

HHBC



Jude

Rescue who you can:

Jude 22 & 23



Jude 22 & 23: N.A.S.

22 And have mercy on some, who are doubting;

23 save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.



The 'Problem' with Verse 22 and 23, as stated by some expositors:

- **H.A. Ironside:** *'There is considerable manuscript variation here'*
- **William Kelly:** *'Now we come to a passage which I feel to be unusually difficult to expound; and the reason is this. The original authorities and the best authorities are all in confusion about it. This is very rarely the case in the New Testament, but it is the case here. All the great authorities are at sixes and sevens in the testimony they give of these two verses'*
- **Merriman:** *'there is a garbled text in the Greek, very difficult to translate and interpret'*



Jude 22 & 23:

22 And have mercy on some, who are doubting; (NAS)

... And of some have compassion, making a difference: (KJV)

*... **Be merciful to those who doubt*** (NIV)

*.... **And some convict, when contending;*** (Wuest; Mayor)

23 save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.



Jude 22

22 And have mercy on some, who are doubting;

1. Or: with some **convict**, when **contending**
2. Context: in the last days, Jude says there will be mockers, unholy men causing divisions, worldly-minded following their own lusts (Verses 18-19)
3. These false teachers then, will ensnare some weaker believers, causing some to be led astray
4. One popular interpretation of Jude 22 and 23 is then: the weak believer will be in doubt, and therefore come alongside them, and take pity on them, shore up their faith . . .
5. Another way to look at it: some are going to express contentiousness due to lack of knowledge of the things of Christ; therefore, convict them; but better word would be: **convince** them of the true Word of God, **The** faith
6. Part of the difficulty of this verse is ‘mercy’ = **eleéō-** to have pity, compassion; aid the afflicted—
7. But others: say the the source texts read: **elegchō-** to bring to a confession and conviction of sin (Alford & Mayer according to K. Wuest). Mayor then translates, "**reprove them because of their doubts,**" or "**convince them when they dispute with you.**" Alford translates, "**And some indeed convict when contending with you.**" **elegchō** is same word as John 16:8’s ministry of the H.S. convicting concerning sin, righteousness and judgment....



Jude 22

22 And have mercy on some, who are doubting;

And some convict, when contending;

And of some have compassion, making a difference

1. J. Vernon McGee keeps it simple and agrees with the ‘those who are in doubt’ reading of V. 22
 - a) His example of the unbelieving woman who attended his bible study asking contentious questions....

2. Constable, like J.V. McGee has a tendency towards this reading of ‘having mercy on those who are in doubt’: he sees it as tender, loving instruction:

(in context: Beloved ones who are praying in the Spirit, building themselves up in the Word and abiding in the Love of God vs. 20-21) should tenderly help those of their fellow believers who were struggling and perhaps stumbling under the influence of the false teachers. Those in view are earnest doubters who sincerely cannot decide between truth and error. We should not abandon these brethren but restore them with compassion if possible.

This, then is a softer reading of the text using the word “mercy” rather than “convicting”



Jude 23

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This thought Jude most likely had Zechariah 3: 1-5 in mind:

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. 2 And the LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?” Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel. Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, “Take away the filthy garments from him.” And to him He said, “See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes.”

And I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the LORD stood by.

- Jude moves from believers caught up in error by False Teachers, who are to either be tenderly ministered to in their doubt, or *convicted/contended* with (the more aggressive interpretation), to: these others who are to be saved and snatched out of the fire



Jude 23

save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

1. We are to save (**sōzō**) this new second class of people out of the fire. ‘Save’ has the usual meaning of rescuing from peril; danger; destruction
2. A likely interpretation of who the ‘others’ are in v. 23 are BELIEVERS who are so far down the spider hole of false teaching and risk being righteously judged by God. These are to be snatched out from the heresy before they are completely swept away. . . (Constable)
3. A GREAT WARNING in Verse 23: however, in doing the ministering to the suffering, erring believer, exercise extreme caution: have a fear **for the contagion of sin**; (Wuest) or fear/respect the fire that threatens to devour them (F.B. Hole). Rescue them in a godly spirit— far removed from any self-confidence: “only if he goes about it in that spirit will he escape being burnt or defiled himself, and so be able to rescue them” says Hole

Jude 22 & 23

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ANOTHER INTERPRETATION AT VERSES 22 and 23 combined:

- Both Wuest and Merryman bring this into the analysis of the difficult text:
- Says Wuest: “The unseen particle **men** appears in [verse 22](#), and **de** in [verse 23](#). When these are used together (as they are here) they show contrast— And these together: **men** and **de** give preference to using the word “convict” rather than “mercy” in Vs. 22:
- If you use the word for “mercy”/ **eleéō** in vs. 22, (*have mercy on some who doubt*) and in Vs. 23 you are commanded to have “mercy with fear” on some others— there is no contrast. The existence of the **men** and **de** particles necessitate there being a contrast. But: if **elegchō** or “convict” is used in vs. 22, this word “convict” correctly provides the contrast with “have mercy with fear” in vs. 23
- Merryman gives this: “**(On the one hand)**, have mercy those who are *judging through* (22) (ie. Maybe having doubts, weighing things on Christianity or perhaps a believer working through a doctrine. This, he says is a serious consideration. In contrast to these: **(on the other hand)** rescue others out of the fire save others, showing mercy with fear



Jude 22 & 23

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- Summing: Mayor translates *“reprove them because of their doubts”* or *“convince them when they dispute with you”* or *“And some indeed convict when they are contending with you”*
- Wuest’s translation: *‘And some indeed on the one hand be convicting when contending with you; be saving, snatching out of the fire, others on the other hand, upon whom be showing mercy in fear, hating even the undergarment completely defiled by the flesh.’*

“HATING EVEN THE GARMENT POLLUTED BY THE FLESH”

- ?
- Roman 7’s: *‘I am doing the very thing I hate’* and *‘no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me’* and *‘For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.’* is similar to the tenor of verse 23’s phrase.
- And Psalm 14:3’s: *‘They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.’*



Jude 22 & 23

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“HATING EVEN THE GARMENT POLLUTED BY THE FLESH”

- **Ironside:** *‘Others need to be snatched from the fire. Energetic effort should be made to warn and deliver these souls before the evil gets so firm a hold on them that it is too late for them to seek blessing. But in every instance, the believer needs to remember that unholy teaching is defiling and leads to unholy living. Care must be exercised lest, in seeking to aid another, the believer himself becomes ensnared by the evil influence’*
- What it doesn't mean: hating your physical body; or the gnostic concept of dualism: e.g. material things, including the body are bad and evil, and the spiritual, non-material things are pure and holy; leading to the heresy that Jesus did not have a physical body.
- ‘Garment’ = *chitōn* is a tunic or undergarment worn next to the skin
- The "garment" stands for those things affected by contact with fleshly behavior such as personal habits and practices, speech, companions, and the like. Scripture often uses garments as a symbol of what other people see, namely, our conduct. [Constable]



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SUMMATION:

- There is not much difference in the meaning of the exhortations.. Both direct that a Godly discrimination be used in dealing with persons taken in error. (Ironsides)
- A hard and fast rule for treating all alike is contrary to the verse, and to the tenor of scripture. (Ironsides)
- I believe whichever translation and word substitutes 'mercy' or 'convict'; if you go with "Have mercy on some who are doubting" or "on some have compassion, making a difference" or "some convict, when contending", you will be extracting God's thoughts on the matter
- Each translation of the 'problem' text has value, and conveys truth... Could the H.S. wanted this passage to have multiple interpretations so as to be a richer text in so few words?
- A very good lens through which to view Jude 22-23 is to see how Paul dealt with false teachers and erring members of the local assemblies.
- E.g.: Paul's care and diligence using discrimination is evident in I Cor. 8: helping believers 'judge through' things related to eating meat sacrificed to idols... Or his more pointed, aggressive convicting/contentions with "You foolish Galatians" ...
- Or his method in I Cor. 5 of dealing with the young man and his stepmother: he seems to say here 'remove this garment polluted by the flesh' to the rest of the congregation: throw him out before his situation inspired others to come too close to that fire.