

## Gilbert Larson - Jude

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All right, you're on the Epistle, the Epistle of Jude. As we consider this epistle written by the Master of summation, we might wonder who he is. He was one of the twelve apostles chosen by Jesus to witness to the Jews and was known by several names. Now, in Matthew 10:3, he is called Lebius. In Mark 3:18, he is called Thaddeus.

And in Luke 6:16, as well as in Acts 1:13, he is called Judas, the son of James. The name Judas is also referred to by John in his gospel, the 14th chapter and the 22nd verse, which reads, judas said unto him, not Iscariot. Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world? I mentioned that he was a master of summation, which is proved by the amount of material he covers in so few words. Let me read what he has to say in his Epistle, and we can cover it very shortly.

I'd like to read it from the New English Bible, which changes a number of the words, but does not change the meaning, makes it easier to understand.

I would like to have you follow me from your Bibles, the St. James Bibles, and kind of compare the two as we go along, from Jude, servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those whom God has called, who live in the love of God the Father and in the safekeeping of Jesus Christ. Mercy, peace and love be yours in fullest measure. My friends, I was fully engaged in writing to you about our salvation, which is yours no less than ours, when it became urgent, urgently necessary to write at once an appeal to you to join the struggle in the defense of the faith, the faith once delivered, which God entrusted to his people once and for all.

It is in danger from certain persons who have wormed their way in the very men whom Scriptures long ago marked down for the doom they have incurred. They are enemies of religion. They pervert the free favor of our God into licentiousness, disowning Jesus Christ, our only Master and Lord. You also know it all. But let me remind you how the Lord, having once delivered the people of Israel out of Egypt, next time destroyed those who are guilty of unbelief.

Remember, too, the angels how some of them were not content to keep the dominion given to them, but abandoned their proper home, and God has reserved them for judgment on the great day, bound beneath the darkness in everlasting chains. Remember Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring towns. Like the angels, they committed fornication and followed unnatural lusts. They paid the penalty in eternal fire, an example for all to see.

So too with these men today. Their dreams lead them to defile the body, to flout authority, and to insult celestial beings. In contrast, when the archangel Michael was in debate with the devil, disputing the possession of Moses' body, he did not presume to condemn him in insulting words, but say, may the Lord rebuke thee.

But these men poured abuse upon things they did not understand, the things they do understand. But instinct, like brute beast, proves their undoing. Alas for them. They have gone the way of Cain, and they have plunged into Balaam's error for pay. They have rebelled like Korah, and they share his doom.

These men are a blot on your love feasts, where they eat and drink without reverence. They are shepherds who take care only of themselves. They are clouds carried away by the winds without

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giving rain. Trees that in season bear no fruit, dead twice over and pulled up by the roots. They are fierce waves of the sea, foaming, shameful deeds.

They are stars that have wandered from their course, and the place forever reserved for them is black as stone darkness. It was to them that Enoch, the seventh and descendant from Adam, directed his prophecy when he said, I saw the Lord come with his myriad of angels to bring all men to judgment and to convict the godless of all their godless deeds that they had committed, and of all the defiant words which godless sinners had spoken against him. They are a set of grumblers and malcontents. They follow their lusts, big words come rolling from their lips, and they court favour to gain their ends. But you, my friends, should remember the predictions made by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the warning they gave. In the final age there will be men who pour scorn on religion and follow their own godless lusts. These men draw a line between spiritual and unspiritual persons, although they are themselves wholly unspiritual. But you, my friends, must fortify yourself, and in the most sacred faith, continue in prayer in the power of the Holy Spirit. Keep yourself in the love of God and look forward to the day when our Lord Jesus Christ comes in mercy.

Look forward to the day when our Lord Jesus Christ in his mercy will give eternal life. There are some doubting souls who need your pity. Snatch them from the flames and save them. There are others for whom your pity must be mixed with fear. Hate the very clothing that is contaminated with sensuality.

Now to the one who can keep you from falling, set you in the presence of his glory. Jubilant and above reproach to the only God our Savior be, glory, majesty, might and authority through Jesus Christ before all time, now and forevermore. Now these are the words of the Apostle Jude, and it was rather evident that Jude had been planning to write a more general statement about the Gospel to the Church. But when he saw that the truth was being assailed on all sides and attacked by and God's word being attacked by enemies who sought to destroy the faith once delivered to the saints, he joined with Peter and James and John and Paul in warning his brethren of the dangers of being fooled by false teachers.

The faith that Jude is warning us about is the fact that Jesus had come in the flesh to suffer and to die for both the church and the world, reminding us that the work of God during the present age is to call out from the world a people willing to suffer and die with Jesus and having faith that is inspired by the promises of God that they would live and reign with Christ when he returned to establish his long promised kingdom. The false teachers, referred to by Jude as certain men who crept in unawares or unnoticed had become leaders even in his time. We believe this applies to what happened to the church, to the true Church, when the apostles fell asleep in death and the faith once delivered to the saints was almost lost to the faithful followers of the Master. Now, instead of being inspired by the hope of Christ's return and the establishment of his kingdom, they adopted the view that the kingdom was already here and that the military might have the same civil powers or to civil governments should be used to enforce their man made rules which they claim to be the laws of the kingdom.

We know how God's people have suffered from these laws. From our study of history, both church history and secular history, Jude minces no words at the nature to which these folks false teachers who oppose the truth. But at the same time he tempers his remarks with the love and mercy of God. He knew there would be those who were deceived by the devil and were not willfully opposed to truth and righteousness. So, brethren, in our contending for the faith, we are to recognize a

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difference and to endeavor to help those who give any evidence of wanting to do right.

We must remember as we read of these examples of the past that we are surrounded by the same temptations and must fight to overcome the spirit of the world, the flesh and especially of the devil. We see great strides being taken by nominal Christendom them today who are ignoring important doctrines of truth for the sake of unity. Brother Russell tells us much about this in the fourth volume, especially pages 172 and 173. In verse 6, the apostle Jude speaks of the angels who kept not their first estate, but who left their own habitants. This is an Old Testament example taken from Genesis 6, 2, 4, where we read about the sons of God who took unto themselves daughters of men and had giants born unto them.

These offsprings were destroyed in the flesh, and the unholy angels were cast down into hell. The Bible Hell so clearly described for us by Brother Russell in his writings.

These fallen angels have been restrained by everlasting chains which keep them from appearing as men. But under darkness they have plagued mankind until the judgment of the bright millennial day. The mediums through whom these fallen angels are now working serve Satan's purpose in attempting to prove that the dead are now more alive than ever, perpetuating his original lie to Adam and Eve.

Now Brother Russell warns us against spiritism and occultism in our vow unto the Lord, his very words being, I vow to thee that I will be on the alert to resist everything akin to spiritism and occultism, and that remembering that there are but the two masters, I shall resist these snares in all reasonable ways as being of the adversary. Certainly that is a very strong admonition. Now, Jesus or Jude used the wicked people of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them as types of evil and evildoers. He states in verse seven that they were set forth as an example suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. We note that these people were not tormented by the fire, but were destroyed by it.

This fact takes the wind out of the sails of those who try to use the thought of eternal fire to prove their erroneous doctrines of hellfire or eternal torture for the wicked. The word fire here is used as a symbol of destruction, and so we find Sodom and Gomorrah are represented as suffering the vengeance of age lasting destruction. Remember, they were set forth as an example of both God's vengeance and of his mercy, his mercy being shown. For Sodom and Gomorrah, Jesus had said that the Jewish cities that rejected him were more were to be should be more afraid than the people of Sodom and Gomorrah of being eternally destroyed.

We find this recorded in Matthew 10:15.

Matthew 10:15 reads, Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city, the city that rejected Jesus.

What Jude tells us is that the sodomites were used by the Lord as an example of those who would suffer everlasting death. We know that the sodomites were not everlastingly destroyed because both Jesus and Ezekiel in the Old Testament clearly teach that all shall be raised from the dead and be given an opportunity to obey the laws of Christ's kingdom and if obedience, live forever in the promised resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. Now the people of Sodom and Gomorrah will remain dead until the appointed time for bringing them again from the captivity of death as declared by the prophet in Ezekiel. In his book the 16th chapter and the 55th verse, Jesus teaches us that in the thousand year day of judgment that it would be more tolerable for

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Sodom and Gomorrah than it was for the Jewish cities that rejected him. As I have already told you, he says, Jude says in verse 20 and 21 that ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying with the Holy Spirit, that is the Spirit of loyalty and devotion to God, should keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

In verse eight, Jude tells us of filthy dreamers defiling the flesh, despising dominion or authority, speaking evil of dignities reminds us so much of what we read in our daily newspapers and can see what's going on round about us every day, especially in this neighborhood. Not too far from this hall we find many dens of iniquity, such as we find over here on Rush street, and over in Old Town, which is just maybe a mile north of us, we find many who have defiled themselves and have thrown all authority and wisdom to the winds. In verse nine we're reminded by Jude that we must be patient with what we see about us and be on the guard against any and every indication of sympathy or affiliation with the Spirit of the world. It is not for us to attempt to transform the world or to correct society and its ways.

We are to follow the examples of Michael the Archangel, who did not even bring a railing accusation against Satan, but he said the Lord rebuked thee. Certainly we can use the wisdom of that thought in our daily walk in life.

We must remember that the Church's work is to garner in the wheat and to let the world take care of itself until the day of the until the Judgment Day. Verse 10 through 16 point the dangers of teaching falsehood for profit or for a living.

These form a class who sin against the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God not through ignorance, but because of selfishness. They are no longer walking after the Spirit, but in the footsteps of our Master, which is the way of sacrifice. They choose to walk after their own lusts or desires, speaking great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. They are men pleasers because of their self seeking, more interested in pleasing men than the Lord, and are far from their consecration to sacrifice. This class is also described in second Peter, the second chapter, in which chapter, by the way, we find many similar words to the words spoken by Jude.

Jude also reminds us of our privileges to choose our friends and companions by their obedience and loyalty to the Lord and the truth.

We must maintain our steadfastness in the faith, while we use every opportunity to rescue out of the consuming fire those who are willing to reform from their proud and wicked ways. The prophet Malachi describes this day in Malachi 3 1 3, where he shows under the figure of fire how the Lord's children will be purified by the refiner's fire, and blessed and delivered up to the Father with the dross of error destroyed.

Jude closes his epistle with a beautiful doxology in verse 24 and 25, which reads, now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion, power, both now and forever. I found in the sixth volume a beautiful poem based on the 24th verse, which is about presenting you faultless before the presence of his glory. I'd like to read that for you at this time.

It's on page 193 of the sixth volume. Faultless is his glory Presence all the soul within me stirred all my heart reaches up to heaven at the wonder of that word able to present me faultless. Lord forgive my doubt, I cried Thou didst once to loving doubt show hands and feet and riven side O for me

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build up some ladder bright with golden round on round, that my hope this thought may compass,  
Reaching fate's high vantage ground, praying thus behold my ladder reaching unto perfect day  
Grew out of a simple story dropped by someone in the way once a queen. So ran the story,  
seeking far from something new found in it a mill where strangely naught but rags repaid her view,  
Rags from out of the very gutters, rags of every shape and hue, While the squalid children picking  
seemed but rags from hair to shoe. What then rang her eager question, can you do with things so  
vile?

Mould them into perfect whiteness, said the master with a smile. Whiteness quotes the Queen, half  
doubting. But these reddened crimson dyes, surely naught can ever whiten these to fitness to your  
eyes. Yes, he said. Though these are colors hardest to remove of all, still I have the power to make  
them like the snowflake in the fall through my heart the words so simple, throbbing with echo in and  
out Crimson, scarlet, white as snowflake can this man and can God not now unto a day.

Therefore thus the tale went on at will to the Queen there came a present from the master at the  
mill. Fold on fold of fairest texture lay the paper purest white on each sheet there gleamed the  
letters of her name in golden light. Precious lesson, wrote the master Hate my mill thus given me  
Showing how our Christ can gather vilest hearts from land or sea in some heavenly alembic Snowy  
white from crimson bring Stamp his name on each and bear them to the palace of the King. O what  
wondrous visions wrap me Heaven's gates seem open wide Even as I stood clear and faultless by  
my dear Redeemer's side Faultless in his glory presence Faultless in that dazzling light Christ's  
own love majestic, tender Made my crimson snowy white. May the Lord add His Blessing.

Just about 25 minutes. Just about 25 minutes.