

# THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

Rev. Todd Weedman



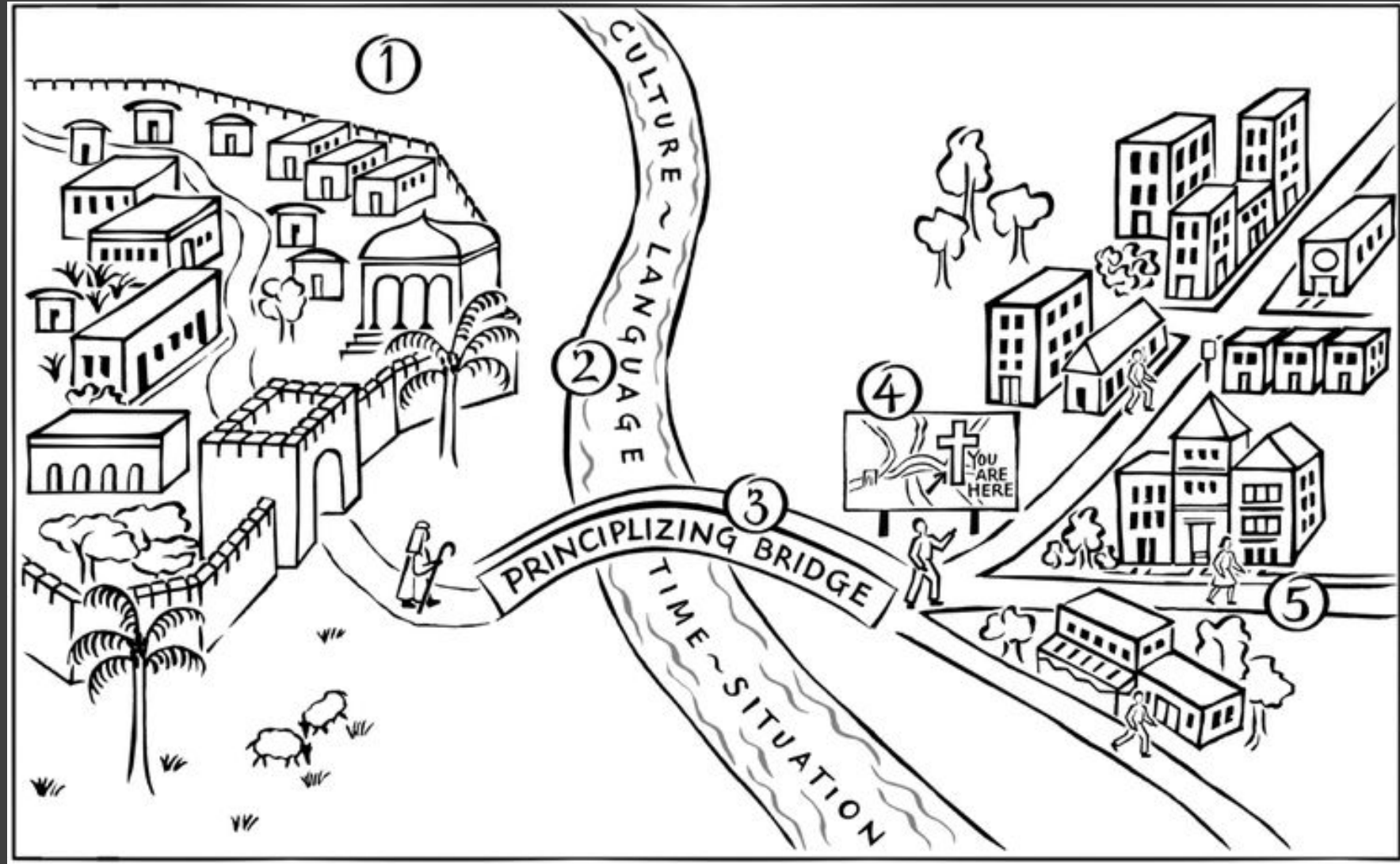




# GRASPING GOD'S WORD

Duvall J. Scott & J. Daniel Hays. *Grasping God's Word : A Hands-On Approach to Reading Interpreting and Applying the Bible*. Fourth ed. Zondervan Academic 2020.

1. Grasp the Text in Their Town.
2. Measure the Width of the River to Cross.
3. Cross the Principizing Bridge.
4. Consulting the Biblical Map.
5. Grasping the Text in Our Town.



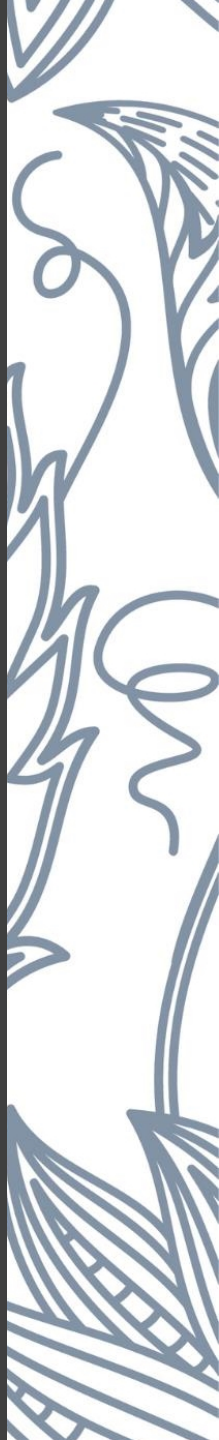


# REVIEW


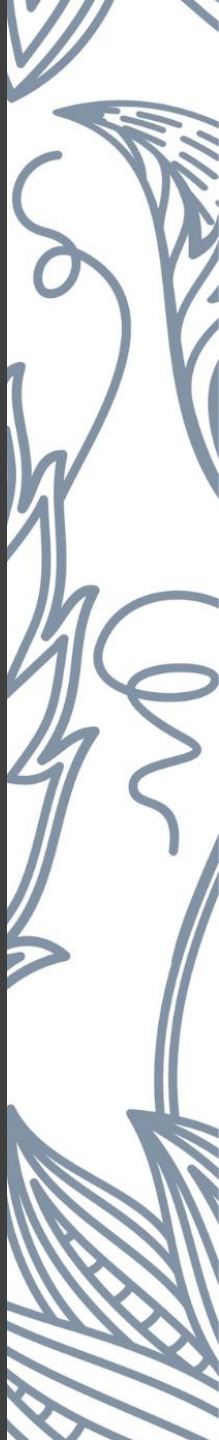
## 1. Who is the Author?

- Jude, brother of James (Bishop of Jerusalem), and our Lord Jesus, who came to believe in Jesus as Messiah sometime between the resurrection and Pentecost. He serves as an itinerant preacher among the churches in Galilee.


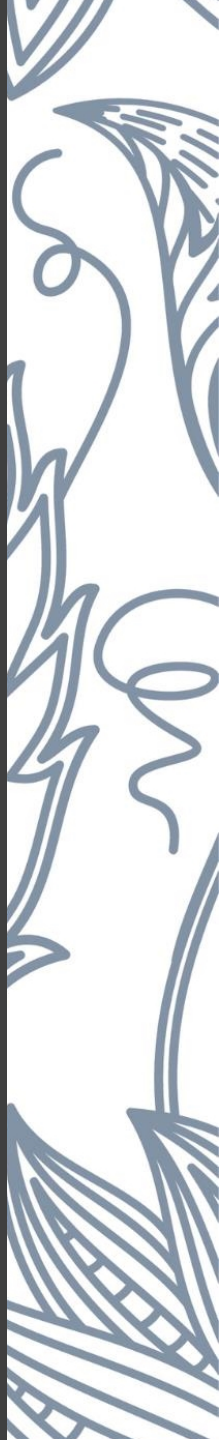
## 2. Who was Jude's intended audience?

- First-generation Jewish Christians living in Galilee, among the churches that had been planted by the Apostles themselves.
- 



- 
- 
3. What is the genre of Jude?
    - Jewish-Apocalyptic style, popular in first century Palestinian Judaism, before 70 AD. Steeped in Greek speech rhetoric and Jewish Midrash and Peshar hermeneutics.
  4. When was Jude written?
    - Approximately 48 – 58 AD
  5. What was Jude's purpose for writing?
    - Jude indicates his longstanding intention to communicate with them, which has been made more urgent by a crisis in the churches. He wishes to urge his audience to contend for \*the\* faith, once for all handed down.

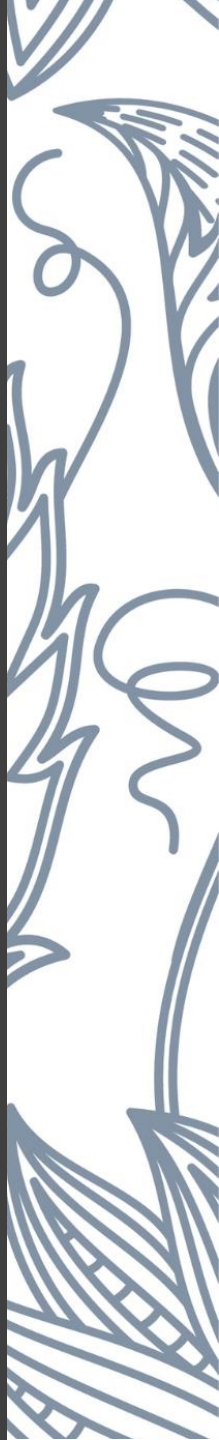


- 
- 
6. What does Jude tell us about his opponents?
- “Long ago designated for... condemnation” – Jude seems to believe that they were the subjects of prophetic condemnation in I Enoch.
  - “Ungodly people” – As contrasted with the “righteous,” Jude is emphasizing their antinomianism.
  - “Pervert grace into sensuality” – Most certainly using grace as a license to engage in illicit sexual practices.
  - “Deny Jesus Christ” – Rather than submitting to Jesus’ authority, they are a law unto themselves.





7. How has God historically responded to such things? Jude's 3 examples:

- A. The unbelieving after the Exodus (Num.13-14), whose faithlessness (believing neither the power nor the command of God) provoked God's wrath and punishment.
  - B. The fallen Angels (Gen. 6, I En. 6-11), whose rebellion against God by abandoning his creational purpose for themselves (and teaching or encouraging others to do the same) provoked God's wrath and punishment.
  - C. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, whose sexual immorality and pursuit of unnatural desire provoked God's wrath and punishment.
- 






## FURTHER INDICTMENTS & EXAMPLES FROM THE PAST

*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.*

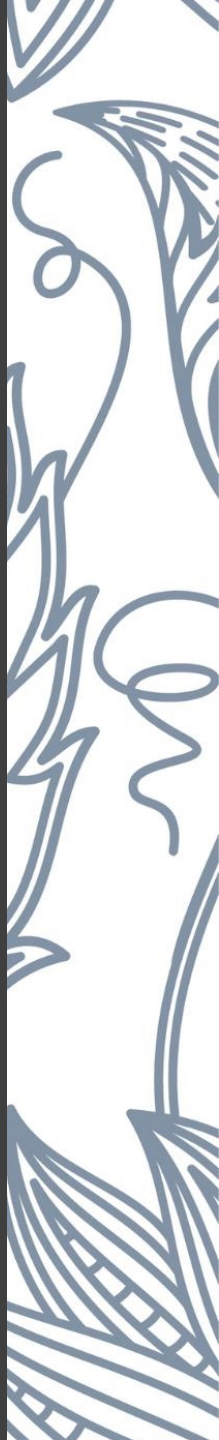
— Jude 8-10







Blessed Lord, who caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and the comfort of your holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.  
**Amen.**



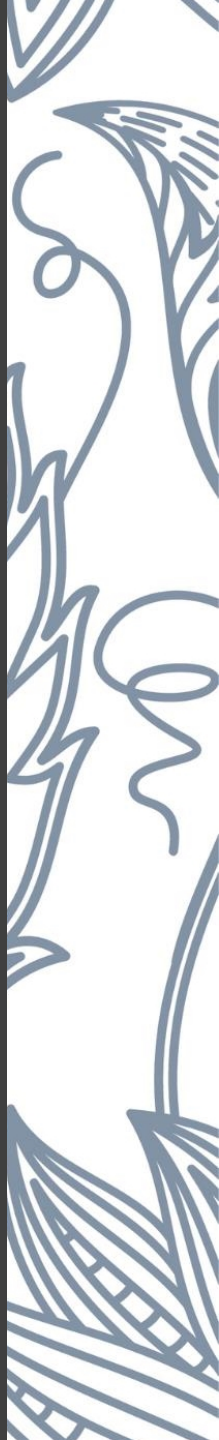




## FURTHER INDICTMENTS

*Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones.*

Jude's opponents are relying upon dreams to:

- A. Defile the flesh
  - B. Reject (property) authority
  - C. Blaspheme
- 





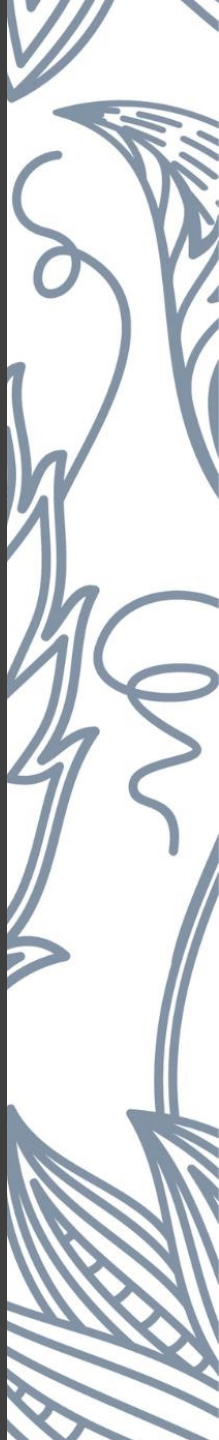
# RELYING ON THEIR DREAMS

Two possible interpretations:

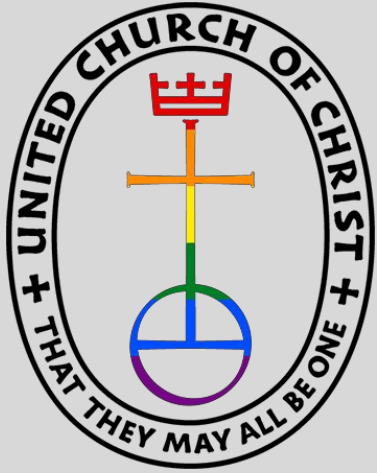
1. A turn of phrase to indicate that Jude's opponents are making things up to suit their desired outcomes (e.g. "if you think that's going to happen, you're dreaming.")
2. An indication that Jude's opponents are literally relying upon actual dreams and visions as a source of revelatory authority that supersedes the written word of God and the instructions of Jesus himself.

Ὅμοίως μέντοι καὶ οὗτοι ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι

ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι is a participle form of the verb ἐνύπνιον, "to dream." This word is frequently used in connection with prophetic dreams/visions (e.g. it appears in Acts 2:17 and in the LXX translation of Joel 2:28).







Excerpts from the UCC [Website](#):

- “We believe that God was revealed in the past, but also in the present and the future. In the Bible, God was known through covenants with people and nations, through prophets and teachers, through conflicts and commandments, in visions and songs, and through the followers of Jesus and the church... Throughout history, in moments of compassion, justice, and peace, in our worship, sacraments, prayer, seeking, action, and silence, God continues to speak.”
- “You are encouraged to discover God speaking through the Bible. The “Word” we discover there, however, is not frozen in time. If you explore the Bible and move from book to book, you may discover that God is revealed in different ways, sometimes even seemingly contradictory ways. At distinct moments in biblical history, God speaks in new ways about God’s unchanging intent of love, justice, deliverance, community, reconciliation, and peace. We are not limited by past understandings, but we seek new insights and help for living in faith today.”
- “We believe God loves the world as much as God loves the Church. Because our doors and windows are open, we listen for God in a variety of places out in the world: in the arts, in political struggles, in the sciences, in media, in education, and especially in voices of those who are often ignored.”





Sarah Mullally, Bishop of London

Speech presenting the Living in Faith and Love process to General Synod, February 8, 2023

- “To deal with ... disagreement and to find ways forward, we need a radical new Christian inclusion in the Church. This must be founded in Scripture, in reason, in tradition, in theology and the Christian faith as the Church of England has received it; it must be based on good, healthy, flourishing relationships, and in a proper 21st century understanding of being human and of being sexual.”
- Our call is and always will be to seek the face of Christ – yes, in each other, but above all in searching the Scriptures, examining the Church’s tradition, and exercising our reason as we strive to make sense of how truth is to be lived out with grace in our 21st century context. The reality is that as we have done all these things – even among ourselves as bishops – our conclusions about the ‘clear teaching of Scripture’ and the trajectory of the Church’s tradition diverge... somehow, mysteriously, the people of God who seek God’s face and who want to see the Church flourish, disagree.”
- “The church has begun to change. It has begun to change the way it does things. I believe we are now more aware of the need to include as many voices as possible in our deliberations, to listen to the Spirit speaking through the whole church, in all its diversity. And as we have done so, we have realized how rich and transformative such conversations can be.”





# IS GOD INCONSISTENT?

“God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?” — Num. 23:19

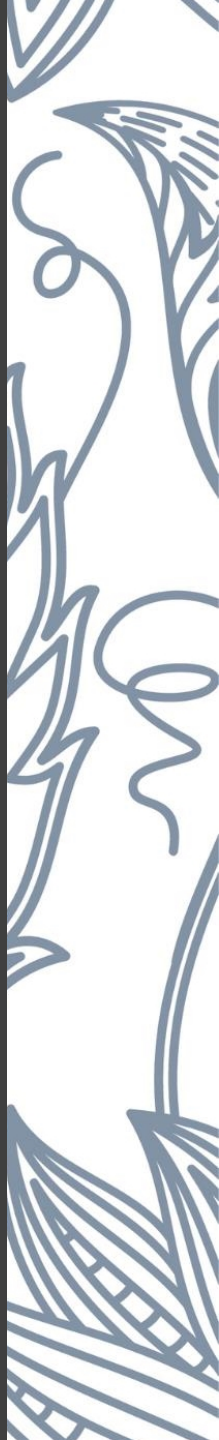
“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.” — Isa. 40:8

“For I the LORD do not change.” — Mal. 3:6a

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.” — Matt. 24:35

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” — James 1:17

“Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever.” — Hebrews 13:8

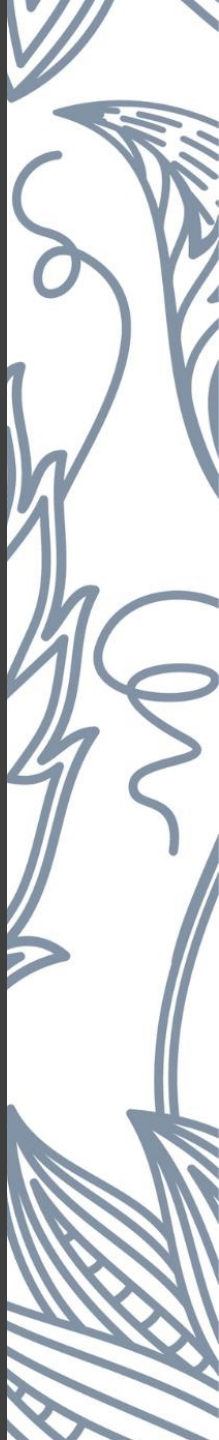






## DOES GOD'S WORD CHANGE?

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” — Matthew 5:17-20







## XXXIX ARTICLES OF RELIGION

“Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the holy Scripture we do understand those Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.”

— Article VI, *Of the Sufficiency of Scripture*







## XXXIX ARTICLES OF RELIGION

“The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: And yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation.”

— Article XX, *Of the Authority of the Church*



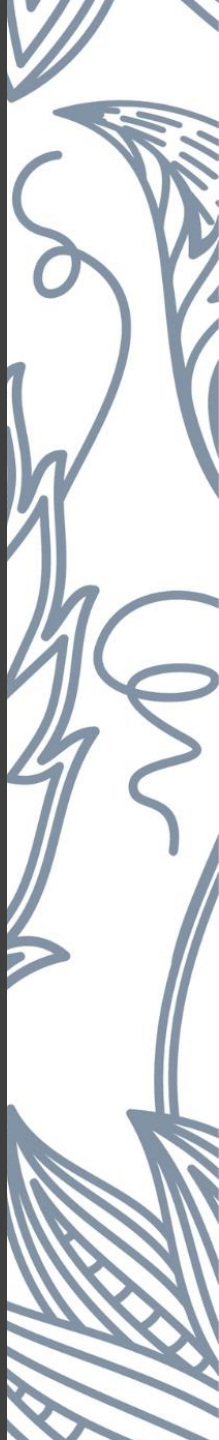





# BOOK OF HOMILIES

“That man is ashamed to be called a Philosopher, which readeth not the books of Philosophy, and to be called a Lawyer, and Astronomer, or Physician, that is ignorant in the books of Law, Astronomy, and Medicine. Now can any man then say that he professeth Christ and his religion, if he will not apply himself (as far forth as he can or may conveniently) to read and hear, and so to know the books of Christ’s Gospel and doctrine?

Although other sciences be good, and to be learned, yet no man can deny, but this is the chief, and passeth all other incomparably. What excuse shall we therefore make (at the last day before Christ) that delight to read or hear men’s fantasies and inventions, more then his most holy Gospel?







And will find no time to do that which chiefly (above all things) we should do, and will rather read other things then that, for the which we ought rather to leave reading of all other things. Let us therefore apply ourselves, as far forth as we can have time and leisure, to know God's word, by diligent hearing and reading thereof, as many as profess God, and have faith and trust in him."

— Homily I. *A Fruitful Exhortation to the reading of Holy Scripture*





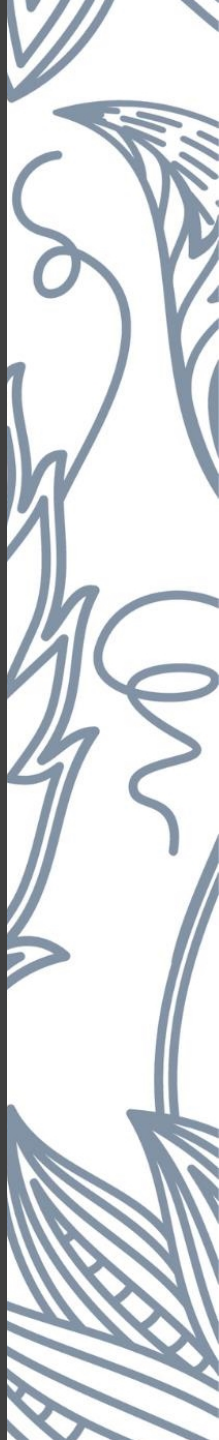


# BOOK OF HOMILIES


“The great utility and profit that Christian men and women may take (if they will) by hearing and reading the holy Scriptures no heart can sufficiently conceive, much less is my tongue able with words to express...

The ordinary way to attain the knowledge [of God], is with diligence to hear and read the holy Scriptures. For the whole Scriptures (saith Saint Paul) were given by the inspiration of God ...

The Holy Ghost is the Schoolmaster of truth, which leadeth his Scholars (as our Savior Christ saith of him) into all truth. And whoso is not lead and taught by his Schoolmaster, cannot but fall into deep error, how godly soever his pretense is, what knowledge and learning soever he hath of all

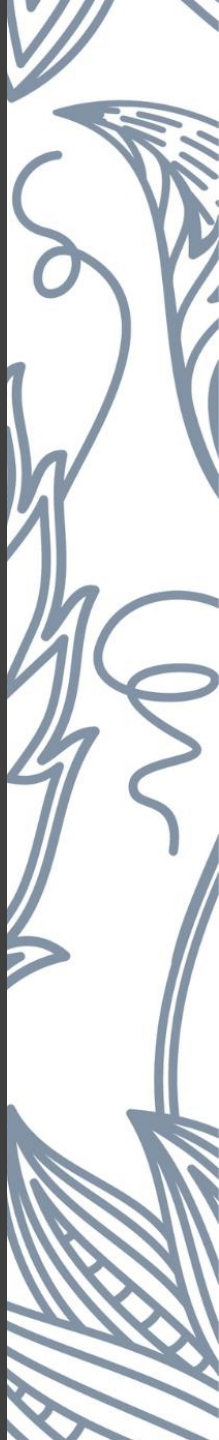







other works and writings, or how fair soever a show or face of truth he hath in the estimation and judgement of the world. If some man will say, I would have a true pattern and a perfect description of an upright life, approved in the sight of God: can we find (think ye) any better or any such again, as Christ Jesus is, and his doctrine, whose virtuous conversation and godly life, the Scripture so lively painteth and setteth forth before our eyes?...

Follow you me (saith Saint Paul) as I follow. And Saint John in his Epistle saith: Whoso abideth in Christ, must walk even so as he hath walked before him. And where shall we learn the order of Christ's life, but in the Scripture? Another would have a medicine to heal all diseases and maladies of the mind. Can this be found or gotten other where then out of God's own book, his sacred Scriptures?







If one could show but the print of Christ's foot, a great number I think would fall down and worship it: But to the holy Scriptures, where we may see daily (if we will) I will not say the print of his feet only, but the whole shape and lively image of him, alas, we give little reverence or none at all.

—Homily X: *An information for them which take offence at certain places of the Holy Scripture*

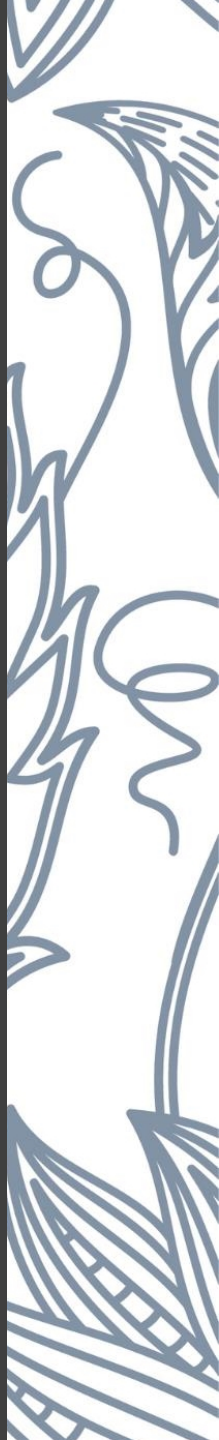






# DEFILE THE FLESH

σάρκα μὲν μιάινουσιν

- μιάινω | verb | to pollute, stain, defile; (pass.) to be defiled, corrupted, become ceremonially unclean; this refers to both ceremonial and moral uncleanness [Mounce]
  - This phrase appears repeatedly in I Enoch to describe the sinful rebellion of the angels against God through abominable sexual acts.
  - *“Jude is therefore identifying [their] sin... is sexual immorality.”* – Richard Bauckham
  - *Apparently they saw themselves as so spiritual that they had transcended a necessity to worry about affairs of the body or deeds... Thus, they could indulge in various deviant acts and claim that these were not sin since they were not under the law and that it did not adversely affect them since they were spiritual.”* – Ben Witherington III
- 





# REJECT AUTHORITY

κυριότητα δὲ ἀθετοῦσιν

- ἀθετέω | verb | to set aside, that is, (by implication) to disesteem, neutralize or violate: - cast off, despise, disannul, frustrate, bring to nought, reject. [Strong's]
- *“The main thing we know about these false teachers is that they reject God’s law, that is, they are antinomian, recognizing no law and no divine or angelic authority over them if it means a restriction of their ways and experiences.”* – Ben Witherington III






# BLASPHEME GLORIOUS ONES

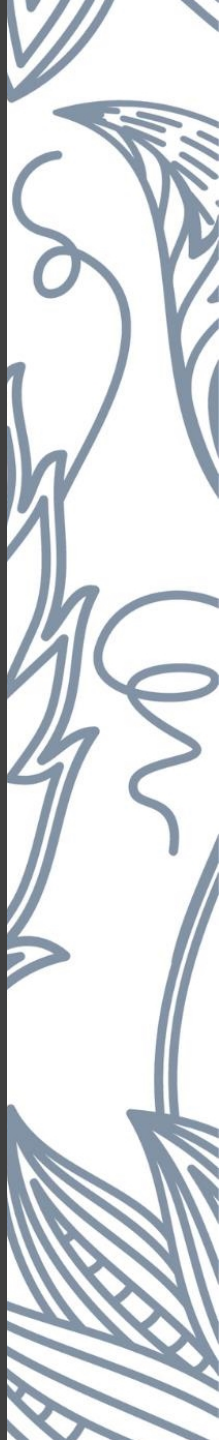
δόξας δὲ βλασφημοῦσιν

- βλασφημέω | verb | to vilify; specifically to speak impiously; to blaspheme; to defame, rail on, revile, speak evil against. [Strong's]
- Who are these “glorious ones”?
  - Possibly Moses, the Prophets, the Apostles?
  - Possibly ‘anyone in authority?’
  - Probably Angels.
- *“In early Judaism the giving of the law was thought to be through angels to Moses, and not directly, as the Old Testament seems to imply (Acts 7:38, 53; Heb. 2:2; Gal. 3:19...). Thus the false teachers’ slander of angels was probably part of their rejection of the law. Since angels were part of the creation order*





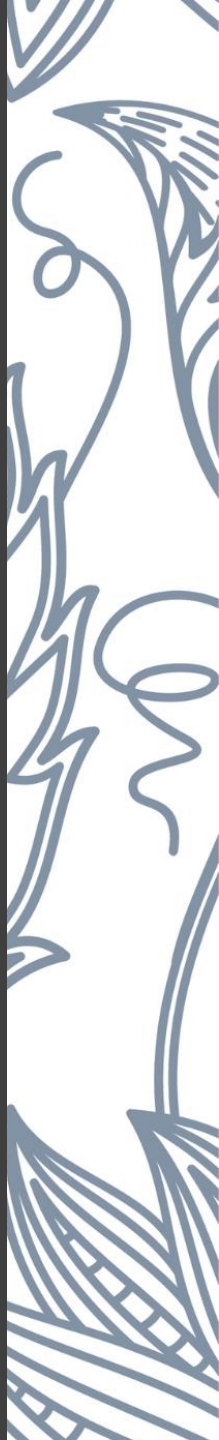
*(as was the law that they mediated), Jude sees these false teachers as the Sodomite violators of the creation order God made. They reject any authority that conflicts with their own. Like the fallen angels, by these activities they have abandoned their proper place in the created order; like the Israelites they have wandered into apostacy; like the Sodomites they have committed sexual sin and insulted the angelic realm. The conclusion that Jude wishes his audience to draw is that the false teachers malign what they do not really understand—spiritual matters—but since they are so sexually experienced their only real knowledge is in an area they share with mere animals. This carnal knowledge corrupts them or will lead to their destruction. – Ben Witherington III*







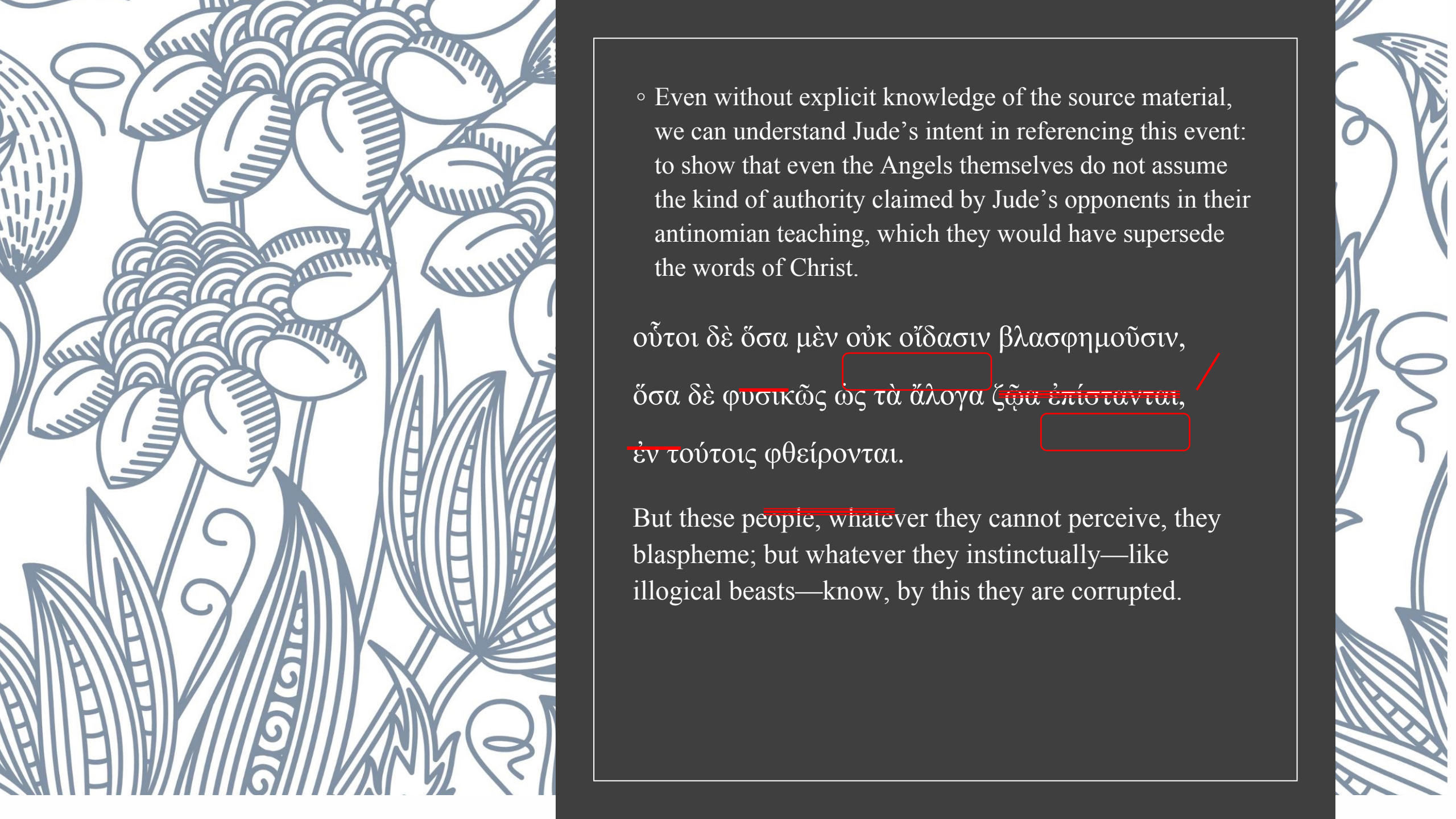
# MICHAEL V. THE DEVIL

- *“It is not easy to see what part of Scripture Jude got this tale from... whatever the case may be, here is what we have to learn from this incident: if the archangel Michael refrained from cursing the devil and dealt gently with him, how much more should we mere mortals avoid blaspheming, especially as we might offend the majesty of the Creator by an incautious word.”* –Ven. Bede
  - Clement of Alexandria & Origen both claimed this was taken from an apocryphal text called “the Assumption of Moses,” of which no complete surviving manuscripts exist.
  - Others believe this is a rabbinical interpretive tradition based off Zech. 3:1-5.
- 



Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, O Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?" Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. And the angel said to those who were standing before him, "Remove the filthy garments from him." And to him he said, "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments." And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord was standing by.




- 
- Even without explicit knowledge of the source material, we can understand Jude's intent in referencing this event: to show that even the Angels themselves do not assume the kind of authority claimed by Jude's opponents in their antinomian teaching, which they would have supersede the words of Christ.

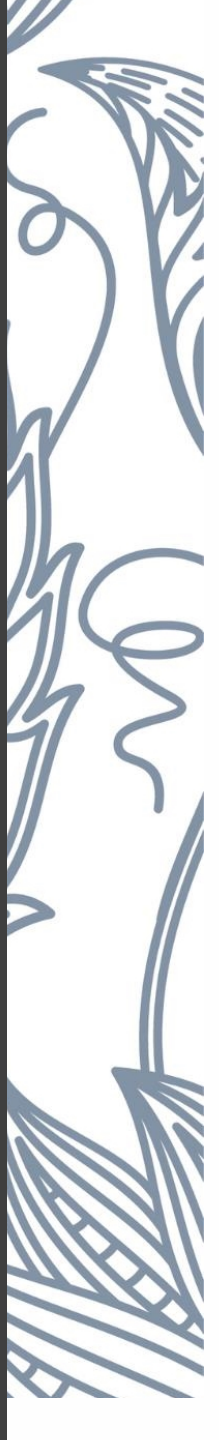
οὗτοι δὲ ὅσα μὲν οὐκ οἶδασιν βλασφημοῦσιν,  
ὅσα δὲ φυσικῶς ὡς τὰ ἄλογα ~~ζῷα ἐπίστανται~~,  
~~ἐν~~ τούτοις φθείρονται.

But these people, ~~whatever~~ they cannot perceive, they blaspheme; but whatever they instinctually—like illogical beasts—know, by this they are corrupted.






*Jude 10 brings this first proof to a conclusion, for this is the first time we hear about judgment of the sectarians themselves, not just about judgment of the parallel examples. The false teachers have already been stigmatized as “these people,” which rhetorically speaking serves to distance both the author and the audience from them. They are clearly the problem that generates this discourse and are the focus of the strong polemic, and repeated use of the term houtoi (Jude 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 19) is an example of anaphora, as our author keeps reminding the audience that he is talking about the same troublemakers. – Ben Witherington III*







## NEXT WEEK...

- The way of Cain.
  - Balaam's error.
  - Korah's rebellion.
- 









## A CLOSER LOOK:


### *INSPIRATION & AUTHORITY, CITING NONCANONICAL TEXTS*

Jude's use of texts like *1 Enoch* and the *Assumption of Moses* is precisely what placed his book in the doubtful category as Scripture in the second century and afterward. We must decide several matters: (1) Is citing apocryphal material unworthy of scriptural authors? The answer must be no, and most scholars with a high view of Scripture will simply point out that God directed or inspired Jude to use the true parts of *1 Enoch*. (2) In what sense is *1 Enoch* true? Does Jude take *1 Enoch* to be a record of real historical events, or could he have used a myth or legend to drive home a true point? We cannot decide a priori what the biblical authors will do until we see what they actually do.

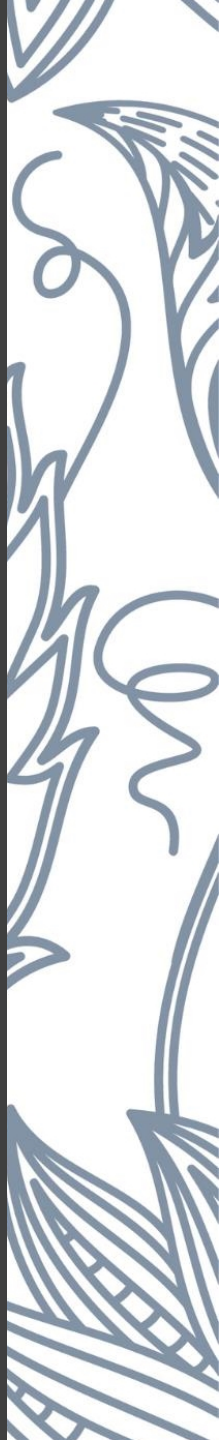
Our view of inspiration must fit the text, not




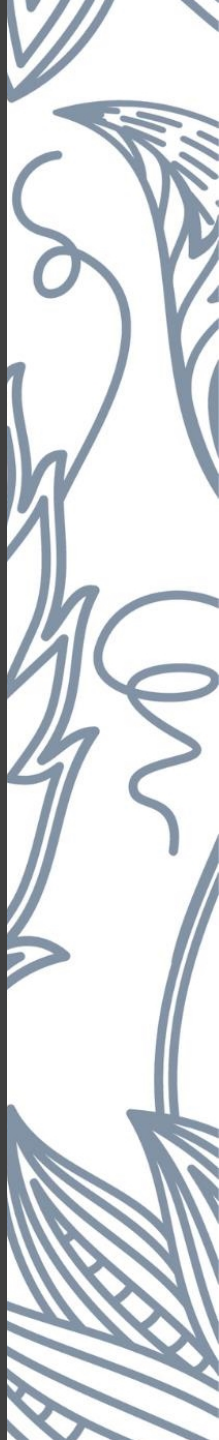




vice versa. A moment's reflection will suggest that it is perfectly possible for a biblical author or character to convey real truth, even about history, but using the vehicle of a fictitious story. Jesus does precisely that with the parables. Thus, what genre is *1 Enoch*, and how did Jude view and use it? Did he see it as history or myth or some combination or mythical reflections on history? This becomes even more dramatically important when we are told that the archangel Michael debated Satan over the body of Moses—something the Old Testament gives no inkling of! At least Jude 6 is based on Genesis 6:1-4, but not so Jude 9. At this point we can make only some tentative suggestions as to how to deal with this:


1. There is no question that *1 Enoch* and the *Assumption of Moses* contain a lot of mythical and legendary material. Jude held this material in common with his audience: these stories had a moral for Israel.
- 



- 
- 
2. The example in Jude 6 is sandwiched between two clearly historical examples in Jude 5 and Jude 7. This suggests that Jude saw the story of the fallen angels as historical (he handles Genesis 6:1-4 with restraint, unlike its use in *1 Enoch*). Jude 9, however, is separated from the first three examples by Jude 8, which may suggest that Jude saw this illustration as different and that he was now turning to fictitious or legendary examples to condemn the false teachers (a good debater would use all kind of examples to make his case). Since, however, Jude 11 contains more biblical and historical examples (Cain, Balaam, Korah), it could be that Jude viewed all of the examples alike.

The story in Jude 9 is by definition supra-historical, involving two more-than-human






figures, possibly in a nonnatural sphere, in which case Jude 9 could not be labeled historical on any normal terms, though it could be real. While Jude 9 may be viewed by Jude as about a real suprahistorical event, we cannot rule out the possibility that Jude used a fictitious example to make his point about the behavior of the false teachers. Whatever the intention of the inspired author here, we must follow where he leads and not insist that he lead only in ways we want him to lead. Jude is dependent on *1 Enoch* 6-19 here, especially *1 Enoch* 10, where these angels, called the watchers (i.e. peeping Toms), are bound by the archangel Michael and temporarily placed in darkness under the earth until the day of judgment, when they will be thrown into Gehenna.

It is no surprise that Jude's use of *1 Enoch* and

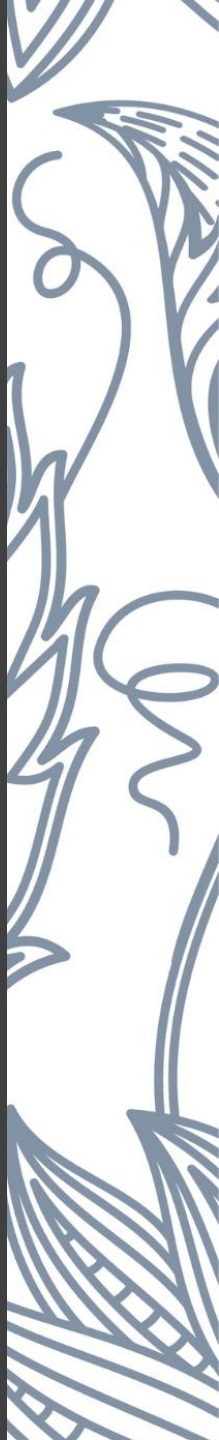







Other apocryphal material confused the church fathers. For example, Bede says, “It is not easy to see what part of Scripture Jude got this tale from, though we do find something like it in Zechariah.”<sup>1</sup> He Continues:

*“The book of Enoch from which this quotation is taken, belongs to the Apocrypha, not because the sayings of the prophet are of no value or because they are false but because the book which circulates under his name was not really written by him but was put out by someone else who used his name. For if it were genuine it would not contain anything contrary to sound doctrine. But as a matter of fact it includes any number of incredible things about giants, who had angels instead of men as fathers, and which are clearly lies. Indeed, it was precisely because Jude quotes him that for a long time his letter was rejected by many as being uncanonical.”*

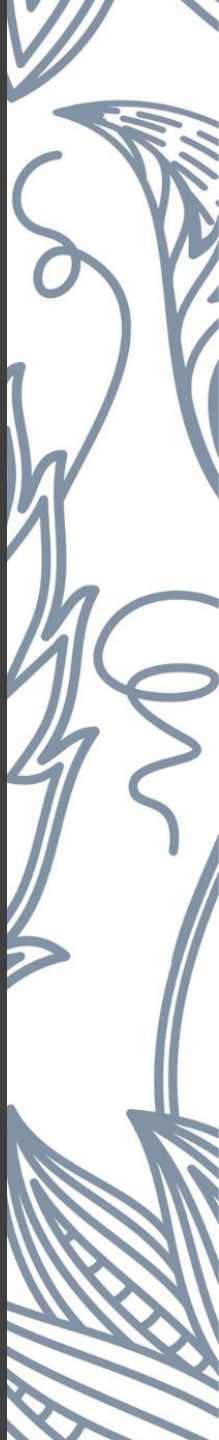







*Nevertheless it deserves to be included in the canon because of its author, its antiquity, and the way in which it as been used, and particularly because this passage which Jude takes from Enoch is not in itself apocryphal or dubious but is rather notable for its clarity with which it testifies to the true light.”<sup>2</sup>*

Well before Bede, Tertullian seems rather willing to accept *1 Enoch* as Scripture, partly because of Jude’s use of it: “Since Enoch in the same book tells us of our Lord, we must not reject anything at all which genuinely pertains to us. Do we not read that every word of Scripture useful for edification is divinely inspired? AS you very well know, Enoch was later rejected by the Jews for the same reason that prompted them to reject almost everything which prophesied about Christ. It is not at all surprising that they rejected certain

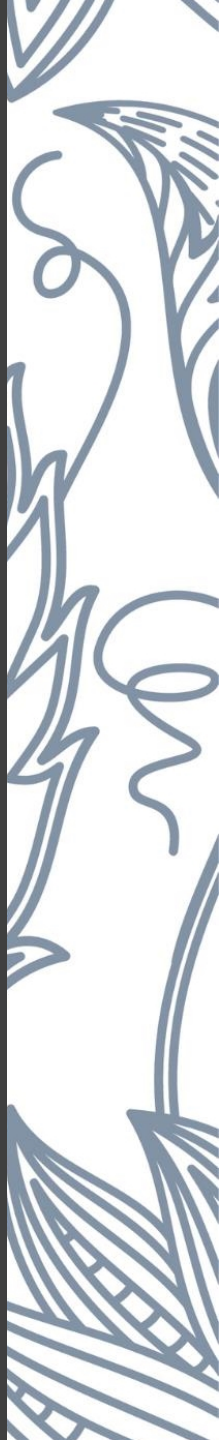







Scriptures that spoke of him... But we have a witness to Enoch in the epistle of Jude the apostle.”<sup>3</sup> The debate over whether *1 Enoch* was canonical raged over several centuries, and the final conclusion was negative (Jerome *De viris illustribus* 4; *Apostolic Constitutions* 6.16.3). In general the earlier opinion was more favorable (*Barnabas* 16.5; Tertullian *Idolatry* 15.6; Clement of Alexandria *Extracts from the Prophets* 3).

We may take comfort then from not being alone in trying to puzzle these things out. What the use of such traditions shows, surely, is that Jude is writing an ad hoc document to a specific Jewish Christian audience conversant with early Jewish material, even some of the more arcane bits of it. He did not envision his discourse falling into our hands, these many centuries later. The inclusion of this document







in the canon of the New Testament however indicates that the church fathers saw it as some enduring and endearing worth, even though it was never included in the early lectionaries.

