

Their Audacity (v.10)

VERSE 10 But these men revile the things which they do not understand (δὲ οὗτοι βλασφημοῦσιν ὅσα μὲν οὐκ οἶδασιν [conj. + pro.demonstr.n.m.p., *houtos, this*; “these men” + pres.act.ind.3p., *blasphemeo, slander, revile* + pro.correlative.acc.nt.p., ὅσος *hosos, as much as*; “the things” + neg.w/pf.act.ind.3.p., *oida, know, understand, recognize*]); **and the things which they know by instinct** (δὲ ὅσα ἐπίστανται φυσικῶς [conj. + pro.correlative.acc.nt.p., ὅσος, *hosos, as much as*; “the things” + pres.dep.ind.3.p., ἐπίσταμαι, *epistamai, understand, comprehend*; “they know” + adv., *phusikos, by instinct* {cp. noun φυσικός *phusikos, instinctive* at Rom.1:26,27 & 2Pet.2:12}), **like unreasoning animals** (ὡς τὰ ἄλογα ζῶα [adv. *hos, like* + def.art.w/adj.n.nt.p., ἄλογος, *alogos, not able to reason*; 3x: Acts.25:27; 2Pet.2:12; Jude.10]), **by these things they are destroyed** (ἐν τούτοις φθείρονται [prep.w/pro.demonstr.instr.nt.p., *houtos* + pres.pass.ind.3.p., φθείρω, *phtheiro, ruin, destroy*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 10

1. In contrast to the august archangel who, out of respect, surrenders His case to God, “these men/types bad-mouth the things that they do not understand.”
2. After his brief digression, Jude returns to verse 8 and draws our attention to the root of their *modus operandi*.
3. These being first the carnal and the other two being their spiritual presumption (cf. v.8).
4. He begins with the contemptuous “these men” which he takes up from v.8a.
5. The verb “revile” purposely picks up the “railing” of v.9 and the “revile” of v.8.
6. Here the object of the verb (*blasphemo*) is “the things” (correlative pronoun [ὅσα]) of divine viewpoint (BD).
7. It is not the result of having any true understanding that the liberal scoffers make their attacks upon the faith, but is the result of their negative volition and intense hatred of all that falls under the banner of sound teaching.
8. It is not the result of their having any superior knowledge (is there a veiled attack here upon ‘Gnostic’ pretensions?); on the contrary, it is their *modus operandi* to assault “the things they do not understand”.
9. As he will touch on in v.19, they do not have God the Holy Spirit.
10. An illuminating passage is provided in 1Cor.2:7-17, especially v.10 and 15f, where Paul declares that the natural man (i.e., unbeliever) is incapable of understanding spiritual matters.
11. For all their human intelligence and academic training, these men have no true insight into spiritual things.
12. They speak out against original creation, verbal plenary inspiration, the flood, the incarnation, substitutionary atonement, resurrection, and prophetic truth, not to mention the moral code of Scripture.

13. They dream-up all sorts of alternative explanations for these things, expounding upon them with high-sounding terms.
14. Theirs is “falsely called” knowledge (1Tim.6:20) which keeps them from ever arriving at *epignosis* truth (2Tim.3:7).
15. In the Greek of this verse we have the *men...de* construction differentiating that which “they do not understand” from that, which as natural men, “they know by instinct”.
16. Paul taught that there is a universal, moral law written in the hearts of all mankind (Rom.2:14-15; cp. vv.26-27).
17. Otherwise pagan cultures could not have developed advanced moral and criminal codes.
18. This distinguishes mankind from the lower creation.
19. Jude employs the adverb (φυσικῶς), while Paul uses the cognate noun (φύσει; Rom.1:26; 2:14).
20. The corresponding adjective is used in Rom.1:26 and 27 and 2Pet.2:12.
21. Paul uses the adjective to teach that the natural order clearly teaches that sex is for partners of the opposite sex.
22. In Corinthians he teaches that it is against the natural order of things for a male to wear long hair (1Cor.11:14).
23. However, in 2Pet.2:12 the adjective is used of animals (“creatures of instinct”) who are governed by programmed instincts, but lack the reasoning skills of humans.
24. This verse is of interest, in that it is the parallel to the verse under consideration.
25. In other words, it is used differently here than it is in 2Pet.2.
26. The further indictment against the moral and spiritual reprobates is that they do not follow what they instinctively know to be true!
27. They pontificate on what they do not know and turn away from what they do know.
28. At least animals follow their limited natural instincts, which is more than can be said for the theological and moral liberals.
29. In the end, they act just like “unreasoning animals” who are being fattened for slaughter (2Pet.2:12).
30. Jude makes explicit what Peter leaves to our deductive reasoning ability.
31. And so, like dumb animals, they all will be destroyed.
32. The words “by these things” refers to the very principles of God’s word and God’s natural order that could deliver them from judgment.
33. “These things” refers to the doctrines that a sovereign and all-mighty God holds all men to.
34. Being negative and extremely hostile toward God and His moral order, they live in a dream world.
35. Physically, they are immoral; intellectually, they are arrogant; and spiritually, they are under the blackout of the soul.
36. ‘Moral relativity’ and ‘progressive thinking’ are their undoing.
37. The judgment of God will catch up with them individually and collectively.
38. The present day counterparts face the wrath of the day of the Lord.
39. The application of this to positive volition is to adhere to moral integrity, intellectual humility/honesty, and spiritual sensitivity.

They Emulate Three Notorious Individuals (v.11)

VERSE 11 Woe to them (οὐαὶ αὐτοῖς [*part. of interjection, ouai, denotes the pain that will come upon the culprit + pro.dat.m.p., autos*])! **For they have gone the way of Cain** (ὅτι ἐπορεύθησαν τῇ ὁδῷ τοῦ Κάϊν [*conj., hoti + aor.pass.ind.3.p., πορεύομαι, poreuomai, go, journey + def.art.w/loc.f.s., hodos, way + def.art.w/gen.m.s.indecl., Cain*]), **and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam** (καὶ μισθοῦ ἐξεχύθησαν τῇ πλάνῃ τοῦ Βαλαάμ [*conj. + gen.m.s., misthos, wage, pay + aor.pass.ind.3.p., ἐκχέω, ekcheo, pour out, shed (blood), give oneself over to; “rushed headlong” + def.art.w/dat.f.s., plane, error + def.art.w/gen.m.s.indecl., Balaam*]), **and perished in the rebellion of Korah** (καὶ ἀπόλοντο τῇ ἀντιλογίᾳ τοῦ Κόρε [*conj. + aor.mid.ind.3.p., apollumi, perish + def.art.w/loc.f.s., ἀντιλογία, antilogia, dispute, rebellion error + def.art.w/gen.m.s.indecl., Korah*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 11

1. Once again, Jude turns to the OT for examples with which to compare the false teachers, and selects three notorious individuals whose wickedness brought upon them disaster.
2. A similar fate awaits their present-day counterparts.
3. “Woe to them!”, he exclaims, using an imprecation of doom which is found frequently in the OT, especially in the prophets and in the Gospels and the book of Revelation (twice in the epistles, here and in 1Cor.9:16).
4. First, “they have gone (‘travel’/‘journey’/‘proceed’) in the way of Cain”, which is a reference to their *modus vivendi* (i.e., manner of life).
5. What is prominent in most peoples’ mind about Cain is that he murdered his brother, being the first person to commit this crime.
6. Cain was an unrepentant unbeliever (1Jn.3:12).
7. Cain, the firstborn of Adam and Eve (Gen.4:1), was not a man of faith, being the very opposite (Heb.11:4).
8. Cain was a great lover of self, the rebel against God who relies on his own resources, the instructor and founder of a society which gave itself over to godlessness, materialism and sensuality (Gen.4:16,17,24).
9. This is “the way of Cain”.
10. Cain corrupted others and this is the point of Jude’s comparison with the heretics.
11. Secondly, they are compared to Balaam, the Gentile prophet of God.
12. Balaam was solicited by the king of Moab to curse Israel for a fee (Josh.24:9-10).
13. He was frustrated on all three attempts (Deut.23:4,5; Neh.13:2).
14. He was exceedingly avaricious, which fact stands out clearly from the narrative of Num.22-24.
15. When Balaam failed in collecting the fee, he resorted to another device which, in the end, cost him his life (Num.31:16; cp. Rev.2:14).
16. “The error of Balaam” refers to his lust for money (2Pet.2:15).
17. He put money above devotion to the will of God.
18. His love of money cost him his life (SUD), as he was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

19. His death is recorded in Num.31:8 (cp. Josh.13:22).
20. Balaam was a believer (communicator) who let his STA lust grid subvert his love for the truth.
21. He was not an unbeliever, as is commonly supposed by the commentators.
22. He was not anti-Semitic, per se.
23. He attached himself to those who were hostile to the chosen people, due to his lust for money.
24. Like Lot, he associated himself with those he otherwise detested to gratify his materialism lust.
25. Lust for money subverted what positive volition he had.
26. Like Balaam, the false teachers targeted in 2Peter and Jude are driven by monetary lust.
27. This, along with sex lust and rebellion, is prevalent among the liberal heretics (cf. 2Pet.2:3, 14,15).
28. These types are in it for the monetary gain.
29. Truth is not the preeminent, rather their own advancement within the organizations of which they are a part.
30. Liberalism pays well.
31. Balaam is the prototype of unprincipled men who will not shrink from intellectual dishonesty for monetary gain and who, like him, are doomed to ignominy.
32. So Balaam's "error" is that they are victims of the weakness which seduced him.
33. These teachers seek to make a handsome profit from their innovative propaganda.
34. This is a prominent and pervasive trend among false teachers and corrupt academics (cp. 2Cor.2:17; cp. 2Tim.3:2,3; 1Pet.5:2).
35. Thirdly, they "have perished in the rebellion of Korah".
36. The reference is to Korah, the son of Izhar, who along with Dathan and Abiram and two hundred and fifty members of the congregation, mutinied against Moses' and Aaron's leadership and sought to gain a share in the priesthood themselves (Num.16:1-35).
37. Korah, a great-grandson of Levi and younger contemporary of Moses, was joined by Dathan, Abiram, On (all Reubenites), and 250 men of leaders among the tribes of Israel.
38. They charged that Moses and Aaron took too much authority for themselves.
39. They claimed that Moses and Aaron had promoted themselves (Num.16:3).
40. Korah, a member of the priesthood, was not content with his place within that priesthood but wanted to form a new priesthood made up of men from all the tribes, a clear violation of the Law.
41. According to the Biblical narrative (Num.16:31-35), an unprecedented and terrible judgment befell them: the earth opened and swallowed up Korah, Dathan and Abiram and their households alive, while fire from heaven consumed the 250 agitators.
42. The false teachers, like Korah, clearly defy the duly constituted leadership of the church, refusing to accept their authority and setting themselves up in opposition.
43. The Targums specifically call Korah a "schismatic".
44. Insubordination of this sort was not unknown in the early church.
45. It lay behind the injunctions of 1Tim.1:20; 2Tim.3:1-9; Titus.1:10-11; 3:10-11.
46. It is represented by the revolt of Diotrephes (3Jn.9-10) and by the malcontents to whom Clement of Rome wrote his letter.
47. False teachers refuse to submit themselves to the RCC and the scriptures that define it.

48. In this verse we have three aorist indicatives: “have gone”, “have rushed”, and “have perished”.
49. All three verbs relate to the long history of these types who are characterized by self-will, greed and divine retribution.
50. Individually, they face the SUD and collectively, their last days counterparts will face the wrath of the tribulation.
51. So, in these three pen-pictures from the OT we see three leading characteristics of the false teachers.
52. Like Cain, they are self-centered and devoid of true love.
53. Like Balaam, they are prepared, in return, for gain to teach others to violate the truth and righteousness of God’s word.
54. Like Korah, they are reckless with the ordinances of God and insubordinate to established authority.
55. It is not without significance for Jude’s purpose that each of the three OT characters taught others to sin, and each met with ruin.
56. It is equally obvious that these are the three major characteristics of second century Gnosticism.

Five-Fold Designation (vv.12-13)

VERSE 12 **These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts** (οἱ σπιλάδες ἐν ταῖς ἀγάπαις ὑμῶν [*pro.demonstr.n.m.p. houtos, this + pres.act.ind.3.p., eimi + def.art.w/n.f.p., σπιλάς, spilas, a rock over which the sea washes; metaph. of those who wreck the lives of others + prep.w/def.art.w/loc.f.p., ἀγάπη, agape, love, love feasts/fellowship meals; only used here in the NT*]) **when they feast with you without fear** (συνευωχούμενοι ἀφόβως [*pres.dep.pt.n.m.p., συνευωχέομαι, suneuchomai, feast together; here and 2Pet.2:13 + adv. aphobos, without fear*]), **caring for themselves** (ποιμαίνοντες ἑαυτοὺς [*pres.act.pt.n.m.p., ποιμαίνω poimaino, tend, shepherd, look after, rule (Rev.2:27); “caring” + pro.reflexive.acc.m.p., heautou; “for themselves”*]); **clouds without water** (νεφέλαι ἄνυδροι [*n.f.p., νεφέλη, nephele, cloud + adj.n.f.p., ἄνυδρος, anudros, without water*]), **carried along by winds** (παραφερόμεναι ὑπὸ ἀνέμων [*pres.pass.pt.n.f.p., παραφέρω, paraphero, blown along + prep.w/gen.m.p., ἄνεμος, anemos, wind*]); **autumn trees without fruit** (φθινοπωρινὰ δένδρα ἄκαρπα [*adj.n.nt.p., φθινοπωρινός, phthinoporinos, belonging to autumn; 1x + n.nt.p., δένδρον, dendron, tree + adj.n.nt.p., ἄκαρπος, akarpos, without fruit*]), **doubly dead, uprooted** (δὶς ἀποθανόντα ἐκριζωθέντα [*adv., dis, once and again; “doubly” + aor.act.pt.n.nt.p., ἀποθνήσκω, apothnesko, die + aor.pass.pt.n.nt.p., ἐκριζώω, ekrizoo, uproot; 4x: Matt.13:29; Mk.15:13; Lk.17:6; Jude.1:12*]);

VERSE 13 wild waves of the sea (ἄγρια κύματα θαλάσσης [*adj.n.nt.p.*, ἄγρια, *agria*, found in the open field or forest, wild; fig. of strong natural forces; of sea waves raging + *n.nt.p.*, *kuma*, wave + *gen.f.s.*, θάλασσα, *thalassa*, sea]), **casting up their own shame like foam** (ἐπαφρίζοντα τὰς ἑαυτῶν αἰσχύνας [*pres.act.pt.n.nt.p.*, ἐπαφρίζω, *epaphrizo*, foam up, cast up to the surface; fig. of living shamefully in an abandoned way; *1x* + *pro.reflexive.gen.nt.p.*, *heautou*, ones own + *def.art.w/acc.f.p.*, αἰσχύνη, *aischune*, shame]); **wandering stars** (πλανήται ἀστέρες [*adj.n.m.p.*, πλανήτης, *planetos*, wandering + *n.m.p.*, ἀστήρ, *aster*, star]), **for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever** (οἷς ὁ ζόφος τοῦ σκότους τετήρηται εἰς αἰῶνα [*pro.rel.dat.m.p.*, *hos*; “for whom” + *def.art.w/n.m.s.*, *zophos*, gloom + *def.art.w/gen.nt.s.*, *skotos*, darkness + *pf.pass.ind.3.p.*, *tereo*, hold in reserve + *prep.w/acc.m.s.*, *aion*, age, time; lit. “into the age” only here in the singular with the preposition; usually with the plural]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 12-13

1. At this juncture Jude leaves the OT examples, and in a series of five picturesque metaphors characterizes their spiritual condition.
2. For the designation “These men are” (οὗτοί ἐἴσιν) compare vv. 16 and 19 and 2Pet.2:17.
3. The demonstrative pronoun *houtos* (“these men”) is repeated from vv.8 and 10.
4. The pronoun is featured in this letter to designate a specific category of reversionism in a contemptuous way.
5. It is like our “these types.”
6. Jude proceeds with a series of five colorful designations of the libertines, all taken from nature (i.e., rocks, clouds, trees, waves and stars).
7. The first depends upon two possible meanings of the hapax feminine plural noun (σπιλάς) translated “hidden reefs”.
8. The cognate verb is σπιλόω (*spiloo*) and means “to stain”.
9. It is used metaphorically in the NT in Jam.3:6 and Jude.23.
10. There is a masculine noun (σπίλος) which means “spot”, occurring in Eph.5:27 and 2Pet.2:13.
11. In the parallel verse, 2Pet.2:13, the masculine noun is correctly translated in the English versions as “stains” or “spots”.
12. The immorality and antinomianism of the false teachers who had attached themselves to the fellowship of positive volition is likened to “stains” on a garment.
13. In Jude, the feminine plural noun is used with a masculine definite article (οἱ).
14. There is some doubt as to what *spilades* means, since it is a rare word, occurring only here in the NT.
15. In secular Greek, it means “rocks” or “hidden reefs”.
16. These libertines at the agape-feasts were like sunken “reefs”, waiting to shipwreck the faith and morals of the unwary.
17. The setting provided an atmosphere more conducive to catching believers off guard.

18. “Hidden reefs/rocks” gives an excellent sense, and goes well with the author’s penchant for vivid imagery drawn from nature.
19. The agape-feasts provided the setting for the Lord’s Table in the early church, and very soon proved liable to abuse through greed, disorder, drunkenness, and immorality (1Cor.11:20-22).
20. The parallel verse in 2Pet.2:13 makes mention of such abuses, which were encouraged by certain individuals.
21. The present deponent participle “feast together” (συνευωχέομαι) is used here and in 2Pet.2:13 where it is translated by the pejorative “carouse” (NAS).
22. Peter declares that these men took pleasure in tricking believers with respect to matters of morality and doctrine (“They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse [or better “feast”] with you.”).
23. They encouraged excess and challenged the faith of the adjusted/godly.
24. This is a most unusual assault upon the early church, in that the culprits were unbelievers (all the evidence in 2Peter and Jude so indicates).
25. Jude further characterizes them as men who were “without fear”.
26. They were devoid of the fear of God.
27. The reality is that such types have much to fear.
28. They did what they did without the slightest qualm.
29. They were extremely arrogant in their assault upon the faith of positive volition.
30. The next phrase, “caring for themselves”, contains the present participle of the verb “to shepherd” (*poimaino*) and the reflexive pronoun *heautou*.
31. This phrase underlines their total selfishness.
32. They “act the shepherd to themselves” recalls Ezek.34:8 “*the shepherds fed themselves, and have not fed the sheep*”.
33. Instead of looking after others, they have led them astray.
34. It is plain that they sought positions of leadership to further their agenda.
35. The next four images stand loosely in apposition to “the men who...feast with you”.
36. First, they are “clouds without water carried along by winds”.
37. The traveler in the Middle East is often exasperated by the heavy clouds that roll in and fail to bring rain, and only intensify the excessive heat.
38. The idea is that they are all show and no substance.
39. They have nothing to offer those who are foolish enough to listen to them.
40. They are like the man who talks big of presents he never bestows (Prov.25:14).
41. Here is a graphic example of the uselessness of teaching that is supposedly “advanced” and “enlightened”, but does not bring the hearer to maturity.
42. Second, the words, “carried along by winds”, refers to the false teachers who are here compared to “clouds”.
43. This refers to their penchant for new and novel concepts.
44. The phrase reminds us of Eph.4:14 and the words “carried about by every wind of doctrine”.
45. They are victims of their own instability, advocating things that are in conflict and sensational (tickle ears).
46. Thirdly, they are like “autumn trees” which ought to be loaded with fruit.
47. They personally have barren lives and are of no benefit to others who come in contact with them.
48. The adjective “autumn” (φθινοποριυός) occurs only here.

49. These are men who, based on their exposure to Christianity, should be loaded with good works (i.e., fruit).
50. These “trees” are “doubly dead” (δὶς ἀποθανόντα; adv. twice followed by the aor.pt. of *apothnesko*, “to die”), which corresponds to spiritual death and operational death.
51. Spiritual death is the condition of all humanity in the unsaved state (cp. Eph.2:1 “*And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,*” Also Col.2:13 “*And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,*” And Jn.5:24 “*Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.*”).
52. Operational death is seen in the words “faith without works is dead” of Jam.2:20,26.
53. The only works they had is “dead works”, the product of either spiritual death or temporal death (out of fellowship works as in Heb.9:14).
54. The adjective “uprooted” refers to their projected sin unto death.
55. All of these types have and will fall into the hands of a living God (Heb.10:31 “*It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of a living God.*”).
56. “Uprooted” refers to their removal from the historical scene.
57. The prophetic implication is that their kind will be removed permanently from the earthly kingdom (cf. Matt.15:13 “*But He answered and said, ‘Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.’*”).
58. This adjective occurs 4x: Matt.13:29; 15:13; Lk.17:6; Jude.12.
59. Fourthly, they are “wild waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame”, i.e., their own shameful deeds.
60. No doubt Isa.57:20 lies behind this image, as it conjures up the restlessness of the wicked and their continual output of filthy scum; such is found about the seashore when the tide recedes.
61. The word ἐπαφρίζω (*epaphrizo*) is very rare.
62. The poet Moschus uses it of the seaweed and other rubbish borne on the crest of the wave and deposited on the beach.
63. The previous figures present what these types do not produce, while this one presents what they do produce.
64. These individuals spread everywhere the debris of their corrupt reasoning.
65. The adjective “wild” (ἄγρια) is an antonym of “tame”.
66. It refers to their lack of self-control in the promotion of their liberal agenda.
67. The dirty scum they are constantly contaminating society with will, in the end, be to “their own shame”, when God unmasks evil and judges the perpetrators.
68. Jude’s fifth and final figure are of falling stars that have left their courses in the sky.
69. Jude is thinking of shooting stars, whose doom is the black darkness forever.
70. For this metaphor he goes to *1 Enoch* (18:14ff) where the angel shows Enoch “a prison for the stars of heaven”.
71. Later, he sees stars bound together, and is told “these are stars which have transgressed...and this is the prison of the angels in which they are kept for ever (21:2,6,10)”.
72. This suggests that Jude is thinking of the doom of the fallen angels of Genesis 6 (of which he had spoken in v.6), when he talks of the doom “reserved” for wandering “stars”.
73. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that he goes on to quote *Enoch* in the next verse.
74. They pretend to be lights, but have gone astray, and doom awaits them (there is probably a play on *planetai*, *wandering*, and *plane*, *error* of v.11).

75. The words, “the black darkness”, are literally, “the gloom of the darkness”.
76. It refers to the realm of the underworld, or sheol-hades, where all unbelievers end up.
77. The noun translated “black” (*zophos*) is used to describe the place of the sinning angels of Gen.6 in 2Pet.2:4 and Jude.6.
78. It is also used two times of the realm of these reversionistic unbelievers in 2Pet.2:17 and Jude.13.
79. The noun *zophos* means partial or complete darkness.
80. The underworld of judgment is a murky place.
81. The perfect passive indicative of *tereo* (to keep, guard, keep in reserve), translated “reserved”, is also found in connection with these people in 2Pet.2:17.
82. 2Pet.2:17 is parallel to Jude.12,13 (Peter and Jude used different metaphors).
83. Their end confirms the interpretation that these men are unbelievers masquerading as Christians.