

THE GROUPS OF JUDE 22-23: HOW MANY AND WHO?

by

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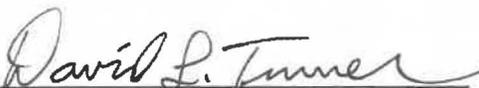
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The large number of variant readings in this passage combined with the extent of the variation in these readings presents the interpreter with some difficult problems to solve. One of these problems is to determine which reading is the correct reading of the original autograph. The second problem is to determine the identity of the groups of which Jude speaks in these verses.

When the principles of textual criticism are applied to this passage, they yield a possible solution to the problem of determining the correct reading. The external evidence involved is somewhat indecisive. It appears to support the type of reading containing three groups found in Sinaiticus or in Alexandrinus, but the early evidence for the reading containing two groups found in p⁷² or in Clement's writings must not be ignored. The internal evidence, on the other hand, is somewhat more decisive. The majority of this evidence supports the shorter reading containing two groups.

When the principles of exegesis are applied to this passage, the problem of the identity of the groups in these verses can be resolved. The background and contents of the Epistle of Jude reveal that this letter was written to correct the problem of the infiltration of unsaved false teachers into the church. These verses are Jude's instructions to his readers, telling them how to treat these false teachers. They are to win the savable and to pity the unsavable. A grammatical and lexical study of the verses shows that the participle διακρινομένων is of primary importance for the understanding of this passage, and that a misunderstanding of this word probably led to the great degree of variation in the passage. It has the meaning in this passage of "those being judged." A synthetical study of the passage brings to light some corresponding Old Testament passages, including Zechariah 3:1-5 and Amos 4:11. These passages help to illuminate the meaning of being snatched from the fire and of garments polluted by the flesh in Jude.

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Adviser

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- BAGD W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, Greek-English Lexicon of the NT
- BDF F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk, A Greek Grammar of the NT
- JTS Journal of Theological Studies
- p⁷² Bodmer papyri VII and VII
- TDNT G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (eds.), Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
- ZNW Zeitschrift fur die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Epistle of Jude, though small in size, carries with it a powerful message. It is a book about apostasy in the Church. Jude portrays in graphic language those who seek to destroy the church from within. He alerts his readers to the problem, and then instructs them in how to combat it. It is a remarkable little letter which is extremely relevant for today.

In spite of this fact, however, Jude seems to be a much neglected book. In doing research for this thesis, this writer found that there was a scarcity of good works dealing with it. Very few journal articles were found and only a relatively small number of commentaries. The reasons for this are not known with certainty, but one possible reason is that this book has a high number of "problems" associated with it. Perhaps many scholars are afraid to commit themselves, or maybe the solutions are not there to find. This writer does not believe that these motives are reason enough to neglect this great epistle.

One of the problems of this book involves verses twenty-two and twenty-three. This is a difficult passage because of the numerous textual variants associated with it, and because of the varied interpretations arising from these

textual variants. Two general types of variants are involved, with several lesser variations of each type. A shorter form of variant presents only two different categories or groups of people, while a longer form of variant presents three. The major problem of this passage is whether there are two groups in the original reading, or whether there are three. Only after this is resolved can the identity of the groups be determined.

This thesis has been an attempt to determine by means of the principles of textual criticism the reading which was most likely in the original autograph of these verses, as well as to discover by means of the principles of exegesis the identity of the groups involved. Although tentative conclusions have been reached, due to the difficulty of the evidence, dogmatism is not intended. It has been found that the reading καὶ οὓς μὲν ἐκ πυρὸς ἀρπάζετε, διακρινομένους δὲ ἔλεατε ἐν φόβῳ, μισοῦντες καὶ τὸν ἀπὸ τῆς σαρκὸς ἐσπιλωμένον χιτῶνα is most likely the reading found in the original. It has also been found that the two groups described in these verses are groups of false teachers who are active among Jude's readers. The first group is made up of those who are saveable and who will be snatched from the fire through the gospel. The second group consists of those false teachers who are to be pitied because their fate is sealed.

CHAPTER II

EXAMINATION OF THE TEXTUAL VARIANTS

The variants associated with this passage are quite numerous and diverse. For this reason, the task of examining them was looked upon with some degree of "fear and trepidation," not because of the great amount of work involved, but because there must have been a very good reason for all of these diverse forms. Usually the reason for so much diversity is that the passage is difficult to understand. It was with this in mind that the task was undertaken.

The Approach Taken

Much debate has arisen in the past concerning which manuscripts of the New Testament are true to the original autographs. The debate stems partly from the fact that several different types of text have been discerned by many. Each text-type has its own general characteristics which make it more or less desirable depending on which view the textual critic takes. One major view, defended by Wilbur N. Pickering¹ and others, is that the Byzantine text-type with its majority support is to be preferred. Others, including

¹Wilbur N. Pickering, The Identity of the New Testament Text (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers, 1977), p. 151.

Bruce M. Metzger¹ and D. A. Carson,² see the Byzantine text as an inferior one, and prefer the earlier readings of the minority text-types.

This writer prefers the latter view for several reasons. The lack of early witnesses for a Byzantine text is a main consideration. The argument set forth by Pickering that these manuscripts simply wore out from use or were destroyed after being copied remains unconvincing.³ Why would not the "poorer copies" which today are identified with other text-types have been destroyed as well? Though not all earlier manuscripts are more accurate than later ones, it seems best to follow the general principle that the farther removed a manuscript is from the original autograph, the more likely it is that mistakes have crept in, all other factors being equal.

Additional arguments for preferring the earlier text-types over the Byzantine text can be found in history, as pointed out by Carson.⁴ The Byzantine Empire, which was Greek-speaking, would naturally tend to proliferate manuscripts of the type of text which was used there, while

¹Bruce M. Metzger, The Text of the New Testament; Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 161.

²D. A. Carson, The King James Version Debate: A Plea for Realism (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), p. 43.

³Pickering, Identity of the New Testament Text, pp. 123-24.

⁴Carson, King James Version Debate, pp. 49-50.

other regions of the world, which preserved Greek only as an academic language, in later years would have far fewer Greek manuscripts of the text which they used. Thus a text-type such as the Byzantine, with a majority of witnesses supporting it, is not necessarily a better text because of that majority support. Associated with this is the fact that text-types seemed to solidify in the fourth century as the church became more institutionalized. This limited greatly the intermixing of manuscripts from different text-types and had the effect of regionalizing that text-type which came to be called Byzantine within the Byzantine Empire. It was not necessarily a superior text, but it was the one which the Byzantine church chose to proliferate.

It must be stated at this point that the dating and text-type classification of manuscripts are not the only criteria for determining correct textual variants. Many other factors are involved. It may be that these other factors would rule out certain readings of early manuscripts or of better text-types in favor of those readings of later manuscripts or text-types. Other external evidence must be considered, such as the geographical distribution of the witnesses and the genealogical relationship of the witness to the text-type.¹ In addition, a proper approach to textual criticism will include an examination of all of the internal evidence for or against a reading. The internal evidence

¹Metzger, Text of the New Testament, p. 209.

would include such things as scribal error or intentional corruption. The reader should refer to the works of Greenlee,¹ Metzger,² or Geisler and Nix³ for a more complete description of the criteria for deciding upon textual variants than is possible here.

The Variants Involved

An examination and comparison of the twenty-sixth edition of Eberhard Nestle's Novum Testamentum Graece⁴ and the third edition of the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament⁵ yields a large amount of textual variation in Jude twenty-two and twenty-three. The diversity of the readings can be seen in the following list of some of the major variant readings. Minor variant readings have been excluded from the list.

1. οὓς μὲν ἐλεᾶτε (ἐλέγχετε) διακρινομένους
οὓς δὲ σφίζετε ἐκ πυρὸς ἀρπάζοντες
οὓς δὲ ἐλεᾶτε ἐν φόβῳ
2. οὓς μὲν ἐλέγχετε διακρινομένους
οὓς δὲ σφίζετε ἐκ πυρὸς ἀρπάζοντες ἐν φόβῳ

¹J. Harold Greenlee, Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), pp. 63-68, 114-19.

²Metzger, Text of the New Testament, pp. 186-219.

³Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, A General Introduction to the Bible (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968), pp. 360-70.

⁴Eberhard Nestle, Novum Testamentum Graece, 26th ed., ed. Erwin Nestle and Kurt Aland (London: United Bible Societies, 1979), p. 612.

⁵Kurt Aland, et al., eds., The Greek New Testament, 3rd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1975), pp. 834-35.

3. οὓς μὲν ἔλεεῖτε διακρινόμενοι
οὓς δὲ ἐν φόβῳ σφίζετε ἐκ πυρὸς ἀρπάζοντες
4. οὓς μὲν ἐκ πυρὸς ἀρπάζετε (ἀρπάσατε)
διακρινομένους δὲ ἐλεᾶτε (ἐλεεῖτε) ἐν φόβῳ

All of the variants have been categorized into three divisions by the United Bible Society editors. Nestle's text adds no additional variants, but does give a few additional witnesses. It seems best to follow the divisions of the United Bible Society editors in order to simplify the task of examining the external evidence supporting each reading, which is done in the following section. All witnesses and dates cited there are taken from the United Bible Society edition unless otherwise noted. Here the variants are simply identified according to their divisions. The variants are divided into those which involve verse twenty-two, comprising the first group, and those which involve the first and second parts of verse twenty-three, which are the second and third groups respectively. Those words which do not vary in the two verses, such as the first three words of verse twenty-two and the last part of verse twenty-three, are left out in order to simplify the process.

The First Group of Variants

The first group of variants involves the verb and participle of verse twenty-two. Here the United Bible Society editors prefer, though with considerable doubt, the reading ἐλεᾶτε διακρινομένους. Two other variants have a considerable number of witnesses supporting them. One of these

is the reading ἐλέγχετε διακρινομένους in which only the verb differs from the first reading. The other reading is ἐλεεῖτε διακρινόμενοι, which differs in both verb and participle. Three other readings with only a single manuscript supporting them are listed. These are the readings ἐλέγχετε διακρινόμενοι, ἐλέγετε διακρινόμενοι, and ἐλεεῖτε διακρινομένῳ. One other variant reading supported by several witnesses omits the verb and transposes διακρινομένους so that it occurs in the second part of verse twenty-three. This variant would in effect permit only two groups of people in these two verses.

The Second Group of Variants

The second group of variants in these verses involves the verb, σφίζετε and participle, ἀρπάζοντες, and the word groupings associated with them in the first part of verse twenty-three. The United Bible Society editors chose, again with considerable doubt, the reading οὕς δὲ σφίζετε ἐκ πυρὸς ἀρπάζοντες, which is supported by a number of witnesses. Codex Sinaiticus supports this reading in a correction, but the original manuscript reads ἀρπάζετε instead of ἀρπάζοντες. Several other witnesses have the first reading, but add ἐν φόβῳ at the end. A large number of witnesses have the ἐν φόβῳ just before the σφίζετε of the first reading. Two variations of this last reading occur. One occurs when σφίζεται is substituted for σφίζετε in at least two manuscripts. The other occurs in a majority of the lectionaries

where the article τοῦ is added before πυρός. Three abbreviated readings also occur. Codex Vaticanus has the reading σφζετε ἐκ πυρός ἀρπάζοντες, which is identical to the first reading but without the οὐς δὲ. Several witnesses support the reading ἐκ πυρός ἀρπάζετε, and at least one witness supports the similar reading, ἐκ πυρός ἀρπάσατε. These latter two eliminate the first verb and change the participle to an imperative.

The Third Group of Variants

The third group of readings categorized by the United Bible Society editors involves the middle of verse twenty-three. The editors have chosen the reading οὐς δὲ ἐλεᾶτε ἐν φόβῳ, which is supported by a number of witnesses. Several similar readings occur with variation or substitution of the verb. The verbs used in these are ἐλεεῖτε, ἐλέγχετε and ἐλέγετε. A few manuscripts add θεοῦ to ἐν φόβῳ, and Jerome omits ἐν φόβῳ. Several witnesses support the reading διακρινομένους δὲ ἐλεᾶτε ἐν φόβῳ. This participle is transposed from verse twenty-two, according to the editors. A majority of the witnesses omit everything except the ἐν φόβῳ which would then be transposed to the first part of verse twenty-three. This option would in effect eliminate this group of people and thus permit only two groups.

The External Evidence

The number of different textual variants makes the task of examining the external evidence for them seem at

first formidable, but a closer examination reveals that several of the variants have very weak support. This fact simplifies the task considerably. A preliminary elimination of those variants from all three groups of variants seemed to be the best procedure to follow. A more concentrated examination of the evidence for the remaining variants then follows.

The Minor Variants

From the first group of variants, several can be eliminated because of weak support. The reading ἐλεεῖτε διακρινομένῳ, with the dative form of the participle, is listed with only the Greek minuscule 1505, dated 1084, supporting it. The readings ἐλέγχετε διακρινόμενοι, ἐλέγετε διακρινόμενοι, and ἐλέγετε διακρινομένους also are listed with only one Greek minuscule each, dated fourteenth, thirteenth and eleventh centuries respectively. Such a single manuscript with a late date would be a very poor basis for selecting any of these readings. Internal evidence examined later in this paper also rules out these variants.

From the second group of variants, two readings can be ruled out because of weak support. The Uncials 049 and 0142, dated ninth and tenth centuries, both substitute the verb σφάζεται for σφάζετε. Although two witnesses are better than one, an examination of their readings in Jude shows that they generally agree, except for the addition of ὑμᾶς by 0142 in Jude 5. This indicates that the two manuscripts are related and are probably perpetuating the same mistake.

The addition of the article to πρὸς by a majority of the lectionaries is also on weak ground as a reading, since such minor changes in lectionaries are common.¹

From the third group of variants also, several readings are poorly supported. Only two late witnesses add Θεοῦ to ἐν φόβῳ. This reading can also be eliminated on the basis of internal evidence as pointed out later. Only one twelfth century manuscript, the minuscule 2412, has the verb form ἐλέγετε. Jerome is cited as omitting ἐν φόβῳ by the United Bible Society editors, but no other witnesses are given for this reading. Therefore it would be highly questionable.

The remainder of the textual variants of these two verses have somewhat more external evidence in their favor. Each of the remaining variants in each group can now be examined in greater detail.

The First Group of Variants

The evidence for the first group

The reading ἐλεᾶτε διακρινομένους in verse twenty-two is supported by several good witnesses. Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus both contain this reading. These two manuscripts are generally recognized as the oldest extant uncial manuscripts of the New Testament. They are of very good quality. Greenlee classifies both as witnesses of the Alexandrian text-type.² Other witnesses containing this

¹Metzger, Text of the New Testament, p. 30.

²Greenlee, Introduction to Textual Criticism, p. 118.

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²Greenlee, Introduction to Textual Criticism, p. 118.

reading include a ninth century correction of Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, the eighth or ninth century uncial Ψ, the twelfth century minuscule 88, lectionary 680 dated the thirteenth century, and the Harkleian Syriac version which is dated in the early seventh century. This reading is dated back at least to the early fourth century.

The reading ἐλέγχετε διακρινομένους is supported by a larger number of witnesses than the first variant. It also has some early witnesses. Codex Alexandrinus and the original hand of Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, both fifth century manuscripts, support this reading. Alexandrinus is identified as a witness for the Alexandrian text-type except in the gospels, where it is Byzantine.¹ Kenyon gives good evidence that the manuscript originated from Egypt.² Ephraemi Rescriptus is also of the Alexandrian text-type according to Greenlee,³ but Kenyon classifies it as a mixed text.⁴ Its place of origin is not known. Several ancient versions also have this reading, including the Latin Vulgate, the Bohairic Coptic version and the Armenian version. The Vulgate was translated in the fourth century by Jerome. The Armenian version is dated in the fourth or fifth century.

¹ Ibid., pp. 117-18.

² Frederic G. Kenyon, Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d.), p. 75.

³ Greenlee, Introduction to Textual Criticism, p. 118.

⁴ Kenyon, Handbook to Textual Criticism, p. 88.

The originator of this version probably used both the Greek manuscripts and the Old Syriac version in its production.¹ The Old Syriac version may have originated very early² and generally agrees with the oldest manuscripts.³ Ephraem, who also supports this variant, supposedly used the Old Syriac version.⁴ Ephraem died in 378. The Bohairic Coptic version may have originated as early as the second century, though only much later manuscripts are extant.⁵ Two important minuscule manuscripts, 33 and 81, also support this reading. Dated ninth and eleventh centuries respectively, these manuscripts are regarded as descending from very ancient texts.⁶ Both are classified as Alexandrian. Several other lesser witnesses also support this reading. Its wide geographical acceptance is an important factor in its favor.

The reading ἐλεεῖτε διακρινόμενοι is supported by the Byzantine text-type, which includes a majority of the Greek manuscripts. It is supported by Codex Mosquensis, a ninth or tenth century manuscript which Geisler and Nix classify as Western,⁷ but which Greenlee classifies as Byzantine.⁸ Codex Angelicus, a ninth century manuscript generally classified as Byzantine, also supports this reading as does Codex

¹ Ibid., pp. 171-72.

² Ibid., p. 157.

³ Ibid., pp. 161-62.

⁴ Ibid. ⁵ Ibid., p. 183.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 132-34.

⁷ Geisler and Nix, Introduction to the Bible, p. 278.

⁸ Greenlee, Introduction to Textual Criticism, p. 118.

Porphyrianus, a ninth century manuscript generally classified as Alexandrian. A number of other, less important uncials and minuscules, dated from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries, are listed in support of this reading. The majority of lectionaries are also given as support.

The same group of witnesses which supports the last variant of this group, the one which omits the verb and transposes διακρινόμενος, also supports readings in the other two groups of variants which are uniquely different from the other variants. This phenomenon is difficult to explain, especially since most of the witnesses for this reading are early. The oldest known copy of Jude, found in p⁷², contains this reading. This document is generally a strong Alexandrian witness, but does not seem to be so in Jude as Sakae Kubo points out.¹ This can easily be seen because of the lack of agreement with the other Alexandrian witnesses. In this book p⁷² agrees more closely with the Old Latin and Philoxenian Syriac versions which also support this reading. This papyrus is dated in the third century by Metzger.² The Old Latin manuscript which supports this variant is an eleventh century document, but obviously has a more ancient tradition behind it. The Philoxenian Syriac version is dated in the early sixth century. The Sahidic Coptic

¹ Sakae Kubo, "Textual Relationships in Jude," in Studies in New Testament Language and Text, ed. by J. K. Elliott (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), p. 280.

² Metzger, Text of the New Testament, p. 40.

version, probably originating in the third century, also supports this reading. This is an Alexandrian witness in the Catholic Epistles according to Greenlee.¹ Three of the early Church Fathers support it as well. Clement of Alexandria died in 215, Orsisius is dated at 380 and Jerome died in 420. This is an impressive group of witnesses. The early dating proves one of two things. Either this variant is the reading of the original autograph of Jude, or else all of these witnesses are perpetuating a very early mistake which crept into the text.

Some conclusions for the first group

A comparison of the external evidence supporting each of these variants in verse twenty-two shows that, in general, the Byzantine witnesses support the reading ἐλεεῖτε διακρινόμενοι, while the witnesses for the Alexandrian text-type are divided among the three other major variant readings. Since there are no early witnesses supporting this Byzantine reading, it is probably not the correct reading. The last variant examined is supported by the earliest witnesses and there is, therefore, a good possibility that this could be the original reading based on the external evidence. However, since this reading is so much different from the other readings, judgment has been reserved until examination is made of the internal evidence.

¹Greenlee, Introduction to Textual Criticism, p. 118.

Of the other two readings, both are possible based on the external evidence, since both are supported by early witnesses. If there must be a choice between the two, this writer would choose the second reading ἐλέγχετε διακρινομένους. Even though Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, which support the first reading, are considered by many to be among the best manuscripts, some of the witnesses for the second reading are just as early, and they are more numerous as well. Also, there seems to be a wider geographical distribution of the witnesses supporting the second reading.

A choice between this second reading and the last is considerably more difficult. The last reading has the earliest witnesses, but a much greater number of both early and later witnesses support the second reading. This indicates that if the error is in the second variant, then that error occurred early and gained wide support. A choice between the two, though difficult on the basis of the external evidence, is not impossible since the differences can be accounted for by the internal evidence which is examined in a later section.

The Second Group of Variants

The evidence for the second group

The first variant of this group, οὓς δὲ σφίζετε ἐκ πυρός ἀρπάζοντες, is very convincingly supported. Its witnesses include all of the witnesses which support the first two variants of the first group, with a few exceptions. Those witnesses from that group which do not support this

variant include Vaticanus, Ephraemi Rescriptus, lectionary 680, the Harclean Syriac version and a few of the later Church Fathers. Several of its witnesses are dated in the fourth century. The original hand of Sinaiticus has this reading, except that an imperative is found in the place of the participle. A corrected reading of this manuscript has the participle, however. The internal evidence in a later section explains the original reading.

The second variant, οὓς δὲ σφίζετε ἐκ πυρὸς ἀρπάζοντες ἐν φόβῳ, is supported by the fifth century Ephraemi Rescriptus, the Harclean Syriac version and several later minuscule manuscripts. It is not nearly as well attested as the final variant. The Harclean version seems to be closely related to Ephraemi Rescriptus in Jude, and may have used it as a source for translation.

The third variant, οὓς δὲ ἐν φόβῳ σφίζετε ἐκ πυρὸς ἀρπάζοντες, is supported by most of the witnesses for the Byzantine text-type. The earliest witnesses are the ninth century uncials Codex Mosquensis, Codex Angelicus and Codex Porphyrianus. The lectionaries also support this reading with the addition of an article before πυρός, though several do not have the article.

The fourth variant, σφίζετε ἐκ πυρὸς ἀρπάζοντες, is listed with only the support of Vaticanus. Though this is an excellent manuscript, the lack of corroborating evidence weakens considerably the possibility of this being the reading found in the original autograph.

The last variant is found in two different forms. The first, ἐκ πυρὸς ἀρνάζεσθε, is supported by the versions and Fathers which supported the last variant of the first group, but with one addition. Nestle's text adds the support of Hieracus, who is dated at 302. The second form of this variant is supported by p⁷² which changes the present imperative verb to aorist imperative. The probability of a single parent manuscript for both readings is very high, but the evaluation of which reading that parent manuscript contained falls in the area of internal evidence. This variant is supported by the earliest witnesses.

Some conclusions for the second group

The determination of the best reading from this group of variants would follow the same lines as the choice in the first group. The Byzantine reading in this passage has no early support, and is, therefore, probably not the best reading. The Alexandrian text-type witnesses are divided along different lines from those of the first group, except for the witnesses supporting the last variant. These are the earliest and, therefore, are more likely to be accurate if all other factors are excluded. Based on the external evidence, the first variant of this group also seems to be an excellent reading for the same reasons that were given for the second variant of the first group.

The Third Group of Variants

The evidence for the third group

The first reading from this group, οὕς δὲ ἐλεᾶτε ἐν φόβῳ, is supported by all of the Alexandrian text-type witnesses which support the first two readings of the first group of variants, with the exception of Ephraemi Rescriptus and a few tenth and eleventh century minuscules and Church Fathers. These excluded witnesses divide their support between three of the other variants. Some of the witnesses supporting this variant are of very good quality.

The second variant, διακρινομένους δὲ ἐλεᾶτε ἐν φόβῳ, is supported by the group of early witnesses which supported the last variant in the other two groups. Here again Hieracus is added by the Nestle text in support of this reading. For this variant, however, both Jerome and p⁷² have forms which are different from that of the other witnesses. Jerome omits ἐν φόβῳ, while p⁷² substitutes ἐλεεῖτε for ἐλεᾶτε. The reasons for these differences are found in the examination of the internal evidence. The differences are not great, and therefore the witnesses all support the same basic variant.

The third variant, οὕς δὲ ἐλεεῖτε ἐν φόβῳ, is supported only by a few late minuscules of lesser importance. It most certainly cannot be said to be the best reading on the basis of external evidence.

The fourth variant, οὕς δὲ ἐλέγχετε ἐν φόβῳ, is of about the same quality as the third variant. It too is

supported by a few minuscules of lesser importance and by some of the later Church Fathers. Both of these variants would need excellent support from the internal evidence in order to overcome the poor external evidence.

The last variant listed, the one which omits οὐδὲ and the verb and transposes ἐν φόβῳ, is supported by most of the witnesses supporting the Byzantine text-type, as well as by several others, including Ephraemi Rescriptus, the Harclean Syriac version and most of the lectionaries. The fact that a manuscript as early as Ephraemi Rescriptus supports the last reading mentioned gives it somewhat more credence than those variants from the other two groups which are supported by the Byzantine text-type. However, the quality of Ephraemi Rescriptus as a witness is certainly poorer than the quality of some of the witnesses supporting other variants. Metzger is of the opinion that this manuscript was compounded from all the major text-types.¹

Some conclusions for the third group

Of the variants of this group, the first two are supported by the better witnesses. The choice between these two based on external evidence alone is extremely difficult, as was the situation with the other two groups. Both have early witnesses, though the second variant has a witness about one hundred years earlier than the first. The geographical distribution of the witnesses is greater for the

¹Metzger, Text of the New Testament, p. 49.

first variant, and it is also supported by many more witnesses. The problem with deciding between these two variants is basically the same as it was for the other two groups. The external evidence alone cannot be the deciding factor in determining which of these two better readings is the best reading.

Some Conclusions

Some general conclusions can be drawn from the external evidence just presented for the three groups of variants. The evidence has favored two types of readings in this passage. A longer type of reading supported by such witnesses as Alexandrinus and Sinaiticus is possible mainly because of the quality of the witnesses supporting it, but with other factors considered as well. A shorter type of reading supported by such witnesses as Clement and p⁷² is also possible based on the early dating of its witnesses, but also with other factors considered. A decision between these two readings could not be reached based on external evidence alone.

The Internal Evidence

The external evidence just examined is only one part of the total evidence used in deciding which textual variants are most likely the readings of the original autographs. The other part of the evidence is the internal evidence. This type of evidence is, by nature, more subjective. It must, therefore, be considered with caution. Nevertheless, it is a valuable tool for textual criticism. Since

the external evidence revealed two readings with greater support than the rest, this section is organized around those two readings.

Evidence for the Longer Reading

The principle of derived variants

One of the principles used in examining the internal evidence of variants is to choose the reading which best explains the other ones.¹ This principle could be called the principle of derived variants. It is probably one of the most important principles and is examined here first in relation to the longer reading.

The readings supported by the uncials Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus are very similar. The only differences are found in the imperative of verse twenty-two and the first participle of verse twenty-three. The difference in the participle, which the original hand of Sinaiticus has as an imperative, probably can be explained as a confusion with the ending of σφζετε. A corrector of Sinaiticus probably thought as much when he changed the imperative to the participle. The other difference is not as easy to explain. Sinaiticus has the imperative ἐλεατε in verse twenty-two, while Alexandrinus has the imperative ἐλέγγετε. Metzger suggests that ἐλέγγετε was "a scribal modification introduced in order to differentiate the statement from that in

¹Greenlee, Introduction to Textual Criticism, p. 115.

the clause οὐς δὲ ἐλεᾶτε in verse 23."¹ However, scribal modifications of such a drastic nature are relatively rare. It seems more likely to take ἐλέγχετε as the original reading of the two, as do Mayor² and Green.³ The other reading which was substituted for ἐλέγχετε would then be seen as a confusion of the ἐλεᾶτε of verse twenty-three. For all practical purposes, however, the two readings can be considered as one, as long as it is remembered that ἐλέγχετε is the original reading.

The rest of the variants of verse twenty-two can also be explained as variations of these two readings. The two manuscripts which contain the verb ἐλέγετε are certainly witnesses to an error of spelling in which the χ has dropped out of ἐλέγχετε. The confusion of the two variants which contain ἐλεεῖτε is understandable if these readings are based upon the variant containing ἐλεᾶτε. These two words are morphologically related and have about the same meaning.⁴ The difference in participles can easily be explained.

¹Bruce M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), p. 728.

²Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter (London: Macmillan and Company, 1907; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965), pp. cxc, cxci.

³Michael Green, The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude: An Introduction and Commentary in The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), p. 187.

⁴Ibid.

Metzger's suggestion, that the nominative case participle was introduced by copyists who wanted to conform it to the participles ἀπαύζοντες and μισοῦντες which follow,¹ is probably correct. The dative participle is probably just a mistake of verb/object agreement. The discussion of the relationship of the readings supported by p⁷² is more involved, and so is reserved for later consideration.

The variants of verse twenty-three contain similar errors in relation to the reading supported by Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus. The readings of Ephraemi Rescriptus and of the Byzantine consensus are similar in nature. Both readings drop the οὐς δὲ ἐλεᾶτε but keep the ἐν φόβῳ. The former reading simply allows the ἐν φόβῳ to remain where it is, but the latter reading places it before the σφίζετε, though the reason for this is not known. The verb ἐλεᾶτε, and consequently the οὐς δέ along with it, was probably dropped by a scribe who considered it to be a dittography of the ἐλεᾶτε which he found in some manuscripts at verse twenty-two. The reading supported by Vaticanus drops the first οὐς δέ of verse twenty-three, but agrees in all other ways with Sinaiticus. The omission is probably a case of haplography of the last syllable of the previous participle. The addition of Θεοῦ to ἐν φόβῳ by a couple of witnesses is explainable if this is the accidental, or otherwise, inclusion of a scribal marginal note into the text. The only remaining variant to be explained in verse twenty-three, besides that

¹Metzger, A Textual Commentary, p. 728.

supported by p⁷², contains the imperative, ἐλέγχετε, rather than ἐλεᾶτε. This reading could be a confusion resulting from the comparison of several differing sources, or it could simply be an accidental reversal of the verbs of verses twenty-two and twenty-three. This latter suggestion would assume that the readings supported by Alexandrinus are the original ones.

The explanation of how the shorter reading of p⁷² would have been derived from the longer reading of Alexandrinus is considerably more difficult to believe. The earlier form of the shorter reading seems to be the one supported by Clement and the early versions. This form contains the verbs ἀπαύζετε and ἐλεᾶτε found in p⁷². This earlier form of the reading could have arisen through a series of scribal errors or intentional changes. The original change would have been from the Alexandrinus reading to the Sinaiticus reading. From there, a scribe would have eliminated the first element because of the duplication of the ἐλεᾶτε, while retaining the participle and inserting it with the other ἐλεᾶτε in the third element. This change would also require a substitution of οὗς μὲν for the οὗς δέ of the second element, since it would now be the first element. Somewhere along the way, the οὗς of the third element dropped out, probably because of the -ους on the end of the participle. Further changes would also be necessary in what was originally the second element. Perhaps the same scribe, since he was free with the text anyway, or another one

thought that the $\sigma\phi\zeta\epsilon\tau\epsilon$ of this element was superfluous and decided to eliminate it. This would have required changing the participle of this element to an imperative. Or perhaps the participle was accidentally changed first because of confusion with the ending of $\sigma\phi\zeta\epsilon\tau\epsilon$. The form resulting from all of these changes would be the one supported by Clement. From this form, only two relatively minor changes are required to arrive at the p^{72} form.

The possibility of such changes occurring as are listed above is only very slight. Intentional scribal changes hardly ever resulted in a shorter text, unless there was some doctrinal reason behind it.¹ A doctrinal change does not appear to be involved here. Shorter readings also occasionally resulted from certain types of unintentional changes, such as homoeoteleuton and haplography. Those would be involved to an extent here, but they cannot account for all of the changes. The theory that the longer reading is original does not adequately account for the shorter reading based on the normal principles used for evaluating internal evidence.

The principle of characteristic style

One of the principles for evaluating internal evidence, cited by Greenlee² and others, does appear to support the original longer reading theory of this passage. Many

¹ Metzger, Text of the New Testament, p. 201.

² Greenlee, Introduction to Textual Criticism, p. 115.

commentators have pointed to "the author's predilection for arranging his material in groups of three,"¹ and have appealed to the principle that "the reading which is characteristic of the author is generally preferable."² This principle could be called the principle of characteristic style. Such groups of three are indeed common in Jude. However, Greenlee offers an appropriate caution with this principle when he says,

This principle cannot be adhered to too rigidly, as an author must be granted the privilege of using some words or forms only rarely. Indeed, a rare form may sometimes be original and the more common form may represent a scribe's attempt to regularize the author's style.³

If Greenlee's statement is correct, then this principle should not be relied upon for choosing a variant if it is the only one supporting that variant.

Evidence for the Shorter Reading

The principle of the shorter and harder readings

At least two of the other generally accepted principles for evaluating internal evidence give definite support to the theory that the reading supported by Clement, and indirectly by p⁷², is the original reading. One of these is that the shorter reading is generally preferable. The reason for this principle is that the scribe more often

¹Metzger, A Textual Commentary, p. 728.

²Greenlee, Introduction to Textual Criticism, p. 115.

³Ibid.

had a tendency to add to the text because of conflation, harmonization or other reasons.¹ The other principle is that the harder reading is preferable because scribes had a tendency to simplify the difficulties, either intentionally or unintentionally.² That the longer reading is a smoother, more refined reading can hardly be questioned.

The principle of derived variants

Since it has already been pointed out that the long reading is probably supported by Jude's characteristic style, though there may be considerable doubt about this, there remains only one further general principle to examine in relation to the shorter variant. If the evidence shows that the other readings could reasonably have developed from this one, then it can be said that a majority of the internal evidence supports the short reading.

J. N. Birdsall,³ and C. D. Osburn writing after him,⁴ have offered one explanation of how the other readings could have been derived from the reading found in p⁷². Birdsall suggests that the form οὓς μὲν ἔλεεῖτε διακρινομένους δὲ ἐκ πυρὸς ἀρπάσατε resulted from a reversal of the verbs of the p⁷² reading. Though there are no witnesses for such a reading, he suggests that the Byzantine reading with its

¹Ibid., pp. 114-15. ²Ibid., p. 115.

³J. Neville Birdsall, "The Text of Jude in p⁷²," JTS 14 (February 1963):397-99.

⁴C. D. Osburn, "Text of Jude 22-23," ZNW 63 (1972): 139-44.

subvariants is a possible descendant of it. He then suggests that the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus readings are confluations of these two forms. The additional οὐς after διακρινομένους in Sinaiticus would have been due to ditto-graphy. This suggestion is all the more probable since the resultant reading would be the expected one, and would produce a neatly balanced three-clause form. The absence of δέ in the second member of the Vaticanus reading is explained by Birdsall as either an accidental omission or as the result of "some continuing memory of the original two-member form."¹ The forms containing ἐλέγχετε and the variations of διακρινομένους are asserted by Birdsall to be variations of the conflate reading of Sinaiticus. Though it was stated in the arguments supporting the longer reading that ἐλέγχετε was probably the original reading, if Birdsall's theory is correct, then such would not be the case. Birdsall explains the readings containing σφίζετε . . . ἀρπάζοντες by postulating that this is simply an expansion of ἀρπάσατε. Such expansions of the text are quite common in various manuscripts, according to Metzger.² Osburn expands upon Birdsall's arguments with only minor variations.

The discussion of the details of how most of the variants could be derived from the Sinaiticus/Alexandrinus type of reading has already been given in the previous

¹Ibid., p. 398.

²Metzger, Text of the New Testament, pp. 203-05.

section. The intriguing part of Birdsall's argument is his theory of how the Sinaiticus form came about from the p⁷² form. The evidence for his proposed reading seems, on the surface, to be lacking. There would be no external evidence for it unless, of course, the Byzantine manuscripts are included. It is at least a possibility that the Byzantine readings are not a result of a late corruption of the longer readings, but are the descendants of much earlier forms. After all, is that not the contention of many of the Byzantine text-type supporters?

Even though the external evidence may be lacking, Birdsall does present a convincing argument for his theory based on internal evidence. His argument is based on the ambiguity of the verb *στασιάζομαι*, which he says developed a new meaning in the early Church. He contends that the original meaning of "to be judged" was intended by the writer here. The proposed textual change would have resulted from a misunderstanding that the word as used here had its new meaning of "to argue" or "to doubt." The results of a study of this word in the following chapter confirm Birdsall's understanding of it. The reversal of the verbs of the p⁷² reading would be a possible consequence if the word was interpreted with the newer meaning. Such a change could have occurred early since the word's new meaning developed early.

Based on this evidence, this writer believes that Birdsall's theory is correct, but not entirely. There is

one part of his argument that does not hold up under close scrutiny. He argues that the form ἐλεεῖτε of p⁷², rather than the form ἐλεᾷτε supported by Clement, is the original reading because of some morphological evidence which he presents. He says, "Verbs in -εω began to yield to a tendency to be written with -αω in the early years of the Christian era, but the contrary tendency is not found until about the third century."¹ With his argument, however, he fails to consider the probability that p⁷² is a third or fourth century document, and that ἐλεᾷτε is supported by Clement in the second or early third century. His argument cannot possibly prove that the reading of p⁷² was the original one unless he first comes up with a document dated earlier than Clement with that reading. Then, since the tendency for the -εω verb to change to the -αω verb would already exist, it would be more likely that ἐλεεῖτε is the original reading. Birdsall disproves his own contention that the p⁷² reading is earlier than the reading supported by Clement.

In spite of the failure of this part of Birdsall's argument, the rest of it is still excellent. It shows that the reading supported by p⁷² is the probable source of most of the other variants. But the reading supported by Clement is very similar to it and is most likely the original reading based on the evidence presented by Birdsall and on the rest of the internal evidence.

¹Birdsall, "Text of Jude," p. 398.

Conclusions on the Variants

It has been shown that the external evidence for the variants is of a mixed nature. Many good witnesses support two of the readings with three elements. Of these, the reading supported by Alexandrinus was slightly preferred over the reading supported by Sinaiticus. On the other hand, a few very early witnesses, including Clement and p⁷², support a type of reading with only two elements. Due to the early dating of this reading, it was considered to be of equal quality with the reading of Alexandrinus based on the external evidence.

The internal evidence was more one-sided in its support of one of these readings. The principle of choosing the reading which is more characteristic of the author was shown to offer its support more to the Alexandrinus reading. However, the shorter reading, and specifically the reading of Clement, was preferred based on the rest of the internal evidence.

Because of the early date of the reading καὶ οὐς μὲν ἐκ πυρὸς ἀρπάζετε, διακρινομένους δὲ ἐλεᾶτε ἐν φόβῳ, μισοῦντες καὶ τὸν ἀπὸ τῆς σαρκὸς ἐσπιλωμένον χιτῶνα in verses twenty-two and twenty-three of Jude, and because of the internal evidence supporting this reading, it is the reading preferred over all the others. This is the reading which is examined in the following chapter in order to identify the two groups involved.

CHAPTER III

IDENTIFICATION OF THE GROUPS

The reading chosen to be the original reading in the previous chapter would be translated, based upon the results of the studies in this chapter, in the following way:

And be snatching some out of the fire, but have pity on the others being judged, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

The fact that two differing groups are involved in these verses is evident from this translation. But who are these groups? And why are they differentiated? This chapter is based on the results of an exegetical study of this passage which was undertaken in order to answer these questions.

Clues from the Content and Background of the Epistle

The Epistle of Jude bears a remarkable resemblance to some portions of the Second Epistle of Peter. The exact relationship of the two has been explained in several ways,¹ but it is difficult to be certain of the correct one. The similar descriptions of false teachers and the fact that Peter places their coming as a future event, while Jude writes of it in the past leads many to believe that Jude was

¹Merrill C. Tenney, New Testament Survey (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1961), p. 371.

written after Second Peter and was based on it.¹ An exact date of the epistle is impossible to determine, but Everett F. Harrison gives a possible date of A.D. 70 to 80.²

There is also uncertainty concerning the identity of the false teachers. Jude identifies them only as "certain men," τινες ἄνθρωποι, in verse four, but he does give a graphic description of them. He says that they have "crept in unnoticed," apparently into the meetings of the believers, and maybe even into positions of leadership among them. They were able to do this by posing as Christians.³ But they were not Christians, for Jude describes them as "ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." This licentiousness manifested itself in the defilement of the flesh and the rejection of authority. They are selfish men, greedy, grumblers, fault-finders, arrogant, lust-motivated and hypocritical flatterers. Though Jude never calls them false teachers, the similarity of their description with that of the false teachers in Second Peter suggests that they were.

¹Ibid.

²Everett F. Harrison, Introduction to the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), p. 436.

³George Lawlor, Translation and Exposition of the Epistle of Jude, An International Library of Philosophy and Theology: Biblical and Theological Studies, ed. Robert L. Reymond (N.p.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1972), p. 47.

After warning his readers of the danger around them, Jude offers them some positive instructions in how to combat the danger. He urges them to keep control of their own relationship to God through faith, prayer, love and hope of eternal life. Then in verses twenty-two and twenty-three he instructs them concerning their relationship to these false teachers which He has just described.

From the context of these verses, it appears that both groups involved are made up of the false teachers. Apparently, some of these false teachers are not beyond hope, for Jude tells his readers to snatch them out of the fire. This in turn implies that those of the other group are beyond hope and can only be pitied.

Clues from Grammatical and Lexical Study

The importance of the word διακρίνω to the meaning of this passage must not be underestimated, as has already been shown. This word is found from Homer onward where its chief meaning is "to judge, make a distinction, distinguish" and from this "to separate, divide" as of flocks of sheep.¹ The word is also used by Greek writers as a legal technical term meaning "to render a decision."² The passive of this verb is associated chiefly with this last meaning and is

¹The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "Distinguish, Doubt," by B. Gartner, 1:503.

²BAGD, p. 184.

used of an issue that has been brought to a decision, and also has the meaning "to be separated,"¹ presumably as a result of the decision.

In the Septuagint the word has much the same meaning. It is used to translate the Hebrew words דָּבַר , meaning "to judge," and also the niphal with the meaning "to enter into judgment," יָדַבֵּר , meaning "to exercise judgment," יָבַח , meaning "to examine," and יָבַח , meaning "to choose."

The usage of this word in the New Testament is more varied. It is used in its various forms eighteen times including its usage twice in Jude. In the active it has the meanings "make a distinction or differentiate" (Acts 15:9, 1 Cor 4:7), "pass judgment" (1 Cor 14:29), "judge correctly" (Matt 16:3, 1 Cor 11:31), "recognize or discern" (1 Cor 11:29), and "render a decision" as a legal technical term (1 Cor 6:5).² In the middle it has developed two new meanings in the New Testament period. As a deponent verb, its new meanings are "take issue, dispute" (Acts 11:2, Jude 9) and "be at odds with oneself, doubt, waver" eight times (Matt 21:21; Mark 11:23; Acts 10:20; 11:12; Rom 4:20, 14:23; and James 1:6 twice).³

It can be seen that the meanings found in the Septuagint and the early Greek writers have not disappeared in

¹Gartner, "Distinguish, Doubt," p. 503.

²BAGD, p. 184.

³Ibid.

the New Testament even though two new ones have appeared for deponent forms of the verb. Since the usage in Jude twenty-two and twenty-three could be either a middle participle or a passive participle by form, the question is whether it is a middle participle in these verses having the meaning "doubt," or whether it is a passive participle having the meaning "judged."

The possibility that this word had a passive meaning in New Testament times is not really a point of contention. A footnote dealing with this passage in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament gives three possible meanings for this word. They are: (1) "judged," (2) "when they dispute," and (3) "when they doubt."¹ The first of these is a passive meaning while the latter two are meanings associated with the middle. The fact that no other passive forms of this word occur in the New Testament does not exclude the possibility that this one occurrence is a passive form. Nor does the other occurrence of this word in Jude in a middle form exclude this possibility. The occurrence in Jude nine would actually be a stronger argument for a passive than for a middle usage in Jude twenty-two and twenty-three. Since Jude used the middle with one meaning in verse nine, it would be more confusing to his readers if he intended the middle with a different meaning in the later verses than if he intended a passive meaning.

¹TDNT, s.v. "διακρίνω (κρίνω)," by Friedrich Buchsel, 3:947.

One important consideration in determining whether διακρινομένου is middle or passive in Jude twenty-two and twenty-three is the view which is held concerning the variant readings. There are certain factors contained in some of the readings which would not permit a passive meaning. Those readings which link ἐλέγχετε with διακρινομένου or its other forms would almost certainly require a middle meaning of "doubt" since ἐλέγχω means "to convince or reprove."¹ Also, the three member readings of Alexandrinus and Sinaiticus would favor a meaning of "doubt" for διακρινομένου because the three groups seem to be in an order descending toward ungodliness, with the last group being those who are judged for their wickedness, while the first group who are doubting are only at the first stage of decline.² It is only the readings of p⁷² and Clement which readily accommodate a passive meaning of "judged." Arguments have already been given for choosing the readings of p⁷² and Clement over the others.

It has been pointed out that some of the other readings may have resulted from the misunderstanding of this word διακρινομένου. It is true that the p⁷² and Clement readings may have been the ones that resulted from this misunderstanding. However, the opposite is more likely the

¹BAGD, pp. 248-49.

²William Barclay, The Letters of John and Jude in The Daily Study Bible (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), pp. 204-05.

case. The middle meaning of "doubt" is well attested in the rest of the New Testament while the passive meaning of the word is not. Jude's less familiar use of the word would prompt later readers to see a more familiar use in this passage rather than the opposite.

From the arguments above, it can be seen that διακρινόμενους in Jude twenty-two and twenty-three is more likely a passive participle than a middle participle and would therefore have the meaning "being judged." The connotations of this word indicate that the Judge, who is omniscient, has already decided the outcome of the case and has rendered His decision. However, the present tense of the participle may indicate that God is in the process of rendering the decisions. This is not really an inconsistency, for from the human standpoint the decision is not made until the iniquity of these false teachers is full and there is no turning back. Their hearts are hardened to the gospel. These people can only be pitied.

An interesting grammatical feature of this passage is the οὐς μὲν . . . οὐς δέ correlative construction, with the second οὐς being replaced by διακρινόμενους. This type of construction either can refer to something that is already known, or it is wholly indefinite.¹ The usage in this passage would be the latter and would be translated in an indefinite sense, such as "some . . . others." This does

¹BDF, p. 250.

not mean that this verse does not refer to the false teachers already discussed. This sense is used only because the immediately preceding context does not involve a direct discussion of the false teachers.

The verb ἐλεῶ is used twice in the New Testament. In Romans 9:16 it is used of God. The present active participle is used there. In these verses in Jude, the present active imperative form is used. This verb probably developed from the verb ἐλεεῖτε by a mixture of the inflectional types -ᾶν and -εῖν.¹ Since Romans was written about A.D. 57² and the verb ἐλεῶ is found in it without textual variation, then the verb must have been in use by the time that Jude was written. Its meaning would probably be about the same as that of ἐλεέω which is "to have mercy or pity." Jude's readers were to pity those who were already condemned to the flames.

The verb ἀρπάζω, which appears in these verses in the present active imperative form, is a graphic term with two meanings. It can mean "steal, carry off, drag away," or it can mean "snatch or take away." This latter meaning usually refers to people and can either be done forcefully, or with no resistance offered.³ Here the meaning probably involves the first of these in the sense of a forceful rescue from the flames of the fire. Jude's readers were to

¹BDF, pp. 45-46.

²Harrison, Introduction to the New Testament, p. 304.

³BAGD, p. 108.

diligently present the gospel to the false teachers so that some would be rescued from the judgment ahead.

The last phrase of verse twenty-three helps to shed some light on the identity of the second group. The readers were to hate even the garment of this group which was polluted by the flesh. The word ἐσπιλωμένον is a perfect passive participle of σπιλώω meaning "to stain or defile."¹ The thing that defiles is the flesh, σαρκός. This is a word used many times in the New Testament and it has many meanings. The picture is of an undergarment which has been soiled by the body. The meaning behind the picture is of a life which has been permanently stained by sin. Jude's readers were to pity these people, but they were to do it with fear, lest their lives become stained as well. They were to hate the deeds of such a way of life and avoid falling into them.²

Clues from Synthetical Study

The figure of snatching from the fire is probably taken from two Old Testament passages, Zechariah 3:1-2 and Amos 4:11. In the Zechariah passage, Satan is seen standing beside Joshua the high priest to accuse him before the angel of the Lord. But Satan is rebuked and asked, "Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?" speaking of Joshua. The idea is that Joshua has been removed from the power of Satan who can no longer accuse him. In Amos 4 God is recounting

¹BAGD, p. 770.

²Lawlor, Jude, pp. 135-36.

all of the judgments which He has brought upon disobedient Israel. He likens Israel's overthrow to His overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah in verse eleven, then says, "you were like a firebrand snatched from a blaze." Israel was kept from total destruction, even though the heat was on. From these two passages, it appears that being snatched from the fire means being removed from the judgments which result from sin. These judgments could be both the temporal judgments experienced here on earth and the eternal judgments found in the Lake of Fire.

If the figure of snatching from the fire is taken from Zechariah 3:1-2, then the figure of the unclean garments is taken from Zechariah 3:3-5. The fact that the two are in the same context in both Zechariah and Jude makes this seem more likely than the suggestion of Barclay that the reference is to the regulations of Leviticus 13:47-52 concerning the burning of the garment of a leper,¹ although this latter suggestion may also be involved. In the Zechariah passage, the angel of the Lord orders that Joshua's filthy garments be removed and that clean garments be put on him. In verse four the angel of the Lord says, "See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes." It can be seen from this passage that sin is associated with the filthy garments. Jude's readers were to hate the "spotted garments." They were to hate the iniquity of the false teachers.

¹Barclay, John and Jude, pp. 205-06.

Some Conclusions on the Identity of
the Groups

From the studies in this chapter it can be seen that both groups of Jude twenty-two and twenty-three are associated with the false teachers which Jude discusses in such great detail in his epistle. Jude makes no distinction earlier in his epistle when he is discussing these people, so it is logical to conclude that they are all the same sinful type of individuals. But Jude tells his readers to snatch the first group from the fire. This is an expression meaning to remove them from the judgment resulting from sin. The only way to do this is to present the gospel so that they accept it.

The second group is to be pitied by Jude's readers. The reason is that these people are under judgment for their evil deeds. Presumably they will not accept the gospel and be snatched from the fire as are the others. For this reason the judicial decree of future condemnation is already certain. They may even be experiencing part of their judgment already here on earth. Jude warns his readers to hate their deeds so that they will not fall into the same patterns of conduct.

The reader may be wondering how Jude's readers were to know in which group each of the false teachers would be. The fact is that Jude's readers could not know, for it is God's decision. His readers were to do all in their power to bring all of the false teachers to salvation, but with

the knowledge that not all would be savable. Some would be hardened to the gospel and would continue going their own way. It is only by the grace of God that any would be saved.

Jude's instructions in this passage were meant to be an encouragement to his readers. Their work in telling the good news would not be in vain, because some would be snatched from the fire. They were not to neglect their responsibility to win these false teachers. On the other hand, their failure to win some should not be a discouragement to them, for Jude was warning them ahead of time that many would be unsavable. They should not silence their witness because of these who would not be saved.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

It has been said that textual criticism is more of an art than a science. As such, it is always subjective to a large degree. The conclusion concerning the textual variants of this passage, that the reading which is the shortest and earliest attested is the reading of the original autographs, is also subjective. But it is hoped that the reader will give consideration to the reasoning behind this conclusion and judge it according to the accepted principles of textual criticism.

The identity of the two groups involved in the chosen variant is clear from a study of the passage. The first group consists of those false teachers and apostates of Jude's day who were savable and were to be won with the gospel. The second group was only to be pitied because their judgment was already certain. The deeds of this group were to be avoided by Jude's readers.

The false teachers of Jude's day and the false teachers of today are not much different. It is imperative that the true Church today follow the same instructions which Jude gave to his original readers with regard to these false teachers. The savable must be snatched from the fire and

the unsavable must be pitied, but with fear. The only problem is, how can one tell the difference? The true gospel of salvation must go to all because no one can tell the difference except God Himself. The Church must not forget its responsibility to the false teachers of today, those with only the appearance of godliness who pretend to be members of the true Church. Jude's instructions are still relevant today.

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