

Exegetical Notes for Jude 17-23

KEY

ACCS = Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament XI (Gerald Bray, Ed.)

ATR = Word Pictures in the New Testament (A.T. Robertson).

BAG = Bauer Arndt and Gingrich: A Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.

BAW = Syntax of New Testament Greek (James A. Brooks and Carlton Winbery).

BKBC = Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: John, Hebrews - Revelation (Craig A. Evans, Gen. Ed.).

Calvin = Calvin's Commentaries, Vol. XXII (John Calvin).

Carson, Moo, Morris = An Introduction to the New Testament (D.A. Carson, Douglas Moo, Leon Morris).

Cedar = The Preacher's Commentary: James, 1 & 2 Peter, Jude (Paul A. Cedar).

CNTOT = Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament (Beale and Carson, Eds.)

Comfort = New Testament Text and Translation Commentary (Philip W. Comfort).

Dauids = The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude: The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Peter H. Davids).

DNTT = The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology (Colin Brown, Gen. Ed.).

Gill = Gill's Commentary on the Bible (John Gill).

Gene Green = Jude and 2 Peter: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Gene Green).

Guthrie = New Testament Introduction (Donald Guthrie).

Helm = 1 & 2 Peter and Jude (David R. Helm).

Keener = The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament (Craig S. Keener).

Kelly = A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude (J.N.D. Kelly).

Kittle = Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (G. Kittle and G. Friedrich, Eds.).

Lenski = The Interpretation of I and II Epistles of Peter, the three Epistles of John, and the Epistle of Jude (R.C. Lenski).

Luther = Commentary on Peter and Jude (Martin Luther).

Metzger = A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (Bruce M. Metzger).

Michael Green = Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 2 Peter and Jude (Michael Green).

NLK = New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament.

Schreiner = The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Peter, Jude (Thomas R. Schreiner).

Wallace = Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics (Daniel B. Wallace).

Parsing Verbs and Declining Nouns

Verbs (tense, voice, mood, person, number):

ποιμάνατε (ποιμαίνω = to tend, shepherd || Verb: Aorist Active Imperative, 2P).
ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι (ἀποκαλύπτω = to reveal, disclose || Verb: Present Passive Infinitive).

Nouns (gender, case, number):

παθημάτων, (παθημά = suffering || Noun: Neuter Genitive Plural).

Participles (gender, case, number, tense, voice):

μελλούσης (μελλω = to be about to || Participle: Feminine Genitive Singular Present Active).

Adjectives (gender, case, number):

(ἐπιεικής = gentle, kind || Adjective: Masculine Dative Plural).

Pronouns (person, case, number):

ἡμῖν (ἐγώ = I || First Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Dative Plural).
ὑμῖν (σύ = you || Second Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Dative Plural).
αὐτῷ (αὐτός = He, Him || Third Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Masculine Dative Singular).
(τοῦτο = this || Near Demonstrative Pronoun: Neuter Nominative Singular).

Passage Structure

Sentence

17 Ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀγαπητοί, μνήσθητε τῶν ῥημάτων
you but beloved must remember the words

Relative Clause

τῶν προειρημένων
spoken beforehand

Prepositional Phrase

ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν
by the apostles of Lord our

Appositional Clause

Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ·
Jesus Christ

Subordinate Clause

18 ὅτι ἔλεγον ὑμῖν·
that they were saying to you,

Prepositional Phrase

Ἐπ' ἐσχάτου χρόνου
In the last time

Quotative Frame

ἔσονται ἔμπαῖκται
there will be mockers

Prepositional Phrase

κατὰ τὰς ἐαυτῶν ἐπιθυμίας
according to - their own desires

Appositional Clause

πορευόμενοι τῶν ἀσεβειῶν.
pursuing ungodly

Sentence

19 οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἀποδιορίζοντες,
These are the ones who cause divisions

Appositional Clause

ψυχικοί, πνεῦμαμηῆχοντες.
worldly, without the Spirit.

Sentence

Segment Clause

20 ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀγαπητοί,
you but beloved

Participial Clause

ἐποικοδομοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς τῇ ἀγιωτάτῃ ὑμῶν πίστει
building yourselves up on most holy your faith

Prepositional Phrase

ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ
in Spirit Holy

Segment Clause

προσευχόμενοι,
praying

Segment Clause

21 ἑαυτοὺς
yourselves

Prepositional Phrase

ἐν ἀγάπῃ θεοῦ
in the love of God

τηρήσατε
keep

Participial Clause

προσδεχόμενοι τὸ ἔλεος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν
while waiting for the mercy of Lord our

Appositional Clause

Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
Jesus Christ

Prepositional Phrase

εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.
to life eternal

Sentence

Segment Clause
22 καὶ
And

Relative Clause

οὓς μὲν
those who

ἐλεᾶτε
have mercy on

διακρινομένους,
are doubting;

Segment Clause

23 οὓς δὲ σὺζετε
others but save

Prepositional Phrase

ἐκ πυρὸς
out of the fire

Participial Clause

ἀρπάζοντες,
by snatching them

Segment Clause

οὓς δὲ ἐλεᾶτε
others and have mercy on

Prepositional Phrase

ἐν φόβῳ
with fear

Participial Clause

μισοῦντες καὶ τὸν
while hating even the

Prepositional Phrase

ἀπὸ τῆς σαρκὸς ἐσπιλωμένον
by the flesh polluted

Prepositional Phrase

χιτῶνα.
garment

17 But you, ==> beloved
must remember
the words (spoken beforehand)
by
the apostles
of our Lord Jesus Christ,

18 that they were saying to you,

“In the last time there will be mockers pursuing their own ungodly passions.”

19 These are the ones
who cause divisions,
worldly,
without the Spirit.

20 But you ==> beloved,
building yourselves up
(on your most holy faith)
and praying in the Holy Spirit,

21 keep yourselves in God's love
while waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ
to eternal life.

22 And ==> have mercy on those who are doubting;

23 but ==> save others
by snatching them out of the fire.

And ==> on some have mercy (with fear)
while hating even the garment
which is polluted by the flesh.

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

GREEK TEXT:

17 Ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀγαπητοί, μνήσθητε τῶν ῥημάτων τῶν προειρημένων ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ 18 ὅτι ἔλεγον ὑμῖν· [ὅτι] ἐπ’ ἐσχάτου [τοῦ] χρόνου ἔσονται ἐμπαῖκται κατὰ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἐπιθυμίας πορευόμενοι τῶν ἀσεβειῶν. 19 Οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἀποδιορίζοντες, ψυχικοί, πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες. 20 Ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀγαπητοί, ἐποικοδομοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς τῇ ἀγιωτάτῃ ὑμῶν πίστει, ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ προσευχόμενοι, 21 ἑαυτοὺς ἐν ἀγάπῃ θεοῦ τηρήσατε προσδεχόμενοι τὸ ἔλεος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. 22 Καὶ οὐς μὲν ἐλεᾶτε διακρινομένους, 23 οὐς δὲ σῶζετε ἐκ πυρὸς ἀρπάζοντες, οὐς δὲ ἐλεᾶτε ἐν φόβῳ μισοῦντες καὶ τὸν ἀπὸ τῆς σαρκὸς ἐσπιλωμένον χιτῶνα.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

17 But you, beloved, must remember the words spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, 18 that they were saying to you, “In the last time there will be mockers pursuing their own ungodly passions.” 19 These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly, without the Spirit.

20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in God's love while waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. 22 And have mercy on those who are doubting; 23 but save others by snatching them out of the fire. And on some have mercy with fear while hating even the garment which is polluted by the flesh.

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

- I. Remember the words of the Apostles (17-19)
- II. Keep yourselves in God's love (20-21)
 - A. Building
 - B. Praying
 - C. Waiting
- III. Look out for others (22-23)

SERMON OUTLINE:

- I. Safeguards Against Spiritual Suicide (vv. 17-21) - *Key Word: “Transformation”*
 - A. Remember Sound Words (17-19)
 - B. Remain in God's Love (20-21)
 - 1. Building
 - 2. Praying
 - 3. Waiting

II. Sorting Through Spiritual Sickness (vv. 22-23) - *Key Word "Triage"*

- A. The Sick:
- B. The Dying:
- C. The Dead:

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what's the passage talking about): Staying secure in the midst of deadly error

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what's the passage saying about what it's talking about): by remembering the words of the Apostles and practicing the truth of the faith

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): Those who truly belong to Christ are marked by spiritual perseverance.

CENTRAL PROPOSITION OF THE SERMON: How to contend for the faith all the way to the presence of His glory (v. 3b, cf. v. 24)

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: Contenders versus Pretenders (Parts 1-2)

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

This passage brings the readers back to v. 3.

Perseverance

This passage, including the ending benediction, demonstrates the beautiful balance that's bound up in the doctrine of perseverance.

We have those who are described as “beloved” (the church)

We have those who are described as “mockers” - those who follow after their own ungodly lusts and are devoid of the Spirit.

We have those who are described as “doubting” and those whom we are exhorted to “snatch out of the fire” and others who we are to “have mercy with fear” while “hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.”

Promise of verse 24: “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,”

Note the three Persons of the Trinity in this passage.

17 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

Ἑμεῖς δέ, ἀγαπητοί, μνήσθητε τῶν ῥημάτων τῶν προειρημένων ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

Ἑμεῖς δέ, (ὅμιν = you || Second Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Nominative Plural).
ἀγαπητοί (ἀγαπητος || Adjective: Masculine Vocative Plural). Vocative of Direct Address.
μνήσθητε (μιμνήσκομαι = to remember || Verb: Aorist Passive Imperative, 2P). Imperative of Command.
τῶν ῥημάτων (ῥημά || Noun: Neuter Genitive Plural). Genitive of Direct Object?
τῶν προειρημένων (προειρέειν = to speak before || Participle: Neuter Genitive Plural Perfect Passive).
Attributive Participle.
ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων (ἀποστόλος || Noun: Masculine Genitive Plural). Genitive / Ablative of Agency.
τοῦ κυρίου (κύριος || Noun: Masculine Genitive Singular). Genitive of Possession.
ἡμῶν (εγώ || First Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Genitive Plural).
Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ –

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

But you, beloved, must remember the words spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

But you, beloved, (Ἑμεῖς δέ, ἀγαπητοί,)

Other uses in Jude - vv. 1,3. See my notes there.

must remember the words spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,
(μνήσθητε τῶν ῥημάτων τῶν προειρημένων ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ)

When? If Peter predates Jude then you have the words of Peter. Warnings to the church by Christ are found in the NT as well. The content is in v. 18 (see my notes there).

Vv. 17–19. Jude told his readers to remember what the apostles had foretold about scoffers. At Ephesus, Paul warned of the “savage wolves” that would come in to destroy the flock and distort the truth (Acts 20:29–30). He sounded similar warnings of apostasy to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1–5; 4:3–4). Peter had addressed the same issue (2 Peter 2:1–3; 3:3–4). The quotation in Jude 18 is a loose rendering of Peter’s words in 2 Peter 3:3, and at the same time it summarized Paul’s warnings. [The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 2, pp. 922–923). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books]

Remembrance and remembering... Verse 5, cf. 2 Peter 3:2-4 (cf. my notes there).

2 Peter 3:2–4 2 that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles. 3 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts,⁴ and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.”

τῶν ῥημάτων (ῥημά || Noun: Neuter Genitive Plural). Genitive of Direct Object? Contrast with λογος. ῥημά leans more toward spoken words, a declaration (Jn 8:20; Acts 2:14; Rom. 10:18). However, the semantic range overlaps, and ῥημά does not refer specifically to some personal revelation (as popularly taught in the modern positive confessional movement). These words are prophetic, as they were spoken “beforehand” and inspired as they were the words of Christ's apostles (Apostles being the inner circle of those who spoke with the authority of Christ Himself).

Note the thread of Jude's argument with v. 4 as his “launching point” - he cites 3 OT examples as precedent (vv. 5-7), he cites Enoch, a source that his opponents perhaps respected, against them (vv. 14-15), and now cites the NT apostles.

Note “Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” in v. 4 (who was denied by the opponents) with “apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ” here (those who predicted their coming).

Remember what? Words. Does this refocus the authority of the canon to the NT (and OT) as opposed to the Pseudepigrapha?

Proverbs 13:4 The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied.

RAF: This is as true in spiritual matters as it is in natural life. We cannot be “richly supplied” by that which we have not indulged in. And Christ is MEANT to be indulged in by His people. Those who do not labor diligently to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord will not make progress. They will get nothing. Those who pursue Him gain Him. Those who sit around waiting for spiritual maturity – never grow. Each day the Spirit inclines us to seek Him – but how the tyranny of the immediate drowns out His sweet voice. “Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling” wrote the hymnist – but the world is loud and boisterous and drowns out His patient, sweet wooing of our souls to step aside and refresh ourselves in the wonder of His love and grace.

We have spoken often of the “noetic” effects of sin; how the Fall has impacted our ability to retain the vital reality of spiritual things. Bishop Ussher, that grand divine of an earlier age in

his famed “Body of Divinity” catechized on this issue when opening up the effects of the first sin by our parents, Adam and Eve. He wrote that when sin entered we suffered “The loss of the perfection of the Image of God, and the corruption of nature, in Man called original sin.”

He went on to show that this corruption shows itself in us in 6 primary things.

“Q. What is the first?

A. The blindness of the Understanding; which is not able to conceive the things of God.

Q. What is the second?

A. The forgetfulness of the memory; unfit to remember good things.

Q. What is the third?

A. The rebellion of the Will; which is wholly bent to sin, and altogether disobedient unto the will of God.

Q. What is the fourth?

A. Disorder of the Affections, of Joy, heaviness, love, anger, fear, and such like.

Q. What is the fifth?

A. Fear and confusion in the Conscience; condemning where it should not, and excusing where it should condemn.

Q. What is the sixth?

A. Every member of the body is become a ready instrument to put sin in execution.”

Note the second in his list: “The forgetfulness of the memory; unfit to remember good things.”

This is why we simply cannot sustain a healthy spiritual life on diet of one worship service on a Sunday morning. Because we do not retain it. Nature itself is designed to reinforce this reality in requiring us to take in physical nourishment several times a day – not just once a week. And if our bodies need that nourishment over and over just to maintain life, how much more our souls when the world around us is toxic to spiritual life and seeks to rob us of it at every turn.

Believer, we do not stress the need for prayer and Bible study privately, and teaching of the word more than once a week because we are trying to meet some hidden quota imagined to make sure we are “doing enough”. We press it because in our fallen condition, we need to be drinking at the fountain and feasting at that table over and over, or we cannot grow or sustain any kind of true spiritual health and vitality.

The glory, the wonder of it all is that our Christ and Savior is beckoning us to Himself all the time. Never too busy. Never distracted. Never unwilling to meet us and break bread with us afresh. If we are not refreshed in Him, if He seems distant and spiritual comforts escape us – we must ask if we have even made the effort to meet with Him in prayer or the Word? And if not, then hear the Master call again today “Come and dine!” He will receive you and meet with you as though you had never been away.

[Reid Ferguson blog article dated 1/23/14, citing James Usher, A Body of Divinity: Or, the Sum and Substance of Christian Religion (Eighth Edition.; London: R. J.; Jonathan Robinson; A. and J. Churchill; J. Taylor; J. Wyatt, 1702), 477]

18 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

ὅτι ἔλεγον ὑμῖν· [ὅτι] ἐπ’ ἐσχάτου [τοῦ] χρόνου ἔσονται ἐμπαῖκται κατὰ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἐπιθυμίας πορευόμενοι τῶν ἀσεβειῶν.

ὅτι ἔλεγον (λεγω || Verb: Imperfect Active Indicative, 3P). Iterative Imperfect.

ὑμῖν· (συ = you || Second Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Dative Plural).

[ὅτι] – According to Wallace, this use of the indicative with ὅτι is “recitative.” The ὅτι should be left untranslated; in its place one should put quotation marks. [Wallace, 454]

ἐπ’ ἐσχάτου (ἐσχάτος || Adjective: Masculine Genitive Singular).

χρόνου (χρόνος || Noun: Masculine Genitive Singular).

ἔσονται (ἔμι || Verb: Future Middle Indicative, 3P). Predictive Future.

ἐμπαῖκται (ἐμπαικτης = mocker || Noun: Masculine Nominative Plural). Same word is used in 2 Peter 3:3 (only other NT use). Used 1x in the LXX (Corollary word in the OT refers to a mischief maker).

κατὰ τὰς (ἡ || Definite Article: Feminine Accusative Plural).

ἑαυτῶν (Reflexive Pronoun: Masculine Genitive, 3P).

ἐπιθυμίας (ἐπιθυμία || Noun: Feminine Accusative Plural). Accusative of Direct Object.

πορευόμενοι = (πορευόμαι = to follow, go after to || Participle: Masculine Nominative Plural, Present Middle/Passive). Attributive Adverbial-Modal Participle. They pursue their own agenda while they mock.

τῶν ἀσεβειῶν (ἀσεβεία || Noun: Feminine Genitive Plural). Genitive of Description.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

that they were saying to you, “In the last time there will be mockers pursuing their own ungodly passions.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

No prophetic parallel except in 2 Peter (see my notes there). This is almost a verbatim quote.

that they were saying to you, (ὅτι ἔλεγον ὑμῖν·)

ὅτι ἔλεγον (λεγω || Verb: Imperfect Active Indicative, 3P). Iterative Imperfect. Repeated. Cf. Acts 20:29-30; 2 Thess. 2:5; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1ff.

When? How? See my notes on 2 Peter 3:2.

“In the last time ([ὅτι] ἐπ’ ἐσχάτου [τοῦ] χρόνου)

See my notes from 2 Peter.

there will be mockers pursuing their own ungodly passions.” (ἔσονται ἐμπαϊκται κατὰ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἐπιθυμίας πορευόμενοι τῶν ἀσεβειῶν.)

See my notes from 2 Peter.

March of the Mockers.

ἐμπαϊκται (ἐμπαικτης = mocker || Noun: Masculine Nominative Plural). Same word is used in 2 Peter 3:3 (only other NT use). Used 1x in the LXX (Corollary word in the OT refers to a mischief maker).

Kittle's discussion on the root:

παίζω.

παίζω, in class, times ἔπαισα, πέπαικα, πέπαισμαι—forms which agree in sound with those of παίειν, “to hit”—later ἔπαιξα, πέπαιχα, πέπαιγμαι, ἐπαίχθην, means in virtue of its derivation from παῖς “to act in childlike or childish fashion,” “to play,” “to dance,” “to jest,” “to mock.” Related are the nouns παιδία, παιδιά, also as a personification of erotic play, attested both on inscr. and in art, e.g., on a vase at Munich, Paidia, tossing the winged Himeros.³ παιδιά means “play,” “jest,” παῖγμα, παιγνία “play,” “jest,” “mockery,” παῖγνιον “toy,” “plaything,” “rascal.”

1. The Use of the Word by the Greeks.

In Hom. παίζω is used (Od., 6, 100–106; 7, 291) for the play (ball-games) of maidens or nymphs; in 8, 251 the verb means “to dance,” cf. also 23, 147. Very commonly in secular Gk. the verb denotes lack of seriousness in something, e.g., attitude or conduct, Hdt., IV, 77: ὁ λόγος πέπαισται (vl. πέπλασται), i.e., the saga is lightly treated or invented. In the Platonic dialogues the question is often raised whether what Socrates says is meant seriously (σπουδάζειν, σπουδή) or is to be taken in jest (παίξειν, παιδιά), Gorg., 481b; Phaedr., 234 d. Xenoph. Mem., IV, 1, 1 argues to the contrary that even what Socrates says in jest is no less profitable to his friends than what is meant seriously, cf. also Plat. Phileb., 30e; Leg., I, 647d; II, 656c. Cf., too, Plut. Sept. Sap. Conv., 13 (II, 156d): ὃ πλεῖστον ἡδονῆς ἅμα καὶ παιδιᾶς καὶ σπουδῆς ἔνεστιν, ἐγείρουσι τούτῳ (sc. the Muses) ... τὴν φιλοφροσύνην, Xenoph. Sym., I, 1: τὰ μετὰ σπουδῆς πραττόμενα ... καὶ τὰ ἐν ταῖς παιδιαῖς. The use of παιδιά in Plat. Resp., X, 602b shows disparagement of the term; it denotes what is of little account, what is not to be regarded as serious or significant, cf. Aesch. Prom., 314. The ship is a plaything of the winds, Secundus Sententiae, 17. Man is a plaything of fate, *ibid.*, 7; cf. Luc. Nigrinus, 20; Anth. Pal., 10, 64, 6. Man is already presented as a plaything of deity in Plato (Leg., VII, 803c): ἄνθρωπον ... θεοῦ τι παῖγνιον εἶναι μεμηχανημένον ... · τούτῳ δὲ δεῖν τῷ τρόπῳ συνεπόμενον καὶ παίζοντα ὅτι καλλίστας παιδιᾶς πάντ' ἄνδρα καὶ γυναῖκα οὕτω διαβιῶναι (cf., 797b). The element of scorn is stronger in BGU, IV, 1024 VII 26 (4th c A.D.): ἔπεζεν (for ἔπαιζεν) αὐτὴν ἢ πεν [ε]ία. Finally, life in general is not taken seriously and the advice is given on burial inscr.: παῖσον, τρύφησον, ζῆσον, ἀποθανεῖν σε δεῖ (2nd/3rd c A.D.). Thus jesting and mockery meet. A low view of this frivolous attitude from the standpoint of true culture is to be found esp. in Plat. Prot., 347d: ὅπου δὲ καλοὶ κάγαθοὶ συμπόται καὶ πεπαιδευμένοι εἰσίν, οὐκ ἂν ἴδοις οὐτ' 198 αὐλητρίδας οὐτε ὀρχηστρίδας οὐτε ψαλτρίδας, ἀλλ' αὐτοὺς αὐτοῖς ἰκανοὺς ὄντας συνεῖναι ἄνευ τῶν λήρων τε καὶ παιδιῶν τούτων ... In the pap. παιδιά is used in the sense of “wantonness,” also “folly,” “stupidity.”

In philosophy and pedagogics the concept of play had an established place from the time of Plato. Aristot. is decisive here. He examines the place of music in education. He asks whether it belongs to education, to play, or to amusement, and concludes that it is to be put with all three, Pol., VIII, 5, p. 1339a, 11 ff., b, 9 ff. At b, 15 he says: ἢ τε γὰρ παιδιὰ χάριν ἀναπαύσεώς ἐστι. Cf. Eth. Nic., X, 6, p. 1176b, 27–35: οὐκ ἐν παιδιᾷ ἄρα ἡ εὐδαιμονία. καὶ γὰρ ἄτοπον τὸ τέλος εἶναι παιδιάν, καὶ πραγματεύεσθαι καὶ κακοπαθεῖν τὸν βίον ἅπαντα τοῦ παίζειν χάριν, ἅπαντα γὰρ ὡς ἐπεὶ ἐτέρου ἕνεκα αἰρούμεθα πλὴν τῆς εὐδαιμονίας· τέλος γὰρ αὐτῆ. σπουδάζειν δὲ καὶ πονεῖν παιδιᾶς χάριν ἡλίθιον φαίνεται καὶ λίαν παιδικόν. παίζειν δ' ὅπως σπουδάζῃ, κατ' Ἀνάχαρσιν, ὀρθῶς ἔχειν δοκεῖ· ἀναπαύσει γὰρ ἔοικεν ἡ παιδιά, ἀδυνατοῦντες δὲ συνεχῶς

πονεῖν ἀναπαύσεως δέονται. That play relaxes and refreshes is the determinative thought in Aristot.'s discussion, cf. also Pol., VIII, 3, p. 1337b, 33–42. Cf. further Eth. Nic., IV, 14, p. 1127b, 33 f., 1128a, 20 f.; VII, 8, p. 1150b, 17. As the more pleasant side of life play is contrasted with seriousness in Rhet., I, 11, p. 1370a, 14 ff.: διὸ αἱ πᾶθυμιαὶ καὶ αἱ ἀπονίαι καὶ αἱ ἀμέλειαι καὶ αἱ παιδιαὶ καὶ αἱ ἀναπαύσεις καὶ ὁ ὕπνος τῶν ἡδέων· οὐδὲν γὰρ πρὸς ἀνάγκην τούτων. καὶ οὐδ' ἂν ἡ ἐπιθυμία ἐνῆ, ἅπαν ἡδύ. Finally, there is the judgment of Pol., VIII, 3, p. 1337b, 33 ff.; though play is a means of relaxation and recreation, it is not a worthy use of leisure. It naturally maintains its universal significance in education of children, though certain requirements must be considered in relation to the kind of play. Aristot. speaks of these in Pol., VII, 17, p. 1336a, 33 f. διὸ τὰς παιδιάς εἶναι δεῖ τὰς πολλὰς μιμήσεις τῶν ὕστερον σπουδαζομένων, cf. Pol., VIII, 5, p. 1339a, 31 ff.⁶¹

Childish mockery; tomfoolery; mischief.

The apostolic prophecy indicated that the last time will be marked by the advent of "mockers" (. . . *empaiktai*, found only here and in 2 Pet. 3:3 in the NT; see Isa. 3:4 LXX: "Mockers shall rule over them"). "Mockers/scoffers" frequently appear in the OT (Pss. 1:1; 35:16; Prov. 9:7-8; 13:1; 14:6; 19:25, 29). In Kelly's words (1969; 283), a mocker is one 'who despises morality and religion, the arrogant and godless libertine.' The mockers set themselves strongly against the Lord in the Gospels as they heap ridicule on Him and subject him to physical abuse (Matt. 20:19; 27:29, 31, 41; Mark 10:34; 15:20; Luke 22:63; 23:11). "Mocking" is a supreme act of dishonor in an attempt to bring shame on a person (see Herodotus 4.134; Epictetus, Disc. 1.4.10). "To mock" is one of many lexical entries attached to the concept of "the disparagement or low estimation of others, or indeed the world, creatures, and even deity, in word, attitude or act" (G. Bertram, TDNT 5:630). In 2 Chron. 36:16 the LXX uses the verbal form of the word found here in Jude: "Nevertheless they sneered at his messengers, and set at naught his words, and mocked [. . . *empaizontes*] his prophets." [G. Green, 115]

Translating this pursuing ungodly passions to make it a bit more contemporary. Pursuit is more vivid that going after and passions is less loaded a term than lusts. The contrast is that these men were pursuing, charging after, their own (self-centered) passions which were ungodly. There are passions that are godly pursuits.

Hope - God can save mockers – even if these were reprobate . . . Cf. Paul.

πορευόμενοι = (πορεύομαι = to follow, go after to || Participle: Masculine Nominative Plural, Present Middle/Passive). Attributive Adverbial-Modal Participle. They pursue their own agenda while they mock.

Luther: "They are neither under an external nor an internal government, neither under divine nor human control. They float about between heaven and earth in their lust, just as the devil leads them."

1 Kittel, G., Bromiley, G. W., & Friedrich, G. (Eds.). (1964–). *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

19 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

Οὗτοι εἰσιν οἱ ἀποδιορίζοντες, ψυχικοί, πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες.

Οὗτοι (οὗτοι = these || Near Demonstrative Pronoun, Masculine Plural).

εἰσιν (εἰμι || Verb: Present Active Indicative, 3P).

οἱ (ὁ || Definite Article: Masculine Nominative Plural).

ἀποδιορίζοντες, (ἀποδιορίζω = to divide, separate || Participle: Masculine Nominative Plural, Present Active). Substantival Participle. Textual variant adds ἐαυτούς - “they divide themselves” - but this is an unlikely reading: the opponents were hardly separating themselves from the rest of the body as the entire context of Jude makes clear (cf. Metzger; Comfort).

ψυχικοί, (ψυχικός = natural, unspiritual, physical || Adjective: Masculine Nominative Plural). No good equivalent to this Greek word.

πνεῦμα (πνεῦμα || Noun: Neuter Accusative Singular).

μὴ ἔχοντες. (ἔχω || Participle: Masculine Nominative Plural, Present Active). Attributive Participle?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly, without the Spirit.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly, without the Spirit. (Οὗτοι εἰσιν οἱ ἀποδιορίζοντες, ψυχικοί, πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες.)

The scoffers are further described in three ways: they *set up divisions*, they are *worldly people*, and they are *devoid of the Spirit*.²

It is, however, preferable to understand that they have not actually started a separate group, but that they have created or caused the creation of factions and cliques within the Christian community.³

Present active articular participle of the double compound ἀποδιορίζω [*apodiorizō*] (from ἀπο, δια, ὀρίζω, ὅρος [*apo, dia, horizō, horos*], boundary, to make a horizon), rare word, in Aristotle for making logical distinctions, here only in N. T. Διορίζω [*Diorizō*] occurs in Lev. 20:24 and ἀφορίζω [*aphorizō*] in Matt. 25:32, etc. See αἵρεσεις [*haireseis*] in 2 Pet. 2:1. **Sensual** (ψυχικοί [*psuchikoi*]). Old adjective from ψυχή [*psuchē*] as in 1 Cor. 2:14; 15:44; James 3:15. Opposed to πνευματικός [*pneumatikos*]. Not used by Peter.⁴

2 Arichea, D. C., & Hatton, H. (1993). *A handbook on the letter from Jude and the second letter from Peter* (p. 51). New York: United Bible Societies.

3 Ibid.

4 Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Jud 19). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

Romans 8:9.

God takes unity seriously. But unity has to be grounded in truth. Truth can be divisive / necessary or needlessly. These false teachers were causing division in the local church by means of their false teaching. Some were following them, or siding with them. Others were “doubting” (cf. 22-23).

Edification becomes demolition. Satan's demolition crew.

The term Jude employs to refer to this vice appears only here in the NT. The verb . . . (*apodiorizo*) appears in Aristotle's discussion about animal classification, where he uses it to mean "mark off by dividing" (Pol. 1290B; K. Schmidt, TDNT 5:455; BDAG 110; derived from . . . *diorizo*, to define). But the term also could mean "divide" (MM 61), the sense that Jude has in mind since his concern is not merely that the heretics make distinctions between people. Although the word Jude uses is quite rare (much more common in the NT is . . . , *schizein*; . . . *schisma*; see Mitchell 1991: 68-74), the concern about causing division was expressed often in the early church (Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 1:10; 11:18; Gal. 5:20; Titus 3:9-10). Division or separation was one of the outcomes of heresy (1 Tim. 4:1; 1 John 2:18-19) and was one of its central, defining characteristics as in the case in this congregation. Tearing apart the body politic was not considered virtuous either within or outside the Christian community. In an ordered society, where place was established by convention and enforced by law, maintenance of unity within the community was a high social obligation (see 1 Cor. 1:10). The heretics came in to divide a body that should have been unified in both faith and conduct (cf. Eph. 4:1-16).

The second vice in Jude's list (cf. Rom. 1:29-31; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Pet. 4:3; and the mother of all vice lists in Philo, Sacrifices 5 §32) identifies the heretics as 11) . . . (*psychikoi*). Commenting on 1 Cor. 2:14, Thiselton (2000: 267) rightly remarks that "The difficulty of translating (*psychikos*) into English is notorious." The term appears in both Paul (1 Cor. 2:14; 15:44, 46) and James (3:15). In common Greek usage, . . . (*psychikos*) was that which pertained to the soul or life as opposed to the . . . (*somatikos*), which pertained to the body (Josephus, J.W. 1.21.13 §430; 4 Macc. 1:32: "Some desires are related to the soul and others to the body"; LSJ 2027-28). However, in Christian hands, (*psychikos*) is placed in contrast with what is "spiritual" or of the Spirit. The person who is . . . (*psychikos*) is devoid of the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:14) and is entirely earthly (1 Cor. 15:46-49; E. Schweizer, TDNT 9:661). James (3:15) likewise talks about the "wisdom" that is "earthly, unspiritual [. . . *psychike*]." In light of this understanding, Jude's accusation is that the heretics are nothing more than earthly people who are not governed by the Spirit. They are entirely "natural" and belong solely to this world, as "worldly people." In other words, they are not disciples of Christ but simply unregenerate people. [Gene Green, 117]

Worldly / Worldly-Minded (NASB; ESV; RSV)

Natural / Follow Natural Instincts (NIV)

Sensual (KJV)

HCSB ==> “These people create divisions and are unbelievers, not having the Spirit.”

Romans 8:9 – these are not regenerate.

“To have the Spirit of God is to be a Christian, and not to have the Spirit is to be outside this state of grace. Jude reinforces his previous claim: These people are not even believers! They are

nothing more than unregenerate humans, whose lives are lived on a base, even animal and instinctual level (cf. v. 10). This is the ultimate cause of the heretics' immorality and explains their actions. Their impiety has its roots in the fact that they do not possess the transforming power of the Spirit of God in their lives. Within a Christian context, no accusation could be more devastating.” [Gene Green, 118]

20 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

Ἑμεῖς δέ, ἀγαπητοί, ἐποικοδομοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς τῇ ἀγιωτάτῃ ὑμῶν πίστει, ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ προσευχόμενοι,

Ἑμεῖς δέ, ἀγαπητοί, (Same construction as in v. 17).

ἐποικοδομοῦντες (ἐποικοδομεῶ = to build up, build upon || Participle: Masculine Nominative Plural, Present Active). Attributive?

ἑαυτοὺς (Reflexive Pronoun: Masculine Accusative, 2P).

τῇ ἀγιωτάτῃ (ἀγιωτάτος = superlative of ἅγιος || Adjective: Feminine Dative Singular).

ὑμῶν (συ = you || Second Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Genitive Plural).

πίστει, (πίστις || Noun: Feminine Dative Singular). Dative of Indirect Object.

ἐν πνεύματι (πνεῦμα || Noun: Neuter Dative Singular). Dative of Sphere?

ἁγίῳ (ἅγιος || Adjective: Neuter Dative Singular).

προσευχόμενοι, (προσευχόμενα || Participle: Masculine Nominative Plural, Middle / Passive).
Attributive-Circumstantial Participle.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit,

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Introductory note to this section:

Jude used only one imperative, the word “keep” (*tērēsate*) in v. 21. The other three verbs are all participles: building yourselves up (*epoikodomountes*), praying (*proseuchomenoi*), and waiting (*prosddechomenoi*). Each of these participles should be understood as instrumental participles, describing *how* we keep ourselves in God’s love. The participles in this case still virtually function as imperatives, but they modify the command to keep yourselves in God’s love, setting forth the means by which the readers can do so. If this view is correct, then we have another example of a triad in Jude. He provided three means by which the readers could keep themselves in God’s love, (1) by building themselves up in their faith, (2) by praying in the Spirit, and (3) by waiting eagerly for the return of Jesus Christ. Two other features of these verses should be noted. When we think of triads, the implicit Trinitarianism of the text should be observed. Jude referred to praying in *the Holy Spirit*, the love of *God*, presumably the Father, and the mercy of *our Lord, Jesus Christ*. Second, still another triplet emerges, at least conceptually, since Jude referred to faith, love, and the concept of hope in the return of the Lord.⁵

⁵ Schreiner, T. R. (2003). *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (Vol. 37, pp. 481–482). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

But you, beloved, (Υμεῖς δέ, ἀγαπητοί,)

Same construction as in v. 17.

Verses 20–21 offer pastoral guidance to believers amid apostasy. In the words of Litfin, Jude reminded his readers that “the best thing believers can do to withstand the malady is to develop their spiritual immunological resources.”¹² The heart of Jude’s directive is, “keep yourselves in the love of God” (v. 21a). It is the only direct command in these two verses; three participial clauses, structurally subordinate to this command, set forth further elements involved. The two preceding participial clauses (v. 20) indicate by what means the central directive is effected, while the following participial clause indicates the expectant attitude that flows out of the directive (v. 21b). [Selected Studies from Jude Part 3: An Exposition of Jude 17-23 D. Edmond Hiebert - BSac 142:568 (Oct 85) p. 360]

building yourselves up on your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, (ἐποικοδομοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς τῇ ἀγιωτάτῃ ὑμῶν πίστει, ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ προσευχόμενοι,)

A building / temple) is a frequent metaphor for the Christian community - especially in Paul’s letters (cf. also 1 Peter 2:5).

The meaning of the figure is not that each Christian should build up his or her own Christian life, but that Christians should help and encourage one another so that they may grow in their faith and collectively contribute to the growth and well-being of the church. [Arichea, D. C., & Hatton, H. (1993). A handbook on the letter from Jude and the second letter from Peter (p. 52). New York: United Bible Societies.]

Peter described believers as living stones that are being built up into a spiritual house (1 Pet 2:5). What Jude said here does not contradict Paul but represents a fresh use of the metaphor. The “most holy faith” upon which the church is built is the gospel of Jesus Christ, and this faith has Jesus Christ as its center. When Jude spoke of “faith” here, he referred to the body of teachings, the doctrine of the church of Jesus Christ.¹⁶ This fits with v. 3, where believers are exhorted “to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.” So the first way believers remain in God’s love is by continuing to grow in their understanding of the gospel, the teachings that were handed down to them at their conversion. This faith is “most holy” because it comes from the holy God, and Christian growth occurs through the mind, as believers grow in their understanding of God’s word and of Christian truth. Jude did not think that growth occurred mystically or mysteriously. Instead, believers experience God’s love as their understanding of the faith increases. Affection for God increases not through bypassing the mind but by means of it. [Schreiner, 482–483]

The “most holy faith” goes back to the “faith once for all delivered to the saints.” in v. 3.

A building that will withstand the floods of heresy must be built “on [the foundation of] your most holy faith” (τῇ ἀγιωτάτῃ ὑμῶν πίστει). The expression can be understood with an instrumental sense and rendered “building up yourselves by means of your most holy faith.”¹³ But the context makes it preferable to take “your most holy faith” as denoting the foundation on which the Christian life is founded. “Faith” (πίστει) here is not subjective, the personal faith that

they exercise (which would be a very unreliable foundation), but rather the objective faith “which was once for all delivered to the saints” (v. 3). “Your most holy faith” acknowledges that the readers have personally appropriated this faith as their own and evaluate it as “most holy” (τῆ ἀγιωτάτῃ). The adjective, applied to faith only here in the New Testament, is a true superlative, not merely elative (“very holy”). As “most holy” it is separate and distinct from all other faiths because of its origin and transmission, as well as because of the holiness it produces in those who build their lives on it. “Because the Spirit inspired this faith, genuine spirituality is its fruit.”¹⁴ It stands “in marked contrast to the vile and shifty doctrines which the libertines profess and uphold.”¹⁵

“Praying in the Holy Spirit,” the second activity fostering spiritual growth, characterizes the operation of the inner life. The development of spiritual maturity is vitally related to the practice of prayer at all times and in all places. “Praying” (προσευχόμενοι) is a comprehensive term and covers all forms of prayer. In usage the term was restricted to prayer addressed to the gods or to the true God. It thus implies a reverential attitude. The phrase “in the Holy Spirit” marks the sphere of the praying, “as if immersed in the Holy Spirit and shut off from the world’s evil.”¹⁶ The picture is parallel to Romans 8:26–27, where Paul portrayed the Holy Spirit as prompting, purifying, and directing prayer in harmony with the will of God. Jude called for “praying out of hearts and souls that are indwelt, illuminated, and filled by the Holy Spirit.”¹⁷ [Selected Studies from Jude Part 3: An Exposition of Jude 17-23 D. Edmond Hiebert - BSac 142:568 (Oct 85) p. 361]

Praying in the Spirit (cf. Eph. 6:18 “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests” where the context clarifies that speaking in tongues is not in view).

No temptation to see this as praying / speaking in tongues prior to the early 20th c. (1901?) / Charismatic movt. in the 1960s.

We don't see praying in Christ as some sort of ecstatic speech. Context dictates that Jude is emphasizing the fact that the believing comm. has the HS – something the fters don't have (v. 19). I don't see any justification for prayer in a language any other than the one you understand.

What about 1 Cor. 14:14-15?

“Jude's concern is with the corporate life of the church in their struggle against heresy, and given the problems within the Corinthian church regarding speaking in tongues, it is hard to imagine how such a call would contribute to the church's corporate life . . .” Gene Green, 121]

The Spirit assists us in prayer (Rom. 8:15-16,26-27); Gal. 4:6; Eph. 6:18.

The second instruction that Jude gives is that his readers should *pray in the Holy Spirit*. This again is a familiar command in the New Testament (see Rom 8:26; Eph 6:18). The preposition *in* here most probably means “in the control of,” “under the inspiration of,” “guided by,” or “by means of the power of.” In other words Jude is exhorting his readers that when they pray they should always seek and follow the guidance of the Spirit, so that by the Spirit’s power they are able to pray properly and according to God’s will. So we may also say “You should pray through the power of the Holy Spirit,” “... guided by the power of the Holy Spirit,” or “When

you pray, the power of the Holy Spirit will guide you.”⁶

To pray in the Spirit is to pray in the name of Christ—that is, to pray consistent with His nature and will. To pray in the Spirit is to pray in complete agreement with the Spirit, who “helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words [real words unuttered, not nonwords uttered]; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God” (Rom. 8:26–27). Zechariah 12:10 calls the Holy Spirit the “Spirit of grace and of supplication.” Just as we are to pray continually, know that the Holy Spirit continually prays for us. When we pray in the Spirit, we align our minds and desires with His mind and desires, which are consistent with the will of the Father and the Son. [MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *Alone with God* (pp. 25–26). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.]

Praying in the Holy Spirit is not speaking in tongues, but is “praying out of hearts and souls that are indwelt, illuminated, and filled with the Holy Spirit” (George Lawrence Lawlor, *Translation and Exposition of the Epistle of Jude*, p. 127). It is praying in the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph. 6:18). [Pentecost, E. C. (1985). *Jude*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 923). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.]

The Word (most holy faith) and the Spirit (praying in the Holy Spirit) are the twin marks of a true church. You can have doctrine apart from regeneration. And the Spirit works through truth.

“This is “prayer which is not mere utterance of my own petulant desires which a great deal of our ‘prayer’ is, but which is breathed into us by that Divine Spirit that will brood over our chaos, and bring order out of confusion, and light and beauty out of darkness . . . “ [Alexander Maclaren]

Building / Praying / Waiting.

⁶ Arichea, D. C., & Hatton, H. (1993). *A handbook on the letter from Jude and the second letter from Peter* (p. 53). New York: United Bible Societies.

21 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

ἑαυτοὺς ἐν ἀγάπῃ θεοῦ τηρήσατε προσδεχόμενοι τὸ ἔλεος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

ἑαυτοὺς (Reflexive Pronoun: Masculine Accusative, 2P).

ἐν ἀγάπῃ (ἀγάπη || Noun: Feminine Dative Singular). Dative of Sphere.

θεοῦ (Noun: Masculine Genitive Singular). Genitive of Possession.

τηρήσατε (τηρεω || Verb: Aorist Active Imperative, 2P). Imperative of Command.

προσδεχόμενοι (προσδεχόμεαι = to wait for, expect, receive || Participle: Masculine Nominative Plural, Middle / Passive). Adverbial-Temporal Participle.

τὸ ἔλεος (ἔλεος || Noun: Neuter Accusative Singular). Accusative of Direct Object.

τοῦ κυρίου (-).

ἡμῶν (εγω || First Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Genitive Plural).

Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (-).

εἰς ζωὴν (ζωή || Noun: Feminine Accusative Singular). Accusative of Result.

αἰώνιον. (αἰώνιος || Adjective: Feminine Accusative Singular). Accusative of Place/Purpose/Result?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

keep yourselves in God's love while waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

keep yourselves in God's love (ἑαυτοὺς ἐν ἀγάπῃ θεοῦ τηρήσατε)

The central command of the two verses now appears: “Keep yourselves in God’s love” (v. 21). Was Jude exhorting believers to maintain their love *for* God, an objective genitive? Or was he saying that they should keep themselves in the place where they experience God’s love for them, a subjective genitive? A decision is difficult. Probably we are faced with a false alternative. Our love for God depends upon his love for us. Hence, the two cannot and should not be rigidly separated. It is interesting to note that in v. 1 believers are said to be “loved and kept by God.” There God’s love for believers receives the emphasis, the love by which he called us to be his people. What is remarkable is that Jude exhorted believers here to keep themselves in God’s love. They must keep themselves in God’s love to avoid apostasy, so as not to be corrupted by the opponents. We have already seen that being preserved in God’s love will only be a reality if believers continue to grow in their understanding of the Christian faith and if they regularly pray. Ultimately, believers, as I argued in v. 1, are kept by Jesus Christ (*Iēsou Christou tetērēmenois*). Or, as v. 24 says, God is the one “able to keep (*phylaxai*) you from falling.” Those who trust in Christ remain in the faith because of the preserving work of God the Father. Nevertheless, the promise that God will keep his own does not nullify the responsibility of believers to persevere in the faith. God keeps his own, and yet believers must keep themselves in God’s love. Jude represented well the biblical tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. On the one hand, believers only avoid apostasy because

of the grace of God. On the other hand, the grace of God does not cancel out the need for believers to exert all their energy to remain in God's love.⁷

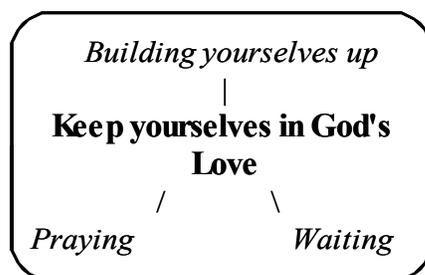
Alexander MacLaren basically concurs with this ordering of the text around the command of keeping oneself in God's love [<http://archive.org/stream/epistlesofjohnju62macl#page/97/mode/1up>]

τηρήσατε (τηρεω || Verb: Aorist Active Imperative, 2P). Imperative of Command. Cf. the Impv. use of the participles in this section. This is to remain in the sphere, or under the blessing of God's love, not to be in or out of it by way of one's obedience.

Echoes the thought of verse 1b: “to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ.” God's love was the cause of their election. Cf. Jn. 15:13; Rom. 5:8; Eph. 1; 1 Jn. 3:16, 4:9-10)

Jude's next instruction to his readers is to *keep yourselves in the love of God*. The Greek text can mean “Keep yourselves in your love for God,” and some commentators follow this interpretation. This is possible, since in the two previous exhortations Jude is urging his readers to some course of action, and here he may also be exhorting them to continue loving God.

Most commentators, however, take the genitive construction of this phrase as meaning “God's love for you,” which would be parallel to *the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ* in the next part of the verse. In this case Jude is telling his readers that they should live and act with the consciousness that God loves them; if they believe that God loves them, then such a faith demands an appropriate response: their life must show that they are indeed controlled by God's love. As previously noted, *keep* is a favorite term of (see verses 1, 6, and 13). So we may translate “You should continue to live knowing (or, with the assurance) that God loves you.”⁸



while waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. (προσδεχόμενοι τὸ ἔλεος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.)

Cf. Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 3:14.

⁷ Schreiner, T. R. (2003). *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (Vol. 37, pp. 483–484). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

⁸ Arichea, D. C., & Hatton, H. (1993). *A handbook on the letter from Jude and the second letter from Peter* (pp. 53–54). New York: United Bible Societies.

[T]he object of the Christian's waiting is really Jesus Christ himself, who will show mercy; the object is not his mercy, as a literal translation of the verse seems to indicate. Another way of translating this is "wait expectantly for the Lord Jesus Christ to mercifully ..."⁹

The third means of remaining in God's love is explicated with the last participle, waiting (prosdechomenoi) "for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ." The word "waiting" is eschatological, focusing on the coming of the Lord. Joseph of Arimathea awaited God's kingdom (Mark 15:43). Simeon and Anna were waiting for God's redeeming purposes to be fulfilled (Luke 2:25, 38). In Titus 2:13 believers are to await the hope of the Lord's return. Since believers are to wait for Christ's mercy, they will receive it at the coming of the Lord. [Schreiner, 484]

Referring to Christ's mercy is unusual in the New Testament. Why did Jude speak here of mercy?

Reflecting on Christ's coming causes believers to desire mercy (not justice). Cf. Matt 5:7; 2 Tim 1:18.

"Jude clearly taught that believers must remain in God's love until the end and avoid apostasy. He did not believe, however, that believers will ever be perfect in this world, and therefore they will need Christ's mercy on the last day. Jude emphasized that believers remain in God's love by waiting for Christ's return. Apparently Christians cannot remain in God's love if they immerse themselves in this world and cease to long for their future perfection before God (vv. 24-25)." [Schreiner, 484]

Taking one's eyes off future hope evidences that one's real love is for the present (world).

9 Ibid.

22 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

Καὶ οὓς μὲν ἐλεᾶτε διακρινομένους,

Καὶ οὓς (οὓς || Relative Pronoun: Masculine Accusative Plural).

μὲν ἐλεᾶτε (ἐλεᾶω = to show or have mercy || Verb: Present Imperative Active). Imperative of Command.

διακρινομένους, (διακρινῶ = to doubt, hesitate, dispute [middle: to judge] || Participle: Masculine Accusative Plural, Present Middle). Substantival Participle.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

And have mercy on those who are doubting;

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

And have mercy on those who are doubting; (Καὶ οὓς μὲν ἐλεᾶτε διακρινομένους,)

Verses 22-23 have a complicated textual issue. Cf. Comfort 805-06.

There is a textual problem in verse 22: some manuscripts have “convince,” while others have “have mercy.” The two verbs are quite similar in the Greek, both in form and in sound, and this obviously gave rise to the textual problem. . . .

This mercy is directed toward fellow Christians *who doubt*. The word used here already appears in verse 9, but there it has the meaning “dispute.” Some scholars take the position that it also has the same meaning here, referring to members of the Christian community who argue against other Christians, and who justify their ungodly behavior by means of the heretical teachings of the godless. This goes well with the verb “convince” or “refute” and produces the following translation: “refute those who dispute the Christian faith.”

However, the word here is in the form of a passive participle, and in the passive the verb frequently means “to be doubtful,” “to waver,” “to hesitate,” and this is the meaning reflected in RSV and TEV, and in many other translations. These are the Christians who begin to have doubts about the truth of the Christian faith and of particular Christian doctrines because of the influence of those who are giving false teaching. Perhaps we can say “those who are uncertain about what they believe.”

A third possible meaning of this word is “to be under judgment” and refers to people who have been reproved or perhaps separated from the Christian community because of their stubborn and unrepentant attitude. While this is possible, and it fits the context quite well, no translation examined for this Handbook follows this interpretation.¹⁰

10 Arichea, D. C., & Hatton, H. (1993). *A handbook on the letter from Jude and the second letter from Peter* (p. 55). New York: United Bible Societies.

I like the way Schreiner summarizes:

The most striking feature of the textual tradition is that some witnesses divide the text into two clauses, while other witnesses divide it into three. The earliest text,⁷² divides the text into two clauses and can be translated as follows, “Snatch some from the fire, and show mercy to those disputing (or ‘doubting’) with fear.” Vaticanus (B) also splits the text into two groups: “And those to whom you show mercy when they doubt; save them by snatching them from the fire. For others you must have mercy with fear” (cf. NEB). The uncial C inserts the verb “reprove” or “convict” (*elenchete*) instead of “have mercy” (*eleate*) and reads as follows, “Reprove those who are disputing, and save others by snatching them from the fire.” The Majority text (see K, L, P, S) also divides the text into two. It is rendered by the NKJV, “And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire” (cf. KJV).

The other noticeable feature here is that the term *diakrinō* (“doubt,” “dispute,” or “distinguish”) is in the Majority text a nominative plural (*diakrinomenoi*) instead of an accusative plural as in all the other witnesses (*diakrinomenous*). Since it is nominative in the majority text tradition, it must signify the action of those who are showing mercy, and it probably means that one must make distinctions between those who need mercy and those in a more perilous state who must be snatched from the fire. The three-clause text is supported especially by A and Ⲙ. Codex Alexandrinus (A) can be translated, “Reprove those who are disputing; save others by snatching them from the fire; on others have mercy with fear.” The only major difference from Sinaiticus (Ⲙ) is that the first verb is “reprove” (*elenchete*) rather than “have mercy” (*eleate*). The text of Sinaiticus is represented by the NIV, “Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear.” The NRSV translates the text even more precisely, “And have mercy on some who are wavering; save others by snatching them out of the fire; and have mercy on still others with fear.”

If we begin with smaller matters first, the imperative “have mercy” (*eleate* or *eleeite* in the texts) should be preferred to “reprove” (*elenchete*). The former is supported by the wider textual tradition, and the latter was likely introduced by scribes to facilitate a progression from severity (reproving) to mercy. The Majority text, as noted, has the nominative “making a distinction” (*diakrinomenoi*) instead of the accusative *diakrinomenous* (“doubting” or “disputing”). But the latter is almost surely original, and the nominative probably was inserted to agree with the other two nominative participles in the text—“snatching” (*harpazontes*) and “hating” (*misountes*).

Certainty on whether the text should be divided into two or three clauses cannot be attained. I believe, however, that the text as it is translated in the NRSV (and NIV) probably is original. The two-phrase form of the text is more easily accounted for if there was originally a triad rather than vice-versa. Ross argues that the third reading does not fit as “an expansion of any of the shorter ones, and there would have been no motive for complicating an already obscure passage by adding a third clause.”²⁸ Stylistically, however, such a decision fits with Jude’s fondness for triads. Some of the errors were likely introduced because it was difficult for scribes to determine the meaning of *diakrinō*. Should it be rendered “doubt” or “dispute,” or even as “making a distinction” per the NKJV? Since the verb *diakrinō* occurs in v. 9 and clearly means “dispute,” some scribes, in my judgment, thought the meaning of the verb must be the same in both verses. This would also explain the insertion of “reprove” (*elenchete*) since “reproving disputers” makes good sense. I would suggest, however, that in this context *diakrinomenous* means “doubters,” and so Jude began by encouraging mercy for those who were doubting and

wavering. The tripartite arrangement of the text is also supported by external evidence, especially the Alexandrian family. Metzger probably is correct in concluding that Vaticanus (B), although an error was accidentally introduced, actually supports Sinaiticus (κ).

Before we examine the two verses more carefully, we should summarize the verses as a whole and their place in the argument. In vv. 17–19 Jude reminded his readers that the apostles predicted the opponents would arrive. Their presence did not constitute a surprise nor, ultimately, a threat to the faith once for all handed down to the saints. Then in vv. 20–21 he gave positive exhortations to believers. They must not think the faith will be preserved simply by attacking the false teachers and revealing their errors. The readers must be attentive to their own relationship with God. They must remain in God’s love by growing in their understanding of the faith, by praying fervently in the Holy Spirit, and by waiting eagerly for Jesus to return and to grant them his mercy. We come to the third stage of the argument in vv. 22–23. Verses 17–19 focus on the opponents; and vv. 20–21, on the readers. Now Jude explained to the readers how they should respond to those who had been affected by the false teachers and perhaps even how they should treat the false teachers themselves. The exhortation is threefold. First, those who were wavering under the influence of the false teachers should not be rejected or ignored. By showing mercy to them, as they struggle with doubts, such people could be reclaimed. Second, others were close to being captured by the teaching and behavior of the opponents. Believers must not give up on them. Their lives could still be salvaged, and they could be snatched from the fire that threatened to destroy them. Third, others had already been defiled by the false teachers. Perhaps Jude even spoke here about the false teachers themselves, although this seems less likely. Probably Jude spoke of those who had fallen into the libertinism of the false teachers. Even in this case mercy should still be extended. But the readers should be extremely careful, avoiding the danger of being stained by the sin of these opponents.³²¹¹

11 Schreiner, T. R. (2003). *1, 2 Peter; Jude* (Vol. 37, pp. 485–487). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

23 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

οὓς δὲ σώζετε ἐκ πυρὸς ἀρπάζοντες, οὓς δὲ ἐλεᾶτε ἐν φόβῳ μισοῦντες καὶ τὸν ἀπὸ τῆς σαρκὸς ἐσπιλωμένον χιτῶνα.

οὓς δὲ (οὓς || Relative Pronoun: Masculine Accusative Plural).

σώζετε (σώζω || Verb: Present Active Imperative, 2P). Imperative of Command.

ἐκ πυρὸς (πυρ || Noun: Neuter Genitive Singular). Genitive/Ablative of Separation.

ἀρπάζοντες, (ἀρπάζω = to snatch || Participle: Masculine Nominative Plural, Present Active).

Adverbial-Instrumental Participle.

οὓς δὲ (οὓς || Relative Pronoun: Masculine Accusative Plural).

ἐλεᾶτε (ἐλεᾶω = to show or have mercy || Verb: Present Active Imperative, 2P). Imperative of Command. See use in v. 22.

ἐν φόβῳ (φόβος || Noun: Masculine Dative Singular). Dative/Instrumental of Manner.

μισοῦντες (μισέω = to hate || Participle: Masculine Nominative Plural, Present Active). Adverbial-Temporal Participle.

καὶ τὸν (ὁ || Definite Article: Masculine Accusative Singular).

ἀπὸ τῆς σαρκὸς (σαρξ || Noun: Feminine Genitive Singular). Genitive/Ablative of Agency.

ἐσπιλωμένον (σπιλω = to stain, spot, defile || Participle: Masculine Accusative Singular, Perfect Passive).

χιτῶνα. (χιτῶν = tunic, clothes, shirt || Noun: Masculine Accusative Singular). Accusative of Direct Object.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

but save others by snatching them out of the fire. And on some have mercy with fear while hating even the garment which is polluted by the flesh.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

but save others by snatching them out of the fire. (οὓς δὲ σώζετε ἐκ πυρὸς ἀρπάζοντες,)

Who are the people who should be saved? Some commentators suggest that it is the same people spoken of in verse 25, that is, those who doubt. Others identify this group with the people mentioned in the next clause. Still others, however, are of the opinion that there are three groups mentioned in verses 22–23, one group in verse 22 and two other groups in verse 23. This is the position taken by both RSV and TEV.

The expression *snatching them out of the fire* is an allusion to Zech 3:1–5, especially verses 3–4. The word for *snatch* can also mean “take by force,” “carry off.” If *fire* is taken to refer to the final judgment (as in the first possibility above), then the whole act of snatching people out of the fire is keeping them from going to hell or from eternal destruction at the end of the age. However, if *fire* refers to difficulties experienced in the present, then snatching people out of the fire means taking them out of their difficult situations, or making sure that these difficult

situations cease and no longer affect the believers in a negative way.

It is clear from both RSV and TEV that *snatching them out of the fire* is the means by which saving these people is achieved. This relationship needs to be expressed clearly in the translation. In some languages it is much more natural to express *save* as the purpose or result of the act of snatching, as for example “Snatch them out of the fire in order to save them” or “... and, as a result, save them.” In this context the word for *snatch* does not seem to indicate “force.” If that is true, perhaps we may translate “Help them to get out of.” Keeping in mind the two possible interpretations for the meaning of *fire*, it is possible to translate this clause as: (1) “Rescue other people by snatching them from the fire of judgment,” or (2) “Rescue other people by saving (snatching) them from the trials and difficulties that are like a fire.”¹²

And on some have mercy with fear while hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. (οὐς δὲ ἐλεᾶτε ἐν φόβῳ μισοῦντες καὶ τὸν ἀπὸ τῆς σαρκὸς ἐσπιλωμένον χιτῶνα.)

ἐλεᾶτε (ἐλεᾶω = to show or have mercy || Verb: Present Active Imperative, 2P). Imperative of Command. See use in v. 22.

Jude now mentions a third group and exhorts his readers to *have mercy with fear* toward this group. The word for *mercy* is the same word used with reference to the first group. But what does *have mercy with fear* mean? A literal translation will be misleading, since it will have the meaning “mercy characterized by fear” or “fearful mercy.” But here Jude is talking about two attitudes: being merciful and being fearful. And *fear* here can mean two things. Firstly, it may be fear of being contaminated by the sins of these people. In this sense Jude is saying that, while they should have mercy and compassion on these people, they should also be aware of the danger of their sins and should guard themselves against being influenced by them. So this fear has in it the elements of carefulness and caution. See, for example, JB, “there are others to whom you must be kind with great caution.” On the other hand, *fear* can mean “fear of God.” In this sense Jude is exhorting his readers to continue to have awe and reverence for God. And since they know that God will punish those who sin against him, their fear of God will prevent them from being influenced by these evil people within their fellowship.

While both of these interpretations can be justified by the text, the first one seems to be preferred because it fits the context much better, especially the words that follow.

The expression *hating even the garment spotted by the flesh* seems to explain further what *fear* means. In this case Jude exhorts his readers to be very cautious in dealing with these people, in order to avoid contamination of any kind. The word translated *garment* is the piece of clothing that is worn next to the skin. This is sometimes known as the inner garment, in contrast to the coat or robe that is known as the outer garment. This inner garment is described as *spotted by the flesh*. *Flesh* is the same word used in verse 8; here it refers either to sinful human nature or to actual sinful acts, primarily sexual immorality. The whole expression *the garment spotted by the flesh* can be understood literally; that is, their clothes are dirty and soiled as a result of their sinful acts. Or it may be expressing the primitive belief that spiritual and demonic powers can reside in and be communicated through a person’s clothes (see Mark 5:27–30; Acts 19:11–12). It is more likely, however, that here we have a figure of speech known as hyperbole, or

12 Arichea, D. C., & Hatton, H. (1993). *A handbook on the letter from Jude and the second letter from Peter* (p. 56). New York: United Bible Societies.

exaggeration. The idea seems to be that these people are so sinful and so evil that even the very clothes they wear are affected and defiled.

What does Jude mean by exhorting his readers in this manner? Some commentators suggest that here he is advising his readers not to have any contact with these sinners—a position that finds support elsewhere in the New Testament. To hate even their garments then means that any contacts with these people, however casual or slight, should be avoided at any cost. However, it seems more likely that Jude’s intention is not for his readers to avoid contact with such people, but to exercise caution and care in dealing with them. The object of their hate is not the sinners but their garments; the sinners on the other hand should be the object of their mercy and compassion, with the aim in view of leading them out of their errors and sinful ways. If this is the case, we may translate “as if their clothes have been stained by their sinful evil lusts” or “as if their sinful evil lusts have made their garments filthy.”¹³

To still others, a third group, believers should show mercy. But they were to do so in an attitude of fear, that is, caution, lest they become contaminated by the sin of “the most abandoned heretic” (Michael Green, *The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude*, p. 188). Such persons are so corrupt that the stench of death has polluted them and even their clothing, as it were, reeks with the odor of corrupted flesh (cf. comments on “stained” in v. 12). [Pentecost, E. C. (1985). *Jude*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 923). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.]

Apostates and 1 John 5:16.

¹³ Arichea, D. C., & Hatton, H. (1993). *A handbook on the letter from Jude and the second letter from Peter* (pp. 56–57). New York: United Bible Societies.