

Lesson 6
Universal Truth: The Catholic Epistles
The Epistle of St. Jude
AD 60-80

Commentary:

Who is this St. Jude? First and foremost, Jude says he is a “a slave of Christ.” Secondly, he is called the brother of James and appeals to his authority. This, of course, is the much respected St. James (James the Just) the first Bishop of Jerusalem whose epistle was studied earlier. Also, while Father Farley makes no mention of Jude’s relationship with Jesus, my research indicates that Jude is the Judas mentioned as a son of Jesus’ worldly Father Joseph who had four children from a prior marriage - James, Joses, Simon and Judas mentioned in Matthew 13:55. (Clement of Alexandria). Jude could therefore be labeled a “step-brother” of Jesus but, of course, this is impossible since Jesus is God.

How does this epistle compare to the others? Isn’t it essentially another letter of hope and consolation for our Jewish Christian people under extreme duress from the Roman authorities and false teachers?

Let us see.....

+ St. James’ theme centers on one’s personal behavior:

- 1) **Temptations of doubt and riches cured by patient endurance;**
- 2) **Be self-controlled in your behavior;**
- 3) **“Born Again” means get your faith into practice and make sure you control your tongue and be generous to the needy (James 1:22-27);**
- 4) **Faith without works is dead (James 2:14-26); and**
- 5) **In times of sickness and /or suffering draw closer to God.**

St. Maximus the Confessor says:

“Many human activities, good in themselves, are not good because of the motive for which they are done. For example, fasting, vigils, prayer, psalmody, acts of charity and hospitality are by nature good. But when performed for the sake of self-esteem (vainglory or self-glorification) they are not good. God searches our purpose.... He bestows blessings only when something is done for the right purpose. For God’s judgment, looks not at the actions, but the purpose behind them.”

+St. Peter’s theme centers on countering the heavy persecution of Christians by the Roman Empire – remember what we taught you. He recommends:

First Peter 1 & 2:

- 1.) **Remember your baptism for it has made you different. Live it. Persevere;**
- 2.) **“Born Again” means you are renewed by Christ’s resurrection and now heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven!**
- 3.) **Suffering of the righteous brings on glory;**

- 4.) We are all a part of the Royal Priesthood of the Lord. Special people called to do good works and glorify God ((First Peter 2:9-12);
- 5.) Avoid fleshly desires and by your good works glorify God;
- 6.) However, be submissive to your masters even to the harsh. When Christ was reviled he did not revile in return. When He suffered He did not threaten. We are sheep; our souls are under His care.

In First Peter 3

- 7.) Women should be focused on their inner heart, a quiet spirit of great value to God. Husbands are charged with protecting their wives; and
- 8.) Love covers a multitude of sins so be hospitable to one another.

In First Peter 4 & 5

- 9.) As you minister, do so with God's grace so He is glorified in all things;
- 10.) When you suffer as Christians do not be ashamed but glorify God;
- 11.) Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God; and
- 12.) If you suffer, the whole church suffers with you. Christ will return to set all things right.

The Epistle of St. Jude

Commentary

Jude's letter is against the corrupters of the faith, those false teachers that Peter also condemns. However, he says it is not enough to condemn the heretics. Christians have to provide a credible alternative and he devotes the closing section of his epistle to what that is. He maintains that Christians should not be surprised by error in the church or to regard it as anything unusual because the apostles had predicted this situation. The only way to deal with it is to maintain the orthodox faith, live a pure life and evangelize others. Avoid divisions caused by the scoffers and those devoid of the Spirit. He alludes to the Christian faith as a cloak that may be soiled. The cleansing of this garment cannot only be done in our own strength but by the power of God. (Cyril of Alexandria; Andreas; Oecumenias; Clement of Alexandria; Maximus the Confessor; Venerable Bede)

Questions

1. Cain was used by Jude as an example of _____.
2. Balaam opposed _____ for the sake of _____.
3. Korah rebelled against _____ by opposing his _____.
4. False teachers have opposed the _____ of the _____ and will _____.
5. False teachers according to Jude are like: (check)
 waterless clouds straying stars waves of the sea hidden reefs
- 6.) The impious sinners are like the Israelites in the desert who _____ at God and experienced his _____.

In St. Paul's farewell address to the elders (priests and bishops) of Ephesus in the Book of Acts he said,

“Therefore take heed to yourselves and all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which he purchased with his own blood.

For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you not sparing the flock.

Also, from among yourselves, men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.” (Acts 20:28-30)

And St. Peter warns.....

“....scoffers will come in the last days walking according to their own lusts, and saying ‘where is the promise of His coming?’ For as the Fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.” (Second Peter 3:3)

7.) Given the above quotations from Scripture, what does Jude recommend for dealing with error in the church?

8.) What in your own view is meant by the statement from the Venerable Bede: “While the Christian garment may get soiled, the cleansing of it cannot be done on our own strength but the power of God.” If possible, give a personal example with your answer.

Overview: Jude's farewell reminds everyone that God is still in charge. His glory, power, and majesty will be fully revealed at the right time. For Christians the most important thing is to be ready to enter into His presence without blemish. This last verse gives equal glory to the Father and the Son. He is refuting those who believe that the Son is inferior to the Father. The Son does not have his beginning from some point in time but has been there from all ages.

**Handout Article, “Take Heart: A Christian Approach to Healing,” Lyn Breck
The Messenger, a quarterly journal of the Archdiocese of the
Orthodox Parishes of the Russian Tradition in Western Europe.**

+++++++The End+++++++

Want to look at Jude's Epistle closer?

It has been said by biblical scholars that Jude's epistle compares very favorably with Second Peter.

List below ways in which each epistle says essentially the same thing. In view of the similarities why do you think this epistle was written?

Here is how they compare:

Second Peter

1. Slave of Christ

**2. Your Baptism cleanses you.
Don't be blind & shortsighted.**

**3. Pay attention to Scripture
Study and feed on it.**

**4. False prophets and false teacher
Deny the Master. Lifestyle sensual,
sexually immoral and greedy (money)**

**5. False teachers despise Angel orders
and blaspheme the Lord**

**6. Peter denounces way of Balaam
a false prophet who loved unrighteousness**

Jude

Slave of Christ

**Baptism is not enough.
Persevere in Godly living**

**Faith comes from the tradition
Handed down from the Apostles**

**Impious men deny the Master.
Look at what God did with Sodom
& Gomorrah, Israeli's after Egypt
when God destroyed the
unbelievers (Num 14) & Angels
sinned with women (Gen. 6:1-4)
Michael the Archangel disputes
w/ the devil but does not judge.**

**Jude denounces false teachers
like a prophet of old using men
of Cain, Balaam and Korah**

Question answers:

- 1. Someone who chose evil over good.**
- 2. God for the sake of money.**
- 3. Moses authority**
- 4. Authority apostles perish**
- 5. All**
- 6. Grumbles wrath**

- 7. Maintain the orthodox faith;
live a pure life; evangelize others;
remember the prophets; avoid
divisions.**
- 8. (your personal experience)**