

These false teachers have no spiritual capacity for spiritual knowledge. It's not there and it can't be there. They have no human spirit. They have no filling of the Holy Spirit. They can only learn and have knowledge of natural things.

So, in our context, the verb, "*epístamai*," is nothing more than humanistic knowledge. The knowledge that any human being can have about anything in this world, including abstract or philosophical knowledge.

"*Epístamai*" refers to how an unbeliever knows what he knows from the surrounding natural world, or from his own mental capacity.

So "*epístamai*" is in distinct contrast to "*oída*." That's why it's "*oída*," "*ouk*." They cannot know what they do not know. "*Epístamai*" is all they can know.

Jude uses these two different verbs "to know" as a contrast. To highlight the difference between what believers should know, and sometimes don't and sometimes do, and how they come to know it.

It's the difference between metabolizing of spiritual information and the processing of physical information.

So what exactly, then, is the knowledge to which "*epístamai*" refers?

The text says it is what the false teachers know, "*epístamai*," "naturally". Naturally, as opposed to spiritually.

"Naturally" is the adverb "*φυσικῶς*" – "*physikōs*." It means, "by instinct." Knowledge by instinct. Knowledge that they come by naturally.

So, they arrive at humanistic knowledge, or "*epístamai*," by natural instinct.

This natural instinct is knowledge validated by human logic or contact with surroundings or environment. You learn by the contact that you have around you, your senses, or, in this case, "*epístamai*" may be learned by prolonged practice and repetition in that environment.

It's the natural world. It's everything that's around you. The instinctive knowledge is limited to things physical, not spiritual.

It is not learned through a spiritual apparatus, but instinctively using the brain and the senses. That's natural.

So, the natural thought process is limited to the physical natural world. There's the limitation on the epistemology of the unbeliever.

This is a complete validation of the biblical illustration of Operation Z, the necessity of regeneration, the necessity of the human spirit, and the necessity of the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, false teachers and unbelievers cannot present spiritual information that can cause spiritual growth without the filling of the Holy Spirit and Bible Doctrine. False teachers and unbelievers cannot process spiritual information, therefore, they cannot grow from their natural “*physikōs*” knowledge.

The false teachers and unbelievers may present an academic understanding of a doctrine. That's why they're so deceptive. But it will still be interspersed with human viewpoint falsehoods.

Next their physical knowledge is like that of, “brute beasts.”

“Brute” here is the nominative plural of, “*ἄλογος*” – “*álogos*.”

We have the negative “*á*” and then “*logos*.” “*Logos*” means “knowledge,” or it's how we get knowledge or “logic.” So, the better translation of our “*álogos*” would be “without reason” or “irrational.”

“Irrational” is instinctive in the sense that it is subjective humanistic thinking. It's knowledge that hinges on feelings or emotions, but it cannot be spiritually appraised.

“*álogos*” is a knowledge that has no fixed criteria. It is relative, it is inconsistent, it is, at times, even contradictory. This is humanistic knowledge derived from subjectivity and relativism.

“*álogos*” is relative. Bible doctrine is absolute spiritual reality. It is divine viewpoint versus human viewpoint.

Human viewpoint is “*álogos*,” human viewpoint is “*epístamai*,” and that's what they speak evil of. They can't know it as you can. They can't appraise it spiritually.

So, “*álogos*” then carries the same connotation as “*epístamai*,” learning and knowing by instinct, rather than learning and knowing with the objective, spiritual apparatus, illustrated once again by the grace apparatus for perception.

We have one more word to look at in verse 10. Along with “*álogos*” is the noun, “ζῷον” – “*zōon*.” “*Zōon*” is translated “beasts”, but it actually refers generally to a “living thing” or “a being, something or someone that is alive.”

However, in general, it denotes things that are not exactly human but also not really animals of the regular kind. They are beings that are different. For example, “*zōon*” is sometimes used for angelic creatures, as in Revelation 4:6-11, the Cherubim at God's throne.

In classical Greek literature, this word is used for a miraculous bird called the Phoenix. Not human, but not really animal either. But in our context, it is different, since the “*zōon*” describes human beings, the false teachers in the churches.

So, it must refer to aberrant human beings as beasts. They are in a class with the unreasoning, who learn and know simply by instinct and who have a distorted relative knowledge based on physical criteria only.

These are people whose knowledge is purely humanistic because they are unbelievers who have rejected Christ and who have rejected Bible doctrine.

So, the “*zōon*” beasts refer to humans. But, without the ability to process spiritual things, Jude makes absolutely sure who these false teachers are in the minds of his readers.

They are ones who cannot grow spiritually, who do not want to grow spiritually, who have rejected Christ, and have nothing to say to Christians.

Believers without doctrine are no different than the “brute beasts” that teach them. They are affected by false teachers, and that's what they become. They're still going to heaven. They still have eternal security, but they have no spiritual growth and they have no desire for spiritual growth, even though they have the complete capability to do so.

Believers all over this world know absolutely nothing of Bible Doctrine. They have not grown one inch since the moment they expressed faith alone in Christ alone because they have not heard, nor do they have any interest in learning, Bible doctrine. They have not been filled with the Holy Spirit because they don't know about rebound. Their human spirit is essentially dormant because the Holy Spirit is not teaching the doctrine that they're not hearing. And so, there can be no spiritual growth. That's where we are today.

False teachers in churches rely on feelings and emotions rather than teaching the truth of Bible doctrine. That's why Jude uses the terminology, “they know naturally like brute beasts.” He is speaking of physical cognitive ability versus spiritual cognitive ability.

Our expanded translation thus far in verse 10:

“On the one hand, these (false teachers) continually malign things they do not understand (like Bible Doctrine and fellowship with God), but on the other hand, things that they understand by instinct as illogical creatures (degeneracy), by means of these things (functioning inside the cosmic system),

So, what is the result, then, of those who are “instinctive, unreasoning beings” as Jude calls them? Verse 10 C, the last phrase. “In these things they corrupt themselves”.

That which the “brute beasts” delight in, which is human viewpoint. Ironically this is what ruins them in many ways, but starting with their eternal future.