

EPISTLES OF JOHN AND JUDE

Our lesson today will be brief overview of the books of I, II, and III John and the book of Jude.

They bring out beautiful and important lessons appropriate for the Church when they were written -

and perhaps even more important for the Church living at this end of the Age.

The three epistles of John - compared with Jude are almost a lesson of contrasts.

John stressing "love" and Jude exhorting in stronger terms --

and yet each expressing a deep concern for the spiritual welfare of the Church along doctrinal and moral lines.

Each author in his own way, has endeavored to fortify the Church,

that they be strong in their beliefs - not to be deceived - not to sin --

and yet above all stressing how important it is to have the correct attitude towards our brethren --

because this will reflect the depth of our love for our Heavenly Father.

LETTERS OF 1-2 AND 3 JOHN

We find there is a unanimity of opinion among Biblical Scholars

that all 3 of the Epistles of John,

were written by the same Apostle John who wrote the Gospel of John.

35 passages of John's Gospel are common to the 1st epistle of John,

making it obvious that it could only be done by the same Author.

John was the younger brother of the Apostle James -- both being the Sons of Zebedee.

We would like to dwell for a few moments on the personality of John in his younger years --

in order to compare how he had matured and mellowed when he wrote the Gospel and 3 Letters
a little later in his life.

Perhaps in some ways John's experiences were similar to our own.

In Mark 3:17 we read of James and John being given a new Surname.

"And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder."

We see how this verse implies dynamic personalities --

filled with ZEAL -- and perhaps being a bit impetuous at times.

A good example of this zeal is when a Samaritan Village refused to receive Jesus.

The account is found in Luke 9:54,55:

LUK 9:54 And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

Another example of their impetuosity is found in Luke 9:49,50:

"And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us."

There's a profound lesson in these verses.

Here were some who were doing a good work --

casting out Devils in JESUS NAME but for some reason

were not following together with the disciples.

We notice the immediate human reaction -- they felt it was wrong --

they shouldn't be doing it -- they condemned them for it -- BUT NOTICE JESUS' GENTLE REBUKE!

"Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us."

On Reprint 4668 Bro. Russell shows how we are not to have this disposition:

"We should not object to the Lord's using various agents to accomplish his work. We should not think that we alone have the privilege of engaging in his work, that we have patent rights on his work and can hinder others from doing what they may be able to do and take pleasure in doing."

On another occasion we read in Mark 10:35-37 a request of James and John.

"And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we shall desire.

And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?

They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory."

Jesus gently rebukes them in verses 41-44:

"And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John.

But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

A beautiful reply of Jesus to James and John.

One that no doubt helped them to reflect inward

and develop more the spirit of HUMILITY thru service to their brethren.

These examples of John's younger days showed why he was called a SON OF THUNDER.

He was filled with an INSTANT IMPETUOUS REACTIONARY ZEAL for the Lord --

but we can see it lacked understanding --

it needed to be corrected and guided by the gentle rebukes of our Lord.

Undoubtedly John must have humbly accepted the corrections of the Lord

for he became the closest friend of Jesus, the one Jesus loved most.

We can see this from the standpoint that on various special occasions,

Jesus took his 3 closest disciples with him -- Peter, James and John.

1. When Jesus raised the rulers daughter - Mark 5:37-39:

"And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.

And when Jesus was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

2. On the Mount of Transfiguration Matt. 17:1-3:

"And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

3. In the Garden of Gethsemane - Matt. 26:36-38:

"Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

We believe, however, John was who Jesus loved the MOST from several Scriptures.

John 13:21-25:

"When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

Here it would appear Peter made some jesture to John

that he should ask who it was that would betray Jesus -- as if it wouldn't be likely answered if someone else asked.

Incidentally, as we consider this Scripture we want to note the humbled change that has taken place in John.

When John wrote this Gospel,

it was many years later than when as a young man he wanted to call down fire from heaven

to destroy those who wouldn't accept Jesus --

or -- when he requested to sit on Jesus right hand.

When John wrote this Gospel and his 3 Epistles -- he puts himself entirely in the background.

Not once does he speak of himself by name.

When of necessity he needs to refer to himself in telling the Gospel account,

he merely refers to one of the disciples who Jesus loved.

Truly John manifested a beautiful attitude of CHRISTIAN MODESTY!

Even though he was an Apostle,

he was not disposed to speak of himself,

or call attention to his office and authority.

As we consider John's Epistles, we could see why John was called the disciple Jesus loved.

For truly his words are filled with a Loving Spirit - Gentleness - and warmth.

Even in John's impulsive youth, however,

the loving spirit must have been manifested.

For we find that at Jesus crucifixion,

only John of all the brothers was present -- together with 4 loving sisters.

John 19:25-27:

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

Thus while in agony on the cross, Jesus gives his greatest tribute to John when he says to his Mother --

"Behold Thy Son" -- and to John - "Behold Thy Mother."

As we go on now to consider John's First Epistle, notice the gentleness,

warmth and love expressed in how John affectionately thruout the book addressed believers as "Little Children and Beloved."

1 John 2:1 and 28:

1JO 2:1 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:

1JO 2:28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

1JO 3:7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

1JO 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

1JO 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

His deep love for the brethren is also manifested in how he calls them beloved.

1JO 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

1JO 3:21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

1JO 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

1JO 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

1JO 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

Next we would like to consider WHY the Book of 1 John was written.

Apparently the letter was written to the overall Churches in general,

because there are no specific personal references.

John lived longer than any of the other Apostles, and it is believed he wrote these epistles between the years 90 to 98 A.D.

History tells us that by that time Anti Christ was already making great inroads into the Church.

This was brought about by Greek and Oriental Philosophers who joined the Christian church,

and incorporated their heathen philosophies with the teachings of Christianity.

One of their teachings was that Jesus was a dual being, man and spirit.

John addressed this error in 1 John 4:1-3

4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

How plain and simple! Here John gives us a touch stone for determining right from wrong teaching.

Jesus was not a Spirit Being!

Not a part of a trinity of God's!.

Not God incarnate!

But a Flesh and Blood perfect HUMAN being

And if any one teaches differently they are part of the Anti-christ.

In addition the Heathen Philosophy entering the church,

included the thought that INTELLECTUAL KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING was the height of Christian attainment,

rather than the development of Christ likeness in developing AGAPE LOVE.

Thus as we consider the book we will be able to understand WHY John spends so much time on the subject of Agape Love.

For the early Church and for us, it must be the ultimate attainment of Christlikeness.

Thus the main theme of the book is AGAPE LOVE.

The Love that God has for us and the love that we need to have for all our brethren.

The love that ultimately everyone who need to have before they will receive everlasting life in the kingdom.

The word Agape together with its verb Agapao, is used 49 times in the book of 1st John.

Agape love is the highest form of love. Love like God loves.

A love that expects nothing in return.

A love that goes thru life, ever motivated to accomplish that which would be for the eternal

best interest of every single one of God's creation.

Thus in his letter John refutes intellectualism as the prime Christian goal,
by stressing the need for development of AGAPE LOVE.

And it would seem from the tone of his letter he was correcting what was a lack of OF ONENESS - OF LOVE amongst the brethren, for it was beeing superceeded by intellectualism.

But in any case it is a master piece, of showing how God views the development of full AGAPE LOVE as the supreme goal of our life.

CHAPTER 2

1 John 2:9-11 (New American Standard)

"The one who says he is in the light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.

The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

CHAPTER 3

1 John 3:11,14-18, 23 (New American Standard_

11 - For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

14-18, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer: and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

But whoever has the world's goods, and behold his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

23 - And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

CHAPTER 4

7 - (Diaglott) "Beloved we should love each other; because love is from God; and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and knows God."

11-12 - Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

18 (Diaglott) There is no Fear in LOVE, but PERFECT LOVE casts out FEAR; because FEAR has restraint; and he who FEARS has not been perfected in LOVE.

20 (New American Standard)

"If some one says 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen."

CHAPTER 5

1 John 5:1,2 (New English)

"Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God, and to love the parent means to love his child;

it follows that when we love God and obey his commands we love his children too."

We may immediately say in our hearts -- Why so many admonitions to love our brethren.

We all love our brethren - they are easy to love -- and that's true.

MOST OF THE TIME!

R-4849 "AS we learn to love one another the love of God is being perfected in us, the true, benevolent love which the Lord commands.

The Lord said that we should love one another as he has loved us - to the extent of being willing to lay down our lives for one another.

We are not to love some of the brethren some of the time, and some of the brethren all of the time; but we should love all of the brethren all of the time;

and overlook their frailties and imperfections, taking that high standpoint from which God views them, forgiving one another, as God, for Christ's sake, overlooks our blemishes.

We ought to forgive those who trespass against us as we hope and trust that God will forgive our trespasses. No one can be of the "elect" class unless this love be perfected in him.

Yes, John's great lesson seems to be that we need to LOVE ALL OUR BRETHREN!
ALL THE TIME!

Even those who may have hurt and injured us --

those who may have said something a little unkind --

those who have a little different viewpoint than us --

CAN WE STILL LOVE THEM??

Can we try to see what God sees in them -- why God called them --

That we are all brethren, and we need to LOVE - TO HELP - TO LISTEN - TO TRY TO UNDERSTAND WHY THEY DID WHAT THEY DID --

Why they said what they said.

Why they believe what they believe even if it's a little different than our understanding.

Do we even know what others believe, if we never or rarely talk to one another.

Could it be that we might be surmising things that are not, or are no longer true?

May we remember we MUST Love ALL of our BRETHREN, for the Lord COMMANDS US TO.

Which implies we will make efforts to see, to talk too, to encourage, to help, or even to correct,

as much as possible, those whom the Lord has called and begotten as our brethren.

In addition to the lack of brotherly love that existed, we find WORLDLINESS had crept into the Church along with its associated SINS.

1 John 2:15-17:

15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

The sins of worldliness and lack of brotherly love was evidently shaking the brethren's faith and confidence of THEIR STANDING WITH THE LORD.

John shows them what they and we all must do when we have slipped and fallen.

1 John 1:8,9

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

2:1 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:

2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Yes, we will slip, we will stumble, we will fall, we are but dust,

but God will forgive, for we have an advocate who we can come to prayer.

If we but recognize our fault -- confess it in prayer and BELIEVE -- NOT DOUBT -- THAT GOD will forgive us.

Thruout this 1st letter of John's he uses the word "WE KNOW" or its equivalent over 30 times --

thereby endeavoring to strengthen OUR CONFIDENCE AND FAITH in the things we have learned.

1 John 3:2

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but WE KNOW that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

1 John 4:20-21 (Diaglott)

"And you have an Anointing from the HOLY one; you all know it.

I have not written to you because you do not know the TRUTH, but because you know it, and because no lie is from the TRUTH."

Yes John wanted them and us to hold fast in CONFIDENCE AND FAITH to the things we have learned.

II JOHN

Second John is a very brief epistle of 13 verses.

Who it is written to is uncertain.

2 John 1:

1:1 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;

The Elder is John, now 100 years old.

It appears to be written to a Sister in the Truth and her children.

Several of the points are similar to those in John's 1st Epistle.

2 John 5

5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

2 John 7

7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

III JOHN

The third letter of John is written to an individual brother named GAIUS

John commends his hospitality to traveling servants of the Lord.

3 John 5-8 (New English)

"My dear friend, you show a fine loyalty in everything that you do for these our fellow-Christians, strangers though they are to you.

They have spoken of your kindness before the congregation here. Please help them on their journey in a manner worthy of the God we serve.

It was on Christ's work that they went out; and they would accept nothing from pagans.

We are bound to support such men, and so play our part in spreading the truth."

A beautiful note to end Johns' letters.

Showing HOSPITALITY AND LOVE to our brethren -- even though they may be strangers to us. --

"IN SO DOING WE PLAY OUR PART IN SPREADING THE TRUTH."

JUDE

Notice now as we proceed to the book of JUDE it is somewhat of a contrast as compared with the Epistles of John.

John with great warmth stressing "love," and Jude exhorting in much stronger terms -- and yet each expressing a deep concern for the spiritual welfare of the Church along doctrinal and moral lines.

Each author in his own way, has endeavored to fortify the Church,

that they be strong in their beliefs - not to be deceived - not to sin --

and yet above all stressing how important it is to have the correct attitude towards our brethren --

because this will reflect the depth of our love for our Heavenly Father.

JUDE

The genealogy of who Jude is somewhat beclouded -

but we would like to suggest the following to identify his background.

He introduces his letter by mentioning he was the brother of James,

most likely calling attention to James because he was more prominent in the early Church.

We are told in Acts 15 James was the leader of the Church in Jerusalem,
and would therefore be well known among the Christians.

Paul in Gal. 2:9 calls James one of the pillars of the Jerusalem Church.

Matt. 13:55 helps us to further identify Jude --

it tells us that both Jude and James are the half brothers of Jesus.

In addition Luke 6:15 mentions that James and Jude were apostles.

We have to appreciate the humility of Jude -

for you notice he did not capitalize on the fact that Jesus was his half brother --

or that he and James were Apostles.

He could have used this to exert a greater influence on the words he was about to write -
-

but he merely called himself primarily:

"the servant of Jesus Christ."

He wrote his letter in about the year 65 AD,

to the Church in general of his day.

However he was also directed by the Holy spirit,

to write what would be applicable to the Church in the last days.

Jude starts with a beautiful salutation -

"Mercy, peace and love be multiplied unto you."

MERCY in the realization that all our sins are covered and we are accepted by God in
the beloved.

PEACE, with God, with our fellow men, our consciences, and the prospect before us.

And LOVE to God, the brethren, and to all mankind.

Indeed what blessings are there which these do not include.

Jude starts his letter by saying in verse 3:

"I was very eager to write to you my beloved brethren of "OUR COMMON SALVATION."

It was to be an exhortation to his brethren to faithfulness
and counsel concerning many things pertaining to the hope they shared in common.

However, looking at the condition of the Church in his day,
he realized there was a serious problem that needed to be addressed.

Some of the problems and conditions Jude goes on to write about are very similar to those found in second Peter.

In fact their terminology is so similar - it would almost seem as if they copied one from the other.

They no doubt both saw the same problems.

Jude exhorts the brethren in verse 3 to:

"earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

You can just feel the intensity of Jude's exhortation --

"TO EARNESTLY CONTEND."

Yet, we don't want to misunderstand what he meant when he said to "earnestly contend for the Faith."

He did not mean to be contentious - or argumentative.

We've all heard the expression,

"We can contend without being contentious!"

Nor did Jude mean we should have disrespect for one when they may have a slightly different opinion than ours --

on crossing the tee or dotting the eye.

Bro. Russell in Reprint 5057 tells us how we should "earnestly contend."

"With gentleness, long-suffering, patience, brotherly-kindness, love; not with anger, hatred, malice or strife."

Jude was referring to the fundamental principles of doctrine and its application in our lives.

He is telling us to always hold them dear and when one seems to err,

don't cover it up and pretend it doesn't exist,

but with the spirit of love gently strive to help them see a better way.

But may your motivation ever be to help rather than to enjoy pointing the finger of guilt.

Jude goes on to address the problem as to why the early Church --

and we this end of the age --

must earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints,

vs. 4, - N.I.V. translation:

"For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you.

They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord."

Oh how we must be careful to be ever watchful,

for it is so easy for things to occur so gradually that we don't notice what is happening.

In the early Church these men didn't literally deny that our Lord existed or that he wasn't the Redeemer.

But their teachings and conduct virtually nullified what Jesus stood for.

Jude goes on to show us these conditions would not just be in his day,
but also noted these conditions would be prevalent in the last days of the church as well.

Jude writes in verses 17 to 19:

"Dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold.

They said to you, In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires."

These are the ones who cause divisions, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit."

God evidently foresaw that one of the problems for the brethren living in the last days,
would be scoffing, -- meaning false teachings that mock or belittle the truth,
which in turn will result in many divisions of the church.

One of Satan's favorite tools is to divide and conquer.

We can easily see that one of the ways Satan would use, is to introduce false teachings.

Jude is thus especially admonishing us, - those living in the last days.

For we know from our Lord's
teachings that we would be specially blessed -

our Lord would provide a special servant who would give us meat in due season.

It would be a time of great enlightenment, that would thrill our hearts,
as we had enfolded before us the most beautiful, harmonious plan that could ever be
conceived.

Jude is telling us to
learn it, follow it, cherish it, protect it.

Earnestly contend for this faith delivered to you. Never take it for granted.

So that when the false teachings and precepts come,
we would be able to recognize them immediately as not being a "Thus saith the LORD."

Satan has and will use every means possible to destroy the seed of promise.

In Jude's day, one of the methods Satan used,
was to corrupt the doctrinal faith once delivered to the saints.

Heathen philosophers came in among the Church,
embraced the name of Christ for a purpose,
but then denied the merit of his sacrifice.

Satan's introduced the doctrine of the trinity followed by the abomination
of the MASS, AND THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

All God dishonoring doctrines undermining the teachings of God's word -
which is the very foundation of our faith.

And so it will be in the "last days," Jude tells us.

Other erroneous teachings,
or practices will gradually infiltrate the Church,
similar as in Jude's day.

Verse 4 tells us it would be gradually,
they would "creep in unawares."

In our day it could be challenging some of the fundamental doctrines of the harvest
message.

It could be a worldly spirit,
that would imperceptibly at first permeate our meetings - our dress -
our activities - our conduct - our morals.

Materialism may enter the picture of ever striving to have more of the good things of this life.

It could be how we spend our time --
watching Television that would use up much of our time and energy,
that could be used in more profitable ways in the Lord's service.

It could be the oriental concept that teaches the doctrine that "Christ lives within us,"
and he will accomplish all that needs to be done.

That we are not to use any personal initiative,
because that would be like trying to earn our salvation through dead works.

And as a result we can sit idly by doing nothing,
and be perfectly content waiting for Christ to work with in us.

So Jude is telling us that we must be aware of everything and anything that could cause us to set aside the vision of this one thing I do.

To have our lives burned up with zeal to fulfill our consecration vows.

Jude goes on to give three well known historical examples of disloyalty to God,
gross immorality, and the disastrous consequences, which followed.

These are found in (vss. 5-7) in his letter.

First:

"how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not."

WHY? Because, after all that God did for Israel in their miraculous deliverance,
they on numerous occasions manifested a lack of faith in God -
the last incident being the reaction of those who spied out the land of Canaan.

Only Joshua and Caleb exercised sufficient faith to believe God could deliver them from the giants.

Consequently, nearly the entire first generation out of Egypt died in the wilderness - because of their lack of faith.

Thus they are an example for us, to see what unfaithfulness and disloyalty will lead to.

The Second incident is in vs.6

"The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

It was not wrong for the angels to come down to earth.

They were holy angels with good intentions.

But in their association with Satan and fallen mankind,
many became contaminated with unwarranted fleshly desires.

As a result they lost their first estate.

They no longer could have fellowship with God and the Holy Angels,
and were confined to tartaroo or earth's lower atmosphere,
having to work through mediums in chains of darkness for 1000's of years until their final judgment.

Here again we see an example of disobedience to the counsel and authority of God,
and the disastrous results of their disloyalty.

The Third example is Sodom and Gomorrha.

They defiled their flesh indulging in gross immoralities, -

"going after strange flesh" -

and as a result became examples to us of undergoing the punishment of everlasting fire.

Not eternal torment, for Ezek. 16 tells us they will be resurrected.

We realize "everlasting fire" refers to age lasting destruction.

Their wickedness was so bad that God saw fit to destroy them all at once so that when they return in the resurrection,

it will not be as difficult for them as it would have been,

if they were allowed to live and go more deeply into sin.

But it becomes to us an illustration of those who will receive everlasting destruction in second death,

for deliberate repeated spiritual or physical acts that are contrary to the principals of God.

Jude gives us these three examples to show us the serious consequences of disobeying God,

his principles and the standards laid down for the New Creature.

Verse 8 then goes on to give us further characteristics of the false brethren who entered the church.

"they despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities."

Who are the dignities they speak evil against?

It is none other than those whom God has chosen to be Kings and Priests of the universe.

It is so easy for the flesh to become judgmental of our brethren.

We need to be careful of this tendency,

remembering God tells us to "Speak Evil of No Man."

For who are we to cast judgment against the very sons of God.

Evil speaking in itself, thus becomes in the mind of God,

as bad or even worse, than what ever it is we are speaking evil against.

Notice the striking example along this line that Jude gives us in vs.9

But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses,

did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!'"

Just imagine even Michael the arch angel wouldn't dare bring a slanderous accusation against Satan himself.

He left it up to God!

So may it be with us, it is not our business to slander or pass sentence upon others.

We must judge actions to avoid those things Jude brought to our attention,
but leave the final judgment to God.

So Jude is telling us to avoid error. Proclaim truth.

But always do so with
the spirit of love, remembering that Jehovah is the final judge.

Always remembering the principle of Matt. 7:2:

"With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged."

Verse 11 continues in referring to those who speak evil of dignitaries, or the brethren.

"Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain."

Cain yielded to evil suggestions from the Adversary.

He became full of hatred and jealousy.

Which led him to murder his own brother.

Thus, walking in the way of Cain would be being jealous,
accusing our brethren,
becoming bitter which could turn to hatred.

And remember our Lord's words thru John in 1 John 3:15:

"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer."

Oh may we not follow in the way of Cain.

We have yet another example in verse 11 to avoid.

We are not to:

"run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward."

Balaam a prophet of the Lord, when offered a reward to curse Israel was willing to so.

He knew the Lord's instructions,

and even when obstacles were placed in his way, still remained greedy.

His error was love of reward.

The desire for reward extends into many avenues of life,

wealth, power, honors, position in the truth movement.

Wanting to be well thought of by our brethren and thus doing or believing what we think others would be pleased with.

May our motivation never be to gain any of these rewards, and thus commit the error of Balaam.

Jude continues with characteristics of false brethren in -

Vs. 16:

"These men are grumblers and fault finders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage."

"they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage."

Then notice again how the LORD has repeatedly guided Jude thru the examples he gives us,

to bring to the attention of the early Church and to us --

the need to avoid grumbling and faultfinding of others.

It is so unlovely.

For in reality when ever we are finding fault with others,

we are really patting ourselves on the back,

implying we don't have this problem, we are better than they.

And the effect again of this tendency,

of judgmental faultfinding is what Jude brings out in verse 19.

"These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly minded, devoid of the spirit."

Yes divisions in spirit and in classes are bound to follow when this spirit is prevalent.

Verses 22 and 23 tell us what we should do if we see any of these in our brethren:

22 And of some have compassion, making a difference:

Another translation says, "Be merciful to those who have doubts and reassure them."

Reassure, strive to help and strengthen those who may be affected by any false brethren who enter the Church.

"Snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear - hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh."

Our desire must always be to have an interest in helping one who is going astray.

But it must be with caution, with a bit of reverential fear,

that our compassion does not succumb to follow with them.

We must ever hate those evil things that the Lord has condemned, but leave the final judgement to God.

And If we are faithful the time will come when we will have full knowledge and ability to judge all things.

Notice how Enoch prophesied about that time in verses 14 and 15:

"The Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

This is the great day of judgment.

The time when justice and righteousness will be in the earth.

That will be the time when if faithful we will have the ability,
together with our head to mete out the chastisements,
rewards, and punishments as God would have us.

So finally brethren until that time:

vs. 3:

"Do Contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints."

vs. 20:

"build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit."

vs. 21:

"Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life."

vs. 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,
to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, now and
evermore. Amen."

This is my prayer for each of us.