

*Messengers
For
Christ*

*Outreach Program
Handbook 11*

Jude 4: Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

God bless you and welcome to this *Messengers for Christ 11 Adventure* entitled *Jude: Contending for the Faith*. As we get into this short twenty-five verse letter, we will see an awesome portrait of what's required when contending for the faith. This tragically neglected epistle is full of enigmas that will challenge the best of Bible students. It contains many fascinating Old Testament references and allusions. Subtitled by some, "The Acts of the Apostates," [<https://www.khouse.org/articles/2000/259/>] Jude deals with heresy and heretics with a message very apropos for us today.

AUTHORSHIP: The author identifies himself in verse one as "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James." "Jude" is another form of the Hebrew name Judah (Greek "Judas"), a common name among the Jews. The writer of this epistle is both the brother of James and the half-brother of our Lord Jesus. Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3 assure us that Jesus had several siblings among whom were four half-brothers: James and Joses and Simon and Judas. It is interesting that Jude notes his relationship to his brother James, the writer of the Epistle of James, but does not note his relationship with the Lord. Also of some curiosity is that all of the writings of Paul bear the titles of those to whom they were written (Romans – Hebrews), while all the Christian Hebrew Epistles bear the name of those who wrote them (James – Jude)

DATE: Dating the writing of Jude is difficult because he neither identified to whom he was writing nor the heretical group about which he was writing. Most commentators assign the date between 67 and 80 AD¹. The only evidences for the date of Jude are inferences from Jude's probable life span and from the heresy he combated. If Jude was the younger brother of Jesus and James (as his position in the lists of brothers in Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3 suggests), he could have survived well into the last quarter of the first century.

Jude refers to "the faith" in verses 3 and 20. This expression can be found in the late 40s and 50s, especially in contexts of opposition and defense, such as I Corinthians 16:13; II Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 1:23; and Philippians 1:27. However, most references to "the faith" are found in later New Testament works, such as Acts 13:8; 14:22 and Hebrews 4:14. It's also found thirteen times in the Pastoral Letters which were written late in Paul's life (i.e., the mid-60s). Therefore, a later date for Jude is more likely than an early one.

DESTINATION: Although the destination is unspecified, the tone of the letter suggests that his audience was Christian Hebrews. It is clear that the Epistle of Jude was addressed to faithful Christians — "to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ" (Jude 1:1). This could include both those who lived in Palestine as well as those of the dispersion. The references to Old Testament incidents and extra-biblical literature point to believers who understood these references without explanation.

OCCASION AND PURPOSE: Verse three makes the purpose of the epistle clear. Jude wanted to write concerning the common salvation, but the Holy Spirit demanded that he write of the danger encroaching upon the believers, which demanded a more somber theme and compelled him to sound a solemn warning. He warns the believers to both beware of the apostates and contend for the faith. The apostates of whom he wrote denied the lordship of Christ.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: Jude exhorts the believers to contend earnestly for the faith (that which is to be believed and that which was once delivered to the saints). We know from the Book of Acts that there were disputes and dissensions in the early years of the church age. We know that many turned away from Paul and the gospel of Jesus Christ he preached (II Timothy 1:15; I Timothy 4:1; II Timothy 4:4).

Peter also warned that in the future "there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (II Peter 2:1). However, Jude notes the incursion of these "certain men" in the past tense; they "crept in unawares." So, Jude must have been written after II Peter. So, although II Peter 2:1-3:4 is remarkably similar to Jude 4-19, God had each written; one to warn of coming danger and the other to call the believers to earnestly contend for the faith because the danger was clear and present.

1. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, page 918. However, Bullinger in his Companion Bible suggests a date as early as 41-46 AD (page 1880).

Affirmations: I will earnestly contend for the faith. I stay alert and guard against any clear and present danger.

Recommended Reading: Day 1: II Peter 2; Day 51: II Timothy 1

Jude 1-2: Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, *and called: 2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.*

It is intriguing that the very first word in this epistle is “Jude.” “Jude” is a shorten form of “Judah” or “Judas,” a very common name in the Old Testament and Gospel times. I call it intriguing because Jude or Judas has become almost synonymous with traitor, and Jude is the only book in the Bible dealing exclusively with apostates and apostacy.

TENOR AND STYLE: The language in Jude is strong; it is harsh; it is scalding; it is severe. Unfortunately, strong language is not always palatable; people don’t like it. The cry for militant Christianity that we find within Jude is not popular! Jude is a call to arms!

There’s a sense of urgency behind Jude’s instruction to fight for the truth and stand up against error. Its short and pithy commands and statements pop off the page like machine-gun fire. Jude reminds us that there is a time and a place for the aggressive protection of the truth from those who would seek to tear it down.

The Book of Jude is filled with references to the Old Testament, including the Exodus (v. 5); Satan’s rebellion (v. 6); Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7); Moses’ death (v. 9); Cain (v. 11); Balaam (v. 11); Korah (v. 11); Enoch (vv. 14,15); and Adam (v. 14). Jude’s use of the well-known historical illustrations of Sodom and Gomorrah, Cain, Balaam, and Korah reminded the Jewish Christians of the necessity of true faith and obedience.

Jude used many enigmatic figures of speech with allusions to hidden reefs, shepherds, clouds, trees, waves, and stars. He frequently wrote in triads where concepts were expressed in groups of three. In *Numbers in Scripture*, Bullinger states that “Three, therefore, stands for that which is solid, real, substantial, complete, and entire. All things that are specifically complete are stamped with this number three.” Therefore, the extended or extreme use of these triads in Jude is to present complete, substantial examples that entirely cover the point and make the details of this epistle real and tangible. When addressing what the false teachers were called, the triad is doubled and established with six specific comparisons.

These triple arrangements describe:

The author: Jude / Servant of Jesus Christ / Brother of James.

The ones written to: Sanctified by God the Father / Preserved in Jesus Christ / Called.

The greeting: Mercy / Peace / Love.

The description of certain men: Ungodly / Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness / Denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The examples of judgments: Unbelievers among Israelites / Angels who sinned / Sodom and Gomorrah.

The dreamers who: Defile the flesh / Despise dominion / Speak evil of dignities.

What Michael did when contending with the devil: Disputed about the body of Moses / Durst not bring against him a railing accusation / Said, The Lord rebuke thee.

What false teachers went after: The way of Cain / The error of Balaam / The gainsaying of Korah.

What false teachers were called: Spots / Shepherds without fear / Clouds without rain / Trees without fruit / Raging waves / Wandering stars. [Notice that the triad is doubled and we have 6 instead of 3.]

False teachers were identified as: They who separate / Sensual / Having not the spirit.

In verse twenty the beloved are to keep themselves in the love of God by: Building up themselves / Praying in the Holy Spirit / Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have compassion on one another and reverentially make each other whole by: Making a difference / Pulling them out of the fire / Hating the garment spotted by the flesh.

Jude speaks positively of the believers and assures them of God’s gracious working on their behalf. It also speaks negatively of those who oppose the truth Jude urges them to contend for. The high praise for the faithful and the stern warning to the apostates sets a dichotomy that is almost palatable. Jude exerts pressure on the readers to resist the encroaching false doctrine and earnest contend for the truth that had been committed to their care.

Affirmations: I answer God’s “call to arms.” I will resist any encroaching false doctrine.

Recommended Reading: Day 2: Exodus 3; Day 52: Exodus 6.

Apostate: a person who forsakes his religion, cause, party, etc.

Apostacy: a total desertion of or departure from one's religion, principles, party, cause, etc.

STRUCTURE: This is an introverted or chiastic structure which Bullinger says "is by far the most stately and dignified presentation of a subject; and is always used in the most solemn and important portions of the Scriptures." It is easy to see the correspondence between the A's, the B's, etc.

[1-2] A Opening salutation providing assurance to the believers

[3] B The believer and the faith: the exhortation to contend for it.

[4] C Apostates described

[5-8] D Apostasy in Old Testament history

[9-10] E Apostasy in the Supernatural Realm

[11] F An Ancient Trio of Apostates

[12-13] E Apostasy in the Natural Realm

[14-16] D Apostasy in Old Testament prophecy

[17-19] C Apostates described

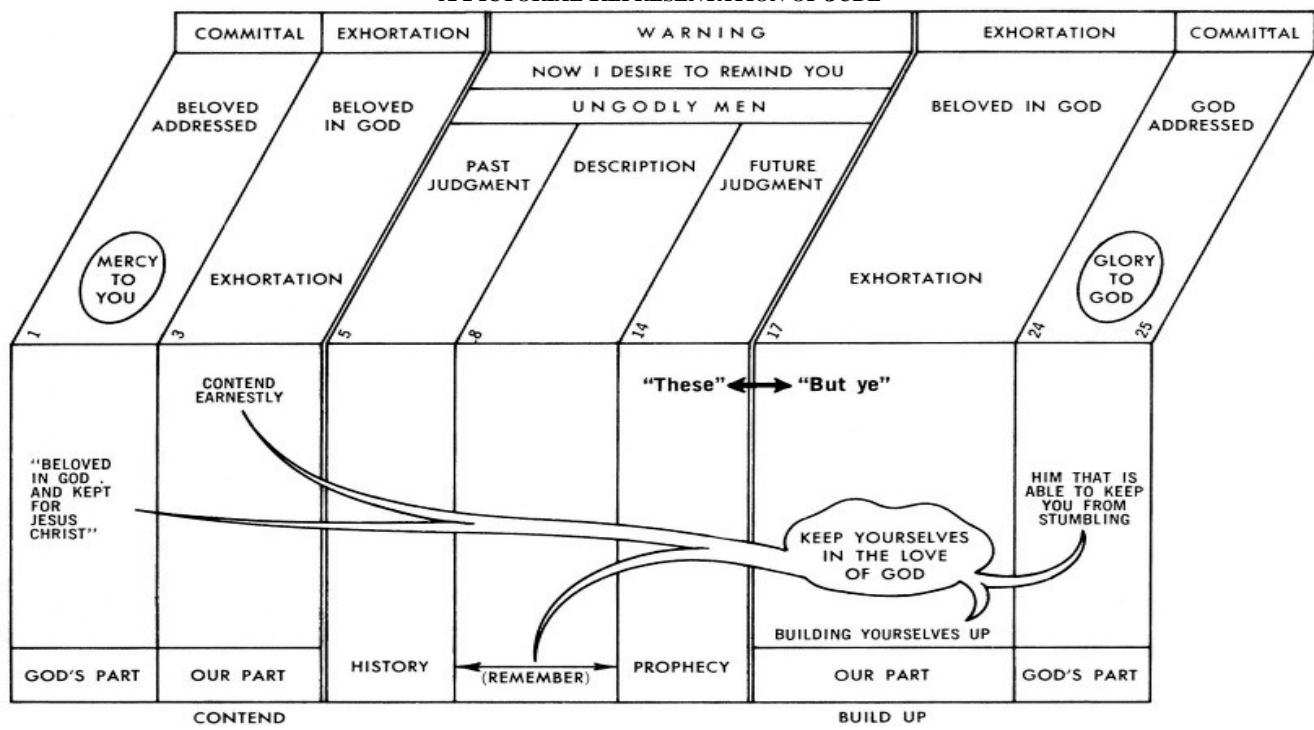
[20-23] B The believer and the faith: the reminder to contend in love.

[24-25] A Closing doxology providing assurance to the believers

He also quotes Bengel who observes with regard to this form of the figure, that "its employment is never without some use: *viz.*, in perceiving the ornament and in observing the force of the language; in understanding the true and full sense; in making clear the sound interpretation; in demonstrating the true and neat analysis of the sacred text."

Both sections A deal with giving assurance to the believers. Both assure the believer that he will be preserved or kept and that he doesn't have anything to be troubled about regarding the judgment of God. Regardless of how austere and severe God's judgment has been in the past, those born-again of His spirit have the assurance of eternal life and will live forever with Him. Therefore, as we study Jude we must always remember the assurance He gives to those that are His, that He will preserve them through all difficulties.

A PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION OF JUDE¹



1. From Precept Austin: https://www.preceptaustin.org/jude_commentary

Affirmations: I am assured of my standing as a son of God. I give heed to God's warnings.

Recommended Reading: Day 3: Exodus 4; Day 53: Exodus 7.

II Thessalonians 2:3: Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

Jude contains 456 words and employs a vocabulary of 227 words. Sixteen of those words are unique to Jude in the New Testament (five more are shared only with II Peter and one with James). Having so many words unique to this epistle makes it an interesting one to study. The writer uses so many words that no other New Testament writer did. He had very specific ideas and concepts to communicate and the Author, God, chose Jude because he would say it just like He wanted it said.

There are several words unique and found only once in Jude:

Apodiorizō (592) they who separate [vs 19]

Aptaistos (679) from falling [vs 24]

Deigma (1164) example [vs 7]

Ekporneuō (1608) giving themselves over to fornication [vs 7]

Epagōnizomai (1864) that ye should earnestly contend [vs 3]

Epaphrizō (1890) foaming out [vs 13]

Exelegchō (1827) to convince [15] [variant]

Gongustēs (1113) murmurers [vs 16]

Hupecchō (5254) suffering [vs 7]

Kore (2879) Core [vs 11]

Mempsimoiros (3202) complainers [vs 16]

Pareisdunō (3921) crept in unawares [vs 4]

Phthinopōrinos (5352) whose fruit withereth [vs 12]

Phusikōs (5447) naturally [vs 10]

Planētēs (4107) wandering [vs 13]

Spilas (4694) spots [vs 12]

There are certain words occurring in only Peter or James and Jude:

Asebeō (764) ungodly committed [once in both Peter and Jude]

Empaiktēs (1703) mockers [once in both Peter and Jude]

Huperogkos (5246) great swelling [once in both Peter and Jude]

Spiloō (4695) spotted [2] [once in both James & Jude]

Suneuōcheō (4910) when they feast [once in both]

Zophos (2217) darkness [twice in both Peter and Jude]

You may have heard Bible teachers speaking of the days in which we live as the last days or the latter days and that Christ's return is imminent. Most also suggest that just before his return there will be a falling away or an apostasy. Since it is the penultimate book of the Bible some even speak of the Book of Jude as being the vestibule of the Book of Revelation, declaring that it prepares us for what is coming very soon.

Yes, Jesus asked in Luke 18:8, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" That statement is taken as a sign of great apostasy before Christ's return. Many quote II Thessalonians 2:3, "for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first" to prove this latter-day apostasy theory. However, II Thessalonians 2:3 is talking about our departure in the gathering together not a departure from the faith. Some quote II Timothy 4:1 in support of the apostasy theory, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." But Paul warned Timothy about these things because they were a clear and present danger while they both lived. Even during Paul's life time some believers forsook sound doctrine.

II Timothy 4:3-4: For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;⁴ And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

Peter also warned about false prophets, false teachers and damnable heresies in II Peter 2:1. He ties this into people who doubted the very fact of Christ's return saying in II Peter 3:4, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation." Only a vivid anticipation of Christ's return will allow us to continue to stay hot, vital and moving ahead as we wait. The truth is that the Bible teaches that since the day Jesus ascended true and faithful believers have been anticipating his soon return. I trust our investigation of this very enigmatic Book of Jude will inspire you and build your hope to see our Lord face to face.

Affirmations: I will not give heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils. I endure sound doctrine.

Recommended Reading: Day 4: Exodus 5; Day 54: Exodus 8.

KEY CONCEPTS IN JUDE

DAY 5

Jude 1: Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved [*tēreō*] in Jesus Christ, *and* called:

The first 2 key concepts I want to mention occur in the first verse. They are preserved or kept and love.

Preserved or kept, *tēreō*: *Tēreō* is used five times in Jude and is one of the key concepts. Gingrich lists three usages for it. “1. keep watch over, guard 2. keep, hold, reserve, preserve and 3. keep, observe, pay attention to.” Thayer says it means “to attend to carefully, take care of,” “to guard,” metaphorically “to keep, one in the state in which he is,” “to observe,” and “to reserve.” Friberg adds, “hold in reserve, preserve for a purpose or until a suitable time.” The Louw-Nida lexicon adds, “to cause a state to continue.” It is used in the salutation to describe the saints whom God preserves. This is the only salutation in New Testament that includes preserved, *tēreō*.

It is used of the angels that did not keep themselves in the state in which they were and are now kept in a state of confinement.

Jude 6: And the angels which kept [*tēreō*] not their first estate [*archē*, principality], but left their own habitation, he hath reserved [*tēreō*] in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. [See also II Peter 2:4; 3:7.]

It is used of the ungodly for whom is reserved [*tēreō*] the blackness of darkness forever.

Jude 13: Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved [*tēreō*] the blackness of darkness for ever. [See also II Peter 2:9, 17.]

It is also used of our responsibility to keep ourselves in the love of God.

Jude 21: Keep [*tēreō*] yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. [See also James 1:27: “to keep himself unspotted from the world.”]

A synonym of *tēreō*, *phulassō*, is also used in verse 24 in tribute to God, Who is able to keep us from falling.

Jude 24: Now unto him that is able to keep [*phulassō*] you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. [See also II Peter 3:17.]

In discussing these two synonyms Thayer says, *tēreō* expresses watchful care and is suggestive of present possession, and *phulassō* indicates safe custody and often implies assault from without. He also notes that *tēreō* may mark the result of which *phulassō* is the means. [See also I Peter 1:4; II Peter 2:4, 9, 17; 3:7.]

Love, *agapaō*, *agapē* and *agapētos*: These words occur seven times in Jude. Three times in the first three verses. Love is central to the heart of the Epistle of Jude and central to contending for the faith. Whenever we contend for the faith, we must “keep ourselves in the love of God.” Only as we use the wonderful love of God that has been shed abroad in our hearts (Romans 5:5) will we be able to accomplish this challenge God sets before us. We must love, even while we contend against the errors of apostates. We must love their souls even while we oppose their words and deplore their ways. Sometimes it is delicately difficult to keep these separate, but the love of Christ in our hearts will put wisdom on our lips.

Jude 1-3: Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified [most critical texts read, *agapaō*, loved] by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, *and* called: ² Mercy unto you, and peace, and love [*agapē*], be multiplied. ³ Beloved [*agapētos*], when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

We find the verb in Jude 1. The noun is in Jude 2, as well as Jude 12 and 21. The adjective is used as a substantive in direct address in verse 3; it is also found in verses 17 and 20. The ungodly try to spot and spoil our feasts of charity, or fellowship meals which were a special type of communal meal having particular significance for early Christians as an expression of their mutual affection and concern. However, we are commanded to keep ourselves in the love of God so we can help them. Remember *agape* is love in action that's why it is translated charity in the KJV of I Corinthians 13.

Affirmations: I am kept by Jesus Christ. I am beloved of God.

Recommended Reading: Day 5: Jude KJV; Day 55: Jude ASV.

Jude 3: Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints:

Although it shows up after “preserved” and “love,” “contending” is the major key concept and focus of Jude. **Contending, *epagōnizomai* and *diakrinō*:** A third key concept is “contending,” *epagōnizomai* translated “that ye should earnestly contend” in verse three. This is its only use in the New Testament. It is a compound word derived from *epi* and *agōnizomai*. (It is used seven times in the New Testament). *Epi* means “for” or “over,” an *agōnizomai* denotes an intense struggle. It is where we derive the English words “agony” and “agonize.” When the two are combined *epagōnizomai* means to contend as a combatant for or about or over something.

Five of the sections of the structure of Jude deal with this idea of contending. Section B (verse 3) addresses the believer and the faith and is an exhortation to contend for it. Section B (verses 20-23) address the believer and the faith and are a reminder to contend in love. The entire central section, composed of E, F and E, the focus of the epistle, verses 9-13, concerns “contending with evil.”

“Contend” occurs three times in the KJV. The first is in Acts 11:2 where those zealous for circumcision had a dispute with Peter about his going into a Gentile’s home and eating with him. The remaining two uses are in Jude verses three and nine.

Ungodly, *asebēs*, *asebeia*, and *asebeō*: The fourth key concept is the ungodly. Two of the eight uses of the adjective *asebēs* are found in Jude, as are two of the six uses of the noun *asebeia*. It refers to people who are destitute of reverential awe towards God. These people are impious, contemning God. We find *asebēs* in verse four, which tells us why Jude is writing this letter to warn the believers of these ungodly men who have crept into the church without notice.

Jude 4: For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 15 is a stunning display of the figure paregmenon where four words from the *aseb-* root occur. The adjective *asebēs* occurs first and last and the noun *asebeia* and the verb *asebeō* occur between them.

Jude 15: To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly [*asebēs*] among them of all their ungodly [*asebeia*] deeds which they have ungodly committed [*asebeō*], and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly [*asebēs*] sinners have spoken against him.

We find the last use in verse 18.

Jude 18: How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly [*asebeia*] lusts.

These ungodly men have no reverence or respect for God and His will. Rather they put their desires and agenda before God and what He wants.

Remembrance, *hypomimnēskō* & *mimnēskō*, and judgement, *krisis*, are also important concepts. We all need to be reminded of the truth at times. That is what Jude is doing. Unless we remember what was taught to us for our learning and give heed to what is written to us, we will not retain the instruction in righteousness God wants us to have. Listen, remember, and obey are simple yet necessary steps to walking in the love of God and avoiding judgement.

Jude 5a: I will therefore put you in remembrance [*hypomimnēskō*, remind you], though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt,

Jude 17: But, beloved, remember [*mimnēskō*, intentionally recall] ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Jude 6: And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment [*krisis*] of the great day.

Jude 15: To execute judgment [*krisis*] upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

Affirmations: I contend earnestly for the faith. I remember the truth I am taught.

Recommended Reading: Day 6: Acts 11; Day 56: Acts 15.

Galatians 2:7-8: But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision *was* unto Peter; ⁸ (for He who was at work for Peter in *his* apostleship to the circumcised was at work for me also to the Gentiles),

One of major reasons I wanted to look into Jude is the new appreciation I gained for the Christian Hebrew Epistles from Jon Nesse. In his book *Leadership in the Body of Christ* he shared about the two branches of the first century church and how God worked in each. Much of what I will be sharing comes from that work.

Jude is part of the canon known as the General Epistles, the Catholic Epistles, or the Non-Church Epistles. They are so called because they are not addressed to churches or pastors. I prefer to call them Christian Hebrew Epistles since they are written by and for the church of the circumcision. [So also does J. Sidlow Baxter in *The Strategic Grasp of the Bible*, p.335.]

We know that Paul's Church Epistles always occur in the same order in all extant manuscripts. It is also true that in the earliest and best manuscripts the seven epistles of James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3 John and Jude are placed before the fourteen epistles of the apostle Paul. Frederick Scrivener, after examining over 4000 manuscripts of the New Testament, said: "Whether copies contain the whole or a part of the sacred volume, the general order of the books is the following: Gospels, Acts, *Catholic Epistles*, Pauline Epistles, *Apocalypse*."¹ This is the position assigned them in the critical editions of Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort."²

These seven Christian Hebrew Epistles were initially intended to be read by a large body of people, mainly Jewish, living outside Palestine. These epistles were written by men who were commissioned to preach the gospel to the circumcision. Paul recognized this special commission, and how it differed from his.

Galatians 2:9: And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

These "pillars" were recognized as the "founding fathers" of the early church, and they were accorded a special esteem because of this. Paul afforded them the same esteem recognizing that they were "apostles before me [Paul]" (Galatians 1:17). They were also Jews and this gave them a priority which Paul admitted.

Romans 1:16: For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

The Gospel was given to the Jewish people first. In the early days after Pentecost the apostles spoke only to Jews about Christ (Acts 11:19). After Peter opened the door for the Gentiles preaching at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10 and 15:7), it finally became permissible to grant Gentiles an opportunity to hear the Gospel. However, Paul still gave the Jewish people the priority of hearing saying, "It *was necessary* that the Word of God should *first* have been spoken to you [i.e. Jews]" (Acts 13:46). Paul consistently went to the Jews *first* when he wanted to teach (Acts 11:19; 13:14; 14:1; 17:1,10; 18:4). He maintained that custom until God told him it was time to move on and go unto the Gentiles (Acts 18:6). However, he still went to the synagogues on occasion (Acts 19:8; 28:17).

When Paul wanted to settle the question of circumcision among the Gentiles (Acts 15:1-4), he went "to them of reputation [that is, to them of recognized authority], lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain" (Galatians 2:2). Paul admitted that had he not cleared his teaching concerning the irrelevance of circumcision for Gentiles with the pillar apostles in Jerusalem and had they not given credence to the teaching, his teaching would have been, as he said, "*in vain*."

However, when the three pillar apostles heard what God was doing through Paul among the Gentiles, they "gave to me [Paul] and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision" (Galatians 2:9). This rank of authority was demonstrated by James at the Jerusalem conference. It was James who gave the final decision on what the Gentiles could and could not do (Acts 15:19-20).

1. Frederick Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to Criticism of the New Testament for the Use of Bible Students*, 4th ed., ed by Edward Miller, vol. I (New York: G. Bell, 1894), p.72.

2. *Catholic Epistles*, James Hastings, ed., *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. I (New York: C. Scribner's Sons: c1898-1904), p.360.

Affirmations: I speak to both Jews and Gentiles. I am thankful for the right hand of fellowship extended to me.

Recommended Reading: Day 7: Galatians 2; Day 57: Acts 13.

Galatians 1:6-7: I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another [*heteros*] gospel.⁷ Which is not another [*allos*]; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

Just because Galatians 2:7 refers to the gospel of the uncircumcision and the gospel of the circumcision, don't think that Paul and Peter preached two different gospels. They both preached the gospel of Jesus Christ concerning the mystery. The distinction between the two is to emphasize the sphere where it was proclaimed but not to designate a difference in the type of good news communicated.

God has Paul use the figure of speech *epanorthosis*, correction, in Galatians 1:6-7 to arrest their attention and impress upon the believers the danger of what they were doing. First, he states the truth. You turned to another, *heteros*, gospel. *Heteros* is the Greek word that is used when there are only two alternatives or the other is of a different kind. There are only two choices. There is the truth, the true gospel, and there is its misrepresentation (every other thing that purports to be the true gospel and is not.)

Although what they taught appeared to be a gospel and was presented as the gospel, it was not. Paul's correction makes it clear, "which is not another." This word for another, *allos*, is used when there are many alternatives or when the choices are of the same kind. There are not other, *allos*, gospels. There are not other acceptable gospels of the same kind. That is what the enemies of the truth want you to believe - they are all really the same. Although they may claim they are all the same, they are not right. They are not the same. There is only one true gospel.

Paul's correction is to restate the truth in a way that will make a greater impression upon them. The simple truth he initially stated was that this other, *heteros*, gospel was of a different kind. His correction was to assure them that they were not the same. It is not the same gospel with just a little different take on it, just a little different spin. Paul is clarifying what the enemies of truth do. They were the "some that trouble you, who would pervert the gospel of Christ."

They were changing the true gospel of Christ into a perversion. They were using this perverted gospel in an attempt to turn the Galatians away from the truth. The word "troubled" in this verse is the Greek word *tarassō*. It means to agitate, to take away one's calmness of mind, to disturb one's equanimity. It stirs one up; it makes one disquieted and restless. They may use the same words, but their intent was not the same as Paul's. Neither was their message, despite what they may have claimed.

Galatians 1:8-9: But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we said before, so say I now again, if any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

Whoa! That is heavy! This is quite a departure from how Paul normally addressed issues. Paul was the apostle of grace was he not? Yet he says that these enemies of the truth, who preach another gospel, are to be accursed. He does not just say it once. He repeats it for emphasis. There is something most dramatic in his opposition to those who would pervert the gospel of Christ. Can you sense how adamant Paul was? These figures of speech bring the point home.

It was important for Paul to identify these enemies of truth. Their perversion of the gospel causes confusion and substitutes lies for the truth. Men and women who function like this must not be allowed to continue to have influence within the church. Paul adamantly opposed them and so should we.

In the next chapter Paul shares an incident that took place when he and Barnabas went to Jerusalem. They shared the gospel with the most reputable believers. Even there, false brethren tried to bring them under the bondage of the law.

Galatians 2:1-5: Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with *me* also.² And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.³ But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:⁴ And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:⁵ To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

Paul, Barnabas and Titus did not give place or yield to the pressure of the false brethren. It says not "for an hour." We would say "not for a minute." Note the reason they refused to draw back or give place: "that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." That is earnestly contending for the truth and is worth emulating.

Affirmations: I only preach the true gospel. I continue in the truth so that the truth of the gospel might continue.

Recommended Reading: Day 8: Galatians 1; Day 58: Galatians 2.

Galatians 2:9: And recognizing the grace I had been given, James, Cephas, and John - those reputed to be pillars - gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the Jews.

Yes, Paul and Barnabas were sent to the Gentiles and James, Peters, and John were sent to the Jews, but that doesn't mean they were forbidden to preach to the others. When Paul was ordained to ministry in Acts 9:15, he was ordained as a chosen vessel to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. Paul's threefold God-assigned calling was first and foremost, to bear Christ's name before the Gentiles; this was the most important part of his calling. Second, he was to be a witness for Christ before kings. Third and least of all, he was to bring the Gospel to the children of Israel — the Jews. This was God's divine order for Paul's life.

Although Paul had clearly heard what God said, he did not initially respond favorably to his assignment. Paul was very proud of his heritage. He boasts of it in Philippians 3 saying he was "circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee. . . ." Having been rigidly raised as a Pharisee, Paul had been taught from the youngest age that Gentiles were like "dogs," and were to be avoided. Thus, when God told Paul that his primary call was to the Gentiles, it was hard for him to embrace.

In Acts 26, we find Paul toward the end of his life standing before King Agrippa, recounting the day of his conversion to Christ. Paul was told to "Rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee" (Acts 26:16). Amazingly, right from the start, Jesus made known to Paul the purpose for his life. Furthermore, the Lord said He would be "delivering [Paul] from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee" (Acts 26:17). Why? "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18).

By this time Paul's call was clear to him. He knew his primary call was to the Gentiles. He had embraced it and wrote definitively of it:

Romans 11:13: For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.

Galatians 2:8: (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles.)

Ephesians 3:1: For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.

We know from Scripture that Paul was not readily accepted by the apostles in Jerusalem. In fact, his presence and activities caused such a ruckus, the church leaders put him on a boat in Caesarea and sent him back to his homeland of Tarsus (Acts 9:30). It was Barnabas who went back to Tarsus to seek Paul (then called Saul) and bring him to Antioch to serve in leadership (Acts 11:25-26).

It was while serving as a leader in Antioch that the Holy Spirit selected Paul and Barnabas to launch out on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:2-3). Church history reveals that for the first five years of Paul's ministry, he consistently attempted to bring the Gospel to the Jews. He understood the Jews — he knew their language, their culture, and how they thought. Thus, because he was comfortable with them and deeply burdened for their salvation, his attention and efforts were fixed on his Jewish brethren.

In every town Paul went, he was magnetically drawn to the local synagogue where he reasoned and discussed the Scriptures with the Jews. In the cities of Salamis (Acts 13:5), Antioch (Acts 13:14), Iconium (Acts 14:1), Thessalonica (Acts 17:1), Berea (Acts 17:10), Athens (Acts 17:16, 17), and even Corinth (Acts 18:1, 4), the first place he went as soon as he entered the city was the synagogue.

However, things changed as Paul made his way into the city of Athens, he headed for the synagogue to dispute the Scriptures with the Jews as he had done so many times before, but the spirit stirred him when he saw the depth of Athens' idolatry. He began sharing the gospel with Gentiles in the marketplace. The philosophers he encountered took him to the Areopagus on Mars Hill where he spoke almost exclusively to Gentiles. Their receptivity to the Gospel was quite remarkable, and there were even certain high-ranking Athenians who were saved (Acts 17:16-34).

Acts 18:1 says, "After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth." Although Paul initially went to the synagogue in Corinth to reason with the Jews, it wasn't long until he redirected his energies to the Gentiles. At long last, he was putting his primary focus on the prophetic order that God had designed for his life. He had realigned himself with God's plan that was given to him when he first came to Christ. As a result, I Corinthians 2 and II Corinthians 12 tell us that signs, wonders, and mighty deeds followed Paul as he preached the Word to the Corinthian pagans! Plus, Paul found remarkable favor with multitudes of Gentiles who responded to his message, and as a result, he established a large, powerful church in the city of Corinth.

Affirmations: I magnify the work God has called me to do. I find remarkable favor from those to whom I preach.

Recommended Reading: Day 9: Acts 26; Day 59: Acts 13.

II Corinthians 11:5: For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.

II Corinthians 12:11b: . . . for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.

In the first portion of the Book of Acts, we find the name of Barnabas placed before that of Paul (Acts 11:30; 12:25; 13:2, 7), but later (when Paul was given more authority) the placement is reversed (Acts 13:43, 46, 50). Barnabas was a Christian prior to Paul, and he was a Levite (Acts 4:36). This at first gave him a rank above Paul in the eyes of the Jews. This was finally changed (Acts 15:2) and only temporarily reversed when they were once again within a Jewish environment at Jerusalem (Acts 15:12, 25).

Since there had been a great deal of doubt among some first century believers, especially Jewish Christians, regarding the validity of Paul's teaching and the inspiration of the letters he wrote, God had Peter write to inform his readers that Paul's letters were indeed inspired of God. Peter sanctioned the body of Paul's letters and informed his readers that Paul's epistles were indeed inspired and warned them that not receiving or accepting them would be to their destruction. (II Peter 3:15-16).

The principle of rank is one reason that the epistle of James precedes that of Peter, and Peter those of John and that of Jude. In keeping with this principle of superior rank, the first place of all was accorded to the epistle of James. Even Paul recognized the rank of the pillar apostles in this fashion. "And when James, Cephas [Peter], and John, who seemed to be pillars. . ." (Galatians 2:9). The order of these "pillar" apostles is exactly in conformity to the principle of rank. It is no wonder that the Christian Hebrew Epistles follow this exact order in the New Testament canon. This is a clear sign that the authority concept was being followed precisely.

Though Paul was the least of all New Testament leaders in social rank, his abundant labor gained for him the right to have his name indelibly stamped on more books of the Bible than anyone else. It was Paul's devotion and his abundance of work for the cause of the Gospel that afforded him honor (II Corinthians 11:18-28). Indeed, he wrote more of books in the New Testament than anyone.

There definitely were two separate parts of the first-century church, the Gentile branch and the Jewish branch. As we have already read, Galatians 2 says God was working effectually in both sets of leaders. Each was energized by God to deal with the foibles of their separate cultures and to encourage them to walk accurately despite them. So, as a consequence, each had their own set of strengths and weaknesses.

Galatians 2:11-14: But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.¹² For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.¹³ And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

In both Acts 15:1ff and Galatians 2:11-14, those from the Judean Branch of the Church (who believed in holy days and forbade eating certain meat and required circumcision, etc.) intruded into the affairs of the Gentile Church and caused stumbling. It would have been equally wrong for the Gentile Church to intrude into the working of the Hebrew Church.

It is true God never intended for the church to be split, but because of the cultural prejudices and practical application of the truth both branches of the church developed separately. Perhaps, the pressure from the Romans civil authorities also augmented the separation (Acts 18:2). Regrettably, we have many more than two divisions now.

Peter acknowledged the present truth in II Peter 1:12. The "present truth" being the revelation of the mystery of godliness that was now present after Paul and other of the apostles and prophets received it and Paul finished writing it down in his epistles (Ephesians 3:2-5).

Peter also refers to Paul's epistle of Hebrews in II Peter 3:15 and the rest of Paul's epistles in II Peter 3:16, warning the Church of the circumcision not to wrest with the wisdom of the gospel Paul presented. It wasn't that one branch was right and the other wrong. Remember, we already saw that God worked mightily in the leadership of both branches.

The Christian Hebrew epistles are as much God's Word as Paul's writings. We can learn from all of God's Word. Great fundamental truths like II Peter 1:20 and 21 are in these Christian Hebrew epistles. As we get into Jude, we will see how pertinent its truth is to us.

Affirmations: I labor in the Lord abundantly. I recognize leadership in whom God works mightily.

Recommended Reading: Day 10: II Corinthians 11; Day 60: II Corinthians 12.

II Corinthians 10:13: [NLT] We will not boast about things done outside our area of authority. We will boast only about what has happened within the boundaries of the work God has given us, which includes our working with you.

In practice the two branches of the first-century church only proceeded part way to unity, being impeded by their cultures and traditions. Had both branches not been attacked and the church not been persecuted by the Romans they may have made it through the practical transition into this new administration unified. Then Christianity today might be very different. But they did not succeed. Consequently, when the church emerged from the difficulties of the first and second centuries, it was far different than what may have been envisioned by the apostles when it began.

Paul reproved and corrected those within his branch of the church, but he also declared he would not be a cause of stumbling for those to whom he was not sent to minister. So, the line that we dare not cross is intruding uninvited into “another man’s line of things” as II Corinthians 10:16 states. Indeed, Paul claimed to have fully preached the gospel of Christ. . . not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man’s foundation (Romans 15:20). Paul was proud of his work and let it speak for itself. Paul said in Romans 15:18, “Yet I dare not boast about anything except what Christ has done through me, bringing the Gentiles to God by my message and by the way I worked among them” [NLT]. (See also Acts 15:12; 21:19.)

In Acts 26, Paul recounted the day of his conversion before King Agrippa. Amazingly, right from the start, Jesus made known to Paul the purpose for his life (Acts 26:16). Furthermore, the Lord said He would be “delivering [Paul] from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee” (Acts 26:17). The words “send thee” is a translation of the Greek word *apostolō*, which is from where we get the words *apostle* and *apostolic*. Hence, Jesus told Paul that he was going to be an apostle to the Gentiles. Verse 18 continues, “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” Scripture reveals that Paul knew his primary call was to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; 22:21).

Romans 11:13: For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.

Romans 15:16a: That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God.

Galatians 1:16a: to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles

Galatians 2:8: (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles.)

Ephesians 3:1: For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.

Ephesians 3:8b: . . .this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

I Timothy 2:7a: [NLT]: And I have been chosen as a preacher and apostle to teach the Gentiles.

Since language and culture is a barrier, the structure of the Body of Christ must, in addition to being congregational, also be divided along cultural lines. This allows for the most successful local congregations to develop a higher order and scope of bodily structure perhaps even to the extent of influencing an entire culture. Consequently, some ministers’ spheres of influence will be local while others may have a larger jurisdiction at an intermediate regional level or upon an entire nation or culture. We see this clearly in Galatians 2:7-10 between the Gentile church led by Paul and the Judean church led initially by Peter then later by James.

Galatians 2:7-8: But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; ⁸ (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

God was working effectually and mightily in both branches of the church. The Gentiles were led at that time by Paul and Barnabas, and the Christian Hebrews by Peter, James and John. If Paul tried to impose Gentile Christianity upon Judea, destruction would occur, likewise if the Judeans tried to impose their brand of Christianity upon the Gentiles. Instead, the Apostles shared the “right hands of fellowship,” a phrase which expresses their genuine favor and respect for one another (Galatians 2:9).

One cannot say that one branch of the first-century church was right and the other wrong. God was working with each set of leaders to organically build a structure that worked for each culture so that believers could array and unify around local ministers. Each branch had different circumstances and challenges, weaknesses and strengths, as well as epistles written specifically for it, Paul’s epistles (with the exception of Hebrews) to the Gentile Branch and Peter, James, John and Jude for the Hebrew Branch.

The major distinction between the two branches was that the Hebrew branch of the church was still deeply influenced by the Law of Moses (Acts 21:20). And the Pharisees still exercised influence even within the Christian Hebrew Church. Although Jude was written for the Hebrew branch, we will see as we proceed through it how practical it is for the entire Church today.

Affirmations: I recognize my area of authority. I speak of my work in the Lord proudly.

Recommended Reading: Day 11: II Corinthians 10; Day 61: II Corinthians 13.

APOSTOLIC MINISTRY IS RELATIONAL, GEOGRAPHICAL, & TERRITORIAL, PART I DAY 12

I Corinthians 9:2: If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.

Although Paul was universally respected in the early church as an apostle, he was not an apostle to every first century congregation. He was an apostle only to those with whom he had ministered the grace of God. Churches outside of Paul's purview acknowledged Paul's apostleship, but he was not necessarily their apostle. Many believers respected Paul as an excellent minister, a beloved brother, and an able leader, but he only had apostolic responsibility for the churches he had helped start and those for whom he served as mentor, teacher, and father in the faith.

II Corinthians 11:28: Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

We must understand that "all the churches" does not mean every single church without exception. It means all the churches for which he was responsible before God. Now this may refer to all the churches of the Gentiles that he initiated and served by exercising oversight.

Romans 16:3-4: Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: ⁴ Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

However, his purview was limited as is every minister's. We are only responsible for the churches we serve and effectively minister to.

Acts 20:25-28: And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. ²⁶ Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*. ²⁷ For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. ²⁸ Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Thus, Paul's apostleship was limited to those for whom he bore direct spiritual responsibility and with whom he had a unique relationship. Paul's relationship with particular churches and individuals is the reason we have his epistles. Paul wrote those letters because he was directly responsible for the spiritual well-being of those believers and because he had a unique apostolic relationship either with them or with their local leadership.

One example of Paul's apostolic relationship with local leadership was the church in Colossae. Although there is no record in Acts that Paul personally founded the Colossian church, we know that he sent Epaphras as his representative to fulfill that assignment. Under Paul's direction and spiritual covering, Epaphras traveled to Colossae and started the church. Once the Colossian church was established, the congregation received Paul as the apostle to that church based on his relationship to Epaphras.

Paul was careful not to cross over into another man's territory. He didn't want to cause any confusion about whom he was supposed to serve and direct. He was only responsible for certain churches and those were the ones he held accountable to take heed to his guidance. This tells us that Paul not only recognized and exercised his authority, but he also respected the authority and territory God had given to others.

II Corinthians 10:13-16 [NLT]: We will not boast about things done outside our area of authority. We will boast only about what has happened within the boundaries of the work God has given us, which includes our working with you. ¹⁴ We are not reaching beyond these boundaries when we claim authority over you, as if we had never visited you. For we were the first to travel all the way to Corinth with the Good News of Christ. ¹⁵ Nor do we boast and claim credit for the work someone else has done. Instead, we hope that your faith will grow so that the boundaries of our work among you will be extended. ¹⁶ Then we will be able to go and preach the Good News in other places far beyond you, where no one else is working. Then there will be no question of our boasting about work done in someone else's territory.

Paul was very aware that he wasn't an apostle to everyone. That's why he wrote, "Not boasting of things outside our area of authority" [NLT] or "beyond proper limits" [NIV] or "beyond our proper sphere" [EUB] or "outside the area of the work which God has given us" [CJB].

Affirmations: I think carefully and clearly about those to whom I give the right to lead me spiritually. I yield oversight in my life to others only at the Lord's direction.

Recommended Reading: Day 12: Jude AMP; Day 62: Acts 20.

APOSTOLIC MINISTRY IS RELATIONAL, GEOGRAPHICAL, & TERRITORIAL, PART II DAY 13

I Corinthians 9:2: If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.

Paul knew he was an apostle to the Corinthians; he had planted and nurtured their growth. He spent 18 months there, wrote them epistles, and developed a relationship with them. The word “doubtless” in I Corinthians 9:2 is actually the Greek word *gar*, and it means “indeed.” It is an affirmation of his apostolic relationship to them. A better translation would be “Indeed I am to you!” Paul knew that his apostleship was limited, geographical, and relational, so he concentrated on those with whom he knew he had this special, “indeed,” God-given relationship.

Paul frequently had to defend his apostleship because deceitful workers would try to exert authority over entire regions of churches that he and other apostles had established and to which they had imparted their lives. Apostleship was power, so those with impure motives sought to invade Paul’s territory and claim his fruit, seeing it as an effective way to exploit someone else’s work for themselves.

Those who coveted the apostolic position used every imaginable method to attract, tempt, lure, entice, and seduce the churches under the authority of genuine apostles. In Paul’s case, the imposters couldn’t find a legitimate reason to accuse him, so they used slanderous and even stupid accusations as they tried to persuade the churches to reject Paul and submit to their authority instead. For example, these false apostles accused Paul of being unimpressive in appearance and a poor public speaker.

II Corinthians 10:10:

“For *his* letters,” they say, “*are* weighty and powerful, but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible.”

II Corinthians 11:6:

But though *I be* rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.

They accused him of financially taking advantage of the churches (I Corinthians 9:14-15). They tried to seduce churches back into the noose of legalism by accusing Paul of being loose in his doctrine of grace (Galatians 1:6-7). They asserted that Paul’s revelations weren’t as deep as theirs, prompting Paul to remind his readers that he was the one who actually had a direct revelation from Jesus Himself (I Corinthians 9:1; Galatians 1:11).

These usurpers of apostolic authority were after Paul’s territory — and in order to get what they were after, they set out to discredit Paul. This is why Paul frequently started his letters by saying, “Paul, an *apostle* of Jesus Christ.” Wherever Paul’s apostleship was being threatened by false apostles, he rose up like a spiritual father to defend his position and protect his spiritual children. His children were in jeopardy, and his relationship with them was at stake. Paul’s deep sense of responsibility and his love for the flock wouldn’t allow him to remain silent. Rather, it drove him to speak up and wage war, if needed, against the imposters who were trying to invade his geographic realm of influence. Paul was determined not to allow those deceivers to destroy his credibility so they could steal and ravage the sheep under his care.

It is sad to say, but there are people who misuse the ministry for their own personal gain of some type. Whether it’s for prestige or monetary reasons, it is innately wrong. When this kind of deceit occurred in Paul’s day, he rose up to defend the churches, as well as his apostleship. Paul’s one desire was to protect the flock that God had placed under his charge against wolves that only sought to devour the sheep to gratify their self-absorbed lust for control.

Whatever the assignment a particular apostle has been sent to fulfill, it will be defined by some form of divine boundaries, whether they are regional, geographical, or spiritual in nature. Within that marked-out territory assigned by the Lord, the true apostle will stand guard over the relationships he is called to steward. His heart’s fervent desire will be to protect, teach, and strengthen the people — ensuring that they become firmly established in God’s Word, not swayed by external forces or opposition.

Affirmations: I fight for my people. I realize the motivation behind personal attacks.

Recommended Reading: Day 13: I Corinthians 9; Day 63: Jude BSB.

James 1:1:

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

James clearly states in verse 1 to whom he is writing. He addressed his letter "...to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad..." The Greek word translated "scattered abroad" is *diaspora*, which describes the random scattering of seed. Here, this word was used to depict the scattering of the twelve tribes of Israel. Although the northern kingdom of Israel was scattered to other countries after the Assyrian invasion when Hoshea was the king and the southern kingdom of Judah were scattered to other countries after Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah, the *diaspora* referenced here is the one mentioned in Acts 8 and 11. The Old Testament relocation of people was organized and purposeful. The best the twelve tribes were taken to the conquering country and people from the conquering country were relocated to the conquered land. This was done to hinder nationalism and foster peace. The *diaspora* referred to in Acts was due to persecution and proceeded rapidly.

Acts 8:1 and 4:

And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. . . . ⁴ Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

Acts 11:19:

Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution [*thilipsis*] that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

In the first century world, seed was either planted in nice, neat rows one seed at a time or it was scattered randomly. The word *diaspora* describes this random scattering. The sower would reach his hand into a satchel of seed, grab a handful, and then randomly scatter it over a field, throwing a little here and a little there. This is a picture of what happened to believers in the first century. Like seed seized by the hand of the sower, they were taken away from family and friends, removed from their homes and jobs, and randomly scattered all over the eastern lands of the Mediterranean without rhyme or reason. *Diaspora* tells us the displacement of these believers was not nice, neat, or orderly; it was disruptive and chaotic.

The death of Stephen at the hands of the religious leaders marked the beginning of this dispersion and increased persecution against the Church. This was a great persecution against the church at Jerusalem. The word "great" in this verse is the Greek word *megas*, which describes something big, great, huge, or enormous. The word "persecution" in Acts 8:1, is the Greek word *diōgmos*, and it can be used negatively or positively. It means to pursue, to follow after, or to persecute. It was the term used to describe the actions of a hunter who followed after an animal to apprehend, capture, and kill it. This "great persecution" was led by Saul — who later became the apostle Paul. It was a house-to-house hunt launched throughout Jerusalem. Like animals aggressively tracked by hunters, Christians ran for their lives to escape the murderous clutches of Saul and the religious leaders. This persecution is what caused believers to be "scattered abroad," which is the Greek word *diaspora*, describing the random scattering of seed — the same word used in James 1:1 to describe not the scattering of unredeemed children of Israel but rather born-again Christian Hebrew believers.

In James 1:2 James calls his readers brethren. This word "brethren" is a translation of the Greek word *adelphos*, which is an endearing term used to describe those of one's own family. It occurs 19 times in James. What's interesting about *adelphos*, translated "brethren," was that it was later used in a military sense to depict brothers in battle, comrades, or a brotherhood. It was first made popular by Alexander the Great, who would host huge award ceremonies and call especially brave soldiers up on the stage to stand with him, addressing them as *adelphos*. Hence, the word *adelphos* carried the idea of camaraderie and was the greatest honor that could be conferred upon a soldier.

The people to whom James was addressed were begotten of God. They were the first fruits of his creatures (1:18), having the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ (2:1). Although we may not come from a Hebrew heritage, James like the other Christian Hebrew epistles are addressed to us as members of the church of God.

Affirmations: I am proud to call you brother. I'll go everywhere preaching the word.

Recommended Reading: Day 14: James 1-3; Day 64: James 4-5.

I Peter 1:1-2: Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ² Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

There is a record in Galatians that provides some insight into the understanding of to whom the Christian Hebrew Epistles were addressed.

Galatians 2:9: And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

James, Peter, and John were esteemed to be pillars of the church. They were reputed to be and recognized as leaders in the church. At the time that these events in Galatians 2 were transpiring they were ministering the gospel to the circumcision, those of Jewish heritage, while Paul and Barnabas were ministering to those of Gentile heritage. Their epistles initially went to Christian Hebrew believers, but they provide instruction in righteousness for all born-again believers (II Timothy 3:16).

We saw in the last lesson that James wrote to the diaspora of Israel, well so does Peter.

I Peter 1:1-2: Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ² Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

“Scattered” in verse 1 is *diaspora* the same word used in James, and it also refers to those Jews who were scattered because of the persecution noted in Acts. These believers were noted to be in the 5 areas listed in verse 1. Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia were all located in the territory known later as Asia minor.

II Peter 1:3-7: According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: ⁴ Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. ⁵ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; ⁶ And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; ⁷ And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

These believers were “elect” or chosen. They were begotten again by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They were kept by the power of God. They were also to be found at the appearing of Jesus Christ. They were redeemed by the blood of Christ (I Peter 1:17-18). These were believers, born-again of God’s spirit and members of the body of Christ.

II Peter 1:1-2: Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: ² Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

Similarly, the salutation of II Peter addresses those whom have “obtained like precious faith.

II Peter 3:1: This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

This being the second epistle written to them certainly suggests that it was written to the same people as was the first. They were those of the *diaspora* in Asia Minor who had believed in Jesus Christ and received the gift of holy spirit. Certainly, the instruction in righteousness contained in the epistles of Peter would be applicable to all members of the church of God regardless of the ethnic heritage.

Affirmations: I enjoy God’s exceeding great and precious promises. I’m elect!

Recommended Reading: Day 15: I Peter 1-2; Day 65: II Peter 1-2.

I John 1:1-3: That which was from the beginning, which **we** have heard, which **we** have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; ² (For the life was manifested, and **we** have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto **us**;) ³ That which **we** have seen and heard declare **we** unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with **us**: and truly **our** fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

In I John we do not find the typical greeting used in epistles written at that time. (There will be more on this when we come to the salutation in Jude on days 17-19.) Instead, John immediately addresses the word of life which would allow them to have fellowship with John and his associates (note the “we,” “us,” and “our” in verses 1-3 above) who had fellowship with the Father and His son Jesus Christ.

When we get to chapter 2, we find out more about those to whom John is writing.

I John 2:1-2: My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: ² And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins* of the whole world.

“Little children” is a diminutive of endearment. It has little to do with age and more to do with their understanding of the word of life John wanted to communicate. It appears 9 times in I John and refers to those young and growing in their understanding of the Word of God. Although these “little children” are the main focus of John’s first epistle. He also mentions “fathers” and “young men.” These 2 terms also allude to spiritual maturity. “Fathers” referring to those who have been involved in the new birth and rearing of others, and “young men” referring to those more mature than “little children” but not yet reaching adulthood or full maturity. However, John also uses the terms “brethren” (2:7) and “sons of God” (3:1-2). These show a common standing of all of them before God. Their standing is all the same, but the state of their maturity in the faith varies. As I John 5:13 states these “little children” knew they had eternal life. Although they were new and immature they were born again and part of the church of God.

In the second and third of John’s epistles, John takes up the more typical form of salutation.

II John 1-3: The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth; ² For the truth’s sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever. ³ Grace be with you, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

III John 1: The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

John’s reference to himself as an elder alludes to his more mature understanding of the Word of Life. Although both II and III John may have been written to address specific situations the elect lady and her children and Gaius were facing. III John 4 indicates Gaius was one of those “little children” who were immature but still walking in the truth. However, the elect lady and her children may be an allusion to the children of Israel by an implied comparison and the use of “little children” in I John. III John 13-14 also give us an excellent example of the care and oversight exercised by an apostle over his people, as we learned about in the lessons from days 12 and 13.

Walter Cummins has the following note by “elect lady” in his working translation in *A Journey through Acts and the Epistles*. It gives another plausible explanation as to whom II and III John were written.

“The chosen lady may refer to an individual, as is generally supposed, or it may refer by comparison to either the Judeans or the people of Israel of whom certain of her children were walking in the truth. Then the children of her sister mentioned in verse 13 would refer by comparison to the other of those two groups (the people of Israel or the Judeans). Knowing that John, along with James and Peter, were ministers to the Judeans and the children of Israel, would lead credence to such a comparison. This kind of comparison may also be seen in Jeremiah 3:6-11; Ezekiel 16:44-63. We should also recall the implied comparison “little children” as it was used in I John to refer to those who had recently come to know the Father and whose sins were forgiven. . . . Whether this epistle was written to an individual or to a group of the people of Israel, the chosen lady and her children were loved by “all they that have known the truth” according to verse 1.”

We understand that although Paul’s epistles were initially addressed to specific churches in specific cities, they were applicable and pertinent to all members of the church of God. So, too, although The Christian Hebrew Epistles were initially addressed to specific people in specific areas, they too are applicable and pertinent to all members of the church of God.

Affirmations: I love the word of life. I enjoy fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Recommended Reading: Day 16: I John 1-2; Day 66: II & III John.

Jude 1-2: Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, *and* called: ² Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

The first word of this epistle is Jude, the English equivalent of the Greek Judas and the Hebrew Judah. It is a name that has become identified with being a traitor. Although it was a common name in Bible times, one does not find many today due to its association with Judas Iscariot. With the exception of the Beatles song of the same title and the rock group Judas Priest one does not find it much today.

The name Judas is used in the meat packing industry of a trained goat used at a slaughterhouse and in general animal herding. The Judas goat is trained to associate with sheep or cattle, leading them to specific pens and on to trucks. In stockyards, a Judas goat will lead sheep or cattle to slaughter, while its own life is spared. The name Judas is also used to designate figuratively any person or thing used as a decoy to lure people into being caught, arrested, etc. The allusion is to Judas Iscariot, the disciple who betrayed Jesus in exchange for thirty pieces of silver. However, this has little to do with the epistle of Jude.

This two-verse salutation is typical of the fashion that was the standard of his day. It has the name of the sender, the name of the recipient, and a greeting that follows. These salutations could be formal and complex or informal and simple. Let's look at a couple of examples from the Book of Acts. When the Council of Jerusalem wrote letters in support of Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15:23 it started: "The apostles and elders, your brothers [That's the senders.], to the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia [That's the receivers.]: Greetings." Again, in Acts 23:26 when the captain sent Paul to Felix he wrote a letter which started: "Claudius Lycias [That's the sender.], To His Excellency, Governor Felix [That's the receiver.]: Greetings." Another example of a more elaborate greeting is this one from the emperor Claudius to the people of Alexandria in Egypt: "Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, Imperator, Pontifex Maximus, Holder of the Tribunician Power, Consul Designate [That's the sender.], to the City of the Alexandrians [That's the receivers.], greetings." Do you see the typical pattern: the name of the sender to the name of the recipient followed by a greeting.

From the very beginning of Jude's epistle we find three of the afore mentioned triads (from the lesson on Day 2). In the salutation of Jude in verses 1-2 we find three descriptive terms in each of the three categories. The sender is Jude who identifies himself as "the servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James." The receivers are also identified with three terms: "them that are sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ and called." The greeting also has three parts: mercy and peace and love.

The sender: Jude, Ioudas, Judas. Although Jude is a shortened form of Judas in English, the Greek uses only one word for both as well as for Judah also. Judas was a common name in the first century. The *International Standard Bible Dictionary* lists seven individuals in the New Testament who have this name. This Judas or Jude was the brother of James and the half-brother of Jesus. It's intriguing to me that neither of the epistles that bear their names mentions that fact.

Matthew 13:55 tells us Jesus' half-brothers were James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas. The James and Judas mentioned in Matthew 13:55 are the two whose epistles are found in the New Testament. Like his older brother James, Jude did not place his faith in Jesus while the Lord was still alive. Although they questioned Jesus' ministry before the resurrection, after the crucifixion and resurrection both became followers of their half-brother, Jesus. I Corinthians 9:5 offers a tantalizing piece of information, noting that the Lord's brothers and their wives traveled and served to further the gospel.

The servant [*doulos*] of Jesus Christ: When I think of this word *doulos*, I associate it with great men of God like Paul, Timothy, James and Jude. It's an honorable title. It's a word that conveys dignity, dedication, and esteem, but that's because of the way it is presented in the New Testament. Our Biblical culture has elevated the word and dignified it, but the culture of the day made no such association.

They had *douloi*; they knew people who were *douloi*. They were menial servants. They were the lowest of the household slaves who washed the feet of guests who entered the house. There was no respect or dignity

associated with it. In Bible times *doulos* was a term without dignity and respect. It's only the Biblical culture that brought it to a place of honor and dignity.

In John chapter 13 when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, he was changing the way people thought of the lowliness of service. If you remember, Peter had a problem with it. Peter said, "You'll never wash my feet." He had a problem associating the lowliness of the work of a *doulos* with his master, Jesus Christ. Jesus was teaching and making a point. He was changing the way people thought about serving. After washing their feet, teaching by word and example he said, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

It was men like Jesus and Paul and Timothy and James and Jude that brought dignity to the service of a *doulos*. It took some time before the term changed. The Greek culture, like the Roman one, treated slaves harshly. The Roman and Greek idea of authority was to rule not serve. Serving God was all right, but serving others was hard to accept. That required quite a paradigm shift for them. Jesus was aware of the culture and intended to change it.

Matthew 20:25-28: But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.²⁶ But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;²⁷ And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant [*doulos*]:²⁸ Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Jude calls himself a *doulos* to identify himself as a servant. Contending for the faith is a task of a *doulos* who responds to the direction of his master with obedience. We will see that contending for the faith is not exercising dominion over the brethren but rather serving them in love.

The order of the words, Jesus Christ, is correct, and it too, emphasizes serving. (Do you see how I am trying hard to make a point to always say serving and not service.) Everyone likes service, especially when they are the ones being served. I say *serving* instead of *service* to make a point that the giving end of the service, the serving is as honorable and blessed as the receiving end.

Brother of James: This James of whom Jude speaks is the head of the church in Jerusalem in Acts 15 and the author of the epistle with his name on it. Neither this James or Judas were numbered among the apostles that were chosen by Jesus, and apparently did not believe in Jesus until after the resurrection (Matthew 12:46). However, Galatians 1:19 suggests that James may have been ordained as an apostle after Jesus' resurrection as he rose to serve as the leader of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13; 12:17; 21:18; Galatians 2:9, 12; I Corinthians 15:7). [The Companion Bible Appendix 182 on the Lord's Brethren is good for further study. See John 7:5.]

Affirmations: I'm honored to be a *doulos*. I proudly serve the body of Christ.
Recommended Reading: Day 17: I John 3-4; Day 67: I John 5.

Jude 1-2: Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, *and* called: ² Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

The next part of the salutation identifies to whom it was written, and it, too, has three parts. It was written to them:

That are sanctified [beloved] by God the Father: The critical Greek texts indicate that *hagiazō*, sanctified, should be replaced by *agapaō*, loved or beloved. The perfect tense of the word here indicates past completed action with present ongoing result or effect. God placed His love on believers before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4-5) with results that continue in the present and into the future.

Preserved in Jesus Christ: This is the only salutation in New Testament that has preserved, *tēreō*, included. *Tēreō* is used five times in Jude and is one of the key concepts. It denotes watching, guarding and keeping one's eye on something. It implies watchful care and close attention and stresses the absolute protection and preservation of the believer by Jesus Christ.

John 17:11-15: And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep [*tēreō*] through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.¹² While I was with them in the world, I kept [*tēreō*] them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept [*phulassō*], and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.¹³ And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.¹⁴ I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.¹⁵ I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep [*tēreō*] them from the evil.

The saints have been kept or guarded by God the Father with the result that they are the objects of His present and permanent, watchful care. The words “Jesus Christ” are in the simple dative case. God the Father is keeping them guarded for Jesus Christ. Our Lord prayed (John 17:11 above) and committed the saints into the watchful care of God the Father, and He is keeping them for Jesus Christ, not in the sense that the Father is keeping the saints in lieu of His Son keeping them, but in the sense that the Father is keeping them so that they might continue to be forever the possession of the Lord Jesus.

Called: “Called” is the Greek word *klētos* from *kaleō* meaning called, invited, or welcomed and was originally used to designate those invited to a banquet. Barclay has a note in his commentary that says “*kaleō*” has three great areas of use. (1) It is the word for summoning a man to office, to duty, and to responsibility. The Christian is summoned to a task, to duty, to responsibility in the service of Christ. (2) It is the word for summoning a man to a feast or a festival. It is the word for an invitation to a happy occasion. The Christian is the man who is summoned to the joy of being the guest of God. (3) It is the word for summoning a man to judgment. It is the word for calling a man to court that he may give account of himself. The Christian is in the end summoned to appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

Many translations placed “called” first, before the other two phrases that describe the called ones. Among which are the: ASV, ERV, ESV, NAS, NET, NIV, and RSV. Some Greek manuscripts from the tenth to thirteenth centuries add a word meaning “Gentiles” or “nations,” which would be translated “to the called nations.” The Aramaic also supports the variant reading. The word for “called” is *klētos*, which is used in Romans 1:6-7; 8:28; I Corinthians 1:2, 24. However since the audience was primarily of the circumcision and Jude is one of the Christian Hebrew Epistles this variant should be rejected.

I Corinthians 1:24: But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

It is clear that this epistle is written to the called who had believed regarding Jesus Christ, were born again of the spirit, and were therefore part of the church of God. Verse three also adds that Jude wrote regarding the common salvation, the salvation that was common to Jews and Gentiles alike.

Affirmations: I am beloved] by God the Father. I am preserved in Jesus Christ.

Recommended Reading: Day 18: Jude BBE; Day 68: Jude BTW

Jude 2: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

As we read the greeting, we will need to remember all three of the qualities mentioned because we will not only need to receive them ourselves, but we will need to extend them to those we minister to. When contending for the faith we will need high doses of mercy, peace and love. First, we will need to recognize the difference they have made in our lives, and second, we will need to extend them to those with whom we contend for the faith. I said “high doses” because of the words, “be multiplied.” This Greek verb is in the optative mood which expresses a wish or desire.

Mercy: It is interesting that this letter on apostasy speaks of mercy, *eleos*, instead of grace, *charis*. They are close cousins, but there is a distinct difference. Grace is getting what you don’t deserve, and mercy is not getting what you do deserve. Mercy looks back on previous failure and is granted to eliminate future consequences. Grace looks forward to future success and is granted to expand previous expectations. We’ll see how mercy suits the message of Jude as we go through it.

Although the typical greeting in the church epistles written by Paul included simply grace and peace, when he wrote the leadership epistles to Timothy and Titus he added mercy. Not only do servant leaders need to appropriate mercy to themselves for their shortcomings and failures they need to extend it to those whom they serve.

God’s mercy is ready to appear in our lives and provide health, freedom, strength, liberty, wisdom and everything else we need. Indeed, Jude’s desire is that it not only appear but be multiplied. So, get ready for an abundant increase. Let’s confess that our God is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort (II Corinthians 1:3). Let’s confidently proclaim He is plenteous in mercy to us because we call upon Him. His mercy not only endures forever (Psalms 136:1), but they are new to me every morning! Great is His faithfulness! (Lamentations 3:22-23)

Peace: Peace, *eirēnē*, is a guarding fruit. It is to rule in our hearts. That means we make decisions based on peace... based on maintaining our quiet seas. If we are upset or agitated, then we take action to eliminate it. The great cargoes of life come in over quiet seas, and our peace with God maintains our quiet seas. It is opposed to disorder and has a quieting and comforting effect on us (Philippians 4:7; Colossians 3:15; I Corinthians 14:33). Enjoying and maintaining peace should be a priority in our lives. It will guard us as we contend for the faith.

We may face many storms in life. Sometimes we quiet them, and the storm dissipate. At other times the storms do not quiet, and we endure them. Regardless, we can always be peaceful, if there is not peace in our environment, then there can always be peace in our hearts.

Love: This is the second of three times we encounter the *apapaō* word family in the first three verses. The relentless devotion God has for us, we should also have for one another. We did nothing to earn it, and we must give it as freely as we received it. This is the badge of Christianity, (John 13:35) and the motivating force for all we do for God (I Corinthians 16:14). This is the only New Testament salutation with “love.”

Be multiplied: This term is used 12 times (the number of governmental or organizational perfection) and is translated multiply in all but its first use where it is translated “abound.” This phrase only occurs in the salutations of Jude and I & II Peter. It is intriguing to me that its first use in Matthew 24:12 speaks of iniquity abounding, as the reason that the love of many shall wax cold. Of course, “to multiply” is a rapid form of increase that escalates in terms of quality, quantity, and size becoming fuller and more abundant.

As we saw, Jude is writing to born-again believers. His inclusion of “preserved” stresses the absolute protection and preservation of the believer in Jesus Christ. Indeed, both the first two verses and the last two verses of Jude give assurance to the believers that the judgment God describes for the ungodly will not come upon them. As we proceed into the epistle, we will be blessed to remember this assurance.

Affirmations: I enjoy God’s mercy. I have peace that passes all understanding.

Recommended Reading: Day 19: Jude CJB; Day 69: Jude CEV.

Jude 3: Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Verse 3 begins the first section on the believer and the faith. In it we find the central theme of the epistle, contending for the faith. That is the main message and challenge presented in this short letter. Although it is easier and more comfortable just to teach and preach about the blessings of our common salvation than it is to challenge folks to contend for the faith, the latter is quite often, more “needful.”

After the salutation, Jude immediately handles the purpose for the epistle. What he intended to do was interrupted by God, Who had something else for him to do. He wanted to write about the common salvation, but God insisted that he exhort them “to earnestly contend for the faith” instead.

Verse 3 tells us that this is written to the beloved, the church of born-again believers. This term is one of special endearment used of people with whom one has a close and special relationship. The word carries the meaning of someone who was deeply cared for and completely devoted to. They were not only beloved to God; they were beloved to Jude.

Jude so loved them that he gave all (the greatest possible degree) of diligence to write to them. This describes one so diligent, excited, and energetic that he puts his whole heart into the principle or task before him. This word, *spoudē*, signifies doing something with excitement, enthusiasm, and haste because it is so important, serious, or urgent. It means to give one’s best efforts to a project or task and to do it enthusiastically. He intended to write about the common salvation, but he didn’t. The common salvation is that which Jesus Christ made available to Jew and Gentile alike. This common salvation is what Jude shared with those to whom he was writing. The critical Greeks texts read, “our common salvation.”

But, like I said, he never did. Instead, the King James Version says that “it was needful for” him to change and exhort them “to earnestly contend for the faith.” However, “needful” doesn’t approach the intensity that the Greek word carries. There was a divine compulsion. It’s the Greek word *anankē* which means a necessity; a compelling need requiring immediate action. It refers to accomplishing something compulsory or absolutely required. Paul felt the same obligation to preach the gospel (I Corinthians 9:16).

Jude said he was a slave and a slave does what his master requires. Jude had no choice; he had to do what his lord requested. It was laid upon him as a burden he couldn’t ignore. We know the Word of God was written by revelation. Jude simply did as he was told.

The repetition of “to write” is the figure of speech polyptoton, the repetition of the same part of speech in different inflections. It calls attention to the act of writing, giving us the purpose and intent for doing so. Jude gave the utmost haste, earnestness and diligence to write and although what he intended to communicate was altered, the care and urgency of doing so was not. The writing took the form of an exhortation. He is calling them to his side to admonish, beseech, beg, entreat, encourage, comfort, and strengthen them to contend earnestly for the faith, the faith which was once delivered to the saints.

The Greek word translated “that ye should earnestly contend” is *epagonizomai*. It is used no place else in the New Testament. It means to “agonize with intense determination.” The Louw-Nida lexicon says it means “to exert intense effort on behalf of something.” That something here is “the faith,” which we will handle tomorrow. It comes from the root word, *agonizomai* with the preposition *epi* on the front of it. *Epi* when used of purpose in compound words may intensify the meaning or add the idea of “for” or “unto.” Prefixed to *agonizomai*, it points to the purpose for which we contend, i.e. “the faith.” This unique compound verb pictures a person taking his or her stand on top of something an adversary desires to take away, and fighting to defend and retain it (Note: G. F. C. Fronmüller, “The Epistle General of Jude,” in Lange’s Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, 12:5:13.).

The root, *agonizomai*, transliterated into the English “agonize,” was commonly used in connection with the Greek stadium to denote a strenuous struggle to overcome an opponent. It was also used more generally, of any conflict, contest, debate, or lawsuit involving the expenditure of all one’s energy in order to prevail. We are to contend “for” or “on behalf of” the faith. This is serious, urgent business. We will see more tomorrow.

Affirmations: I change my plans when God says to. I fight to defend and retain what God has given me.

Recommended Reading: Day 20: Jude DBY; Day 70: Jude DRA.

Jude 3: Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

What is the faith for which we have been directed to contend? Jude 3 attaches the definite article to “faith” to clearly define or identify something that it is not vague or general, but rather, fixed, precise, and exact having fixed limits bounded with precision. It is used so that we may be positive, certain, or sure about what is intended.

The definite article is used to set it apart as the right way to believe in contrast to all other ways to believe. It is used of the content (beliefs and doctrines) of what Christians are supposed to believe and hold in common. There is only one faith, and the believers were instructed in it. Now we must endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace regarding that which was delivered unto us (Ephesians 4:3-6).

Ephesians 4:3-6:

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.⁴ *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ One Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

“The faith” refers to the sum or totality of what Christians believe. Approximately one-half of the 38 occurrences of the specific phrase “the faith” refer not to the action of believing but rather to what is believed. It refers to the unchangeable body of Christian truth which was once and for all delivered to the saints. That last phrase makes it obvious it references not the believers’ subjective faith but to the objective truths to which believers firmly adhere.

The faith refers to that body of doctrine that was given by God through the Apostles to the church. The word “doctrine” is found at least sixteen times in the Pastoral Epistles alone. Paul admonished both Timothy and Titus to make sure the believers were being taught “sound doctrine,” which means “healthy doctrine,” doctrine that promotes the spiritual health of the local church. Paul initially sought to destroy the faith, but he believed regarding it and then preached what he had received.

Galatians 1:23:

But they had heard only, That he [Paul speaking of himself] which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith [the true and right contend of what Christians are supposed to believe] which once he destroyed.

Paul was preaching the genuine thing. He had changed, and he challenged us to examine ourselves to see if we are faithful to it.

II Corinthians 13:5:

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

We are to contend earnestly for the faith because there are those who work against it, like Elymas in Acts 13.

Acts 13:8:

But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withheld them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith

“The faith” epitomizes what all believers are to cherish and hold fast. It is what unites us and allows us to persevere when times are tough.

Affirmations: I cherish the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. I stay faithful to the apostles teaching.

Recommended Reading: Day 21: Jude EMB; Day 71: Jude WEB.

Jude 3: Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

We saw yesterday that Paul exhorted the disciples to continue in the faith, and when individuals do so, then whole churches can get established in the faith.

Acts 16:5:

And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

Paul encouraged the Corinthians to stand fast in the faith (I Corinthians 16:13), and He also congratulated the Colossians for the steadfastness of their faith.

Colossians 2:5-7:

For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith [believing] in Christ.⁶ As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:⁷ Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in **the faith**, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

The faith includes the proper teaching of the mystery and the gospel of Jesus Christ. As Paul instructed Timothy in I Timothy 3:9 saying, “holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.” Faith is a bigger, more inclusive term and includes both of the teaching or doctrine of the mystery and the gospel. Paul also warned Timothy that some would depart from the faith.

I Timothy 4:1:

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

They don’t lose the faith of Jesus Christ that they received. What is described here is rejecting the teaching or doctrine that embodies what the faith is. The faith involves duty to others. Part of the responsibility of which the faith instructs us, is properly providing for one’s own. If one does not do so he is worse than an infidel.

I Timothy 5:8:

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

Paul remained faithful and finished his course having kept the faith. He never departed from the true doctrine.

II Timothy 4:7: I have fought [*agonizomai*] a good fight [*agon*], I have finished *my* course [*dromos*], I have kept the faith:

Paul tells Timothy toward the end of his life that he finished his course earnestly contending for the faith. Paul also encouraged Timothy to do the same in I Timothy 6:12. In order to fight the good fight, Paul had to strive for the mastery [*agonizomai*] in regard to disciplining his own life to serve God’s people. This is the outcome Jude is anticipating for his readers. Jesus Christ has promised to keep them (Jude 1) and Jude asks them to keep the faith which was once delivered to the saints.

Yes, we are contending for the faith, but the prize is people. Paul called them his “joy and crown” (Philippians 4:1). He described Epaphras as “laboring fervently” [*agonizomai*] in prayer for the Colossians (Colossians 4:12). While Paul was *epagonizomai*[ing] for the faith he was also *agonizomai*[ing], having great conflict for the people (Colossians 2:1).

Colossians 1:28-29:

Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:²⁹ Whereunto I also labour, striving [*agonizomai*] according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

God wants His people cared for, and without contending for the faith that will not be possible.

Affirmations: I care for God’s people. God works in me mightily.

Recommended Reading: Day 22: Jude ERV; Day 72: Jude ESV.

Philippians 2:3-4: *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*⁴ Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

In religious circles, we sometimes find people who are judgmental, condescending and contentious. Smug know-it-all attitudes and elitist thinking does not correlate with contending for the faith. Jesus was certainly valiant for the truth. When he invited us to learn of him, he described himself as “meek and lowly in heart” (Matthew 11:29). God also encouraged us in Ephesians 4:1b-2a “to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness, meekness and longsuffering.”

Lowliness, meekness, and longsuffering are attitudes necessary to cultivate in order to walk worthy, but we must not only think right; we must follow through with action. Unless we forbear one another in love and endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, we will never walk worthy of our calling (Ephesians 4:1).

Many times, we miss opportunities because we don’t prepare ourselves for them. We prepare ourselves in many ways. Two of the best ways are by prayer and proper attitude maintenance. Prayer allows us to bring into our relationship with God vital things on our hearts, and maintaining proper attitudes predispose us toward action that we have predetermined to take. I’d like to combine these two options and prayerfully present to God my desire to maintain a proper attitude. That’s an important part of my prayer life, “God help me to be lowly and meek. Help me to be long-suffering with people.” Not only am I putting that attitude in my mind, I’m going to God, presenting to Him my desire and asking for His help with it.

An attitude is a predisposition to act. It is not an action, but it is a mindset that leads to or directs us to act in certain ways. It is important to keep our attitudes right because it provides a necessary head-start. When our attitudes are right, as situations or opportunities present themselves, we roll right into it.

Let me give you an example using a basketball. What is a basketball predisposed to do? I’ll give you a clue. It’s round. Well, it’s predisposed to roll. If you place it on a surface that is not flat, what’s it going to do? Right, it’s going to roll. If you place it on a flat surface it will remain motionless, but if I give it the slightest little push, what’s going to happen? It’s going to roll. Why? Because it’s round; it’s predisposed to roll. My Bible is flat. It’s not predisposed to roll. It will move if I push it, but as soon as I stop pushing, what happens? It stops; it stays still.

That’s what the proper attitudes do. They predispose us to take the proper action. When our attitudes are right, we move into action without much impetus. It doesn’t take much of a push to get a basketball to roll. Neither does it take much of a stimulus for us to act when our attitudes are right. When we are lowly, meek, and long-suffering we are predisposed to walk worthy. The preposition “with” is the Greek word *meta* both times it occurs in Ephesians 4:2. This shows us that these attitudes of lowliness, meekness and longsuffering should accompany the worthy walk of a believer. Forbearing one another in love and endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace are action steps that take us further on our way to walking worthy.

As Philippians 2:3-4 above warns us, selfishness may raise its head in strife and vainglory. “Strife” refers to a desire to put one’s self forward. It’s a partisan and fractious attitude that promotes self-interest. Vainglory means empty boasting. It’s an attempt to vaunt oneself. It’s not only associated with extreme pride and boastfulness, but also excessive and ostentatious vanity. Paul challenges us to let **nothing** be done through strife or vainglory. Not one thing — we should not allow ourselves ever to act out of strife or vainglory. What do we do instead? In lowliness of mind, we esteem others better than ourselves. That’s genuine humility. “Better” means “superior” or “more important.” Servants who serve out of love esteem those they serve highly. We reckon them worthy of the service.

Although we are sons of God, we, like Jesus, take on the form of a servant and serve. He came not to be ministered unto but to minister. We follow his lead in this regard. Being convinced of our sonship is what allows us to engage in serving. Knowing whose we are and whom we serve is as important to us as it was to Paul (Acts 27:23-24). We take our direction from God. He directs us into these ministering situations. We voluntarily and genuinely esteem others worthy of being served. We treat them with honor and respect and promote their best interests. We remain thankful to God for opportunities to serve. Pleasing Him should always be our priority.

It does not say that others are better than those who serve them. It says we esteem them that way. We do not see ourselves as inferior; we are sons of God with all power. We simply esteem others to be more important than we are while we serve them. All God’s family has the same rank and privilege. When it’s our opportunity to serve, we do it knowing full well that those we are serving deserve our best effort, for we are not just serving them, we are serving God in the process. Paul knew he was not one bit behind the chiefest of the apostles, but he still chose to serve (II Corinthians 11:5; 12:11). He knew that he was not inferior to anyone, but he still esteemed others as superior to himself. That is just the simple heart of a servant. In serving people we serve the Lord.

Affirmations: I champion the truth. I put away lying and speak the truth.

Recommended Reading: Day 23: Jude ETH; Day 73: Jude GNV.

Jude 3: Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Please notice that the faith we have been looking into has been once delivered unto the saints. “Once” could also be translated “once and for all.” It is the Greek word, *hapax*, and it means a single occurrence to the exclusion of any other similar occurrences. It connotes completion, finality, or something so consummate that it needs nothing more to be added to it. It could be rendered “once and for all” or “once and never again.” The Companion Bible has a note suggesting, “once for all.” [So do the ASV, CJB, ERV, ESV, MIT, NAB, NAS, NAU, NET, NIB, NIV, NJB, NKJ, NRS, RSV, & TNIV. The GWN, NIRV, & NLT have “once for all time.” The BBE has “once and for ever.”] This word is most illuminating.

“The faith was once delivered. Jude said it had been done. Here we are, approximately 2000 years after the faith was first delivered to the saints, and we are surrounded with hundreds of sects and cults who claim to have a new word of revelation that now completes God’s word to mankind. Mohammed offered his Koran. Joseph Smith his Book of Mormon. Sun Moon his Divine Principle. Some even consider every contemporary intellectual trend as a suitable replacement for the Bible. However, any claim of additional revelation outside the Bible is evidence of apostasy (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Revelation 22:18-19).

In his last message delivered to the pastors of the church in Ephesus and recorded in Acts 20, Paul warned them that after his departure “shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.” He also warned that men shall “arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” (Acts 20:29-30). The wolves who pervert the faith are professing believers. They are pastors and church leaders who have gone astray.

There are some striking things about Jude’s instruction. It says first, that our faith is not something that anybody has made up; it was delivered to us. It is not fabricated, or worked up by a collection of individuals or church councils. It is one body of truth that was consistently delivered by authoritative persons, the apostles. It has come to us through them. Furthermore, Jude says that it was once for all delivered. It was only given at one time in the history of the world. It does not need any additions. The sense of these words is “once for all turned over for safekeeping.” The Lord has entrusted us with His Word. It is completed and canonized. We must keep it, uncorrupted and intact, for every generation until He returns. This we do by preaching and teaching all of it to every creature, to the greatest extent we possibly can.

Now some think that contending for the faith means to use the Bible as a club with which to bludgeon people. Such people feel that they need to be very contentious in contending for the faith. But this is not what Jude has in mind at all. He is simply talking about the need for proclaiming the truth. As Charles Spurgeon has taught: “The truth is like a lion. Whoever heard of defending a lion? Just turn it loose and it will defend itself.” This is the way the word of God is. If we begin to proclaim it, it will defend itself.

The church is always one generation short of extinction. If our generation fails to guard the truth and entrust it to our children, then that will be the end! When we think of the saints and martyrs who suffered and died so that we might have God’s truth, it should make us want to stand up and take our place beside them being faithful unto death.

We must contend without being contentious and be confident without being arrogant. We must choose winning ways and winning words in the pursuit of winning hearts for Him. We must be tough as nails on the truth, but soft as butter on people. We can refuse to compromise on the truth, but be flexible in our methods, becoming “all things to all men” that by all means we might save some (I Corinthians 9:22).

Finally, note that the safeguarding of the faith was not merely to specially trained theologians or other professionals, but to “the saints.” Every believer is commanded to “earnestly contend for the faith.” “Saints” is the Greek word *hagios* used of those set apart by the gift of holy spirit. It refers to all born again believers in our administration. They were the recipients of this special delivery package. It had been hidden away until such time as God revealed it to His apostles and prophets. Jude 3 which details the purpose of the epistle begins with “beloved” and ends with “saints.” It is this special group of beloved saints that Jude challenges to “earnestly contend for the faith.” This group includes both you and me. It’s time for us to get busy!

Affirmations: I trust the Bible to be complete and contain what I need. I am a beloved saint of God.

Recommended Reading: Day 24: Jude GWN; Day 74: Jude GNT.

Jude 4: For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jude 4 begins the next section of the structure, Apostates Described. An apostate is a person who forsakes or abandons the faith as represented by the apostles' doctrine, and apostasy is a total desertion of or departure from the apostles' doctrine. It differs from a heretic and heresy, which is limited to the rejection of one or more Christian doctrines by one who espouses an overall adherence to the faith. Apostasy is not just indifference or error or even getting tangled up with a heresy. Rather it is a rejection and departure from the truth once adhered to. This section begins in Jude 4 (above) by telling us why he is writing to exhort them to contend earnestly for the faith.

“For” is “gar,” a contraction of *ge*, (verily) and *ara*, (therefore, further) meaning “the fact is” or “in fact.” It has a more extensive meaning than the English word “for,” expressing the reason, cause, motive, or principle, etc. of what has been said previously. It could be translated “truly therefore” or “indeed.” Thayer says it is a particle of affirmation and conclusion. “Truly therefore” there are certain men crept in unawares. It was necessary to write because there were certain men who crept in unawares.

“Crept in unawares” is the Greek word, *pareisdunō*. It only occurs here. It literally means to settle in alongside. Thayer says it means “to enter secretly,” or “slip in stealthily.” Friberg adds “join a group unnoticed and worm one’s way in.” Loew-Nida adds “to join surreptitiously with evil intent.” It is in the past tense indicating that the action has already happened. This sinister opposition had already entered the picture. These ungodly men ingrain themselves into people’s sentiments by their plausible pretenses, in an attempt to produce an altering or transforming influence upon them with their errors.

These skillfully wicked men pretend to be religious teachers, but their doctrines impugn the very foundations of truth. Peter describes the same people saying they, “privily shall bring in damnable heresies.” They came in “by stealth;” they had not come by a bold and open avowal of their real sentiments. They professed to teach the truth, when in fact they denied some of its fundamental doctrines; they professed to be holy, when in fact they were living scandalous lives. There has always been those who have been willing to do this for base purposes.

Jude warns that these certain men crept in unnoticed. They didn’t wear a “Danger: False Teacher” name tag. Their stealth is what made them so dangerous, no one knew they were there. God’s people were being hoodwinked. God knew, and He is warning His people about them. God wants them confronted; He wants His church to handle this situation. Yes, they may be hidden to some believers but as far as God is concerned, their condemnation was marked out long ago and their judgment is established and assured.

When Peter communicates this warning in II Peter 2:1 he puts it in the future tense, saying, “there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies.” Jude’s warning in verse 4 puts it in the past tense. Between the two occasions these ungodly men made their entrance.

Jesus had warned of this kind of wolves in sheep’s clothing.

Matthew 7:15-20: Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.¹⁶ Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?¹⁷ Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.¹⁸ A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.¹⁹ Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.²⁰ Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Paul was put in peril by false brethren.

II Corinthians 11:26: *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine* own countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren;

Paul also warned of them in several other places which we will get into tomorrow.

Affirmations: I am wary of false prophets & teachers. I help my friends stay out of peril from false brethren.
Recommended Reading: Day 25: Jude HCS; Day 75: Jude MIT.

Jude 4: For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul also warned of the same kind of people in his writings.

Galatians 2:4-5: And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: ⁵ To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

I Timothy 4:1: Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

Ephesians 4:14: That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Philippians 3:17-19: Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. ¹⁸ (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹ Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

Titus 1:9-11: Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. ¹⁰ For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: ¹¹ Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

The phrase “*before of old ordained to this condemnation*” means their appearance and sinful work was predicted or prophesized of. “*Were before ordained*” is the Greek word *prographō*. It occurs five times. It has two usages: one, “*to write before or previously*,” and two, “*to write before as a public declaration, notice, or placard*.” It occurs with the first meaning twice in Romans 15:4 and in Ephesians 3:3.

Romans 15:4: For whatsoever things were written aforetime [*prographō*] were written [*prographō*] for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Ephesians 3:3: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore [*prographō*] in few words,

It occurs with the second meaning here in Jude and in Galatians 3:1.

Galatians 3:1: O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ *hath been evidently set forth* [*prographō*, to write before as a public declaration], crucified among you?

It occurs in Jude with the Greek word *palai* (of old, in times past). Walter Cummins in his working translation renders it: “*those of whom a public declaration was written in times past*.” The whole phrase used here is a parenthetical explanation that ties those who slipped into the Church to the examples written about in times past. This may refer back to II Peter or it may refer to other Old Testament records. The nature of the threatened danger is serious enough to have been predicted long ago.

The Greek word for “*of old*” may, on the contrary, be used of even a recent past, as in Mark 15:44 and II Peter 1:9. Therefore it may refer to previous prophetic utterances of the same type as we find in I Timothy 4:1-2 and II Peter 2:1, which had already pointed to such men as the coming danger of the Church.

Condemnation is the Greek word *krima*, meaning a judgment, often a condemnatory sentence. “*This*” is a demonstrative pronoun which points to the same judgment that occurred in times past to others and is discussed in Jude 5-7.

Affirmations: I take heed to God's warnings. I obey the truth.

Recommended Reading: Day 26: Jude MGI; Day 76: Jude MSG.

Jude 4: For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying ~~the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.~~ [The last phrase should read, “our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” As in NLT, ESV, BSB, NAS, ERV, NET and others.]

Now we get into the description as to who these certain men are. Following the style of the rest of the epistle, it comes in a triad. First, they are called ungodly men: “ungodly” is *asebēs* meaning “destitute of reverential awe toward God, contemning God, impious” according to Thayer. Friberg adds “irreverent, godless.” These men live without any regard for God. There is no Greek word for “men,” a better generic word would be “people.”

Second, they are identified as turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness. This is the opposite of legalism; this is license. Lasciviousness is “unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, wantonness, insolence, outrageousness, shamelessness.” It is used in the plural here to address the immensity of the problem, all the different kinds or manners of lasciviousness. It denotes conduct shocking to public decency which rejects restraint and indulges in lawless insolence. These people use their freedom in Christ as an occasion to the flesh. They exchanged or transposed the grace of God for unbridled lust. They still talked about grace but in reality, they twisted, abused, misused, and perverted it.

It is interesting to me to note that Paul warned the Gentile church of similar danger. However, Paul’s warning in Galatians 2:4-5 dealt with legalism that had crept in and Jude’s dealt with license. Both legalism and license, are opposing attacks on our liberty in Christ. Both of them are dangerous and insidious.

Lasciviousness here refers to sin that is practiced without shame, without any sense of conscience or decency. Although it is usually used in the sense of sensual sins, such as sexual immorality, it can also be used in the sense of brazen anti-biblical teaching, when the truth is denied and lies are taught without shame. Both ideas may be intended here, because as the rest of the epistle develops, we’ll see these certain men had both moral problems and doctrinal problems.

Third, they “deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” The word “God” in this phrase is not in many of the critical texts. There are also two different Greek words for “lord,” *despotēs* and *kurios*. The word *despotēs* was primarily a correlative of *doulos* (servant or bond slave), whereas *kurios* was applicable to many other relationships. *Despotēs* is used of one who wields unrestricted power and absolute domination, confessing no limitations or restraints. The English word “master” is sometimes used with reference to a master of servants, and it might better represent the Greek word *despotēs* as it is used in the Scriptures. The more usual word *kurios* (lord) is used in this verse in the phrase “Lord Jesus Christ.” Since Jude initially identified himself as a servant of Jesus Christ it is likely that *despotēs* refers to Jesus Christ. Referring to Jesus this way makes their denial even more brazen.

These ungodly people deny our only master and lord, Jesus Christ. Note the word “only.” There is no other Master than the Lord Jesus Christ, from God’s viewpoint. He alone is our master. The word “deny” means “abnegate, repudiate, abjure, reject, or refuse something.” They deny Jesus his rightful position as master and lord and act without any deference to him.

This word “deny,” *arneomai*, comes with a warning in its first occurrence in Matthew 10:33 where Jesus said, “whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.” A similar warning also occurs in Luke 12:9. In the gospels, *aneomai* is also used of Peter’s denials, John the Baptist denying that he was the Christ, and the crowd denying they had touched Jesus when he perceived that power went out from him. Although it does not appear in the church epistles, it does occur six times in the pastoral epistles.

These false teachers who crept in unnoticed look the role and play the part, but the reality is that they are wolves in sheep’s clothing. Although they masquerade as ministers of the light but they are indeed, ministers of darkness. Peter had already warned them that this would happen (II Peter 3:1-3:4), and God had already made a public declaration about this kind of person in the Old Testament. They only go unnoticed because the believers are asleep at the switch.

Affirmations: I look to Jesus as my master and lord. I stay vigilant in exercising oversight.

Recommended Reading: Day 27: Jude MRD; Day 77: Jude NAB.

Galatians 5:1: Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

These ungodly men who turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ, succeed because no one contends with them. Jude calls the believers to contend for the truth of the faith, for if they do not, it is only a matter of time before it is corrupted. So insidious is the deception that it will occur without the believers even realizing what has happened. Since they are shrewd in their misuse of the Word of God, they are able to trick and entice God's very elect.

The lie that allows for such erosion of the truth is that false teaching is no big deal. It is insignificant and it is not something we really need to be concerned about. Although the false teaching may be difficult to identify, the real reason it is not perceived to be the threat that it really is, is because it creeps in unnoticed.

We are living in a day and time of tolerance. We are trained to say, "Whatever you want to believe is perfectly all right. After all, you have a right to your own beliefs and I have no right to say that you are wrong. I hold my beliefs, you hold your beliefs; I tolerate you and you tolerate me." It's the number one virtue in our society today; it has taken the moniker of "correctness." It is not correct to say, "That's wrong!" Then I would be intolerant and you would quickly become intolerant of my intolerance. That's why it is important to contend without being contentious. Otherwise contending for the faith will be a dangerous thing to do.

What some people see as freedom, is not freedom at all. It is a return to bondage. That is why God exhorts us to stand fast in His liberty. People seem to have a tendency to gravitate to the extremes. One extreme is legalism. We have a problem; let us make a rule for it. Attempts at legislating spirituality within the church have never worked and never will work. Laying down the law—dictating what is right and wrong—neither empowers people to do what is right nor to stop doing what is wrong.

Of course, the other extreme of license is not any more beneficial. Our liberty is not an undisciplined freedom without accountability. License provides an occasion to the flesh with its excessive and controlling appetites. License usually leads to the abuse of privilege. Walking in the spirit does not mean I do everything I want to do! Yes, all things are lawful, but not all things are expedient or profitable—not all things will build you up" (I Corinthians 6:12, 10:23)

So, what keeps us in balance? How do we stay put in our liberty and not swing between the extremes of legalism and license? The key lies in developing our relationship with our loving heavenly Father. Christianity is a way of a Father with His family, and in every family there are responsibilities and accountability. We cannot live meaningful lives without loving relationships. The foundation of all our relationships is the one we share with God. It provides the basis from which all others are built. God established a permanent relationship with us by putting His seed in us. Now, we can choose to do whatever we want, but how should we respond to such a loving heavenly Father?

Our freedom is in our ability to choose to live responsibly within the family of God. We are not independent "humanoid units." God is our Father, and we have a family. Our freedom, our identity, our success, our fulfillment in life will come from our relationship with Him and from other relationships within this wonderful family of God.

Christianity is a way of a Father with His family. Walking by the spirit is relationship not regimen — family life not formulas. Within the confines of God's Word and will, we are free to nurture a relationship with God, which is the essence of walking in the Spirit. We should nurture relationships with our brothers and sisters within the family, also. The love of God is the glue that keeps our relationships together, and the integrity of God's Word in our lives provides the strength of the adhesion. The love of God unites and binds us in such wonderful relationships (Colossians 3:14).

This love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the holy spirit which has been given unto us (Romans 5:5). We simply renew our minds and manifest it. We can love with the love of God, just like Jesus did. We can love like Jesus Christ loved because his ability is in us, and we are **as he is** (I John 4:17). The more we recognize our identity in Christ and the more we are conformed to his image (Romans 8:29), the more we can experience the freedom God desires for us. Trying to reduce walking in the spirit to a formula or regimen can only frustrate us.

We live in a new Administration. This is a new day and time to which the world still has not awakened to. I Corinthians 2:9 says concerning the great mystery that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things [concerning the great mystery of Christ in us the hope of glory] which God hath prepared for them that love him." Our freedom in Christ allows us to walk into the experiential reality of the great mystery. We are on the greatest adventure there has ever been. We can discover the great realities of our new man and the power God has given us to live and give within His family. It's worth fighting for!

Affirmations: I stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made me free. I am not entangled with the yoke of bondage.

Recommended Reading: Day 28: Jude NCV; Day 78: Jude NET.

Jude 5-8: I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord [God], having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.⁶ And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he [the Lord God] hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.⁷ Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.⁸ Likewise also these *filthy* dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

In this section, which describes apostasy in the Old Testament, we find three examples of judgments and three descriptions of filthy dreamers. In the last section when the apostates were described Jude pointed to judgments that occurred in times past to others which the present-day apostates would also suffer. Now in verse 5-8 he reminds us of the judgments he was referring to and who these people really are. The examples he uses are of judgments on corporate groups: Israel, the angels that fell and the communities of Sodom and Gomorrah. They were dealt with collectively. Later, in verse 11, he will deal with the judgments of three individuals.

Jude purposefully and deliberately reminds them saying, “I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this.” “Will” is a translation of *boulomai*, referring to a deliberate choice, showing purpose. It is a strong term that underlines the predetermined and determined intention driving the plan, wish, or resolve. “This” should be the word “all” (i.e. all *these things*) according to most critical Greek texts. Jude knew he wasn’t telling them anything new. This is the first indication that he was writing to believers from a primarily Jewish background. They were already taught these examples, but they needed to hear it again and apply it to their present situation. Ideally, every believer should know exactly what these allusions from the Old Testament are. If we aren’t familiar with them we need to widen our scope and deepen our understanding of the Bible. Spurgeon and Calvin both speak to point of returning to truths already known.

“As for the root facts, the fundamental doctrines, the primary truths of Scripture, we must from day to day insist upon them. We must never say of them, ‘Everybody knows them’; for, alas! Everybody forgets them.” *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit: Sermons, Parts 309-320* By Charles Haddon Spurgeon, p. 194.

“The use of God’s Word is not only to teach what we could not have otherwise known, but also to rouse us to a serious meditation of those things which we already understand, and not to suffer us to grow torpid in a cold knowledge.” *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*, John Calvin, p.434.

In the first example, which is all we will handle today, he reminds them of is the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. You can find the record in Numbers 14. God delivered His people out of slavery in Egypt and they came to a place called Kadesh Barnea, on the threshold of the Promised Land. But at Kadesh Barnea, the people refused to trust God and go into the Promised Land of Canaan. Therefore, almost none of the adult population who left Egypt entered into the Promised Land. Instead, they wandered in the wilderness for forty years. That allowed the unbelievers who refused to take the land and were over the age of twenty to die in the wilderness before Joshua, Caleb and the rest of the people who believed God to take the land to enter into it.

“Afterward” is the Greek word for “second” or “secondly.” God’s deliverance had a second part. Yes, he brought His people into the promised land, but only those who believed got to enter. The second part entailed waiting around 40 years while the unbelievers all died off. Psalm 95 describes how the Lord reacted to their unbelief.

Psalm 95:10-11: Forty years long was I grieved with *this* generation, and said, It *is* a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:¹¹ Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

These verses in Psalms are also quoted in Hebrews 3. When God summarizes this in Hebrews 3, He says in verse 19 that they could not enter in because of their unbelief. They had freewill, but there are consequences to unbelief.

Affirmations: I heed God’s warnings. I root out unbelief in my life when I detect it.

Recommended Reading: Day 29: Jude NIRV; Day 79: Jude NIV.

Jude 6: And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he [the Lord God] hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

The second example concerns the angels that fell. This refers to the angels that followed Lucifer in rebellion to God. However, Jude is not speaking about all of the angels, but rather only those that caused the degradation in the days of Noah.

I Peter 3:19-20: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; ²⁰ Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

These spirits in prison are restricted to a place called *tartarus*, which is not *sheol*, *hades* or hell. *Tartarus*, a term also used in Greek mythology, was a place of punishment for the departed spirits of the very wicked, particularly rebellious gods. In Greek mythology it was the place where the Titans and Giants which rebelled against Zeus, the Father of gods and men, were kept.

II Peter 2:4: For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell [consigned them to *tartarus*], and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved [*tēreō*] unto judgment;

Jude tells us that these angels “kept not their first estate but left their own habitation.” Their first estate is where the Lord had created and placed them so that they could serve Him. However, they left their assigned habitation and are now suffering for it. They committed a terrible atrocity by willingly rebelling against God and following Lucifer. Their current plight is described as being “reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” They are isolated and restricted in a place of utter or complete darkness. Because of the havoc they caused in Noah’s day they are no longer allowed contact with people but are restrained in darkness until the judgment of the great day.

These angels chose to leave “*their first estate*.” They deserted during conflict, battle. They exercised their freewill, having full knowledge of what God had ordained them to do, they willingly refused to believe Him and thus they condemned themselves by their rebellion. In the same way, Jude is warning people that the improper exercise of their freewill can put them in serious trouble, too. There are often consequences to bad decisions.

Let me go off on a little tangent for a moment. Do you remember what God promised after the flood? He promised there would never be another flood and he gave the sign of a rainbow to guarantee it.

Genesis 9:9-17: And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; ¹⁰ And with every living creature that *is* with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. ¹¹ And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. ¹² And God said, This *is* the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations: ¹³ I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴ And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: ¹⁵ And I will remember my covenant, which *is* between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶ And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* upon the earth. ¹⁷ And God said unto Noah, This *is* the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that *is* upon the earth.

How could God guarantee it would never happen again. He could do so because he kept the angels who were responsible for all the evil that necessitated it, to be reserved in everlasting chains under darkness until they are judged in the future. Since they are not free to infiltrate and contaminate mankind, there will be no need to purge and cleanse the planet again.

Affirmations: I do my best to carry out God’s assignments. I’m so thankful God is watching over things.
Recommended Reading: Day 30: Jude NJB; Day 80: Jude NKJ.

Jude 7-8: Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.
⁸ Likewise also these *filthy* dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

The third example is Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them. They were judged for giving themselves over to fornication and going after strange flesh. They were set forth as an example. Peter also addresses the problem of false prophets and false teachers using Sodom and Gomorrah as an example

II Peter 2:3-6: And through covetousness shall they [the false prophets and false teachers of 2:1] with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. ⁴ For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; ⁵ And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; ⁶ And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

Anyone born-again is not in danger of losing their eternal life. Their standing assures them of being forever with the Lord; it's their state now that suffers.

II Peter 2:20-22: For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end [their life in this world entangled and overcome by the pollutions of the world] is worse with them than the beginning [before they were born again.] ²¹ For it had been better for them [now during their sojourn on earth] not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. ²² But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Similar to the angels that fell, the Sodomites chose homosexuality, a lifestyle they knew was wrong. How important our freewill choices appear when seen in light of these examples. “Likewise,” in verse eight means, “in like manner” or “in the same way.” “The filthy dreamers” of verse eight refers back to those who “crept in unawares” in verse four. These dreamers in our times will suffer the same way as those Jude just used as examples. The choice of “dreamer” to describe them offers at least two possibilities. Either they were out of touch with reality, living in a dream world or they claimed to have prophetic dreams, which were really deceptions. (See Deuteronomy 13:1-5 and Jeremiah 23:25-32.)

The Greek text of Jude eight has no word for “filthy.” It also adds a word that is not translated into English in the KJV. The Greek particle *mem* meaning “indeed” or “truly” describes their defilement. These dreamers are, also, described three ways. The first is marked by lust; the second is marked by rebellion and the third is marked by irreverence. They “defile the flesh (lust), despise dominion (rebellion), and speak evil of dignities (irreverence).” They defile the flesh by indulging it. They despise or reject any authority or lordship including that of Jesus Christ (Do you remember verse 4? See also Luke 10:16). They so wanted to be in authority that they rejected the authority of God, and they rejected those God put in authority.

The third of the descriptive characteristics is that they “speak evil of dignities.” In the over 30 translations I checked there were only two who translated, *doxa*, the Greek word for “dignities” as “glory” (Magiera NT Peshitta Translation) or “matters of glory” (Walter Cummins working translation). The rest use “dignities,” “rulers,” “angelic or celestial beings,” “glorious ones,” “those in authority” and “majesties.” The Greek refers to not just “persons” but also “things.” Of course, Titus 3:2 directs us “to speak evil of no man.”

II Peter 2:12 also warns against those who “speak evil of the things that they understand not.” They blaspheme or speak slanderously regarding matters of glory, whether it be God’s people, God’s Word or other things of God. “Glory” in the Greek text is in the plural and refers to all kinds of matters of glory. What they should laud, they slandered.

As the next section begins, we find Jude using a specific illustration from the supernatural realm to clarify the point he made of not speaking evil of dignities. If Michael the archangel acts with courteous regard and respect for the devil, how should we act?

Affirmations: I will not defile my flesh, rebel against authority, or speak evil irreverently of glorious things.
 Recommended Reading: Day 31: Genesis 19; Day 81: II Peter 2.

Jude 9-10: Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.¹⁰ But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

We have now reached our section on apostasy in the supernatural realm. It starts noting how Michael contended with the devil over the body of Moses. Jude contrasts the arrogance of these filthy dreamers with the behavior of the archangel Michael, who, when challenging Satan himself would not speak arrogantly, but used the Word of the Lord.

The mention of this is one of several allusions to Old Testament events that are found only in the New Testament. This is an example of the figure of speech *hysteresis* or subsequent narration. It is where further details of long prior events are given. Nowhere else, do we read about this contention.

Other examples include: the Second Coming prophecy of Enoch (Jude 14-15), that Noah was a preacher of righteousness (II Peter 2:5), that Lot was a righteous man (II Peter 2:7-8), the names of the two magicians in Egypt who withstood Moses (II Timothy 3:8), that Elijah prayed for the rain to stop for 3^{1/2} years (James 5:17, the account in I Kings 17 & 18 never linking the long drought in Ahab's day to Elijah's prayers. See also Luke 4:25) and that the Pharaoh of the Exodus was not Egyptian (Acts 7:18, "another" being *heteros*, of a different kind; compare Isaiah 52:4). Another similar example of information being found in an unusual place is our Lord's statement that "it is more blessed to give than to receive" that is found in Acts 20:35 instead of in one of the four gospels.

I mentioned as I closed the last section that Jude would be using a specific illustration from the supernatural realm to clarify the point he made of not speaking evil of dignities in this section. I asked the question that if Michael the archangel acts with courteous regard and respect for the devil, how should we act?

Jude wouldn't use this as an illustration if his readers were unaware of it. Although we find nothing written of in the Old Testament it would not have been a very effective illustration if it left his readers scratching their heads in wonder.

Jude 9: Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed [*dialogomai*, "had a dialog with" used 13 times 10 of which are in Acts] about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

In my thinking this is quite a strange example. If I were to give an example of not speaking evil of dignities, I'm not sure this is where my thoughts would go. Surely, God's archangel on assignment from God would have the authority to dress down, reprimand or scold the devil. However, he does not. Michael, despite the fact that he is dealing with his adversary, still has to recognize his rank. Jude describes Michael's action with another triplet: 1) he disputed about the body of Moses, 2) he dared not bring a railing accusation and 3) he said, "The Lord rebuke thee."

Among the biggest errors God's people make when dealing with the adversary is to ignore or not recognize him and to treat him glibly, flippantly. Even though Michael was doing the will of God in obedience to divine command, and even though the devil opposed him seeking to avert God's purposes, Michael resisted the temptation to bring a railing accusation and simply said, "The Lord rebuke thee."

The point seems to be that if Michael, who has so much power, authority and knowledge of the truth, is careful to respect the God-given dignity of a fallen angel, then why should we, mere men, speak contemptuously of the principalities and the powers in high places?

"Archangel" is the Greek, *archangelos*, a combination of *archē* (leader, chief) and *angelos* (messenger, agent, or angel). It is always used in the singular. There can be properly only one *archangel*, one chief or head of the angelic host. Michael is designated here as the chief of the spirit messengers who remained faithful to God after Lucifer and his cohort of angelic accomplices fell. Michael may have only been given this appellation after Lucifer vacated the position. "Michael" means "he who is like unto God."

However, questions still remain. What is this about the body of Moses? Why are either of them concerned about it? There are over 500 Old Testament references to Moses, and only one refers to his body.

Affirmations: I follow Michael's example. I use the Word of the Lord when rebuking evil spirits.

Recommended Reading: Day 32: Jude NLT; Day 82: Zechariah 3:1-2. Daniel 10:10-13, 21; 12:1; Revelation 12:7.

Jude 9-10: Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.¹⁰ But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

However, questions still remain. What is this about the body of Moses? Why are either of them concerned about it? There are over 500 Old Testament references to Moses, and only one refers to his body.

Deuteronomy 34:5-6: So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.⁶ And he [the Lord] buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

Moses was not allowed to go into the Promised Land. He was allowed to go to the mountain tops to see the Promised land, but he was not allowed to enter therein. Moses even made several requests until God finally told him to not bring it up again. He could see it from afar, but he could not go into it (Deuteronomy 3:23-28). He dies, and the Lord buries him. He does it personally without an agent acting on His behalf. It is like when he closed the door of the Ark (Genesis 7:16).

Targums are the distinctive designation of Aramaic translations, paraphrases or commentaries on the Old Testament. The Targum of Jonathan tells of the tradition that sprung up about how Michael and Satan fought over the body of Moses. I am not bringing this up suggesting that the targum validates Jude. Jude is true because it was written by God. The targum just validates how the Israelites knew about the example.¹

For some reason God wanted the place of Moses' burial kept secret. He wanted to deny people access to it. Knowing how Israel turned the brazen serpent into an idol (Numbers 21:8-9 and II Kings 18:4), it would seem logical that the devil wanted to use Moses' body in the same way to lead Israel astray into idolatry. The Roman Catholic veneration of the bones of the saints, placing remnants of them in every church altar provides further reason to think the devil may have had that in mind. The incident recorded in II Kings 13:21 where a dead body was brought to life when the corpse made contact with the bones of Elisha may lend further support for that idea. It seems that God simply wanted to remove the temptation to turn the body of Moses into a fetish by denying people access to it.

But for Jude, the main point isn't *why* Michael disputed, but *how* he disputed with the devil. It said that Michael dared not "bring against him a railing accusation, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!'" Michael did not mock or accuse the devil. Neither has God called us to judge the devil, to condemn the devil, to mock him or accuse him. Rather we are to battle against him in the name of the Lord. The manner of Michael's fight is a model for spiritual warfare. Even he did not contend on his own authority; instead, he contended with the Lord's authority. This relates to the certain men in a "how much more" line of thinking. If Michael dared not bring a railing accusation (a judgment of blasphemy) against the devil, an evil dignity, how much more should these certain men not speak evil of godly dignities.

Jude 10: But these speak evil (*blasphēmeō*) of those things which they know [*oida*] not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

Jude contrasts how these certain men, these filthy dreamers acted with how Michael acted. Michael dared not bring a railing accusation, a judgment of blasphemy, against the devil, while these men speak evil [*blasphēmeō*] of dignities and other things which they know not.

Jude uses the same words as Peter describing these certain men as "brute beasts." They use the simile to show how these men conduct themselves as animals. Animals are incapable of reasoning; they are controlled by their animal nature. Their chief aim is to satisfy their hunger and fulfill the desires of their bodies. Describing someone as a dumb animal is quite shocking. But remember, this description is for the instruction of God's people so they can be wary of those the devil may send their way.

1. There is another book, *The Assumption of Moses*, that also deals with this traditional teaching.

Affirmations: I speak evil of no one. I walk by the spirit, not my old man nature.

Recommended Reading: Day 33: Deuteronomy 34; Day 83: Deuteronomy 3.

Jude 11: Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

Jude 11 is the central section of the epistle. In it, Jude compares the awful examples of three Old Testament characters to leaders in the New Testament church who have used their influence for evil. In verse 11 we reach the height of Jude's denunciation of those who crept in with evil intent.

Jude's denouncing, public censure, or condemnation of these ungodly infiltrators is an example of the figure of speech malediction or imprecation. It is an expression of feeling by way of malediction or execration. This is not simply an expression of pain and abhorrence; it is a threatening and strong disapproval which echoes Christ's denunciations from the synoptic gospels and takes the same denunciatory form.

These three examples are personal and individual. They are not corporate examples dealing with groups of people. Jude pronounces "Woe!" over these men just as Jesus did to the Scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:13. The word translated "woe" (*ouai*) is an emotional cry that means something like: "*O how horrible it will be!*" Although "Woe!" is common in the gospels and Revelation, Jude 11 and I Corinthians 9:16 are the only 2 places it occurs in the epistles, and I Corinthians 9:16 does not have the same denouncing character.

The reason he gives for his pronouncement is how they have followed three men from the Old Testament who had a particular sin that marked their lives in opposing God and misleading God's people. He speaks of the way of Cain, the error of Balaam, and gainsaying of Core. Jude uses them as tragic and terrible examples of ungodly men who pursued specific transgressions.

Jude uses 3 different phrases to identify their sin: going in the way of, running greedily after the error of, and perishing in the gainsaying of. They are proceeded by the Greek, *hoti*, which means "because, since, for that, or for" giving the reason why anything is said to be or to be done. It is often added to a speaker's words to show what grounds he gives for his judgement. These iniquities are the reason for the stern denunciation.

"Going, *poreuomai*, in the way, *hodos*, of" is frequently used literally of traveling along a road or path (Matthew 22:9; Luke 9:57; 19:36; Acts 8:26, 36, 39; 26:13). However, it is also used to denote a course of conduct (Acts 2:28; 14:16; 16:17). This idiomatic reference to a person's walk or conduct also occurs in Jude 16-18. The phrase is the familiar one for a habitual course of conduct (Psalms 1:1; Acts 9:31; 14:16).

To "run greedily after" is literally "they were poured out." It is a strong picture of excessive indulgence. Paul also uses the same term for the extravagant way God loves us saying in Romans 5:5 that "the love of God has been shed abroad or poured out in our hearts. However, when spoken of persons, that they are "poured out," or that they "rush tumultuously" on an object, it denotes that they give themselves up to something. The idea here is, that all restraint was relaxed, and that they rushed on tumultuously to any course of life that promised gain. It speaks to the baneful absoluteness of their surrender to the error in question.

To have "perished in the gainsaying of" indicates that the result is so certain, that Jude speaks of it as if it were already done. They have the same character as Korah, and will be destroyed in the same manner. They are "identified" with him in their character and doom. Although "perish" generally means cease to exist it also has a rare usage that means "abandoned" or "wasted." Evan Roberts says, *apollumi* as it relates to men, is not the loss of being per se, but is more the loss of well-being. It means to ruin so that the person ruined can no longer serve the use for which he was designed. *Apollumi* then has an alternate meaning of no longer usable for its intended purpose. Detzler writes that *apollumi* can also mean to fail to obtain what one expects or anticipates and so to lose out.

The word "gainsaying," *antilogia*, means properly contradiction, or speaking against. The idea here seems to be, that they were guilty of insubordination, possessing a restless and dissatisfied spirit, and a desire to rule. The term denotes properly an opposition expressing itself in words,

These 3 descriptions of sin refer to following a habitual perverse course of conduct, giving oneself up to something with no restraint, and surrendering absolutely to the error in question, and abandoning God's design and intended purpose for a godly life.

Affirmations: I avoid the way of Cain. I exercise restraint to not pursue evil.

Recommended Reading: Day 34: Jude NRS; Day 84: Jude TPT.

Jude 11: Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

Cain was the eldest son of Adam and Eve and the world's first apostate and murderer. He's considered the prototype of hatred and envy toward one's brothers. Cain's story is found in Genesis 4. Both Cain and Abel brought an offering to the Lord. God accepted Abel's offering, but He rejected Cain's sacrifice. Hebrews 11:4 clarifies that the difference between the two offerings was that Abel's was offered in faith.

Hebrews 11:4:

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

"Faith" presupposes something to have faith in. We must first hear the Word, then we can have faith in it. Faith comes from hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Abel's offering was in response to something he had heard of the Word of God. When Adam and Eve sinned, they tried to cover themselves with fig leaves (Genesis 3:7). However, God confronted and reproved and corrected them (Genesis 3:8-19) clothing them with animal skins which required the shedding of blood.

Genesis 3:21:

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

This is where God established the truth that the shedding of blood was required for the forgiveness of sin. This foreshadowed the death of the promised seed which would provide clothing with power from on high (Luke 24:49). Cain's offering was not rejected because it was of the fruit of the ground. Grain offerings of barley and wheat were prescribed for major religious festivals (Numbers 29:39 NIV). There is nothing wrong with what Cain presented; he gave of his first fruits. It was his obstinance and attitude of heart that caused his offering to be rejected. It was not done "in faith"; it was not done in response to the Word of God in which he was instructed.

The way of Cain spoken of in Jude 11 is the rejection of God's ordinances. His refusal to bring an offering that shed blood for the remission of sins was a defiant declaration had he had no sin for which to atone and that he rejected not only the shedding of blood for the remission of sin, but God's total plan of redemption which was written in the stars of the promised seed who would shed his blood to provide for it (Hebrews 9:22; 13:12; Ephesians 1:7; Revelation 1:5).

Leviticus 17:11:

For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul.

Genesis 4:5 records that after God rejected Cain's sacrifice, Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. He became angry because he knew he was rejected by God and in a fit of anger Cain murdered Abel, and then he lied about it to God. As a result, Cain was exiled and settled in the land of Nod, where he built a city, which he named after his son Enoch. His descendants are enumerated together with the inventions for which they were remarkable (Genesis 4:17-22).

I John 3:12 explains that Cain murdered his brother because Abel's works were righteous (by faith), while Cain's own were wicked.

I John 3:12:

Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

Jude says that Cain typifies a "way" that these certain men follow. They pursue the same way that Cain did. It is "the way of" unbelief and rejection of the Word of God. It will lead to jealousy, persecution of the godly, and eventually to murderous rage.

Affirmations: I accept the blood of Jesus that cleanses my sin. I act in faithful response to the Word of God. Recommended Reading: Day 35: Genesis 4; Day 85: Hebrews 11.

Jude 11: Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

Balaam's story is in Numbers 22-25, 31. I could find no place in scripture where Balaam was called a prophet. He is introduced as the son of Beor and as a man reputed to be of great personal power.

Numbers 22:6:

Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they *are* too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, *that* we may smite them, and *that* I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest *is* blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed.

When the Israelites approached Moab, the Moabites entered into some sort of an alliance with the Midianites. At the instigation of Balak, at that time king of Moab, the elders of the two nations were sent to Balaam to induce him, by means of a bribe, to pronounce a curse on the advancing hosts of the Israelites (Numbers 22:7). When the first delegation from King Balak arrived, God told Balaam to have nothing to do with them. God's initial words to Balaam were, "Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they *are* blessed." (Numbers 22:12).

God warned Balaam to turn back when he was on the way to see Balak. Yet his heart was so set on the rich reward King Balak promised that he continued on. II Peter 2:16 refers to Balaam's tenacious obstinacy as madness, which from the Greek meant, insane, irrational behavior, describing someone acting "out of their mind." Balaam even ignored a talking donkey, sent to warn him to turn back. After meeting with King Balak of Moab, Balaam prophesied over Israel four times. But as he spoke forth God's word, he did not curse Israel - instead he blessed them. When he was unsuccessful in cursing Israel, Balaam advised Balak on how to bring Israel under a curse (Numbers 25:1-2). Instead of trying to have a prophet curse them, he should lead them into fornication and idolatry and then God would curse a disobedient Israel.

Revelation 2:14:

But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

Balak did just that, sending his young women into the camp of Israel to lead Israel into sexual immorality and idolatry. Because of their sin, God did curse Israel - He brought a plague of judgment upon Israel that killed 24,000 (Numbers 25:1-9). Therefore, Balaam was guilty of one of the greatest sins: deliberately leading others into sin. Worse yet, he did it for money. The greedy "error of Balaam" was that he was willing to compromise for money (See also II Peter 2:15). The certain men Jude warned about had the same motivation of heart.

Nothing else is said of Balaam, until Numbers 31. In Numbers 31:8 we are told of his violent death at the hands of the Israelites (See also Joshua 13:22), and in 31:16 we learn of his shameful counsel which brought disgrace and disaster into the ranks of the chosen people.

Out of this triad of evil ungodly men, Balaam is the only one for whom a reason is given for his behavior. It says he did it for reward. "Reward" in Jude 11 is the Greek word *misthos* which means wages or hire. It is used of a recompense that appropriately compensates a particular decision or action. II Peter 2:15 notes that Balaam forsook the right way, going astray because he loved the wages of wickedness, wrongdoing, or unrighteousness. Perhaps we should understand it as a headstrong will breaking down all obstacles, refusing to listen to reason or expostulation, as Balaam holds to his purpose in spite of the divine opposition manifested in such diverse ways.

Affirmations: I don't take bribes. I control my will to pursue the will of God.

Recommended Reading: Day 36: Numbers 22-24; Day 86: Numbers 25 & 31.

Jude 11: Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

The final part of the picture is that they “perished in the rebellion of Core.” Korah’s story is found in Numbers 16. Korah was the ringleader of the rebellion against his cousins Aaron and Moses. He was a bold, haughty and ambitious man who recruited 250 other renowned leaders to join him in the sedition.

Numbers 16:1-2:

Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took *men*: ² And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown:

They rose up seditiously against Moses and Aaron, and perished in the attempt. These ungodly men whom Jude identifies as having crept into the church imitate Core in their rebellion not just against local church leadership but against Christ himself, the state and order of whose church is being attacked. They seditiously disturb the body of believers despising dominion, and speaking evil of dignities, which will lead to their own destruction.

Their rebellion has dangerous consequence. They might be said to perish in his gainsaying, as a type and example of their destruction, which would be swift and sudden. This would denote the certainty of it. The Jews say of Korah and his company, that they shall never ascend, or rise up and stand in judgment, and that they shall have no part or portion in the world to come.

Jude describes the Levite Korah’s rebellion against Moses as “gainsaying,” *antilogia*, (to speak against, dispute, contradict). He was a prominent man in Israel, who one day came to Moses, saying, “Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation *are* holy, every one of them, and the LORD *is* among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?” (Numbers 16:3). Korah and his followers were guilty of insubordination and resented the authority God gave to Moses and Aaron.

When Korah said this, Moses fell on his face, knowing God’s judgment would soon come. Moses then proposed a test: each group took censers (for burning incense) and came before the Lord. The Lord Himself would choose which man He wanted to represent Him: Moses or Korah.

When they both came before God, the Lord told Moses to step away. Then, the ground opened up and swallowed Korah and his followers. After that, fire came down from heaven and burned up all of his supporters. They all “perished.” These remarkable events were to serve as a sign to thwart any future attempts at similar rebellion. Later on, in Numbers 26 when talking about the tribe of Reuben we read the following account:

Numbers 26:9-10:

And the sons of Eliab; Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This *is that* Dathan and Abiram, *which were* famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the LORD: ¹⁰ And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign.

Korah was a Levite, but not of the priestly family of Aaron. As a Levite, he had had his own God-appointed sphere of ministry, yet he was not content with it. He wanted the ministry and the authority of Moses. When these certain men rejected authority and spoke evil against dignitaries, they walked in “the rebellion of Korah.” The rebellion was a contemptuous and determined assertion of self in opposition to the will of God.

Core certainly attempted to change the divine order which God established when He assigned the functions of the priesthood to the family of Aaron. In like manner the apostates of Jude’s day set themselves up as teachers in the church without a regular, or supernatural call to the ministry. Their sedition like Core’s would lead to a swift and utter destruction if God’s people would respond to Jude’s message like Moses responded in Numbers 16.

Affirmations: I don’t rebel against God’s established authorities. I don’t speak against or contradict God’s Word. Recommended Reading: Day 37: Numbers 16; Day 87: Numbers 26

Jude 12 & 13: These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; ¹³ Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

Jude goes on to describe these certain men, the fitly dreamers, the false teachers. This time he doubles the typical triad using six descriptions. He uses examples of things in the natural realm to make his comparisons.

First is “spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you:” “Spots” is a translation of the Greek word, *spilas* which is not used elsewhere in the New Testament. It is used of reefs or hidden rocks which may cause shipwrecks. It is used here of ungodly people who wreck the lives of others before danger is suspected. The Louw-Nida says it means, “an unrecognized source of danger or peril” or “an unseen or hidden danger.” These men are hidden dangers in their feasts of charity. In the early church “love feasts” were used to feed the poor and needy, and for the purpose of fellowship. They were festive times of entertainment and sumptuous feasting. It is used only here and in II Peter 2:13.

Hidden reefs cause shipwreck, which is exactly what the false teachers were trying to make of the faith of the believers.

I Timothy 1:18-20: This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; ¹⁹ Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: ²⁰ Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

Believers can and do make their faith shipwreck. Those who have been deceived need to be handed over to Satan (cast out of fellowship) so that their faith can be restored to them. False teaching must be contended with and fought against. As Paul tells Timothy, the way to keep from being shipwrecked is to hold to the faith (maintain the sound confession of and commitment to the authority of all Scripture) and to maintain a good conscience (doing what we know is right).

Peter describes such people as “spots. . . and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you. . . that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls” (II Peter 2:13-14). It’s not a pretty picture. God does not tolerate such ungodly behavior, and neither should we.

Second is “feeding themselves without fear:” The ASV translates this phrase “Shepherds who without fear feed themselves.” The Greek could literally be translated “fearlessly themselves shepherding.” Shepherds are supposed to serve with integrity (Psalms 78:72). They must stay alert and protective of their flock (Acts 20:28-31). They must do this willingly, honestly, eagerly, as good examples (I Peter 5:2-3).

Ezekiel 34:2-4: Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe *be* to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? ³ Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: *but* ye feed not the flock. ⁴ The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up *that which was* broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.

In verse 12 there is no word for “feeding,” and the word translated shepherding is *poimainō* not *boskō*, the normal word for feeding. Although feeding is an important part of the functioning of a shepherd, *poimainō* focuses on “tending” or caring for and protecting the flock. This guarding, guiding, and folding the flock is only provided ultimately by Jesus Christ, who calls under-shepherds such as elder-overseers to guard and guide His people under His direction (I Peter 5:1-5). *Poimainō* occurs 11 times in the New Testament, usually with a figurative sense of providing Spirit-directed guidance in conjunction with feeding His people by teaching them Scripture.

Affirmations: I care for my fellow believers. I war a good warfare.

Recommended Reading: Day 38: Ezekiel 34; Day 88: I Timothy 1.

Jude 12: These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

Third is “clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds:” As far as I can tell, Jude 12 is the only place in the Bible that compares clouds to people. Several references use cloud imagery to depict the presence of God directing Israel (Exodus 13:21), speaking to Moses (Exodus 16:10-11), anointing the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-38) and the temple (I Kings 8:10-11) and speaking to the apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:5). Jude may be alluding to Proverbs 25:14.

Proverbs 25:14: [NLT]:

A person who promises a gift but doesn’t give it is like clouds and wind that bring no rain.

Jude, however, applies a strong negative imagery. Although they may seem to represent the presence of God, their misty vapor holds no “water,” no blessing. This testifies to the uselessness of teaching which is supposedly “advanced,” “progressive” and “enlightening” but has nothing to offer for the nourishment of one’s spiritual life. In an agrarian-based economy, clouds were hopeful signs of rain to refresh the land. New Testament imagery connects water with life-giving properties emanating from the Holy Spirit and with the cleansing value of the words of Scripture.

John 4:14: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Ephesians 5:26: That he [Christ] might sanctify and cleanse it [the church] with the washing of water by the word.

Paul warned Titus about many “unruly and vain talkers and deceivers” “whose mouths must be stopped” so God’s people would become “sound in the faith” (Titus 1:8-13). They were professors without practice (i.e. all talk no action).

Thus, Jude compares those who hinder “the faith” to those who appear to represent godly pursuits and character but are empty of the refreshing and guiding power of the Holy Spirit and void of biblical wisdom and insight. They are “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Ephesians 4:14) and “serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Romans 16:18). These empty clouds are carried along by winds, not operating on conviction but upon the most immediate way to satisfy their fleshly lusts. They are not committed to doctrinal truth but to whatever wind of doctrine that most appeals to them at the moment.

Fourth is “trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots:” Trees should properly be translated “autumn trees.” These men are “trees, autumn trees [which should be ready for harvest but are], without fruit, twice dead plucked up by the roots.” Many illustrations in Scripture compare bearing fruit trees with believers bearing godly character. The reason for the frequent comparisons is that “a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit” (Luke 6:43). Since “every tree is known by his own fruit” (Matthew 7:16; Luke 6:44), so will these ungodly men.

Jude is making the point, however, that there are “trees” planted in the midst of the orchard that have withering “fruit” or have already been rooted up as worthless, fruitless, and twice-dead. These trees should not be allowed to remain (Luke 13:6). At best, they scar and mar the beauty of the orchard, and at worst they spread their decay and rot throughout it. John the Baptist taught that such dead, fruitless trees are to be “hewn down, and cast into the fire.”

Matthew 3:10: And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Affirmations: I want to drink of living water. I want fruit that lasts.

Recommended Reading: Day 39: Proverbs 25; Day 89: Matthew 7.

Jude 13: Raging [*agrios*, fierce, uncivilized, untamed, or wild] waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

Fifth is: “raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame:” The particular image in verse 13 is of rolling billows surging ashore after a storm, spitting out “shame” from amidst the foam. As the energy of the storm increases so do the waves’ height and frequency. As they move, the debris in and on the ocean is picked up and carried along. There is a specific term for the debris. It is called, detritus, loose fragments, such as sand or gravel, that have been worn away from rock. As the waves rise up toward the shore, they break and the foam begins to collect and then spew out the “shame” previously covered by the depths. Not rightly dividing the Word of truth and not respecting it will produce shame (II Timothy 2:15; Psalms 119:6).

Isaiah speaks of it:

Isaiah 57:20-21: But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.²¹
There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

Picture an ugly shoreline after a storm has washed up all sorts of driftwood, seaweed and debris. The shame cast up by these raging waves is not just filthy but also damaging to those among whom the shame is dumped. Paul warned the Corinthian church about those who dealt with “hidden things of dishonesty,” who were “walking in craftiness,” and “handling the word of God deceitfully.” In vivid contrast, Paul and his co-laborers openly displayed “the truth commanding ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (II Corinthians 4:2). Like Jude, Paul forecasts only destruction for these kinds of people. They brag “in their shame” and have their mind set on “earthly things” (Philippians 3:19).

“Foaming” at the mouth is frequently connected with demonic oppression in Scripture (Mark 9:17; Luke 9:39; etc.). Medically, the symptom is seldom positive. Perhaps Jude is offering a glimpse of the devilish source of such “raging,” raising further alarm.

Sixth is: “wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever:” This short reference is somewhat enigmatic. The five “wandering stars” of Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn were clearly known in Jude’s day, and their behavior had been plotted for many centuries. Meteorites (shooting stars) and comets were also called wandering stars. The Bible also uses “stars” as figures of speech for angelic beings in Job and Revelation.

It is clear in context that Jude is referencing ungodly people, most likely influential leaders in the churches, who are damaging and defiling God’s work. The particular focus of this example is that they are “reserved” for a “blackness of darkness for ever.” “Ever” is the Greek *aiōn*, referring to an uninterrupted period of time.

Earlier, Jude cited “the angels which kept not their first estate” as being “reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (verse 6). Peter alludes to the same punishment of “angels that sinned” who were delivered “into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (II Peter 2:4).

But, it does not appear that Jude is speaking of angels in verse 13. Beginning in verse 8, Jude begins to tie his illustrations to people—leaders who are misusing their role and privileges for evil rather than good. All of the previous examples are obvious: filthy dreamers, natural beasts, those behaving like Cain, Balaam, or Korah—even the waterless clouds, fruitless trees, and foaming waves are easily compared to human behavior.

How do we apply this illustration? Since the Creator made all things, His revealed Word often provides insight about the true nature of the universe long before we discover it. Comets were observed in Old Testament times. Today we know that they “wander” for some time but eventually dissipate into “the blackness of darkness for ever.” Just so, these “stars” may wow some for a season, but they will disappear.

Those metaphors are very vivid: hidden rocks, waterless clouds, autumn trees, raging waves, and wandering stars. That is how Jude describes false teachers. Hidden rocks speak of their danger. Waterless clouds refer to the false promises they make. Fruitless autumn trees illustrate their barrenness. Raging waves depict their wasted effort, foaming out nothing but shame. Wandering stars point to their brief and aimless course ending in darkness. What descriptions!

These six illustrations that describe the character of ungodly men who are attacking “the faith once delivered to the saints” (verse 3). This very poignant letter literally sizzles with scathing imagery for those who dare to stir up dissention and disobedience among God’s people. This central section deals with contending for the faith while confronting godless men. Jude certainly presents many reasons for us to rise up and do so.

Affirmations: I confront dissention. I maintain quiet seas in my soul.

Recommended Reading: Day 40: Isaiah 57; Day 90: Philippians 3

Jude 14-16: And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,¹⁵ To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly **among them** of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.¹⁶ These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

Verses 14-16 form another section in the structure, Apostasy in Old Testament Prophecy. It complements verses 5-8 which deal with Apostasy in Old Testament History. It is another hysteresis referring to a prophecy of Enoch not recorded anywhere in the Old Testament. This is the oldest recorded prophecy by a man in the Bible, and it's a prophecy about the end times and the ungodly. The word "ungodly" is used 4 times. Jude was being very definite and distinct. He was not being politically correct; he was not diluting the message.

This prophecy was not recorded in the Old Testament, but was handed down through oral tradition like the one in Matthew 2:23 which says that Jesus would dwell in Nazareth. There were prophecies which were simply spoken and not written until long after they were given. They are still revelation and will be fulfilled. This prophecy begins with "behold" which marks the figure of speech asterismos and calls special attention to itself.

There are two Enochs in Genesis. One is a son of Cain (Genesis 4:17), and the other is a seventh-generation descendant of Adam through his son Seth (Genesis 5:18, 21-24). Jude makes very clear which one he means. This Enoch is also listed in Luke's genealogy of the Lord Jesus (Luke 3:37), also indicating that he is important to remember.

Enoch was the father of Methuselah, who was the grandfather of Noah. Although the Bible does not mention it, several of the early church scholars allude to a Book of Enoch and cite passages from it about the awful days before the world was destroyed by the great flood.

Perhaps the most startling fact recorded about Enoch is that he "was translated (moved from one place to another) that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Hebrews 11:5). The Genesis record simply notes, "And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Genesis 5:23-24).

Enoch's "walk with God" and the lifestyle that "pleased God" are the apparent motives for Jude's short reference. Jude announces (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) that Enoch preached about the second coming of Christ! That is remarkable. Before the Bible was written, before the destruction of the world by the flood, before the promise of "the seed" to Abraham and the centuries of God's preparation for the Messiah, Enoch was proclaiming that Jesus would come again in judgment!

Verse 14 in the critical Greek texts actually reads, "the Lord came with ten thousands of his saints." Of course, the lord has not yet come, but his coming is so certain that the prophecy was written in the past tense. Bullinger says that the switch from the literal future tense to the past tense is the figure heterosis. He says that the past is used instead of the future: "...when the speaker views the action as being as good as done. This is very common in the Divine prophetic utterances where, though the sense is literally future, it is regarded and spoken of as though it were already accomplished in the Divine purpose and determination. The figure is to show the absolute certainty of the things spoken."¹

Here the figure emphasizes the absolute certainty of the Lord's coming in judgment. The Greek word for ten thousand is *myrias*, myriad, meaning ten thousand. It is also used to refer to an indefinite, very large number or innumerable multitudes. The Lord will return with a very large number of "saints," holy ones, to deal with the ungodly to which he is about to refer.

Jude identifies two ungodly traits that bring about this judgment: ungodly deeds that were committed in an ungodly way and hard speeches that have been spoken by ungodly sinners against the Lord Jesus. Verse fifteen shouts of the ungodly. The reiterated use of the word "ungodly" is emphatic. Four times some form

of *asebēs* occurs. It occurs as a noun, an adjective, a verb, and an adverb. All four forms that appear in Jude 1:15 are negative forms of a word for worship. The “a” prefix, like “un” in English stresses the lack of honor and deference that are due the Creator of the universe. These ungodly sinners will be condemned by their own deeds and fierce words. This paregmenon demands that we notice the character which is attributed to them. Their character, their deeds and their speech are all ungodly. The words “among them” in verse 15 are omitted according to some critical Greek texts. “Convince” is from *elenchō* that means to expose, convict, reprove, rebuke, or show to be guilty. It denotes *convincing* with solid, compelling *evidence*, especially to expose, prove wrong, and correct. “Hard” is from the Greek word, *sklēros*, that means rough, hard, violent, harsh, or stern. It literally means hard or dried out, and is used figuratively to mean stiff, stubborn, and unyielding. It describes people who won’t budge, bend, or submit.

“Murmurers” and “complainers” are Greek words found nowhere else in the New Testament. Although “murmur” does occur many places in the New Testament, this noun was employed by Jude to identify those who habitually and discontentedly complain about God. These grumbling fault-finders follow their own lusts and run off at the mouth extravagantly seeking their own advantage. In John 6:41 the Jews murmured at Jesus Christ when he spoke of being the bread of life. Even some of Jesus’ disciples murmured at him before they left and walked no more with him (John 6:61 & 66). Murmuring is a sin of no minor importance as I Corinthians 10:10 indicates.

I Corinthians 10:10:

Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

Jude uses a rather unusual word picture to describe those who use others for their personal advantage. They speak “great swelling words” to gain the advantage. The Greek word is *huperonkos*, which conveys something like “beyond weight” or “too heavy.” They are immoderate, boastful, excessive, pompous, or bloated. They identify braggarts who constantly exaggerate, spouting words out from an inflated ego. The words are coming from hearts that are lustful and attempting to manipulate others for their own benefit. It appears that those who “murmur” and “complain” will use “heavy” words to achieve their ends. They may admire and commend others, but only for what they can profit by doing so.

It really is remarkable that Enoch prophesied of these men before the flood. It sure is evidence that there is nothing new under the sun. Neither should God’s people be ever caught off guard by them as God is able and willing to prepare us long before it happens. Remember II Peter is the warning that came before Jude warning of what was about to happen; Jude confirmed that it had indeed taken place.

1. E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, p. 518.

Affirmations: I’m coming with the Lord when he returns in judgement. I do not seek advantage from people.
Recommended Reading: Day 41: Jude RIV; Day 91: Jude TNIV.

Jude 17-19: But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; ¹⁸ How that they told you there should be mockers [translated “scoffers in II Peter 3:3, the only other place the Greek word is used.] in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. ¹⁹ These be they who separate themselves [cause division], sensual, having not the Spirit.

Verses 17-19 form another section in the structure, Apostates Described. It complements verse 4 which also deals with describing apostates. Remembering the words spoken by the apostles (also described as the apostles’ doctrine in Acts 2:42) is our only protection from the threatened apostasy. Remembering implies that we heard them. We just need to cling to them. Paul writing to the Hebrews¹ also gave a definitive warning.

Hebrews 2:1: Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip.

Jude tells the beloved believers in verses 17-18 that what he is saying is not new; that, in fact, the apostles prophesied this would happen. He calls them to remember that they had been forewarned, so they should not stumble in their faith. Peter was one who warned them in II Peter 2:1-3:10, and Paul warned them in Acts 20:29-30. He also warned Timothy in I Timothy 4:1-2; & II Timothy 3:1.

Verse 19 describes these mockers in another trio of defining characteristics. Jude focuses on the core character of these mockers, noting that they “separate themselves” and are “sensual,” and have not the Spirit. They consciously separate themselves from the godly. “Separate” is the Greek, *apodiorizō*, used only here in the New Testament. It depicts making logical, invidious distinctions. It means to separate off by placing boundaries or to instigate divisions between people which are calculated to create ill will or resentment or give offense. They are typically hateful, offensively, or injurious intending to cause animosity, resentment, or envy. John speaks of this saying, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us” (I John 2:19). Jesus simply notes that “every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved” (John 3:20).

“Sensual” is the adjective form of the Greek noun for soul, *psuchē*. These kinds of people are driven by their “natural man” and cannot receive “the things of the Spirit of God” (I Corinthians 2:14). It doesn’t say they were natural men, but they acted like natural men. They were “soulish,” pursuing what is natural, as it relates to physical life or tangible things alone. James is even more intense calling them “earthly, sensual, devilish” (James 3:15). Other translations render *psuchikos* as following mere natural instincts [NIV], worldly or worldly-minded [ESV, NAS, BLB, CSB], soulish [LET], animals [CPD], men of the world [WNT], and controlled by their impulses [CJB].

The last phrase is quite absolute. These people do not have the Spirit, *pneuma*. This must be usage 5 of *pneuma* meaning manifestations of the spirit. These believers no longer operate manifestations of the spirit. They have decided to walk according to what they can see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. Their irreverence for God and the things of the spirit that He wants to energize leaves them no alternative than going the world’s way.

Jude has already established they were part of the church but had departed from the faith. They still had holy spirit; they just didn’t use it. Remember, they were sensual or “soulish,” they walked as natural men not operating the spirit. They walked by the flesh not by the spirit. Walking by the flesh is walking in one’s own lusts and walking by the spirit is walking with the manifestations of the spirit. When we walk by our senses instead of by the spirit we are headed for trouble.

1. For 12 centuries (from A.D. 400 to 1600) the epistle of Hebrews was entitled and known as the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews.

Affirmations: I want the apostles doctrine and original Christianity. I can’t live without manifesting the spirit.

Recommended Reading: Day 42: Hebrews 2; Day 92: John 3.

Jude 20-21: But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,²¹ Keep [*tēreō*] yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Like the corresponding section in verse three, this one opens addressing the beloved. What a wonderful reminder to us of our dearness to God and one another. The beloved are to keep themselves in the love of God as they are building, praying and looking.

Verse 20 and 21 are one sentence. The subject is “ye”; “beloved” is an appositive describing who “ye” are; the main verb is “keep,” an aorist imperative, which indicates it is to be undertaken at once. “Keep yourselves in the love of God” does not mean keep loving God. It means to keep yourself in alignment and harmony with the love of God. It means to live, act and walk according to the love of God.

How does one keep himself in the love of God? Remember this is one of the key concepts of Jude. There are three present participles in verses 20 and 21, which indicates continuous action happening at the same time as the main verb. In other words, we keep ourselves in the love of God by building up ourselves, praying in the holy ghost and, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. “Looking for” is the Greek word *prosdechomai* meaning await, expecting to receive in a personal manner or to welcome with warm reciprocity. It expresses expectant waiting where a person is ready and willing to receive all that is hoped for. It connotes a high level of personal involvement both in interest and motivation.

The believers are frequently compared to a “building” of God (Ephesians 2:22) made up of “lively stones” (I Peter 2:5), and we are exhorted to edify each other (Romans 14:19). Jude encourages us to build ourselves up by operating manifestations of the spirit. We know from I Corinthians 14:4 that when we speak in tongues we edify ourselves. Romans 8:26-27 also reminds us we can make intercession for one another as we work together to build a strong assembly. Each one of us has a part to play in the increase and edification of the body of Christ.

Ephesians 4:16: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Jude addresses the individual. He presumes we are aware that we are “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets” with “Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20). Even with a “wise masterbuilder” like Paul to give us inspired instructions (I Corinthians 3:10), we need to be very careful how we build on the foundation that Jesus Christ has laid for us. Our work can be “gold, silver, and precious stones, wood, hay, [or] stubble,” and will be evaluated by the “fire” of God’s timeless judgment (I Corinthians 3:12-13).

The construction of the building — both the larger house and the individual “lively stones” that make up the house — are to be built up on the “most holy faith.” Our “most holy faith” is the same idea as the faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Once the foundation has been laid by Jesus Christ, we are to be “rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as we have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving” (Colossians 2:7).

“Praying in the holy ghost” is speaking in tongues. Because it follows closely upon “building up yourselves on your most holy faith,” the two phrases are often equated. Although both may refer to operating manifestations, we can use the manifestation of speaking in tongues to build ourselves up and to build one another up.

The final participle is “looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” This phrase refers to the anticipation of our hope for Christ’s imminent return. The word “looking” carries the ideas of waiting with anticipation or earnestly expecting. Paul also encouraged Titus to live looking for the blessed hope of Christ’s return (Titus 2:12-13). Without the hope we won’t be able to keep ourselves in the love of God. The hope provides a wonderful endurance factor. The greater our hope, the more steadfast we are to endure until the end.

Affirmations: I keep myself in the love of God. I speak in tongues often.

Recommended Reading: Day 43: Jude TNT; Day 93: Jude AWT.

Jude 22-23: And on some have mercy, who are in doubt;²³ and some save, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear [reverence]; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

After the first triad of “building up yourselves,” “praying in the Holy Ghost” and “looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ,” comes another which encourages us in how we ought to work with one another. Verses 22 and 23 are also one sentence with three present active imperatives. They are: have mercy, save and have mercy. This triad forms a nice chiastic structure. Each of these three are modified by an active present participle. Present participles indicate continuous action that goes on at the same time as the main verb. We are to show mercy to those who doubt. We save others snatching them out of the fire. Lastly, we again show mercy with reverence to some, even though we hate their stained and spotted garments.

The first of these present participles “making a difference” is the Greek verb, *diakrinō*. It means to separate, to discern, to distinguish, to discriminate, to make a distinction; then, especially in the middle and passive voices, to separate one’s self from, to contend with, to dispute, to hesitate, to waver, to doubt. It occurred earlier in Jude (verse 9) where it was translated “contending.” We show mercy to those who doubt, those with whom we contend. We already were reminded to contend in love, Jude now adds showing mercy to the process. “Snatching” is *harpazō* meaning to, seize by force suddenly and decisively. It indicates taking by an *open display* of force *not* covertly or secretly. “Hating” is *miseō* meaning to detest or denounce. It indicates renouncing one choice in favor of another.

Remember, we saw two triads. (imperatives: mercy/save/mercy) (present participles: doubting/snatching/hating). We also come across a fourth particle, but this one is a perfect passive participle. Perfect participles indicate completed action before the action of the main verb. In other words, the garments were already stained and spotted, before we showed mercy hating what we saw.

The Word speaks of being clothed with righteousness (Job 29:14; Psalms 132:9; Isaiah 59:17; 61:10). Stained, spotted or filthy garments refers to being clothed with sin or unrighteousness.

Zechariah 3:1-5: And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.² And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, [This angel followed Michael’s example, didn’t he?] O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: *is* not this a brand plucked out of the fire? [This is an allusion to branding, being marked permanently by sin and its consequences. This is what Joshua the high priest was being saved from, a life of sinful lust and overindulgence.]³ Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.⁴ And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity [the reason for the filthy garment picture] to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.⁵ And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by.

You may have heard the saying we hate the sin, but love the sinner. That’s how we treat people stained and spotted with unrighteousness. We show mercy, respecting the people yet hating the spotted garments.

“Compassion” is not the usual Greek word, *splagchnizomai*, rather it is *eleēō*, which means to have mercy on or to help one afflicted. This word choice implies a desperate need that we must attempt to remedy. Many of the Lord’s healing miracles were instigated by compassion. We are encouraged to “show mercy” to those who urgently need the healing of the Word of God. That’s why *eleēō* is linked with “save,” *sōzō*. We see the need and want them made whole.

Although some commentators insist that fire in verse 23 refers to burning eternally in hell-fire, I do not believe that it what it means. I believe the fire talked about here refers to burning in lust like I Corinthinas 7:9 addresses. These are so “spotted” (dirty, filthy) by their fleshly deeds that we must “beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness” (II Peter 3:17).

The immediate context deals with lasciviousness and lust. We must also remember that those born again, even if they depart from the faith will still escape the judgment of the lake of fire and enjoy eternal life in the presence of God and His son. Just as surely as we are to earnestly contend for the faith, we are to contend in love. “Love” is the badge of our brotherhood, and it should characterize all that we do.

Affirmations: I show mercy. I act decisively when I see people with needs.

Recommended Reading: Day 44: Zechariah 3; Day 94: I Corinthinas 7

Jude 24-25: Now unto him that is able [*dunamai*] to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,²⁵ To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Jude closes his epistle with the afore mentioned beautiful benediction. Our God is able! The Greek verb *dunamai* is a cognate of *dunamis*, power or ability. It signifies not only sufficient innate power to accomplish the task, but also the knowledge to perform the job correctly. He is able to “keep you from falling.” These word choices are absolutely wonderful. God’s ability is used to provide a place of safe custody sufficient to stop any external attack. “But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and *keep* you from evil” (II Thessalonians 3:3). That is why “the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God” must be given “honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen” (I Timothy 1:17).

Jude has counseled the believers to keep themselves in the love of God. He has also set before them the attitude they ought to adopt toward different people in different situations. He has not concealed the peril to themselves which the discharge of their duty to others may involve. Recognizing how dubious brotherly counsel or personal effort may be in carrying out any one in these solemn and arduous obligations, he now at reminds and assures his readers of a higher power that is available for their help and protection. God is able, and we must receive power from on high so we can contend for the faith and keep ourselves in the love of God.

Jude ends the epistle with a tremendous attribution of praise. Three times in the New Testament praise is given to the God who is able. In Romans 16:25, Paul gives praise to the God who is able to strengthen us. The KJV uses the words “him who is of power to establish.” The NIV says “him who is able to establish.” The definitions of “establish” in the Strong’s Concordance are: strengthen; establish; stand firm; be resolute. God can give us a foundation for life which nothing and no one can ever shake. In Ephesians 3:20, Paul gives praise to the God who is able to do far more than we can ever ask or think. He is the God whose grace no man has ever exhausted and on Whom no challenge can ever be too great.

“Keep” in verse 24 is not *tēreō*; it’s *phulassō*. *Phulassō* is more in harmony with the present context, as indicating protection against the great perils just pointed out. Thayer says *phulassō* means to preserve by “having an eye on.” It is commonly used of the uninterrupted vigilance shepherds show in keeping their flocks (Luke 2:8) and the diligence of a military guard to secure what has been entrusted to him. It stresses the constant, personal interest involved with the guarding.

“Falling” is the Greek word is *aptaistos*. It is used of a sure-footed horse, who does not stumble and of a man who does not fall into error. “He will not let your foot slip....” (Psalms 121:3). To walk with God is to walk in safety, even on the most dangerous and the most slippery path. In mountaineering, climbers are roped together so that even if the inexperienced climber should slip, the skilled mountaineer can take his weight and save him. In the same manner, when we bind ourselves to God, He keeps us safe. Jesus Christ keeps us from falling when we stay in the love of God.

Now the word that is rendered “falling” is even more emphatic and carries a larger promise. For it literally means “without slipping” or “without stumbling.” Slipping and stumbling is that which precedes falling. We are not only kept from falling, we are kept from slipping even on the slickest surfaces and stumbling over the any stumbling stones that are in the way. I wonder if Jude pictured Isaiah 63:13 where it recorded that God led Israel through the deep as an horse in the wilderness without stumbling. Do you not see the picture? The nervous, susceptible animal, slipping and sliding over slippery surfaces, and the owner laying a kindly hand and a firm one on the bridle-rein, and speaking soothing words of encouragement, and leading it safely, that it stumble not. So, God is able to lay hold of us when we are in perilous places, and when we cry, “My foot slippeth,” (Psalms 17:5; 18:36) His mercy will hold us up.

Affirmations: God keeps me from falling. I recognize the glory and majesty, dominion and power of God.
Recommended Reading: Day 45: Romans 16; Day 95: Isaiah 63.

Jude 24-25: Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,²⁵ To the only wise [all critical Greek texts omit] God our Saviour [critical Greek texts add “through Jesus Christ our lord”], *be* glory and majesty, dominion [*kratos*] and power [*exousia*], [most critical Greek texts add “before every age.”] both [and] now and ever. Amen.

Not only is God able to keep us from stumbling, but He will make sure we are presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. “Present” is *histēmi* which means to make to stand, place, set up, establish, appoint, or set in balance. “Presence” is *katenōpion* meaning “before the face of” or “over against.” It is a compound word from *kata*, “down, or exactly according to,” and *enōpios*, “in the eye.” *Kata* is used to intensify the meaning. Literally it means down in the eye or according to eyesight. It is translated “in the presence of” because it indicates that one is in someone’s direct, concentrated gaze. We might say in full view.

“Faultless” is *amōmos*; it means blameless, unblemished, or without spot, blot or other visible defect. It is used in verse 24 of believers who are morally and spiritually blameless, unblemished from the marring effects of sin. It was used of sacrificial animals and of priests under the Mosaic law. They were required to be *amōmos* (Leviticus 21:17-23; 22:17-25). It also occurs in Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; Colossians 1:22; Hebrews 9:14; I Peter 1:19; and Revelation 14:5.

This will all be done with “exceeding joy.” That’s not the normal word for joy, *chara*; it’s another word, *agalliasis*, which means wild joy, ecstatic delight, exultation, and extreme exhilaration.

What a powerful promise verses 24 and 25 are. It includes both something the lord is doing for us now as well as something he will do for us when he returns. Now, he is keeping us from falling, and in the future, he will present us blameless with great joy. This is part of the assurance Jude gives to God’s people.

At this very moment he is guarding us, keeping us, and helping us not to stumble. Then, when he returns we will rise to meet him in the clouds, blameless, faultless, and flawless. He will take us from the earth and bring us into the presence of the glory of our heavenly Father, blameless. That’s something worth thinking about. That’s a benediction worth remembering.

Verse 25 begins with a needed omission and a couple additions. The KJV adds the word “wise,” and omits the phrase “through Jesus Christ our lord” and “before every age.” Wise is not in any critical Greek text of Jude 25, although it does appear in Romans 16:27. “Only” is *monos* which means, only, alone or solitary. There is only one God, and He is God alone! It is God alone who the One who is all-sufficient, solitary, and enough. “The only God” is the refuge from the crowds of evils that dog our steps, and from the temptations and foes that assail us at every point.

The coupling of “Saviour” with “God” is common in the Pastoral Epistles (I Timothy 1:1; 2:3; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4). After “Saviour” must be inserted, on the best MS. authority, “through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Then comes “glory and majesty, dominion and power.” We need to omit the first “and.” “Glory” and “dominion” are frequent in the New Testament doxologies, but the Greek words represented by “majesty” and “power” occur here only. After “power” we must supply, on overwhelming MS authority, “before all time.” Consequently “is” may be substituted for “be” before “glory;” but no verb is needed. “Both now and ever” may also be translated “and now and to all the ages.” Thus verse 25 should read: To the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, is glory, majesty, dominion, and power, before all time, and now, and to all the ages. Thus, we have a most comprehensive phrase for eternity—before time, present time, future time—and thus the three-fold arrangement runs through to the very end on time.

“Amen” is the common ending of a doxology (Romans 1:25; I Peter 4:11; II Peter 3:18). These ungodly men may “despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities,” may utter “great swelling words” about their own knowledge and liberty, and scoff at those who don’t walk with them; but still, ages before they were born, and ages after they have ceased to be, glory, majesty, dominion, and power belong to Him who saves us, and would save even them, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Affirmations: I anticipate exceeding, great joy. I will live forever.

Recommended Reading: Day 46: Leviticus 21; Day 96: Leviticus 22.

II Corinthians 6:2:

(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)

We saw in yesterday's lesson that the last verse in Jude should be translated, "To the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, is glory, majesty, dominion, and power, before all time, and now, and to all the ages. Amen." Of those 3 aspects of time, we function only in the middle one - now. We live in an eternal now!

In Isaiah 49:8 the prophet spoke God's Word saying, "Thus saith the LORD, in 'AN' acceptable time have I heard thee, and in 'A' day of salvation have I helped thee." In II Corinthians 6:2, Paul quoted this Old Testament promise to hear, help, and preserve His people, and then added, "'Behold, **now** is 'the acceptable time,' behold, **now** is 'the day of salvation.'" Primarily, his point was that the salvation the world had so long sought was now available through the accomplished works of Jesus Christ, the day of salvation had come. Nevertheless, a more immediate application is also implied. That is: today, the present day, is the day of salvation. To not claim our salvation today, puts us in jeopardy of never receiving it. Yesterday is history, and tomorrow is only a dream. Today is the only time we have, and today is epitomized in one little three letter word — **NOW!**

Of the things the word "now" conveys, at the top of the list is a sense of urgency. There was a sense of urgency about salvation among the people the apostles taught. Three thousand obeyed the gospel on the day of Pentecost, the first day it was preached (Acts 2:41). The same day he learned about Jesus, the Ethiopian Eunuch asked if he could be baptized (Acts 8:35-38). The Philippian jailer was baptized "the same hour of the night" he heard and believed (Acts 16:33). There should likewise be a sense of urgency in the message we preach.

The great truths of eternity must be captured and enjoyed, NOW. Although we are guaranteed to live forever, none of us are guaranteed to live tomorrow. Albert Einstein said, "Yesterday's the past and tomorrow's the future.

Today is a gift - which is why they call it the present." It's what we do with this "present," in the here and now, that makes all the difference in eternity. Remember the dramatic healing of a lame man at the temple gate beautiful? The man was placed there daily for years, but one day Peter challenged him saying, "Look on us."

Acts 3:5-9: And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.⁶ Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.⁷ And he took him by the right hand, and lifted *him* up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.⁸ And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God:

What happened that day for that man? He made a choice. . . a choice to be whole. . . he received his salvation. Peter explained it later in chapter four.

Acts 4:10-12: Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole.¹¹ This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.¹² Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we **must be saved**.

The man made a choice to believe, but before he did, Peter made a choice to open his mouth. He spoke in the name of Jesus Christ, and at that moment in time, eternity was affected. The Lord God Almighty Who inhabits eternity reached into his life, and he was made whole. Choices were made that changed eternity for his man and many others who believed because of the miracle they saw in this man's life. It is choices like this that bring the power of the eternal God into manifestation in the reality of the present. That's the eternal NOW!

"Now" occurs eight times in the epistle to the Ephesians (2:2, 13, 19; 3:5, 10, 20; 4:9; 5:8). "Now" is the new beginning we have been waiting for, let's take advantage of it. When we know the will of God the best time to act upon it is **NOW**. The choices we make now make all the difference in how we will spend eternity. Too many of us let what has happened in the past influence what we are doing in the present. Regret over the past and fear for the future only serve to cripple us in the present. The present is the only time we have to live and move and have our being in Him. Let's not waste time. Let's act now!

Affirmations: I live in the eternal now. I don't waste time.

Recommended Reading: Day 47: II Corinthians 6; Day 97: Isaiah 49.

Acts 3:19-21: Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; ²⁰ And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: ²¹ Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

It has taken a long for me to begin to grasp the amazing upheaval and transition that occurred at the beginning our administration. The amazing events of the Pentecost recorded in Acts 2 changed the world forever. The sacred mystery that God had kept hidden from the foundation of the world was being disclosed. The gospel of Jesus Christ according to the mystery was sure to shake up the status quo and open great vistas of God's lavish love and provision for mankind.

God had Luke write his second treatise, Acts, to record this extraordinary time in the history of the world. Although Christianity has so many of its antecedents in Judaism and established its very roots in the inspired Hebrew scriptures we know as the Old Testament, the day of Pentecost in 28 A.D. initiated a drastic change in the way God would thereafter deal with His people. The transition from Judaism to Christianity was made more difficult because of the cultural animosity between Jews and Gentiles. Both Jews and Gentiles would need the access into the church of God provided by Jesus Christ. The new revelation of both Jews and Gentiles as fellowheirs and of the same body appeared radical and extreme.

When Paul reached Jerusalem in Acts 21, James and the Elders explained to him with considerable apprehension: "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which have believed; and they are all zealous of the Law." "Zealous of the Law" means that they had not completely turned from Moses to Jesus in the sense of trusting Jesus solely for "justification by faith." They had become persuaded (through the miracles and witness of the Apostles) that Jesus was the Messiah, and that if a sufficient number in the nation believed on Him as such, and repented toward God, and devoutly kept the Law, Jesus would soon return from heaven and set up the Messianic kingdom with Israel as its center (Acts 3:19).

Then in Acts 21, when all Jerusalem was in an uproar, the chief captain stopped the beating of Paul and brought him into the castle. A multitude of the people followed the soldiers crying for Paul's demise. Those "many thousands" who believed on Jesus but were very "zealous of the Law" must have been mixed in with those other devoutly religious Jews when this vehement outburst of hatred against Paul was ignited. At least there is no record of any of them coming to Paul's defense. What were they to do a little later when the nation of Israel as a whole finally repudiated Jesus. That same venerated religion which was founded on the Mosaic Law and the Hebrew Prophets, denounced Jesus as a blaspheming deceiver.

Then association with this Christian way meant ostracism and social rejection. "Believing" on Jesus had now become an acutely costly thing. It can no longer be Jesus and Judaism- it must be Jesus or Judaism. What the painful perplexities and costly issues of that choice must have been for thousands of those devoutly Mosaic Jewish "believers" on Jesus, no words of mine could express- nor can I imagine fully understanding the impact of what that choice entailed.

George Findlay in his book, *The Epistles of Paul, the Apostle: A Sketch of Their Origin and Contents* shared some wonderful insight. On pages 265-266 he wrote:

This "word of exhortation" [referring to the Epistle to the Hebrews] was written under the shadow of the doom of national Judaism. The signs which our Lord had given in his prophecies of judgment were being fulfilled; and "the day" was visibly approaching which He foretold (Heb 10:25). The "forty years" of respite (30-70 a.d.) granted to unbelieving Israel, had nearly expired (Heb 3:7-19). A "shaking" was going on in the powers of earth and heaven, amongst all the civil and religious institutions of the nation, which portended their speedy removal (Heb 12:26-29). . . . For a generation Judaism and Christianity, the old covenant and the new, had subsisted side by side [in Judea]; but this could be no longer. "He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second" (Heb 10:9). The supreme crisis had come for these Jewish Christians. They had clung to the ancient fold, and in their zeal for the law (Acts 21:20) had strained their loyalty to Jesus Christ almost to the breaking point. Now they must choose between the two camps. Either they will follow their High Priest "without the gate, bearing" from their Jewish kinsmen "His reproach"; or they must take sides with His enemies and crucifiers, and remain within the gate of Jerusalem, awaiting the judgment of which "a fearful expectation" filled every thoughtful Hebrew mind (Heb 10:27, 37-39). This, they must understand, would be to "draw back unto perdition." The siege and fall of Jerusalem verified the warning in full measure.

Certainly, in the almost 2000 years since our new administration began, the cultural perplexities and prejudices have assuaged somewhat. The truths Jude wrote to the Christian Hebrews to whom he originally send his epistle apply to all believers whether their background was circumcision or not.

Affirmations: I have repented and been converted. My sins have been blotted out.

Recommended Reading: Day 48: Acts 3; Day 98: Acts 21.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole *duty* of man.¹⁴ For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil.

It's astounding to me that 25 verses in this intense little letter have dealt with so much. Not only does Jude's letter present information, it challenges us to respond by earnestly contending for the faith. The passion that Jude felt for the Church and his fellow believers is evident. There is so much for us to apply to our lives and our assemblies, our churches. What if every one of us burned with the same passion and zeal shown by Jude! Would we be able to make a difference?

Jude writes under special constraint as he announces in verse 3. After the 2 verse greeting verses 3-16 tells us why to contend. Verses 3-4 address the subtle perversions of the apostate teachers; verses 5-7 their certain doom; verses 8-11 their impious ways; verses 12-13 their utter falsity. This all culminates in Enoch's prophecy of coming destruction in verses 14-16.

Then verses 17-23 tell us how to contend. We must realize the apostacy has been foretold (17-19); we must operate manifestations (20-21); we must show compassion and make a difference (22); and we must seek to urgently rescue others. This all culminates in Jude's doxology on the coming consummation in verses 24-25.

Although the main theme and focus is contending for the faith, there has been much attention given to our hope also. Our hope of the return of Christ provides an important endurance factor for our lives. Jude notes emphatically that:

- (1) We know the Lord's coming is sure,
- (2) We know who will accompany the Lord,
- (3) We know the purpose of His coming, and
- (4) We know the result of the Lord's coming.

God had Jude write this brief epistle at a time when it was necessary for every believer to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. This was not just a pastor's call to arms, everyone was challenged by Jude to contend for the faith. It must be remembered that all contending for the faith must be done while we keep ourselves in the love of God. We should love their souls though we may oppose their words and deplore their ways. It is the love of God which will put wisdom in our lips

Jude's days were critical times much like our own, and Jude's warning applies to us today. We must stay on guard and contend with any ungodly people that creep in amongst us. It is vital to remember the apostles' doctrine and cleave to it. Never in the history of the church has the Body of Christ been so willing to sacrifice truth for the sake of unity. Because of this compromise she shall have neither.

The opening and closing two verses about the preservation of the saints are very encouraging. These positive bookends keep the believers contending without fear knowing they are kept by the power of God.

Walter Cummins, in his book, *A Journey through the Acts and Epistles* included the following comments at the end of Jude:

"God had Jude write this brief epistle at a time when it was necessary for those who had learned about the common salvation to contend earnestly for it. They were preserved by Jesus Christ, and they were to keep themselves in the love of God, edifying themselves by their most holy believing and by praying in the holy spirit, which is speaking in tongues. They were also to wait for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those were critical times during which certain ungodly people had crept in among them and were teaching doctrine contrary to what they had learned about Jesus Christ from the apostles. The description of those times is similar to the description of times recorded in II Peter 2. Both II Peter and Jude direct those in the Church back to those things that the apostles has taught previously into what is recorded in the Scriptures."

Both, the church of the circumcision and the church of the uncircumcision must contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. The apostles' doctrine initially established the new believing households (Acts 2:42). Although Paul was the one chosen to write most of the details about the great mystery revealed, it was admittedly revealed to all God's holy apostles and prophets by the spirit (Ephesians 3:1-6).

Jude seems to write to no specific group of people. Rather the letter is simply addressed "to those who are called, wrapped in the love of God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ" (verse 1) and then later he addresses them as "beloved" or "dear friends" (verse 3). Certainly, Jude was written to us. Let's make sure we answer God's call to arms and contend for the faith being valiant for the truth.

Affirmations: I have an intense hope for Christ's return. I answer God's call to arms!

Recommended Reading: Day 49: Ecclesiastes 12; Day 99: Jude YLT.

Revelation 12:11: And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

The Bible is replete with examples of men and women who did their Father's will. Men and women who dared to go beyond the limits of their natural abilities. . . men and women who dared to do the impossible and change the course of history. Our lives can make a difference. We may never know how big a difference, but we must be willing to dare valiantly in great causes for God, and contending for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints is certainly one of them.

Theodore Roosevelt said, "Far better is it to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure. . . than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in a gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat." Cecil Beaton also said, "Be daring, be different, be impractical, be anything that will assert integrity of purpose and imaginative vision against the play-it-safers the creatures of the commonplace, the slaves of the ordinary." We are free to be whom God made us to be, and that is not just like everyone else. That will take some "grit."

Sometimes I wonder: "Do I have what it takes?" "Am I made of the "right stuff?" If the Bible is right, the answer to both questions is affirmative. We have the wherewithal we need to accomplish great things for God. Jeremiah longed to be with men valiant for the truth, but he lamented that there were none in Israel. That is where we can come in. We are among those who are valiant for the truth. We can walk in the footsteps of the master; we can demonstrate that we have what is required. We are made from the *right stuff*. We have *what it takes*.

Jeremiah 9:2-3: Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they *be* all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.³ And they bend their tongues *like* their bow *for* lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD.

In the movie, *True Grit* the elusive nature of "grit" is a theme spanning the full length of the film. Although the quality is never explicitly defined, it seems to be just the right combination of toughness and bravery to get the most dangerous job done. It may not appear outwardly until absolutely necessary, but those who have it will summon it when they truly need it. Quite naturally, it also includes a certain amount of self-sacrifice. In the movie none of the characters, no matter how resourceful or upstanding, emerged untouched by pain and suffering. It was as if it was enough merely to survive. In the movie, escaping outright destruction seems to be the ultimate test of who had grit and who had none.

When the dust settles, we will still be standing. When the faint of heart vanish, we still remain. When the call for help goes out, we will be there to answer and respond. Let us invest ourselves in people we love. Let us give ourselves to them and serve them wholeheartedly. As we have therefore opportunity let us do good unto all, especially unto them of the household of faith (Galatians 6:10) and live valiantly for the truth, contend for the faith.

I recently ran across an ancient prayer. It did not include the words, "in the name of Jesus Christ," but it was prayed with the authority with which he commissioned us. The prayer itself is short and to the point and appropriate for our study:

From cowardice that shrinks from new truth,
From the laziness that's content with half-truth,
From the arrogance from the one who thinks he knows all the truth,
Oh God of truth,
Deliver me!¹

1. From Lists to Live By compiled by Alice Gray, Steve Stevens, and John Van Diest, Multnomah Publishers, Sisters, OR page 80.

Affirmations: I have what it takes to be valiant for the truth and contend for the faith. I invest myself in people I love.

Recommended Reading: Day 50: Revelation 12; Day 100: Jeremiah 9.