

READ The BIBLE Together



Jonah - Titus - Jude

SHALOM CHURCH, SINGAPORE
(Upholding the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith)

JONAH

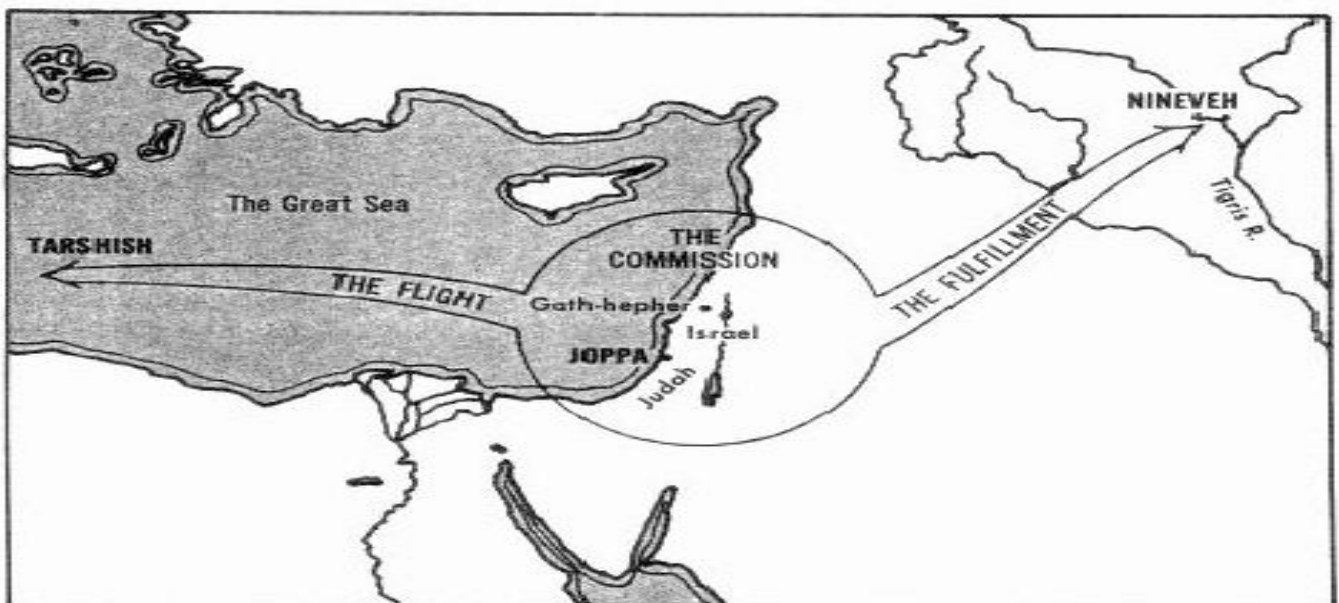
Introduction

A prophet is someone whom God has called to be His authorized spokesman. According to Exodus 4:15-16, he is God's mouth. God first conveys a message to the prophet and it is the task of the prophet to convey God's message faithfully to the people.

Jonah was a prophet. He made his first appearance in the Old Testament in 2 Kings 14:25. There he prophesied that the territory of Israel (from the entrance of Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah) shall be restored. We know from that passage (2 Kings 14:23-27) that *Jonah* served as a prophet during the reign of Jeroboam II (about 789-748 BC). Jeroboam II was deemed the greatest ruler of the dynasty of Jehu. During his reign, the northern kingdom of Israel experienced what is termed as 'the glamour age'. Besides *Jonah*, *Amos* (Amos 1:1) and *Hosea* (Hosea 1:1) were the other known prophets who ministered during the reign of Jeroboam II. We are informed in 2 Kings 14:25 that *Jonah* is from Gath Hopher. This is located somewhere in Galilee, about 5 miles from Nazareth. This means that *Jonah* belongs to the northern kingdom of Israel and not the southern kingdom of Judah. This also means that the Pharisees were either tragically ignorant or blatantly lying when they said that *no prophet has arisen out of Galilee*. (John 7:52)

The book of *Jonah* is often classified as 'minor prophet'. The word 'minor' does not mean it is unimportant. It just means it is shorter compared to Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. These 4 prophetic books are often termed 'major prophets'. An interesting feature of the book of *Jonah* is that unlike the other minor prophetic books, *Jonah* is an "action-book". Here in *Jonah*, we read of many things done by the prophet *Jonah*, besides the words he spoke. We should also remember that in the book of *Jonah*, *Jonah's* audience was Nineveh (Assyrians), not Israel.

GEOGRAPHY OF JONAH



Memory Verse: Numbers 32:23b ~ *be sure your sin will find you out.*

Day 1 Read the Introduction to Jonah

1. Jonah is said to be from Gath Hopher. Where is this place?

2. Who was the king of Israel during the times of Jonah?

3. (a) Who else were ministering as prophets at the same time as Jonah?

(b) What is a prophet?

(c) Do you think there are still prophets today?

4. Take some time to familiarize yourself with the map (previous page). Note *where* is Tarshish and *where* is Nineveh.

Day 2 Read Jonah 1:1-3 Matthew 12:40-41

1. Who is Jonah? Was he a real person or a fictitious character?

2. (a) Where did God tell Jonah to go?

(b) What did He want Jonah to do?

(c) What do you think is God's reason(s) for this mission of Jonah?

3. Where did Jonah go instead? Why?

Day 3 Read Jonah 1:4-6

1. (a) Who sent the storm and why?

(b) How severe was the storm?

2. (a) What's the response of the sailors to the storm?

(b) What did Jonah do during the storm?

3. (a) What did the captain of the ship think Jonah should be doing?

(b) According to ship's captain, what is the likely result of this storm?

Day 4 Read Jonah 1:7-11 Proverbs 16:33

1. (a) How did the men decide who is the guilty one?

(b) What does Proverbs 16:33 say about casting lot?

(c) Should we use this method to make decisions today?

2. According to Jonah, who is he?

3. According to Jonah, what is the cause of this storm?

Day 5 Read Jonah 1:12-17

1. What was Jonah's proposal to them to calm the storm?

2. (a) What did the sailors want to do?

(b) What did they try to do?

(c) What was the result?

3. (a) Who threw Jonah into the sea?

(b) What happened next?

Day 6 Read Jonah 1:16-17

1. What's the impact of this whole incident upon the sailors?

2. What happened to Jonah after he was thrown into the sea?

3. What does this reveal about God's attitude towards Jonah?

4. (a) What have you learnt about God from Jonah 1?

(b) What reproof and correction do we get from Jonah 1?

Day 7 Read Jonah 2:1-3 Psalm 50:15 Psalm 130:1-2

1. (a) Jonah 2 is a prayer of Jonah. Where was Jonah at this time?

(b) What lessons should we learn from this simple observation?

2. Verse 2a is the summary of this entire poem in Jonah 2.

(a) Why did Jonah pray to God?

(b) What is God's response to his prayer?

3. (a) What is the meaning of 'Sheol'?

(b) From what Jonah said in verse 2b-3, what was his state then?

Week 2

[16th – 22nd October 2011]

Memory Verse: Jonah 2:9c ~ *Salvation is of the LORD*

Day 1 Read Jonah 2:4-6

1. Re-write verse 4 in the format below:

YET

Re-write verses 5-6 in the format below:

YET

What pattern do you see?

What can you learn from this?

Day 2 Read Jonah 2:7-9

1. What did Jonah do when his soul fainted within him?
2. Who forsook their own mercy?
3. What did Jonah vow to do?

Day 3 Read Jonah 2:9-10

1. How long was Jonah in the fish's belly? (Cf. 1:17)

2. Jesus used this event to illustrate an important truth in the New Testament. What is it? (Luke 11:29-30)

3. The fish vomited Jonah onto dry land. Where do you think is that 'dry land'? (Refer to your map before you give your answer!)

Day 4 Re-read Jonah 2 & review the last 4 days' lessons

1. What have you learnt about God from Jonah 2?

2. What instructions about the Christian Life do you receive from Jonah 2?

3. Jonah said at the end of verse that that 'salvation belongs to the LORD'. How does Jonah's experience here illustrate this truth?

Day 5 Read Jonah 3:1-3

1. What did God want Jonah to do?

2. This time, what was Jonah's response?

3. Write down all that you know about Nineveh from these 3 verses:

Day 6 Read Jonah 3:4-5

1. What's the message of Jonah to the people of Nineveh?

2. How did the people of Nineveh respond to Jonah's message?

3. (a) Have you ever seen such a response to the preaching of God's Word?

(b) How do you account for such a response?

Day 7 Read Jonah 3:6-9

1. What was the king's response to Jonah's message?

2. What did he command the people to do?

3. What do you think is the meaning of the king's words in verse 9?

Week 3

[23rd – 29th October 2011]

Memory Verse: **Jonah 4:2d ~ *You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm.***

Day 1 Read Jonah 3:10

1. How did God respond to the repentance of Nineveh?

2. (a) Does this make Jonah a false prophet, since he has proclaimed, "*Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown*"?

- (b) Read Jeremiah 18:7-10. Does this passage help you answer the question above?

3. Write down one thing you've learnt about God from Jonah 3:

Day 2 Read Jonah 4:1-4

1. Why was Jonah so angry? With whom was he angry?

2. How does the anger of Jonah here explain the actions of Jonah in 1:3?

3. (a) What is Jonah asking for in 4:3?

(b) Have you ever asked for/sought the same thing?

(c) What is God's response?

Day 3 Read Jonah 4:5-9

1. After his 1st round of conversation with God (v1-4), where did Jonah go and what did he do? What was he seeking to achieve?

2. What did God do?

V6:

V7:

V8:

3. What do you think God is seeking to teach Jonah from this 'plant & sun' incident?

Day 4 Read Jonah 4:10-11

1. "*Who cannot discern between their right hand and their left*" --- who are they?
2. What is God seeking to do with Jonah here?
3. What is the response of Jonah? Why do you think this is how the book of Jonah ended?

Day 5 Re-read Jonah 4 and review the lessons for the past 3 days.

1. Write down one thing you've learnt about God in Jonah 4:
2. Write down one thing you've learnt about the Christian Life in Jonah 4:

3. (a) Did you ever have problems with God's goodness towards others? (That is, you feel that God should not show any kindness to *that* person and you are very upset / bitter because God did!)

(b) Are you having this problem now?

(c) How does the book of Jonah help you deal with this problem?

Day 6 Review Jonah 1-4

1. What do you think is the message of this book?

2. What is the most important lesson you have learnt from this book? Write it down:

Go and share this lesson with another person:

Day 7 Jonah (Selected topics)

1. Read Jonah 1:3.

Reflect: *Jonah was disobeying God right here and yet his path was so smooth.*

Lesson:

2. Read: Jonah 4:1 and Luke 15:10

Reflect: *Sharp contrast in Jonah's response and heaven's response.*

Lesson:

3. The book of Jonah used the phrase 'God prepared' 4 times. Can you locate them?

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(iv)

What is the lesson here?

Week 4

[30th October – 5th November 2011]

TITUS

Introduction

Author and Recipient

Paul wrote this epistle, as stated in the salutation (1:1). He wrote it to Titus whom he called "*a true son in our common faith*" (1:4). Titus was a Gentile by birth (Galatians 2:3). He accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem during the controversy over circumcision around AD 50 (Acts 15:1-2, Galatians 2:1-5). We next find Titus mentioned in 2 Corinthians 2:12-13, 7:5-7, 13-15 – he was sent to Corinth to find out how the Corinthians were faring spiritually and if they had responded positively to Paul's admonition; he was also the one who took the letter of 2 Corinthians to the church @ Corinth. From Titus 1:5, we learnt that Titus was left on the island of Crete to

help sort out the situation there. He was then asked to go to Nicopolis to meet Paul (Titus 3:12). Finally, we read that he has gone to Dalmatia (2 Timothy 4:10) during the last days of Paul's earthly life. It is believed that Paul was executed around AD 64/65.

Time and Place of Writing

When did Paul write this epistle to Titus? Before we attempt to answer the question, we must first re-construct the likely time-line of Paul's final years:

- Paul was released from his house arrest in Rome (28:30-31).
- After he was freed, Paul visited Ephesus, left Timothy there to supervise the churches, and went on to Macedonia in northern Greece. From there he wrote I Timothy (I Timothy 1:3).
- He also visited Crete, left Titus there to supervise the churches and went to Nicopolis in Achaia in southern Greece (Titus 3:12)
- He visited Troas (2 Timothy 4:13) where he was suddenly arrested, taken to Rome and sentenced to death
- From Rome, he wrote 2 Timothy

The date of Titus must be sometime after Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment (AD 61-62) and shortly before his re-arrest and final imprisonment. Further, some time must be allowed for him to return to Asia Minor, evangelize with Titus on Crete, and winter in Nicopolis. Since it is believed that Paul was executed around AD 64/65, therefore this letter to Titus should be dated no earlier than AD 63.

Purpose and Theme of the Epistle

This epistle is written to a young preacher assigned a difficult task of stabilizing the churches in Crete and to help them close the gap between doctrine and practice in their daily life. Among the things Titus must give attention to include appointing qualified elders (1:5-9), teach them things proper for sound doctrine (2:1) and exhort the brethren to be zealous for good works (2:14, 3:1, 8, 14).

Titus 3:8 could be viewed as the key verse of this epistle: *This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.*

Hence, the theme of Titus could be: ***Maintain good works!***

Memory Verse: Titus 1:2 ~ *God, who cannot lie*

Day 1 Read the Introduction to Titus

1. (a) Write down everything you know about Titus from the Bible:

(b) How long did Titus know and serve together with Paul?

2. What is the theme of this epistle to Titus?

3. What are some of the things Paul wants Titus to give attention to while supervising the churches @ Crete?

Day 2 Read Titus 1:1-3

1. Who is Paul? How does he introduce himself?

2. What can we learn about God from these 3 verses?

3. (a) What has God manifested in due time?

(b) How does He manifest it?

Day 3 Read Titus 1:4

1. Who is Titus?

2. What is (a) grace, (b) mercy and (c) peace?

3. (a) From whom come grace, mercy and peace?

(b) What is the significance of this?

Day 4 Read Titus 1:5-9

1. Who left who in Crete? Why?

2. (a) How should an elder be like?

Negatively

Positively

(b) Why?

Day 5 Read Titus 1:10-16

1. Whose mouths must be stopped, and why?
2. Why do these men teach falsehoods?
3. (a) What did the Cretans' own prophet say about them?

(b) What did Paul tell Titus to do in that regard?

Day 6 Re-read Titus 1:10-16

1. What do you think is the meaning of verse 15?

2. How did Paul describe the false teachers?
3. What do you think is the connection between this section (v10-16) and the previous (v5-9)?

Day 7 Review Titus 1

1. What have you learnt about God in Titus 1?
2. What lessons about the Christian Life can we learn from Titus 1?

Week 5

[6th November – 12th November 2011]

Memory Verse: Titus 2:11 ~ *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.*

Day 1 Read Titus 2:1-8

1. How should older men behave?
2. How should older women behave?

3. How should younger women behave?

4. How should younger men behave?

Day 2 Read Titus 2:4-5

1. (a) Verse 4a says that older women should teach younger women the things mentioned in verses 4b-5. Do you see this happening in Shalom Church today?

(b) How can this become a regular feature of the life of Shalom Church?

2. (a) Why, do you think, “older men teaching younger men” is missing in Paul’s instructions here?

(b) Is this also a needed regular feature of the life of Shalom Church?

Day 3 Read Titus 2:1-10

1. How should servants behave? (V9-10)

2. Why should older men, older women, younger women, younger men and servants behave in the way outlined in these 10 verses?

Verse 5:

Verse 8:

Verse 10:

3. How often do these reasons motivate you to live a holy life?

Day 4 Read Titus 2:11-12

1. What has the grace of God brought? To whom?
2. What does the grace of God teach us to deny?
3. How should we live, as taught by the grace of God?
4. These 2 verses add to the answer given in Day 3 Question 2. How?

Day 5 Read Titus 2:13-14

1. As we live soberly, righteously and godly in this present age, what else should be we doing (v13)?

2. (a) Who is our “great God and Savior”?

(b) What did He do for us?

(c) Why did He do it?

Day 6 Read Titus 2:15

1. What is Titus to do?

2. Why do you think is Titus called to do this?
[Look back to Titus 1 for some answers]

3. “*Let no one despise you*”, says Paul to Titus. Why do you think Paul said this?

Day 7 Review Titus 2

1. What have you learnt about God in Titus 2?
2. What lessons about the Christian Life have you learnt from Titus 2?

Week 6

[13th November – 19th November 2011]

Memory Verse: Titus 3:8 ~ *This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.*

Day 1 Read Titus 3:1-3

1. Who is the “them”?
2. What things must the “them” do?
3. What was once true for the “we ourselves”?
4. Paul intended to set up a contrast between the conduct commanded in v1-2 and the behavior described in v3. What do you think is the purpose of this contrast?

Day 2 Read Titus 3:4-7

1. By what were we saved?

2. What is the washing of regeneration?

3. What is the renewing of the Holy Spirit?

4. What was shed on us abundantly through Christ Jesus?

5. Are these things true of you today?

Day 3 Read Titus 3:7-8

1. (a) By what are we justified?

(b) What have we become after we have been justified?

(c) Is verse 7 true of you today?

2. What does Paul want Titus to affirm constantly?

3. What do you think the 'good works' in verse 8 refer to?

Day 4 Re-read Titus 3:1-8

1. Why should Christians *'be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men'*?

2. (a) What is the 'faithful saying' referred to?

(b) Why is it termed 'faithful saying'?

Day 5 Read Titus 3:9-11

1. (a) What must we avoid?

(b) Why?

2. (a) Who must we reject?

(b) When must we do that?

(c) Why must we do that?

3. How do the 'avoid' and 'reject' commands tie in with the theme of this epistle?

Day 6 Read Titus 3:12-15

1. Who is mentioned in verses 12-13? Write down anything you know about each of them.

2. (a) What must we learn to do?

(b) Why?

(c) Are you already doing it?

3. (a) What is verse 15 about?

(b) Is this a feature of our local church life here?

If no, what can you do to help make it a feature?

Day 7 Review Titus 3 Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17

1. What have you learnt about God in Titus 3?
2. How does Titus 3 equip you to do every good work in your service to Christ?
3. What is the most important lesson you have learnt from this book?

Write it down:

Go and share this lesson with another person:

Week 7

[20th November – 26th November 2011]

JUDE

Introduction

The author identifies himself in verse 1 as Jude. Who is Jude? The Greek word is '*Ioudas*' which can be translated as 'Judah' or 'Judas'. Besides Judah (the son of Jacob) mentioned in Genesis, there are five 'Jude/Judah/Judas' in the New Testament:

- i. Judas Isacriot, the one who betrays Jesus (Mark 3:19)
- ii. Judas of Galilee, an infamous revolutionary (Acts 5:37)
- iii. Judas the son of James, one of the 12 apostles (Luke 6:16)
- iv. Judas the prophet, also named Barsabas (Acts 15:22,27,32)
- v. Judas, half-brother of Jesus (Mark 6:3)

Since our author has said in verse 1 that he is the brother of James (whom we take to be the one mentioned in Galatians 1:19, Mark 6:3 and Acts 15:13), hence it is very likely that he is the half-brother of Jesus! We recall that during the earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, his brothers did not believe Him (John 7:5). But now that our Lord has risen from the dead and ascended into the heavens, it appears that at least two of his half-brothers have believed – James and Jude. In fact, both of them went on to be leaders of the Christian Church.

The epistle of Jude is one of the shorter New Testament epistles. “*Brief but punchy*” is how some would describe it. The outline of this epistle is very straightforward:

A Christian Letter	vv1-2
Intruders detected	vv3-4
God will judge!	vv5-16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Old Testament Examples • One Familiar Example • Three Further Old Testament Examples • One Further Familiar Example 	
You must act!	vv17-23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be Reminded • Be Responsible <li style="padding-left: 20px;">For Yourself <li style="padding-left: 20px;">For Others 	
Look at our Great Saviour!!	vv24-25

Why did Jude write this epistle? The occasion is clearly stated in verse 4, namely false teachers have secretly crept in among believers. Hence, though he wanted to write about something pleasant – *our common salvation*, yet he now has to write about something that is less pleasant – *expose the false teachers and their errors*. The aim of Jude in doing this is not “attack for the sake of attack” but (i) the well-being of the believers (vv20-23) and (ii) the glory of our God (vv24-25).

Memory Verse: **Jude 20-21 ~ *But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.***

Day 1 Read the Introduction to Jude

1. What have you learnt from the Introduction?

2. Do you agree that Jude is the half-brother of Jesus? Explain.

Day 2 Read Jude 1-2

1. (a) Who is the author?

(b) How does he describe himself?

(c) Assuming that he is the half-brother of Jesus, why does he describe himself in the way that he did in the opening sentence?

2. (a) How are the recipients of this epistle described?

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(b) Can the same 3 words be used of you?

3. (a) Why do you think 'mercy, peace and love' are so vital to our Christian Life?

(b) Why do you think Jude prays that these 3 might be 'multiplied' to his readers?

Day 3 Read Jude 3-4

1. (a) What does Jude want his readers to do? (V3) Why? (V4)

2. (a) What does '*contend for the faith*' mean? What does it involve?

(b) Is there a contradiction between being a gracious Christian and contending earnestly for the faith?

3. What else did Jude say about 'the faith'?

4. How are the intruders described? Have you met such people?

5. How does one turn the grace of God into lewdness?

Day 4 Read Jude 5-8

The focus of these 4 verses is on the group of people mentioned in verse 8. However, Jude begins by drawing his readers' attention to three Old Testament examples of God's judgment in verses 5-7:

Example #1: Verse 5

1. Who are they?

2. What did the Lord do for them initially?

3. What did the Lord do to them afterwards?

Why?

Day 5 Re-read Jude 5-8

1. Example #2: Verse 6

(a) Who are they?

(b) What did they do?

(c) What did the Lord do?

2. Example #3: Verse 7

(a) Who are they?

(b) What did they do?

(c) What did the Lord do?

Day 6 Re-read Jude 5-8

1. Recall the 3 examples in verses 5-7. What, do you think, is the purpose of citing them?

2. The word '*likewise*' in verse 8 links the people mentioned here to those in verses 5-7. In other words, they are guilty of the same sin as those in the 3 examples. Write down how Jude called and described these men:

(a)

(c)

(b)

(d)

The implication is that these men will share in the destiny of their 'spiritual ancestors'.

Day 7 Read Jude 9-10

This story of Michael and the devil having a dispute over the body of Moses is taken by a book called *The Assumption of Moses* -- a story that is familiar to Jude's reader. We must not be overly troubled that Jude quoted from a non-Biblical book. He is not the first person to have done that. Moses did it in Numbers 21:14 and Paul also did in Acts 17:28. What we need to note is that while Jude quotes from *The Assumption of Moses*, he at no time said or hinted that he is quoting Scripture. "The Lord said" or "The Spirit said" is expressly missing. Hence, it is clear that he is just quoting a human author to make his point.

1. (a) Who is Michael?

(b) What dispute did he have with the devil?

(c) How did he conduct himself in the dispute?

2. Name two distinctive hallmarks of the false teachers (v10):

(a)

(b)

3. The word 'but' at the beginning of verse 10 is meant to set up a contrast between Michael in verse 9 and the false teachers in verse 10. What is the contrast?

Memory Verse: *Jude 20-21 ~ Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.*

Day 1 Read Jude 11-13

1. Three names are mentioned in verse 11. Who are they, what significant events were they involved, and what were their sins?

(a)

(b)

(c)

2. (a) How does Jude describe them?

(b) What is Jude seeking to convey via these descriptions?

(c) According to Jude, what is their final destiny?

(d) What is Jude seeking to convey through these 3 verses?

Day 2 Read Jude 14-16

1. What is the Lord going to do?

2. What areas in the life of the ungodly will be subjected to His judgment?

3. Verse 16 gives us a further description of the false teachers. Write them down:

(a)

(d)

(b)

(e)

(c)

(f)

4. What is the message of Jude in these 3 verses?

Day 3 Read Jude 17-19

1. What must we remember?

2. What's the content of the message that we are to remember?

3. Once again, the mockers are described. Write them down:
 - (a)

 - (b)

 - (c)

4. Why do you think does Jude keep describing the false teachers using different words?

Day 4 Read Jude 20-23

1. What should we do for ourselves?
 - (a)

 - (b)
 - (c)

 - (d)

2. What do each of them mean?

3. Have you been doing them?

Day 5 Re-read Jude 20-23

1. What should we do for others?

(a)

(b)

2. Have you been doing them?

3. *'hating even the garment defiled by the flesh'* – what does it mean?

Day 6 Read Jude 24-25

1. What is God able to do?

2. Why, do you think, Jude ends his epistle with these words?

3. Take some time to meditate on what Jude says about God in verse 25.

Day 7 Review Jude 1-24 Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17

2 Timothy 3:16-17 say: *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

The word 'doctrine' means 'teaching' while the word 'reproof' means 'refuting error'. Together, they tell us that the Scripture is profitable to *teach us what to believe and to refute any erroneous beliefs that we might have*. The focus is on '*what we believe*'.

The word 'correction' means 'restore' and while 'instruction in righteousness' means 'training, nurturing, discipline and chastisement'. Together, they focus on '*how we must live*'. Hence, Scripture is useful to correct our wrong conduct and train us to behave in the right way.

1. What 'doctrine and reproof' has Jude given you?

2. What 'correction and training' have you received from Jude?

3. What is the most important lesson you have learnt from Jude? Write it down:

Go and share this lesson with another person:

ADDITIONAL NOTES / QUESTIONS