

Session Six: Interpretation, Pt. 2

1. Revisiting Occasion, Purpose, and Interpretation

1.1. Which verse supplies the occasion of Jude's letter? (verse 4)

1.2. Which verse most succinctly highlights Jude's purpose? (verse 3)

1.3. The observation phase of an inductive study allowed us to learn **what** the text says. Turning our attention to interpretation, we want to focus on what the text **means**. (What commands and principles transfer to present circumstances?)

1.4. 4 guidelines to aid in arriving at an accurate interpretation:

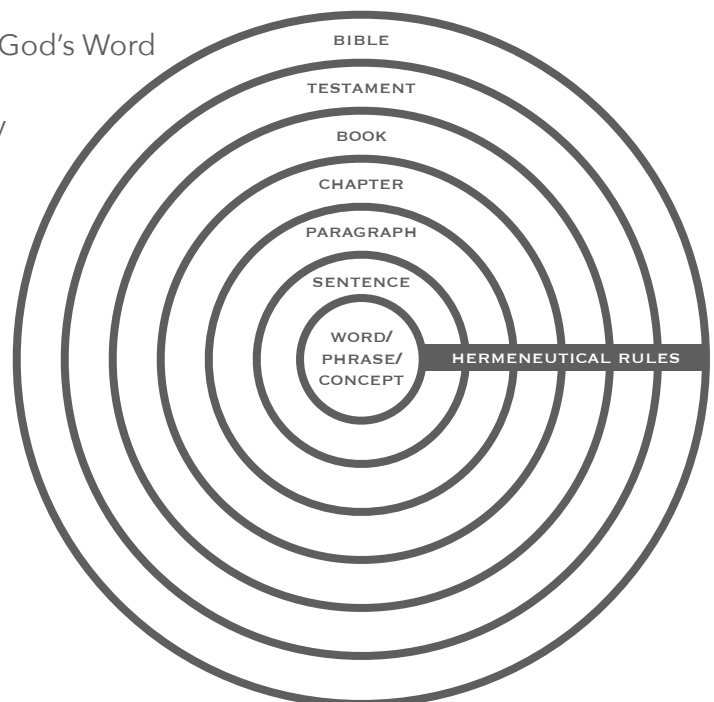
1.4.1. Guideline #1: **Saturate** Yourself in God's Word

1.4.2. Guideline #2: **Study** Concentrically

1.4.3. Guideline #3: **Submit** to Scripture's Own Interpretation

1.4.4. Guideline #4: **Compare** Interpretational Findings with Commentary Sources

1.5. We do not use commentary to **formulate** our interpretation, but rather to check and **expand** it.



2. Practicing Interpretation, Cont'd.

2.1. The overarching prompt for each group: In light of Jude's occasion and purpose, verse(s) _____ mean(s) _____.

2.2. Keep an eye toward **application**. (Why does this text matter in my daily walk with the Lord? What am I supposed to do with it to bring honor to Christ?)

Reminder of Groups

Group #1 - v4: *For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.*

Group #2 - v5: *Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.*

Group #3 - v9: *But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you."*

Group #4 - v11: *Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion.*

Group #5 - vv14-15: *It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him."*

Group #6 - v24: *Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy,*

You will have a large portion of today's class to finish up the work you started last week. Toward the end, we will come together and discuss some of our findings. Please be ready to present something helpful to the class.

Next week, we will wrap up interpretation and jump into the final phase of our project: application.

JUDE (English Standard Version)

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.” But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion. These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever. It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage. But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.” It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Ongoing Questions/Themes:

STUDYING CONCENTRICALLY (sample)

Group #1 - v4: *For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.*

Circle #1 (Word/Phrase/Concept)

- certain people

Circle #2 (Sentence)

- have crept in unnoticed
- long ago destined for condemnation
- ungodly people
- pervert the grace of God into sensuality
- deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ

Circle #3 (Paragraph/Section)

- my chosen section = vv3-4
- there is a need to contend for the faith (v3) because of these "certain people" (v4)

Circle #4 (Chapter/Surrounding Sections)

- section #1 = vv1-2
 - "certain people" contrasted with those called, beloved, and kept (v1b)
- section #2 = vv3-4
 - see circle #3
- section #3 = vv5-16
 - **examples of ungodly people from the past, "certain people" (vv5-7)**
 - "certain people" = "these people" (v8)
 - rely on dreams
 - defile flesh
 - reject authority
 - **blaspheme glorious ones** (angels, who had a special role of establishing moral order)
 - blaspheme all that they do not understand (v10)
 - destroyed by what they understand instinctively (v10)
 - **walked in the way of Cain (v11)**
 - **abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error (v11)**
 - **perished in Korah's rebellion (v11)**
 - feast with you without fear (v12)
 - shepherds feeding themselves...(v12)
 - shameful people (v13)
 - for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever (v13)
 - **about these Enoch prophesied...the Lord comes...to execute judgment" (vv14-15)**
 - "certain people" = ungodly sinners (v15)

- grumblers (v16)
- malcontents (v16)
- follow their own sinful desire (v16)
- loud-mouthed boasters (v16)
- show favoritism to gain advantage (v16)
- **"certain people" predicted to come by apostles of Jesus (v17)**
- **scoffers, following their own passions (v18)**
- **cause divisions (v19)**
- **worldly people, devoid of the Spirit (v19)**
- section #4 = vv17-23
 - N/A
- section #5 = vv24-25
 - N/A

Circle #5 (Book)

- see circle #4

Circle #6 (Testament)

- v17 - *But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.*
 - 2 Peter 1-3 - *But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.*

Circle #7 (Bible)

New Testament: Matthew 7:15-20 - *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.*

Old Testament:

- v11 (walked in the way of Cain) - see Genesis 4:3-8
- v11 (Balaam's error) - see 2 Pt 2:15-16 and Numbers 22:22-41
- v11 (Korah's rebellion) - see Numbers 16:1-35

Extra Circle, #8 (Helpful Outside Information)

- **archangel Michael...disputing about the body of Moses...(v9) - see *The Testament of Moses***
- **Enoch prophesied...(vv14-15) - see *1 Enoch***

Textual Anecdotes

v5: *Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.*

"Jude's first example is the desert generation of Israel. Jude reminds his readers that 'the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt.' We encounter in this statement an interesting textual variant. As noted in the footnote to this verse in the NIV, a number of Greek manuscripts, in place of the word translated 'Lord,' have the Greek word for 'Jesus.' Some commentators think that this reading is original and that Jude here thinks of the preexistent Jesus as the one who delivered the people out of Egypt. They point to 1 Corinthians 10:4, where Paul identifies the 'rock' that followed the Israelites in the desert with Christ" (Douglas J. Moo, *The NIV Application Commentary: 2 Peter, Jude*, 239).

This is my view of v5.

Others would simply hold that the name Jehovah God should be employed.

Either way, what is being emphasized is NOT who exactly delivered the Israelites.

What IS being emphasized is **destruction** for disbelief (v5), **judgement** for leaving a proper place of authority (v6), and a **punishment** of eternal fire for ungodly living, namely sexual immorality (v7).

"...it may be that, in view of Jude's general usage, he has used *kurios* here of Jesus, not so much because he is concerned to explain the preexistent activity of Christ, but rather because in his typological application of these OT events to the present it is the Lord Jesus who has saved his people the church and will be the Judge of apostates" (Richard J. Bauckham, *World Biblical Commentary: Jude, 2 Peter*, 49).

v9: But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you."

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made by these Jewish exorcists: dismissing the power and influence of evil angels without the authority of Jesus to back it up.

As noted above, verse 9 is a notoriously difficult verse. We face two problems: the source for the story Jude refers to, and the application of the story to the false teachers.

(1) The word "archangel," used only one other time in the New Testament (1 Thess. 4:16), refers to the highest rank of angel, as Jews developed these ranks in the intertestamental period.²¹ Michael, mentioned three times in the Old Testament (Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1) and once elsewhere in the New (Rev. 12:7), is always included in this group and often made the most important within this highest rank. The problem is that we do not find anywhere in the Old Testament or in extant Jewish literature the story that Jude refers to here. However, several early Christian fathers tell us about a book that they were familiar with that contained the story. It is variously called *The Assumption of Moses* or *The Testament of Moses*.²² One of the bases of the story Jude quotes is apparently the vision of Zechariah in Zechariah 3, in which "the angel of the LORD" and Satan dispute over Joshua the high priest:

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?" (vv. 1–2)

We can recognize how the tradition that Jude quotes puts the words of rebuke from this vision on the lips of Michael. We, of course, have no way of knowing exactly what Jude thought about this story. He certainly gives no indication that the book from which he quotes had canonical status. But did he think that the story about Michael and Satan was true, that it really happened? Or was he simply quoting a story well known to his readers to illustrate a point? We have no way of telling (for further details, see the "Bridging Contexts" section).

(2) More important for our immediate purposes is the significance of the story for Jude. According to most English translations (including the NIV), the main point is that Michael, archangel though he was, "did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him [Satan]." The connection with verse 8, through the idea of "slander," is clear. Presumably, Jude's point is that the false teachers are so presumptuous as to do what even Michael, the archangel,

21. Sometimes there are four chief angels, sometimes seven (see Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 60).

22. There is considerable controversy over the existence and relationship of these two books and which one Jude may have referred to. An up-to-date survey of the situation can be found in Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 65–76.

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refused to do: rebuke, without the Lord's authority and backing, Satan or his associates. For Michael did not himself rebuke Satan; he called on the Lord to do so. The false teachers, however, disparage evil angels on their own authority.

With the "these" at the beginning of verse 10, Jude returns to his characterization of the false teachers. We should view verse 9, then, as a quick illustrative interruption in his criticism of these heretics. The NIV unfortunately disrupts the verbal continuity from verses 8 and 9—the verb translated "speak abusively against" is again the verb "blaspheme" or "slander." Thus the first part of verse 10 wraps up Jude's criticism of the false teachers for slandering evil angels: What they do not even understand, they slander.

Oh, yes, Jude goes on, there are some things they do "understand."²³ But they understand them "by instinct, like unreasoning animals." As the parallel in 2 Peter 2:12 suggests, Jude is here describing the false teachers' sexual excesses. Rather than following the "reason" of God's word, they act at the level of pure instinct—like animals, with no moral compass or sense of right and wrong. No wonder that they are "destroyed" by these things. Thus Jude ends his paragraph on the note that has been so important throughout: the eschatological judgment that will strike the false teachers in Jude's churches, just as it struck the desert generation, the angels who sinned, and Sodom and Gomorrah.

(Douglas J. Moo, *The NIV Application Commentary: 2 Peter, Jude, 246–247*)

What is being emphasized is NOT the details of Michael's contention with the devil (that is not part of the completed canon). What IS being emphasized is *judgment* by way of using a story to illustrate the point. (For if Michael was of an extremely high position of authority and he did not blaspheme, how much more wicked are "these people" [cf. vv8-13] who do.) The ungodly people written of in Jude's letter are so depraved they are like unreasoning animals, only groping for ungodly ends.

vv14-15: *It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him."*

What we know about Enoch:

1. He was an early descendant of Adam
2. Genesis 5:24 - *Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.* (he did not die)
3. There are a number of legends about Enoch in the literature between the Testaments
4. Jude quotes from a non-canonical book, 1 Enoch
5. "This book was popular in Jude's day, and both he (cf. v6) and Peter (1 Peter 3:19-20; 2 Peter 2:4) allude to it" (Douglas J. Moo, *The NIV Application Commentary: 2 Peter, Jude*, 269).
6. "The subject of Enoch's prophecy is a common theme in Jewish apocalyptic writers: the coming of God to judge the wicked. The text Jude quotes is 1 Enoch 1:9...Behold, he will arrive with ten million of the holy ones in order to execute judgment upon all. He will destroy the wicked ones and censure all flesh on account of everything that they have done, that which the sinners and the wicked ones committed against him" (269)

What Jude is NOT emphasizing is all the details surrounding the life of Enoch. He IS illustrating a point, a point about coming judgment on the wicked. There is no guesswork about this when we reach v15.

The Holy Spirit moved Jude to take truth from 1 Enoch and place it into what we know to be canon. This doesn't make 1 Enoch equal with Scripture. Remember, this text is being used to illustrate a point. This is exactly what Paul did in 3 of his writings (inspired no less by the Spirit), quoting secular sources (poets and philosophers) in Acts 17:28, 1 Corinthians 15:33, and Titus 1:12.

Biblical authors at times utilize what is easily known in a cultural context to explain spiritual realities. Remember: All truth is God's truth.

reinforcing the certainty of it.

Even though this prophecy is not recorded in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit inspired Jude (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21) to use it because it was familiar, historically valid, and supported his overall thesis. Jude extracted the quote from the pseudepigraphal book of *1 Enoch*, with which his first-century readers were well acquainted. The book was part of the written history and tradition of the Jewish people, and rabbinical allusions to it were not uncommon.

(John MacArthur, *2 Peter & Jude*, 188)