

# PREACHING THROUGH I AND II PETER, I, II AND III JOHN, AND JUDE

## THE EPISTLES OF PETER

These letters, written to Christians in five provinces of Asia Minor, give evidence that the Apostle Peter had been among these people for some time. His First Epistle was written to encourage believers to stand fast in the face of persecution which the Emperor Nero had started against them. The Second was written as a warning against their being led astray by false teachers among themselves. It is thought that both were written a short time before Peter's death, or about 67 A.D.

### ANALYSIS

- I Peter 1 The Christian's incorruptible inheritance.
- 2,3 Practical exhortations for the earthly pilgrimage.
- 4,5 Exhortation to stand the "fiery trial."
- II Peter 1 The great and precious promises.
- 2 Warnings against false teachers.
- 3 The second coming of Christ.

## THE EPISTLES OF JOHN

The Apostle John spent the later years of his life ministering in the province of Asia, about Ephesus. The First Epistle is a circular letter to the churches, and seems to have been written especially to warn against the false teachings of the Gnostics. These were some who had mixed Greek philosophy with Christian teaching and claimed to possess certain mystical knowledge of God and of truth which others did not. Their boasts of superior wisdom were not borne out in their lives, and John shows their pretenses to be false.

### ANALYSIS

- 1 God is light, revealed in Christ.
- 2 Walking in the light demands holy living.
- 3,4 Righteousness, love, and sound faith are necessary for the Christian.
- 5 The Christian's assurance is in God's promises.

The Second Epistle of John is a personal letter to the "Elect Lady" (perhaps a symbolic name of a church) to warn against

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false teachers. The Third Epistle is personal letter to the “be-loved Gaius” to encourage him in helping faithful preachers.

### JUDE

The brother of Jesus and of James (Mark 6:3) writes to Christians probably in Asia Minor, to warn them against false teachers and to urge them by sound teaching and holy living to “contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints.”

Sermon Outlines Provided:

“Ye Were Redeemed” (I Pet. 1:12-25)

“Liberty, Limited” (I Pet. 2:16; Rom. 6:12-23)

“You’re God’s Man!” (I Pet. 5:1-5; Acts 20:28-31)

“An Old Grad Remembers” (II Pet. 1:12-18)

“For Our Sins” (I John 1:5—2:3)

“Fellowship in Love” (I John 3:1, 2, 11-18; 4:7-12, 16-21)

“Not Every Spirit” (I John 4:1-3)

“Helping God’s Servant” (III John)

“Jude Speaks for Restoration” (Jude)

### QUESTIONS OVER I & II PETER, I, II & III JOHN, JUDE

1. What does Peter say is the end of your faith? (I Pet. 1:9)
2. Peter links the validity of baptism to what fact in Jesus’ life? (3:21)
3. Peter exhorts elders to tend the flock of God in what way? (5:2, 3)
4. How does Peter say that prophecy came? (II Pet. 1:21)
5. Who is called a “preacher of righteousness” by Peter? (2:5)
6. What does Peter say will happen at the coming of the day of God? (3:10)
7. What does John promise if we confess our sins? (I John 1:9)
8. How does John define sin? (3:4)
9. Perfect love casts out what? (4:18)
10. If any come that bring not the doctrine of Christ, what are we to do? (II John 10)
11. Who was Diotrephes? (III John 9)
12. Jude says we are to earnestly contend for what? (Jude 3)

PREACHING THROUGH I PETER  
YE WERE REDEEMED

(I Peter 1:12-25)

INTRODUCTION — We re-examine a contract to find what there is in it for us; as in case of insurance policy.

Thus Peter writes to Christians under persecution to remind them of the power and benefits of their faith.

I. REDEEMED.

A. Definition: "loosed, by a price."

B. Imprisoned, the prisoner is freed by payment made by another.

C. In faith and life you are not your own; you are bought with a price (I Cor. 6:19, 20).

II. REDEEMED FROM:

A. Ignorance.

1. Had the church so early established schools? (v. 14).

2. "Not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance."

— Ignorance of the will and goodness of God (in which many wish to remain).

3. In Christ you know God — the supreme knowledge.

B. (Not mentioned here) the guilt and the power of sin.

— This slavery cannot be relieved except in Christ.

C. The vain manner of life (empty, unrewarding) (v. 18).

1. It is the life without purpose.

2. "Received by tradition from your fathers," it is bound on you by social habit.

(Redemption demands the turning from ancestor worship to God's will.)

How great is our redemption? He that is saved from falling in, is more favored than he who is pulled out, half drowned.

III. REDEEMED BY:

A. Not silver and gold.

1. These might buy the body of a slave, but never the love of a son.

2. The world's greatest treasure is not sufficient to the purpose.

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- B. The blood of Christ (v. 19).
  - 1. The cost to heaven is beyond comprehension.
  - 2. The cost to Him is reviewed (Phil. 2:5-11).
- C. Measure the cost by its purpose:  
“That He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Christ” (Rom. 3:26).
- D. Measure the value of the redemption by its cost:  
If it is worth so much to my Lord, it can't be insignificant to me.

### IV. REDEEMED THROUGH:

- A. Redeemed through obedience to Him (v. 22).  
— The division between God's children and the children of this world turns on obedience to God.
- B. Redeemed through the living word (v. 23).  
“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

### V. REDEEMED TO:

- A. Love of the brethren (v. 22).  
— Here is the uniform by which the soldiers of Christ are to be recognized (John 13:35).
- B. A living hope— through the resurrection of Christ (v. 21).  
— Because of this you do not sorrow as unbelievers do (I Thess. 4:13).
- C. Faith unfeigned— trust based on the knowledge of God's love.  
— Faith becomes a natural part of one's personality.
- D. Continued obedience (v. 14).  
— Saved through obedience, one does not become a rebel afterward.
- E. Holiness (vv. 15, 16). (Compare Lev. 11:44; 19:2).  
— This is the child's increasing resemblance to his Father.

### CONCLUSION —

“I've been redeemed and I know it.  
I've been redeemed; I must show it;  
Show it in my walk, show it in my talk,  
Show it in my song, halleluia!  
I've been redeemed and I know it.”

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LIBERTY, LIMITED

(I Peter 2:16; Romans 6:12-23)

INTRODUCTION — From the occasion, the Fourth of July.

- A. We are proud and jealous of our freedom.
  - B. It means little to say that millions have fought to preserve it; it means more to say that it is the heritage that our own family and friends are offering themselves to defend.
  - C. Peter wrote the text, with its verse on freedom shining like the north star, to Christians whose freedom we would doubt.
- I. BE FREE. Are we as free as we think we are?
- A. Just now we are held in by legal fences that touch every phase of life, but that is not the slavery that concerns us.
  - B. Can we worship freely, or are we prevented by cares, concerns, and ambitions that crowd into the very Lord's hour of the Lord's Day?  
—And what of the burden of guilt that keeps out the light of God's love?
  - C. How many will yield to the tyranny of tobacco before they reach home, or immediately thereafter?
    - 1. Hunters in the dry autumn woods, deprived of their smokes at the gate, are back within two hours, pleading for relief.
    - 2. No human tyrant could boss as many Americans as completely as the cigaret does.
  - D. Drink—only a mention as the next step.
    - 1. I want to be free to drink or not to drink—I want my neighbor to be the same.
    - 2. The way to remain free is to say “no.”
  - E. Society yields to the tyranny of the dance and the card game.  
—College parties, where constructive imagination should be present, follow a slavish pattern.
  - F. Boy-girl relationships tyrannized by customs of disrespect and familiarity.

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1. The individual is left hardly free to choose his own conduct.
2. Genuine choice is a struggle against the pressure of what "everybody's doing."

Be free, and stay free.

### II. NOT USING YOUR FREEDOM FOR A CLOAK OF MALICIOUSNESS. That destroys freedom.

- A. Freedom of speech can become malicious slander.
- B. Freedom of religion can become indifference and freedom from religion.
- C. Freedom from want can become slavery to property.
- D. Freedom from fear can become complacent slavery.
- E. The real danger lies in liberty's becoming license.

In every case mentioned, the slavery has grown out of misuse of freedom.

- F. Illustration—The dairyman's freedom-loving heifer finds herself in quicksand, where she can't move at all.
- G. One thoughtless act in an hour of freedom can fashion a yoke for time and eternity.

The way to stay free.

### III. AS *SERVANTS OF GOD*.

- A. The only real freedom lies in choosing voluntarily the will of God—any other course destroys freedom and destroys self.
- B. Read Romans 6:15-23.  
"Ye cannot serve God and Mammon" (Matt. 6:24)—it is impossible likewise to serve neither. You will serve some god!
- C. "Ye are not your own. Ye are bought with a price" (I Cor. 6:19, 20).

The "servant" is *Doulos*—a slave bought and paid for.

**CONCLUSION** — If the Son [who purchased you] shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

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YOU'RE GOD'S MAN

(I Peter 5:1-5; Acts 20:28-31)

INTRODUCTION — An elder's request for help in understanding his work brings letters that become a book.

*"Pete, You're God's Man."* — Not only God's man, but God's partner in the ministry of Psalm 23.

You have not been given an honorary degree; you've been given a job, and what a great one!

Pastors and assistants!

I. *WHAT IS THE JOB?*

— Pastors-shepherds as seen in Psalm 23. The concept is hard to understand, because we don't see the prototype.

A. Feeds.

*Psalm 23*  
"Maketh me to lie  
down in green  
pastures"

*I Peter 5*  
"Feed the flock  
of God"

*Acts 20*  
"Feed the church  
of God"

B. Leads.

"Leadeth me beside  
still waters"

"Being examples to  
the flock"

"Take heed to  
yourselves"

C. Protects.

"Restoreth my soul"  
—"in the presence of  
enemies"

Take heed to the flock  
"Grievous wolves"

D. Directs.

"Guides in paths of  
righteousness"

Taking the oversight

"The Spirit has made  
you overseers."

"Apt to teach" — "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." — "Holding fast the faithful word . . . to exhort and convince" (Tit. 1:9).

Why do we not have more detailed job descriptions? They wouldn't always fit. The job description needs to be developed by the elders for the congregation.

II. HOW IS IT TO BE DONE?

- A. Not of constraint, but willingly. (They were already elders.) —“If a man desire the office of a bishop he desireth a good work” (I Tim. 3:1). The Lord’s army is made up of volunteers.
- B. Not for (money), but of a ready mind.  
John 10:11-14, contrasts the hireling and shepherd.
- C. Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples. Beware the Diotrefes-Boanerges syndrome. (Young people asked an elder, 84, to talk to them about dating! —An elder exercising his authority!)

III. WHO IS TO DO IT?

Qualifications are just that—the person for the job.

- A. Character—positive: blameless, one-woman man, sober, good behavior, hospitable.  
—negative: wine, striker, greedy, brawler, covetous, self-willed.
- B. Ability.  
Aptitude—apt to teach, vigilant, orderly.  
Experience—rules well his own house, not a novice, well reported, given to hospitality.
- C. Equipment—good name and good wife.

IV. WHY? —Compare I Peter 5:6-9. It is for your life!

- A. January 1975 *Reader’s Digest* has “A Psychiatrist Looks at Pro Football.” He was employed by the San Diego Chargers to improve their performance. He came up with a personality profile for every position, and applies it generally: “Appropriateness of success and happiness.” —But the Chargers still lost their games!  
—And arguing about the qualifications for office hasn’t done much to improve their performance among our churches. What then?
- B. By contrast—  
Young mother lifts the riding mower off a little boy’s foot—she had to!

CONCLUSION — So I Peter 1:6-11 —With men it is impossible; with God all things are possible!



## AN OLD GRAD REMEMBERS HIS TEACHER

(Commencement)

(II Peter 1:12-18; 3:17, 18)

INTRODUCTION — Consider your college yearbook:

- A. You will look it over many times, with enriched meaningfulness.
- B. Suppose that you had a complete record of lifelong ministry, related to student days.
- C. The Apostle Peter had such an album of memories, and shares some of it.

### I. RECRUITMENT (John 1:40-42).

- A. It wasn't exactly a college recruiting tour that Jesus made to Judea, but it turned out that way for Simon.
- B. The active recruiter was brother Andrew.
- C. Jesus set forth the possibilities.
  - 1. He saw what Simon was, a person, the natural product of a family. — There was danger that Simon might be satisfied with that, not seeing need.
  - 2. He declared what Simon could be, by the influence of Christ: "Cephas." — There was danger that he might be discouraged, not seeing possibilities.

### II. REGISTERING (Luke 5:1-11).

- A. The seaside encounter and call led Peter to leave his family business and sign with Jesus as a full-time student.
- B. In the event we see what brought Teacher and student together. It spells LORD.
  - Leadership (in Jesus) and following (in Peter).
    - The request for a pulpit-boat, supplied.
  - Oversight and obedience.
    - The ridiculous demand to resume fishing in the daytime, submitted to.
  - Reward and recognition.
    - Boatloads of fish, and acknowledged "Lord."
  - Direction and discipleship.
    - "Thou shalt catch men," an invitation immediately accepted.

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### III. RECITATION (Matt. 16:13-23) AND TESTING.

- A. The merit-award recitation, confessing Christ (vv. 13-18).
  - 1. "Who do men say I am?" The student must know what's going on.
  - 2. "Who do you say I am?" The student comprehends and is committed.
  - 3. The student at the head of the class.
    - a. Information came from the right source.
    - b. The honor name (Cephas, Peter) is conferred.
- B. The failed test, professing his own mastery of the subject (vv. 21-24).
  - 1. The subject matter (suffering, death, resurrection) was difficult.
  - 2. The student failed to comprehend, and resisted.
  - 3. The resistance became a tacit denial of Jesus' Lordship.
  - 4. The student at the foot of the class.
    - a. Information came from the wrong source.
    - b. The rebuke fitted the seriousness of the error.

### IV. REVIEW (Matt. 17:1-8).

- A. The transfiguration re-emphasized the glory of Christ.
- B. Peter's proposal of three "tabernacles" revealed again his faulty comprehension.
- C. The divine "Hear Him" reemphasized the authority of Christ.

### V. THE NIGHT OF THE SENIOR BANQUET

- A. Competition over "who is most likely to succeed."
  - 1. Then the Teacher started shining shoes!
  - 2. This must not be! "Then you have no part with me."  
"Then give me the full treatment."
- B. Warning that all would be ashamed of the Teacher.
  - 1. "Others perhaps, but not I," Peter professed (of himself).
    - 1. "You especially," Jesus warned.
- C. Puzzling and depressing predictions; then a prayer session in a park.

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1. "Watch while I pray," Jesus requested; but Peter and the others slept.
  2. A band of terrorists came to take Jesus. Peter used his switchblade on one of them, but Jesus patched the fellow up!
  3. Jesus let the blackguards take Him away, and Peter stumbled along at a distance.
- D. There was a trumped-up trial in the priestly palace, Peter trying to be not too uncomfortable.
1. "Hey, you're one of His men!" "Not me!" came the automatic, scared, defensive.
  2. "Sure you are!" Is a scared liar going to *confess* immediately to the repeated charge? Rather, he who will tell a lie will swear to it!
  3. The cock's shrill morning cry pierced Peter's ears and his heart. He crumbled and fled!

## VI. REINSTATEMENT (John 21:1-17).

- A. Resurrection day provided Peter a brief encounter with the Lord (Luke 24:34).
- B. Fuller conversation came later in Galilee.
1. A night's fruitless fishing was followed by another miraculous catch, at Jesus' direction.
  2. Seven disciples breakfasted on grilled fish sandwiches with Jesus; then questions to Peter, and answers without boast or profession:  
"Do you have more God-like love for Me than these others do (as you have boasted before)?"  
"I'm really fond of You." "Then feed My sheep."  
"But do you have that God-like love for Me?"  
"I like You a lot!" "Then tend My lambs."  
"Do you really like Me as you say?"  
"You know everything; You know I like You!"  
"Then feed My lambs."
- C. Jesus addressed Peter again as Simon; but He still had work for him to do. (Neither Peter nor we have to be perfect for the Lord to use us. We must be willing.)

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### VII. COMMENCEMENT (Acts 2).

- A. The Holy Spirit made the introductions, and Peter was salutatorian.
- B. His address a bold affirmation (confession) of Christ:
  - 1. Jesus of Nazareth was approved of God but rejected and slain by you (v. 22).
  - 2. God raised Him from the dead. Prophecy had shown that it would happen (vv. 24-35).
  - 3. God has made Him Lord and Christ (v. 36).
  - 4. You are to repent, and be baptized in the name of the One you killed, so your sins may be forgiven (v. 38).
- C. The church began with that commencement.

### VIII. POST-GRADUATE WORK.

(He did not cease to be a student after he graduated.)

- A. Peter's ministry was always confession of Christ; never more profession of his own faith.
- B. At the healing of the lame man at the Temple: "You killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead" (Acts 3:15).
- C. Before the Council when it tried to silence him: "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth doth this man stand before you whole . . . neither is there any other name . . . wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4:10,12).
- D. Again before the Council: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew. Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a prince and a Savior" (Acts 5:30, 31).
- E. "They ceased not to . . . preach Jesus as the Christ."
- F. In the house of Cornelius: "[Christ] is Lord of all!" (Acts 10:36).

### CONCLUSION —

Peter turns from remembering to admonishing:

- A. Beware lest ye also . . . be led from your own steadfastness (as I was, in denying).
- B. How can we be safe? "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."
- C. "To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen."

PREACHING THROUGH I JOHN

FOR OUR SINS

(I John 1:5—2:3)

INTRODUCTION —

Sin is not a popular subject, and it is going by many names, but the thing that used to be called sin is wrecking the world, life by life.

I. SIN IS A REALITY.

A. "If we say we have no sin . . ."

1. A tendency to sin is in the nature of man.
2. Perhaps the grosser sins crying for expression, and finding it too oft.
3. Perhaps the subtler sins of selfishness and pride.

B. "If we say we have not sinned . . ."

1. Shall we look into the dark recesses of every conscience?
2. Can we say we have taken every advantage of our opportunities before God?
3. In the Sermon on the Mount we see the spiritual Xray probing innermost ills.

C. Shall we add "If we say we cannot sin . . ."?

1. Captain Hazael replies to Elisha's prediction of his treachery against his king, "Is thy servant a dog, that I should do this thing?" (II Kings 8:13).
2. As Simon Peter, "All men may be offended in Thee, but I never" (Matt. 26:33).
3. General Braddock dies in Washington's arms, sighing, "Who would have thought it?"

III. IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS . . .

A. No one is left out.

1. John includes himself, thus rebuking those who sit in judgment.
2. Paul says "pray for us" (I Thess. 5:25)—each must pray for other, and Christ for all.
3. The book is written to Christians, and not to sinners of the world.

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- B. There is the modern idea that a sense of guilt is not wholesome.
  - 1. Explains wrong actions as left-overs of animal ancestry, or unavoidable result of unfortunate heredity or environment.
  - 2. The result is rampant, unbridled sin.
  - 3. Amoral or immoral, the result is the same.
  - 4. In Christians it becomes the careless, "continue in sin, that grace may abound" (Rom. 6:1).
- C. There is the other extreme, seen in "St." Augustine, spiritually lashing himself for trivial offenses of long ago. — This becomes the attitude of hopelessness.

### III. HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST TO FORGIVE US.

- A. Pardon is the only hope.
  - 1. We can't plead "not guilty."
  - 2. We can't bear the just punishment.
- B. The blood of Jesus Christ His son cleanses us from *every* sin.
  - 1. In this is the limitless cost of our offenses.
  - 2. In it also is the personal application of His sacrifice to each sin.
- C. We have an Advocate (one standing alongside) with the Father.
  - 1. "He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).
  - 2. He that is without sin is not casting stones.
- D. He is the propitiation for our sins.
  - 1. Atonement — the only possible payment.
  - 2. Sin-offering — the one perfect, complete, and eternal sacrifice.
  - 3. Means of appeasement.
  - 4. Reconciliation — "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (II Cor. 5:19).
  - 5. Propitiatory — the Mercy seat, presence of God among His people.

CONCLUSION — And not for ours only, but for the whole world. How shall He become their Advocate? Through us! "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. 10:8).

PREACHING THROUGH I JOHN  
FELLOWSHIP IN LOVE  
(I John 3:1, 2, 11-18; 4:7-12, 16-21)

INTRODUCTION —

- A. John presents Christian fellowship as a strong cord of three braided strands:
- (1) Fellowship in light — the truth of Christ — doctrinal.
  - (2) Fellowship in life — the way of Christ — moral.
  - (3) Fellowship in love — the care of Christ — interpersonal.

We deal today with the third strand.

- B. By definition and language we recognize three “loves” — romantic, affectionate, and godly. An enrichment of the Greek language was necessary to express God-like love. The word chosen was *agapé*.

- C. There are two distinct postures in fellowship:

1. Face to face, as noted especially in David and Jonathan.
2. Shoulder to shoulder, as noted especially in Paul and Timothy. We deal with both.

I. WE RECEIVE GOD’S LOVE TOGETHER (shoulder to shoulder).

- A. It is godly love, in the divine nature that could not be known until God sent His Son (John 3:16).

- B. It is first love.

1. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (4:10).
2. He who interprets love as some other person’s responsibility toward him has missed the whole point of God’s initiative.

- C. It is inclusive love, shed abroad to the whole world.  
— Who, then, are we to be particular with the distribution of our love?

- D. It is love that acknowledges: “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” (3:1).

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- E. It is self-forgetful, sacrificial love: "He laid down his life for us" (3:16). — Matthew 9 tells of a series of incidents in which Jesus' acts of mercy were met with skepticism and scorn; yet He continued to give Himself unflinchingly, because He saw the needs of the people and had compassion on them.

II. WE RESPOND TO GOD'S LOVE TOGETHER

(shoulder to shoulder).

- A. We love (Him), because He first loved us.
- B. We enjoy the removal of fear.
  - 1. We are not terrorized by God's presence nor fearful in the presence of men.
  - 2. Thus we are safe for others to be around. It is typically the frightened animal, or man, that is dangerous.
- C. We are equipped with boldness in the day of trial.
  - 1. We may speak freely of Christ, as did Peter and John (Acts 3, 4).
  - 2. We may sing while persecuted, as did the martyrs of Roman oppression.
- D. We are under obligation to continue in love.
  - Revelation 2:4 rebukes those who "left their first love," betraying Christ as the object of their love, and shaming Christ by slacking their devotion.
- E. We are exhorted not to love the (anti-Christ) world.

III. WE REFLECT GOD'S LOVE IN RELATION TO ONE ANOTHER (face to face, especially).

- A. Since God so loved us, we are to love one another.
- B. We thwart love when we act as Cain, whose works were evil (3:12).
  - 1. The fellowship in moral behavior having been broken, the fellowship in love couldn't stand the strain.
  - 2. When tempted to be viciously critical, look within. What are you trying to cover or excuse?
- C. We express love in material ways (3:16-18).
  - 1. Verbal expressions are not enough; deeds establish the truth of words.



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2. Love is generous with what it has, though that may be little (II Cor. 8:1-5).
3. Love lays down its life for the beloved (3:16; John 15:13).
  - a. The "laying down" may be acceptance of death, as Christ on the cross.
  - b. It may be the daily bestowal of time, rights, etc., as Christ in ministry. "I would be giving and forget the gift."
- D. We accept love from those who love the Lord, and love us for His sake.
  1. God sought, even required, the love of His people (Deut. 6:5).
  2. Jesus, as Lord, required the love of His disciples (Matt. 10:37).
  3. So we also need to be loved, and others need to give the love we accept.
  4. The love given and accepted is sometimes imperfect.
    - a. (See the Greek or a careful translation of John 21:15-17: "Do you have God's kind of love for Me?" "I am fond of You.")
    - b. The Lord still uses our imperfect love to His purposes if we allow it.
- E. We do not limit our love to the circle of those who love us.
  1. God requires our love to His people, and He has some who do not love us.
  2. Jesus commanded, "Love your enemies" (Matt. 5:43-48).
  3. God loves us beyond our deserving; we are to be like Him.
  4. Some of His people love us beyond our deserving; we can be like them.

**CONCLUSION** — An important element in any fellowship is the opportunity for a deepening and broadening acquaintance. God is love; let's enlarge our acquaintance with Him!

## NOT EVERY SPIRIT

(I John 4:1-3)

### INTRODUCTION —

- A. Burma missionary's story of communist spies in Burma.  
— The city did not want to be told that there was danger, or that its respected citizens were spies. It was prelude to disaster.
- B. Thus the church in this day shudders from those who would warn them of anti-Christian elements.
  - 1. We are not saying that all those who are not completely Christian are deliberately designing its destruction—that is the danger.
  - 2. Yet it is as dangerous to be unwarned of spiritual misleaders.

### I. BELIEVE NOT (TRUST NOT) EVERY SPIRIT.

(*Pisteuo*—“to place confidence in, believe, trust.”)

- A. False prophets do, and will, exist; folk should be warned against them.
- B. The warning is not toward suspicion, but toward intelligent evaluation.
- C. The nature of the false prophets.
  - 1. Those who would destroy the Messiahship of Christ. Here is a touchy issue with our Jewish neighbors.
  - 2. Humanists—the term is more exact and descriptive than “modernist.”
    - a. Humanism not as anti-Christian, but humanism disguised as “Christianity.”
    - b. Human Bible; human Christ; human salvation; human hope; human development.

### II. THE DIVINE TEST—“Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in flesh . . .”

- A. Humanists in religion are to be known more for what they do not say than for what they do. A consistent omission of reference to cardinal facts of the Gospel is at least a good hint that they don't believe them.
- B. Course for a Young People's Conference on Life of Jesus says, “Those young people who find intellectual

## PREACHING THROUGH I JOHN

difficulty in accepting the divine generation of Jesus should be allowed to study him as the son of a normal Jewish family." — This course never mentions Christ. It makes only vague reference to the "survival of Jesus" — no clear declaration of His resurrection.

- C. Such is suicide for Church of Christ.
  - 1. Having denied every head except Him, we must not destroy Him!
  - 2. Having rejected every book but the Bible, we cannot afford to destroy that.

### III. BELIEVERS ARE OF GOD. DISBELIEVERS ARE NOT. Two distinct conditions.

- A. This is a basis of understanding, and is not inconsiderate.
- B. The Jew resents this idea, and tries to destroy it.
  - 1. He has edited the Bible to remove historic references to Jewish opposition to Christ.
  - 2. Here is real danger to neighborly relationships; let him reject Christ if he must, be he shall not be allowed to destroy Him again!
  - 3. If the Christian world wakes up in future generations to find that the Jew has robbed him of all that is best in his religion in exchange for a false "brotherhood," it will not be good for the Jew.
- C. The Jew has nothing to fear from the New Testament Church. — His bitterest enemies are political and non-Christian.
- D. Nothing is to be gained by confusing the issue.
  - A Christian preacher leads a VBS class in visiting a Jewish synagogue, where the rabbi shows the elements of Jewish worship. Preacher closes the session with prayer, in Christ's name. Rabbi expresses appreciation that Christians engage in Christian prayer.

IV. AND CONCLUSION — Love toward all is the fruit of real faith. Dr. Shelton gives his life in Tibet to the people of that country—not because they are his brothers in Christ, but because they are not!

PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE  
HELPING GOD'S SERVANT  
(III John)

INTRODUCTION — "What did I do?" It's a question often asked by one who is credited with some good deed or charged with some crime, when the deed was performed by another.

- A. Accessories to the fact are dealt with by law as responsible for what is done.
  - 1. So we try the "lookout man" or getaway driver or hideout helper in a bank robbery.
  - 2. In similar fashion the sports statistician records "assists" as well as goals.
- B. Second John and Third John deal with "assists" to religious teachers.
  - 1. Second John warns against encouraging false teachers.
  - 2. Third John commends Gaius for helping and encouraging traveling teachers of truth.

I. WHOM SHOULD WE HELP?

- A. Teachers of truth.
  - 1. Truth is tested by acknowledgment of Christ in the flesh (I John 4:1-3).
  - 2. Truth is tested also by the nature of one's "walk."
- B. Shepherds rather than hirelings (v. 7).
  - 1. They do not deal with godliness as a way of gain (II Tim. 6:5, 6).
  - 2. Undemanding, yet dependent on the provision of God through His people.
- C. Demetrius cited as an example (v. 12).
  - 1. Recommended by those who know him.
  - 2. Recommended by comparison of his words and works with the Word of God.
  - 3. Recommended by the apostle.

II. WHY SHOULD WE HELP?

- A. Because the servant needs help.
  - 1. (Fund raising organization says it won't raise a dollar; it will show your people how to raise all they need.)
  - 2. So the servant of God cannot do the work that needs

## PREACHING THROUGH III JOHN

to be done; he can lead, teach, and encourage to all that is required.

3. The newcomer and stranger especially needs help, as one vulnerable, perhaps lonely.

B. Because the Christian needs to give the help (v. 8):  
"Fellowhelpers to the truth."

1. "Where our missionaries go, we go with them."
2. A church is blessed in calling a young preacher, not for what the young man could do for them, but for what they could do for him. Together they grew!

### III. HOW SHOULD WE HELP?

A. In a manner worthy of God.

1. Because he is God's servant and you love God, you help him with your best.
2. Because you are God's servant, you act as a representative of God.
3. (Comparison: when the Avon lady calls, her respect for her employer will make her act like a lady; and the customer's respect for Avon will make her treat the representative kindly.)
4. How much more royally a Christian should deal with God's servant!

B. In encouragement for his service to another.

1. "Receive" and "bring them forward on their journey."  
We are not the only ones they need to serve.
2. Christians cannot afford to be selfish.

C. In thoughtful reflection of the Golden Rule.

1. Cooperate in what we ask him to do.
2. Express appreciation for conscientious effort.
3. Accept and benefit from the teaching and service he renders (Compare I Thess. 3:8).
4. Be thoughtful and considerate to his family. He can't accomplish his work if they are unhappy.

**CONCLUSION** — You'll meet him later, at a convention or at the judgment. Let him greet you warmly, saying, "You helped me to whatever accomplishment I have made in the ministry!"

Philemon 7: "The hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother."

## JUDE SPEAKS FOR RESTORATION

(Jude)

### INTRODUCTION —

- A. Here is restoration: (1) Something so inherently right that departure from it becomes wrong; (2) A departure so substantive that it demands correction; (3) The acceptance of responsibility for making the correction; and (4) Implementation of the renewal.
- B. All this we find in Jude's one-chapter book dealing with the theme, "Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (v. 3, ASV).

### I. LOOK AT WHAT IS GIVEN (vv. 1-3).

#### A. The Giver is God.

1. He is the Father, revealed in Old and New Testaments.

2. He is wholly good, and mindful of His children.

3. He has spoken, variously at various times, but finally through His Son (Heb. 1:1).

#### B. The recipients are "the saints," those who are committed to His cause (v. 1).

1. They are called by the Gospel.

2. They are beloved of God, having received the gift of His Son (John 3:16).

3. They are kept, or preserved, by the power and for the sake of Christ.

#### C. The gift is "the faith" — that which is believed by those who are Christ's.

1. It is *salvation*; that which saves becomes the identifying mark of those saved.

2. It is the common salvation, available alike to all mankind in every time and every clime. Those who are one *with* Christ become *one IN* Christ.

3. It is impossible that there be another faith delivered, as it is impossible that there be another Christ, or only begotten Son, given.

## PREACHING THROUGH JUDE

### II. LOOK OUT FOR DEPARTURES (vv. 4-16).

—Much of the New Testament is restorationist here.

A. Moral defections, “turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.”

1. Romans 6 warns against continuing in sin.

2. I Corinthians 5 and 6 decry immorality among the saints.

B. Doctrinal wanderings, “denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1. I John 4 warns of those who deny that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.

2. Galatians warns against mixing the authority of Moses with that of Christ.

3. I Corinthians 1–4 warns of challenging the Lordship of Christ through loyalties to men.

C. Personal vagaries, especially in the rebellious, quarrelsome spirit—

1. Despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities (v. 8).

2. Murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts (v. 16).

3. Verse 11 introduces a terrible trio:

a. Cain, whose jealousy led to murder.

b. Balaam, whose greed led to betraying Israel.

c. Kore (Korah), whose prideful ambition stirred rebellion against Moses.

—There was not an atheist in the bunch; all were active in the fellowship of folk worshiping the true God; but they had a vicious spirit.

### III. LOOK INWARD TO YOUR OWN RESPONSIBILITIES (vv. 17-23).

A. The spotlight turns from “them” (the defectors) to “you” (the readers).

1. “You” may have wandered and need to be restored—thus said Old Testament prophets.

2. “You” may see a brother wandering, and need to restore him (Gal. 6:1).

3. “You” (all of us) need to be warned and protected against wandering (II Pet. 3:17).

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### B. Jude's admonitions:

1. Remember the warnings given earlier by Christ and the apostles (vv. 17-19).
  - a. Don't be misled into following the defectors.
  - b. Don't lose your confidence in Christ.
2. Reenforce your faith (vv. 20, 21).
  - a. Build yourself up; grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ (II Pet. 3:18).
  - b. Pray, both for yourself and for others.
  - c. Live in God's love.
  - d. Grow in eternal hope. (Restoration is a goal, not an accomplishment. It is a chart to follow, not a log of finished journey.)
3. Relate to fellowmen in the experience (vv. 22, 23).
  - a. Have compassion and reach to save.
  - b. Snatch the sinners from burning, but cautiously.
  - c. The "restoration plea" must be a *plea, pleading, saying please*.

## IV. LOOK UP, TO THE SOURCE OF POWER AND JUDGMENT (vv. 24, 25).

- A. Jude has set forth problems and responsibilities too great for us. — Good! Now we are where God wants us, depending on Him.
- B. God can keep from stumbling.
  1. Into excesses, of sin, or of abhorrence of the sinner.
  2. Into self-satisfaction that we have not so wandered.
- C. We honor Him by allowing Him to do for us and in us what He wishes.

## CONCLUSION —

In a Christ-centered God-consciousness is the fine balance of humility and confidence that belongs to restorers at their best. The faith once for all delivered is not our invention, so we have nothing of which to be proud. It is God's provision, so we have nothing of which to be ashamed. His be the glorious reign, forever!