

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 439

The Epistle of Jude, Part 8

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Teacher: Dr. Michael S. Heiser (MH)

Host: Trey Stricklin (TS)

Episode Summary

In this last installment of the book of Jude (vv. 17-25), we take a look at several points of Jude's theology, namely his Christology and fear of apostasy on the part of his audience. Jude continues to hammer away at the fact that the false teachers about which he has warned his audience were predicted—and are predictable in their ungodly conduct and desire to sow discord among believers.

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 439: The Epistle of Jude, Part 8. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike. How are you doing?

MH: Oh, pretty good, pretty good, can't complain.

TS: Yeah.

MH: It's getting close to our Fantasy Football season, Trey. We're inching toward it.

TS: Yeah, it's the best time of the year, to be honest.

MH: Yeah,

TS: I'm sure everybody else out there is excited. We need to start a football Bible podcast or something. I don't know how that works.

5:00 **MH:** Yeah, I don't know how that would work either, but yeah. I've been doing mock drafts. I'm trying to prepare and trying to do better than I did last year.

TS: Yeah.

MH: Of course, it all depends on injuries.

TS: I haven't touched it. I don't like mock drafts as much, Mike. I get too in love with the picks and then I get too focused on that. I'd rather just react fresh than...cause you know what I mean? I'll get stuck on somebody.

MH: Yeah, I know.

TS: I just can't do it, so that's why I just prefer not to do mock drafts.

MH: You do enough of them and you just assume somebody is going to fall to you.

TS: Yeah, exactly.

MH: And then somebody will do something crazy and then there goes that.

TS: Yeah, yeah.

MH: I understand.

TS: Yeah, for sure. Well, Mike, this is the last Jude episode, correct?

MH: Yeah, our last installment, yeah.

TS: Yeah, yeah, and I want to remind people. Please send me your questions at treysticklin@gmail.com with your Jude questions and we'll have a Q&A. I've gotten some trickled in, Mike, so hopefully it will be next week or the week after that maybe we'll do a Q&A over Jude.

MH: Okay.

TS: But don't forget to send me that and if you want to know the correct spelling of my name go to nakedbiblepodcast.com and you can find it in the "About" section. I can only imagine how many people try to email me and don't get it right.

MH: Yeah.

TS: But I'm ready, Mike, if you are.

MH: Alright, well, let's jump in here. So for Part 8, we're going to cover the rest of the book, which technically is Jude 17-25. But before we jump into that, I want to return to verses 14 and 15 real briefly and pick up something that I left sort of dangling. It was intentional. I figured we would talk about it in this episode as opposed to the last one. Recall that in Jude 14 and 15, Jude quoted 1 Enoch 1:9. We spent the whole episode talking about that last time. And the quote in 1

Enoch 1:9 can be found...It's essentially an amalgamation of three Old Testament passages. They are Jeremiah 25:30-31, Isaiah 66:15-16, and Zechariah 14:5. Let me just read those three to you. So Jeremiah 25:30-31 says:

³⁰ "You, therefore, shall prophesy against them all these words, and say to them:

**"The LORD will roar from on high,
and from his holy habitation utter his voice;
he will roar mightily against his fold,
and shout, like those who tread grapes,
against all the inhabitants of the earth.**

**³¹ The clamor will resound to the ends of the earth,
for the LORD has an indictment against the nations;
he is entering into judgment with all flesh,
and the wicked he will put to the sword,
declares the LORD.'**

Then Isaiah 66:15-16:

**¹⁵ "For behold, the LORD will come in fire,
and his chariots like the whirlwind,
to render his anger in fury,
and his rebuke with flames of fire.**

**¹⁶ For by fire will the LORD enter into judgment,
and by his sword, with all flesh;
and those slain by the LORD shall be many.**

And then Zechariah 14:5 is where we pick up with the holy ones.

⁵ And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

So 1 Enoch 1:9 essentially smashes these passages together and takes something from each of them and puts it into one quotation. We talked a little bit about the economy of doing that last time, but one thing I wanted you to notice for this time though is, I think, a little more subtle and probably a little more important. What Jude has done here... If you go to Jude and you say...right up here in verse 14:

¹⁴ It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, ¹⁵ to execute judgment...”

10:00 So on and so forth. Well, we just read these passages from the Old Testament. Who is coming with the holy ones? Who is coming to bring judgment in these passages? Who is it? It's God. It's Yahweh. In all of these passages, it's Yahweh himself. So what Jude has just done here is he has taken 1 Enoch 1:9, which combines these three passages about something that God is going to do (God himself is going to do) and he makes it about the coming of Christ. I mean, there's no more certain way to identify Jesus with God as doing stuff like this, and Jude is very, very up front with it. He doesn't hide it at all. He doesn't hide his Christology. He has a high Christology. He has just made Jesus God. He has made Jesus the “God actor” in these three verses because he applies them to Christ.

Green in his commentary has this to say. He writes:

Jude has taken a passage that speaks of a divine theophany and has transformed it into a passage that refers to the advent of Christ (Osburn 1977: 334): Ἰδοὺ ἦλθεν κύριος ἐν ἀγίαις μυριάσιν αὐτοῦ (*Idou ēlthen kyrios en hagiais myriasin autou*, Behold! the Lord comes with his holy myriads). [MH: That's from Zechariah 14:5.] Jude refers to Jesus Christ as “Lord” (vv. 4, 17, 21, 25), and it is his coming that is in view. In 1 En. 1.3–4, the one who comes is “the great Holy one, ... the eternal God”...

Again, that would be logical because of the Old Testament reference.

[This echoes] the magnificent theophany passages of the OT that anticipate the majestic advent of Yahweh (Isa. 64:1–3; Mic. 1:2–5; Hab. 3:1–19; cf. Deut. 33:2; Judg. 5:4–5).

So Green finishes his quote by saying:

Jude's high Christology is evident in this passage since Christ is the one whose coming and judgment are anticipated.

So again, this is a tactic. For those of you who wanted... You do apologetics and you get into conversations with people and they'll say things like... Most people are well-meaning. They just don't know any better. They'll say things like how the New Testament doesn't identify Jesus as God and this claim is never made in the New Testament and so on and so forth. This is a classic example where that is wrong, because here you have the writer pull three passages out of the Old Testament. Now he quotes 1 Enoch 1:9 out of convenience because 1 Enoch 1:9

combines all three, but all three have an appearance of God himself. And when Jude uses it, it is an appearance of Jesus. So he interchanges God and Jesus in these passages and it's a strong statement of deity. And this happens a lot in the New Testament. So we don't want to miss stuff like that when we run into it.

Let's take this into verses 17-23 and I'll read those. Jude writes:

¹⁷ But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." ¹⁹ It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. ²⁰ But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. ²² And have mercy on those who doubt; ²³ save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

So we have to ask ourself right away, what predictions is he talking about? Verse 17:

¹⁷ But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is what he says right after he quotes 1 Enoch 1:9. It's a sweeping statement that I would judge must refer to preaching they have heard from other apostles, or perhaps (I mean, it's possible) that they have read in other letters or gospels of the New Testament that existed before Jude wrote. I mean, it's late enough when you get to the composition of Jude that some of the New Testament (a good portion of the New Testament) is going to exist already. And so Jude may be thinking that... [audio breaks up]... by some means. Maybe the circulation would have been that wide because Jude is a general epistle; it's not written to any specific church. So it's not really clear other than Judea, most likely, where these believers are living. So it's possible they could have had prior exposure to some scripture, some books of the New Testament, but at the very least, apostolic preaching would fall into this, too.

The predictions are specific statements. The Greek word here is *tōn rhēmātōn*. This is from *rhema*, the "word"—not *logos*, but *rhema*. This is a different word for "word," the term the New Testament has used elsewhere to refer to a message preached. It is very common there. So Green cites the following examples. I'll just give you a couple.

John 8:20:

²⁰ These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

15:00 So “these words he spoke in the treasury.” Again, it’s a sermon.

Acts 2:14:

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.”

The word there is *rhema* or in plural *rhematon*. So this must be what it’s referring to—specific statements uttered by the apostles about what would be the second coming. But again, Jude is going to quote what he does from 1 Enoch, building on the Old Testament to fuse Jesus and God when he does so. I mean it’s still about the second coming obviously, but the fact that he would do that and apply these passages to Jesus says something about his theology.

Green adds here that the context points to not just any old sermon, but specifically a prophetic message. So you have a few examples of this. I’m just going to pick from his grocery list.

Matthew 26:75

⁷⁵ And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.

So “the saying of Jesus.” Again, this was a specific prophetic predictive thing.

Luke 1:38

³⁸ And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

So, again, “according to your word.” Again, in a very predictive sense. Let’s go to one more here.

Luke 9:45

⁴⁵ But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

So Jesus has just predicted something. The disciples don't know what he's talking about and they're afraid to ask.

So these predictions made by the apostles, again, probably preaching, could be actual examples in the New Testament that Jude's audience had access to. We don't know that for sure, but, again, it's predicting something. We have to ask ourselves, what's it predicting? What's the content of the predictions? Basically, that false teachers would arise.

¹⁸ They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." ¹⁹ It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.

So his whole point is that, "Look, everything I've been talking to you about up to this point has been predicted before." And Jude is viewing his own time as the time when this stuff is being fulfilled because this is why he is writing to his audience— to warn them about following the false teachers. So what characterizes the false teachers in Jude's mind? Again, he gives a brief description here. He calls them scoffers. You could also translate the term "mockers." It refers those who would mock the faith—for Jude, the days to come when this set of conditions is going to be prevalent is near. It's very close in his mind.

Bateman in his commentary ties this into "already-but-not-yet" eschatology because of the way "last days" are used in various passages. We go back up to our passage for today, verse 17:

¹⁷ But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions."

So on and so forth. So in the New Testament...I know we've heard this before, but I want to give you a few examples. In the New Testament, the expression, "the last days" also occurs in various ways. You could have "on the last day" (John 6:39-44; John 12:48).

John 12:48 says:

⁴⁸ The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.

So a very specific day of judgment. Acts 2:17 is another example:

**17 “And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;**

That’s Acts 2. That’s Peter’s sermon. So “the last days” there is happening. It is contemporaneous with what Peter is doing.

2 Timothy 3:1 is another example:

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty.

20:00 Well, they were certainly in times of difficulty then, and Paul is telling Timothy that basically the persecution, the suffering, the things that are happening to him (and also, of course, to Paul personally) shouldn’t be a surprise because they viewed themselves as living in these last days.

One more. 1 Peter 1:20:

20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you...

So this is a reference to Christ’s incarnation, and Peter is linking it to “the last time” and “the last days.” Again, for them, this wasn’t a remote future kind of thing. It was current. It was contemporary. And for Jude, what he is saying about the mockers and the scoffers that are going to appear in the last days, he is really speaking about his own times that he knows this is doing to happen and this is going to be the pattern. He also characterizes them as having ungodly passions; they’re self-serving. We don’t need to rehearse this territory. Jude has gone through a number of Old Testament archetypal examples about worldly passions, serving the flesh, just a self-serving attitude in general. Again, this is who they are. As Jude lists at one point in his epistle, they don’t produce anything. They don’t produce anything. They just take. Again, they’re “waterless clouds swept along by winds, fruitless trees” and that whole grocery list. They produce nothing of value. They do what they do to consume things upon themselves and to live for themselves. They also cause divisions, he says, to get people within the believing community to follow them instead of the apostles and they split the church. They create discord. They’re worldly, Jude says, they’re devoid of the spirit.

I’m going to take these two together. I like what Bateman does in his commentary with this. He says, commenting on the word “worldly,” which is *psychikos*:

How is ψυχικός (*psychikos*) to be understood in Jude? The noun occurs five times in the NT (1 Cor 2:14; 15:44, 46; Jas 3:15; Jude 19). Many understand ψυχικός (*psychikos*) in terms of Gnosticism, whereby Jude uses gnostic terminology of “psychic” and “pneumatic” to insult gnostic false teachers. Whereas the gnostic (or protognostic) false teachers used the terminology to separate, belittle, or slander Jesus’ followers, Jude turns the words against them.

But Bateman doubts that. He says:

Yet Jude does not address gnostic false teachers [MH: anywhere in the epistle]... In 4 Maccabees the noun appears to contrast the mind (ψυχικός, *psychikos*) and the body (σωματικός, *sōmatikos*): “Some desires are mental (ψυχικαῖ, *psychikai*), others are physical (σωματικάῖ, *sōmatikai*), and reason obviously rules over both” (4 Macc 1:32 NRSV) [MH: so you have a Second Temple text that combines the two]... In the NT, ψυχικός (*psychikos*) conveys the idea of a person devoid of God’s spirit (1 Cor 2:14) or who is worldly (1 Cor 15:44–49),

I’m going to just read 1 Corinthians 2:14.

¹⁴The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

So, I mean, Jude’s really getting to the point here. I mean, he’s apparently categorizing the false teachers as not even being believers. In other words, they’re not believers who have gone astray. They are sort of true heretics. They are individuals who are absolutely contradictory to the apostolic teaching, and they do this for a variety of reasons.

Bateman continues and says:

It seems reasonable and in keeping with Jude, however, to once again see in Jude 19 as an echo of something Jude has already mentioned about the godless. “The similarity between this charge and that in Jude 10, which claims that these people only know things ‘instinctively [*physikos*], like irrational animals,’ suggests that the point of all this is the accusation that they lack the spirit.” Thus the mockers (the ungodly) live on the level of instinct (ψυχικός, *psychikos*; and φυσικῶς ὡς τὰ ἄλογα ζῶα, *physikōs hōs ta aloga zōa*). Or, as one translation renders ψυχικός (*psychikos*): “They follow their natural instincts” (NLT; cf. NIV)... Jude readily links his contemporary Jewish godless rebels with archetypal godless rebels of Jewish history (Jude 5–7, 11). They appear time and again in Jewish literature, and they have no relationship with God.

25:00

He's going after them as unbelievers. Believers, of course, are to be the mirror opposite of this in [Jude] verses 20 and 21.

²⁰ But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

Just to comment on this one line, “the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ...” It's likely a reference to his coming—his second coming. Green writes in his commentary:

“Mercy” is here viewed as an eschatological blessing that will be given to the believer at the final consummation.

Again, when everything wraps up, which, of course requires a second coming. He writes:

It is the opposite of judgment, which will befall those who disobey the gospel. In his coming, God will “set right the evils of the world”, and so the righteous are those who anticipate this mercy. The mercy that the church awaits, then, is the counterpoint to the judgment that Jude has shown will come on those who have abandoned their appointed place in God's order.

And of course, he has done that through the whole epistle, in comparing them to these archetypal... either villains or just bad examples in the Old Testament.

That brings us to verses 22 and 23, and without getting into the weeds here, commentators are pretty much agreed that verses 22 through 23 are the most difficult in the letter because of the status of the original manuscripts. It's messy, to put it lightly. There's a lot of variation here. Most of it is minor and small, but there's a lot of disagreement among the manuscripts in verses 22 through 23. So I always recommend to you out there, if you want to do any kind of sort of rudimentary textual criticism... If you're doing your Bible study and you come across the fact that there are different manuscripts that disagree, one of the good resources to use is the NET Bible. So what the NET Bible does here is it just uses the text of P72 (which is a papyrus, the oldest example we have in Jude) and follows that whenever he can. And that's going to be sufficient for what we're doing. I just wanted to notice it because we don't want to assume too much in these verses about any area of doctrine. If there's textual difficulties in a verse, you need to be appropriately cautious, and so we will be. But the verses say this:

²² Have mercy on those who waiver; ²³ save others by snatching them out of the fire; have mercy on others, coupled with a fear of God, hating even the clothes stained by the flesh.

A few odd things here in these two verses... In the like manner, believers are to show mercy... [audio breaks up]. Jude is admitting this, and this is why he is concerned—because they have had an impact. They have sown discord among the believers. So there are people who are following them, who are listening to them, and Jude is trying to get them to realize that, “Look, this has been predicted for how many centuries now, and in the last times you’re going to have false teaching. In the last times you’re going to have people scoffing. In the last times you’re going to have bad doctrine.” You’re going to have all these things. So Green writes here:

God’s mercy is especially demonstrated in human salvation through Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:4; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:3; 2 John 3; *TLNT* 1:471–79). The marvel of God’s mercy is that it is extended to those who, through sin, were alienated from God (Eph. 2:3–4; Titus 3:3–5)... While the church awaits the mercy of the Lord Jesus, members of the church are to extend the eschatological blessing of mercy toward those who, in their weakness, have fallen into the snare of the heretics.

So in other words, don’t treat the confused doubter the same way you’d treat the false teacher. This is what Jude wants. Don’t treat them the same. Be patient and merciful with those who doubt, who have been led astray. Be patient and merciful. Instruct them. The goal is to keep them from becoming another false voice, another worldly person who causes division. If you run into believers that are just wavering in their theology, wavering in the truth that the apostles taught, Jude wants those people treated mercifully. He wants them to be handled with patience and handled with care, not like the false teachers whom he has pretty much excoriated throughout the whole letter.

30:00

Then he writes in verse 23, “snatching them out of the fire.” Now I would say this much. I mean, if we go back up...Let’s just go get the verses together in context here. Verses 22 and 23:

²² And have mercy on those who doubt; ²³ save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

Jude’s wanting a lot of tolerance here. Again, just be merciful to those who are doubting and snatching them out of the fire. He’s already said that the false teachers are devoid of the spirit. He considers them unbelievers. So we’re still talking about believers here who have been led astray and how Jude wants them treated—with patience and with mercy. So it’s not a reference to the conversion of the false teachers so much as it is a reference to the people who have been affected by them and just brought back from judgment. I would say you have to wonder about the language here, “snatching them out of the fire.” It’s not really a

reference to the lake of fire because that is eschatological. That's post-resurrection. You think about the timing of the lake of fire in the book of Revelation and it's in conjunction with the resurrection—the living and the dead, both good and evil or wicked and righteous. So it's not going to be a reference to that. Rather, it probably refers to rescuing people from the final post-resurrection judgment. So it's not like a second chance on judgment day or anything like that. It rather refers to rescuing people before we ever get to that point, snatching them out of the fire, so to speak—saving them at the last moment.

Again, what this points to is that apostasy for the early church was real. I mean, they considered this a real possibility that people could junk the faith, that people could just reject it. Those who had once professed belief in it could reject it and the consequences were dire. We spent a lot of time talking about that in the book of Hebrews.

In his commentary, Green's thoughts go back to Zechariah 3:2. You recall that I doubt the Zechariah 3 context for the part in Jude's epistle about Moses, but there could be something to it here as far as Zechariah 3:2 referring to "a brand plucked out of the fire" (basically, the rescue of God's people). If you go back to Zechariah 3, you've got the scene there with the angel of the Lord, the *satan*, and Joshua the high priest. So in that instance, yeah, I mean you do have this language that would be appropriate where the nation is "a brand plucked from the fire" just before it was destroyed. That is certainly appropriate in Zechariah 3, the Old Testament context of the exile. So Jude's thought appears to go back to that and Green writes:

However, the language does not follow the Septuagint.

So what he means by that is, looking at the Greek, it is not following the Septuagint of Zechariah 3, but Green is still thinking it might be in view. He said:

The same expression appears in Amos 4:11, but Jude likely has the Zechariah passage in mind since an echo of that text [MH: in Green's mind] is already found in verse 9.

Again, recall that I doubt that. I doubt it strongly because Moses had no guilt, so I don't think the analogy fits at all. So Green says:

The same expression appears in Amos 4:11, but Jude likely has the Zechariah passage in mind since an echo of that text is already found in verse 9 and since he again alludes to it again in verse 23.

He alludes to Zechariah 3 again in verse 23, which I think is a better argument. In verse 23 you can see it. Again, just reading it again, "save others by snatching them out of the fire." Then you go back to Zechariah 3, "a brand plucked from the

fire.” It could be. It could be the right situation there. Again, it’s a better argument, but we’ll just go with it. Green writes:

The “fire” from which some needed deliverance is that of the final judgment. In both Testaments as well as Jewish literature, divine judgment by fire is a common image.

35:00

By the way, this is something we should camp on a little bit, too. You’ll often hear people refer to the Old Testament as devoid of the concept of hell or devoid of the concept of a fiery judgment. That is not actually true. It may not be hell in the New Testament sense or Sheol or the grave even though there are a couple references to fire there, but there’s a long list here. I’ll just read a few.

Deuteronomy 32:22

**²² For a fire is kindled by my anger,
and it burns to the depths of Sheol,
devours the earth and its increase,
and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains.**

And this is Deuteronomy 32:22. It’s in the context of Israel going astray of following other gods.

Isaiah 29:6

**⁶ you will be visited by the LORD of hosts
with thunder and with earthquake and great noise,
with whirlwind and tempest, and the flame of a devouring fire.**

Again, it’s a fiery judgment.

Isaiah 30:27

**²⁷ Behold, the name of the LORD comes from afar,
burning with his anger, and in thick rising smoke;
his lips are full of fury,
and his tongue is like a devouring fire;**

Again, that’s familiar because of the name theology, but there you have the reference to “devouring fire” again. And there’s a lot of them. Green lists a lot in the commentary, probably at least a dozen or so. I’m not going to go through them all, but just so that we’re aware theologically of the roots of what you get in the New Testament when it comes to the hell passages, they are found in the

Old Testament. You will find this idea in the Old Testament, so don't be misled by claims of the contrary. Green writes:

The implication appears to be that they had succumbed to the persuasion of the heretics (again, those who doubt) and had themselves become liable to the judgment about which Jude has warned throughout this epistle. For Jude, the possibility of apostasy was as real as the hope of redemption for those who have been taken in by the theology and the practices of the heretics... Jude calls the church to engage in a redemptive act toward those who would face judgment. The church is to "snatch" them (ἀρπάσατε, *harpasate*) [MH: *harpazo*] from the fire. The word Jude uses means "to take something forcefully" (Job 24:2, 9; Bar. 4:26; Matt. 11:12; 12:29; 13:19; John 6:15; 10:12, 28–29; Acts 23:10; W. Foerster, *TDNT* 1:472–73; *MM* 78–79; *BDAG* 134).

There are a number of examples of *harpazo* in the Septuagint and in the New Testament, but it's "to take something forcefully." Acts 23:10, for example:

¹⁰ And when the dissension became violent, the tribune, afraid that Paul would be torn to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him away from among them by force and bring him into the barracks.

So again, it's the use of the same term there. I should mention *harpazo* is used in 1 Thessalonians 4, which many are going to interpret as the rapture. There's no rapture here in Jude 23 because it's believers who are to snatch those who have apostatized from the fire before it's too late. So what we're talking about is people who are either on the verge of apostasy or who have already apostatized. It's not believers being rescued from a tribulation. So at least here in Jude 23 we don't have anything like a rapture in mind. Green continues:

As the church is responsible to build itself up on the foundation of faith, so also rapid and drastic measures must be taken to rescue those who have become wayward. Errant members are not to be simply dismissed.

Again, that's a key thought.

Errant members are not to be simply dismissed but also sought out and delivered from the error into which they have fallen. This mutual care for errant members became a key theme in the corporate life of the church (Matt. 18:15–20; 1 Cor. 5:1–5; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6–15).

They all describe efforts to reclaim people, reclaim believers who have gone astray. So Green says:

The mutual care for errant members became a key theme in the corporate life of the church and was not simply the domain of the congregational leadership. In a group-oriented society like that in which Jude and his readers lived, social control over the behavior of the individual was a significant moral force (Malina and Neyrey 1996: 186–87). Hence, to bring the whole church into the attempt to modify the behavior of the individual is a powerful means of persuasion and an effective plan of rescue.

So that's just another way of saying that Jude would have wanted the whole church to be involved in this, not just the pastors (reclaiming people who have gone astray, who have been led astray). It's really the job of the whole church.

40:00

The last line of verse 23 I want to say something about, “hating even the garments stained by the flesh.” The NET Bible here says this. I thought it was a good note.

The “flesh” in this instance could refer to the body or to the sin nature. It makes little difference in one sense: Jude is thinking primarily of sexual sins, which are borne of the sin nature and manifest themselves in inappropriate deeds done with the body. At the same time, he is *not* saying that the body is intrinsically bad, a view held by the opponents of Christianity. Hence, it is best to see “flesh” as referring to the sin nature here and the language as metaphorical.

Again, I think the NET Bible is on the right track there. Now Bauckham tries to link this as well to Zechariah 3. And again, I'm not sure how successful that is, but it's possible that the image “being plucked out of the fire” might come from Zechariah 3, but it could come from somewhere else. But Bauckham writes this:

Probably there is an allusion to Zech 3:3–4, where Joshua is “clothed with filthy garments” (RSV). Again Jude shows no dependence on the Septuagint. [MH: His Greek is different, so this may be tenuous.] The wording in Zech 3 is connected with the words צִאָה tse'ah and צִאָה tso'ah, (Hebrew terms) which are most often used in the OT to refer to human excrement (Deut 23:14; 2 Kgs 18:27).

I'll just read you the Deuteronomy 23:14 reference.

¹⁴ Because the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and to give up your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy, so that he may not see anything indecent among you and turn away from you.

The indecent thing is, then, this vocabulary for human excrement.

It can refer to drunkards' vomit, and in Isa 4:4 is figurative for wickedness). Jude therefore interprets the “filthy garments” to mean clothes

which have been soiled by the body. The *chitōn* (“tunic”) was the garment worn next to the skin.

The picture is therefore a vivid and intentionally unpleasant one, which Jude uses to suggest that whatever comes into contact with these people is contaminated by their sins. For a somewhat similar use of the image of soiled clothes, cf. Rev 3:4.

I’ll read that to you.

⁴ Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

Again, this imagery of uncleanness is what he is getting after. Bauckham continues:

Jude’s reference to “the flesh” does not imply that he regards the physical body as intrinsically sinful, but rather that he is thinking primarily of the sins of the flesh in which the false teachers indulged (cf. vv 8-10).

The phrase suggests that Jude’s readers, while exercising mercy toward these people, must maintain their abhorrence of their sin and everything associated with it, lest they themselves be infected by it.

Again, I think you could make that argument without Zechariah 3, but there it is. And I think just generally Bauckham has some good things to say there.

And that brings us to the last two verses, the doxology, which reads:

²⁴ 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, ²⁵ 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.

Three real quick notes here. The line “to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless...” “Keeping” language elsewhere in the New Testament is fairly prevalent.

2 Thessalonians 3:3:

³ But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.

So there's the terminology for "keeping."

John 17:11:

¹¹ And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

There are other examples, but the "keeping" language elsewhere in the New Testament can be very straightforward and prominent. The idea is protection from apostasy. Again, apostasy was real in their minds. This could really happen. Bauckham notes:

The general sense is that God will protect Jude's readers from the dangers of falling into the sinful ways of the false teachers and thereby failing to attain to final salvation.

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Again, the threat of apostasy was real and so this is part of Jude's Doxology—his prayer—to keep them from stumbling and to present them blameless at the last day when the Lord returns.

Second thought: "Present you blameless" here is the language of Old Testament sacrifice. This is a little more obscure. Think Romans 12:1-2 here.

Romans 12:1:

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

So in a verse like that it's easy to see, but this idea of presenting them blameless, that's the language that was used in the Old Testament of presenting sacrifices. Sacrifices had to be blameless. They had to be without blemish. So you actually get this language here. It's the language of Old Testament sacrifice and Bauckham has a few other parallels.

1 Thessalonians 3:13:

¹³ so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Ephesians 5:27:

27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

And Colossians 1:22, which I won't take the time to read. So Bauckham notes that these passages are eschatological in reference. Christians are to be presented before God as sacrificial victims without blemish. This is the image that Jude and Paul in Romans 12:1-2 and these other passages is shooting for—basically, for every believer to have their life surrendered in such a way that they don't hold anything back and there is nothing that is being held back and there's no moral compromise here, especially in the context of listening to false teaching. This is what Jude wants. He uses the language of "without blemish" from Old Testament sacrifice to communicate it.

Then lastly, just what could almost be a throwaway line is actually really important. I'm going to read here the last verse.

25 to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever.

The phrase "before all time..." I mean, he's obviously writing at a time when we've already seen Jesus. Okay, Jesus has died, he's risen, he's ascended, but he uses this phrase "before all time" and he loops Jesus into it.

25 to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever.

By looping Jesus into that as being essentially the conduit or the means by which the glory, majesty, dominion, and authority are shown to God or given to God or attributed to God, that's a claim of pre-existence—that Jesus existed... The Son existed before the incarnation. Again, it's something that's very easy to read over, but "before all time" is a very strong statement of the deity of Christ by virtue of pre-existence. So we don't want to miss a theological nugget like that because it's right there but very easy to read over. The language requires the pre-existence of Christ, and it's not just before earthly creation, but before "all time"—all time, before there was any time. Again, you have God and you have Christ. So again, that's just an important theological nugget to not let escape.

And that brings us to the end of Jude. Again, we're not in the habit of doing verse-by-verse commentaries, but with this letter being so small, we almost did that, just picking out a few things that I think are of interest and worth noting in the letter that gives the letter theological value and makes it interesting. So hopefully we all learned a few things going through this epistle. As short as it is, there's lots of good stuff in it and we'll see next time if you have any questions.

TS: Yeah, Mike, the verse where it talks about all the scoffers, those who cause division, worldly people... That kind of resonated with me what's going on in the world today, especially here in the United States—the left and the right.

MH: For sure.

TS: The left and the right are both guilty of this, and it was just something that resonated with me.

MH: No, I follow you. That's well-said.

TS: So I guess my message to the world is “knock it off.” That's all I can say. Alright, Mike. Well, I want to remind people again to send me your questions at treysticklin@gmail.com for Jude specifically and we'll do an entire Q&A on Jude. That was a great Bible study, Mike. I look forward to the next one. We have a couple of interviews with Dr. Justin Bass over some terminology.

MH: Yeah, I asked Justin to chat with us about the terminology of hell essentially.

TS: Yeah.

MH: Words like Gehenna and Hades and Sheol. Again, he spent a lot of time studying that stuff, so I wanted to have him back on for that.

TS: Looking forward to that. Alright, with that I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God bless.