

At Risk in the Community

Key Verses: *“Of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.”*
—**Jude 22,23**

Selected Scripture:
Jude

GOD USED RIGHTEOUS

Jude (not Iscariot who betrayed Christ) to address faithful believers with a message designed to inspire vigilance and avoid succumbing to deception introduced by apostates. Although “The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient” (II Tim. 2:24), Christians must “earnestly contend for the faith” to insure being established in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.—
Jude 1-3

Jude identified a dangerous condition whereby self-serving individuals infiltrated congregations of believers introducing false doctrines and unrighteous practices, causing unsuspecting Christians to follow their leading. Although this was a problem in the Early Church, such practices are ever-present dangers throughout the entire Gospel Age.—vs. 4

Three examples of God’s judgment against unrighteousness are cited, including Israel’s unbelief after receiving many promises of blessings for obedience. The angels who sinned caused the termination of the dispensation before the flood, and the destruction of Sodom

and Gomorrah because of gross immorality.—vss. 5-7

A discussion of how apostates operate in the church ensues, including defilement of the flesh, rejection of authority provided by the Lord's counsel, and speaking evil of true servants of God.—vs. 8

Jude continues with a graphic description as to the outlook for these false teachers, whose actions are destructive to the spiritual growth of believers who are striving to serve the Heavenly Father. "These speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core."—vs. 10,11

A time of just recompense is promised for all such evil conduct, assuring that wickedness will not always seem to flourish and the necessity of being prepared to resist any encroachments by the Adversary. "Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Eph. 6:13-17) Those in harmony with the Lord's way appreciate the promise that righteousness will prevail.—Jude 14,15

"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."—vs.21

Our Key Verses exhort faithful believers to be watchmen, warning fellow Christians when we note danger lurking among the brotherhood. "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."—James 5:20 ■