

LESSON 12

PART I: THE RETURN OF CHRIST

2 Peter 3:1-18

Introduction

In contrast to many books of the Bible, the chapter divisions in 2 Peter correspond to the subject divisions. Chapter 2 deals with the heretical teachings and immoral lives of false teachers. Chapter 3 is devoted to the return of Christ, a doctrine which was apparently denied by the false teachers.

The Certainty of Christ's Return

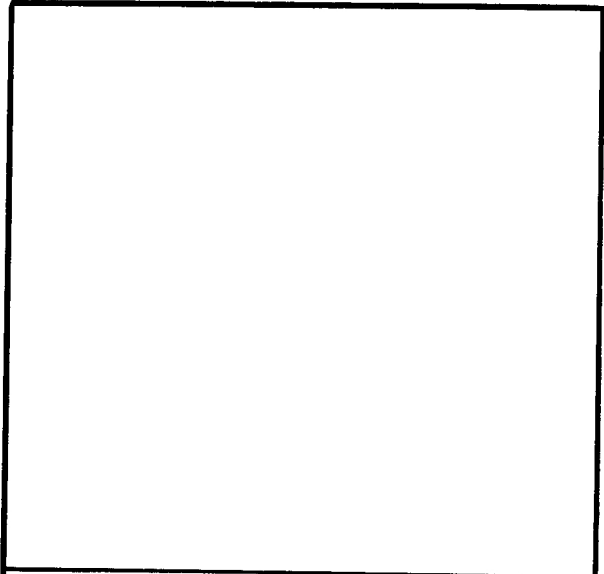
2 Peter 3:1-10

Errors of the scoffers (2 Pet. 3:1-7)

Verse 1 makes reference to the fact that a previous letter had been written, perhaps 1 Peter. On the other hand, the reference may have been to a lost epistle. Those who reject Petrine authorship claim that the reference is only a literary device to give the impression that 2 Peter is also the work of the Apostle Peter. The author's reference to his previous attempt to arouse honest thought does not fit 1 Peter, if he was referring specifically to the problem of scoffers who questioned the doctrine of the second coming. First Peter does exhort the leaders to be faithful during difficult times.

It was the author's desire that his readers would remember the words of the holy prophets as well as the commandments of Jesus, which were transmitted through the Apostles (v. 2). The belief that false teachers would arise in the last days was a common belief among the Jews. The Qumran Community concluded that the nation was involved in general national apostasy. A teacher of righteousness would arise in their midst and would warn them of all that was coming upon the last generation, but the breakers of the Covenant would not believe him. The wicked priest was an implacable adversary of the teacher of righteousness and would attempt to destroy his works.

Jesus had warned His disciples that false messiahs would arise and deceive many before the end



*A previous letter, which is mentioned in 2 Peter 3:1, could be a reference to \_\_\_\_\_ or to a lost \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(1 Peter, epistle)*

*The Qumran Community warned of a w \_\_\_\_\_ p \_\_\_\_\_ who was an implacable a \_\_\_\_\_ of the teacher of r \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(wicked priest, adversary, righteousness)*



came (cf. Matt. 24:4-6, 11, 23-26). Paul also warned the churches that false teachers would come to destroy the flock after his departure (cf. Acts 20:29-31; 1 Tim. 4:1ff.). John stated that the appearance of antichrists indicated that it was the last times (1 John 2:18). Peter agreed that the presence of scoffers was a sign that the last days had arrived (v. 3).

"The last days" refers to a new and final stage of God's redemptive work. This stage would be marked by the New Covenant based on God's mercy and love. The people of God would no longer be exiled from His presence because of their sins. The day would be marked by the glorious presence of the Lord, the fruitfulness of the land, and the victory of the people. God would re-establish His glorious Kingdom.

The disciples understood that the death and resurrection of Jesus initiated the beginning of the last days or the New Age. God's heavenly Kingdom was established by the work of His Son. The Kingdom was not given its fullness in its initial stages but would come to its consummation at the end of the age with the coming of the King in His glorious Kingdom.

Since the second coming of Jesus and the consummation of the Kingdom had not taken place as soon as some had expected, scoffers arose to mock the Christian hope in the return of Christ (v. 4). Paul had expected an early return of Christ, and some of his teachings were misunderstood by the Thessalonians. It was necessary for him to write epistles to the Thessalonians to correct these misunderstandings. The scoffers were saying that Christ would not return, the end of the world would not come, and the world would continue as it had existed from the beginning of creation (v. 4). To deny the return of Christ and the end of the world was to deny a final judgement; therefore, the scoffers continued to walk in their own way.

Peter warned them that if they denied the judgement of God, they were ignorant of the Scripture. The world had not continued without alteration since its creation. In referring to the Genesis account, Peter reminded them that God had created the heavens and the earth long ago through His Word. God spoke and the dry land was separated from the water. However, the time came when the wickedness of men in the day of Noah caused God to destroy the world by the water of the deluge (vv. 5-6). The power and dependability of God's Word are illustrated by the fact that the world was created and destroyed by it. The same trustworthy Word of God promised that He would not again destroy the world by a flood, but God is a consuming fire. Malachi had predicted that "the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Mal. 4:1).

Jesus warned of false \_\_\_\_\_.

Paul warned of false \_\_\_\_\_.

John warned of \_\_\_\_\_.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The new and final stage of God's redemptive work, which would be based on the New Covenant, was called \_\_\_\_\_.

(the last days)

The Kingdom will be consummated at the end of the \_\_\_\_\_.

(last days)

The scoffers mocked the Christians' hope in the return of Christ because--

to deny His return was to deny the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ and a final \_\_\_\_\_.

(end, world, judgement)

Peter illustrated the dependability of God's Word:

1. The world was \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ by His Word.
2. God gave His Word that the world would not be destroyed by \_\_\_\_\_ again.

(created, destroyed, water)

God had warned the wicked people in the day of Noah that the world would be destroyed by water. They rejected the word of warning; therefore, they perished in the judgement of the flood. God warned through Malachi that the world would be destroyed by fire. The scoffers who denied the coming judgement day of God needed to remember that it is "by the same word" that the present heavens and earth are "reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition [destruction] of ungodly men" (v. 7).

Reasons for the delay of the Parousia (3:8-10)

The prophets of long ago had predicted the Day of the Lord. It was to be a day of doom for the wicked and a day of deliverance for the righteous. Generations passed but the Day of the Lord did not arrive.

Jesus revealed that His return would bring judgement and salvation. The Apostles anticipated that Christ's return (the Day of the Lord) was near at hand; however, a number of years had passed since the ascension of Jesus. God's people continued to be afflicted, but the Lord had not returned. The scoffers chided that He was not coming. Peter assured them that the delay of the Lord's coming does not indicate the uncertainty of His return. God's measure of time differs from man's. For one who exists eternally, a thousand years "are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night" (Ps. 90:4; cf. 2 Pet. 3:8).

A second reason for the delay of Christ's return was to give additional time for those in sin to repent, lest they perish (v. 9). Christ instructed His disciples to preach the Gospel in all the world. Through preaching, His chosen of every nation would be called from the realm of sin and Satan and into the Kingdom of God. His return was delayed in order that God's elect could hear the Gospel and be delivered from the kingdom of evil before its destruction. The delay also allowed the utmost time for unrepentant sinners to turn from their wicked ways.

Peter explained that the Day of the Lord might be closer than the scoffers thought, for it would come like a thief (v. 10). He described the judgement of that day in terms of a destruction by fire. The heavens (the atmosphere of the earth) will pass away with the swishing sound of wind or a sound like the rush of wings. The component parts (elements) of the physical world will be destroyed by fire (v. 10). The works of man will also melt with the elements. Peter's description of the destruction of the world sounds like that of the modern scientist who warns concerning the total destruction which can be brought about by nuclear power. Peter's description was not based on a vision of the future developments of science

*Peter pointed out that God's Word is dependable in judgement.*

1. He warned the wicked of Noah's day that they would be destroyed by \_\_\_\_\_.
2. God has warned that the wicked will be destroyed by \_\_\_\_\_.

*(Compare your answers with the text.)*

*Parousia means the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord  
and the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ.*

*(Day, return)*

*One apparent delay of Parousia is that God does not measure \_\_\_\_\_ as man does.*

*(time)*

*Give two additional reasons for Christ's delay in returning.*

*(to give additional time for those in sin to repent, so God's elect can hear the Gospel and be delivered from evil.)*

but on his understanding of Yahweh who consumed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone from heaven. When God revealed Himself to Moses on Mount Sinai, the people heard the roaring of thunder and saw lightning and smoke "because the Lord descended upon it in fire" (Exod. 19:18). Fire is considered also to purify. The present world has become contaminated with sin. Fire is used to dispose of repulsive material such as decaying bodies. On the spiritual level, fire describes the destruction of sin.

Preparation for Christ's Return

2 Peter 3:11-18a

What one should be (3:11)

In view of the impending judgement and destruction by fire, Peter confronted his readers with the question of what kind of lives they should live. He saw the severity of God's judgement against unrighteousness as an incentive to live holy and godly lives (v. 11).

What one should expect (3:12-13)

The anticipation of the dissolving of the heavens and the melting of material elements brings different responses from the saved and the lost. The devout and godly look eagerly for the coming of the Day of Yahweh, for it will mean the fulfilment of His promises of "new heavens and a new earth" (v. 13).

The understanding of the contrast between the passing heavens and earth and the new heaven and earth should not be limited to the realm of the physical. The old order consists of God's material creation, and His relation to earth by man in terms of the kingdom of Israel. Because of sin, God is far removed from His creation which has come under the power of evil. The new heaven and earth correspond to the new Kingdom, with a heavenly Jerusalem as its capital, which will come in fullness at the destruction of the old order. The fact that it is a 'heavenly Jerusalem' suggests the combining of the two realms of heaven and earth. The old order of man on earth and God in heaven does not result in an intimate relation between the transcendent God and earthly man. In the new order, God's dwelling will be with man; therefore, there must be creation of a new heaven (God's dwelling place) and a new earth (man's dwelling place).

Sin destroyed the Old Covenant and separated God and man. The New Covenant establishes a righteous people in order that Yahweh, who puts His laws

On the spiritual level, fire describes the destruction of \_\_\_\_\_.

(sin)

Peter saw the severity of God's judgement as an incentive for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ living.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Match terms and descriptions.

→ — 1. New heaven and earth

→ — 2. Old heaven and earth

- a. God's material creation
- b. Heaven and earth combined
- c. God separated from man by sin
- d. God dwelling in the midst of man

(1. b, d, 2. a, c)

in their hearts, will be their God and they will be His people (Jer. 31:33b). According to Matthew 1, the birth of the Messiah meant two things:

1. Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins [shall deliver his people from the power of evil]—v. 21.
2. They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us—v. 23.

The old order under the Old Covenant had failed; therefore, the Temple in Jerusalem, which represented God's presence, would be destroyed (cf. Matt. 24). The heavenly bodies of the old created order will cease to function (Matt. 24:29); that is, the sun and moon will fail to give forth their light. The end of the world (the old created order) and the sign of Christ's coming to establish fully the new order will come about at some unexpected time (Matt. 24). Events related to the coming of the Son of Man and the end of the world are not separated, but at that time the chosen will be gathered into the Kingdom. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). According to Revelation 21, the old order will give way to the new heaven and earth. Instead of heaven and God being transcendent as in the old order, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev. 21:3). The new heaven and new earth are described in terms of the glorious new Kingdom with the heavenly Jerusalem as God's dwelling place. That which has contaminated the old order will be cast into the lake of fire. If Jesus is Christ and Lord (King and God), it is a mistake to separate His presence as King in the Kingdom from the presence of God in heaven. Those who have been made righteous under the New Covenant eagerly await the coming day of God.

What one should do (3:14-18a)

The glorious promises to those who are righteous should be an adequate incentive to make one zealous in holy living and to be without spot or blemish (v. 14). Secondly, this hope should motivate peaceful relations with one's fellow-man. The common hope of Christ's return in the establishment of the new heaven and earth should replace the quarreling within the churches. Thirdly, the hope should cause diligence in evangelism in order to hasten the coming of Christ and to deliver those from sin to share in Christ's glory (v. 15a).

Peter indicated that his epistle was addressed to the same people to whom Paul had written (v. 15b).

*Are these statements true or false?*

1. *The end of the world and the coming of Christ will come at an unexpected time.*  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. *The events of the coming of the Son of Man and the end of the world will be separate.* \_\_\_\_\_
3. *Jesus' presence as King in the Kingdom should not be separated from God's presence in heaven.* \_\_\_\_\_

*(1. true, 2. false, 3. true)*

*List three responses the Christian should make to the certainty of God's judgement.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*(be zealous in holy living, live in peaceful relation with others. be diligent in evangelism)*

What Paul wrote was by divine inspiration—"according to the wisdom given unto him." "All his epistles" does not necessarily mean those which we have but rather those with which Peter was acquainted (v. 16). Peter's reference to "things in Paul which are difficult to understand" may refer to his teachings, in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 2 Thessalonians 2, concerning the return of Christ and the end of the world. First Corinthians 15 may have been in mind also. The Scriptures are difficult to interpret with regard to the return of Christ and the end of the world and continue to be twisted by the ignorant and unstable (v. 16).

Verse 16 seems to place the epistles of Paul on the same level of inspiration as "the other scriptures"—the Old Testament. Rather than following the false teachers who twisted Paul's doctrines to suit their own desires, the readers were exhorted to hold fast to the doctrines which they had taught previously (v. 17). The doctrinal teaching they had received would enable them to evaluate the false teachings. There was the danger that they would be carried away by the new, erroneous interpretations. To be swayed by the teachings of false prophets would result in their loss of stability and their failure to grow in Christ. In contrast to the unstable and dormant life, the "beloved" were to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (v. 18a).

### Conclusion

#### 2 Peter 3:18b

The closing doxology combines 'day' and 'eternity'. Glory is to be given to Christ from the present until the "day of eternity," which will be the time of His coming, the destruction of the old order, and the establishment of the eternal order of the new heavens and earth.

## PART II: JUDE

### Special Introduction

#### The importance of Jude

Jude is a brief epistle of 25 verses, and it compares with 2 and 3 John in obscurity. This little-known epistle appears in the Authorized Version after 3 John; however, the message is related to 2 Peter 2. The importance of the letter is increased by the fact that it was written at a time when distinction had to be made between orthodoxy and heresy. "Its particular application is at the point of deciding that there is a relationship between profession and practice, between

*Peter said Paul's writings were \_\_\_\_\_ inspired and \_\_\_\_\_ to understand.*

*(divinely, difficult)*

*Peter considered Paul's writings to be on the same level of inspiration as the \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(Old Testament)*

*The message of Jude is related closely to \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(2 Peter 2)*

creed and conduct, between doctrinal belief and ethical behavior."<sup>1</sup>

Traces of Jude appear in the letter to the Corinthians, which was by Clement of Rome (about A.D. 96). Similarities of language appear also in other early writings. It is possible that these similarities do not mean literary acquaintance but knowledge of common expressions which served as sources for various documents. The epistle is referred to in the Muratorian Canon (about A.D. 170), but the form of the reference may suggest that some questioned its authenticity. However, Jude was used widely at an early date and the questioning of its authenticity probably arose mainly because of the author's use of apocryphal books.<sup>2</sup>

### Authorship

The epistle identifies the author as "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James" (v. 1). The authenticity of the statement was questioned in the early Church as well as in our own day. Since Jude was a common name, the identification of this Jude is uncertain. The fact that the author called himself a brother of James seems to point to a well-known leader by that name, probably James of Jerusalem who was the brother of Jesus (cf. Mark 6:3). It appears that the author planned to gain acceptance for the epistle on the reputation of James. Perhaps Jude, a brother of Jesus, had been an itinerant preacher among those to whom he wrote the letter.

Some scholars have dated the letter too late to make it possible for Jude, the Lord's brother, to be the author. Like 2 Peter, it has been assumed that the heretical teachers were second-century Gnostics. However, the allusions to the false teachers do not give sufficient proof that they were even Gnostics, much less first-and second-century Gnostics.

It has been suggested that Jude was the Apostle called Judas, the brother of James (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13—AV). However, modern translations use "son of James" rather than "brother of James."

There is insufficient evidence to conclude that the epistle was an anonymous writing, with the name James added at a later century, or that Jude was an unknown person who was later identified with James of Jerusalem. Until more specific and convincing evidence

<sup>1</sup>Ray Summers, "Jude," in Vol. 12 of The Broadman Bible Commentary (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1972), p. 232.

<sup>2</sup>Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction (3rd ed.; London: The Tyndale Press, 1970), p. 906.

The author of the Jude epistle claimed to be \_\_\_\_\_, the brother of \_\_\_\_\_.  
He was probably a brother of \_\_\_\_\_.

(Jude, James, Jesus)

Some have suggested the author was the Apostle \_\_\_\_\_, the brother of \_\_\_\_\_.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Some have concluded the epistle was an \_\_\_\_\_ writing with the name \_\_\_\_\_ added later.

(anonymous, James)

is presented, it seems wise to hold to the traditional view that the author was Jude, the Lord's brother.

### Date

The date depends on one's view of authorship and recipients. If Jude, the Lord's brother, wrote the epistle, the date could vary from A.D. 60 to 90. Jude must have been younger than our Lord; otherwise he would have had to be a son by a former marriage, a theory unsupported by any evidence.

Because of the implication that an orthodox body of doctrines had developed, some scholars argue for a date later than would have been possible for the brother of Jesus. Also reference is made to "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (v. 3). It should be remembered that the roots of a common doctrine were established at the Jerusalem Conference in A.D. 49. The faith was challenged vigorously by Judaizers during the lifetime of Paul. Even before the Jerusalem Conference, Paul received himself the Gospel of Christ which was commonly held by all Christians.

Verse 17 mentions the predictions of the Apostles. This statement has been interpreted to mean that the apostolic age had passed. The reference, however, is to the prediction that there would be scoffers to arise in the Church. This could refer to 2 Peter. Those who scoffed at the Christian doctrine of the resurrection and return of Christ were not long in appearing. Jews on the Day of Pentecost laughed contemptuously at the preaching of the disciples. The doctrine of the resurrection was mocked by Gentile philosophers at Athens. Apparently some of the teachers who led in the Church at Corinth had approved immoral conduct among the membership (1 Cor. 5). The true doctrine of salvation by grace is always in danger of being perverted and restated differently to provide a license for immorality.

Identifying the false teachers who "crept in unawares" (vv. 4f.) with second-century Gnostics is without sufficient support. Internal evidence is not strong enough to deny the possibility that the author was Jude, the Lord's brother. A date, based on the traditional view of authorship, would have to fall between A.D. 60 and 80.

### Recipients

The general address "to those whom God has called, who live in the love of God the Father and in the safe keeping of Jesus Christ" (v. 1—NEB) gives little indication of the location and specific identity of the recipients. The general address may indicate that the author intended for his letter to be circulated

If the Lord's brother wrote Jude, the date of its writing would be between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

An argument for a later date (second century) is the implication that an o \_\_\_\_\_ body of d \_\_\_\_\_ had developed already.

(orthodox, doctrine)

The interpretation of verse 17 to mean that the \_\_\_\_\_ age had passed would indicate a second-century date.

(apostolic)

Some identify the false teachers as second-century \_\_\_\_\_ and thus hold to a second-century writing.

(Gnostics)

among various churches. His reference to specific circumstances regarding false teachings may indicate that he had a concrete situation in mind; however, this particular heresy may have been more widespread than generally is recognized now.

The recipients have often been identified as Jewish Christians since the author used Jewish apocryphal writings. Others have argued that the Gnostic tendencies of the false teachers indicate a Gentile church. Although nationalism kept Jewish settlements in Roman cities segregated to a degree, it is unlikely that Jews completely escaped Gentile influence. It has been pointed out previously that there were Jews who held Gnostic beliefs. The similarities of Jude to 2 Peter suggest that the two epistles were written to Christians in similar circumstances.

### The relation of 2 Peter and Jude

Ray Summers points out that the epistles have six common characteristics:

1. They warn against false teachers.
2. They use three illustrations of God's judgement, two of which are identical: judgement on angels and judgement on Sodom and Gomorrah.
3. They use Balaam as an example of false teachers.
4. They describe the false teachers as men defiant of divine authority.
5. They use material from apocryphal writings.
6. They use strong metaphors to characterize the false teachers.<sup>3</sup>

Most of 2 Peter 2 and Jude are parallel.

Although the doctrines of the false teachers were very similar, they were not absolutely identical. Since both epistles used similar descriptions of the teachers, the natural conclusion is that one used the other's writings. It is undetermined which was earlier and original. Another possibility is that both used a common source. Arguments supporting the priority of each have been summarized by Donald Guthrie and will

<sup>3</sup>"Jude," p. 233.

What indicates Jude may have been written to Jewish Christians? \_\_\_\_\_

What indicates it may have been written to a Gentile church? \_\_\_\_\_

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Write your own abbreviated list of characteristics which Jude and 2 Peter have in common.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

(Compare your list with the one in the text.)

not be repeated here because of the limitations of space.<sup>4</sup> The arguments are inconclusive, and the problem remains unsolved. Fortunately, the inspiration of either epistle is not dependent on the resolving of the question of their relationship.

### Purpose

False teachers had gained entrance into the Church and were perverting the doctrines of the faith. It may be that their teachings sounded reasonable and consistent with orthodox teachings, but they were actually serious threats to orthodox Christianity. The epistle was written to warn against the heresy and to encourage loyalty to the "faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (v. 3).

### Interpretation of Jude

#### Greetings (vv. 1-2)

Jude as "servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James" is best taken to refer to James of Jerusalem, brother of Jesus. The mention of James strengthened the authority of the epistle. The recipients who were beloved of God were called as His people into His Kingdom. Because God loved them and had called them, He kept them guarded from harm. They were kept by God for Christ. Verse 2 could mean that they were beloved in God and were kept in Christ. The greeting contains the typical prayer for divine grace and peace to be bestowed upon the recipients.

#### The occasion of the letter (vv. 3-4)

Jude's theme was the salvation which was common to him and his readers. Verse 3 seems to indicate that he was working on a treatise regarding the doctrines of salvation, but he had found it necessary to turn aside from this treatise in order to write a warning against heretical teachers. He urged his readers to contend (agonize) earnestly for the faith which was passed on from Jesus through the Apostles to them. Since the faith was "once for all delivered," it appears that the doctrinal interpretation of the teachings of Jesus had reached a point of crystalization which was regarded as orthodoxy. To depart from the accepted teachings meant to hold heretical teachings.

False teachers had slipped into the Church secretly and were perverting the teachings of the faith (v. 4).

The Epistle of Jude was written to warn against f \_\_\_\_\_ t \_\_\_\_\_, who were perverting the d \_\_\_\_\_ of the f \_\_\_\_\_, and to encourage l \_\_\_\_\_ to the faith.

(false teachers, doctrines, faith, loyalty)

Apparently Jude was working on a treatise regarding the doctrines of s \_\_\_\_\_. However, he found it necessary to turn aside to warn against h \_\_\_\_\_ teachers. His readers were to contend earnestly for the f \_\_\_\_\_. The faith "once delivered" implies that a crystalized o \_\_\_\_\_ had arisen. False teachers were perverting the teachings of the f \_\_\_\_\_.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

<sup>4</sup>New Testament Introduction, pp. 920ff.

These men had been predicted in writings beforehand. They were described as ungodly men who twist the teachings concerning God's grace into doctrines which permit lawless immorality. Their perversion could have been either by corrupt lives or erroneous teachings.

Paul anticipated that some in the Roman Church would interpret his doctrine of justification by faith to mean that man should continue in sin so that grace might abound (6:1ff.). Both the immoral lives and teachings of the Libertines denied Jesus Christ as Lord. By claiming that the teachings came from Him, false teachers put Christ in conflict with the righteous demands of God. Also, they denied Jesus as Lord by rejecting His authoritative control over their lives. Their heretical teachings, however, would not defeat the purpose of Christ, for it had been determined long ago that they would be doomed (v. 4).

#### The judgement of false teachers (vv. 5-7)

Three illustrations were used to warn the people concerning apostasy and unrighteousness. God delivered the Israelites out of the land of Egypt, but He destroyed many of them in the wilderness because of their unbelief (v. 5). During the forty years, the Israelites began to doubt God's power to provide for them and to give them the land of Canaan.

A second illustration makes reference to 1 Enoch and is similar to the reference to angels in 2 Peter. According to 1 Enoch, 200 angels conspired to leave heaven in order to enter into sexual union with women on earth. The rebellious and evil angels were bound by the archangels Raphael and Gabriel and consigned to the regions of darkness until the day of judgement (v. 6).

The third illustration refers to Sodom and Gomorrah, which were destroyed because of their wickedness. The citizens of those cities were guilty of immorality and unnatural lusts, "going after strange flesh" (v. 7). The angels, verse 6, cohabited with women; the men of Sodom attempted sexual relations with angels (Gen. 19:5-8). The relations between the divine order of angels and the human order of flesh exemplified "unnatural lusts." Punishment for their sins was by eternal fire which came from heaven.

#### The conduct of the false teachers (vv. 8-16)

The derogatory description of the teachers parallels that of 2 Peter 2:10ff. In spite of the warning of judgement contained in the Old Testament and the apocryphal books, these men destroyed human relations by indulging in fleshly immorality and by rejecting the authority of both God and Christian leaders. They even insulted celestial beings (v. 8).

False teachers justified their immoral lives by attributing them to C, and they denied Him as Lord by rejecting His a.

(Christ, authority)

Jude illustrated his warning against apostasy and unrighteousness by recalling God's deliverance of the \_\_\_\_\_ from Egypt and His destruction of many in the \_\_\_\_\_ because of their \_\_\_\_\_.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

His second illustration made reference to the rebellious and evil angels who were bound and consigned to the regions of \_\_\_\_\_ until the day of \_\_\_\_\_.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

What was Jude's third illustration in his warning against apostasy? \_\_\_\_\_

(Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of their wickedness.)

The false teachers indulged in fleshly \_\_\_\_\_ and rejected the authority of \_\_\_\_\_.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Jude's reference to the archangel Michael's vying with the devil for the body of Moses comes from the non-canonical Hebrew books, The Assumption of Moses. Michael insisted that the body of Moses belonged to God, but the devil claimed it because Moses had murdered the Egyptian. Michael did not rebuke the devil, who was also a ruler, but simply said, "The Lord rebuke thee" (v. 9). Since revelation from God often was given through angels, the deliberate errors of false teachers showed their disrespect not only for angelic dignitaries but also for God who gave the revelation.

The shallowness of the teachers was revealed by the fact that they claimed to be authorities in renouncing spiritual truths which they did not understand (v. 10). Since they were ready to scoff at anything which they did not understand, they rejected spiritual truths which had been given through revelation. Their own knowledge was limited to experiences resulting from instinctual desires on the level of irrational animals and without divine revelation. They had become utterly depraved, like unreasoning beasts (v. 10). Their condition was tragic for they walked in the way of Cain (v. 11). Cain lacked spiritual perception; therefore, his worship lacked faith and was rejected. His jealousy of his brother Abel, whose worship was acceptable to God, resulted in murder.

Jude, like 2 Peter, used Balaam as an example of heretics whose lives were guided by selfish desires rather than sincere worship. Balaam was willing to forfeit spiritual values for material gain. Korah, who organized 250 of the leading men of Israel to rebel against Moses and Aaron, fell into a seemingly bottomless crevice in the earth caused by an earthquake (cf. Num. 16:1-35). Jude concluded that the false teachers of his day were so oriented by fleshly desires that they had no appreciation for spiritual matters. They were described as—

crude gluttons at the love feast  
of the Christians,

waterless clouds which could not  
produce what their appearance  
promised,

fruitless trees whose existence was  
worthless and whose destiny was to  
be uprooted and to be burnt,

raging waves of the sea that wasted  
their power by dashing against the  
rocks on the shore, and

wandering stars which follow purpose-  
less tracks in the eternal darkness  
(vv. 12f.).

The false teachers showed disrespect for  
\_\_\_\_\_ beings.

(angelic)

The heretics were guided by selfish \_\_\_\_\_  
rather than sincere \_\_\_\_\_.

(desires, worship)

Jude referred to a second apocryphal passage in 1 Enoch. First Enoch was a pseudonym attributed to the Old Testament patriarch who was of the seventh generation from Adam (v. 14). According to 1 Enoch, the patriarch prophesied that the Lord would come with myriads of angels to execute judgement upon all of the wicked and ungodly in the day of judgement. The angels as messengers or servants of God would help to convince the ungodly of their deeds. This awareness would justify their severe punishment (v. 15). The depth of their ungodliness was revealed by their speaking against Christ, "denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 4). They murmured against everything good, they complained against all who did not agree with them in their passions and vice, and they were loud-mouthed boasters who flattered the wealthy people for personal gain (v. 16).

Proper conduct of the faithful (vv. 17-23)

In contrast to the false teachers whose lives denied their Christian profession, the faithful were to live spiritual lives by faith. The Apostle Peter and perhaps other Apostles had predicted that scoffers with ungodly passions would appear in the last times (vv. 17f.; cf. 2 Peter 3:3). These mockers would be controlled by their own ungodly lusts. Their desire for power would cause them to create divisions in the Christian fellowship in order to gain followers. Since the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of unity in the Christian fellowship (cf. 1 Cor. 12), the false teachers revealed that they were devoid of the Spirit by their works of disunity (v. 19). To avoid the divisions attempted by false teachers, the Christians were exhorted to strengthen themselves by loyalty to their faith and by unity created by praying in the Holy Spirit (v. 20). Their own motives were to be controlled by the love of God and by a recognition of His mercy in Jesus Christ which had brought eternal life (v. 21). These motives were in contrast to the brute instincts of the false teachers, who were controlled by passions and desires for personal power, prestige, and wealth.

Apparently the false teachers were convincing some that the life of dedicated love, which was controlled by the mercy of God, was vanity; therefore, some had begun to doubt (v. 22). Those who were established in the faith were to rescue those who doubted by convincing them of the truths of their faith. They were to have compassion for the unsaved and to snatch them out of the fiery judgement of God (v. 23). In order to help the faltering, who had yielded to the ways of the flesh, the faithful were to engage in merciful efforts on their behalf, but they were to be cautious lest they be influenced to yield to the lusts of the flesh (v. 23).

*The false teachers murmured against everything \_\_\_\_\_.*

*They complained against those who did not agree with them in their \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.*

*They were loud-mouthed \_\_\_\_\_ who flattered \_\_\_\_\_ people.*

*(good, passions, vices, boasters, wealthy)*

*In contrast to the ways of false teachers, Christians are--*

*to be loyal in their \_\_\_\_\_,*

*to be controlled by the \_\_\_\_\_ of God,*

*to rescue those who have begun to \_\_\_\_\_*

*because of the \_\_\_\_\_ teachers.*

*(faith, love, doubt, false)*

Doxology (vv. 24-25)

The epistle closes with one of the most beautiful doxologies of the New Testament. It expresses the faith that the sovereign God is able to keep those who are faced with heresy from falling. Only those who are righteous are qualified to rejoice in the presence of His glory. The epistle ends with a tribute to Jesus Christ, who is identified as the One God in contrast to the many demigods of the Gnostics. Only He is worthy of glory, majesty, dominion, and authority for ever.

*Jude closes with a doxology, which expresses the faith that the sovereign \_\_\_\_\_ is able to keep those who are faced with \_\_\_\_\_ from falling.*

*(God, heresy)*

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

1. To what does "second epistle" refer in 2 Peter 3:1? \_\_\_\_\_
2. List four who warned against false teachers in the last days. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Define "last days." \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why did the scoffers deny the return of Christ? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How did Peter attempt to prove the dependability of the Word of God concerning judgement? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. List three reasons for the delay of the Parousia. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. How will the new heaven and earth differ from the old order? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What should be the Christian's response to God's certain judgement? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. What did Peter say about Paul's writings? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Who was the author of the epistle of Jude? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Why has Jude been given a second-century date? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. List six common characteristics which 2 Peter and Jude share. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. What was the purpose of Jude? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. Interpret Jude 3-4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. State two errors of the false teachers. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
16. List three illustrations which were used to warn the people against apostasy. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
17. Briefly describe the conduct of the false teachers. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

18. Describe the proper conduct of Christians. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Supplementary activity (Level 2):

Read pages 172-176 in Bowman and do the following exercises.

1. Outline Peter's second reply to the scoffers (3:5-13).
2. Reread pages 167-172 and list the parallel teachings of 2 Peter 2 and Jude.

Advanced activity (Level 3):

Read pages 127-143 in Leaney and answer the following questions.

1. What do Leaney's comments on 1 Peter 3:1 reveal concerning his belief about the author?
2. How does Leaney interpret 2 Peter 3:5-7?
3. Interpret 2 Peter 3:10.
4. On what does Leaney think the false teachers based their doctrine of self-indulgence?
5. What does Leaney depict as the contemporary problem regarding Christian hope? What are his own conclusions? Do you agree with them?

Seminar Discussion

1. Is the literal return of Christ essential to Christian hope today? Defend your answer.
2. What is meant by "the last days" and how does it differ from the end of time?
3. Why has Christ delayed his return?
4. What should one expect when Christ returns?
5. How are Jude and 2 Peter 2 similar?
6. What were the false teachers, referred to by Jude, apparently teaching?