

# *The Book of Jude*

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**(1979 and 1989 Studies and 1988 Discourse)**

The following transcribed study, in its original form, was more or less a lengthy, unrehearsed, informal explanation of the Epistle of Jude presented to a few interested individuals in September 1979.

Additional pages include a study led by Bro. Frank in 1989 (ten years later), some miscellaneous quotes and comments, and a discourse given in 1988. All of these should be utilized with the following understanding:

1. Each paragraph preceded by “**Comment**” or “**Q**” (an abbreviation for “**Question**”) was introduced by someone other than Bro. Frank.
2. The studies did not follow a prepared text but were extemporaneous in nature.
3. Although the transcriber tried to faithfully, with the Lord’s help, set forth the thoughts that were presented in the studies, the notes are not a verbatim rendering and, therefore, should be considered in that context.
4. Finally, Bro. Frank did not review the notes for possible errors that may have inadvertently entered the text.

With this disclaimer in mind, may the notes be a blessing as a useful study guide.

# THE BOOK OF JUDE

(Study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1979)

It seems providential that the Book of Jude is found next to the *final* book in the Bible, the Book of Revelation, which is one of the *last* books to be understood this side of the veil. The Epistles of John (not the Gospel), the Epistle of Jude, and the Revelation of John—all three of these last messages to the Church—each contain special prophetic warnings and admonitions with respect to the future. Moreover, each sequential message, as it is given, contains increasingly greater detail and thus ascends in importance. First, there is John's allusion in his epistle to Antichrist and its identity; then comes Jude's stern message; and finally the Apocalyptic scene of events of the Gospel Age provides an overview that helps us, in turn, to locate, identify, and further understand the climactic predictions of the age, particularly its conclusion.

Let us observe how strange it is that Jude's epistle is sandwiched between the two messages of the same apostle John—between his epistles and his Apocalypse. Does not this placement of Jude suggest to us the possibility—nay, the probability—that these last three perhaps least-studied, least-understood books are to be considered as a special triad or unit unto themselves, which in due process of time would assume greater import?

The Book of Jude seems to have been written especially for the *end of the age*. What is the evidence or proof for such a statement? Verses 14 and 15 of the epistle inform us that Enoch prophesied of conditions that would prevail in the last time, or day, and this prophecy of Enoch was directed against a class that Jude himself repeatedly refers to in his epistle. This book provides a rather startling revelation of conditions that will exist not in the world but *in the Church*, and it is from this standpoint that we will consider the letter.

Since the Book of Jude is almost identical in language form and subject content with part of the Second Epistle of Peter, it is advisable to compare the two, not merely to demonstrate their remarkable similarity but also to supply additional information. Such information (1) assists in the clarification and interpretation of certain details in Jude, enabling us to better understand its true portent, and (2) highlights the importance of examining and heeding its warnings and expostulations. For convenience and to facilitate reference, a comparison of Jude and the Second Epistle of Peter appears at the end of this treatise.

**Jude 1: 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:**

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

This letter is directed to the consecrated, the sanctified, those who are set apart; it is meant particularly for the spiritual class God is calling in this age. A more accurate paraphrase of verses 1 and 2 would be: "From Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, to those who are sanctified.... May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied unto you."

**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.**

The Revised Standard Version more clearly states the thought: "Beloved, being very eager to write to you of *our* common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." The King James Version, which does not use the word "our," has "the common salvation." This common salvation, however, is the common hope of the Church, not the restitution hope of the world.

Originally, Jude planned to write a message of exhortation to faithfulness, stating what the heavenly hope is and giving counsel along different lines—in other words, to give a general exhortation of advice concerning many things pertaining to the hope of the Church’s high calling. But Jude abandoned his original intention. Some translations read as if Jude had previously written such a letter. Whether he did or not we cannot be certain. In any event, he changed his mind or course, and became concerned not about just general problems but about a *particular* problem. He felt that the faithful brethren would find it necessary to contend for the faith “once for all delivered to the saints.”

Why would the Revised Standard Version and other translations call it “the faith ... once for all delivered to the saints”? The reason is that it is an *unchanging* faith. Jude is not referring to dispensational truth in general but to a problem *basic to all* of God’s people that will be a particular problem at the *end of the age*. Verse 4 identifies what the problem will be.

**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.**

In many translations, the thought is expressed that these ungodly men forced or wormed their way in, implying the use of a little pressure and digging, but that does not seem to be the thought. (Note: This study is being presented more or less from our own bias or slant, for in the normal way of interpreting Jude, there are certain conflicts and many, many unresolved questions.) The Jerusalem Bible says, “Certain persons have *infiltrated among you*,” and this wording is more the thought. Pressure will not necessarily be involved, although it is possible some will pressure themselves in. While it is not definite whether all the individuals of this class enter the fellowship of the brethren with ominous, evil intent, the context clearly indicates that the entrance is unobtrusive and not initially discerned by the sanctified membership at large. The point is, **HERE THEY ARE!** Somehow they got into the Church, into our midst! And what is the problem? Jude forewarned the Church long ago that in the end of the age, a condition would develop where ungodly persons would come into their midst and *pervert the grace of God into lasciviousness*, and he showed that such individuals are marked for *destruction*.

Here we call attention to 2 Peter 2:1,2, the parallel text to Jude 4. The text is indeed shocking because it indicates that in time, some of this ungodly element will be elevated to the role of teachers in the Church, bringing in with them undermining doctrines and practices that will lead to the downfall of many. “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who will subtly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them, bringing on themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their impious practices, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of” (see translation on page 21).

These individuals who penetrate the Church in the latter day are described as “ungodly.” However, a better translation is “*impious ones*,” for they lack the quality of true reverence. They fail to pay due respect to the unequivocal authority of God, His Word, and Christ. In the final analysis, it is this fundamental fault in their character structure that opens the door to all manner of evil.

In what way will this class of ungodly or impious persons in the Church turn the grace of God into lasciviousness? They will presume on God’s mercy and forgiveness by not correcting the problems that exist. The Apostle Paul, in writing about the love and mercy of God in Romans chapters 5 and 6, said that God is merciful to the Christian, but then he added the following thought: Because of the grace of God, shall we “*continue in sin, [so] that [the] grace [of God] may [thus] abound [in us]?*” In other words, should we prove God’s mercy by presuming to

sin? Paul said, “God *forbid!*” We *must not presume* on God’s mercy by sinning (Rom. 6:2). If Christians feel they have an *all-loving* and *all-forgiving* God, that belief or attitude can lead to various detrimental conclusions, among which is universal salvation.

The Apostle Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 5:1,2,6,7,9-11 the following:

“It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife. And ye *are puffed up*, and *have not* rather *mourned*, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.... Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven.... I wrote unto you [previously] in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world.... But *now* I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that *is called a brother* be a fornicator [etc.] ... with such a one, *no, not to eat.*”

It is inconceivable to imagine that the brethren at Corinth were glorying in the conduct of the sinner in their midst—no, of course not! They were glorying in their own self-conceit and the magnanimity of their imagined love. Their spirit of forgiveness was so broad and generous that they could overlook this terrible deed and not only tolerate the sinner’s presence in their midst at meetings but also perhaps even offer him consolation and a sympathetic tear—without his having first publicly acknowledged and publicly apologized for his sin and requested forgiveness, accompanied with tears of remorse (as it were, in the spirit of sackcloth and ashes). And to think that this forgiving attitude prevailed despite the fact that the serious misdeed constituted a sin against the cause of Christ, and hence brought disrepute on the truth!

The brethren at Corinth, instead of being more magnanimous in their concept of forgiveness than God, should have *mourned*, even though they themselves were not responsible for the immoral act. Then, to have also tolerated the continued presence of the individual in their midst was a condition the Apostle Paul found unthinkable. His command to excommunicate the individual from the functions of the class was one step. However, not only was the sinner to be barred from spiritual fellowship, but the brethren were to shun association with him even in the world—yea, so much so as not to allow him literally to eat at a table with any of the brotherhood. In verse 11, the apostle was referring to a *natural* table, not a spiritual one. Moreover, anyone committing any of the sins listed in 1 Corinthians chapter 5 was to be treated thus *whether or not he or she was Spirit-begotten*. Specifically, the apostle’s commandment is “not to eat” with one committing such a deed if that one is “*called*” or so much as “*named*” a brother, whether or not he is or was truly such.

Also, it is significant that in the Law, it is written, “And the daughter of *any* priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire” (Lev. 21:9). While Jesus never gave such a commandment to the Church, yet it is quite evident that in regard to the present antitypical priesthood, such a sinner should at least be dispossessed, disowned of the father, in order to shock the individual into a realization of the gravity of the sin—in the hope that eventually the person would confess and utterly abandon the sin in harmony with the Apostle Paul’s counsel of 2 Corinthians 2:1-11. In that counsel, he gave permission to the ecclesia to forgive the one previously excommunicated, not only because of that individual’s excessive or “overmuch sorrow” (verse 7) but also on account of the sufficiency of the punishment of disfellowship exacted, the latter (verse 6) being a necessary time factor towards inducing salvation.

Universal Salvationists believe that God can and will save all and that even Satan will be saved. There was a time, shortly after the First World War, when some in the truth went into this

movement. Such a belief sounds good to the flesh because it allows an individual to have one foot in heaven and one foot on earth without any danger or fear. From that standpoint, there is the possibility that a Christian can presume upon God's goodness by being disobedient and yet expect to be forgiven. The tenets of the Catholic faith, such as the institution of the Mass and the confessional, tend to influence wrong behavior. A standard joke in connection with that faith is that some come from the tavern on New Year's Eve, go to confession, and return to the tavern. Therein they would be using God to their convenience for purposes of forgiveness without changing their ways.

The King James Version mentions denying both God and Jesus, but most versions couple the titles together in reference to Jesus; e.g., "deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ" (RSV). How could one pervert the grace of God into lasciviousness, denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ? The thought is not that this class in the Church will deny Jesus is Christ and audibly renounce him. That would not make sense, because if such were the case, how would this class be *in* the Church? The Church would be shocked. This ungodly class will not openly defy or deny in the sense of audibly expressing auricular discontent with God; rather, they will not obey Christ. They will deny him in the sense of not taking heed to his counsel and Word.

It is one thing to describe our Lord as "Master," meaning he is our example, but the word "Lord" is a stronger thought. We might think of one as being our example, but if one is our lord or king, more obedience is required. The Lord's Word counsels certain instructions, and if we deny that counsel or do not heed it, we will then be denying the Master because it is *his* Word and it is *God's* Word. Notice how verse 4 couples these two thoughts together. Perversion of the grace of God into lasciviousness is linked with denying Jesus as Master and Lord. We would not even know Jesus was Lord unless we had the biblical record of his life, preaching, and instruction for the Church. Therefore, so much that we do concerning the Master—our consecration and everything—comes from his Word because he does not speak to us with an audible voice. We learn about Jesus through his Word.

In the Church are the Little Flock, the Great Company, and the Second Death class (those who were once spiritual but who turned back and rejected and denied, as well as another element, a *worldly* element). The Book of Jude, among other things, describes this subdivision of the Second Death class as a *worldly* element amidst the fellowship, arising from within and also coming into the Church from without. As we proceed, we will try to substantiate this thought. In any event, this class ostensibly believe in Jesus and in God. They have a knowledge of God's plan; of His goodness, mercy, and grace as regards the world; and of Christ's robe of righteousness as regards the Church. However, they presume too much on this grace and, consequently, in effect are denying the Lord's counsel.

**Jude 5: I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.**

Three examples are given, and this is the first. The second and third examples follow.

**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 of the great day.**

**Jude 7: Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, 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.**

In reminding us of these examples, Jude wanted to emphasize certain lessons concerning (1) the people coming out of Egypt, (2) the fallen angels, and (3) the conditions that existed in the

days of Lot of Sodom and Gomorrah.

In discussing the people coming out of Egypt, Jude added, “afterward *destroyed* them that believed not.” What is the inference about this destruction in relation to the antitypical fulfillment? Does this verse imply Second Death to the class prefigured in this example? The Israelites who came out of Egypt in the type will be forgiven and come forth from the grave, but what they picture is another matter.

These three examples furnish some clues about the class Jude was describing. The only clue in verse 5 as to the reason for the destruction is that the people “*believed not.*” In other words, they would not believe the Lord; they did not exercise faith. In Sinai, there were numerous examples of lack of faith on the part of the Israelites, but the reaction of those who spied out the land is particularly apropos here. Only Joshua and Caleb believed God and exercised sufficient faith. Consequently, the entire first generation out of Egypt died in the wilderness except for these two faithful witnesses. The nation did not enter the Promised Land right away because they lacked faith in the advice of Joshua and Caleb, who said, “Yes, the people of the land are big, but the Lord will give us the victory.” The other ten spies were fearful, and the Israelites chose to believe the majority report.

This first example, then, is one clue that the people *did not obey God*. God had said, “You do so-and-so, and I will do such and such for you,” but the people did not obey because they *did not believe God*. Therefore, *failing to act because of not believing the Lord is equated with disobedience*. The Apostle Paul drew a somewhat similar lesson to that of Jude regarding the experiences of the children of Israel in the wilderness at the time of the Exodus, and he described a similar fate (1 Cor. 10:1-12).

The example of the fallen angels brings up another point. What is the similarity between the illustration of the fallen angels and that of Egypt? Not much detail is given in verse 6 except to say they left their first estate. In Genesis, we learn that the fallen angels took wives of the daughters of men, thereby mixing angelic and human natures contrary to the will of God. When these angels appeared to men in the first dispensation, it was not wrong for them to come down here to earth. When they came down, they were *holy* angels, but in their association with fallen mankind, many became contaminated and desired to live here rather than to obey God and just be His helpers, giving instruction to mankind. In a way, there is a similarity between the Lord’s professed people of the Gospel Age and (1) the fallen angels and (2) the children of Israel who came out of Egypt. Just as back there, the *nominal* Israelites who left Egypt became contaminated when they were in the wilderness by reverting to their old habits, so in the Gospel Age, the Lord’s *nominal* people, who profess to leave the world, become contaminated in the “wilderness.” A Christian is called out of the world, and the conflict is not to get back in it. Similarly, the holy angels became defiled through contact with man. Consequently, they were imprisoned, and they are to be kept in this prison until the “judgment of the great day.” A time will come when they will be loosed, and their actions at that time will constitute a *part* of their judgment. Typically, however, their confinement to chains of darkness after leaving their first estate represents something quite different: the casting of the Second Death class into everlasting oblivion.

Another point. When the Israelites left Egypt, they were a *mixed* multitude, some being true and some being merely nominal proselytes. When the angels came down from heaven, they proved ultimately to be a *mixed* multitude, some of them retaining their purity and some sinning and being placed in chains of darkness.

Verse 7 likens Sodom and Gomorrah to the fallen angels (“even as Sodom and Gomorrah”). In other words, Jude was saying that the fallen angels became contaminated by fallen mankind and vice versa—humankind were also contaminated by the fallen angels who came into their

midst. Part of the sin of the inhabitants of these two cities was similar to that of the angels who left their first estate. The fallen angels disobeyed just as those of Sodom and Gomorrah did by giving themselves over to fornication and going after “strange flesh.” The fallen angels were enticed by the new flesh of humanity; they were enamored with the daughters of men, who were “fair” (Gen. 6:2). The Sodomites gave themselves over to another kind of strange flesh, namely, sexual perversion (Rom. 1:24; Lev. 18:23). Sodom and Gomorrah were set forth for an example, suffering the punishment of age-lasting fire. We know they will be resurrected because of the statement in Ezekiel 16:53,55, but here they picture a class that will *not* have a resurrection.

The Israelites were destroyed in connection with coming out of Egypt. The angels were merely put in chains until the judgment of the great day (not a perpetual condition); however, if they keep not their first estate again—that is, if they materialize—the act will condemn them to *everlasting destruction*. The point is this: Verse 7 is *not* discussing spiritual fornication. The Revised Standard Version says, “Sodom and Gomorrah ... likewise acted immorally and indulged in unnatural lust.” In other words, this class Jude was speaking about are likened to the disobedient children of Israel who came out of Egypt, to the angels who left their first estate, and to the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Verse 8 links these three examples to this class.

We would like to make an observation about the terminology used in the end of verse 7. Since the Scriptures abundantly testify that death is the opposite or absence of life, many are troubled by the seemingly harsh contradictory phrase in the Authorized King James Version of the Bible “suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” The first difficulty to be removed is that the thought of “suffering” as understood in today’s vocabulary is not the thought contained in the Greek text. Secondly, whether it is the fire or the vengeance that is everlasting creates no real problem. If eternal fire is the intended thought, it would have to be understood in harmony with the Greek word *geenna*, which is usually translated “hell” in the Bible and hence has a direct bearing on the subject. In Scripture, this word alludes to a valley adjoining the city of Jerusalem: the Valley of Gehenna, or Hinnom. In ancient times, the garbage of the city was cast therein, and a fire burned continuously day and night in this disposal heap. Although the fire was eternal, the daily waste matter thrown into the ravine was utterly consumed and was *not perpetuated* in the fire. On the other hand, if the correct translation is that the vengeance is eternal, not the fire, then the emphasis would be that the judgment is one of utter extinction, final and irrevocable.

**Jude 8: Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.**

Notice that the word “filthy” is supplied. The Jerusalem Bible reads, “Likewise also *these in their delusions...*” The thought is not that this class dream or prophesy with pipe dreams but that in their delusions, they defile their bodies, disregard authority, and speak evil of dignities. The dignities are probably true Christians, although the Greek word just means “glories” or “glorious ones,” that is, the ones the Lord truly owns, the saints. In other words, the true saints are being maligned by this class. This class speak evil of true Christians.

What would constitute disregarding authority? When warned they are walking in an ungodly way, this class ignore the advice, which is *scriptural* advice. They disregard the counsel in God’s Word. For instance, those coming out of Egypt were given certain advice on what to do and what not to do, but they did not obey; they heard the Word, but the hearing was not mixed with fear (reverence and respect). No doubt when the fallen angels came down here, they were given specific instructions what to do and what not to do, but they chose to disobey; they, too, disregarded the Lord’s counsel or authority. They conveniently “forgot” what the Lord had said; they liked it here, so they remained. When Moses told the people to go up into the



Promised Land and the Lord would give it to them, their refusal to obey manifested disregard for counsel and authority. The Israelites had promised to obey the Lord before the land was ever spied out; they had made a covenant with the Lord and then reneged on it by not obediently going into the land.

Sodom and Gomorrah gave themselves over to fornication. “Likewise also ... [this class] defile the flesh.” Is this a reference to *spiritual* defilement, such as not believing in the Lord’s presence or in Pastor Russell’s being “that servant”? No, this defilement pertains to consecration. A Christian should always do certain basic things; namely, he should live a life of consecration, holiness, and obedience to the Lord. Of course there are slips and falls, but the class Jude was describing *disregard* the Lord’s instructions along these lines. Being ungodly, they do not obey the requirements of the gospel, they do not respect authority, and they do not heed the Lord’s counsel. And they speak evil of the Lord’s true servants.

**Jude 9: 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.**

This verse helps us grasp several facts. Michael *contended* with the Devil, he also *disputed* with the Devil, and he said, “The Lord *rebuke* thee.” There is even the possibility of a physical resistance because if Michael had not done anything, the Devil could have just taken the body of Moses. Michael disputed—he had an argument—about the body, and he did rebuke Satan. This verse helps us to know what it means to contend for the faith, yet without resorting to physical violence.

In the beginning of this epistle, Jude stated he would have liked to talk about other things in connection with the Church’s common salvation, but because something urgent had come up, he had to set aside the general counsel and warn the Church along more specific lines in regard to a great, grave, imminent danger. In order to do so, he set forth various examples. He called to remembrance what happened when the Israelites came out of Egypt, etc. Verse 9 is tied in with his logic and statement in verse 3 about contending for the faith (“it was needful for me to write unto, and exhort you ... [to] earnestly contend for the faith which was once [for all] delivered unto the saints”). Jude used Michael’s contending with the Devil as a practical lesson of how to apply the words of this counsel.

Now let us consider Jesus. Did he speak *mildly* with Satan? Did he reason along the lines of “Oh, you should not do that” or “It is not advisable to do that” or “Don’t you think it would be better if it were done this way?” No! Michael had to resist the Adversary, and he no doubt had to raise his voice in dispute. Surely Michael did not just calmly present his side of the question in a dispassionate voice, and neither did the Devil with his viewpoint. It is quite probable that there was actual excitement in connection with this dispute.

Moreover, verse 9 gives insight into the character of Satan and how he thinks. The Adversary very much wanted the body of Moses to make it an object of veneration. Was there anything wrong with Moses? No, he was perhaps one of the most saintly men who ever lived on this earth next to Jesus. What was wrong was that the Adversary would have used him as a fetish or as an object of veneration and thus have taken the people’s minds away from what the prophets (God’s Word) had to say. Even today a danger exists along this line. There is nothing wrong with Pastor Russell and his advice, and he is a revered servant (that “faithful and wise servant”), but the dead Pastor Russell could be revived, as it were, and used instead of God’s Word. There is this possibility among Bible Students in the Harvest period. The danger is that we could say, “Thus saith Pastor Russell this” and “Thus saith Pastor Russell that.” Now we have nothing against Pastor Russell at all. He himself said to “*prove* all things,” and his counsel has always been consistent along this line. However, the Adversary would like us to get away

from *God's Word*, which is the very *foundation of our faith*. Any servant of the Lord is merely an index finger pointing to God's Word, helping to clarify what it says. The Bible is the real authority. We have studied the Pastor's writings and have as much respect for him as many others, but we speak bluntly here because the worship of man is a technique of the Devil.

The thing is, Jesus did *contend, resist, and rebuke*. Therefore, if someone contending for the faith does the same thing, we should not speak evil of that dignity by saying, "He did not show the Christian spirit. He was unkind, unmerciful, and unloving because he raised his voice." We should not view things emotionally and then pronounce judgment. The *cold, hard facts* determine whether or not a party is disregarding the Lord's Word.

However, it is one thing to rebuke and another thing to pronounce a *railing judgment*. A railing judgment is the assassination of one's character. Two things are suggested: (1) It is the pronouncement of the destiny of a person, thereby damaging his character, and (2) the person's character is damaged in a *disparaging* way. In a trial, a judge weighs all the facts before he pronounces a person guilty or innocent, and generally, this pronouncement is done with an unemotional voice. The judge merely says, "Guilty"; he does not bring a railing judgment, but simply makes a decision in accordance with how he sees the facts. A railing judgment is a judgment accompanied with bad feeling. "The Lord rebuke thee" is simplicity itself—no flowery clauses, just a plain statement.

**Jude 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.**

The various translations bring out that in one matter, those of this class do not understand, but in another matter, they do understand. The problem is how to harmonize what is really being said in this verse, and this is difficult unless the class doing these things is identified. The New English Bible reads, "These men pour abuse upon things they do not understand." What is not understood are *spiritual* things. This class have no true spiritual judgment; their judgment is *poor* in spiritual matters. However, in contrast, to show that this class have *natural* minds and do *natural* thinking, the second part of this verse in the New English Bible is, "The things they do understand, [that is,] by instinct like brute beasts ['as irrational animals'—RSV], prove [to be] their undoing [destruction]." In other words, this class can understand only the instincts of beasts or animals that have no reasoning ability. If animals are given meat, they recognize it as such and eat it. If they are beaten, they realize they are getting pain. Animals know certain things pertaining to the baser instincts—they know the hand that feeds them, they know when they are thirsty and hungry, etc.—but they have no rationality. Therefore, this class do understand as regards the flesh. They are wise in fleshly matters, but these matters are like those of the brute beast. Consequently, they know only their own emotions, feelings, and baser instincts, and they do not understand the motivation of others who may be spiritually inclined. This thought harmonizes with a statement of the Apostle Paul, who said that the natural man cannot discern spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:14).

This ungodly class are spoken of as an *outside* element. When the Israelites came out of Egypt, they were a mixed multitude. When the angels came down to planet Earth to minister to man, they were not of the human race but were an *outside* element that came in and defiled humankind. And it is obvious that the class pictured in the Sodom and Gomorrah example were far from the Lord. Verse 11 tells about this ungodly class.

**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.**

There are also three examples here. It is interesting to see that Jude had sort of a mathematical mind—using, first, three examples of a *company* of individuals and now three examples of

*individuals*. Notice that the phrasing starts with Cain, leads to Balaam, and ends with Core (Korah). It is a *progression* that leads to a *climax*. In regard to Core, the text says, “They ... *perished* in the gainsaying.” The account does not say that those who walked in the way of Cain or ran greedily after the error of Balaam perished. (Such will perish, but that was not Jude’s point.) Jude used all three individuals as examples of this one class, and showed that the progression of Cain to Balaam to Core leads to a climax of destruction.

Now let’s go back. Jude reasoned somewhat like the Apostle Paul here. First, this class *walk* in the way of Cain (RSV). It is hard to get the exact thought from just the Common Version. The RSV says this class “*abandon themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam’s error,*” but the King James Version states they “*ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward.*” The progression is (1) *walk*, (2) *run greedily*, and then (3) *are destroyed* in the climax.

Let’s go back again. What would be the problem in walking in the way of Cain? Jealousy, for one thing. Also, Cain did not stop to consider the Lord’s way or the Lord’s counsel but, instead, proceeded in a headstrong manner. He used his *own* reasoning in regard to what the Lord would accept as a sacrifice, and hence he was not particular about giving an animal sacrifice. Although Cain did sacrifice to the Lord, the sacrifice was not as pleasing as Abel’s because the latter sacrificed in harmony with the instruction of God’s Word. Therefore, walking in the way of Cain would be walking in a headstrong manner, failing to use spiritual discernment, and being jealous. Cain failed to discern why the Lord was interested in animal sacrifice, why He was pleased with the blood of animals, which was taught even before the Law. Cain’s jealousy led to murder. First, Cain did not carefully consider God’s Word. Second, he became envious of the party who had heeded God’s Word. Third, he murdered that party.

The problem with Balaam was that gain was his real motive, although at first he pretended otherwise. An ambassador came on behalf of Balak and said the king wanted Balaam to come to him and curse the children of Israel. Even though Balaam replied that he wanted to know the Lord’s will, he was really interested in going to King Balak for the sake of gain. When Balaam did take the matter to the Lord, the Lord more or less let him interpret the counsel the way he wanted to in order to reveal the condition of Balaam’s heart. Despite the fact that certain obstacles arose, Balaam did not discern God’s providence in the matter. Even though when Balaam set out on the errand, the dumb ass saw an angel in the way and began to speak, Balaam nevertheless did go to the king. The Book of Numbers tells later on that Balaam gave bad counsel. He said to the king, “I cannot mechanically curse God’s people, but if you really want to curse them, have them marry strange flesh. Get them to marry the daughters of Moab, and in that manner, you will alienate them from God.” Balaam’s counsel taught lasciviousness, and the reason for the bad counsel was greed for gain. Balaam went to the king because it was to his advantage. In Balaam’s case, the reward was money, but the reward does not necessarily have to be money. Many in the nominal system have this problem of desiring reward in the form of titles, garments, honors, emoluments, high salaries, etc., and they are lax in diligently teaching the Word. This desire for reward extends into many avenues of life.

Gainsaying is rebellion expressed in words. Korah was really rebelling against the Lord—although his rebellion was ostensibly against Moses and the whole setup, including Aaron, the high priest. Korah challenged Moses’ leadership role. As a result, Aaron was proven to be the proper and only servant when his rod alone budded. In the Tabernacle arrangement, Aaron represents Jesus. The danger in the nominal system was that instead of Jesus being the Head, men such as patriarchs, fathers, and popes (i.e., “father of fathers”) intervened and took the place and prestige that belonged only to God and Jesus. Because others felt they were apostles, the teaching of apostolic succession developed in the nominal system. They felt they were of equal importance to the Twelve Apostles, and in cases where individuals were not considered of equal importance, then councils were. Because a council in the early Church evidently had the Lord’s favor, councils in succeeding centuries were concluded to be of equal value. Thus the

nominal system tried to justify apostolic succession on either a collective basis or as individuals having great prominence, circumventing and recognizing someone other than the divinely appointed chief and Lord, the Master. The degree of culpability for the intrusion of this doctrine, practice, and usurpation by ungodly leaders will be based upon the degree of their knowledge and willful sinning against light, which only the Lord, the Righteous Judge, is able to discern. The presumption of equality to or superiority above the authority of Christ is a most serious matter indeed, and perhaps the degree of responsibility incurred is directly proportional to the highest level of their understanding and belief in Christ in former years, that is, prior to their later presumptive acts—and no matter how graciously and humbly(?) those acts were introduced.

The Book of Jude shows that rebellion starts with failure to take heed to what pleases the Lord in particulars. In Cain's case, this led to jealousy and murder. With Balaam, the love for reward led to giving counsel that was injurious to God's people. The third was Korah, who contested the authority of Aaron in being high priest and considered himself equal; he was swallowed up. Notice, the Bible does not mention that Cain was slain. And nothing is mentioned about Balaam's bad counsel until later on (Num. 31:16). We would not know why Balaam was slain if Holy Writ did not indicate that he incurred the Lord's disfavor. Ostensibly before the world, however, the reason for Balaam's being slain would not be known. On the other hand, Korah died for his act almost immediately, and he died openly, the reason for his death being publicly exposed. A "mark" was put on Cain; the account is silent about Balaam until the day of his death, a later date, but Korah, the *climax* of this progression, *perished*. And the climax of this admonition in the Epistle of Jude is the destruction of this ungodly class.

**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;**

In this verse, the word "without" is an important clue in identifying and judging who this class will be. They feed *without* reverence (see Phillips Modern English translation), they are clouds *without* water, and being trees *without* fruit, they are twice dead and uprooted (i.e., *without* a future). The thought continues on into verse 13. Let us analyze these descriptions.

Here are a class who "are spots in your feasts of charity, ... feeding themselves without fear." The word "spots" is also translated "blemishes," "reefs," or (hidden) "rocks." The word in the Greek means "reefs." A reef can be either exposed or hidden in shallow water, the latter being more dangerous. Hence this class are like hidden rocks or obstacles. The majority of translations convey the thought that into the true Church will come a class who will carouse, do bawdy things, be gluttonous, drink wine, talk loudly, make ostentatious display, etc., thus constituting "blemishes." However, this is not the thought. The text is discussing a *love* feast and thus pertains to the spiritual table. Like hidden rocks, this class will associate, feed, and participate in the charity feasts of the Church *without* reverence. This text is not discussing a rowdy element but an irreverent class who will make themselves known in *love*. Under superficial examination, they look all right, but they are dangerous. Just as a hidden reef is dangerous to a ship because it is not discernible, so this class undermine principles and thus can be dangerous to those not fully aware of what is going on. This epistle is directed to the sanctified; its purpose is to *warn* the *truly consecrated*, be they Little Flock or Great Company.

The parallel text to this first part of Jude 12, namely, 2 Peter 2:13, provides other information about the ungodly. They are described as "spots" and "stains" (mistranslated "blemishes"), in addition to being the hidden shoals of Jude. The "spots" depict the incurred responsibility and disfavor with which they, *as individuals*, are viewed from the divine standpoint. The "stains" refer to the pernicious leavening influence this ungodly class exercise upon the truly consecrated because of their close association.

This class are also described as clouds without water. What is a cloud without water? Normally, a cloud is made up of moisture; it is a condensation of water molecules. Consequently, if triggered by certain circumstances, it will precipitate. The fact that the clouds in this text have *no* water indicates this class have no spirituality or real truth as far as God's Word is concerned, and hence are without refreshment. This class are also likened to clouds carried about of winds, meaning they are not stable. When any wind of doctrine comes along, they lack stability and are wobbly, leaning first one way and then another. Like a cloud without water that goes whichever way the wind blows, they have a wishy-washy character; they do not know what they believe or why. As we find out later (verse 16), not all in this class necessarily have this characteristic, for there is another element in this class who do things for their own *advantagement*.

This class are also referred to as autumnal barren trees. The thought put forth in the Revised Standard Version is that they are "fruitless trees in late autumn," that is, when the season is long over. This slant is more or less how translators tacitly view the passage. However, it should be remembered that the Jewish harvest of *grain* was celebrated in May or June at the season of Pentecost, but that the harvest of *trees and vines* was celebrated at the Feast of Tabernacles (or Feast of Harvest), which was observed in the seventh month, in the fall (or autumn), at the close (or climax) of the season. Therefore, the proper interpretation of this portion of Jude 12 should be that this class are like "unfruitful [early] autumnal trees" or, as rendered in the New English Bible, "trees that *in season* bear no fruit." For this reason—because these trees are *barren*—instead of being pruned in late fall or early spring to improve their fruitage for the next season, they are considered *worthless* ("twice dead, plucked up by the roots"). Hence this class are without any future hope.

Notice that in every instance, this class are headed for Second Death. Because the account gives such a *strong* message, many, after reading a few verses, become frightened and do not want to consider the Book of Jude further.

**Jude 13: Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.**

Wild, raging waves indicate a restless state with no real direction (like clouds being carried about of winds). Casting up foam reminds us of surf, which washes up scum and debris onto the shore; then, when the wave recedes, it leaves the scum and debris behind. These "raging waves" (ungodly ones) cast up foam, thereby exposing their own shame.

There is another point too. Just as the clouds were without water and the trees without fruit, so the waves are *without substance*. Foam is like air. When waves are coming in, they look as if they have real substance. They *appear* to be raging, but when they break on the shore, they go no farther. They surge, foam, and bubble yet lack any true value. The cloud *appears* to contain water but is waterless. They are clouds, yes, but they have no water. They are trees, yes, but they have no fruit. They are raging waves, yes, but they have no substance—just foam and emptiness. When exposed, this emptiness consists of debris, air, foam, scum, etc., and not solid water.

To proceed with the prophecy, the stars of heaven are known as fixed stars around which other planetary bodies revolve. Strictly speaking, this picture is not wholly accurate, for the stars themselves revolve around a common, universal gravitational center, Pleiades, which is styled God's throne. However, their movement is so infinitesimally slow that to our eyes, they appear fixed, whereas we can more readily detect the movements of the planets. The entire heavenly host of stars and planets is under the control of the Pleiades.

Furthermore, the Bible reveals, contrary to the declarations of science, that of all the heavenly host, *not one star faileth* (Isa. 40:26). Therefore, the expression “wandering stars” is at first quite ambiguous. Why, then, does Holy Writ present such an enigma? Perhaps the purpose is to demonstrate the false pretensions and appearance of the ungodly, particularly the more prominent individuals, who assume the position and likeness of stable stars.

In reality, these so-called wandering stars are *without orbit*, hence not underneath or submissive to God’s control. God has ordained that stars and planets move in fixed courses. Therefore, if they come out of their courses, they are, as it were, disobedient. Actually, wandering stars (meteorites or shooting stars) are not really stars at all; they just appear to be such. They burn out as they streak across the sky, being brilliant for a while and then going into the blackness of oblivion. Thus Jude was talking about waterless clouds, fruitless trees, empty foaming surf, and orbitless stars.

**Jude 14: And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,**

**Jude 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.**

Where did Jude get this information? Apparently, he received a special revelation that was a prophecy of Enoch. In a similar manner, the Apostle Paul named the two individuals who withstood Moses in connection with the plagues, and their names are not given in the Old Testament (2 Tim. 3:8). Therefore, we know that certain information was made available to the apostles, and by means of this information, interesting little details come through. It is pleasing to know that some understanding was given to Enoch when he “walked with God” (Gen. 5:22,24), and of that information, we know nothing except this prophecy. Enoch’s walking with God was like having close fellowship with someone and disclosing many innermost thoughts. And the Lord did disclose to Enoch some of His purposes with regard to the future.

This prophecy can be rendered two ways: (1) tens of thousands or (2) ten thousands. Probably the more literalized second interpretation is more accurate, meaning several ten thousands. Ten ten thousands would be 100,000, and adding a few more gives us 144,000, the Church; i.e., the Lord comes with his holy ones. The interpretation given at a recent convention was that verse 14 pertains to the beginning of the Second Advent in 1874. But we counter: The Church was not with our Lord at that time. The sleeping saints were not even raised until 1878, and instead of coming *with* the Lord, they went *to* the Lord—a different direction. The saints are caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Verse 14 is talking about when the Lord *comes with his saints*, not when they go up to him. Therefore, this verse refers to the time *after* the glorification of the Church when The Christ will return to execute judgment. Did the holy ones come in 1874 to execute judgment? No, they were not even resurrected then. And this verse does not refer to the holy angels, for they are not granted such signal honor.

The way Enoch’s prophecy was introduced is significant: “Enoch ... the *seventh* from Adam.” While the Old Testament states that Enoch was the seventh from Adam and he did make this prediction, Adam sometimes, in the favorable sense, represents our Lord, the Second Adam. As Adam was the father of the human race, so our resurrected Lord will ultimately be the age-lasting Father, prophesied in Isaiah 9:6, who is to bless the world in the Kingdom. Our Lord was raised in the *beginning* of the Gospel Age, and way down in the *seventh* generation (or period) of the Church will come this judgment—the seventh period from the Second Adam. Some translations actually state, “Enoch, seven generations from Adam, prophesied....” Here we have an allusion to the seven epochs of the Church. We are living in the seventh (or last) epoch, the Laodicean period, and Enoch’s prophecy pertains to the last time. When this seventh

day has elapsed, Jesus will come with his saints.

Enoch can also represent the Church in the flesh who, because of “walking with God,” are given information concerning His plans and purposes. Just as the Lord disclosed to Enoch back there what He purposed to do in the future, so at this late date, in the seventh era of the Church, God discloses to His people, the Enoch class, His purposes with regard to the Epistle of Jude, which is a particularly pertinent prophecy dealing with the end of the age.

**Jude 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.**

In the early stages, this condition is not readily discernible. As previously shown, the condition is progressive (this ungodly class walk, run, and finally perish), so that the dispensational fulfillment of this prophecy—the raging and foaming out of shame, etc.—will come *later*. This situation will grow steadily worse and worse and worse until finally it will be clearly discernible, but then it will be too late, for the Church will have passed beyond the veil. Only *after* the Church is off the scene will this condition become fully apparent to all the Great Company class. This spirit of murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts, speaking great swelling words, and flattering for advantage—at first discernible by only the few—will become more openly manifest at that *later* time.

What will this class murmur and complain about or against? In the type, the Israelites complained against Moses, asking, “Hast thou led us out here in the wilderness to die?” In the antitype, the murmuring will be against the *Lord*: “Have you taken us in our consecration out here to die?” Therefore, this murmuring will not necessarily be against brethren. The attitude of the Israelites in the type, which also has an antitype, was: “Before we followed the Lord, we had the leeks, onions, and garlic of Egypt. Now we have just bread and water.” The Israelites wanted to return to the Egyptian way of life. Hence this class look for the *natural* things.

This class will be constant murmurers and talk big. They will either pay men great respect or keep quiet, depending on what is *to their advantage*. The Revised Standard Version reads, “flattering people to gain advantage”; i.e., they will hypocritically pay men great respect by flattering them when it is to their advantage, but as soon as it is not to their advantage, they will change. The *motivation* is exposed here.

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

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

**Jude 19: These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.**

Jude indicates he is not the only one to write concerning the last time. When our Lord talked about the days of Noah in Matthew chapter 24, saying the people ate, drank, built houses, etc., he was not criticizing the people at the time of the Flood from the immoral standpoint. In that chapter, Jesus’ lesson was that the people “knew *not* until [the day] the flood came, and took them all away.” The people carried on their usual activities oblivious of the impending Flood. Thus Jesus looked back to Noah’s day and drew a lesson about the unawareness and the suddenness of the Flood.

When Peter spoke of the same condition, he took an opposite viewpoint (2 Peter chapter 3). Peter talked about the people’s attitude—how they scoffed and reviled Noah and did not realize an invisible canopy of water was about to cascade down upon them. Thus Peter used

the people of that time not from the standpoint of building houses and carrying on *normal* activities, but from the standpoint of carrying on *abnormally*. He emphasized the abnormality of their behavior in that they criticized *righteous* Noah and found fault with him.

Jude used the same illustration of the Flood and the scoffers from still another standpoint. The Revised Standard Version reads, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." Jude's statement was something like Peter's except that it includes this other element in the Church. We know there are scoffers in the world, but here we learn there will be scoffers *in the Church*.

Who are these scoffers in the Church and whom do they represent? Verse 19 furnishes a clue: "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." The attitude of the nominal Church all down through the Gospel Age has been that those who separated themselves were in error. For instance, Papacy, the more numerous nominal mass, regarded as heretics those Protestants who left, even though the latter were in the right. In cases of division, the majority who remain frequently have been and are the ones in the wrong. The majority think the very fact that the minority separate themselves, or withdraw from the professed believers, constitutes an act of disobedience and manifests an improper spirit. They think those leaving are not guided of the Lord but are troublemakers, desiring their own following. This is generally the thinking in such a case. However, the Scriptures say neither the majority nor the minority is always right. One could leave and be in the wrong, *or* one could leave and be in the right. One could remain behind and be in the right, *or* one could remain behind and be in the wrong. We will give one illustration. In the Roman Catholic religion, "scriptural" arguments were used during the days of the Reformation against "schismatics," nonconformists, etc. The Apostle John was quoted where he said, "They went *out* from us, but they were not of us" (1 John 2:19). What John meant was that the individuals were not really in harmony with God in the first place, and it was just a matter of time until they got out. Catholics used this Scripture as a proof that the ones who separated from the nominal mass were wrong, and by using just that statement alone, such would appear to be the case. However, the Scriptures show two sides to this question, and the facts have to be weighed in each case.

The Revised Standard Version is stated a little better. "It is these who set up divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit." All too frequently a creedal fence is set up with a certain standard not specifically taught in the Bible. Now a person has a right to his opinions, but he should not use them as a creed for discerning who are brethren and who are not brethren. Paul commented, "One says, 'I am of Apollos'; another says, 'I am of Paul'; but ye are *carnal* if ye manifest that spirit" (1 Cor. 3:3,4). Therefore, to be for one brother and against another is not a very favorable indication.

The comments presented thus far on the matter of divisions are merely intended as helpful observations, for the thrust of Jude's remarks on this subject may be different from that presented elsewhere in the New Testament. Jude's comments pertain to the ungodly class in the Church at the *end* of the Gospel Age, whereas other Scriptures apply to the Church *throughout* the age.

The King James Version states, "These be they who separate themselves," but the rendering should be, "These be they who make boundaries." (The word "themselves" should be omitted.) The explanation is as follows. In the past, all down through the age, strenuous efforts have been made to apply a rigid sectarian bias as to where to draw the line between what distinguishes a true Christian from a heretic. Sectarian efforts continue to persist today, although another tactic is used; namely, several sects unite on a *collective basis*, having the doctrines of the Trinity, Immortality of the Soul, etc., as their touchstone for a basis of fellowship. As brethren, we are quite knowledgeable along these lines as to wherein lies the



danger, but could the danger *with us* be that “marking out boundaries” signifies a *widening*—rather than a restriction—of what constitutes the true circle of Christian fellowship to such an extent that this natural human element, who are not spiritually minded, not only will enter but ultimately will dominate the thinking and direction of the Truth movement? As Christians, we can neither widen nor restrict the boundary lines as they are set forth in God’s Word.

**Jude 20:** But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

**Jude 21:** Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

**Jude 22:** And of some have compassion, making a difference:

**Jude 23:** And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

**Jude 24:** 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,

**Jude 25:** To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Verse 19 ends the warning. Verses 20 through 23 are a summation of lessons to be drawn from this experience that will come upon the Church, and Jude gives us some valuable information.

The benediction of the last two verses is completely self-explanatory, but verses 20-23 are in the nature of advice. Previously Jude advised the consecrated to contend for the faith once given to the saints. Now (in verse 20) he called that faith a “most *holy* faith” and said the saints are to pray “in the *Holy Spirit*.” The emphasis on “holy” is in contrast to the lust, lasciviousness, loose living, etc., of the consecrated life about which the entire epistle is talking.

Verse 21 says, “Keep yourselves in the love of *God*.” We can keep ourselves in the love of others in friendship, but to keep ourselves in the love of God is another matter. “He that loveth me will keep my commandments” (John 14:15,21). And we look for the “mercy of our Lord *Jesus Christ* [not for the mercy of fellow man] unto eternal life.”

Verse 22 is rendered better in the Jerusalem Bible: “When there are some who have doubts, reassure them.” When this situation comes to a climax, when conditions ripen at a later date, there will be a great deal of confusion in the Church, and people will not know what is happening in the Truth movement. At that time, many will become so discouraged and perplexed about what to do that they will wonder whether God is even recognizing them. They will ask, “Are we really of the faith? Why are things happening this way?” At that time, those who are strongest in faith and have more knowledge are to reassure those who are endeavoring to fulfill their vows. The concern of those who have the right disposition will be to strengthen one another in connection with the “most holy faith.”

The advice given in verse 23 as rendered in the Revised Standard Version is confusing. The first part of the verse speaks of some being saved “by snatching them out of the fire” and “on some have mercy with fear.” This indicates either (a) two methods of saving the same class or (b) separate and distinct methods of saving two classes. This erroneous interpretation of verse 23 is due to (1) the unwarranted duplication of the word “some” twice in the same verse, and (2) the juggling and transposition of phrases within the Greek text itself without proper justification. Verse 23 might be paraphrased as follows: “There are others whom you must save with great

*caution, plucking them out of the fire, keeping your distance even from the outside clothing, which is contaminated with vice.*” This reference clearly applies to the Great Company class, who will be saved if they respond. The hope is that through the destruction of the flesh, their spirit will be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5:5). Verse 23 refers solely to those who need *radical* treatment in order to be delivered. It will be impossible to reason and chat with this class in an effort to help them; these will have to be *plucked out*. Stern admonition and advice in the nature of a *warning* will be required to extricate them from the “fire” and from ultimate destruction. However, such assistance and advice will cease after the Little Flock goes beyond the veil. The death and identity of the feet members will be made manifest in their betrayal by the “Judas class” and subsequent execution.

The King James Version translates verse 22, “Of some have compassion, making a difference”; that is, the translators considered the root Greek word *diakrino*, which *basically* signifies “to judge diversely,” to be equivalent to “making a difference.” Translators have had great difficulty with verse 22 because (1) this word, as well as sometimes one other word, varies slightly in the Greek text in the various codices, and (2) while the translators have respect for the more ancient manuscripts, some feel convinced that a corruption in the text had already occurred and that later texts from other sources are more reliable. Be that as it may, when *diakrino* is employed in Scripture in a commendatory sense, as in this instance, it is usually translated “discern,” “discriminate,” “judge,” or “put a difference,” but when it is used in an uncomplimentary sense, it is in various places translated “doubt,” “waver,” or “stagger.”

When verse 22 is considered in conjunction with verse 23, the sense of the passage can be recognized with a greater degree of certainty to signify the following. Jude advised those Christians who are alert to his counsel and who are, therefore, in a position to understand the strange events occurring in the very midst of the consecrated membership, that they have a responsibility to attempt to rescue as many as possible from this contaminated situation. While two methods are to be used to help the *truly consecrated*, be they eventually Little Flock or Great Company, those who are attempting to be of aid in this rescue mission must indeed be very careful not to fraternize with or foolishly enter the morass themselves. It would be dangerous to think that perhaps they could be of greater usefulness if they were closer to the situation. Such proximity would endanger their own salvation. If we understand this matter correctly, verses 22 and 23 apply essentially to consecrated brethren in the Church, and not to the ungodly class Jude was speaking about earlier.

The ones in verse 22 who have doubts and simply need reassuring and comfort are probably real saints because not all of the true saints are strong in the same sense. Christians of all types will be of the Little Flock. Some will have more knowledge, and some will have more ability along another line, but all will be true to the core, hypothetically speaking. Therefore, just because a person needs comfort and reassurance does not mean he will be of the Great Company class. As the Body is *one* and there are differing capacities among the members, so some need to be shielded and comforted, but they are still members of that Body and, if faithful, will make their calling and election sure.

Two classes are described in verses 22 and 23. Verse 22 is talking about true Christians who are prone to discouragement. The second class (verse 23) are in a dangerous situation or straits from which they must be extricated with a stern warning. Just what their destiny will be we do not know. They may not heed the warning and thus go into the fire, or they may heed the warning but not with sufficient zeal to become members of the Little Flock; we cannot say with certainty where the *individuals* of this class will be. Inasmuch as the Scriptures show the Little Flock will have no spot or wrinkle, this last class will no doubt be of the Great Company—if they are rescued. Dealing with them will be difficult and will necessitate great caution. More study is needed on this matter.

The King James Version is obscure on verses 22 and 23, and the Revised Standard Version erroneously brings out the thought of three different classes: “[1] Convince some, who doubt; [2] save some, by snatching them out of the fire; [3] on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.” The point is, there are only *two* classes. The correct rendering of verses 22 and 23, as it appears in the translation of Jude at the end of this study, is as follows: “And reassure some who doubt; but others save with fear, snatching them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.” The first class, those who merely need reassurance, are more apt to be the ones living in harmony with their covenant, but they will not understand what is happening and, therefore, will need information and encouragement. The following is an alternate and more literal rendering of verse 22, meaning the same thing. “And some do you pity, the *doubting ones* [that is, those *who want and are in need of further counsel and redirection*].” The suggestion is that they will be brought to a successful conclusion—the Lord will make sure they are helped—and the ones who participate in that ministry will be proportionately blessed. However, the description of the other class, those who are pulled out of the fire, will be Great Company *only*.

Now what about the class this whole epistle was written about—the “blemishes,” “spots,” “hidden reefs,” etc.? This ungodly class are not being discussed in verses 20-23 because they will not be saved. They are all marked for destruction. Let’s consider them again.

Here are a class who will go into Second Death, yet they are spoken of as being *worldly* people, devoid of the Spirit. They reason with basic instincts and are not spiritual. Anyone who makes an open, honest, unreserved consecration to the Lord is begotten of the Holy Spirit. True, there are differing degrees and capacities of the Holy Spirit, but these individuals *are* Spirit-begotten. The ungodly class Jude was speaking about are in the Church for some time, but because they lack the Spirit of God, they are *natural* men. Moreover, they will eventually become very carnal. The individuals who comprise this ungodly class can be considered natural-minded, or devoid of the Spirit, from one of two standpoints: (1) Some never made a consecration and *always* were natural-minded yet infiltrated the true Church membership, exercising considerable influence upon its policies. (2) Others did consecrate; either (a) they made an honest and valid confession but allowed the “old man,” the natural mind, to later gain the ascendancy over the new mind, or (b) they made an open but perfunctory vow with some reservations in their hearts. Although probably they were aware of those reservations *at the time*, nevertheless, they are *fully* responsible to the Lord for their confession of consecration. The Apostle Paul also spoke of the destiny of this ungodly class (2 Thess. 2:10-12).

The next thing to consider is how someone can die in Second Death who is not begotten of the Holy Spirit. That is the big question with regard to this epistle, but such is the case. *A person not begotten of the Spirit can die in Second Death.* Consider Judas, for example. Judas had been with Jesus, and he died before Pentecost. Some question whether or not Judas died the Second Death, but we feel he did, even though he was not technically begotten of the Holy Spirit in the sense that later occurred. Why would Judas be liable to Second Death? Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man. He is the Light to enlighten every man who enters the world. And what is the “light” that is guaranteed to every individual born on this earth? That he will come to the knowledge of the truth, but what truth? Coming to the knowledge of the truth does not refer to dispensational truth. The knowledge of the truth which the people in the world in the next age will come to is simply that Jesus is the Savior, that he *really* is the Savior. That is the knowledge guaranteed to all mankind—that Jesus tasted death for every man and that all will have an opportunity to make good and receive everlasting life. The world will not have all kinds of complicated doctrines. Rather, their instruction will be merely for obedience, and the obedience will be of the simplest kind: Do this, don’t do that, etc. The world will not be given numerous prophecies in the next age. They will not have to study the Book of Revelation, *Tabernacle Shadows*, etc.—that will not be their qualification. No, they will be judged for life or death on the basis of *obedience*, and the instruction will be very simple.

Billions of people have not even heard the name of Jesus. Some have heard the name of Jesus but have accepted another religion. Others have heard about Jesus but have not made a consecration. The point is this: If anyone comes to the knowledge of this basic truth—that Jesus is the Lord and Savior sent of God—and *truly* believes it, and then makes a consecration on that basis but remains as a natural man and is not led of the Spirit into a deeper understanding, that person is still liable, for he has made a contract with the Lord. For this reason, Jesus said to “sit down and count the cost” because once an individual has put his hand to the plow, there is no turning back (Luke 9:62; 14:26-33). Jesus did *not* say, “If I do not recognize you, you are not begotten of the Holy Spirit,” or “If you do not acquiesce and do the things I tell you and I see you are the wrong material, I will excuse you, and you can go back into the world.” What Jesus said was, “Do not consecrate at all unless you know what you are doing.” The implication is that if a person consecrates who does not know what he is doing, he is still liable and will be held accountable for the contract he made with the Lord to do His will. Be it carefully noted that *the consecration vow is as simple and as legally binding as the marriage vow.*

Thus this ungodly class will go into Second Death—not because they became spiritual in the sense of imbibing the truth, etc., but because they really believed Jesus was the Savior, made a contract of consecration with the Lord, and infiltrated the Church as part of the membership, as evidenced by their participation in *love feasts* and the elevation of some to the role of *teachers* in the Church (see the comment on Jude 4 and 2 Peter 2:1,2). The Book of Jude teaches that this class will multiply and multiply until it *dominates* the Church and others become contaminated. Not right now, because certain other things have to happen first, but later on, this situation will become a real problem. When it does occur, it will cause great consternation. This condition will lead up to the *individual* stand of Christians in the future, at the very *end* of the age.

When this condition exists, what will the true Christian do? He will have to look for those who are spiritual, and those who are spiritual will become fewer and fewer in number until they find they have to stand *alone* in the faith. Jesus was referring to this future condition when he asked, “When I come, shall I find faith in the earth?” (Luke 18:8).

We do know that in regard to the John the Baptist class, Christ beyond the veil must increase while the John the Baptist class this side of the veil must decrease. This numerical change will come, involving both the Great Company and also this other ungodly class. What, then, about the saintly few? They are in for very troubled waters in the future. Other events will have to take place before this general prevailing condition will occur, but the *seeds* of it are already here, and that is what Jude was warning about.

When this condition exists, it will be what Elijah was referring to when he said, “I, only I, am left” (1 Kings 19:14). The Lord answered back that 7,000 in Israel had not bowed the knee to Baal, but those “7,000” will be scattered and isolated—one here, one there. That is why, as that day approaches in the future, there will be a need for the stronger ones to encourage the others. The Holy Spirit helps Christians in calling things to remembrance. Sometimes in trials, we are burdened with various things and do not know what is going on at first, but later, as time goes by, the Holy Spirit brings to mind certain promises, encouragements, and admonitions that are helpful. However, if we have never tried to obtain that information, we will have certain problems, for the Lord will not call to mind things we have never read, considered, heard, or given our hearts to know. On the other hand, if we have previously studied and considered a matter or subject, then later on, the Lord will help us in time of need, and things we have forgotten will come to remembrance.

The Book of Jude has been neglected because it is frightening as well as distasteful to study, normally speaking. When we go to Jude, we usually jump to certain particular passages; we use three or four verses quite frequently. However, although the study of the book as a whole

is not a cheerful subject by any means, it will become meaningful and profitable in the future. And, of course, at the present time, the Book of Jude serves as a forewarning.

Certain evidences quite prevalent even now will develop rapidly later on. The situation can be compared to a dike with a tiny hole. At first, it is only a little hole, and we can put our finger in the hole and perhaps stop the leakage of water or at least slow it down for a while; but it is just a matter of time until the flood occurs. These other conditions will develop following the favorable worldwide general witness, which will result in those who become amenable to the truth coming into the Church in overwhelming numbers. This great influx will be accepted and permitted to go through the ritual, and many of the brethren will be so elated at what is happening that they will not realize they are letting down the standards. Consequently, those who come into the Church will be jeopardized. To allow them to enter under wrong pretensions will be doing them a disservice.

The text “There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts” also refers to individuals who are not spiritual, that is, to scoffers of the world of mankind (2 Pet. 3:3). Noah received similar opposition in his day from the world round about him, who derided his faith in the coming Flood. However, Jude’s discussion of scoffers was from another standpoint. Just because Jude mentioned that the apostles spoke about scoffers in the world does not mean the very same scoffers would be in the Church. Rather, the thought is that those with a *similar type of disposition* will comprise a *worldly* element in the Church. They will go through the formality of entering the Church but will be unregenerate and not change their ways.

There will come an erosion in the Church where, first, a distinction is not made between the consecrated and the unconsecrated. The unconsecrated will be allowed certain privileges so that the band of demarcation will become less and less. Finally, since the unconsecrated were never instructed properly, when they take the step of consecration, they will not know what they are doing. The Lord never gives any individual much information prior to consecration, but as Brother Magnuson said, “God gives us a scroll and says, ‘Sign the bottom line. My will concerning you is printed on the scroll.’” We do not know what that will is—all we know is that when we sign the scroll, we have made a definite contract to do God’s will, whatever it may be. We have the right heart condition; we know what doing God’s will has meant to us and how we overcame certain obstacles (although, of course, we will have some obstacles all our life), and we know we are spiritual. Since the natural man cannot understand spiritual things, one of the best evidences a person is Spirit-begotten is that he *understands spiritual things*. A person may parrot certain statements—for example, about the three worlds—but that is not real understanding.

Be it noted that the scoffers in the Church will not be of the Great Company class because scoffing is an evil disposition. The Great Company may misrepresent and do some other things, but they are not malicious. At heart, they are consecrated and want to please the Lord; it is just that they have certain problems with their flesh and do not control it. Consequently, they will reap a less favorable destiny. Nevertheless, they must *ultimately* develop the proper character in order to get life. The ungodly class are another matter.

Not until the Church is gone will this condition be absolutely evident, for until that time, we cannot make a distinction between the Little Flock and the Great Company. What will happen is that the Little Flock will be taken out by persecution from the nominal system on the outside, leaving behind the Great Company and this other element. However, the Great Company class will be changed before the return of the Lord in the sense of executing judgment on all, for when the Lord comes, he will first deal with the Great Company class. Then he will deal with the world, and this ungodly element is of the world.

This condition will not just “happen.” A favorable message will be given that will divide the

“waters” (peoples). The truth will become popular for a little while before Elijah’s change, so there will be a time when even the Little Flock will have a problem with this condition of ungodly, natural men coming into the Church. However, the feet members will not have the problem for as long a time as the Great Company because in connection with the smiting message given previously, the repercussions will be on those considered to be the ringleaders (2 Kings 2:8-11).

Two types of message will be given at the end of the age: first, a general witness work and popularity along one line, and then a separate smiting message. The truths we present now are not the smiting work. Thus two big messages will be given in the future. Many will participate in the general witness, but very few will participate in the smiting message. The ungodly class will already be in the Church before the change of the feet members takes place.

The question might be asked, How should we prepare for the smiting message? If we have the *Volumes*, we should make it our business to find out who the John the Baptist class is and why Elias must first come. Many in the Truth movement today do not think on or know about these points. A part of the truth message is that the Elijah class is to anticipate a second attack, but those who have never thought, meditated, or prayed about it cannot expect to be specially favored when that time comes. And many openly confess and take the attitude, “Oh, well, we will worry about that when it happens.” They are not interested in studying the subject.

Therefore, the preparation would be to familiarize ourselves with the Lord’s Word so that we will know what is coming and so that we will not be taken off guard. That would constitute our preparation for the smiting message rather than planning a formal program because at that time, God will put words in the mouths of His saints. The feet members will speak as the Lord gives them the Spirit (Matt. 10:19,20; Mark 13:11; Luke 12:11,12). Thus we are not to premeditate our actual words but should just search the Scriptures, making a generalized investigation of the entire subject as it pertains to this particular area of truth, and pray continually for enlightenment as it becomes due.

The Book of Jude has been a real puzzle because there are contradictions if it is read merely from the standpoint of three *spiritual* classes (Little Flock, Great Company, and Second Death). It is interesting that Jude means “Judas.” Judas Iscariot, the traitor, was not Spirit-begotten, and hence a robe of righteousness was not imputed to him; and Jude, the author of the epistle, the brother of James, wrote about a Second Death class who are not Spirit-begotten and, consequently, either previously removed or never had a robe of righteousness.

That there exist these two categories of the class who suffer the fate of Second Death seems to find support in the Parable of the Marriage of the King’s Son, also called the Guest Chamber Parable (Matt. 22:2-14). Verses 11-13 state, “And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which *had not on a wedding garment*: And he [the king] saith unto him, Friend [compare Matthew 26:50], how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness [compare Jude 13].”

There is no clue in the parable as to whether this evil servant initially had a white robe that he subsequently discarded prior to or after entry into the guest chamber, or whether he never had a white robe in the first place. The very omission of information regarding this detail admits the possibility that the evil servant represents both of the following: (1) those who never had a white robe (that is, though they formalized a consecration from the standpoint of a contract, it was not sufficiently valid to be recognized by God in the sense of adoption to sonship, Spirit begettal, and imputation of a white robe) and (2) those who at one time had been spiritual and thus had a white robe but later discarded it.

## Epistle of Jude

## Second Epistle of Peter

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|---|--|---------------|--|
| 1 | Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to the called, those dear to God the Father and safely kept in Jesus Christ.   | 1:1           | Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained equally precious faith with us in the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ.  |
| 2 | May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied unto you.   | 1:2           | Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.  |
| 3 | Beloved, [at first] making all haste to write to you concerning the common salvation, I [now] find it a necessity to write exhorting you to earnestly contend for the faith once having been delivered to the saints.        | 1:19          | We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto you do well that you take heed....  |
| 4 | For certain men have infiltrated [among you], those of old marked out for this judgment, impious ones [lacking reverence], turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, even denying our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ. | 2:1,2         | But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be <i>false teachers among you, who will subtly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them, bringing on themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their impious practices, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.</i> |
| 5 | Now I desire to remind you, though you once knew this, because:<br><br>The Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt [once], the second time destroyed them that believed not.                                  | 1:12;<br>2:22 | Wherefore I will not be negligent always to remind you of these things, though you know them, and are established in present truth.... But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is returned to his vomit; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.   |
| 6 | And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their habitation, he hath reserved in lasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.   | 2:4           | ... God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to Tartarus, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be kept unto judgment.  |
| 7 | Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities round about them, which likewise gave themselves over to fornication, and went after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, undergoing the fire of eternal vengeance.        | 2:6           | And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live <i>impiously</i> .   |
| 8 | In like manner indeed these deluded ones defile the flesh, disregard lordships, and blaspheme dignitaries.   | 2:10          | ... chiefly them that walk after the flesh in defiling lust, and despise lordship. Presumptuous are they, self-willed; they are not afraid to blaspheme dignitaries.   |
| 9 | Yet Michael, the archangel, when contending with the Devil about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a judgment of blasphemy, but said, The Lord rebuke thee!   | 2:11          | Whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, bring not judgment of blasphemy against them before the Lord.  |

## Epistle of Jude (cont.)

## Second Epistle of Peter (cont.)

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|---|---|
| <p><b>10</b> But these blaspheme what things they do not understand; but what things they, as unreasoning animals by natural instinct do know, in these things they are corrupt.</p>  | <p><b>2:12</b> But these, like unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct, made for capture and slaughter, blaspheme matters that they do not understand; and shall indeed perish in their own corruption.</p>  |
| <p><b>11</b> Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and rushed after the error of Balaam for reward, and perish in the contradiction of Korah.</p>   | <p><b>2:14b-16</b> ... Cursed children: which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.</p>   |
| <p><b>12a</b> These are hidden reefs in your love feasts, without [reverential] fear feasting together, feeding themselves.</p>   | <p><b>2:13b, 14a</b> ... Spots they are and stains, feasting along with you, reveling in their deceits; having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices.</p>   |
| <p><b>12b, 13</b> [These are] waterless clouds carried about by winds; unfruitful autumnal trees, [therefore] uprooted, twice dead. Wild waves of the sea, foaming out their shame; wandering stars, for whom has been kept, unto the age [to come], the gloom of darkness.</p>   | <p><b>2:17</b> ... These are wells without water, mists being driven by storm, for whom has been kept the gloom of darkness.</p>  |
| <p><b>14, 15</b> And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied concerning these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with myriads of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the impious ones of all their impious deeds which they have impiously committed, and of all the harsh things which impious sinners have spoken against him.</p> | <p><b>2:5</b> And [God] did not spare the ancient world but did protect Noah, the eighth [among seven other persons], a herald of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of impious ones.</p>  |
| <p><b>16</b> These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, flattering persons to their face to gain advantage.</p>  | <p><b>2:18,3</b> For when they speak great swelling words of folly, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much lasciviousness, those who have scarcely fled away from those living in error.... And through covetousness with fabricated words shall they make merchandise of you: whose judgment of old now lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not.</p>   |
| <p><b>17, 18</b> But, beloved, remember the words which were previously spoken by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. How that they told you there should be scoffers in the last time, the impious ones walking after their own lusts.</p>  | <p><b>3:1-4</b> ... Beloved, I now write unto you; in which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior. Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking in their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his presence? for since the fathers fell</p> |



## Epistle of Jude (cont.)

## Second Epistle of Peter (cont.)

asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.

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|---------------|---|----------------|--|
| <b>19</b>     | These be they, marking out boundaries, natural-minded, having not the Spirit.   | <b>2:19-21</b> | While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after they had known it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them. |
| <b>20, 21</b> | But, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. | <b>3:17</b>    | You therefore, beloved, seeing you know these things beforehand, beware lest you also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.  |
| <b>22, 23</b> | And reassure some who doubt; but others save with fear, snatching them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.   | <b>2:7,8</b>   | And rescued righteous Lot, vexed with the licentious conduct of the lawless ones. (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, was tormented in his righteous soul day after day with their lawless deeds.)   |
| <b>24a</b>    | Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling ...   | <b>2:9</b>     | The Lord knoweth <i>how to rescue the pious</i> out of temptations, and to keep the unjust unto the day of judgment to be cut off.   |
| <b>24b</b>    | ... and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.   | <b>3:14</b>    | Therefore, beloved, seeing that you look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.   |
| <b>25</b>     | To the only wise God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and throughout all ages. Amen.   | <b>3:18</b>    | But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.   |

The above rendition of the Epistle of Jude and of the parallel portion of the Second Epistle of Peter is based on a diligent comparison of the several generally recognized and authentic English versions of the Greek New Testament available to the general public, such as the King James Version, the Living Bible, the Revised Standard Version, the New English Bible, Phillips Modern English, and the Jerusalem Bible.

## EPISTLE OF JUDE

(Study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1989)

**Jude 1 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:**

This general or catholic epistle is addressed to the Church at large, not to a specific church. In other words, it is addressed to the consecrated: “to them that are sanctified ... preserved ... and called.” Notice that in this context, the word “called” takes place *after* consecration, but in what way? Jude was referring to believers who have advanced in their development beyond the initial call of God. He addressed those partakers of the heavenly calling who, up to this point, have faithfully maintained their walk in the narrow way. A transliteration of the original Greek of the latter part of verse 1 is as follows: “To the ones in God [the] Father having been loved, and to [the ones] for Jesus Christ having been kept called.”

Jude was an apostle, and that is an important point in order to rank this epistle as having the proper *authority*. Mark and Luke, the two Gospels not written by apostles, were, nevertheless, penned through the *authority* of the apostles Peter and Paul, respectively. Moreover, the Gospels merely narrate the history of Jesus, and *much* of the Gospels consists of *Jesus’ own words*. Therefore, the entire New Testament was written by apostolic authority.

Consider the problems Jude had, which led him to introduce the epistle in this fashion: “[From] Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ.” (1) Because he was related to Jesus as a stepbrother, he went out of his way (through *humility*) to call himself a “servant” of Jesus Christ; that is, he did not claim special favor because of family lineage. Jude did not want to appear different from the other apostles because of this relationship. (2) Had he said “Judas the apostle,” there would have been a problem because there were two Judases. Judas Iscariot was an apostle, but he fell from that position.

“Jude, the ... brother of James.” It would be known that this James was not the brother of John, both being sons of Zebedee. Hence Jude was the brother of James of Alphaeus (Matt. 10:3).

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

“May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied unto you” (paraphrase).

**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.**

“Beloved” is a tender term of address. The epistle would be stern and sobering, yet Jude approached the subject matter almost as Paul did—like a mother concerned for her children. Jude addressed the Church in a very personal way, speaking *authoritatively* but *tenderly*. In other words, he was not tentative.

Originally, Jude wanted to write a letter of exhortation along more general lines. “Common salvation” is the salvation common to the Church, that is, the hope of the high calling, the hope of the special salvation of being with Jesus. The epistle is addressed to those who are “called” (verse 1) to this “common salvation.”

“It was *needful* for me to write unto you.” Jude’s words suggest (1) urgency, (2) a problem leading to the urgency, and (3) that this epistle was written late. John was probably the only other living apostle at this time, and he was with the churches in Asia Minor. Now, in the absence of other apostles, Jude felt the need to give the advice in this epistle.

Jude was purportedly brought to the emperor of Rome for questioning about the Christian religion. The emperor was going to ferret out the extent of Christianity, but Jude had such a humble appearance that the emperor thought Christianity was no threat. “If this Jude, who is Jesus’ brother, is the only one they can muster up at this time, Christianity is no threat,” he concluded. Hence Jude was dismissed with no further ado.

Because there was a vacuum, Jude felt encouragement was needed with the problem seeds that were arising. He had wanted to encourage and exhort the brethren to press on for the prize of the high calling, but he found a more serious need than the “common salvation.” With the Holy Spirit impressing upon him to warn of a grave danger, he exhorted the brotherhood to “contend for the faith ... once delivered unto the saints.” The very fact Jude urged them to “*contend* for the faith” suggests there would be a departure from “the faith,” an erosion of “the faith.” Changes were introduced into the gospel that weaned Christians away from “the faith.”

Thus the Epistle of Jude was beneficial to early Christians, and it also helped Christians down through the age. However, it is especially pertinent to us living now at the *end* of the age. The clause “*once delivered* unto the saints” suggests that “the faith” was delivered by the apostles—earlier. It also suggests that “the faith” was not dispensational truth but truth that has applied to *all* Christians. In other words, Jude was emphasizing a principle and warning the brethren: “Do not forget your first love, your first faith, which is an *unchanging* faith. Do not succumb to innovations that *will come*. ‘The faith’ will be subverted and misdirected into channels that will be harmful to the Church at large.”

How does the Christian “earnestly contend for the faith ... once delivered unto the saints”? He speaks out when he sees these conditions occurring and does not tolerate or overlook them. (Of course the other extreme should be avoided; namely, the Christian is not to have the *habit* in all conversation and thinking of always finding fault and of never having anything wholesome or constructive to offer. That would be a contentious spirit.) Jude was telling the brethren to contend for *the faith* if and when changes were introduced. Jesus criticized the fourth period of the Church because they did not contend but suffered “that woman Jezebel ... to teach and to seduce” (Rev. 2:20).

**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 fact that verse 4 is written in past tense does not negate the future tense. Not only did Jude’s warning have an application in his day, but he did not know, as the Apostle Paul did, that there would be a *long* period of time in the Gospel Age. Jude probably wrote this epistle after AD 80. He was speaking prophetically of what would happen in the end time, but he did not know when that end time would be.

Jude could see that the element beginning to come into the Church would eventually cause great havoc. Back there the doctrine of Docetism caused such harm, and this same spirit is developing today—not about the angels, as in the past, but in regard to wrong principles that encourage immoral practices.

“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation [that is, Second Death].” Jude was saying, “This ungodly element infiltrated, and here they are!” He was likening this class to Judas, the son of perdition. It is strange—and yet intentional—that by its very name, the Book of Jude directs attention to Judas Iscariot, who betrayed the Lord. Jude, the apostle and author of this epistle, would have been very conscious of his name. After all, if we knew that Judas Iscariot had betrayed Jesus and our name was

Jude, we would have a problem to fight. At the same time, Jude did not want to call attention to himself.

In the final analysis, the epistle is about a Judas class that will develop at the end of the age. But before this class gets to the point of betraying the Master—in a concrete way, that is, not just in thinking—we will see, from Jude’s writing, what leads to that action.

The expression “who were before of old *ordained* to this condemnation” indicates that Jude was thinking in terms of what Judas did—and the Lord knew Judas would betray him *before* the act occurred. After the whole epistle is read, it becomes apparent that Jude was thinking of a Judas *class*. Just as the Christian is ordained to become conformed to the image of Christ, so another element will be of the Judas class. They are “ordained” in the sense that the Lord foreknew they would develop of their own initiative. Hence Jude prophesied of the condition to come. Note: God *does not overrule* free moral agency in predestinating character. Rather, His foreknowledge “ordains” such a *class*. He knew that given the conditions at the end of the age, such a class would develop. Jesus said that not a jot or tittle of the Law would pass away until “all be fulfilled” (Matt. 5:18). Substituting the word “prophecy” for “law” gives the right slant here. “Not one jot or tittle of *prophecy* will pass away until all be fulfilled.” In this sense, the Second Death class is foreordained, and the fulfillment of this prophecy has nothing to do with the overriding of individual consciences.

The parallel text for this verse in Jude is 2 Peter 2:1,2. “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be *false teachers* among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies [who will *subtly introduce destructive heresies*], even denying the [sovereign] Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And *many* shall follow their pernicious ways [*impious practices*]; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.” The Apostle Peter shows that this ungodly element is largely a *teaching* element. Hence the leadership of ecclesias will become corrupt in doctrine, thought, and character. Destruction, condemnation, Second Death, will be their destiny.

The emphasis on “many” in 2 Peter 2:2 shows the influence these false teachers will have. And the fact “the way of truth will be evil spoken of” shows the seriousness of the condition. The cause of Christ, the truth itself, will be impugned. The epistles of 2 Peter and Jude are both necessary, and they should be studied in a parallel way. Their similarity illustrates the principle that out of “the mouth of *two* or three witnesses shall every word be established” (2 Cor. 13:1). Peter spoke on the subject in detail, and Jude provided the confirmatory witness; that is, what Peter said, Jude confirmed. Little additions and differences in the two accounts help to clarify our understanding.

“Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.” The “grace of God” in this context would be His mercy, the fact that we can go to Him and ask for forgiveness through Christ. However, we are not to take advantage of that provision. It is true that Jesus is a sympathetic High Priest, who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and that while we were yet sinners, he died for us. But these provisions should not lead us to willfully sin so that the grace of God may abound (Heb. 4:15; Rom. 6:1,2). We must not presume on God’s mercy.

“Lasciviousness” is licentiousness, specifically the lust of the flesh. Such deeds can be *outwardly* observed. Lasciviousness is a trend of conduct that manifests itself along certain lustful lines.

We should remember that Jude was speaking to the *consecrated*. That is why, when principles of mercy and forgiveness are being discussed, it should be very carefully noted whether the circumstance happened *before* consecration or *after* consecration. All kinds of mischief occur before consecration that receive *carte blanche* forgiveness when one initially gives his or her heart to the Lord. However, the same *carte blanche* forgiveness does not apply to one who is

already sanctified and walking in Christ Jesus. The same magnanimous forgiveness that would apply to a worldly person cannot be given to the consecrated. We can no longer do the things we did prior to consecration and receive the same kind of forgiveness, for that would be presuming on God's mercy and turning His grace into lasciviousness, or looseness. To do so would be a blot not only on us but on the Lord too, and would be equivalent to saying, "God is like that. He has unlawful desires." God does not give grace in order to excuse grievous sin. Thus the danger here is presuming on God's grace.

"Denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Denial comes from disobedience and misrepresentation. Jesus said, "If ye love me, *keep my commandments*" (John 14:15). Would "Lord God" be Jesus or Jehovah? If the Greek *kai* is used, meaning "even," the reference would be to Jesus. "Lord God" (without "Almighty") can sometimes be Jesus, who is our Lord and Master. When we consecrate, he is more than just our Redeemer from past sin—he is the Lord, Master, and Leader of our life. Therefore, we must listen attentively to Jesus' instructions, which are God's instructions. Note: If we change or subvert the doctrine of God and of Christ and give a wrong twist that promotes liberality and mercy in an inordinate fashion, we are, in effect, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness. Moreover, we are *denying* and contradicting God and His Word.

There is an important lesson here; namely, we must give *all diligence* to make sure we do not turn the grace of God into lasciviousness either for ourselves or for others. Forgiveness is to be done according to God's Word. One statement of "I am sorry" is not sufficient with grievous sin. Thus there are some sins that we cannot forgive "seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:22). In other words, heinous sin cannot be forgiven 490 times. There are varying degrees of sin, varying degrees of rebuke, and varying degrees of forgiveness.

The ungodly class Jude is describing come into the true Church in various ways. Some come in from outside, and some arise from within. Grievous wolves enter in with *lambs'* clothing. Some brethren cannot discern a wolf, but sooner or later the wolf betrays himself by his fruits or deeds. Also, evil men shall arise from within, speaking perverse things. It is six of one and a half dozen of the other with regard to this problem in the Church.

Satan was created perfect, and he was perfect *until the day* iniquity was found in him. Hence one may come in with the proper heart condition and then later, as time goes on, deflect or change in character. Others of the ungodly class never really consecrated with the right attitude. Those of this latter group come into the Church as natural men with wrong motives, such as ostensibly "consecrating" because of family or friends or sociality. Of course we cannot read the heart. We can see deeds, however, but even deeds do not necessarily indicate an abiding right or wrong heart condition, unless of course there is a pattern of misconduct along serious lines.

**Jude 5** I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

God called the Israelites out of Egypt and redeemed them. Those who subsequently sinned were destroyed in the wilderness. In the antitype, the Christian is saved out of the world (Egypt). Those of the consecrated who go back into the world and a life of sin (without proper repentance) go into Second Death.

Jude was answering the "certain men," the "ungodly men," of verse 4: "If you think 'once in grace, always in grace,' you are sadly mistaken."

In the type, God "destroyed them that believed not." The Israelites did not exercise sufficient

faith or a *continuing* faith. “The just shall live [or *walk*] by faith.” The “just” were initially saved by faith, but that faith must be continued. Works manifest a *living* faith.

The Israelites made a vow at Sinai to do the Lord’s will and then went back on that vow. The analogy is to the Christian who makes a consecration and then turns back. Once in grace is not always in grace. In the type, only two of the generation above a certain age manifested sufficient faith, namely, Joshua and Caleb.

**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 of the great day.**

The angels’ “first estate” was heaven. How did they *leave* that estate if they were allowed to come down here to minister to mankind and to try to lift man out of the quagmire of sin? They disobeyed in the sense of *remaining* down here, not just coming on an errand and returning. They abode here. In preferring the earth, they contradicted their mission. A Christian leaves his first estate if, after he consecrates, he returns to the world. It is like leaving the city of refuge, the inner circle of God’s fellowship, and fraternizing outside. The “first estate” is a good circumstance.

It would have been better for the Israelites (Christians) to remain in Egypt (the world) if they were going to commit grievous sin later. In spite of all the former grief and torment, their covenant did not bring the proper reverence and responsibility. Paul says it is better not to have known the way of truth than to consecrate and go astray later (2 Pet. 2:20,21).

**Jude 7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, 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.**

The angels who left their first estate went after “strange flesh” (the daughters of men). And the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah went after “strange flesh” (beasts and homosexuality). As “an example,” fire came down from heaven and destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Of Sodom and Gomorrah, only three were saved (Lot and his two daughters). Of the Israelites in Sinai, only two (of age) survived (Joshua and Caleb).

In regard to Sodom and Gomorrah, the sin was *lust* (“fornication”). With the angels who left their first estate, the sin was *lust*. With the Israelites who left Egypt, the sin was *lust* (as proven by the ten primary testings in the wilderness). On one occasion, the Israelites lusted for literal flesh (meat), and God sent quail in such abundance that the people got sick. That was lust for “strange flesh” too because the Israelites were used to eating manna.

The beings in these three examples (the Israelites, the angels, and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah) all have a hope of resurrection or reinstatement to God’s favor. However, Jude drew a different lesson for the Christian. The Christian cannot do the same things in this age and still have the hope of a resurrection. God *destroyed* the Israelites who believed not (verse 5). The angels who left their first estate are *reserved for judgment* in the great day (verse 6). Those who gave themselves over to fornication and strange flesh *suffered the vengeance of eternal fire* (verse 7). The lesson for the Christian is Second Death. In other words, what happened in the type pictures something far more serious in the antitype. Hebrews 10:29 reads, “Of how much *sorer punishment*, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant ... an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?”

Jude used these three examples to tell the Christian, “Notice what their sins were. DO NOT DO LIKEWISE!” Jude repeated and repeated the same lesson under different illustrations. It is

helpful to compare 2 Peter 1:12; 2:4,6,22 with verses 5-7 of Jude (see 1979 Jude study). Peter brought in the thought of a dog returning to its vomit and a washed sow returning to wallowing in the mire. He also said that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is an example to the consecrated of this age who live impiously.

A detailed comparison of Jude and 2 Peter 2 is important. As the Book of Jude is read verse by verse, it begins to explain itself.

**Jude 8 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.**

Verses 8-10 are a unit with cohesive reasoning (compare 2 Peter 2:10-12). The “filthy dreamers” are this same ungodly class of professed Christians who infiltrate the Church at the end of the age. “Filthy” is supplied but appropriate, for Jude was emphasizing holiness versus unholiness.

The ungodly “dream” in the sense that they are deluded. They look to *man’s* reasoning, not God’s. They discuss, follow, and publicly profess *within the Church* their own imaginings and delusions, which are without scriptural substance.

How do those in this ungodly class “defile the flesh”? Their counsel and instruction along worldly lines lead to a lowering of standards. This is a deceptive class; otherwise, they would not have gained access to the Church. The effects of their doctrine defile the flesh. Implying their statements are a “thus saith the LORD,” they cause damage to the new creature. Their counsel is along worldly lines. An example in recent years was a booklet on homosexuality written by a professed Christian. The author tried to justify homosexuality by using Scriptures, saying that it was proper under certain circumstances. But the Bible says homosexuality is wrong—*period!*

The ungodly class “despise dominion” by not strictly adhering to Scripture for their instruction. Being “libertine” leads toward licentiousness—it is wanting liberty in the sense of not being governed or restrained. By not viewing consecration as strictly as they should, this class are guided by their own imaginations and by the imaginations of others; that is, the imaginations of the teachers as well as of the taught are involved.

How do the ungodly class “speak evil of dignities”? The ones who give the accurate, true scriptural counsel are disregarded and maligned. Their teaching is impugned by the ungodly class.

Verse 9 gives the example of a true dignity, namely, Michael the archangel, our Lord himself. Since he is the Head of the Church, “dignities” (plural) would mean that the ungodly speak evil of those who are truly the Lord’s representatives.

On whatever side of the proverbial fence one is situated, he can read these verses and apply them to those who differ with him, but Jude was warning about those who speak evil of *true* dignities. We must judge to a certain extent. After all, we are to esteem those who teach the Lord’s Word properly, and to do so, we must judge what we hear. This principle also applies to private fellowship. Those on the other side also judge (whether or not they will admit it), but they judge in a shallow sense. They do not search for the depth or significance of the meaning, and thus they allow themselves liberties according to the flesh.

Astounding things are beginning to happen and will come to a head more and more, even along doctrinal lines. A loosening of the strictness of consecration allows liberty according to the flesh. Those who do not fear judgment of the Lord take the attitude that He is forgiving, that He is very gracious and merciful. Meantime, they pursue their own course.

**Jude 9** 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.

We are given an example of a “dignity” in the illustration of a contention between the Adversary and Michael (Christ). Since these two are the highest examples of opposite sides of an issue, this illustration is especially profitable to consider.

Jesus said to Satan, “The Lord [God] rebuke thee!” Michael *did contend* and we *are to contend* for the faith (verse 3). Some feel that contending is being contentious, but being “contentious” is a *habit* of life. It is being a thorn, thistle, briar, etc., with nothing constructive forthcoming, just criticism and trouble. There is a time for proper criticism, however. When Jesus contended, didn’t he criticize the Adversary? In a serious doctrinal dispute *based on principle*, we should contend.

Where should we draw the line? Jesus accused, contended, and disputed with Satan. In other words, he brought an accusation against Satan but not a “railing accusation.” Jesus did not say Satan was going into Second Death or “the Father *judge* you,” but he did say, “The Father *rebuke* you.” He did take a stand and indicate his own feeling.

Some say the Christian is always to be gentle, but that depends on the situation. We should be gentle to those of a gentle disposition and be strong to the strong. The unruly must be warned—a responsibility that belongs chiefly to the elders.

“Railing” would include a shouting match, ranting, animosity, etc. One becomes unreasonable, gets emotionally out of control, and often makes comments not even on the issue.

Righteous indignation is another matter. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai and saw the golden calf, he was angry and justifiably smashed the tables of the Law out of righteous indignation. “Be ye angry, and sin not” is the scriptural thought (Eph. 4:26). To “sin not” means to be careful that whatever we are saying is proper. However, the tone of voice does not necessarily have to be sweet, for strength must be met with strength. Elders (and influential sisters perhaps) are more apt to be involved in contending. One caution must be given, however. Righteous indignation is fine, but we are to have *no bitterness* underneath. The contention should be strictly on the Lord’s Word.

Another point to remember is that there are degrees of responsibility. To fall into a sin is one thing—to be deceived or stumbled into a sin—but to *teach* a sin and justify it with God’s own Word is grievous. The Bible is sacred; we cannot play around with it. To teach a sin to others contaminates not only the speaker but also the *brotherhood*.

Although Jesus did not dare to bring a railing accusation against Satan, he said, nevertheless, “The Lord *rebuke* thee.” Jesus did not say simply, “God will handle the matter,” but felt that a rebuke was needed.

Since powerful Satan wanted Moses’ body, it took the more powerful archangel Michael to withstand him. Jesus probably had to actually “physically” resist Satan, as well as verbally contend.

Some have a *false* concept of love. They say that we should never raise our voice or refuse to shake the hand of another. When either of these two actions is taken, those with the false concept of love tend to judge the outward movements and not the real issue.



**Jude 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.**

The ungodly class “speak evil of those things which they know not.” They “know not” because they are not spiritually developed. They speak out of the imaginations of their own hearts instead of the Bible. Hence they lack spiritual reasoning.

“But what they [do] know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.” A *fleshly* mind uses *fleshly* reasoning and rationale to justify either a statement or an act that is wrong; that is, it tries to minimize the effect. Being skilled in human reasoning and philosophy, the ungodly class can make something wrong appear right. We should always stop and think, “Is this what *God* says? Is this what the Law and the Prophets teach?” Isaiah 8:20 expresses the principle: “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Vain philosophies have an undermining effect.

The ungodly class feel justified in opposing “dignities,” but this speaking evil backfires, contaminates, and brings condemnation upon them (verse 8). They corrupt themselves by their human rationalizations. Unaware that they are blind and failing to discern the wrong, they do not correct it. In fact, the blind may think they have superior eyesight, but from *God’s* standpoint, “the blind lead the blind” (Matt. 15:14). What a pitiful condition—a blind person trying to lead other blind people! How great is that darkness! It is inevitable that they will fall into the ditch.

**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.**

Three overall points are to be noticed in verses 11-13:

1. A *progression* in wrongdoing—from going (or walking), to running, to perishing.
2. Repetition of the word “without.” In other words, whatever is expected is not produced.
3. An end result of eternal destruction, Second Death.

“Woe unto them [the ungodly class]! for they have gone in the way of Cain.” How and in what sense do this class have the characteristics of Cain? Cain destroyed his brother, and this class slander dignities by speaking evil of them. What caused Cain to slay Abel? Jealousy. Instead of analyzing how a sacrifice should be made (and thus how to please God), Cain allowed passion to take control. He was jealous of Abel because Abel seemed to have the Lord’s favor. They *both* offered sacrifice (and so do the ungodly class in the Church), but only Abel offered sacrifice in harmony with the understanding available in that age before the Flood. Abel’s sacrifice was more acceptable because it involved the shedding of blood, which God prescribed when he clothed Adam and Eve with the skins of animals. Animals had to be slain—blood had to be shed—to provide the covering for their nakedness.

Back there, so close to creation, there was friendship with the animals. *Human* philosophy may have said that Abel’s killing the sheep for an offering was wrong, but from God’s standpoint, Abel was right, for without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins (Heb. 9:22). Not only was the shedding of blood a feature of the Mosaic Law, but it evidently was a prior practice just like the sabbath. Hence, without being commanded what to do, Abel was in line with the proper procedure.

Cain offered fruit, the result of his labors, which would seem to be proper, but God had respect unto Abel’s sacrifice. Cain’s sacrifice was commendable, but Abel’s was more commendable. It would have shown great *humility* for Cain to go to his brother and ask for a sheep to offer in sacrifice. Or Cain could have traded for a sheep.

Cain's offering was "man-made" in that it was man-raised. (The principle is illustrated by the requirements for an altar; that is, God preferred an altar made of natural, *unhewn* stone.) Cain's offering was the fruit of *his* labors, whereas an animal grows of itself. On the surface, it would seem that the effort and labor involved in growing produce would be esteemed more highly as a resultant sacrifice, but "to obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Sam. 15:22). The priority must be discerned, and *obedience* is the priority—doing what God would most appreciate. Sacrifice is good, but obedience is better. Cain's highest desire should have been to obtain the Lord's blessing *no matter what was required*, and humility was needed in order for Cain to recognize the proper way.

"They [the ungodly class] ... ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward." The prophet Balaam is the next example. He prayed to the Lord and was *ostensibly sacrificing* by going on a long journey. Hence he *seemed* to be an honorable prophet. And many in this ungodly class appear to be honorable teachers. Because of his reputation as a prophet, Balaam was summoned by Balak to curse Israel and/or to give advice as to how the professed people of God might be brought into disfavor.

Actually Balaam "ran greedily." Greed—profit—was involved. There are various kinds of "profit": wealth, power, fame, influence of some kind, etc. When Balak offered money and gifts, Balaam said, "No, I do not want to do anything but what God tells me," but eventually Balaam accepted the rewards. Therefore, Balaam's prayer was only an outward show. The very fact that Balaam would even consider doing what Balak wanted indicates a weakness. Balaam should have cut the matter short right in the beginning and not have gone to see Balak. He did not consider that the Israelites were the people *of God*. Balaam went to Balak for two reasons: (1) to do injury to the Israelites and (2) for personal reward.

"They [the ungodly class] ... perished in the gainsaying of Core [Korah]." "Gainsaying" is verbal rebellion. Since those who rebelled were all children of Levi, Korah's grievance was that he wanted equal authority with Moses and Aaron (Num. 16:1-35). He felt that Moses and Aaron had been in office a little too long, and he wanted to share in their authority. Korah should have realized the impropriety of his request, for God had spoken with Moses before the whole nation. The people recognized Moses' leadership and had even requested of him, "Do not let God speak to us. You speak to God and then tell us, lest we perish." Also, Aaron was "called of God," as was Jesus (Heb. 5:4).

In connection with Korah's rebellion, a test was made to manifest leadership. Rods were put in the Most Holy to see whose rod would bud. If Korah et al were correct in their reasoning, all of their rods should have budded. However, only Aaron's rod budded. Just the one budding was a rebuke to those who had rebelled.

When Moses and Aaron are brought into the context of Jude, they represent God and Jesus, respectively. The crux of the matter is that here is a class who speak evil of dignitaries, the examples being Moses and Aaron and the antitype being *God's Word* and the *statements of Jesus*. As high priest, Aaron pictures Jesus. Moses represents God, the Law, the Word of God. The ungodly class feel they are so important that their *own* statements have great weight. Hence they detract from the true leadership.

Verse 11 shows a progression in evil. The lives of the individuals (Cain, Balaam, and Korah) give us clues about the ungodly class. For example, Balaam was supposedly a *priest* and a *prophet* of God, but he gave *wrong* counsel. One may give proper counsel for years yet later be unfaithful. In other words, faithful representatives can fall, even outstanding ones.

**Comment:** The picture of an umbrella comes to mind. As long as we stay under the umbrella, the love of God, we do not get wet. But even one step out from under the umbrella results in

our getting wet. Only by God's strength can we stand.

Satan especially attacks those who try the hardest to serve God. Stated another way, Satan resists us in the same proportion that we are trying to serve God, and he is lukewarm to those who are lukewarm. As one progressively develops, the trials become progressively severe.

Balaam uttered a true prophecy regarding the Star rising out of Jacob (Num. 24:17). He is an example of an *unrepentant* individual uttering a true prophecy and then perishing.

**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;**

“These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear.” Hebrews 10:26,27 says of those who go into Second Death, “There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain *fearful* looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.” The individuals themselves may not be fearful, but the *judgment* that comes upon them is fearful. In some cases, such as Judas, the individual recognizes what he has done. Judas tried to repent, but he had gone too far. Others die the Second Death *without fear (reverence)*. Jude was talking about this latter class. The fact that they die without fear tells us they are right at the Lord's table, feasting with the consecrated, the true brethren. Because they lack reverence, they have no fear of what they are doing. They are *natural men*.

The ungodly class comprise some who come in from the outside and some who arise from within. “Grievous wolves [shall] enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29,30). Leaders are to stick *close* to the Lord's Word and not to aspire to lordship.

“These are spots in your feasts of charity.” If a “spot” is only one of a majority, it is not as recognizable among the membership. These individuals are “spots” from *God's* standpoint and also from the standpoint of *those brethren who can see or discern*.

“Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds.” The ungodly class are likened to waterless, drifting clouds. In other words, these supposed light bearers have no water, solid basis, or substance.

“Trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots.” “Twice dead, plucked up by the roots” describes a destiny of Second Death. The trees in this illustration are to bear fruit in the autumn. However, when proper, mature fruitage is reasonably expected, there is none. The fruit is withered.

Some fruit may appear earlier, but at the time the individual is judged, he is lacking. There may be a flower, a bud, and even ripening fruit, but when the fruit is picked, it contains a worm and is not edible. The fruit may have the right shape and color, but somewhere along the line, decay or sickness sets in.

**Jude 13** **Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.**

“Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame.” Here is another double thought: raging waves and the resultant foam on the seashore. This illustration pictures a lack of moral stability. Raging waves deposit debris and refuse on the shore, especially in urban areas, and then recede.

2 Timothy 4:3,4 also describes conditions at the end of the age: “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; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables [imagination, delusions].” At the end of the age, teachers with “itching ears” will speak what the hearers want to hear. These teachers will lack firmness and stability in moral principles.

“Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.” The ungodly class are ostensible light bearers, but “wandering stars” (meteors) are not true stars. A meteor is a good analogy, for it attracts more attention than an obedient star that stays in its orbit.

Psalms 19:1 tells us that the heavens declare God’s glory. If we stay in that circle, or orbit, we do not become the wandering star that falls into darkness. “Fixed” stars remain in orbit, obeying the Creator’s laws, whereas meteors, or shooting stars, go to destruction. Fragments usually hit earth’s atmosphere with such speed that friction heats them up and consumes them. Sometimes a hard, dense metal remnant hits the earth. Either way, that is the end of the meteor. Spiritual “meteors” can be bright, outstanding leaders, but their destiny is Second Death. We must keep these things constantly in mind lest we get puffed up. These warnings apply to others in the brotherhood as well—not just to teachers. Diligence is needed to make our calling and election sure.

Remember, this ungodly element is in the *true* Church, not in the nominal Church, which is composed mostly of tares. It is true that the tares will be “consumed,” but not in the sense of Second Death. Tares will be consumed in the error of their way, but they will be enlightened in the future in the Kingdom. Some may get stripes, but they will have a further opportunity.

While Jude’s instruction is slanted mostly against the teachers, every so often it includes the ones who are taught by them and are thus obeying wrong doctrine. For example, “waves” (plural) include those who are taught. This is a general picture, not just a leadership picture.

**Jude 14** **And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,**

The Book of Jude was not received as being of canonical authority until a reasonably late date in early church history because it was felt that verse 9 (regarding the dispute over Moses’ body) and verse 14 (about Enoch’s prophesying) were excerpts from books such as the epistles of Barnabas and Clemens, which contained some truth but were fictionalized and thus unreliable. It is like Hollywood, which sometimes bases a drama upon a supposed reality, but the drama is fictionalized with other incidents.

“Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these.” A time factor is shown: the Enoch *class* is in the *seventh* period of the Church from the Second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. Enoch was literally the seventh generation from Adam in the genealogical line. In antitype, there are seven stages of the Church from the Second Adam.

The wording of verse 14 suggests that the instruction of Jude is primarily slanted to *our day*. In the seventh stage of the Church, this condition of an ungodly element arises—when we would think it *least* apt to arise because we are so enlightened with truth. The *whole* Bible is at our fingertips, and we can know what has happened in history with Christianity. In addition, there are concordances, other Bible study helps, and dispensational truth, yet in our enlightened period, this darkness is to occur.

The parallel between 2 Peter chapter 2 and Jude is a *confirmation* of this condition and the dangers for the Christian. Compare 2 Peter 2:5, which reads, “[God] saved Noah the eighth

person.” Jesus and Peter link Noah (as a picture of Christ at his Second Advent) with the Harvest period (Matt. 24:37-39). The people did not listen to Noah and knew not until the day the Flood came. Noah as the “eighth person” represents Christ in the Harvest period, the beginning of the Millennium, or the *eighth* day. Tying this in with Enoch, the *seventh* from the Second Adam, points out the peculiar *overlapping* of ages in our day. We are in the Millennium, the eighth day, which overlaps the seventh stage of the Church. Again we have a *confirmation* that we are at the end of the age.

2 Peter chapter 2 was written earlier, yet Jude found it necessary to write again on this condition. His writing was overruled for our benefit to give us *two* witnesses. Peter wrote a general epistle plus this warning. Jude zeroed in on just the warning—in such a *powerful* way that it should be a blockbuster.

Enoch prophesied that the Lord Jesus would come with “ten thousands of his saints,” that is, with the complete Church glorified, the 144,000. It is ten thousands as *units*, not 10 x 1,000’s.

A time period is indicated. The judgment to come on the ungodly class (verse 15) will largely occur *after* the death of the feet members. Not until then will the *full* depravity of this class be manifested. When Jesus was crucified, the heart condition of Judas became manifest. When the feet members are put to death, the Judas class will be exposed.

**Jude 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.**

When Jesus comes with the glorified Church to execute judgment, the ungodly class will be revealed. “*Ungodly*” appears four times in this one verse. This ungodly class speak “against him [Jesus].” The Great Company will see this judgment down here, and the responsibility of the judgment will be with the Church in glory.

**Q:** Part of this verse reads, “To convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds.” How broad will this “ungodly” class be—will it consist of just the ungodly ones Jude was talking about, or will it include others?

**A:** The thrust here was Jude’s concern that this ungodly class would make inroads into the professed true Church of God. “Convince” does not mean that the ungodly will be sensitive to what they have done wrong. “Convince” means “convict.” The Christ will execute judgment on this ungodly class and convict them of their ungodly deeds.

With regard to the question, 2 Peter 2:5 speaks of the broader aspect in referring to Noah, who heralded righteousness, bringing in the Flood upon the impious *world*. Peter’s two epistles cover many aspects, whereas Jude deals exclusively with the true Church and the ungodly class in the true Church. Peter spoke broadly of conditions in three classes: (1) the nominal Church, (2) the truly consecrated, and (3) the world.

**Comment:** If verses 14 and 15 are combined, the thought would be that when The Christ is complete beyond the veil, they will come to execute judgment upon the ungodly class among the *remaining* consecrated down here, who will prove to be Great Company in the final analysis.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12, Paul also spoke of this ungodly class at the end of the age. “The working of Satan [will be] with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion,

that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” This class “received not the *love of the truth*.” Note: This text does *not* say they did not receive the truth. In other words, the ungodly class *receive the truth* but do not love it. This condition has to pertain especially to those in present truth, for there is *little truth* in the nominal systems. The class who *perish* *receive* and *accept* the truth, but from God’s standpoint, they do not love the *principles of truth*. Deceived by Satan into *unrighteousness*, they have “pleasure in *unrighteousness*.” Thus this class *receive the truth*, but because they enjoy the pleasures of unrighteousness, they will “perish,” be condemned.

“Unrighteousness” in this context means “lawlessness,” that is, truth not taught by God. In other words, the minds of this ungodly class are turned to fables or delusions—to their own imaginings (see comments on Jude 8). Their *purported* principles of righteousness are, in reality, *false principles* not founded on the *Scriptures*. With their false teachings, they turn the grace of God into lasciviousness (verse 4), thus denying the lordship of the Father and the Son. From that standpoint, the ungodly class follow fables. If one claims to teach what the Bible says but is really teaching falsehood, he is teaching a fable or his own imagination (compare 2 Cor. 10:5). The fear (reverence) of man leads some astray because they have a higher regard for fellow man than for God and His teaching. Such are considered an ungodly class amidst a godly class. If not plucked out of that ungodly element, one will become polluted to the point of incorrigibility.

**Jude 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.

The ungodly class speak “*great swelling words*”; that is, they teach this false doctrine *with confidence*. It is not timidly presented. They have “men’s persons in admiration because of advantage.” In other words, they tickle the ears and fancies of those who like what is being said even if the teaching is not in harmony with God’s Word. “Advantage” means one is advanced in fellowship because of the wrong doctrine.

The unusual thing about the Book of Jude is that *whichever* side of the fence one is on, he will look at those on the other side as being ungodly. Then how will we know where we stand? We must pay *very close attention* to what *Scripture* says, not to what man says. We must test and analyze what we hear against *Scripture*. In proportion that what we hear is not in harmony with *Scripture*, the alert signal should immediately flash as to possible danger.

**Q:** What is the murmuring or complaining about?

**A:** In the type of the Israelites in the wilderness, the complaining against Moses was audible. The Israelites murmured against his leadership. In regard to the murmuring of Christians, it can be either audible or inaudible (that is, saying certain things in their *hearts*). But since God can read the heart, what is inaudible to us is audible to Him. The inner attitude is significant. The *high calling* will be attained by only the Little Flock. We must expend all our effort if we would win the crown. With effort comes fatigue, so we will see dropouts who stop pursuing that goal. What the *Scriptures* tell us to do may be contrary to the desires of the flesh, so some are quiet when certain issues arise, whereas speaking out would be the right thing to do. Then there are times when we should remain quiet, and to speak out would be disobedience.

Moses, who pictured Jesus, said many things about what the Israelites were to do and not to do. Sometimes they disregarded his advice. As shown in the type, Jesus was sent of God to deliver the world out of bondage to sin and death and into the Kingdom. Down here, at the end of the age, there is (and will be) murmuring against those who repeat the words and principles of *Scripture*. One does not have to be an elder to repeat scriptural principles—a sister can do this too. When issues come up, we should expound on what we believe the *Scriptures* to

teach. Others will discredit our words, conduct, and thinking and try to minimize what we are standing for. They will feel our “teaching” is detrimental to the *movement* as a whole. In trying to establish peace, unity, love, fraternity, and thus more success, they will reason that unity will bring more cooperation and witnessing. They will resent those who are “irritants,” those who take exception to certain things being done, and thus complain against those who faithfully uphold the Bible. However, Jude shows the complaining is not really against other individuals but against the *Lord’s* advice, against the instruction of *Scripture*, although it is ostensibly against the personality involved. Murmuring will occur because the nest is being stirred up.

The Israelites murmured ten times against Moses. We wonder how they could complain about the one who led them out of Egypt, the one they could see was used of God in so many ways. We wonder why they did not have implicit faith in what Moses told them, but the *vast majority* disregarded Moses and died.

Thus the murmuring at the end of the age is really against the *Lord*. The ungodly class lust for things of the world. Wanting the best of both situations—the consecrated life and the world—they excuse their worldly behavior and try to justify it with *Scripture*.

This ungodly class will grow worse and worse in the Church, eventually becoming more and more discernible. The murmuring, which may be very pertinent in the future, *starts* with just a little remark here and a little remark there, so we must watch our thoughts and words. In time, the ungodly class will become manifest. Being *in darkness* and being *natural-minded*, they will not perceive right principles.

**Comment:** Part of the Vow comes to mind: “I vow to still more carefully, if possible, scrutinize my thoughts and words and doings.” This ungodly condition can start with a careless remark, and we are all capable of making such a remark. If we are not alert to the careless remark and are not sorry for it, the remarks can start to build up.

**Reply:** Yes, we must be alert and diligent.

The ungodly class do not realize they are viewing matters from the standpoint of natural men. They reason according to *human* instincts, which are not reliable. The conscience must be educated and regulated by *Scripture*, for it can be tender but uneducated. However, those who become more and more inured to the *Lord’s* leadings lose even the tenderness of conscience. The ideal is a *tender conscience that is directed and regulated*. A step down is a conscience that is tender but *not regulated*. The worst condition is the conscience that *ceases to operate*. God will judge us in regard to *how much* we are really trying to do His will, to the extent of our ability. To be enlightened about the dangers is helpful. Enlightenment is not the whole cure, but without light and knowledge, how can one be successful in running for the prize?

In verse 16, emphasis could be given to “walking after their own lusts.” Jude described several things in this verse, but the net effect is that the ungodly class do not follow the *Lord’s* instructions.

**Jude 17** But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

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

Paul, Peter, and John (even in the Book of Revelation) are apostles who spoke about “mockers in the last time” who would “walk after their own ungodly lusts.” We have their recorded words. Other apostles may have spoken too, but we do not have their writings.

The “mockers” in Peter’s second epistle are a broader term. They say, “All things continue the same.” *In principle*, this might apply to the consecrated as follows. We should beware lest we are satisfied with a smattering of truth, feeling that whatever we have (the *Volumes*, for example) is all the truth we need. We are to keep *hungering* for understanding and not close our mind. Matthew 5:6 expresses the *ongoing* principle: “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” We must not be satisfied and smug with what we already know.

Both Peter and Jude exhort us to walk circumspectly. However, Peter goes back and forth with advice for the nominal Christian, the consecrated, and the world, whereas Jude is especially concerned about the brotherhood.

In verse 18, the word “ungodly” is again used. It appeared four times in verse 15 and is now repeated in verse 18. The word “lusts” is used in verses 16 and 18, and “sensual” is in verse 19. A serious problem in our day is sensuality.

Incidentally, the nominal Church attitude in regard to prophecy is as follows. “How we live now is how the Christian has always lived. The Kingdom may not come for hundreds of years. We have always had trouble.”

**Jude 19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.**

This verse was quite thoroughly explained in the 1979 Jude study. It is wrong to use the term “brother” for someone who is not consecrated. To do so would be broadening the scriptural limitations of fellowship.

**Jude 20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,**

The very fact that Jude says to build ourselves up in the “*most holy* faith” indicates there is a problem. In other words, if we are not careful, the holy faith may become an *unholy* faith.

**Q:** Is there a significance in the phrase “building up *yourselves*” as opposed to building up *one another*? Will a time come when we will be very much alone and need to pray and search out matters ourselves?

**A:** When persecution arises, the normal structure of fellowship will be disrupted. Because of the circumstances of the day, we will need nourishment continually. No brother or sister is so strong that when there is no fellowship, he or she can just go along and meet the various contingencies without preparation both in advance and at the time. It will be necessary to keep *feeding on the Word*. EFFORT will be required to keep feeding and to keep oneself in the love of God.

Today we do not have to stand alone, for others see these things, and we can fellowship with them to a greater or lesser degree. But the time will come when we will feel alone as Elijah did.

In discussing the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, the Pastor said the time would come when a division will occur in the true Church. He based this statement on the Elijah and Elisha picture, as well as on the parable where the foolish virgins had to get oil for their lamps and then came back—but too late! In the Passover picture, the “church of the firstborn” includes both the Great Company and the Little Flock, but these two classes will be separated at the very end of the age. The situation will result in Elijah’s being caught up to heaven. The chariot of fire first separates them, and then Elijah is transported up out of sight. The wise virgins will



go in to the marriage, leaving the foolish virgins behind.

**Jude 21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.**

“Keep” implies an *active* trying, not a passive sitting back. We want to *keep* in the circle of God’s love and do *His* bidding.

We look “for the mercy of ... Jesus” because none of us are perfect. In this evil day, we need *special help* to escape the contamination.

**Jude 22 And of some have compassion, making a difference:**

**Jude 23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.**

Jude was talking about two classes. The class in verse 22 need instruction by those who have been blessed with an understanding of these matters. This class may be a little confused and/or a little discouraged, but there is hope for them in regard to the high calling because they just need some proper nurturing and instruction.

However, the class in verse 23 need *radical* treatment. If they respond, they will be Great Company. If they do not respond, they are the ungodly Second Death class. We are cautioned to be very careful how we deal with this class. We must hate the garment spotted by the flesh, which means we are not to get all entangled in the psychology of the matter and the reasons why but are just to deal with Scripture in a straightforward way.

Psychologists want to put themselves down at the level of the victim and try to reason from that standpoint. They try to learn everything about the one who has sinned and then end up getting entangled themselves. The sinner confides because of the sympathy shown to him. If not careful, the one showing the sympathy can get a bond of attachment to the one who needs extrication, thus becoming ensnared himself. We must be like Jesus, who *loved* righteousness and *hated* iniquity (Heb. 1:9).

Some say we should hate the sin but not the sinner. However, then they forgive, not on a scriptural basis, the one who has committed *grievous sin*. Being too merciful in forgiving such a sinner, they get contaminated themselves because they *lowered God’s standard*.

**Q:** The following is excerpted from the 1979 Jude study. “Certain evidences quite prevalent even now will develop rapidly later on ... following the favorable worldwide general witness, which will result in those who become amenable to the truth coming into the Church in overwhelming numbers. This great influx will be accepted ... and many of the brethren will be so elated at what is happening that they will not realize they are letting down the standards.” Is this condition future?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** Now we try to witness, and not many come into the truth. Will it be different later on?

**A:** Yes. Our understanding is that as the trouble gets worse, the comfort of Scripture will become more sought after by worldly people. They will not want to sell the old nature to procure the new, yet they will come into the truth and fellowship with the brethren. Brethren will view this influx as a wonderful blessing. If such natural-minded ones assume any offices in the Church and participate in the teaching, the situation will be dangerous. In other words,

some of this natural-minded element will become teachers.

**Q:** In 1 Kings 19:14, Elijah said, “I, even I only, am left.” Since these words were uttered right after the vision of the wind, earthquake, fire, and still small voice, wouldn’t the *chronological* setting be around 1918?

**A:** Yes, in the chronological sequence, but other Scriptures indicate the same thing will happen at the end of the age when there is not the privilege of fellowship and meetings. Some may feel they are faithful, and looking at the signs of the times, each one may think he is the only one left. Just as Jesus felt alone in the Garden of Gethsemane, so each of the feet members will have his individual experiences alone. When the last members go as a “group,” then possibly because of the media, there will be some awareness of the imminence of the hour as it is learned that certain brethren have been put to death in persecution.

**Jude 24** 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,

**Jude 25** To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

“To the only wise God our Saviour.” The only true wisdom comes from God. We need the counsel in *His Word*. We must imbibe enough of His wisdom and Holy Spirit to overcome in the future dire circumstances.

**IT IS POSSIBLE FOR SOME NOT SPIRIT-BEGOTTEN (BESIDES JUDAS)  
TO GO INTO SECOND DEATH PRIOR TO THE KINGDOM**

Is There Hope for Judas?

(Letter and answer from *Reprint 2283*, April 1, 1898)

“Dear Brother Russell: —In reading the article on Venial and Mortal Sins in the TOWER for June 1, '96, I found a statement on page 122 which, if it is true, would seem to show that Judas' case is not a hopeless one. The statement is as follows: 'On the contrary, those who have sinned wilfully and with full intent, and whose sin is mortal, do not feel penitent; but afterwards approve their sin and boast of it generally as greater light and liberty.' This does not seem to be true in Judas' case. He repented of his sins, and that his repentance was sincere is shown by the fact that he restored to the Priests the money for which he had betrayed Jesus, and confessed to them that he had sinned, and in his despair went and hanged himself.—Matt. 27:3,4,5.

“In the article on Judas' case in the TOWER for April 15, 1896, one of the reasons given for believing that Judas' case is a hopeless one is our Lord's statement in Matt. 26:24. It seems to me that Jesus could not have meant that it would have been better for Judas never to have lived, as this could not be true. For even the short span of life he did enjoy was better than no existence at all. May the meaning not be that it would have been better for Judas if he were not born *yet*? This seems to be the meaning in the Diaglott translation of Matt. 26:24. It certainly appears that Judas did not expect that the Jews would be able to capture Jesus and condemn him to death. For if that was what he expected and desired, then he would not have repented of his sin. In John 17:12 Jesus calls Judas 'the son of destruction.' This would tend to prove that Judas' case was a hopeless one. But we find that Jesus applies just as strong names to the Scribes and Pharisees. He tells them they are of their father, the devil, calls them serpents and generation of vipers, and asks how they can escape the damnation of Gehenna. So it would seem that if Judas has died the second death, at least some of the Scribes and Pharisees must also have suffered it. Judas' case resembles somewhat that of the lady, described on page 41 in the booklet on Spiritism, who had permitted the evil spirits to get control of her will and lead her to wrong a dear friend, and then make her believe she had committed the unpardonable sin. She, too, would have killed herself as Judas did, if she had not been prevented. From what is stated in John 13:2,27, it would seem that Satan was the evil spirit who led Judas to betray his Saviour.

“Hoping you will kindly help me to get a correct understanding of this question, I remain,

“Yours in the Redeemer,

R. A. Lindblad.”

“We give the brother's argument space because it is as good as we have ever seen on that side of the Judas question.

“Some twenty years ago we were inclined to think that *all* must come to a *full* knowledge of *all* truth ere they could be liable to the second death; but we have come to the conclusion from the general tenor of Scripture that this is not the Lord's view and plan. On the contrary, deliberate and intelligent rejection of the first principles of the Gospel seems to imply an unfitness for further favors on the ground that he that is unfaithful in that which is least, would be unfaithful also with more. Adam's knowledge of the divine plan was slight, yet his disobedience brought full death penalty. The real grounds for sympathy with and hope for the masses is the Apostle's statement that Satan has blinded their minds,—misinterpreted the facts. All such will by and by 'see out of obscurity' when Satan shall be bound—during the Millennium.

“We confess little hope for the Scribes and Pharisees who, when they could find no other fault, ascribed our Lord's good works to the devil. As for Judas' tears,—were they better than those of Esau (Heb. 12:17)? Did his repentance lead him to a *renewed* and reformed life, or to self-destruction?—Heb. 6:6.”

**Comment:** The comparison between the tears and attitudes of Esau and Judas is quite strong.

**Reply:** Esau can represent several classes. (1) There is hope for Esau as *natural* Israel versus spiritual Israel. (2) Esau as nominal Christendom sells the birthright in contrast to the Jacob class, who appreciate the birthright, make a consecration, and are faithful to their calling. Nominal Christians, or tares, will certainly get another chance in the Kingdom. (3) But the Pastor was drawing the inference along another line. Both Jacob and Esau were originally a spiritual class. The Esau class, a consecrated class, had the opportunity for the birthright and then forfeited it for an earthly morsel. In this latter case, Esau would seem to picture a Second Death class.

**Comment:** The letter is also strong regarding the scribes and Pharisees who ascribed Jesus' motives and miracles to Beelzebub. In essence, this is saying that some not Spirit-begotten, other than Judas, could have incurred the full penalty. The Lord will judge individual hearts, but Second Death is a possibility.

**Reply:** Yes. Judas was not Spirit-begotten—he perished before Pentecost—but the Scriptures clearly indicate he has no hope of a future resurrection. Some of the scribes and Pharisees could be in a similar situation. They had a relatively similar degree of light because they witnessed Jesus' miracles. To attribute the miracles to Satan working through Jesus would manifest an evil spirit.

**Comment:** The lesson is very sobering to us because we have a lot of truth here at the end of the age—a lot more than these who are being used as types, who were possible or actual candidates for Second Death in the past.

**Reply:** Yes, we have more light today than Judas had back there, even though he accompanied Jesus and witnessed his words and works. The Pastor said he was inclined to think earlier that all would receive a full knowledge of the truth before being liable to Second Death. Then he added, "Now I see otherwise." He realized his earlier view was too lenient. Statements are made both ways on several points in the *Reprints*. We must read *all* of the statements and *analyze* them.

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*Reprint 5453* reads, "The Pharisees ... had a large measure of light, and therefore a large measure of responsibility. And when they, with much light, misrepresented it, this showed a measure of wilfulness on their part which, Jesus said, would be sure to have punishment. Very few ... at that time, had so full a knowledge that they could be culpable in the fullest sense." In other words, *some* Pharisees, a very few, had a sufficiency of knowledge and the degree of willful sin to incur the Second Death penalty.

There are two types of responsibility with the scribes and Pharisees. Many developed animosity toward Jesus and ascribed bad motives based on the *hearsay* of other eyewitness scribes and Pharisees. Hence they did not hear Jesus' side of the story, as it were. Those who saw the miracles and heard Jesus' teachings firsthand but had poisoned minds committed a greater sin. For example, the scribes and Pharisees who paid the tomb guards hush money not to tell about the angel rolling the stone away are *very culpable*. And there are other degrees of responsibility with the scribes and Pharisees.

From a scriptural standpoint, Judas incurred the full penalty without being Spirit-begotten. Doesn't that set a precedent? Based on the case of Judas, we cannot say it is impossible for one not Spirit-begotten to go into Second Death. We will be able to discern between good and evil

if our minds have been *exercised* to think along these lines. Maturity is the exercise of the mind, which develops more and more capability. It develops from milk to strong meat.

We are told not to pray for those who commit the sin unto death (1 John 5:16). How can we not pray for such unless we have the ability to discern when such a sin is committed? Many are asleep and do not want to recognize such situations. We should not pray for the recovery of one who has gone beyond the point of no return. If a teacher is fuzzy on these subjects, he should refrain from trying to teach, for to teach a *wrong* principle incurs responsibility.

In the Kingdom, one will not have to come to a full knowledge of all truth to go into Second Death—and that is true now too. The requirement will be *obedience*.

Hebrews 6:4-6 reads, “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” Those who have been begotten of the Holy Spirit cannot be renewed if they fall away. This text describes a class for which there is no hope, *but it does not say this is the only class*. Hebrews 6:4-6 describes a doctrinally knowledgeable class. Incidentally, doctrine can include principles of truth. “Doctrine” means “teaching,” and there are different kinds of teaching.

A party wrote and raised the issue that only the firstborn of Israel were liable to Second Death the night of the Passover and the last plague. However, the firstborn of Egypt also died. Those who died represent a Second Death class composed of two types:

1. The firstborn Israelites who forsook Judaism and died picture consecrated Christians who forsake their covenant and go back into the world.
2. The firstborn Egyptians who died because they were not under the blood picture non-Spirit-begotten ones who incur a penalty of Second Death during the Gospel Age. In antitype, they are not under the blood for one of two reasons: (1) they were Spirit-begotten at one time and then subsequently lost their Spirit begetting, or (2) they never were Spirit-begotten.

We should keep in mind, however, that no one can go into Second Death unless he knows about Christ. When Christ is reigning in the Kingdom, *all* will know it, and Judas knew about Christ. Jesus is the “true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9). In other words, no one will die the Second Death without having heard of Jesus in some manner. But we should not read into that statement more than it says.

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*Reprint 5684* says, “Hebrews 6:4-8 does indeed refer to the church, but it does not enumerate the only conditions of which any will die the second death.... We see that the second death will be inflicted on some in the Millennial Age.” The Pastor showed an exception to Hebrews 6:4-8 regarding the Church. And then in other articles, he mentioned the scribes and Pharisees, some of whom would also be exceptions to only the Spirit-begotten dying the Second Death in the Gospel Age. Judas is the precedent, but there are others.

Docetism twisted Paul’s doctrine that said we have this treasure (the new mind) in earthen vessels (2 Cor. 4:7). According to this doctrine, a distinction is made between the flesh and the new creature, saying that the inner creature could not sin but the old man could. Proponents of Docetism used this premise to commit all types of fornication, saying the inner man was what mattered. Some even indulged in the excesses of sin to supposedly show their abhorrence of it.

In regard to Jesus' death on the Cross, Docetists did not believe that Jesus was made flesh. They taught that he was God incarnate—half God and half man. Hence they could not see the doctrine of the Ransom, the necessity for Jesus to die to pay Adam's price.

When Christians were imprisoned for their faith or suffered from poverty, for example, Docetists felt that to show compassion was a sign of weakness. They believed that only the spirit was recognized, not the flesh.

When certain types of sin are committed, there can be no forgiveness, even if the individual wants forgiveness. Then there are other sins, and different levels and degrees of sin and guilt. For example, if one committed fornication after consecrating and did not wholeheartedly repent and show reformation of character, we would have little hope that he would get life if he were in a prominent position of influence and leading others astray by his example.

If an individual understands truth and then subsequently becomes blind, going into absolute darkness, we can see that the Adversary has gotten hold of him. But not all blame can be put on Satan, for he must be given an *opportunity* to make inroads into one who is Spirit-begotten. As the Pastor said, it was not Satan who brought death on the human family but *Adam's sinning*. We are not talking about old-age senility but about those who use *reasoning* to teach gross error. They use the Bible to teach a wrong rationale. For such there is little hope.

**Q:** The Book of Jude mentions “murmuring,” and so does the Parable of the Penny. Are the murmurings comparable, or would the Penny murmuring merge into the other if the murmurers did not come to their senses?

**A:** There are different kinds of murmuring. The Penny murmurers are given the penny (a reward), an opportunity, but the murmuring means they do not use it. If that spirit is not overcome, they will lose out. Whether the loss would be the high calling or life itself depends on the individual.

**Q:** The murmuring in the parable was against the *Lord*. Jesus spoke strongly, “Is thine eye evil, because I am good?” (Matt. 20:15). If the murmurers do not come to their senses, wouldn't this be a serious condition?

**A:** Yes. How far the Penny parable can be carried would depend upon the individual and whether he recognizes the wrong and retraces his steps. The degree or intensity of the murmuring would be a factor. Simple prejudice is one thing, but once jealousy, malice, and hatred enter the situation, the danger can be very grave.

**Comment:** Jude says this ungodly class speak evil against “dignities.” If this tendency is not curbed in time, the murmurers of the Penny parable could be jealous of the “dignities” who use the penny. They would be speaking evil of others.

Some may join the Truth movement as a fellowship. Others may join because of a family relationship. With some, it is very obvious that they never saw what was right, what true consecration was. But if one comes to Jesus sincerely with a humble confession, his consecration is *bona fide* and will be accepted. However, we cannot read the motives of others. The Scriptures say that “grievous wolves” shall enter in—individuals who never sincerely consecrated (Acts 20:29).

However, when it comes to *others*, we are not to judge whether or not a consecration was accepted. We know in our own heart if our *own* consecration was sincere. If so, we know with certainty that our consecration was accepted. There is a danger, though, as the years go by, for

if one's heart goes cold and he loses the spirit of a sound mind, he might not recall clearly that his consecration was sincere at the time. As the world comes in and thinking gets beclouded, the person forgets what his initial relationship was to the Lord. Nevertheless, *anyone who professed a consecration—even if he feels it was not accepted—is obligated to keep that vow in spite of the motive.* The Old Testament teaches that principle. “When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee” (Deut. 23:21).

If one's consecration is not accepted, he will not be eligible for spirit life. However, he is responsible for living a life that will develop the principles for receiving life in the Kingdom. That individual is responsible for light received. The degree to which light is spurned or rejected is significant. Once the profession of consecration is made, a person is responsible for keeping that vow. Once the hand is put to the plow, a person cannot change his mind. “And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62).

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*Volume 5, page 272 (last paragraph), reads, “Whether or not the scribes and Pharisees came to a sufficiently clear appreciation of God's holy power to constitute them amenable to the Second Death, for reproaching it as an evil power, we are not able to judge, because we are unable to read their hearts, and because our Lord did not fully state the matter in this connection. If assured they sinned against clear light, sinned to the full against the power of God, we could have no further hope for them, but should merely expect them to perish in the Second Death, as wilful rejectors of God's grace. But if they did not receive a sufficiency of light and knowledge, sufficient contact with the holy power of God, to constitute for them a full trial, they must ultimately come to such a full trial, before they could suffer the full penalty—Second Death.”* The Pastor certainly did *not* feel it was *impossible* for some non-Spirit-begotten scribes and Pharisees to have already gone into Second Death, and thus to have no further opportunity in the Kingdom.

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*Reprint 4364, subhead “The Warning of the Gospel,” states, “Notice carefully that the Apostle did not say to his hearers that a rejection of his message would condemn them to eternal torment. Not a word of that. But he did quote them an Old Testament Scripture which said, ‘Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.’—Acts 13:41.*

“Nor does the Apostle say that his quotation declares absolute hopelessness for the despisers when they perish. The prophecy merely states that God's plan would be declared and that all who despised it would nevertheless wonder at it and would perish without availing themselves of the blessings of salvation. God knows, not we, how many of these despisers who wonder, while perishing, have sinned against a sufficiency of light to hinder them from ever having any further opportunity during the Millennium.”

*Reprint 4365 reads, “Now the Apostle declared, ‘We have done our duty in giving you Jews the first opportunity to hear of this grace of God, but seeing that you thrust it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, we turn to the Gentiles.’*

“What force there is in these words! God has so arranged matters during this Gospel age that his Word of truth and grace judges, tests, the honesty, the sincerity of those who profess to be his. It was not that the Apostle was judging their hearts and saying, You are not worthy of this message. The rejection of the message showed that the hearer was unworthy at heart. Each

one who thus decided added to the count or list of those not worthy of eternal life under present conditions, under the present offer to faith and obedience. How many of them will have any further opportunity, and whether or not the further opportunity would avail them anything, is not for us to say. They are in the Lord's hands. Whatever he shall do for them will be entirely satisfactory to all who have the mind of Christ. We are sure of the 'Love Divine, all love excelling,' and that it will give every member of Adam's race a full, impartial trial for life eternal, as a result of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

\* \* \* \* \*

What about those in the Kingdom who profess consecration for the sake of expediency and prudence but are *insincere*? They will go into Second Death in the Little Season, if not sooner. What is the difference between a consecration with reservations in that age and in this age? In both cases, the individual proves to be unregenerate, incorrigible. God is not obligated to recognize *either* consecration, but both individuals are on trial for life because of making the consecration, really believing Jesus is the Savior yet not being sincere. Hence both *willfully* sin against "full light."

The following paragraph and footnote are from *Tabernacle Shadows*, pages 118-119: "Looking back at the type in the Law, we find that there were 8,580 Levites appointed in the typical service, while only five priests were appointed for the typical sacrificing. (Num. 4:46-48; Exod. 28:1) It may be that this, as much as the other features of the 'shadow,' was designed to illustrate the proportion of [tentatively] justified believers to self-sacrificing, consecrated ones. Though now the nominal Church numbers millions, yet, when an allowance is made for hypocrites, and when only one in each seventeen hundred of the remainder is supposed to be a living sacrifice (though few, yet a correct proportion according to the type), it seems quite evident that the Lord did not make a misstatement when he said that those (the 'royal Priesthood') who would receive the kingdom would be a 'little flock.' (Luke 12:32) And when we remember that two of the five priests were destroyed by the Lord, in symbol of the death\* of negligent and unfaithful priests, we find the proportion of 3 priests to 8,580 Levites would be only 1 to 2,800."

Footnote: "\*As we come more clearly to realize the high attainment of character required of all who will ever be accorded everlasting life on any plane, and how very few seem to make any serious profession of or attempt at *perfect love* as a governing principle in their lives, we are led to wonder if the *two* sons of Aaron who were destroyed by the Lord were not intended to typify the large proportion of consecrated and spirit-begotten ones who have failed to reach the high standard of heart necessary, and who will consequently not be worthy of any life, but will, on the contrary, sink into oblivion—the Second Death."

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*Reprint 4208* speaks of the Judas class at the end of the age. "We are in the habit of supposing that our Lord's words, 'Brother shall deliver up brother to death,' applied merely to our Lord's time and during the dark ages. Do we forget that similar conditions may be expected in the end of this age? ... we believe that very much the same things may be expected with only such limits as our civilization will compel. Apparently it is not enough of a test to us to be 'hated of all men for my name's sake.' We must be tested by the hatred, the malice, the evil speaking and evil surmising of those who dipped with us in the dish, of those who partook with us of the present things of divine bounty at the table of the Lord, the spiritual food. Ah! If this be so, then we may indeed expect for the closing days of the church, the body of Christ, experiences not dissimilar to those which came to the Master in Gethsemane, one of the most trying of which must have been the Judas kiss."



## SECOND DEATH: DEGREE OF RESPONSIBILITY

(Discourse by Bro. Frank Shallieu, October 2, 1988)

This talk pertains to a particular aspect of Second Death, namely, “What Degree of Responsibility Is Necessary for One To Go Into Second Death?” What gave rise to the selection of this subject was the arrival of a letter, two paragraphs of which are excerpted below:

“My understanding of the Ransom is that [in the Kingdom] all will have an opportunity to receive an application of the merit of Christ individually on their behalf, unless one has received the wedding garment as a covering [in the present age]. They [the world of mankind] have not received this application once for all and, therefore, are not subject to the Second Death. Only the firstborn on the Passover night were liable to death from the destroying angel. To be of the firstborn class, one must have the first fruits of the Spirit applied on his or her behalf.

“I am saddened because I feel the presentation gives a reasoning similar to the JW teaching that many will go into Second Death because they do not have the ability to live up to the standard in the present age when evil still predominates.”

*Volume 5, page 439, reads as follows:* “[While] our Redeemer *bought* the world with his own life, ‘his own precious blood,’ ... it also assures us of the *unchangeableness* of divine law, which could not be broken, but instead provided redemption at so great a cost. This assurance that God’s love and justice operate in fullest harmony, gives us confidence that the same principles will continue to rule the universe forever—satisfies us that the ‘wrath,’ the ‘curse,’ will be lifted from all who come into harmony with God through Jesus the Mediator, and that all who do not avail themselves of this grace will be swallowed up of the Second Death—for ‘the wrath of God abideth on them.’—Acts 3:23; John 3:36; Rev. 22:3.” This paragraph pertains primarily to the Kingdom Age because the opportunity to accept Christ in the present life is on the basis of an invitation. It is not a threat. One is not under pressure. The Lord’s advice is to sit down and count the cost. But as we proceed, we will try to show there is a degree of responsibility, nevertheless.

In the following, we will emphasize the key thoughts. “*Eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord*” (Rom. 6:23 paraphrase). “Therefore as by the offence of *one* judgment came upon *all* men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of *one* the *free gift* came upon *all* men unto justification of life” (Rom. 5:18). “[God] will have *all* men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). The thought is that God wills all to be saved from blindness, from ignorance, from not knowing about Jesus and the opportunity of salvation. Regarding the phrase “knowledge of the truth,” some believe this means an “*accurate* knowledge of the truth,” but the word in the Greek is simply “knowledge,” as used many times in the New Testament. And what is “the knowledge of *the truth*”? It is the truth of the present age, as well as of the Kingdom Age, that Jesus Christ tasted death on behalf of every person, that he is the Savior, that he is the channel of salvation to those who accept and obey him. The gift is available to all, but to get life, each individual must take that gift.

1 Timothy 2:5,6 is another text: “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” The expression “for all” can be misunderstood. True, the ransom is for the *benefit of all*, but the expression does not necessarily mean that all will *partake* of it.

Let us consider some additional Scriptures. “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45). Here the phrase is “for *many*,” not for all. Of course the word “many” means “all” in some contexts,

but Jesus used very select language here. The next Scripture is unmistakably universal in its application: “That [Jesus] was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9). The term “true Light” implies *knowledge*. In other words, knowledge will be made available to all eventually, to some in this life and to everyone else in the Kingdom Age. Hebrews 2:9 reads, “But we see Jesus ... that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” Again, this selective language means there is no exception. Jesus tasted death for every man, and he is a Light unto all—no exceptions. However, Jesus’ tasting death “for every man” does not mean that all will avail themselves of that wonderful gift of life.

To show there are some modifications, we will consider other Scriptures. “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth” (John 5:28,29). Some who are now in the grave will not come forth, for those who go into Second Death during the Gospel Age will not be resuscitated. For example, Judas will not come forth from the grave. Therefore, sometimes the word “all” is used in a modified or general sense. On the other hand, an expression like “every man that cometh into the world” clearly means everyone, but that text pertains to light and knowledge.

In the *Question Book* on page 210, the following statement is made: “They [the people in the next age] will have to become ‘Israelites.’ ... Those refusing to come into line with that family will be destroyed in the Second Death.” In other words, the wrath of God will continue to abide on them.

Also in the *Question Book*, page 638, the kind of knowledge that is essential is defined: “How much knowledge is necessary before we could commit this sin unto death? ... it would not require a great deal of knowledge. The Apostle says that if we sin wilfully after we have received a knowledge of the truth [we will not get life]. What kind of truth did he mean? ... how much truth must we have? ... the truth is that ... which Christians have had all during the Gospel age; for instance, the great truth that, ‘God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ ... There is the truth that would sanctify. Now, then, if any has come to a clear knowledge of the truth of God’s love, and of God’s requirement of righteousness, and of our Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior, he has come to a responsible position.”

In the Book of Revelation is another familiar statement. What we want to call attention to is that these statements are strong but very carefully worded. Jesus said, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” (Rev. 21:6). Notice, the water of life will be given freely “to him that is athirst.” Some will not be thirsty when they learn the requirements and conditions of receiving that water. Revelation 22:17 reads, “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And *whosoever will*, let him take the water of life freely.” This verse refers to the call of the Kingdom Age.

Another pertinent text is Luke 13:1-5, where Jesus explained about the random slaughter by Pilate of certain Galileans. Those who lost their lives died not because of what they did as individuals. There was simply a reprisal by Pilate on the particular locality that was responsible for an uprising. To be a Galilean has significance historically. The Master was saying, “What about the innocent victims of Pilate’s edict where he randomly slaughtered some in a bloody fashion?” The question was also asked, “What about the Tower of Siloam?” One day that tower, which was in the Holy City, collapsed and destroyed many people. Jesus replied that the people did not die because of personal guilt. Then he showed that the condition for life is predicated upon a certain principle: “I tell you, ... except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3,5). Jesus did not say that they were guilty but that, nevertheless, the principle of *repentance* is essential for getting life—whether in this age or in the next age.

1 Corinthians 3:1,3 cannot be used as a proof, but it gives a meaningful hint. “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ... For ye are yet carnal.” This verse leaves open the possibility not only that some might be babes in Christ but that some who are ostensibly in the family, as it were, are not even spiritual.

In 2 Corinthians 11:26, where Paul was recounting his sufferings, he said, “In perils among *false brethren*.” In Galatians 2:4, he stated, “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 [again] into bondage.” Notice the expression “false brethren.” A “false brother” is ostensibly a brother but is not one in reality. Nevertheless, such individuals are responsible because they are trying to subvert the teaching of the gospel.

As we proceed, we will try to bring these different Scriptures together into more forceful pictures. First, however, we will read more verses.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12, pertaining to the very end of the age, reads, “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish [in the present life]; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” In other words, if a person makes a formal consecration to the Lord that, instead of being honest and open-hearted, is done perfunctorily with reservations, God does not have to beget that individual of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, that individual is *just as responsible* as a person who dishonestly takes a marriage vow, having ulterior motives. Is the person responsible for his marriage vow? Yes. Did he really mean what he said? No, he was not wholly sincere. It is the same with an individual who consecrates. The person is held responsible for the vow made, even if it is not an open, unreserved consecration.

With regard to Judas, we assume the great majority accept the fact that his case is hopeless. The blackness of the abyss is reserved for this “son of perdition,” for this son of utter destruction. “Perdition” means more than just dying; it is dying and *remaining* dead.

John 6:70,71 reads, “Have not I [Jesus] chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot.” Notice that Jesus called Judas Iscariot “a devil.” And in John 17:12, when Jesus was praying to his Father in the Garden of Gethsemane, part of the prayer was the following: “Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition.” It is true that Jesus called the Twelve up into the mountain, but the apostles were given to him earlier by God. In other words, the call is of God, not Jesus. We are called of God but brought to Jesus, for we see Jesus as the means whereby we can get to know God and have communication with Him. In this same prayer, Jesus indicated that Judas was lost “that the scripture might be fulfilled.”

Another text is Matthew 26:24, “The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.” This verse has a different import than we would think in reading it quickly. For instance, a person who commits suicide is generally rationalized (or should be) by both the Church and the world as having lost his sanity. Life is a gift—even for a short period of time. Therefore, in Judas’s life, there were undoubtedly some moments of pleasure, but he went on to commit the unforgivable sin and incurred the penalty of Second Death. The clause “it had been good for that man if he had not been born” means the following. In speaking about the spiritual domain, about unseen powers, the Apostle Paul said, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12). However, Paul was not saying there is

no wrestling down here with humans who have the spirit of evil. Thus Ephesians 6:12 is saying, “We wrestle *not [only]* against flesh and blood, *but [also]* against ... spiritual wickedness in high places [that is, against other beings in the spiritual or unseen realm].” Matthew 26:24 also needs a modifying word in regard to Judas: “It had been good for that man if he had not [yet] been born.” In other words, Jesus said that the Scripture had to be fulfilled about his betrayal, but it would have been better for Judas if someone else had taken his place. As part of God’s plan, Jesus had to be put to death in order to pay the Ransom price, but the individual responsible for his betrayal did not necessarily have to be Judas Iscariot. Prophecy indicated that someone among the apostles would be the responsible party but did not specify Judas by name. From the standpoint of Judas, it would have been better for him personally to have been born either early enough or late enough to be off the scene at the time of Jesus’ First Advent and his death and resurrection.

Jesus’ words in Matthew 12:31 are another text to consider: “Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.” Sinning against obvious knowledge would constitute “blasphemy” against the Holy Spirit. Then the next verse reads, “And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world [age], neither in the world [age] to come.” Notice the selection of words: “Whosoever speaketh *a word* against the Son of man.” Speaking “a word” is much different than speaking *many words* and teaching against the Lord. The term “a word” is a *modified* expression. For instance, when someone doing carpentry work smashes his finger with a hammer, he may curse God or Jesus. The curse is blasphemous, but the individual will be forgiven that “word” because he is blinded by the god of this world. However, the focus of this discourse is on those who have some knowledge and thus incur responsibility.

In Luke 19, Jesus castigated the scribes and Pharisees at length. In the Parable of the Pounds, the statement was made, “We will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14). The usual thinking is that this parable pertains only to the consecrated, but the parable involves others. Here is a class who opposed Jesus and would not have him reign over them. Speaking to the person who buried his one pound, the Lord said (paraphrased), “You wicked servant! Because you have not been faithful, I will take that one pound from you and give it to the man who has ten pounds.” The Lord did not want to preach Second Death, for salvation is the basic message. Nevertheless, the Second Death aspect is in the parable, and that responsibility is seemingly never discussed from the platform in our fellowship. The parable concludes with the words “But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me” (Luke 19:27). In this statement, Jesus was not referring to those with the pounds but to another group described earlier in the parable as “citizens”: “But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14). Therefore, while Jesus was giving a lesson on the responsibility of his true disciples, we should not lose sight of the fact that this other element was also being addressed.

Now we will point out certain excerpts of the Pastor’s writings in the *Reprints* to show that sometimes he was positive one way and then had reservations later.

In *Reprint 4907* in the year 1911, the Pastor commented on the question of whether one can be amenable to Second Death who is not Spirit-begotten. “More than **thirty** years ago we were inclined to think that *all* must come to a *full* knowledge of *all* truth ere they could be liable to the second death; but we have come to the conclusion from the general tenor of the Scriptures that this is not the Lord’s view and plan. On the contrary, deliberate and intelligent rejection of the first principles of the Gospel seems to imply an unfitness for further favors, on the ground that he that is unfaithful in that which is least would be unfaithful also in more. Adam’s knowledge of the divine plan was very slight; yet his disobedience brought the death penalty.

[Think of that!] The real grounds for sympathy and hope for the masses is the Apostle's statement that Satan has blinded their minds, misinterpreted the facts. (2 Cor. 4:4) [The modifying factor is that mercy takes cognizance of Satan's blinding ability.] All such will by and by 'see out of obscurity' when Satan shall be bound—during the Millennium. We confess little hope for the scribes and Pharisees who, when they could find no other fault, ascribed our Lord's good works to the devil. As for Judas' tears—they were no better than those of Esau. (Heb. 12:17) His remorse led him, not to a *renewed* or reformed life, but to self-destruction."

In a second and later article, the Pastor said the following: "More than **thirty** years ago we were inclined to think that all must come to a full knowledge of all truth...." Then the same remarks were repeated.

Next, in a 1913 article under the subhead "The Sin Unto Death" (*Reprint 5293*), the following statement was made: "During the Gospel age, the only ones who can commit the sin unto death, blasphemy against the holy Spirit, are those who have been enlightened of the holy Spirit. St. Paul says, 'As touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the holy Spirit, and tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance.' (Hebrews 6:4-6, R.V.) Their sin would be wilful, otherwise called 'blasphemy against the holy Spirit.'" We quote this strong and positive statement because the Pastor referred to Hebrews 6:4-6, which is almost invariably used to prove that only those who are Spirit-begotten can go into Second Death. When the Apostle Paul wrote these words in his Epistle to the Hebrews, they applied to a particular context, for Paul was speaking about those *of the consecrated* who depart from the way.

However, an interesting comment was made in *Reprint 5684* in 1915, just two years later, using the same Scripture. "Hebrews 6:4-8 does indeed refer to the church, but it does not enumerate the only conditions of which any will die the second death. All of the church are liable to this condemnation. If they would sin wilfully, if they would fall away so as to deny the very foundation of God's favor—the ransom-sacrifice of Jesus—they would die the second death. This Scripture does not say that there are no other conditions on which the second death will be inflicted. We see that the second death will be inflicted on some in the Millennial age." What the Pastor meant was that in the Millennial Age some who are not begotten of the Holy Spirit will go into Second Death, but that same reasoning applies to this age, as we will try to show. Hebrews 6:4-6 is talking only about the consecrated who go astray in the Gospel Age, but the Pastor referred to some in the Millennial Age. Those who go into the Kingdom in the next age will not be begotten of the Holy Spirit as we are now, yet many insist that Spirit begetting is necessary for one to go into Second Death. We are merely quoting excerpts from the Pastor that indicate a slight suggestion of the possibility otherwise. Hebrews 6:4-6 is used interminably by the brethren and by the Pastor, but in *Reprint 5684*, he realized he had to modify the statement made two years earlier because there is an exception. Therefore, the statement made two years earlier should not be used as a law without any exceptions. The Pastor himself said that Second Death was a possibility for some of the scribes and Pharisees.

In May 1914 (*Reprint 5453*), the following statement was made: "Our Lord said that all manner of sin and blasphemy would be forgiven men except a sin against the holy Spirit. This would not be forgiven them. The Pharisees, not having been received into God's family, nevertheless had a large measure of light, and therefore a large measure of responsibility. And when they, with much light, misrepresented it, this showed a measure of wilfulness on their part which, Jesus said, would be sure to have punishment. Very few [meaning there are *some*], we may say, at that time, had so full a knowledge that they could be culpable in the fullest sense." In spite of all the other statements to the contrary, the Pastor left the door open. The article continues: "The sin unto death is a full sin against the holy Spirit, the sin against full light and knowledge, deliberate, wilful sin. We know of only one person who had such full light and full opportunity

prior to our Lord's resurrection and the coming of the Pentecostal blessing." The Pastor is not contradicting what he just said. The Scriptures *identify positively* only one person, Judas, but that does not mean that others were not guilty. "His special light consisted in that he not only saw Jesus, and saw his miracles, and was a witness of his noble character, but Judas had himself received of this holy Spirit by impartation from Jesus, and had used it, casting out demons, etc." It is true that the Holy Spirit *of sonship* came at Pentecost, but many men in the Old Testament had the Holy Spirit, for they spake of old as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. *Even Saul prophesied under the influence of the Holy Spirit.*

We must expand this subject and not be narrow-minded and dogmatic. Some have been improperly accused of tampering with the Ransom. Unfortunately, brethren can be so frightened that they do not really study and think on the principles of divine government. *Reprint 5453* continues: "Judas had a sufficiency of light, not to condemn him merely to stripes and punishment, but so to condemn him that he would have no further opportunity and hope. He had sinned against very great light. Aside from Judas we know of no other who has ever sinned the sin unto death, except those who may have proven unfaithful after having been begotten of the holy Spirit as new creatures, and who had thus received the mind of God, the holy Spirit."

*Reprint 5293*, August 15, 1913, reads, "Throughout the Millennial age, whoever would have [everlasting] life must get it through the Life-giver, who will give it under the terms of the New Covenant. (1 John 5:12) None can get his share of the blessing [of the New Covenant] except by acceptance of the terms of the New Covenant, and by endeavor[ing] to live up to them. All who do so will be helped, and granted grace sufficient through the Mediator.... If mankind would get everlasting life, they must accept Christ and join themselves to this earthly kingdom class. Christ's kingdom must rule the earth until all the wicked are destroyed.—1 Corinthians 15:24-26."

Matthew 22:2-14 is the Parable of the Wedding of the King's Son. Verses 2-7 read as follows: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." Because natural Israel put Jesus to death and also persecuted the apostles, judgment and destruction came on Jerusalem in AD 70. At that time, new victims were crucified each day on the walls of the city. Finally so many crucifixions had taken place on the city walls that no room remained for the rest of the victims. Imagine the power of the lesson to those who had witnessed Jesus' crucifixion! No doubt some of them were conscience-stricken as they grasped the lesson that their suffering and death by crucifixion were retribution for what they had done to Jesus. Such individuals will have interesting testimonies when they come forth from the tomb in the Kingdom.

The parable continues with verses 8-14: "Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen." These latter verses,

which tell about the “friend” among the wedding guests who was not wearing a wedding garment, are very significant for us at the end of the age. (The parable covers the entire Gospel Age, but the portion about the wedding guests takes place yet future in our day.) The parable begins by telling how Jesus was treated at his First Advent, then the gospel call is described, and finally a guest is discovered in the wedding chamber without a wedding garment.

Jesus addressed Judas as “Friend,” and notice what the king asks in this parable: “*Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?*” Almost invariably the interpretation is given that the guest once had a wedding garment but took it off. However, the parable does not so state. The fact is, simply, that the guest got into the wedding chamber without a wedding garment. It is true that those who sincerely consecrate and are accepted are given a wedding garment, and they can subsequently lose the garment. However, the parable teaches the absence of the wedding garment *for either of two reasons*:

1. The individual did not make a sincere consecration, and hence he never had a wedding garment and was not Spirit-begotten.
2. The individual made a sincere consecration but through unfaithfulness lost both the wedding garment and his Spirit begettal. Stated another way, the individual took off the wedding garment.

The thrust of the parable is, “How did you get in here without having a wedding garment?” Jesus gave precise, accurate lessons, parables, illustrations, and statements at all times, so the wording here should be carefully noted. What is the destiny of this individual without the wedding garment? He was to be bound hand and foot and taken away, and “cast ... into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” In this parable, Jesus was describing a Second Death class. Usually the expression “weeping and gnashing of teeth” refers to Second Death, as in Matthew 24:51.

In Matthew 23:33, the Master was castigating the scribes and Pharisees: “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” The word “hell” here is the Greek *geenna*, picturing Second Death.

When Pilate crucified Jesus, some of the scribes and Pharisees had various evil objectives. Wanting the sign to be changed that was nailed to the Cross, they said, “Do not put on the Cross that he is the King of the Jews. Write ‘*He said he was King of the Jews.*’” But Pilate ignored them and replied, “What I have done I have done.” They also said, “This man said that on the third day, he would rise from the dead. Let us set a watch over the tomb to prevent his disciples from stealing his body.” As a result, part of the Praetorian guard watched at the Garden Tomb to make sure Jesus’ body would not be removed so his disciples could claim he had risen. In addition, a stone was rolled against the door of the tomb and a Roman seal was set. However, an angel of the Lord came down and removed the stone. When the guards saw this happen, they were terrified and went and reported the matter to the chief priests. The chief priests, in turn, paid the soldiers “large money” to keep quiet (Matt. 28:11-15). Their names are not given, but these chief priests, as ringleaders, are culpable of Second Death. On the Day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter accused the congregation, asserting that some of them were involved in some way with sympathy for the Crucifixion. He said, “You and your rulers crucified the Lord Jesus, but I know that you did it through ignorance” (Acts 3:17 paraphrase). In this statement, Peter was speaking of the majority. There were exceptions.

The letter referred to at the beginning of this discourse—the letter that prompted the discourse—correctly mentions that only the firstborn were liable to death in the type, but how many of the firstborn of Israel died? The account does not state whether or not any Israelites died, but certainly the firstborn of Egypt died that night. With the “firstborn” of Israel being a

type on the Passover, as well as on other occasions, we can reasonably draw a lesson or antitype from the death of the Egyptian firstborn. The Hebrew firstborn were passed over, or spared, from death by the destroying angel because blood was sprinkled on the doorposts of their dwellings. The second passing over occurred at the Red Sea crossing when the Israelites, dry-shod, went through safely to the far shore. At that point, the Red Sea waters overflowed the pursuing Pharaoh and his Egyptian host and drowned them all. Not one escaped. The second passing over represents the destruction of the willfully wicked, including Satan, in the Kingdom Age. If the pursuing Egyptians in the Exodus symbolize the incorrigible of the world of mankind, what did the Egyptian firstborn who died earlier represent? They picture the Second Death class during the Gospel Age who, like those who are found without a wedding garment, are not under the blood of Christ. Such individuals either never were under the blood or were under the blood at one time and then left it. And in the parable, those found naked, as it were, either never had a wedding garment or had one for a while and then took it off. In the parable, the condition is intentionally not stated clearly to allow for the possibility of two classes going into Second Death, including those who never had a wedding garment.

Consider Psalm 69:21-28, which speaks about Jesus on the Cross. “They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. *Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents. For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded. Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.*” These prophetic words of Jesus refer to a non-Spirit-begotten class who will not come into the Lord’s righteousness in the future, that is, in the Kingdom. Thus it is technically possible for some to go into Second Death in the present age who are not begotten to sonship. Those who make an insincere consecration are held fully responsible for their personal vows to the Lord.

In no way are we trying to say that many who are not Spirit-begotten will go into Second Death in the present age, but some will. At the time of the First Advent, very few of the scribes and Pharisees would merit this full penalty, and perhaps very few of this category went into Second Death during the Gospel Age. However, the pictures seem to be concentrated at the end of the Gospel Age, and they involve a condition that has already begun but will be more recognizable in the near future. In our midst are some individuals who know the truth but are not consecrated. In fact, because of their knowledge, some of the unconsecrated could give a better sermon than some of the consecrated. If any of these knowledgeable unconsecrated individuals were to *turn against Christ and against Christ’s zealous followers*, they would be very culpable because of their enlightenment, which exceeds that of Judas. Persons with such enlightenment have counted the cost and decided to wait for the Kingdom blessings. Of course that is their privilege because the calling of the present age is an invitation, but if any who are so enlightened deliberately turn against the cause of Christ and the Lord’s people, they will be held as responsible as those who have consecrated. Such sinning would be willful.

In summary, the Scriptures indicate there will be a *Judas class* at the end of the Gospel Age that comprises both elements: enlightened individuals who never consecrated, as well as some who made a sincere consecration but turned from it. Such individuals are getting into the true Church. In one case, an unconsecrated person even became an elder, although he was quickly demoted subsequently when the matter was discovered. Nevertheless, this circumstance points out the danger of loosely using the term “brother” when addressing an unconsecrated individual. At funerals for unconsecrated individuals, an improper message of the high calling is sometimes given. We must not be overly generous in using the term “brother” and in giving the benefit of the doubt. It is an easy matter to simply ask a person if he or she has consecrated.



Now another subject. All who lived before Christ are guaranteed to come into the Kingdom because they did not have the opportunity to know about him. Therefore, one must know about Jesus *with light*; that is, one must *truly know he is the Messiah*. What a person does with that knowledge is another matter, however. Stated another way, none who lived before Christ have gone into Second Death, even though some of them are incorrigible sinners. In spite of the fact that they are incorrigible, they must come into the Kingdom Age because they did not know about Jesus.

One might ask, “Why do you make so much out of this subject?” The subject is important from a prophetic standpoint. Some shocking happenings will occur in the Bible Student movement, and if we are not alert to these coming conditions, we will not know until the roof caves in. *Prejudice* will prevent the unaware from listening to reason in advance.

Consider the incorrigible sinner in the Kingdom Age. During the papal Inquisition of the Dark Ages, horrendous methods of torture were used against true Christians. When individuals who poured hot lead down the throats of victims, for example, come forth from the tomb, they will be told the terms of the New Covenant. Repentance, retribution for willful wrong acts, and restoration will be required. Therefore, one who poured hot lead down the throats of others will have, in effect, hot lead poured down his own throat. God’s Law teaches an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Currently God is winking the eye because He is choosing a special class for the high calling under the Grace Covenant, but in the Kingdom under the New (Law) Covenant, the same principles will apply as in the Jewish Age. The Pastor stated that all sins of the past will be forgiven, but what he meant was that past sins committed *because of Adamic weakness* can be forgiven. Willful sins in any age must receive stripes or Second Death. Willful sinners who stab people 30 and 40 times as pleas for mercy are cried out will receive a dose of their own medicine in the Kingdom because of the principles of God’s Law. Sooner or later retribution must come for willful sin. “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men[’s sins] they follow after” (1 Tim. 5:24). From this standpoint, many willful sinners will not want to go through the retribution process and hence will not accept the terms of the New Covenant. They will want to be put out of their misery and thus will go into Second Death. Those who refuse to hear the voice of “that prophet” will be cut off summarily. “And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3:23).

The three stages of cutting off in Second Death in the Kingdom are as follows:

1. Those who come forth from the tomb and do not want to accept Christ will be cut off summarily. Some people have such a hatred for anything Jewish that even the thought of being Israelitish is completely repugnant to them, and their refusal to accept the arrangement will result in their being cut off immediately.
2. Those who do not make sufficient progress after a 100-year trial will be cut off at that point.
3. Those who obey perfectly out of prudence and are simply biding their time for the Kingdom Age to end so that they can return to former practices will be deceived by Satan in the Little Season and thus be weeded out.

The terms will be just, for “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7). For both Christians and the world of mankind, the willful sowing of sin will reap a penalty and/or retribution. How will retribution be accomplished in the Kingdom? How will the guilty individual receive an experience like the one he gave his victim? He will have a dream that is as real as the experience itself. In the mind, the perpetrator will relive the victim’s thoughts and terror. We all have computers in our brains, and every soul who has ever lived has been in

God's "computer" so that when the resurrection takes place, an individual can be called forth from the tomb and given a new body—earthly, spiritual, or divine. The illustration of a computer can also be used to show how the record of a person's thoughts, words, feelings, etc., can be duplicated by God and placed in the mind of another individual. Thus the memory of a victim will be transferred into the brain of the one who committed an evil deed (rape, murder, etc.) so that the perpetrator will see the crime reenacted as if he is the victim. By this or a similar method, retribution will be accomplished effectively but silently so that the peace of others is not adversely affected. In other words, vicious, willful sins will not be just blotted out. God says, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay" (Rom. 12:19).