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Abstract: Boyan Mak Mihaylov, *Mockers or Beloved? Passions or the Leading of the Holy Spirit? Jude 17–21*. Sofia: Holy Trinity Church, 2026

This article examines Jude 17–21 within the broader context of the Epistle of Jude, arguing that the passage presents a critical contrast between two categories of persons: "mockers" who follow their own ungodly lusts and "beloved" believers who build themselves up in the most holy faith. Through linguistic analysis of key Greek terms (επιθυμία, ἐμπαίκτης, ψυχικός, τηρέω, ἐποικοδομέω) and engagement with Old Testament and intertestamental background, the study demonstrates that Jude's pastoral concern centers on the danger of spiritual deception within the church. The author contends that Jude's message retains striking contemporary relevance, functioning as a call to self-examination whereby believers must discern between

personal desire and the leading of the Holy Spirit. The article concludes by offering five diagnostic questions for assessing one's motivations and decisions, thereby positioning Jude's epistle not merely as a historical document but as a practical guide for maintaining spiritual integrity in the "last days." Original language: Bulgarian Keywords: Mockers, Beloved, Passions, Holy Spirit, Jude, Self-examination, Discernment, Epithymia, Edification, Last days

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The short book *The Epistle of Jude* is often overlooked and rarely serves as the basis for preaching. The Reformer Martin Luther wrote of it: “there is nothing special in it, except that it refers to the Second Epistle of Peter, from which it has taken almost all of its words.”

[1](#)

At first glance this appears to be true, but upon closer examination it becomes evident that Jude possesses remarkable spiritual insight that sounds strikingly relevant today in the twenty-first century.

Who Is Jude? The author identifies himself as a brother of James (Jude 1). The only James known to us who had a brother by this name is the biological brother of Jesus, the author of *The Epistle of James*, and a later leader of the church in Jerusalem, known by the epithet “James the Righteous” or “James the Just.” The evangelist Matthew mentions James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude as brothers and sons of Mary, the mother of Jesus (Matt. 13:55).

[2](#)

To Whom Did He Write? Most likely Jude wrote to Jewish Christian communities in Palestine during the first century. [3](#)

Why Did He Write? Jude clearly states the occasion for his epistle: certain people had secretly infiltrated the church and were turning the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ into licentiousness (Jude 4). Drawing on examples from the Old Testament and from two apocryphal books, Jude portrays these individuals as lustful (Jude 4), slanderous toward all things (Jude 10), motivated by gain (Jude 11, 16), self-indulgent (Jude 12), grumblers, complainers, and speakers of arrogant words (Jude 16).

Notes:

[1](#) Дик Лукас и Кристофър Грийн, *Вестта на II Петър и Юда*, Библията говори и днес (София: Нов човек, 2005), originally published as Dick Lucas and Christopher Green, *The Message of 2 Peter and Jude* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 1995), 189.

[2](#) Дик Лукас и Кристофър Грийн, *Вестта на II Петър и Юда*, 190.

[3](#) Ървин Дженсън, *Обзор на Новия завет* (София: Нов човек, 2006), originally published as Irving Jensen, *Jensen's Survey of the New Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), 528.

Remember the Words of the Apostles

“But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, ‘In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.’ These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.” (Jude 17–19, NASB 1995)

Jude employs the term *lust* (ἐπιθυμία [4](#)), denoting a desire for something that is forbidden. This term occurs thirty-nine times in the New Testament and is used most frequently by the apostle Paul, especially in Romans.

The word *mock* (εμπαίκτης [5](#)) appears only here and in 2 Peter 3:3. The related verb *to mock*

(εμπαίζω

[6](#)

) is used exclusively in the Synoptic Gospels: with reference to Herod (Matt. 2:16), to Jesus mocked by Roman soldiers (Matt. 27:29, 31; Mark 15:20; Luke 22:63), and to the chief priests, scribes, and elders (Matt. 27:40–42; Mark 15:30–32).

[7](#)

When Jesus teaches that one cannot serve both God and wealth, the Pharisees mock Him (εκμυκτηρίζω [8](#), Luke 16:14). Jesus responds:

“You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that

which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.” (Luke 16:15, NASB 1995)

Mocking (χλευάζω [9](#)) also occurs on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:13), prior to Peter’s sermon (Acts 2:14–3). Later, some Pharisees come to faith in Jesus (Acts 15:5) and insist that believers should be circumcised.

Jude’s diagnosis is that these people are “natural” or “soulish” (ψυχικοί [10](#)). The term implies a distinction between a lower, natural nature and a higher, spiritual one. Division is the natural consequence of a life governed by such desires. The verb

to have

(ἔχω) carries a wide semantic range. The phrase “do not have the Spirit” implies that these individuals are not Christians at all (Rom. 8:9). All Old Testament examples cited by Jude point toward judgment—eternal bonds (Jude 6) and eternal fire (Jude 7).

Practical Questions for Us. Today we continue to live in the “last days,” whose defining mark appears to be mockery. Such mockery is evident in lust, slander, pursuit of gain, self-indulgence, grumbling, complaining, and arrogant speech. Although the Holy Spirit dwells within believers, vigilance is required lest we ourselves become mockers who divide the church.

Notes:

[4](#) James Strong, *Strong’s Real Greek Bible Dictionary* (BibleTime 3.0.3, Version 1.5-150704, XML version 2006, 1890), entry #1939 ἐπιθυμία

[5](#) James Strong, *Strong’s Real Greek Bible Dictionary*, #1703 ἐμπαίκτης

[6](#) James Strong, *Strong’s Real Greek Bible Dictionary*, #1702 ἐμπαίζω

[7](#) Mark 10:34 uses the same verb in its Old Testament quotation. There is also another use of the word in Jesus’ parables in Luke 14:29 and 18:32.

[8](#) James Strong, *Strong’s Real Greek Bible Dictionary*, entry #1592 ἐκμυκτηρίζω

[9](#) James Strong, *Strong's Real Greek Bible Dictionary*, entry #5512 χλευάζω

Building Up in the Faith

“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.” (Jude 20–21, NASB 1995)

Jude highlights three practices: edification, prayer, and expectation. Edification (εποικοδομέω [1](#)) means building upon something that already exists. Faith is described not merely as holy but as *most holy*.

Prayer in the Holy Spirit stands in contrast to the mockers. The apostle Paul teaches most extensively on this theme:

“In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.” (Romans 8:26–27, NASB 1995)

John Bunyan writes:

“God does not answer random prayers. While we pray, He examines our hearts to discern the motives and the spirit of our prayer.” (1 John 5:14; *Prayer in the Spirit*, 1662) [12](#)

The exhortation “keep yourselves” reflects the depth of τηρέω [13](#), often used in military contexts.

“Without the Spirit, God does not regard either the beautiful voice or the apparent love and zeal of the person who prays.” (*Prayer in the Spirit*, 1662) [14](#) Notes:

[10](#) James Strong, *Strong's Real Greek Bible Dictionary*, entry #5591 ψυχικός

[11](#) James Strong, *Strong's Real Greek Bible Dictionary*, entry #2026 ἐποικοδομέω

[12](#) Джон Бъниян, *Молитвата* (София: Нов човек, 2023), 27.

[13](#) James Strong, *Strong's Real Greek Bible Dictionary*, entry #5083 τηρέω

[14](#) Джон Бъниян, *Молитвата* (София: Нов човек, 2023), 27.

Conclusion

The Epistle of Jude is fundamentally a message of self-examination. Discernment between personal desire and the leading of the Holy Spirit requires honest questioning.

1. Do I have serious biblical grounds for my decision?
2. Do I apply Christian morality selectively?
3. Does this desire lead to a purer faith?
4. Does my decision edify my family and church?
5. If I act on this decision, will I be closer to God?

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4.Strong, James. Strong's Bible Dictionary. StrongsRealGreek, BibleTime, Version 1.5-150704. 1890