

Dr. David A. deSilva,

2 Peter and Jude

Session 6

1) Abstract, 2) Briefing Document, 3) Study Guide, 4) FAQs

1) Abstract:

The provided text offers an in-depth analysis of the **Book of Jude**, focusing on its rhetorical strategies and theological arguments against false teachers, or "interlopers," within early Christian communities. It highlights Jude's use of **contrasting statements** to distinguish the faithful from those who seek personal gain, comparing them to historical examples of rebellion from the Old Testament. The analysis also explores the **apostolic warnings** against such individuals and emphasizes the importance of **contending for the faith** through mutual encouragement, prayer, and the restoration of those who falter. Finally, the text discusses the **canonical history of Jude**, including debates surrounding its inclusion due to its citation of the non-canonical **First Book of Enoch**, and concludes by underscoring Jude's enduring relevance as a guide for living a blameless life in alignment with God's grace and righteousness.

2) Briefing Document:

Detailed Briefing Document: Main Themes and Key Ideas in Jude

This briefing document summarizes the core themes and most important ideas presented in the provided excerpts from Dr. David A. DeSilva's "2 Peter and Jude, Session 6." The text focuses on the book of Jude, analyzing its rhetorical strategies, key warnings, and enduring relevance for the Christian faith.

I. Jude's Rhetorical Strategy: Contrasting Interlopers with the Congregation

Jude employs a deliberate rhetorical strategy to "drive strategic rhetorical wedges between the two parties" – the "interlopers" (false teachers) and the "congregation or congregations Jude addresses." This is achieved through "two pairs of parallel, contrasting statements":

- **"These people" (v. 16, 19) vs. "but as for you, beloved" (v. 17, 20).** This direct contrast highlights the fundamental differences between the two groups.

II. Characterizing the Interlopers

DeSilva meticulously details Jude's portrayal of the interlopers, emphasizing their negative characteristics and motivations:

- **Grumblers and Fault-Finders:** They are "grumblers, finding fault with their lot while going after their own desires." DeSilva notes the strategic nature of this accusation, linking it to the "Exodus generation, particularly in the two episodes that Jude has already recalled. The rebellion of the people en masse at Kadesh Barnea in Numbers 14 and the power play of Korah and his party in Numbers 16."
- **Self-Serving and Driven by Desire:** Their grumbling is possibly "directed against the human condition, which the interlopers perhaps use as an excuse for making the best and getting the most out of life in the present." However, Jude suggests their "commitment to gratifying their own impulses and yearnings that is to blame for the ills of the human condition." They "continue to nourish the disease at the root of our condition."
- **Charlatans and Flatterers:** They are depicted as "merely Christianized versions of the sophists and the religious charlatans clamoring for attention in the city marketplace." They "make great claims for themselves and their spiritual insight in their speech while fawning over those from whom they hope to profit."
- **Scoffers and Divisive:** Jude labels them "scoffers," which is "quite apt, particularly for the interlopers whose influence Jude seeks to undermine." Their scornful attitude is directed "toward the faith handed down once for all to the saints and the constraints that walking in line with the faith puts on

indulging one's own desires and pleasures." They are also "the ones creating divisions, worldly-minded people, devoid of the spirit."

- **Operating on Natural Intelligence, Devoid of Spirit:** Despite their "pretensions to charismatic experiences and fresh revelations, their dreaming," Jude asserts they are "in fact just operating on their natural intelligence and instincts." This is the meaning of the Greek word *psychikoi*, translated as "worldly-minded." Their practices show them to be "operating on the level of any other animal."

III. Apostolic Warnings Against Such Individuals

Jude reinforces his condemnation by recalling "warnings they had previously received about such people."

- **Recalling Apostolic Teaching:** Jude reminds his audience, "But as for you, beloved, remember the words spoken in advance by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how they used to say to you that in the last time there will be scoffers going after their own godless desires."
- **Resonance with Old Testament Prophecy:** The catchword "ungodly" in Jude's representation "resonates with the language of 1 Enoch 1:9 cited above in Jude verses 14 and 15, where again the lexeme *aseb*, the lexeme for ungodly, appeared three times."
- **Consistency Across New Testament:** While not a verbatim match to any single apostolic text, this warning "might represent a recollection of their oral teaching or simply a paraphrase of well-known and widespread warnings against self-serving false teachers." DeSilva points to similar admonitions from Jesus (Matthew 7 and 24), Paul (Acts 20, 1 Timothy), and 1 John.

IV. The Call to the Congregation: Contending for the Faith

In contrast to the interlopers, Jude exhorts his audience to a specific way of life, emphasizing the positive actions required for faithfulness:

- **Building Up in Most Holy Faith and Praying in the Spirit:** "But you, beloved, as you keep building yourselves up in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God as you await the mercy of our Lord

Jesus Christ unto life eternal." This highlights the role of the Holy Spirit in their perseverance.

- **Steadfastness and Blamelessness:** The faith "initiates people into a way of life that promises blamelessness before God in God's glory, not gratification of any impulse that presents a stumbling block to blamelessness."
- **"Contending for the Faith" - A Two-Fold Mandate: Negative Aspect:** "Negatively resisting the influence of those who claim to be sisters or brothers and yet have not submitted themselves to the authority of the apostolic witness to God's purposes for those who are in Christ."
- **Positive Aspect:** "Positively allowing the faith to take ever deeper root and bear ever fuller fruit in one's own life and facilitating the same in the lives of one's sisters and brothers in Christ."
- **Holiness and Divine Love:** "The demands of holiness and the experience of divine love are not regarded here as at all in opposition. The latter calls us to fulfill the former. Walking in the former positions us to continue in the latter." Genuine believers focus on "honoring the God who called them into his love and to living with a view to finding mercy, to standing blameless."
- **Mutual Responsibility and Restoration:** Jude commissions his hearers to "serve as a guardrail, as it were, for the other. Committing themselves to keep one another on track." This involves showing mercy to the uncertain, saving some "seizing them from the fire," and having "mercy on some with fear, hating even the garments polluted by the flesh."
- **Discerning and Restoring:** This duty "grates against our modern sensibilities... But Jude does indeed call Christ followers to judge in the sense of discern when a sister or brother is moving away from alignment with the blamelessness to which God calls us. And to do this with a view to restoring that sister's or that brother's secure footing on the path to eternal life."
- **New Testament Precedents:** DeSilva connects this to other New Testament voices, citing Jesus (Matthew 18), Paul (Galatians 6), and James (James 5) as examples of communal care and restoration.

- **Influence, Not Expulsion (of Interlopers):** While Paul often advocated expulsion, Jude "at no point... urge[s them] to expel these teachers." His concern is "that the influence flows in one direction only."

V. The Doxology: God's Ability to Preserve

Jude concludes his letter not with typical letter elements but with a "well-crafted doxology, that is, a statement praising and blessing God," likely intended for a worship setting.

- **God's Preserving Power:** "To the one who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand before his glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority before all time and now and into all the ages. Amen."
- **Assurance of Blamelessness:** Despite the danger posed by the interlopers, Jude offers "the assurance that God himself is able to keep and by implication desirous of keeping the believers from stumbling, but rather to preserve them blameless in God's presence so that they will have no cause for shame when they stand before God's glory." This preservation is contingent on believers "keep[ing] themselves in God's love through their faithfulness to the faith entrusted to the saints once for all."

VI. The Location of Authority: Apostolic Tradition, Not Personal Experience

A crucial theme throughout Jude's letter is "the location of authority, particularly of the authority to lay out the parameters of faithful response to God's saving acts in Christ."

- **Against Charismatic Experience and Personal Revelation:** Jude "insists that this authority is not located in the charismatic or spiritual experiences of any individual or group among the churches." It is "not based on experience or a fresh assessment of what is reasonable for flesh and blood humans to attain... It is not in personal experiences of alleged revelation."
- **Rooted in Common Tradition and Apostolic Witness:** Authority is found "in the common tradition that has been handed along to the saints once for all. It is based on the revelation of God through Jesus and the apostles' witness,

which is itself consonant with the revelation of God's righteousness in the Jewish scriptures and the para-scriptural tradition."

- **Faithfulness to Received Truth:** Any teacher's authority "derives in turn from that teacher's faithfulness to and consonant with the faith entrusted to the saints once for all." While understanding may deepen and discernment in new contexts is needed, the "trajectory upon which God had set the church... and the apostles' teaching, cannot be allowed to move away from a commitment to blamelessness before God in the direction that our own desires or mere natural instincts... would lead us."

VII. Textual Criticism of Jude 22-23 (Brief Note)

DeSilva highlights the complexities of textual criticism, using Jude 22-23 as an example of significant textual issues. Varying manuscripts present either two or three restorative actions, and there's debate over whether the first action involves "having mercy" or "convicting." While some early manuscripts prefer two clauses, the essential agreement of Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, and Sinaiticus "tend to tip the scales in favor of their representation of Jude's phrasing" for three independent clauses, with the probable reconstruction emphasizing mercy.

VIII. Jude's Reception and Canonical Status

DeSilva traces the historical reception of Jude, noting its early use and eventual canonical acceptance.

- **Early Use by 2 Peter:** The "earliest sign that Jude was being read and used in the early church appears, perhaps surprisingly, in 2 Peter," which "appears to weave in the content of Jude verses 5 to 18 into his own denunciation," modifying it for a less Jewish audience (e.g., replacing 1 Enoch references with scriptural texts).
- **Ammunition Against New Teachers:** Jude's letter continued to be used "as ammunition against new, innovative teachers emerging among congregations" in the 2nd through 4th centuries, such as Clement of Alexandria using it against the Carpocratians.

- **Debate Over Authority: Luther's View:** Martin Luther saw Jude as a "pseudonymous digest of 2 Peter" and thus "did not hold the document itself to be apostolic and viewed it, moreover, as redundant."
- **Calvin's View:** John Calvin "valued the text enough to write a commentary on it."
- **19th-Century Criticism:** Later writers were "even more vocal in their criticism of the text as a specimen of post-apostolic thinking, inferior to the more creative and innovative thinking of a Paul or a John."
- **Contemporary Relevance:** The "ethos of the late 20th and early 21st century has certainly also not been conducive to embracing Jude with its vision of a rather straight and narrow road to finding mercy on the day of judgment, and its intolerance of the alternative voices and practices of the teachers it denounces."
- **Canonical Acceptance:** While debated (Origen knew of debates, Peshitta initially omitted it), Athanasius included Jude in his 367 AD canonical list.
- **1 Enoch Citation as a Factor:** Jude's citation of 1 Enoch was a significant factor in the debate. While 2 Peter purged these references (perhaps due to obscurity or distaste), some (Tertullian, Ethiopic Orthodox Church) viewed it as an endorsement of 1 Enoch. Jerome noted sectors denying its authority on this basis, while Bede defended Jude by arguing the quoted verse was not objectionable.

IX. Enduring Gifts of Jude

DeSilva concludes by identifying several "gifts" that Jude's presence in the New Testament offers:

- **God's Grace Has a Trajectory:** It reminds us that "accommodating the gospel to our old self, or as Jude puts it, transforming the favor of our God into indecent self-indulgence, amounts to a rejection of our Lord, for it is a rejection of what God, in God's grace, is seeking to accomplish in us through our redemption in Christ." Instead, grace "leads us to conform our old self to the gospel, to bear us along toward blamelessness, and this is not a trajectory that we dare diverge from for our own gratification."

- **Consistency of God's Righteousness and Judgment:** Jude reminds us of God's consistent judgment against unrighteousness, citing examples from the rebel angels, Sodom, and the Exodus generation. "He remains ever the God in whom we are beloved and before whose righteousness we will be held accountable."
- **Concise Picture of Contending for the Faith:** Jude provides a clear understanding of this concept, involving "investing in mutual encouragement, tapping into the support of the Holy Spirit through prayer, and courageously reaching out to and restoring those whose spiritual foothold is faltering."

3) Study Guide:

Jude's Admonitions and Canonical Standing: A Study Guide

I. Overview of Jude's Message and Rhetorical Strategy

Jude's letter employs a strong rhetorical strategy to distinguish between disruptive "interlopers" and the faithful congregation. This involves:

- **Contrasting Statements:** Jude repeatedly uses parallel contrasts (e.g., "these people" vs. "but as for you, beloved") to highlight the fundamental differences between the two groups.
- **Characterization of Interlopers:** They are depicted as "grumblers," driven by their own desires, uttering "lofty things" for profit, and making great claims for themselves and their spiritual insight while flattering others. They are "worldly-minded," "devoid of the spirit," and create divisions.
- **Connection to Old Testament Examples:** Jude strategically links the interlopers' behavior (e.g., grumbling) to negative examples from the Exodus generation (Kadesh Barnea, Korah's rebellion) to underscore their historical parallels and anticipated fate.
- **Anticipation of Apostolic Warnings:** Jude reminds his audience of prior apostolic warnings about "scoffers going after their own godless desires" in the "last time," reinforcing the legitimacy of his concerns.

- **Emphasis on the Holy Spirit:** The letter highlights the audience's endowment with the Holy Spirit as a distinguishing factor and a means of steadfastness in faith, contrasting it with the interlopers' reliance on "natural intelligence and instincts."

II. Contending for the Faith

Jude outlines what it means to "contend for the faith," encompassing both negative and positive actions:

- **Negative Aspect:** Resisting the influence of those who deviate from the apostolic witness and refuse to follow the Holy Spirit toward blameless practice. This includes identifying and countering "scoffers" who disdain the "faith handed down once for all."
- **Positive Aspect:** Allowing faith to deepen and bear fruit in one's own life.
- Facilitating the same spiritual growth in other believers ("sisters and brothers in Christ").
- Maintaining a specific orientation and priorities: remaining in God's love and anticipating the mercy of Jesus Christ unto eternal life.
- Embracing the demands of holiness, which are seen as intertwined with divine love.
- **Communal Responsibility:** Actively intervening to restore those whose spiritual footing has faltered. This involves:
 - Showing mercy to the uncertain.
 - Saving some from spiritual danger ("seizing them from the fire").
 - Exercising discernment ("judge" in the sense of discern) to identify when a believer is straying from blamelessness, with the goal of restoration.
 - Acknowledging the necessity of communal reinforcement for individual faith and walk.

III. Authority and Tradition

Jude's letter strongly asserts the location of authority in the church:

- **Not in Individual Experience:** Authority is not found in charismatic experiences, fresh revelations, personal assessments of what is "reasonable," or alleged personal revelations.
- **In Common Tradition:** Authority resides in the "common tradition that has been handed along to the saints once for all."
- **Revelation of God:** It is based on God's revelation through Jesus and the apostolic witness, which aligns with God's righteousness in Jewish scriptures and para-scriptural tradition.
- **Teacher's Faithfulness:** Any teacher's authority is derived from their faithfulness to and consistency with the "faith entrusted to the saints once for all."
- **Trajectory of Blamelessness:** The church's trajectory, set by God and apostolic teaching, must not deviate from a commitment to blamelessness toward personal desires or natural instincts.

IV. Textual Issues in Jude 22-23

Understanding the textual variations in Jude 22-23 highlights the complexities of textual criticism:

- **Debate over Number of Actions:** Scholars debate whether Jude prescribes two or three restorative actions (independent clauses).
- **Three Clauses:** Supported by Codex Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, and Sinaiticus (corrector). These often suggest "have mercy," "save," and "have mercy."
- **Two Clauses:** Supported by Papyrus 72 and Codex Ephraim Rescripti. These often suggest "snatch/convict" and "have mercy/save."
- **Debate over First Action:** The nature of the first action (mercy vs. convicting) is also disputed.
- **Mercy:** Supported by Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and P72 (which blends actions).
- **Convict:** Supported by Alexandrinus and Ephraim Rescripti.
- **Probable Reconstruction:** Based on the weight of witnesses (Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, Sinaiticus), a probable reconstruction leans towards three

actions: "show mercy upon some who are uncertain," "save some, seizing them from the fire," "have mercy on some with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh."

V. Canonical Standing and Historical Reception of Jude

Jude's journey to canonical acceptance was not without debate:

- **Early Use:** The earliest sign of Jude's use is in 2 Peter, which appears to borrow content from Jude, adapting it for a different audience (e.g., replacing 1 Enoch references with more familiar scriptural texts). Jude was used as "ammunition" against new, innovative teachers in the 2nd-4th centuries (e.g., Clement of Alexandria against the Carpocratians).
- **Debate Points:**
Citation of 1 Enoch: This was a significant factor in debates over Jude's authority.
- **Objection:** Some denied Jude's canonical authority precisely because it cited a non-canonical text. (Jerome, Venerable Bede, who considered 1 Enoch to contain "incredible things" and "clear lies").
- **Defense/Endorsement:** Others (Origen, Tertullian, Ethiopic Orthodox Church) accepted Jude's authority and, in some cases, viewed the citation as an endorsement of 1 Enoch's value and even canonicity.
- **Redundancy/Inferiority:** Martin Luther considered Jude a "pseudonymous digest of 2 Peter," redundant and not truly apostolic. 19th-century writers criticized it as a specimen of "post-apostolic thinking," inferior to Paul or John.
- **Intolerance:** The ethos of the late 20th and early 21st century has been less conducive to Jude's "straight and narrow road" vision and "intolerance of alternative voices."
- **Canonical Acceptance:** Origen accepted it, but knew of debates in the early 3rd century.
- Omitted in earlier Syriac New Testament (Peshitta), but included by 6th century.
- Athanasius included Jude in his canonical list in 367 AD.

- **Modern Value:** Despite historical criticisms, the text offers valuable reminders:
- God's grace has a trajectory toward blamelessness, not self-indulgence.
- God's righteousness and judgment of unrighteousness are consistent.
- A concise picture of "contending for the faith," involving mutual encouragement, reliance on the Holy Spirit, and restoring faltering believers.

VI. Key Theological Concepts

- **Blamelessness:** A central theme, representing the goal of God's work in believers through Christ and the Spirit.
- **Holiness:** Seen as integral to experiencing divine love and fulfilling God's calling.
- **God's Grace and Judgment:** Grace is not an excuse for indulgence but leads toward transformation; God's judgment is consistent against unrighteousness.
- **Apostolic Tradition:** The foundational source of authority for faith and practice.
- **Communal Responsibility:** The imperative for believers to care for and restore one another's spiritual walk.

Quiz: Jude's Message and Canonical Standing

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. How does Jude rhetorically differentiate between the interlopers and his audience?
2. List three characteristics Jude uses to describe the "interlopers."
3. How does Jude connect the interlopers' behavior to the Old Testament?
4. What is the main difference Jude highlights between the interlopers and the audience regarding their spiritual nature?
5. According to Jude, what does "contending for the faith" positively involve for believers?

6. Explain Jude's view on the true source of authority within the church.
7. Briefly describe one of the significant textual issues found in Jude 22-23.
8. Why was Jude's citation of 1 Enoch a point of debate regarding its canonical status?
9. How did Martin Luther view the book of Jude, and what was his primary criticism?
10. Beyond historical context, what contemporary value does the text of Jude offer, according to the source material?

Answer Key for Quiz

1. Jude rhetorically differentiates between the interlopers and his audience by using sharp, parallel contrasts. He frequently uses phrases like "these people" when referring to the interlopers, immediately followed by "but as for you, beloved" to address the faithful, thereby creating a clear distinction and positioning the audience against the rival teachers.
2. Jude describes the interlopers as "grumblers," people who go after their "own desires," and those whose mouth "utters lofty things" while they "flatter for the sake of profit." He also labels them "worldly-minded people, devoid of the spirit," who create divisions.
3. Jude connects the interlopers' behavior to the Old Testament by calling them "grumblers," a characteristic of the Exodus generation. He specifically links their grumbling to the rebellions at Kadesh Barnea (Numbers 14) and Korah's power play (Numbers 16), suggesting a parallel in their unfaithfulness and anticipated fate.
4. Jude highlights that the interlopers are "worldly-minded people, devoid of the spirit," operating on "natural intelligence and instincts" like animals. In contrast, the audience has been "endowed with the Holy Spirit," in whom they are to pray and remain steadfast, ensuring they are guided by the Spirit, not passions.
5. Positively, "contending for the faith" involves allowing the faith to take deeper root and bear fuller fruit in one's own life, and facilitating the same in others. It also means maintaining oneself in God's love, looking expectantly toward the

mercy of Jesus Christ, and embracing communal responsibility for one another's steadfastness.

6. Jude insists that true authority in the church is not located in individual charismatic experiences, fresh revelations, or personal insights. Instead, it resides in the "common tradition that has been handed along to the saints once for all," which is based on God's revelation through Jesus and the apostolic witness, consistent with Jewish scriptures.
7. One significant textual issue in Jude 22-23 is the debate over whether Jude prescribes two or three restorative actions (independent clauses). Different ancient manuscripts (like Vaticanus vs. Papyrus 72) present varying numbers of commands, and also differ on the exact nature of the first command, whether it's "have mercy" or "convict."
8. Jude's citation of 1 Enoch, a non-canonical Jewish text, was a significant point of debate for its canonical status. Some early church fathers argued against Jude's authority because it quoted from a book considered uninspired or problematic, while others defended Jude's authority, sometimes even using its citation to endorse 1 Enoch itself.
9. Martin Luther regarded Jude as a "pseudonymous digest of 2 Peter," implying he did not consider it a genuinely apostolic document. His primary criticism was that the content was "derivatively apostolic" and, more importantly, "redundant" given its similarities to 2 Peter.
10. Beyond historical context, the text of Jude offers contemporary value by reminding us that God's grace has a clear trajectory toward blamelessness, not self-indulgence. It also emphasizes the consistency of God's righteousness and judgment, and provides a concise picture of what it means to contend for the faith through mutual encouragement, prayer, and restoring those who falter.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze Jude's rhetorical strategies, particularly his use of contrasting statements and Old Testament allusions, to understand how he seeks to persuade his audience against the interlopers.

2. Discuss the concept of "contending for the faith" as presented in Jude. What are its negative and positive dimensions, and how does Jude emphasize the communal responsibility of believers in this process?
3. Evaluate Jude's understanding of authority in the church. How does he distinguish true authority from the claims of the interlopers, and what are the implications of his emphasis on "the faith handed down once for all"?
4. Examine the historical reception and canonical debates surrounding the book of Jude. What were the main arguments for and against its inclusion in the New Testament canon, and how did its citation of 1 Enoch play a role?
5. Discuss the theological implications of Jude's closing doxology (Jude 24-25). How does it affirm God's character and power in relation to the believers' journey toward blamelessness, and how does this reassurance relate to the preceding warnings and calls to action?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Apostolic Warning:** Prior admonitions given by the apostles, recalled by Jude, about the emergence of false teachers and scoffers in the "last time."
- **Aseb (lexeme):** Greek word meaning "ungodly," used multiple times in Jude, particularly resonating with language from 1 Enoch.
- **Blamelessness:** A central concept in Jude, representing the state of purity and righteousness that God seeks to accomplish in believers through Christ and the Spirit, enabling them to stand without shame before God's glory.
- **Canonical Authority:** The recognized status of a text as inspired scripture, accepted as authoritative by the church.
- **Carpocratians:** An early 3rd-century Gnostic group active in Egypt, against whom Clement of Alexandria used the text of Jude.
- **Contending for the Faith:** The active and ongoing effort required of believers to preserve and uphold the core truths of the Christian faith, both by resisting false teaching and by building up one another in spiritual practice.
- **Doxology:** A liturgical expression of praise to God, often found at the end of epistles, as in Jude 24-25.

- **Exodus Generation:** The Israelites who left Egypt, many of whom "grumbled" and rebelled against God, serving as a historical warning in Jude.
- **False Teachers (Interlopers):** The individuals or groups Jude addresses who are causing divisions, promoting self-indulgence, and challenging the apostolic tradition.
- **Grumblers:** A specific characteristic Jude applies to the interlopers, linking them to the rebellious Israelites of the Exodus generation.
- **Kadesh Barnea:** A location referenced in Numbers 14, recalling an episode of collective rebellion and grumbling by the Israelites.
- **Korah's Party:** Referenced in Numbers 16, recalling a power play and rebellion against Moses and Aaron, serving as a negative example in Jude.
- **Para-scriptural tradition:** Religious traditions or writings existing alongside and often influencing the interpretation of canonical scriptures (e.g., 1 Enoch).
- **Peshitta:** An early Syriac (Aramaic dialect) version of the Bible, which initially omitted Jude but included it by the 6th century.
- **Pseudonymous Digest:** A term used by Martin Luther to describe Jude, implying he believed it was written under a false name and was a summary or adaptation of 2 Peter.
- **Psychikoi:** A Greek word translated as "worldly-minded" in Jude 19, signifying those who operate on natural intelligence and instincts rather than the Holy Spirit.
- **Scoffers:** A term Jude uses for false teachers, highlighting their scornful attitude toward the established faith and its constraints.
- **Sophists:** Ancient Greek teachers of philosophy and rhetoric, known for making lofty claims and often speaking for profit, a comparison Jude implies for the interlopers.
- **Textual Criticism:** The scholarly discipline of analyzing and comparing ancient manuscripts to determine the most accurate and original wording of a text, exemplified by the discussion of Jude 22-23.

4) FAQs:

1. Who are the "interlopers" that Jude addresses, and what are their characteristics?

The "interlopers" are rival teachers who are causing divisions within the congregation(s) Jude addresses. Jude strongly contrasts them with his audience to undermine their authority and influence. Their characteristics include:

- **Grumblers and Fault-Finders:** They complain about their circumstances ("their lot") and use it as an excuse to pursue their own desires, possibly rationalizing a "short and sorrowful" life by seeking immediate gratification. This grumbling is strategically linked by Jude to the rebellious Exodus generation.
- **Self-Serving and Deceptive:** They are described as "going after their own desires," uttering "lofty things," and flattering others "for the sake of profit." Jude compares them to sophists and religious charlatans who make grand claims about their spiritual insight while seeking personal gain.
- **"Worldly-Minded" and Devoid of the Spirit:** Despite any claims to charismatic experiences or revelations, Jude asserts that they operate solely on their natural intelligence and instincts (Greek: *psychikoi*). Their practices are animalistic, lacking genuine spiritual understanding.
- **Scoffers:** They exhibit a scornful attitude towards the established "faith handed down once for all to the saints," particularly the constraints it places on indulging personal desires and pleasures.
- **Creators of Divisions:** Jude explicitly states they are "the ones creating divisions."
- **Disdain for Apostolic Tradition:** They reject the authority of the apostolic tradition and the moral "guardrails" it sets for believers.

2. How does Jude urge his audience to respond to these interlopers and "contend for the faith"?

Jude outlines a multifaceted response for his audience, emphasizing both negative resistance and positive spiritual growth:

- **Remember Apostolic Warnings:** The audience is urged to recall prior warnings from the apostles about "scoffers going after their own godless desires" in "the last time." This reinforces the interlopers' nature as predicted false teachers.
- **Build Up in Most Holy Faith and Pray in the Holy Spirit:** This involves continually deepening their understanding and practice of the established faith and maintaining a vibrant prayer life guided by the Holy Spirit. This spiritual grounding counters the interlopers' worldly-mindedness.
- **Keep Themselves in the Love of God and Await Mercy:** Believers are to preserve a specific orientation and set of priorities: staying within God's love and looking expectantly towards the mercy of Jesus Christ for eternal life. This contrasts with the interlopers' focus on self-gratification.
- **Negative Resistance:** Contending for the faith involves "negatively resisting the influence of those who claim to be sisters or brothers" but have not submitted to apostolic authority or the Holy Spirit's direction towards blamelessness.
- **Positive Cultivation:** It also means "positively allowing the faith to take ever deeper root and bear ever fuller fruit in one's own life and facilitating the same in the lives of one's sisters and brothers in Christ."
- **Mutual Care and Restoration:** Jude commissions his hearers to act as "guardrails" for one another. This includes showing mercy to those who are uncertain, saving others from spiritual danger ("seizing them from the fire"), and restoring those whose "foothold on the path of blamelessness has faltered." This involves discernment and intervention, even if it "grates against our modern sensibilities" of non-interference.

3. What is the role of "blamelessness" and "holiness" in Jude's message?

"Blamelessness" and "holiness" are central to Jude's message, representing the desired outcome of a faithful life in contrast to the interlopers' self-indulgence:

- **Divine Goal:** The faith initiates people into a way of life that "promises blamelessness before God in God's glory." This is the ultimate aim God is seeking to accomplish in believers through their redemption in Christ.

- **Contrast with Self-Gratification:** Jude highlights that genuine faith does not lead to "gratification of any impulse that presents a stumbling block to blamelessness." The interlopers, conversely, prioritize gratifying their desires over the demands of holiness.
- **Link to Divine Love:** Holiness and divine love are not in opposition but are mutually reinforcing: divine love "calls us to fulfill" holiness, and "walking in the former positions us to continue in the latter."
- **Preparation for Judgment:** Believers are to live "with a view to finding mercy, to standing blameless" before God and Christ, ensuring they "will have no cause for shame when they stand before God's glory." The doxology at the end of the letter emphasizes God's ability to "keep you from stumbling and to make you stand before his glory blameless with great joy."
- **Path of Discipleship:** The path to eternal life is a "straight and narrow road" of blamelessness, emphasizing a consistent commitment to God's standards rather than diverging for personal gratification.

4. How does Jude establish authority in his letter, and what is its source?

Jude establishes authority by contrasting the interlopers' self-derived claims with a divinely revealed and apostolically transmitted tradition:

- **Apostolic Witness:** Jude repeatedly refers to the "apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" and their "warnings" as a key source of authority. This "apostolic witness to God's purposes for those who are in Christ" serves as a benchmark against which the interlopers fall short.
- **"Faith Handed Down Once for All":** The primary source of authority is described as "the faith handed down once for all to the saints" or "the common tradition that has been handed along to the saints once for all." This emphasizes the definitive and unchangeable nature of Christian truth.
- **Revelation of God through Jesus:** The authority is "based on the revelation of God through Jesus" himself.
- **Consonance with Jewish Scriptures and Para-scriptural Tradition:** This revelation is presented as being "consonant with the revelation of God's

righteousness in the Jewish scriptures and the para-scriptural tradition" (such as 1 Enoch, which Jude cites).

- **Rejection of Individual Experience:** Jude explicitly rejects the idea that authority is located in "charismatic or spiritual experiences of any individual or group," "personal experiences of alleged revelation," or "a fresh assessment of what is reasonable for flesh and blood humans to attain."
- **Faithfulness to Tradition:** For any teacher in the church to have authority, it must derive from "that teacher's faithfulness to and consonant with the faith entrusted to the saints once for all." While collective understanding may deepen and new contexts require discernment, the church's trajectory cannot deviate from blamelessness driven by personal desires.

5. What is the significance of Jude's references to Old Testament and extra-biblical examples?

Jude's references to Old Testament and extra-biblical examples are crucial for providing historical precedents and strong arguments concerning the fate of the interlopers:

- **Historical Parallels and Warnings:** By recalling events like the rebellion at Kadesh Barnea (Numbers 14) and Korah's power play (Numbers 16), Jude strategically connects the interlopers' grumbling and rebellious nature to the Exodus generation. These serve as powerful warnings about divine judgment for similar defiance.
- **Prophetic Word of Enoch:** Jude cites 1 Enoch 1:9, calling it a "prophetic word" that acts as a "second witness" against the interlopers (in addition to apostolic warnings). This highlights the consistency of God's judgment against the ungodly across different eras.
- **Reinforcing God's Consistency:** The overall message underscores "the consistency of God's righteousness and God's judgment of all that is unrighteous." God's past actions against rebel angels, Sodom, and the disobedient Exodus generation demonstrate His unchanging character and the consequences for those who reject His authority.

- **Ammunition Against False Teachers:** These examples serve as "strong arguments concerning their fate on the basis of historical examples or precedents," vividly illustrating the consequences of the interlopers' behavior and serving as a deterrent for the audience.

6. What textual complexities exist in Jude's letter, particularly concerning verses 22-23?

Jude's letter, particularly verses 22-23, presents significant textual complexities that highlight the challenges of textual criticism:

- **Differing Number of Restorative Actions:** Ancient manuscripts differ on whether Jude prescribes two or three independent clauses for restorative actions. Some witnesses (Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, Sinaiticus corrector) suggest three, while others (Papyrus 72, Ephraim Rescripti, 9th-century manuscripts) favor two.
- **Nature of the First Action:** There's also disagreement on whether the first action involves "having mercy" or "convicting."
- **Scribal Tendencies:** The general rule of preferring the shorter reading (as scribes tend to expand text) is challenged here, as the longer reading (three clauses) is supported by significant early witnesses like Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, and Sinaiticus.
- **Reconciling Readings:** While the preference leans towards three independent clauses, the issue of the first action remains debated. The readings in Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and P72 suggest "having mercy" for both the first and third clauses, while Alexandrinus might have altered the first action to "convict" for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.
- **Probable Reconstruction:** Based on these considerations, a probable reconstruction of Jude 22-23 reads: "show mercy upon some who are uncertain, save some, seizing them from the fire, have mercy on some with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh."
- **Invisible Task of Textual Criticism:** This example demonstrates the intricate and often "invisible task" of textual criticism for most readers, revealing how

scholars work to reconstruct the most probable original text from varying manuscript traditions.

7. What was Jude's reception and canonical status in the early church, and why was it debated?

Jude's reception and canonical status in the early church were debated, particularly due to its citation of an extra-biblical text:

- **Early Use in 2 Peter:** The earliest sign of Jude's use is in 2 Peter, which appears to weave in content from Jude (verses 5-18), suggesting Jude was circulating and known. However, 2 Peter notably omits references to 1 Enoch, possibly due to its obscurity or distaste for extra-biblical texts.
- **Ammunition Against Innovative Teachers:** From the 2nd to 4th centuries, Jude's letter was used as "ammunition against new, innovative teachers," as seen with Clement of Alexandria using it against the Carpocratians.
- **Canonical Debates:** While Origen accepted its authority in the early 3rd century, he was aware of ongoing debates. The earlier Syriac New Testament (Peshitta) omitted Jude, though it was included by the 6th century. Athanasius, however, listed Jude among his canonical writings in 367 AD.
- **The 1 Enoch Controversy:** The primary reason for debate was Jude's citation of 1 Enoch. Jerome (4th/5th century) noted sectors of the church denying Jude's authority specifically for using a "non-canonical text." Bede (8th century) discussed its problematic nature, though he defended Jude by arguing the quoted verse itself was not objectionable.
- **Differing Views on 1 Enoch:** Some early church fathers, like Tertullian, promoted the value of 1 Enoch and saw Jude's citation as an endorsement of its authority, a tradition maintained by the Ethiopic Orthodox Church.
- **Later Criticisms:** Martin Luther viewed Jude as a "pseudonymous digest of 2 Peter" and redundant, thus not fully apostolic. 19th-century writers also criticized it as "post-apostolic thinking," inferior to Paul or John. The "ethos of the late 20th and early 21st century" has also been less receptive to Jude's "straight and narrow road" and "intolerance of alternative voices."

8. What are the key takeaways or "gifts" that Jude's letter offers to believers today?

Jude's letter, despite its historical complexities, offers several valuable "gifts" to believers:

- **God's Grace Has a Trajectory:** Jude reminds us that "God's grace has a trajectory." It leads us to conform our "old self to the gospel" and moves us "toward blamelessness." Diverting from this path for self-gratification (transforming God's favor into "indecent self-indulgence") is a rejection of Christ and God's redemptive purpose.
- **Consistency of God's Righteousness and Judgment:** The letter reinforces that the God of Jesus Christ is the same God who judged past unrighteousness (rebel angels, Sodom, disobedient Exodus generation). This underscores His unwavering righteousness and the accountability believers have before Him, even as they are beloved.
- **Concise Picture of Contending for the Faith:** Jude provides a clear guide on what it means to "contend for the faith." This involves:
 - **Mutual Encouragement:** Investing in the steadfastness of fellow believers.
 - **Holy Spirit's Support through Prayer:** Tapping into divine strength.
 - **Courageous Restoration:** Reaching out to and helping those whose spiritual footing is faltering, demonstrating mercy and discernment even when it's challenging.
 - **Communal Reinforcement:** It highlights the necessity of "communal or social reinforcement of the faith and walk of each individual member of the body of Christ" for spiritual security and growth.
- **God's Preservation:** Despite the dangers posed by false teachers, Jude closes with the assurance that "God himself is able to keep... the believers from stumbling," preserving them "blameless in God's presence" so they have no shame on judgment day.