. Who was Enoch and what did he have to say to us? (14, 15)

Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."(verse 14, 15)

Enoch first appears in *Genesis* 5:21-24. This passage applauds him as a man who walked with God and then was taken away into God's very presence without experiencing death. The implication is that this is Enoch's reward for a life of faithful obedience. (*Hebrews* 11:5 specifically commends him as "one who pleased God" and therefore "did not experience death.")

Enoch appears only three times in the New Testament. He is listed in the genealogy of Jesus in *Luke* 3:37, *Hebrews* 11:5 (as one of the heroes of the faith) and here in *Jude*. Only here is he explicitly identified as prophesying and is listed

as the "**seventh from Adam.**" In both Genesis 5 and First Chronicles 1:3 he is the seventh from Adam if we include both him and Adam in the list. This helps to distinguish him from the son of Cain in Genesis 4:17 who has the same name.

Nowhere in Scripture do we find any record of a prophecy by Enoch. Jude is loosely quoting the apocryphal book I Enoch. Just as the Holy Spirit led Paul to quote from pagan philosophers (as we have already seen) so he now leads Jude to quote from I Enoch. Again, Jude is citing a source commonly known to his readers and which they would have easily understood. Further, this prophecy fits quite nicely with prophecies found in Scripture concerning Christ's Second Coming.

Jude's point is that Enoch is prophesying about these false teachers who proclaim a false gospel. Indeed we could easily apply this prophecy to all false teachers in any age. Jude is not only speaking to those false teachers but their counterparts in our churches today. The Second Coming will bring swift and inescapable judgment upon the ungodly (which Jude mentions four times in verse 15).

But what specifically is he trying to tell us in this prophecy? **First**, the Lord is coming with myriads of his "**holy ones**" (his angels - see Daniel 7:10; Zachariah 14:5; Matthew 25:31; Second Thessalonians 1:7) to execute **universal** judgment - "**to judge everyone.**" (See Second Corinthians 5:10) He will examine and issue a verdict concerning every man and woman in history. **Second**, Jude seems to be primarily concerned with the fact that the Lord will "**convict all the ungodly.**" He will scrutinize and judge their every deed and every word. He will expose them as being contrary to everything that God is in his nature (unholy versus holy, unloving versus loving, untruthful versus truthful, etc.). Jude focuses in on "**the harsh words ungodly sinners** (and in particular these false teachers) **have spoken against him** (meaning God)." Their speech has been harsh, arrogant -even blasphemous! They have been "telling God - and even his people - a thing or two," but in his presence they will be bowed down prostrate before him, the Judge of all the earth (Philippians 2:10. 11).

The Twentieth Century New Testament paraphrases, "godless sinners that they are! The people are ungodly, their deeds are ungodly, the manner in which they performed these deeds is ungodly, and they further manifest their ungodliness by their blasphemies against the Lord."

B. The prophecy further applied to the false teachers (16)

These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage. (verse 16)

But Jude isn't finished yet! He continues with an even more specific description of their ungodliness. "**These men are grumblers.**" They are chronic murmurers whose ingratitude and discontent is always just below the surface ready to erupt. If you don't think this is serious then re-visit Numbers 14:26-29. The Israelites chronic grumbling led to God's judgment and everyone over twenty dying

in the wilderness without ever seeing the Promised Land. Philippians 2:14 and First Peter 4:9 prohibit such murmuring.

****What are three things that we always seem to complain about? Why? What are two reasons why we should always be grateful instead of complaining? What helps you to be grateful instead of murmuring about a situation?**

Second, they are "**faultfinders**." The New English Bible calls them "malcontents." The sin is very similar to grumbling but here the emphasis is on "the blame game." There is always something wrong with every situation or every condition in which God has placed them. God could have done better! He's not being fair or he simply does not care. This flies in the face of the fact that every situation you're in God has determined you to be there for your own good. There is no greener pasture or better place. You cannot even fall into a pit, where when you reach the bottom, God is not already there. The faultfinders are also oblivious to the countless gifts of God's grace that we experience each and every day - especially in America. These false teachers were not satisfied with the condition of life God had assigned to them, and not only blamed him for it, but for the moral law code or restrictions which he had imposed upon them and upon all mankind.⁴⁴

****Give some examples of some things you or others are always finding fault with? What do you think is the underlying reason why people continually find fault with others? What can we do about it?**

Third, "**they follow their own evil desires**." These men worship themselves. Claiming to be Christians, they refuse to do what lies at the very heart of Christianity. They will not switch their allegiance from pursuing their own selfish

desires to being a follower and imitator of Jesus Christ. Indeed their discontent comes from their pursuit of their own evil lusts. The very nature of sinful desires is that they are insatiable -can never be satisfied. Instant gratification is just that -it is only for an instant! Every momentary pleasure gained from diving into sin demands a deeper plunge until one day they and we take the ultimate plunge.

****What are some ways in which we worship ourselves -that is, place ourselves above God in importance?**

Finally, **"they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage."** Greek scholars Zerwick and Grosvenor translate the Greek for "boast" as meaning "inflated, excessive or bombastic."⁴⁵ The idea is that their inflated view of their own spirituality demonstrates itself in "big talk" or bombastic prideful speech. They bellow out their self proclaimed "God -revealed" new understanding of grace that has freed them completely from God's law. They are on the "fast track" to spirituality.

Further, they speak well of others (pushing just the right buttons) in order to exploit them - to gain a convert. They purposefully mislead those who swallow their doctrine into believing that they have now "spiritually arrived." As Lucas and Green remark, "in order to win followers and gain influence, these men have deliberately chosen to teach a wrong gospel that will make fewer demands and more promises of instant blessing."⁴⁶ Bauckham gives it a slightly different slant: "They do so with an eye to the favor of those members of the church on whom they depend for their prosperous living, hoping that a doctrine of moral laxity will appeal to these others as much as it appeals to themselves."⁴⁷

****Group Work**

Do one or both of the following:

1. Using a favorite psalm, write your own praise song or poem.
2. List the behaviors of these false prophets or teachers and then think of opposite behaviors that would be the characteristic of true prophets or teachers. Look also at Deuteronomy 13:1-5 and 18:14-22.

Lesson Wrap-Up

*At our next session we will be looking at verses 17, 18, and 19. We will discover the predictions of the apostles concerning false teachers.

*Your **assignment for the next lesson** is to read the book of Jude again concentrating on verses 17, 18, and 19. Skim over your notes from the previous lessons and ponder those principles or ideas that the Holy Spirit causes to stand out as you review.

Session Eight

Ancient Words from the Apostles (verses 17, 18, 19)

I. Let's Get Started!

****** Have you ever been a part of, or kept out of, a "clique" (a small exclusive group or circle of people)? Why do you think people form cliques? How can we prevent them or break them up?

II. Discovery Time

****We are going to reverse the normal order and have your groups do their work first.**

Group Work

A. What had the apostles said in general about false teachers in the "last days" (the period of time between Christ's first coming and Second Coming)?

****Read and discuss the following Scriptures to get an idea of what the apostles had predicted: Acts 20:29, 30; First Thessalonians 2:5; First Timothy 4:1-3; Second Timothy 3:1-5; Second Peter 2:1-3; First John 2:18; 4:1-3. Make a list of the different predictions.**

****Now each group will give one prediction at a time until you have covered your lists.**

B. Three characteristics of these false teachers

****We come now to our text.**

But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires. These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. (17-19)

****What three things does the text say that characterizes these false teachers?**

Jude gives his **final warning** to reject and denounce the false teaching of these itinerant preachers. This time he appeals to the predictions of the apostles - what the apostles had said. Once again, he lovingly and endearingly calls the church to remember. The inference is clear from the words "that they were saying to you (New American Standard Version)" that these warnings were a well-known regular occurrence in the apostles preaching and teaching. Further, we agree with Bauckham that when Jude says "**to you**" he "implies that most of the original converts (of the apostles themselves) were still living when Jude wrote."⁴⁸ The church had been given fair warning of the coming of these men. Many of them had heard it directly from the apostles! But what was it that the apostles said that Jude wants to emphasize to his readers?

"In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." First, the "last times (the period of time between Christ's first coming and Second Coming)" will be characterized by those who "jeer, ridicule, treat with contempt, **or scoff at**" the high moral standards taught by Moses, Christ and the apostles. These teachers are an example of such persons who despise any limitations on pursuing their selfish wicked desires. They laugh and jeer at those who refuse to join him - those evangelical Christians who adhere to the puritanical standards of the past. They, the enlightened, have been freed from the stranglehold and judgmental spirit of these old-fashioned Christians' laws.

****What Christian doctrine or beliefs have you heard non-Christians scoff at?**

Second, Jude exposes these false teachers, who claim to be spiritual, by revealing what they really are. They are by habit "**men who divide you**" or "church splitters." They create "camps" in the church essentially separating it into two groups - these sanctimonious elitists, and in contrast, the "average" church goer. Their lifestyle and teaching divides the church into the "haves" and the "have-nots." This is classic heresy -infiltrate the church with a different gospel, conquer and divide. Whereas the true gospel always promotes repentance and faith that leads to unity and harmony, this "false gospel" always elevates its proponents to a position of "spiritual aristocracy"⁴⁹ and destroys the unity of the Church.

**"What are the different ways in which people divide and split churches and how can we unite and build up the church instead?"

Third, they who claim to have special revelations from God's Spirit, in reality, are **completely devoid of the Spirit**. These men are not Christians; they are unbelievers. This is a scathing denunciation! They are "worldly wise" but spiritually foolish. They live their lives on the "natural" level as opposed to the "supernatural." Their horizon is bounded by the "here and now." Their teachings prove that far from being filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit their life is controlled by materialistic, fleshly sexual appetites. They are self absorbed -slaves to their basic instincts. They live for the thrill of experiencing yet another new form of ungodliness.⁵⁰ Church and daily life is all about "what's in it for them."

Lesson Wrap-Up

*Our next session we will be looking at verses 20 and 21. We begin the first of three lessons in our "Boot Camp for the Faithful." Here Jude will give us specific battlefield instructions that will lift us up and give us hope.

*Your **assignment for the next lesson** is to read the book of Jude again concentrating on verses 20 and 21. It will be helpful to review your notes from sessions one and two.

Part Three: Boot Camp for the Faithful (verses 20-25)

Session Nine

Battlefield Instructions (verses 20, 21)

I. Let's Get Started!

****** What is your favorite sport or outdoor recreation? What outfits and kinds of equipment do you need and use? In what way are these individual pieces of equipment helpful or necessary for your enjoyment of this activity?

II. Discovery Time

By now we might be wondering, "In the face of such a formidable enemy, what in the world are we supposed to do?" Gladly, Jude turns his attention from exposing and denouncing these heretical teachers to instructing believers on how to be victorious in their struggle to remain pure in their faith - both in doctrine and lifestyle. Jude is giving us battlefield instructions that **equip us** in our everyday struggle. He is **outfitting us** for battle. **Five instructions** follow (We will look at the first **four** in this lesson):

A. "Build Yourself up in Your Most Holy Faith" (20a)

******Why do you think he says "most holy" instead of just saying "your faith?"

The faith here is primarily the gospel message which they had received from the apostles. It is the foundation upon which the Christian life is built and the necessary essential truth as together we grow toward spiritual maturity. It is the glorious truth that Christ lived a perfect life and died a perfect death for our sins (See First Corinthians 15:1-11). He was our substitute. In his death he took our place. In his perfect life he satisfied God's requirement of a sacrifice that was free from any blemish or imperfection. In his substitutionary death, he received all the wrath and anger of God against our sin, satisfying God's holy anger and paying in full the penalty for our sin. He has settled the sin question once and for all by his complete and final sacrifice (See Hebrews 9:26; 7:27; 9:12, 24-28; 10:1, 2,

10, 12, 14; 13:12). Today he stands in the very presence of God interceding on our behalf and forever declaring, "It is finished! (Hebrews 9:24)"

But we cannot, as the false teachers did, quickly breeze by the adjectives describing that "faith." It is a "**most holy**" faith. Hiebert rightly comments, "It is truly superlative... it is separate and distinct from all other faiths because of its origin and transmission as well as the holiness it produces in those who ground their lives upon it."⁵¹ The true gospel is a life transforming gospel. One of the critical aspects of the gospel and an essential part of what it means "to believe" in Jesus Christ is to **receive him as your new master and boss** (Romans 10:9, 10). He is both Lord and Savior. One cannot read the Gospels without realizing that Jesus demanded obedience and surrender from his followers. Obedience is one of the authenticating fruits of a true believer (See John 14:15; 15). Just as God is holy, we are to reflect his character of holiness in our lives (First Peter 1:15, 16). Saving grace was never meant as a license to sin (Romans 6:1, 2).

It is this **gospel message**, as well as the other **apostolic writings and teachings**, which provide a sturdy and firm foundation upon which to build our lives. ****The very core of your Christian life centers on that daily conversation that God has with you in your Bible study and you with him in prayer.**

B. "Pray in the Holy Spirit." (20b)

Jude's second admonition is to pray under the power and the control and therefore in accordance with the will of the Holy Spirit. The words "your will be done" must be the driving passion of our life. We are encouraged by the promise of the Holy Spirit's presence and ministry of helping and aiding us in such prayer (Romans 8:26, 27). Such humble conversation with God stands in striking contrast to the attitude of the false teachers. As Moffat comments, "The real experience and possession of the Holy Spirit inspires prayer, not any proud sense of superiority to others or any false independence towards God."⁵²

C. "Keep Yourselves in God's Love" (21a)

In verse one, Jude clearly states that these believers are "loved by God." Romans 8:35-39 makes it clear that nothing can separate us from God's love. What then is Jude talking about? Is Jude teaching it is possible to be separated from the sphere of God's love? And how can we reconcile that with what he says in verses one and two?

May I humbly suggest that Jude is referring to "God's love for us." Specifically, I believe he is referring to our responsibility to keep ourselves in fellowship or a place of intimate communion with God. Our response to the overwhelming sacrificial love that God has shown toward us is to live in obedience to God. In John 15:9, 10 Jesus calls us to respond to his love with obedience and clearly states that by keeping his commandments we remain in his love. Those who engage in an ongoing lifestyle of habitual unrepentant disobedience show that they know nothing of intimate fellowship with Jesus. Indeed we can legitimately ask if they have ever come to know him personally or are truly a follower of Jesus Christ.

Specifically, Jude asks his listeners and us to "**wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.**" The coming mercy he speaks of can be understood in two ways. **First**, it can be seen as God's pitying love in that he withholds from us what we deserve. Because of the work of salvation that Christ has accomplished on our behalf we will not be condemned in the future on the judgment day. Our sins have been forgiven! We therefore wait for the full realization of that love and mercy. **Second**, and I believe the emphasis of this verse, we wait for the merciful end of the struggle of this present life and the full realization and final consummation of our salvation. We wait for the "not yet" aspects of his consummated kingdom. We wait for the perfection and glorification of our bodies (receiving a body completely free of our sinful disposition and desires and their corrupting effects). Then we will be absolutely perfect in mind, emotion, will, body, and relationship. We wait for the perfection of the new heavens and new earth. Oh such mercy! We praise God as we wait!

Lesson Wrap-Up

*When your groups have finished and if you still have time, **share (with the whole "church family") from your group discussion time one thought that was especially meaningful to you.

*At our next session we will be looking at verse 22 and 23. We will discover how we can perform "missions of mercy" towards those who are being or have been deceived by false teachers.

*Your **assignment for the next lesson** is to read the book of Jude again concentrating on verses 22 and 23. Begin praying for others in general who have been victimized by false teaching (in the cults, etc.) and those particular people whom you personally know that have fallen prey to false doctrines.

Session Ten

Mercy Missions (verses 22, 23)

I. Let's Get Started!

**"How would you define mercy?" Have you ever had to participate in a "mercy mission" for a friend or relative? What did it involve? How did you feel?

II. Discovery Time

A. Victims in Need of Mercy Missions (22, 23)

Jude now calls the faithful to minister to those who are in danger or have become the victims of heretical teaching. Just as they have and will continually be the recipients of God's mercy, so the faithful must now be the agents of God's mercy towards those who are being deceived by these apostate teachers. Jude identifies three distinct groups for these missions of mercy. It seems that each successive group has traveled further down the road leading to God's judgment and everlasting punishment. It also seems that the methodology (not the message of the Gospel) in evangelizing and ministering to each group differs.

1. "Be merciful to those who doubt" (22)

This group is wavering between the teaching of the apostles and the teaching of the apostates. They go back and forth between conflicting opinions. They are becoming, if not already, duplicitous -that is "double minded." Blum remarks that they are "those who are hesitating - at odds with themselves."⁵³ The implication is that they have sincere questions that need answers. They are all knotted up inside - "earnest doubters who are unable to make up their minds for or against the truth."⁵⁴

** "What are some questions concerning your faith that you have had doubts about? How did people react to them?"

Our response to those in doubt is to be merciful. We must compassionately and patiently entertain and deal with their questions. We cannot rush past this! This is not the time to stridently denounce and belittle. Our purpose is not to win the argument at all cost. And yes, this will take time out of our busy schedules. It will probably involve at the least - weekly visits.

2. "Snatch Others from the Fire and Save Them." (23a)

This group demands urgent and direct (yet loving) confrontation. There must be an aggressiveness and boldness to our action. Why, because as Lucas and Green comment, these people are "actually playing with fire."⁵⁵ The picture here is graphic. It is of someone slipping and about to plummet into the fires of hell. If immediate heroic action is not taken, they will be lost forever. They have begun to swallow false teaching "hook line and sinker." Consequently, they have begun to engage in the very same immoral and deplorable behaviors of their teachers. And as we have seen, these unrepentant behaviors have eternal consequences. Yet all is not lost! It seems that they "will repent when their error is pointed out to them."⁵⁶

This mercy mission will involve confronting and exposing their behavior for what it is. You will need to be ready with explanations and arguments from Scripture. Remember, they will have been told that this (immoral) behavior is perfectly suitable for one who understands that he is set free from the Law or has been liberated by this new "progressive gospel (a gospel which minimizes, rationalizes, explains away as culturally bound, or excuses - if not condones - many of the sins listed in Proverbs 6:16-19, Ephesians 4: 29-32, 5:3-7, Colossians 3:5-10)." After all, they say, "God's wrath is an antiquated notion in which it is impossible for today's Christian to believe."⁵⁷ This is when it is absolutely essential to speak the truth, but to speak it in love!

** "Have you ever had to confront someone who has been the victim of false teaching or a false belief? What was the situation and how did you handle it?"

Group Work

1. Read the following:

3. "To Others Show Mercy, Mixed with Fear-Hating Even the Clothing Stained by Corrupted Flesh." (23b)

We are now nearing the end of the road. These people are fully involved in the sins of their teachers. Jude uses the picture of clothing that is filthy right down to the inner garments. The implication is that the depravity and dirtiness of their souls is so perverse that it has manifested itself everywhere in their lifestyle and actions.⁵⁸ Their sin has become an addiction. Yet Jude's command to "show

mercy" demonstrates that there is **no person** who is so irredeemably bad that God's forgiveness cannot wash away the stain. With genuine repentance and faith God can bring about a complete cleansing and provide forgiveness even to the most reprobate.⁵⁹ He can, as he did for us, take off the "grave clothes," the filthy rags, of our past life and replace them with the "grace clothes" of righteousness.

Accordingly, we are asked to extend mercy with caution. There must be a healthy fear lest we be entrapped in the same sins or fall prey to the same false teaching. We must hate and be repulsed by the sin that has (in direct contradiction to what they have been taught) enslaved them. Yet we are still obligated to reach out to them with the hope that God will intervene even in what looks like the most impossible of circumstances.

2. What are we to be careful about and what hope can we offer?

3. Who are those in need of mercy in your faith community and the community of around it (Here we are thinking more broadly of mercy missions needed not only to those influenced by false teachers or in need of evangelization, but also of those who are in poverty, disabled, shut-ins, struggling emotionally and spiritually, etc.)

4. What is something that your group could do as a "mercy mission?"

Lesson Wrap-Up

*When your groups have finished and if you still have time, **ask them to share (with the whole "church family") from their group discussion time one thought that was especially meaningful to them.

*At our next session we will be looking at verses 24 and 25. We will discover the thrilling hope found in a well known doxology.*Your **assignment for the next lesson** is to read the book of Jude again concentrating on verses 24 and 25. Make a "praise list" of things for which you were thankful to God throughout the events of their week.

Session Eleven

You Know You'll Win (Verses 24, 25)

I. Let's Get Started!

****What is the one characteristic or action of God that causes you to want to burst into praise every time you think about it? What praise song or hymn warms your heart every time you sing it? Why?**

II. Discovery Time

Jude closes the book with an invigorating moment of prayer and praise! As Reike comments, "It lifts the thoughts from earthly conflicts with which the author has been compelled to busy himself, up to the heavenly realms, where God is enthroned amidst eternal might and honor."⁶⁰ Jude reminds us that the journey in our struggle to defend and live the faith will have a glorious end. For the true believer of the Gospel, there is an unlimited reservoir of enablement found in the one we praise, Almighty God.

A. "To Him Who Is Able to Keep You from Falling" (24a)

The word translated by the NIV as "**keep**" carries with it the connotation of "to guard."⁶¹ God is constantly on guard when it comes to the believer. As Psalm 121:3 promises, "He will not let your foot slip - he who watches over you will not slumber." He preserves and protects us from falling. He keeps us from stumbling or tripping up. The idea here is of a surefooted horse that does not stumble and metaphorically of a good man who does not make moral lapses but journeys on in the way of truth without succumbing to error.⁶² What a comfort it is to know that God keeps us from falling into the deceitful traps set by false teachers and from becoming partners in their lifestyle of moral looseness and laxity.

****What are some nagging sin issues with which you struggle? How can this protective power of God help you the next time you're tempted to disobey and fall into sin?**

B. "And to Present You before the Glorious Presence without Fault and with Great Joy" (24b)

But there is more! The end of the journey for the believer culminates in standing before God in heaven. There are several wonderful truths to unpack here:

1. **God will make certain you cross the finish line.**

It is God and his Christ that guards us, causes us to stand, and will present us as the objects of his preserving love before him one day in heaven. We are the work of his powerful hands that cannot and will not fail.

2. The end of the line is the sanctuary of heaven.

God will answer the prayer of our Lord Jesus in John 17:24, "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world." Imagine standing safe and sound surrounded by the dazzling brilliance of the light of his glory - in a place of undiminished and uncorrupted beauty.

****What is it about heaven that appeals to you the most? Think of it in physical, emotional and spiritual terms.**

3. The work he began in you will be completed with absolute perfection!

Because of Christ's perfect sacrifice on our behalf, we will stand before God in the righteousness of his Son. He who was the spotless, blameless, faultless Lamb of God will make us just like himself (First Peter 1:18, 19). We will be a "radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish... holy and blameless (Ephesians 5: 27). We will stand there in absolute perfection, forever "free from accusation (Colossians 1:22)" even the accusations of the devil himself. What a blessing this is that after our lifelong struggle to keep the faith in a promiscuous and irreverent society. Jesus will triumph! Jesus will win, not just for us individually, but for the entire community of faith.

4. There is coming a day of boundless jubilation.

The heavens will rock with a festival of praise! This jubilation of God's people will come from their irrepressible joy over the fulfillment of all of God's purposes and promises (Isaiah 61:10, 11).⁶³

*** Group Work***

1. Read verse 25 and reflect and react to the following:

To the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and for ever more! Amen. (25)

C. Soli Deo Gloria - To God Alone Be the Glory! (25)

Jude now turns his attention toward the only one who is worthy to be the recipient of such praise - God himself. He is the only true God among all those false gods which would seek our allegiance. And as the one true God, he is the only one who can both promise and bring to completion our salvation. He is both God and Savior (See First Timothy 2:3, 4; Titus 3:4). He stands apart from and far above all his creation and therefore is not only worthy of its praise (Psalm 148:13), but is unchallengeable. His laws and sovereign rule cannot be disputed as these false

teachers have done. He alone establishes the rules. His salvation work cannot be altered or improved upon.

This regality is shown in the four characteristics or attributes that Jude describes to him. To him belongs the "**glory**." This is the radiant splendor that surrounds him and his moral excellence that demands our honor and respect (see Hebrews 1:3; Romans 3:23; Psalm 104:1, 2). "**Majesty**" refers to God's greatness in that he is far above and independent of his creation (Ephesians 4:6; Acts 17:24, 25). God is not dependent upon anyone or anything in his creation. "**Power**" refers to his ability to do anything that his holy will chooses (Jeremiah 30 2:17; Matthew 19:26; Ephesians 3:20; Second Corinthians 6:18). "**Authority**" is his sovereign freedom to make use of that power (Acts 1:7).

This great God has chosen to save us through the person and work of his Son Jesus Christ. Both the work of creation and of our salvation has been mediated through "**Jesus Christ our Lord**." He is the only way to the Father (John 14:1, 2, 6). Further, as God, he shares God's glory, majesty, power and authority.

These characteristics are the attributes of an unchanging God. God has always been a God of glory, majesty, power and authority. He was before the creation of the heavens and earth. He is at this very moment. He will forever be! Let the redeemed hear and be glad. Let the heavens resound with the praise of his glory. Let the festivity begin. Amen (let it be so)!

2. **Discuss** some of the items on your "**praise list**" from your homework and/or share the **lyrics** of your favorite worship songs. What **characteristic(s)** of God is the song alluding to?

Lesson Wrap-Up

*When your groups have finished and if you still have time, **ask them to share (with the whole "church family") from their group discussion time one thought that was especially meaningful to them.

*Our next session we will be looking back and celebrating the lessons that God has taught us from the book of Jude. This will be a "festival of praise" in contrast to the way that we have been doing our lessons. (**Next week** will be a time of singing, testimonies, reflections and a fellowship meal.)

*Your **assignment for the next lesson** is to read the book of Jude one more time. (In reading the book again and again, you are slowly committing parts of it to memory that will be very helpful to you in the future. God will draw from that reservoir of truth as you live your Christian life.) As an **alternative assignment**, you may want to read in your quiet time a very similar book, the book of Second Peter (three chapters). **Come next week ready to sing, praise and celebrate the God of our salvation!**

Session Twelve

Looking Back - Moving Forward

Session Snapshot

In this session you will:

1. Come together in a fellowship meal.
2. Follow with a time of praise and worship.
3. Give testimony of those lessons or principles you have learned and applied in your lives. Think not only in terms of looking back but how what you have learned will help you to move forward.
4. Conclude with small prayer groups offering up "conversational prayers" to God.

Notes

Here you may want to write down some of the praise or even prayer items that you have heard from other members of the group. You may also use this space to collect and write down some of your own praises and reflections.

Endnotes

Since we have included parts of the commentary I have included its endnotes here to reveal our sources.

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27. Lucas and Green, p. 185.
28. For some helpful discussion see Bigg, Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*. In *The International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1902), p. 329; Hiebert, p. 238; Bauckham, pp. 53, 54.
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31. See Blum, p. 391, Michael Green, p. 182, Hiebert, p. 243.
32. See Lucas and Green, p. 189.
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