

# **BEWARE OF THE NARCISSIST**

**A Commentary on the Epistle of Jude**

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**By Rev. Desmond Allen, PhD, MDiv**

# Beware of the Narcissist

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BEWARE OF THE NARCISSIST – A Commentary of the Epistle of Jude

Desmond Allen, Ph.D., M.Div.

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## Beware of the Narcissist

## **Preface**

Few people ever consider the perils to be encountered by associating with a narcissist. Sadly, this is something the unfortunate souls who have happened to marry one know all too well. This commentary is an appeal to rid the narcissist from within the midst of your congregation. It is also a warning for everyone to be especially careful about becoming personally involved, at any level other than evangelism, with a narcissist; for the narcissist cannot love.

Narcissism stems from a proud heart and is characterized by self promotion and self-serving actions designed to achieve personal power, advance material gain, and/or enhance personal pleasure. Love is self-sacrificial, honest, humble, patient, charitable, seeks the welfare of others above that of self. God is love. The godly are practitioners of love. The ungodly are practitioners of that which is the opposite of love: self-centered, dishonest, proud, impatient, greedy, seeking the welfare of self above that of others.

## Beware of the Narcissist



## Introduction

### Who was Jude?

#### <sup>1</sup> *Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, . . .*

Although the exact identity of both Jude and James is now a mystery to us, it most certainly was not a mystery to the original audience; for Jude found it sufficient merely to identify himself as the *brother of James*. Of the various disciples named Jude and James in the NT, Judas Iscariot is ruled out for obvious reason. James, the son of Zebedee is also ruled out for his brother was named John. This leaves us with two possibilities. The Apostle Jude, which is sometimes said to be the brother of the Apostle James; however, this translation is amiss (*Lk 6:16*). The phrase, “*the brother of*” is added by the translators; the original text (τουδαν ιακωβου) is literally Jude of James, or James’ Jude, i.e. the son of James. Evidently, to differentiate him from Judas Iscariot, Matthew called this Jude by the surname, Lebbeaus, and Mark called him Thaddaeus; this James and Jude are also identified as the sons of Alphaeus or the alternative, Cleophas (*Ac 1:13; Jn 19:25*).

Finally, we have the brothers, Jude and James, who are identified as the sons of Joseph and Mary; they are the brothers of Jesus (*Mt 13:55*). These, most likely, are the brothers in question. Jude does not call himself an apostle, and without further explanation, he simply identifies himself as the brother of James. At that time of the writing, the most widely known and highly regarded James in the Early Church was James the Just, the brother of Jesus, the leader of the Jerusalem church, and the author of the NT letter of James. Thus, it would be perfectly natural for Jude merely to identify himself as the brother of James.

We should not think it strange that Jude authenticates his identity by mentioning his kinship with James, yet he neglects to

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reference his kinship with Jesus in the same manner. Neither did James mention his relationship to Jesus to introduce his letter or to establish his authority. An appeal to authority, by either, based merely on their kinship to Jesus would be inconsistent with the humility expected of these well-known pillars of the faith. No doubt, as Dr. Albert Barnes suggested, they refrain appealing to this relationship lest they spark jealousy within the brotherhood, as if they were claiming some special sort of royal pre-eminence among the brotherhood. Indeed Jesus' royalty is passed along; but it is passed to all believers in a spiritual manner, not to his earthly brethren. *"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light"* (1 Pet 2:9; see also, Rev 5:10 and 1 Cor 6:3).

Although others might address and even appeal to the earthly kinship James and Jude shared with Jesus (as Paul did in Gal 1:19), neither of them appeal to this relationship as a means of authenticity or authority. Even here, by identifying himself as the brother as James, Jude is merely making it clear to his reader's which Jude he is, for it was a common name in their society. More important than being the brother of the Jesus, Jude identifies himself as *"the servant of Jesus Christ, . . ."* Indeed, both he and James were faithful servants, even unto death, to their Lord and master, Jesus Christ. They neither expected nor incurred any special treatment for being the Jesus' brothers.

### To whom he wrote?

**<sup>1</sup> . . . to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: <sup>2</sup> Mercy unto you, and peace and love, be multiplied.**

Jude's readers are likely the same audience to whom James and Peter wrote; the Jewish exiles, products of the dispersion. The Early Church consisted primarily of Jewish converts. Although the final act of the dispersion occurred a few years after this letter was written (when the Roman general, Titus, pillaged Jerusalem and drove the remaining Jewish population away in 70 AD), many Jews were already subjects of the

dispersion—decedents of the many thousands of Jews who had been taken captive by various invaders.

The Babylonian and Assyrian captivities (as documented in 2 Kings), are well known; but there were other invaders as well. Ptolemy I, of Egypt (322–285 BC) invaded Palestine and captured Jerusalem. Antiochus the Great of Syria (223–187 BC) ousted about 2,000 families from Mesopotamia and Babylon, Phrygia, and Lydia. Pompey captured Jerusalem in 63 BC and took hundreds of Jewish slaves to Rome. Of course, as we learn from the prophets, the dispersion (in its various stages) was the resultant punishment for their disobedience and for allowing pagan neighbors to corrupt their society, spreading immorality and wickedness throughout the nation (*Hos 9:3; Jer 8:3, 16:15ff; Eze 4:13; Zech 10:9*).

Understanding Israel's history is crucial to understanding world history, and the key to recognizing and discerning these last days. The Jews are God's chosen people, the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God made a covenant to grow them into a mighty nation, to bless them, and to bring forth Messiah through them. Although God promised to protect and preserve them as a nation, still they are sons and daughters of Adam, and as such sinners. And true to the sinful nature (with is shared by all) they disobeyed and disappointed the Lord, even to the point of rejecting the Messiah. Nevertheless, God had promised not to forsake them. But He would, as He oft warned, discipline them for their disobedience.

The OT prophets make it very clear that the dispersion (the 1<sup>st</sup> stage of which occurred about 860 BC) will come to an end in the last days when God shall call his people home from the four corners of the earth. They will repopulate their promised land and once again occupy Jerusalem. In so doing, they will be feared and despised by the surrounding nations.

*I will bring them from the North Country, and gather them from the uttermost parts of the earth . . . . I will gather them out of all the countries, where I have driven them in mine anger, and in my wrath, and in great indignation; and I will bring them again unto this place . . . (Jer 31:8, Jer 32:37).*

*Thus says the Lord Jehovah: Whereas I have removed them far off among the nations, and whereas I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them a sanctuary for a*

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*little while in the countries where they are come, . . . I will gather you from the peoples, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel (Eze 11:16-17).*

*I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the peoples round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all the peoples; all that burden themselves with it shall be sore wounded; and all the nations of the earth shall be gathered together against it (Zech. 12:2-3).*

It is more than apparent that this recall began shortly after WWII; Israel was granted nation status and Jews from around the world began returning to the homeland. For the last 7 decades, the Jewish population has continued to grow every year. In 1948 the total population of the Nation of Israel was less than a million people of various ethnicities; by 2017 it had grown to nearly 9 million people—a population growth is largely due to Jewish immigrants.

Scripture tells us Israel will eventually be attacked by several nations. When God miraculously destroys these invading armies, at once the Jews will be converted; suddenly understanding the Scriptures and coming to realize that Jesus is indeed their Messiah.

*I am against you, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn you back, and leave but the sixth part of you, . . . You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you, and all your hordes, and the people that are with you: . . . So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the nations shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel (Eze 39:1-7).*

But now, back to our text; more important than the lineage of Jude's readers is their standing before God, they were **sanctified by God the Father**; a qualification that identifies all believers. The term sanctified (from the root ἁγιάζω) speaks to holiness, separation and purification. Here, the form (ἡγαπημένοις,) is a plural, dative, perfect, passive participle. This means the action (the sanctification) was a past event with continuing results, which was performed to or for those who are

sanctified. As made clear by the passive voice, contrary to what many would like to believe, sanctification is not something the sanctified achieve by their own volition; rather it is something done to them.

Furthermore, the text unmistakably attributes this action to God the Father. However, it should be noted that Scripture speaks of three stages of sanctification: (1) positional sanctification, which is referred to in this text, provided by God and imputed to the believer at conversion; (2) future sanctification, when we shall put off this sinful flesh, don our heaven bodies and be completely holy at last: *“we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. (1 Cor 15:51-53);* and (3) practical sanctification, in which we currently allow the Holy Spirit to work within us, giving us strength to deny the sinful desires of the flesh and to pursue the heart of God. To wit, we are told to *“put on the new man, who in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth” (Eph 4:24); “For it is God who works in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure” (Phil 2:13).*

It is also important to note that the sanctified are ***preserved in Jesus Christ***. Thus, the believer’s positional sanctification, as well as the believer’s security of salvation is not in the believer’s own hands but in the hands of the Lord. This message is made clear many times in Scripture. For example:

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Pet 1:3-5).*

*Being confident of this very thing, that he who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ (Phil 1:6).*

The last significant statement of note in this introduction is that believer’s are ***called***. The term used here (κλητοις) means

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appointed; it makes reference to the believer's election (εκλεκτος). The two terms are used together in 2 Pet 1:10 (υμων την κλησιν και εκλογην) "your calling and election . . ." This election (in which God selects certain persons to partake in salvation and to enjoy a personal, esoteric, relationship with himself) is discussed several times in the NT (see Rom 9:11; 11:5, 7, 28; 1 Th 1:4; 1 Pe 1:2; 2 Pe 1:10). However, no passage explains it in such detail as Paul does to the Ephesians.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, in which he has made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Which he has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he has purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory (Eph 1:3-14).*

Although some have trouble accepting the doctrine, clearly the believer's election is inseparably tied to predestination. And while the impetus for anyone's election remains a mystery, one thing is certain: the believer's election has nothing to do with the volume or degree of good or evil he or she has done. Rather, it is

something that God the Father, for reasons unknown to us, has declared, even before creation. As such, this reality is nothing less than humbling. How can the elect (who are sinners like everyone else) respond with anything other than thankfulness and praise when, like Moses and David, we stand in awe and ask, “Why me”?

## **The Appeal for Apologetics**

### **Why he wrote?**

**<sup>3</sup> Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was necessary for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.**

Although his original intent was to remind his readers of the glorious atonement the Lord Jesus has procured with his own blood and, no doubt, to speak of the future resurrection, instead Jude is compelled to promote the disciplines of sound theology and Christian apologetics. From the beginning, starting with our mother, Eve, it has been Satan’s modus operandi to create confusion, propagate false teaching, and spread doubt. He has continued these tactics throughout history. We see it with Nimrod at the Tower of Babel. We see it among Job’s advisors. And we see it time and again throughout Jewish history as Satan’s emissaries infiltrate and corrupt God’s people. Because this age old tactic was already in play within the Church, for Satan’s agents had already infiltrated the ranks of the Church; the Holy Spirit inspired Jude to stress the importance of sound theology and Christian apologetics.

I cannot refrain from suggesting that even today many pastors should give more diligence to teaching theology and Christian apologetics. Too often they merely preach to the choir—rehearsing the message of salvation to a congregation of believers; believers who, sadly, are theologically and apologetically inept; primarily because all they ever hear is the message of salvation. The result is a land full of theologically ignorant congregations such as the one described in the book of Hebrews.

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*For when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food (Heb 5:12).*

I witnessed this first hand when working on my doctoral project in seminary. My focus was to compare modern methods employed to train candidates for church leadership to those methods employed by the Early Church. I had been concerned for some time about the various leadership roles in our modern evangelical churches. The title of my doctoral project was “The Pastoral Neglect to Provide Leading Laymen with a Basic Foundation in Theology.” To further research this topic I surveyed pastors and leading laymen of their choice within numerous churches from a certain conservative and evangelical association throughout the states of Washington and Oregon.

I expected to find relatively few pastors providing theological and ministerial training to their lay leadership. Likewise, I expected to find a fair percentage of the lay leaders to be less than qualified for their task. However, the results were more staggering than I could have ever imagined. I had peeked behind the facade of neckties, choirs, sermons, beautiful buildings, and spirals reaching to the sky. I felt as though I had ripped the mask off a deeply rooted and shameful ugliness. I had revealed an aspect of Western Evangelical Orthodoxy that is generally shrouded in pretense. I had uncovered an area about which most of us would rather plead ignorance or make excuses. Not willing to confront it face to face, analytically, and honestly, we choose to simply neglect it, and dutifully don our weekly Sunday vesture to mask the embarrassment.

What had I discovered? I found that although 97% of the leading layman regularly prepared and taught Bible classes, and 78% believed they were qualified to provide spiritual counsel, only 3% of their pastors provided them with hermeneutical training. Less than 20% provided some form of theological training, and only 7% of the pastors provided some kind of training in spiritual counseling.

Although they admitted to having very little training for these tasks, most of the lay leaders believed they were qualified. However, as I suspected, their ignorance betrayed itself at the end



of the questionnaire when I asked three simple but pertinent theological questions. I didn't attempt to stump them by choosing particularly difficult topics. Rather, I chose subjects that have a special concern to anyone who teaches biblical classes or gives spiritual counsel. Put simply, I chose subjects that anyone doing what they did should know cold. First, "Why does God allow evil?" Second, "Define total depravity." And third, "In what way is man created in the image of God?"

I did not expect lengthy theological treatises or even biblical references. I merely wanted to see if these teachers had a general understanding of things they were teaching. The results were astounding. Only 24% were able to answer the question as to the image of God. A mere 16% correctly answered why God allows evil, and no one, not one, could define the meaning of total depravity. Overall these leading laymen, these spiritual advisors and pillars in their churches, had only 13.5% correct answers, and no one answered all three questions correctly.

Although not comprehensive or conclusive, this small research project had shed light on a great and shameful display of ignorance within the leadership of our local churches. Sadly, our churches are largely filled with lay leaders who have little or no training for the task set before them. We might say they are the modern Nicodemus'. How is it, they are teachers of the church and do not know these things?

In this case, they did not know these things because their pastors had not taught them. Yet, this is the responsibility of the trained leadership, to nurture and train would-be leaders in the faith that they, too, can effectively fight the enemy. This means theological and apologetic training as well as training in ministry, character, and spirit.

Notice Jude said *earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*. This is especially significant in that false teachers often claim to have some new insight, some new revelation that is contrary to that which has been delivered to the saints. In modern times we see this with the likes of Joseph Smith, the book of Mormon and his Later Day Saints; Charles Taze Russell, The Millennial Dawn, Joseph Rutherford and their Watchtower Society; Jim Jones and The People's Temple and others. Although they claim to follow Christ, they deviate from

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“*the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*”: namely, the deity of Christ and his physical resurrection from the dead. These doctrines are the canon of Christian theology, without which, Christianity does not exist. Thus,

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (Jn 1:1, 14).*

*. . . if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins. Then they also who are fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied (1 Cor 15:14-19).*

### The urgency for application

**<sup>4</sup> For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation,**

But these “Christian Cults” who reject the core of the gospel are not new. False teachers had already started creeping into the Early Church; indeed they had crept into Israel long before the Church was born: **For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation.** To this end, consider the warnings of Peter, Paul, John and Jesus himself.

*Peter: But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who shall secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their shameful ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of (2 Pet 2:1-2).*

*Paul: after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock (Ac 20:29).*

*But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his cunning, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that comes preaches another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if you receive another spirit, which you have not received, or another gospel, which you have not accepted, you might well bear with him. . . . For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works (2 Cor 11:3-15).*

*John: Beloved, believe not every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, of which you have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world (1 Jn 4:1-3).*

*Jesus: Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves (Mat 7:15).*

The need for Christian apologetics is discussed elsewhere in the NT as well. For example: “*be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you . . .*” (1 Pet 3:15). “*Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man*” (Col 4:6). The need to defend sound theology against false teachers is a frequent topic. We are warned that imposters (especially in the last days before Christ’s return) will be an issue. Paul told Timothy, “*the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears*” (2 Tim 4:3). For this reason Paul charged him to “*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine*” (2 Tim 4:2).

<sup>4</sup> . . . **ungodly men**, . . .

The reality of ungodly actors creeping into the flock of the godly; leads me to the following proposition that should help us identify these hedonistic, self-centered performers. Love is self-sacrificial, honest, humble, patient, charitable, seeks the welfare of others above that of self. God is love. The godly are practitioners of love. The ungodly are practitioners of that which is the opposite of love: self-centered, dishonest, proud, greedy, seeking the welfare of self above that of others. In short, ungodliness is narcissism. Narcissism is the opposite of love.

Some mistakenly assume hate to be the opposite of love; others believe it is indifference. But this is a gross misunderstanding of both love and hate. Scripture tells us there are things God himself hates; God is love. Thus, if God himself hates anything, hate cannot be the opposite of love.

*These six things does the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaks lies, and he that sows discord among brethren (Prov 6:16-19).*

Hate, in its purist form, is a judicious, emotional response to that which is the opposite of love. As such, hate stands in juxtaposition to love. Indeed, the nature of love (selflessness) necessitates the rejection of its opposite (self-centeredness). On the other hand, in its impure and corrupt state, hatred is the evil emotional response of the narcissist toward that which impedes or even shines light upon his/her self-serving objective. Self-centeredness hates that which is selfless. Thus, good hates evil and evil hates good, but hate is not the opposite of love.

Neither is indifference the opposite of love; but merely a symptom of self-centeredness. The narcissist has no concern for others; and as long as others do not hinder his/her objective or reveal his/her motives the narcissist is happily indifferent. Furthermore, just as indifference is a fruit of self-centeredness, concern is a fruit of love. As such, God, who is love, is concerned for and actively involved with His creation.

Narcissism is exhibited at many levels; from psychotic sociopaths to those who merely manipulate others to gain some

kind of advantage or power or pleasure. Yet, at all levels of narcissism love is not present.

**<sup>4</sup> . . . turning the grace of our God into licentiousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Some common characteristics among these ungodly thespians is the rejection of God's law, finding glory in God's creation rather than God himself, and abusing God's grace by moving from mercy to unbridled liberty, even as Peter warned when he said "*using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness*" (2 Pet 2:16). The term (ἀσέλγειαν) *licentiousness* or *wantonness* is used seven times in the NT. Of these, two passages provide a more detailed explanation of the term. It paints the portrait of a lewd, morally and physically impure character, driven by avarice and self satiation, full of vanity, and an unhealthy desire for fleshly pleasures. Thus,

*Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto licentiousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness (Eph 4:19); and they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, . . . (2 Pet 2:18).*

When coupled with the other six passages to describe these individuals, a portrait of the ungodly, hedonistic, narcissistic begins to come into focus.

*. . . from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man (Mk 7:22-23).*

*Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and wantonness, not in strife and envying (Ro 13:13).*

*For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found unto you such as you desire not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, conceit, tumults: And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall mourn over many who have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and*

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*licentiousness which they have committed (2 Cor 12:20-21).*

*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, impurity, licentiousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, strife, jealousy, wrath, selfishness, divisions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like (Gal 5:19-21).*

*For the time past of our life will suffice us to have done the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in licentiousness, lusts, excess of wine, reveling, carousing, and abominable idolatries: In which they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of dissipation, speaking evil of you (1 Pet 4:3-4).*

*For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into licentiousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 4).*

Narcissism stems from a proud heart and is characterized by self promotion and self-serving actions designed to achieve personal power, advance personal material gain, and/or enhance personal pleasure. Basically, we have been warned that narcissists have infiltrated the Church and in the last days we can expect a flood of them.

We should ever beware of the narcissist, for narcissism is a cancer. One should especially never develop an intimate relationship with a narcissist, for a narcissist cannot love anyone but self; his/her ego has no room for another. But the narcissist is a master manipulator, a first class thespian, who will feign love, kindness, concern, empathy, humility; and do so quite convincingly with insincere flattery and interest, until the day he/she does not get what he/she wants (be it material gain, power, pleasure) and the true person is revealed. Those who marry a narcissist consign themselves to a life of grief and sorrow.

## A History Lesson About the Narcissist

**<sup>5</sup> I will therefore put you in remembrance, though you once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.**

Still making reference to the ungodly narcissists residing within the church—those who assume Christ’s work of atonement will cover them even though they have not truly committed to him—Jude reminds his readers of the judgment received by a similar ungodly population within ancient Israel. Although God had delivered the nation from bondage, ultimately this did not protect those individuals whose hearts were still in Egypt, the disbelievers who contended with both Moses and God’s directive.

We might recall that Jesus himself warned of those who profess his name yet do not keep his words.

*Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? and in your name have cast out demons? and in your name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock (Mat 7:21-24).*

And what are these saying of Jesus that we are to do?

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets (Mat 22:37-40).*

But these commandments to love God and your neighbor are not something the narcissist can abide. The narcissist can talk about Jesus and some of the nice things he taught; but actually to humble himself before God and to pursue Jesus as his example, so as to seek the welfare of others above his own . . . this is beyond his scope of religion.

## The Narcissist's Disobedience

**<sup>6</sup> And the angels who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. <sup>7</sup> Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after unnatural lust, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.**

These angels who forsook their first estate are the angelic beings mentioned in Genesis 6. Enoch called them the Watchers. The book of Enoch lends some insight into the antediluvian world. Although not part of Scripture, Enoch's work was esteemed a valid, historic record by ancient Jewish tradition; it was even found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Jude and Peter, as well as several early Church Fathers (Barnabus, Tertullian, Irenaeus, Origin, and Clement of Alexandria) referenced Enoch. Tertullian set aside an entire chapter defending Enoch's work.

These fallen Watchers are different from the angels who fell with Satan. Enoch explained that 200 Watchers banded together and made a pact amongst themselves to mix with the daughters of men, whom they found very attractive. To these Watchers and the women with whom they mixed, a hybrid race of giants (the Nephilim) was born. It is very likely that the stories of ancient mythological Greek gods find their origin in these antediluvian hybrids. Enoch spoke at length about them.

It happened after the sons of men had multiplied in those days that daughters were born to them, elegant and beautiful. And when the angels, the sons of heaven, beheld them, they became enamored of them, saying to each other, Come, let us select for ourselves wives from the progeny of men, and let us beget children. Then their leader Samyaza said to them; I fear that you may perhaps be indisposed to the performance of this enterprise; and that I alone shall suffer for so grievous a crime. But they answered him and said; we all swear; and bind ourselves by mutual execrations, that we will not change our intention, but execute our projected undertaking. Then they swore all together, and all bound themselves by



mutual execrations. Their whole number was two hundred, who descended upon Ardis, which is the top of mount Armon. . . . Then they took wives, each choosing for himself; whom they began to approach, and with whom they cohabited; teaching them sorcery, incantations, and the dividing of roots and trees. And the women conceiving brought forth giants, whose stature was each three hundred cubits. These devoured all which the labor of men produced; until it became impossible to feed them; when they turned themselves against men, in order to devour them; and began to injure birds, beasts, reptiles, and fishes, to eat their flesh one after another, and to drink their blood (Enoch 7).

The Watcher's temptation was different from that of Lucifer, who was filled with pride and the lust for power; these were filled with an aberrant sensual lust for forbidden creatures, namely humans, over whom they were to be watchers, protectors, guardians. Perhaps, after seeing the mercy God had shown to Adam, these angelic beings reasoned that the Lord would have mercy on them as well. However, it was not to be. Once the Lord condemned them, they enlisted Enoch to intercede for them, but the Lord would not have it. Their condemnation for having defiled themselves with human women was severe. The watchers were bound for 70 generations under the earth until the Day of Judgment, after which they are to be confined to everlasting fire.

Go, say to the Watchers of heaven, who have sent you to pray for them, You ought to pray for men, and not men for you. Wherefore, have you forsaken the lofty and holy heaven, which endures for ever, and have lain with women; have defile yourselves with the daughters of men; have taken to yourselves wives; have acted like the sons of the earth, and have begotten an impious offspring? You being spiritual, holy, and possessing a life which is eternal, have polluted yourselves with women; have begotten in carnal blood; have lusted in the blood of men; and have done as those *who are* flesh and blood do. These, however die and perish. Therefore have I given to them wives, that they might cohabit with them; that sons might be born of them; and that this might be transacted upon earth. But you

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from the beginning were made spiritual, possessing a life which is eternal, and not subject to death for ever. Therefore, I made not wives for you, because, being spiritual, your dwelling is in heaven (Enoch 15).

The Watchers had failed to understand that (unlike themselves) man was made in the image of God and that God had a special purpose for man. Not only was mankind created for personal fellowship with God, but God would employ mankind as the means to enter his creation and to conquer evil and forever banish it from his presence. Thus, man had received a special grace to which other creatures of God's kingdom were not privy.

Beyond mixing with humanity, the Watchers had also accelerated the evil within mankind by teaching them about certain metaphysical mysteries: incantations, sorcery and astrology. The Watchers also taught man various crafts such as metallurgy, astronomy, and herbs. They taught women about mirrors and how to use makeup, and even how to abort their babies (*Enoch 7-8*). It was the extent of evil that the Watchers and their offspring (the Nephilim) taught men that caused the Lord to bring the antediluvian civilization to an end via the flood. Only Noah (who was perfect in his generations, i.e. void of a hybrid bloodline, *Gen 6:1*), and his family were saved.

It should be noted that although the hybrids first appeared in the antediluvian world, Moses tells us they returned after the flood as well: "*There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that*" (*Gen. 6:4*). Various biblical passages (as well as texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls) speak of several kinds of giants in the post-diluvian world: Nephilim, Rephaim, Zuzims, Emims, and others (*Gen 14:5; Num 13:26-33; Deut 2:10; Josh 11:22, 14:15; 1 Chro 11:15, 23; 2 Sam 21:19-20, 23:13; Job 16:4*). Genesis speaks of these giants during the time of Sodom and Gomorrah, and then again, hundreds of years later, when Israel encounters them several times in the Promised Land. When Moses sent spies to evaluate Canaan, they returned with the terrifying report of the Nephilim inhabiting the land.

*The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that eats up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. And there we saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak, who come of the*

*Nephilim: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight (NASV Num. 13:32-33).*

Exactly how the new species of postdiluvian giants entered our world, we are not told. While the Watchers were bound in darkness under the earth, the spirits of their children, the Nephilim, who were destroyed in the flood, were sentenced to wander the earth as disembodied spirits. We commonly refer to them as demons.

Now the giants, who have been born of spirit and of flesh, shall be called upon earth evil spirits, and on earth shall be their habitation. Evil spirits shall proceed from their flesh, because they were created from above; from the holy Watchers was their beginning and primary foundation. Evil spirits shall they be upon earth, and the spirits of the wicked shall they be called. The habitation of the spirits of heaven shall be in heaven; but upon earth shall be the habitation of terrestrial spirits, who are born on earth. The spirits of the giants *shall be like* clouds, which shall oppress, corrupt, fall, content, and bruise upon earth. They shall cause lamentation. No food shall they eat; and they shall be thirsty; they shall be concealed, and shall not rise up against the sons of men, and against women; for they come forth during the days of slaughter and destruction (Enoch 15).

It is possible that the postdiluvian hybrids are the products of other fallen angelic beings; followers of Satan who took up where the Watchers left off; however this time, rather than a global flood, God used Israel to exterminate them. Because we are told the last days will be similar to the days of Noah (*Lk 17:16*), we might expect another infiltration of hybrid beings to proliferate and attempt to corrupt humanity. It is very likely that such hybrids are the beings that so many refer to as extraterrestrials, for which there seems to be increasing evidence.

Jude makes reference to the sexual immorality often exhibited by the narcissists who have crept into the Church: **Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after unnatural lust, are set forth for an example.** Sexual immorality is a common theme among the narcissists. Not that it is exclusive to them, for it is an issue with mankind in general, for we are all

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sinners. As carnal beings, we enjoy carnal pleasure. Within the confines of God's law such pleasures are natural and perfectly acceptable; however, seeking such pleasures in their bastardized form is a problem, it is sin.

Although believers are redeemed, forgiven, and devoted to the Lord, believers are still sinners and thus subject to committing sin. The believer's only means of overcoming such temptation is to rely upon the Lord's Spirit to give the strength to resist. Still, there is a difference between the godly and the ungodly participating in sinful behavior. The godly (i.e. those who humble before God and seek to obey his commandments and have received Jesus as Savior) are convicted and miserable until they repent and confess their sin to God. The ungodly, the narcissist, is not only happy to participate in the sin, but actually glories in it with no remorse or regard toward God. But we must not be deceived; although the godly seeks and receives spiritual forgiveness for sin, they will still suffer the earthly consequences of their sin: dishonor, shame, broken relationships, disease, jail, etc., maybe even death.

Sadly, many churches are filled with narcissists who talk about Jesus, quote his sayings (i.e. at least those sayings that make them feel good). They will tell others about their religion, yet they happily stand in direct disobedience to much of Scripture and teach things absolutely contrary to what has been given to the saints.

For example, God said homosexuality is an abomination; it was a primary reason for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the antediluvians (*Lev. 18:22; Rom 1:27ff*). Here, homosexuality is condemned along with paganism, adultery, and bestiality; yet in our modern, progressive culture, major Protestant denominations have passed bylaws not only to accept homosexuals as church members but to ordain them to the ministry. "For surely," they argue, "those ancient words were spoken in ignorance, before the enlightenment we have experienced in our new and progressive age." It is curious how these once Christian denominations have decided Scripture is wrong about homosexuality, but adultery and bestiality are still forbidden. Not surprisingly, paganism is also something they generally overlook, for they would not want to offend other

religions. No doubt as their “enlightenment” grows, so too will their “progressiveness” so that we might expect adultery and bestiality eventually to be considered acceptable life choices as well. However, as the passage warns, for pursuing their unnatural lust these narcissists within the church are headed for the same judgment as Sodom and Gomorrah—they too shall suffer **the vengeance of eternal fire**.

These same “progressive Christians” also reject the teaching that hell is a real place reserved for the Devil and his angels, and for non-believers. Appealing to their twisted, narcissistic view of love, they justify their rejection of such passages by arguing that a God of love could not harm anyone. This, of course, is an argument completely foreign to Scripture. And it is an argument that fails to consider the meaning of holiness and justice.

God is love, God is holy, God is just; ergo, love is holy and love is just. Holy cannot abide unholy, just cannot abide unjust; ergo, love cannot abide unholy, love cannot abide unjust. Sin is unholy, and must be dealt with justly; ergo, it must be forever banished, destroyed, removed from the presence of the eternal God. Therefore, it is no surprise that hell is a recurring topic in Scripture. It is a common theme in Jesus’ teachings. One cannot honestly claim to follow Jesus, and then stand in judgment as the arbitrator to decide which of his sayings are trustworthy and which are to be discarded. In the Day of Judgment such objections will not stand. As Jesus clearly explained, many will say,

*have we not prophesied in your name? and in your name have cast out demons? and in your name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity. . . . Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels (Mat 7:23; 25:41).*

To reject the existence of hell based upon a warped and misguided and self proposed concept of love is simply foolish.

## Narcissism's Disrespect for Authority

**<sup>8</sup> Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise authority, and speak evil of the glorious ones. <sup>9</sup> Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil as he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you.**

Jude continues to paint the portrait of these cancerous thespians hiding in plain sight within the Church. The picture is one of rebellion: **these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise authority, and speak evil of the glorious ones.** Sexual immorality and rebellion against authority often go hand and hand. There is a reason for this. Both behaviors stem from the ungodly state of narcissism. Thus, we are warned to be on the watch for church goers who spurn and mock and loathe authority figures, be they in the church or in government. These “free souls”, trapped in their own deceit, detest being subject to anyone or anything. So it is that the “progressive” churches in today’s society, filled with those who accept immorality and reject much of Jesus’ teachings, are often outspoken leaders of movements against the government, which God has in place to keep order and to protect the citizens.

*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resists the power, resists the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Will you then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and you shall have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to you for good. But if you do that which is evil, be afraid; for he bears not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that does evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience's sake. For, for this cause pay you tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing (Rom 13:1-6).*

But this practice of speaking freely against the government is not confined solely to the “progressive Christian” churches; sadly far too many traditional churches (who do accept the gospel

handed down to the saints) have also assumed the employment of government reform, which often leads them to say things against government figures that ought not be spoken. Although they too are in the wrong, their motivation is far different than that of the so called progressives. While the progressives' rebellion against authority springs from their desire to liberate themselves from moral, social, and governmental restraints; the motivation for rebellion against government figures in the more traditional churches is their faulty theology, which leads to the feeble, carnal, and misguided attempts to usher in some sort of moral order, or perhaps even to establish God's kingdom on earth.

But governmental reform is clearly not the objective of the Church. If establishing a godly government was our mission we would have received instructions for the same. Jesus would have addressed it. At least one of the apostles would have addressed it. But Jesus did not. The apostles did not. The fact of the matter is that under the Roman government people suffered far worse conditions than we can scarcely image. The world in which Jesus and the apostles lived was a brutal environment.

In that hierarchical society, slaves, void of any rights, were at the bottom. Slightly above them were freed slaves, and then freeborn citizens. Even the freeborn citizens were divided by class so that each had certain rights. The father, as head of the family unit, held complete control over his household, from slaves to relatives. It was called *patria potestas*, "father's power." He could force their marriage or divorce of any family member, claim their property as his own, or even sell his children into slavery. As *patria potestas* he had the power to punish (by death if he so desired) any member of his household.

Jesus, eleven of the twelve apostles, and thousands of believers were murdered by Rome: burned, beaten, crucified, stoned, made sport of and flayed alive; yet neither Jesus, the apostles, nor the early Church fathers ever spoke out against Rome or encouraged socio-political reformation. Jesus certainly spoke out against the injustices in Israel, the people of the covenant, and the apostles chastised Christians for their sin; but none spoke against Rome or ever encouraged their followers to do so. Their lack of voice was not due to cowardice, or even to a

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lack of concern. Their silence was motivated by their sense of duty.

It was Jesus' duty to take his cross upon himself that he might provide a propitiation for our sin. It was the apostles' duty, and still is that of the Church, to proclaim Jesus and teach theology to the believers. This duty has eternal consequences. Establishing an earthly government is a temporal achievement with temporal rewards, and it is not the mission of the Church. The government, any government, no matter how godly it may seem, will wither with future generations; for man is a sinner by nature and the unconverted heart will always follow its nature. It is powerless to choose any other course.

Regardless of the motivation, rebellion and speaking evil of authority is an ungodly action. Thus, even **Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil as he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you.** If out of respect for his position, even the great Archangel Michael refrained from disrespecting the fallen Archangel Lucifer, how much more are we, the humble redeemed, expected to respect the authority God has in place over us? We, like Michael, should leave it in the Lord's hands. Vengeance is the Lord's, so too is judgment (*Ro 12:19; 2:2ff*).

## The Greed of Narcissism

**<sup>10</sup> But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. <sup>11</sup> 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 rebellion of Korah.**

Jude puts the final touch on the portrait of these rebels with the indictment: **these speak evil of those things which they know not.** With arrogant inflammatory speech against anyone who should dare oppose them, especially if it is authority, these narcissists freely berate that of which they are completely ignorant. One needs only to turn on the television and within minutes you can generally find some popular religious figure disrespecting government officials and spouting off about governmental reform.



If you investigate further, you will discover there is a great deal of self-promotion and personal financial gain for these supposed Christian leaders. This brings to mind a similar plight suffered in ancient Israel by self-centered, narcissistic leaders, who could not see beyond their own immediate existential interests.

*His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs who can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, everyone for his gain, from his own quarter. Come you, they say, I will bring wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant (Isa 56:10-12).*

**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 rebellion of Korah.** With these examples, Jude is expanding our understanding of these rebels. Whereas he first painted a picture of their actions, now he reveals their motives.

Cain's rebellion and corruption stemmed from his pride, his arrogance, and his disregard for obedience; this led to malice toward his brother, who truly and willingly submitted himself to the Lord. Surely the world hates the godly, even as it hated Jesus; but this hatred is personified in the narcissistic hypocrite, the thespian who plays the role of the righteous that he/she might garner personal benefit.

The narcissist's desire for self-satisfaction and self-enrichment coupled with his/her disdain for the true followers of the faith, lead to **the error of Balaam** and **the rebellion of Korah**—the overwhelming desire to benefit on a personal level. Like Balaam, these narcissists within the Church seek to corrupt God's people, teaching things that are contrary to "*the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*". Even as Balaam hired himself out to the pagans, conspiring with them to corrupt Israel with immoral behavior. And like Korah, with no regard for God's order within the congregation, boldly opposed the authority of Moses and Aaron. These rebels do the same; again disregarding "*the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*".

Also notice the text says they ran **greedily after the error of Balaam for reward**. The term ran greedily (ἐκχέω, ekchéō) is the picture of water gushing forth or overflowing, while the term for error (πλάνη, plánē) means deceit. These narcissists within the Church are activists. They speak out loudly against authority and sound doctrine, and quickly rush forward to participate in any rebellious or deceptive activity they believe might advance their personal interests.

### **The Narcissist, The Thespian**

**<sup>12</sup> These are spots in your love feasts, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about by winds; trees whose fruit withers, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; <sup>13</sup> Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.**

Here, a little knowledge of the original language provides greater insight into Jude's word picture. Jude's called them, **spots in your love feasts**. The term "spots" (σπιλάς spilás) is, more accurately, a hidden reef or rock in the sea. These narcissists are not merely blemishes within the congregation; they are dangerous and destructive bodies like a hidden rock or reef is to a seagoing vessel. As such, these rebels are not to be tolerated, for they will damage the church body. Once identified the church leaders should exercise discipline. When Paul learned of such narcissistic hedonism taking place in Corinth, he minced no words as to the disciplinary action they were to pursue.

*It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as is named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that has done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that has so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh,*

*that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know you not that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Cor 5:1-8).*

The term **love feasts** is understood by many to reference fellowship banquets in the Early Church, which were connected to the Lord's Supper. Here, the brotherhood, rich and poor, would sit together in unison as charity and relief for the needy was promoted. Yet, as Jude points out, there were narcissists amongst them; destructive individuals, **feeding themselves without fear**. The idea being, they had no concern for the poor, or for fellowship; they were merely there to fulfill their own appetite and promote themselves.

It is no different than church members today who merely attend meetings and get to know the brethren, that they might promote their business or their standing in the community. Politicians are prime examples of this offense. It is the self-serving, shallow practice of empty vessels. Thus, **clouds they are without water, carried about by winds**; i.e., they are without principle; **trees whose fruit withers, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots**; i.e., they are useless; **Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame**; i.e., the results of their grandiose boasting is little more than their own infamy; **wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever**, i.e., they are headed for eternal damnation.

### The Judgment of The Narcissist

<sup>14</sup> And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints, <sup>15</sup> To execute judgment upon all, and to convict all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

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As discussed earlier, although not part of Scripture, the Book of Enoch was esteemed a valid, historic record by ancient Jewish tradition and was even found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Jude and Peter, as well as several Early Church Fathers referenced Enoch's work. No doubt, as Tertullian argued, Noah (Enoch's grandson) brought the book with him, thus providing a vivid description of the antediluvian world, as well as the prophecies concerning the Lord's return.

The judgment of the Lord upon the unbelievers, who refused to accept his mercy, will be severe. It will be especially severe for these narcissistic thespians, mingling amongst God's people, seeking to corrupt them for their own gain.

### The Characteristics of Narcissism

**<sup>16</sup> These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaks great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration for the sake of advantage.**

Jude is compelled to further clarify just exactly who these narcissists are. Clearly he wants the Church to recognize them and excise them from its midst. The characterization, **murmurers**, has the connotation of being dejected about the way things are, not only with the Church and civil authorities but with God's plan and purpose. Thus, they are **complainers**, i.e., querulous, discontented beings who compare their lot in life to that of others and blame the inequity on everyone else, including God. They seek to satisfy their egos by **walking after their own lusts**—pursuing an unrestrained appetite for their pleasures; all while boasting of their gratification, speaking **great swelling words**.

And then the final characteristic—the gem that gives them away; they are respecters of persons: **having men's persons in admiration for the sake of advantage**. Not only is God no respecter of persons, he does not welcome those who are. It is the narcissist who gives deference to the rich and powerful, lavishing them with gifts and praise so as to gain favor and benefit from their champion's station. This is the same person who objectifies and looks down his nose at the poor and lowly as inferior. Thus, the Lord commanded the Judges of Israel,

*You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike; (Deut 1:17)*

*The poor person is shunned even by his own neighbor, but the rich person has many friends. He who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who has pity on the poor. . . . Whoever oppresses the poor for his own increase and whoever gives to the rich, both come to poverty. (Prov14:20-21, 22:16)*

In direct opposition to the self-centered characteristic of being a respecter of persons, Peter admonishes believers to love the brethren with a pure heart, to be void of motives of self gain, and void of deference to those with high social status.

*And if you call on the Father, who without respect of persons judges according to every man's work, pass the time of your exile here in fear: . . . “Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto sincere love of the brethren, see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently (1 Pet 1:17, 22).*

### **Narcissists in The Last Days**

**<sup>17</sup> But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; <sup>18</sup> How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. <sup>19</sup> These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.**

Elsewhere, Scripture warns us about the great apostasy that will transpire in the Church.

*Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to deceitful spirits, and doctrines of demons; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron (1 Tim 4:1-2).*

*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of*

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*pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they who creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with various lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. . . . But evil men and seducers shall grow worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived (2 Tim 3:1-7, 13).*

Narcissism has a great aversion to truth and will latch onto any teaching it can find to comfort its self-centered behavior. But to do so, the truth must be discredited; therefore all stops are pulled out to reject the veracity of Scripture. So it is that despite the record of some of the oldest documents known to man; Despite the historical accuracy and hundreds of fulfilled prophecies in Scripture; Despite every person's individual witness as to the metaphysical reality of his/her soul and spirit (which predicts the probability of other spirit beings); Despite the numerous recorded historical accounts and the geological evidence of the flood; Despite the witness of Jesus as to the truth of Scripture; Despite the witness of the wondrous precision and beauty of the universe and our own planet (which predicts intelligent design) the narcissist still refuses to accept God's Word.

Various illogical hypotheses are set forth by many educated and intelligent people in an effort to sidestep this issue of God's supremacy: the big bang; organic life springing from inorganic material; the evolution of one species into that of a totally different species, etc. And by far the wackiest, some intellectual members of society choose rather to believe that beings from another universe, traveled countless light years in highly sophisticated spaceships to populate the earth. Such reasoning is the product of the rebellious and proud heart.

Having set forth these preposterous ideas they proceed to ridicule those who accept the veracity of Scripture and who humble themselves before God. So it is; these **mockers in the last time** are to be expected. They are a sign of the time; and as Jude made warned, they have infiltrated the Church.

Once again Jude explains they are narcissists, **who should walk after their own ungodly lusts**. And he makes it very clear that such individuals are not true believers; they are hypocrites,

thespians, putting on the airs of righteousness for personal gain: **These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.**

### Opposing The Narcissism

**<sup>20</sup> But you, beloved, building up yourselves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, <sup>21</sup> Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.**

The metaphor, **building up** (εποικοδομουντες), is used eight times in the NT. Beyond likening the Church to a building constructed upon the chief cornerstone, Jesus, the term generally speaks to each believer constructing a solid, personal and obedient relationship with the Lord. As such, perhaps Paul's words to the Corinthians best illustrate this.

*Now he that plants and he that waters are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are laborers together with God: you are God's field, you are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds thereon. But let every man take heed how he builds thereupon. For no other foundation can a man lay than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall test every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he has built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire (1 Cor 3:8-15).*

Although the Lord took upon himself the responsibility to provide the believer's salvation, each believer has the personal responsibility to build a permanent structure upon that foundation. It is the durability and breadth of this construction that will determine the believer's rewards in the Day of Judgment.

## Concern for Narcissistic Behavior

**<sup>22</sup> And on some have compassion, making a difference: <sup>23</sup> And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.**

In that Jude is speaking to believers about the need to construct meaningful Christian lives, as solid structures built upon the foundation of our Lord, it seems this passage is not speaking to evangelism but to the correction and/or discipline of backslidden brothers and sisters in the Lord. The idea seems to be that with some backsliders a tender hand is necessary while others may need to be dealt with more sternly.

### The Believer's Power to Overcome Narcissism

**<sup>24</sup> Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,**

Elsewhere, we learn of our security in Christ; that it is Jesus, not the believer's personal works, or obedience, or righteousness that secures one's salvation. Such is the passage in John:

*And this is the Father's will who has sent me, that of all that he has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone who sees the Son, and believes on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day (Jn 6:39-40).*

But in this context, the term **falling** (*απταιστους*), used nowhere else in Scripture, speaks to Christ's ability to keep the believer from stumbling, from falling into sin, which would thus cause the believer's building to fall into disrepair. Thus, Jude said, that he might **present you faultless before the presence of his glory**. It is the same thought that Paul had: "*But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil*" (2 *Thes* 3:3).

However, unlike eternal salvation, which once accepted is secure in Christ no matter what befalls the believer; to refrain from stumbling into sin and to go about building a sound spiritual structure, the believer must continually employ Christ's strength.



To make use of this power, the believer must yield daily to the Spirit of God and rely upon Christ's power rather than the power of self; for no matter how strong-willed one might be, due to the sinful nature common to all mankind, strong-will is no match for the power and temptation of sin. The victory over this enticement is only found in the Lord. So it is that Paul explained:

*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that which I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin (Romans 7:14-25).*

*There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is*

## Beware of the Narcissist

*dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also bring to life your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you through the Spirit do put to death the deeds of the body, you shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, by which we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God (Romans 8:1-16).*

## The Believer's Anthem

**<sup>25</sup> To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.**

While Jude's closing words are a pleasing anthem to the believer's heart, these same words are an offensive noise to the narcissist; for the narcissist is wise in his/her own eyes, and seeks only the glory of self, and recognizes no final authority other than self. So be it.