

Transcripts of
**ENEMIES in the
CHURCH**

A Lecture Series by R.J. Rushdoony



R.J. RUSHDOONY

(1916–2001)

Rev. R.J. Rushdoony (1916–2001), was a leading theologian, church/state expert, and author of numerous works on the application of Biblical law to society. He started the Chalcedon Foundation in 1965. His Institutes of Biblical Law (1973) began the contemporary theonomy movement which posits the validity of Biblical law as God's standard of obedience for all. He therefore saw God's law as the basis of the modern Christian response to the cultural decline, one he attributed to the church's false view of God's law being opposed to His grace. This broad Christian response he described as "Christian Reconstruction." He is credited with igniting the modern Christian school and homeschooling movements in the mid to late 20th century. He also traveled extensively lecturing and serving as an expert witness in numerous court cases regarding religious liberty. Many ministry and educational efforts that continue today, took their philosophical and Biblical roots from his lectures and books.

Learn more about R.J. Rushdoony by visiting: <https://chalcedon.edu/founder>

Enemies in the Church (1)

The Enemy

R.J. Rushdoony

Let us worship God.

“It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord and to sing praises unto Thy name oh most high, to show forth Thy lovingkindness in the morning and Thy faithfulness every night.”

Let us pray. Our Father we give thanks unto thee, thy faithfulness and thy loving kindness has ever been manifested toward us. Thou art good to us who so often cannot be good to ourselves. Teach us to trust in thee. Give us grace day by day to walk in the confidence that because our times are in thy hands who doest all things well, the beginning and the ending are thine ordination and thy mercy and grace unto us. Bless us now as we give ourselves to the study of thy Word. In Christ’s name, amen.

Our scripture is from the Epistle of Jude verses 1-4, our subject ‘The Enemy.’ Jude 1-4, Jude is the very short book just before Revelation.

“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: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. 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. 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 Epistle of Jude is a general letter by a man who identifies himself as the servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James. Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3 identify Jude, together with James, as brothers of Jesus. A scholar, JE Huther, said that the Jude, (or Judas, it’s the same name) who wrote this epistle was one of the four brothers and not cousins of Jesus is probable. In fact, Huther went on to say it is beyond any considerable doubt.

So, as with James, we have hear one of the four brothers of our Lord writing a letter. This is a brief and an obscure letter; that is it’s not widely known or studied, but its purpose is an important one. False teachers were perverting the faith, and Jude of necessity spoke out. By identifying himself as Jude, the brother of James, he indirectly notifies the reader that he writes with authority as the brother of James and Jesus. He does this not to gain personal prestige but to stress the urgency of his message. Those whom he addresses are the “... sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.” These are the elect of God, persons who will heed Jude’s warning. They have been made holy by God’s grace and preserved from falling away by Jesus Christ because they are the call of God.

He greets them thus: “mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.” This triple benediction is very Biblical; we encounter it throughout the Bible. In verse one the triple description is sanctified, preserved, and called. Jude not only wants this rich blessing on the saints, but he wants it multiplied. We must not take this benediction as a merely formal and courteous one; the churches were facing a very serious problem of infiltration by alien groups who saw in the success of Christianity an opportunity to capture a vigorous faith for their very different purposes. True, it was a persecuted group, but

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they intended to make it respectable. It was regarded as beneath one's dignity intellectually, they were going to make it respectable intellectually.

Throughout church history infiltration has been a common problem to Christianity. Very early, as here, it was Gnosticism, later; Albigensianism, hellenic philosophies, humanism, modernism, and much, much more. These alien faiths have had in common the desire to merge into Christianity with a façade of agreement while working to remake the faith into a radically alien one. Jude felt an urgent necessity to alert Christians everywhere against this threat to the common salvation. Very often the infiltrating groups retained a façade that is very close to Christian. After all, Barthianism, or neoorthodoxy as it has been called, seemed to be saying the same thing as Christians have over the centuries, and as the Bible teaches, but they did not mean the same thing by it and wherever they succeeded they ate out the heart and the meaning of the faith.

The common salvation, Jude says, must be defended. The common or general salvation is one known to all. Jesus Christ, God incarnate had made atonement for the sins of His people, this they all knew, but now men were promoting supposedly new insights into the faith and higher truths. "Therefore," he says, "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." Men were determined to improve on the faith and modernize Jesus to conform to contemporary science and philosophy. This same effort was the Gnostic movement and it sought to take over Christianity; lock, stock, and barrel. Gnosticism represented the new and higher learning of its day, it is now almost incomprehensible and one can only marvel at the credulity of learned men. Contemporary philosophy and evolutionary science bears a strong resemblance to ancient Gnosticism, and perhaps in a century or so people will wonder that anyone could believe so absurd and complex a system.

The Christian faith needs no improving, no new revelations, it is complete: "once..." and for all time "delivered unto the saints." We must "...earnestly contend," Jude says, to defend and preserve that faith. "For there are certain men crept in unawares..." he says. They have insinuated their way into the church as supposed leaders and wise men, who in reality want to pervert the faith. These are men, who in God's predestination, were ordained to this evil purpose and to condemnation.

"They are ungodly men turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness..." says Jude. And this can only be done by antinomianism, by abandoning the law of God, and this marked the older Gnosticism, and also the new. It is the beginning of every great apostasy from the faith. This 'lasciviousness' is identified for us in I Peter 4:3 and II Peter 2:19. It was simply a contempt of the law in the name of a higher spirituality, and this claim to a higher spirituality then marked gnosticism as it does now.

The faith is not an evolving matter, it was delivered unto the saints, Jude says, in its full and final form with Jesus Christ. The growth of the faith is in application, not in content. The faith doesn't grow because we get new revelations; it grows because we apply the full and finished revelation to our lives and to our world. In application, the believer obeys and serves his Lord. He does not develop or alter the content of the faith, such men are: "...denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Jude says.

The Gnostics saw themselves as the truly enlightened ones, as more spiritual than they whose faith was simply to believe and to obey. The Gnostics were very good at confusing people by a pretentious form of learning. If I were to pass out the texts of some of the Gnostic writings, after two or three sentences you would probably give up. It isn't worth the effort to try to make sense of what they're saying, but they were good at bewildering people who didn't have their learning and their background professionally. Gnosticism so thoroughly adapted itself to the thought of its age that it died with it in its then existing form. We still have it all around us in new age thinking and a great many other varieties. Then,

as now, orthodox Christianity, Biblical Christianity, has been thoroughly out of tune with the wisdom of its day. This has been usually true over the centuries, and it is true now. The faithful believer has commonly been seen as an impediment to the progress of the faith, and he has commonly been treated with contempt. Jude's letter is a general warning against all attempts to improve upon Christianity by making it more palatable to modern man.

Jude's warning, thus, has relevance to more than a passing movement of his day. The fallen world order hates Jesus Christ and His people, it has always done whatever is possible to capture and revise biblical faith. Jude's letter is a warning against this enemy, an enemy he face then, and which generation after generation has faced again in one form after another. Let us pray.

Our Lord and our God we thank Thee that we have been warned against these false and 'higher' spiritualities. We thank thee that thy word is written so that he who runs can read. Give us grace to give heed to thy word, to know that thy law word is binding always, that it is thy righteousness, thy justice, that it gives to us the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, of His atonement, and of His grace and mercy. Make us joyful in thy word, in Christ's name, amen.

ENDNOTES:

1. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Ps 92:1–2). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.
2. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Jud 1–4). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.
3. See Joh. Ed. Huther. Critical And Exegetical Handbook To The General Epistles Of James And John. Translated by Paton J. Gloag and Rev. Clarke H. Irwin. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1882.

Examples of Apostasy

R.J. Rushdoony

Let us worship God.

“LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.”
“I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.”

Let us pray.

Oh Lord our God we thank thee that we are privileged to be thy people, to be members of thy family, the household of faith. Teach us day by day to walk as thy faithful children, to know that thy hand is upon us for good, and in everything to give thanks unto Thee. This morning again, O Lord we come to submit ourselves to thy word, for thy word is truth. Grant that by thy word we see our place, our time, and our duty in terms of Thee. In Christ's name, amen.

Our scripture this morning is Jude verses five through seven. Jude is the brief letter just before Revelation written by our Lord's brother. Our subject; Examples of Apostasy. Jude 5-7.

“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. 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. 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.”

Jude's concern in his brief letter is with the influx of alien faiths and influences into Christianity, into the church. Because we have today, as over the centuries, false and evil doctrines and religions masquerading as true Christianity, what Jude has to say is very important for us. Paul not only denounced all heresies, he also called attention to their errors. Jude's approach is different; he tells his readers you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once declared unto the saints. Before Jude, the other men, like Paul and John, had sharply and clearly defined the line between the faith and heresies. Now Jude says: “you have the truth, fight for it and defend its priority!”

In verse five Jude grimly reminds them that Israel had been miraculously delivered out of the land of Egypt. Israel's deliverance was a spectacular one, far more notable than was their own redemption as Christians. All the same, because Israel showed ingratitude and rebelliousness, God destroyed almost the whole nation. One miracle revealed another in Israel's years in the wilderness, but God still destroyed a carefully protected people because of their unbelief. Why should he spare the early church? They were equally, if not more, blessed. Obviously, this letter was written before the fall of Jerusalem, or else Jude would certainly have cited that as a great example of God's judgment on unbelief. His phrase: “though ye once knew this” is more accurately to be translated: “though you know all things, once and for all” they cannot plead ignorance, in other words. It was a temptation to say of the Hebrews who left Egypt that they were slaves and not as enlightened as the present generation. The problem, however, was not an intellectual one but a moral one. We always want to shift the nature of a problem onto ignorance, or inability to learn somehow, or not as [being as] learned, or anything but to

say it's a moral problem. Anyone can understand that!

It was a temptation to plead ignorance, to say of the Hebrews who left Egypt that they were slaves and not as enlightened as the present generation, but they could not do that, it was a moral failure. The people of the Exodus like the present generation trusted more in their own understanding than in the Lord. The new teachers who had entered the church in Jude's day, the Gnostics, stressed intellectual understanding, and denigrated moral issues as simplistic. They never saw a moral problem, rather intellectual ones, educational ones; ignorance of certain premises supposedly. Their writings in fact lacked moral content and were more metaphysical than ethical. The Lord had saved the people out of the land of Egypt, and this Israel had conveniently chosen to neglect, or to treat as their due because they were the chosen people. It is all too easy for Christians to see themselves as a chosen people who therefore deserve only the best from God when the calling of the elect is to serve God in the war against the city of man, the current Tower of Babel. Instead of realizing how much we owe God, we tend to think more of what God should give to us. Thus we become whiners instead of moral forces.

Jude's first example of ingratitude and apostasy is Israel after its deliverance from Egypt. Jude's second example is the company of the fallen angels. They refused to keep their first estate, or principality. Created by God for a high and holy place, they sought apparently more power. The reference in Romans 8:38 and Ephesians 1:21 are to angelic spheres of authority, to angelic spheres of service, and this dignity they forsook. In rebelling against God, they lost all their privileged status. The fallen angels did not remain in their proper place, or office, and they left their proper habitation. As a result, they are now in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. The emphasis here, however, is not on the fallen angels, but on Christians who may go astray. They are a more privileged group than were the Hebrews of the Exodus, and even the fallen Angels. Jude is thus saying in effect: "if these things can happen to them, why not to you? You are the most privileged people because of Jesus Christ."

Jude's third example is Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities of the plains. They were privileged to have so rich and fertile an area, well-watered and with a lush growth. These are set forth by God as examples of His judgment: "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire," Jude says. Two sins in particular are cited; giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh. The word 'fornication' in the original Greek covers more than sexual acts, although this is a part of the meaning, it means lasciviousness, blasphemous attitudes, and more. 'Strange flesh' has reference to homosexuality. The cities were wealthy, proud, and arrogant. It has been said of urban life that men there see more of man's work than God's work, and they accordingly become too prone to seeing man in independence from God, and with such a perspective they become ungrateful and apostate.

The Gnostics saw themselves as men who addressed the faith and advanced it because they were in harmony with the philosophy and science of their age. They were living, it was felt, in a golden era of mankind, with government, philosophy, science, technology, and human thought generally at its highest. For men to resist merging their simple, biblical faith into the highest of man's wisdom was for them absurd. Their thinking was like that of our time. Jude's requirement is simple: "ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." The thinkers of the city of man are contemptuous then, as they are now, of God's Revelation. They have their own word of truth.

The great scholar on Gnostic literature, Dr. Hans Jonas, not a Christian, wrote of the resemblance between Gnostic myth and the myth of Neo-Darwinian biology. So our science, in Dr. Jonas's eyes, is simply a form of Gnosticism. The mythology of Darwin has great prestige as against the Bible, this will us to understand what the early church faced. The whole array of science, philosophy, technology, this whole world of thought said: "You have to reinterpret everything you believe in terms of this body of knowledge or you will be fools." The wisdom of that era found the Christian revelation to be wanting.

Time has disposed of the wisdom of that era, but we face a new generation of self-styled wise men. This is why the letter of Jude is so timely, it gets to a problem that has plagued the church age after age, and is especially prevalent today.

Let us pray.

Our Father we thank thee for the words of Jude. We pray they may open our eyes to the foolishness of the world's wisdom around us when it seeks to erect itself above thee and thy word. Makes us faithful adherence to Jesus Christ and to thine enscriptured word, teach us so to walk day by day that guided by thy word, and by thy Spirit, we are in all things more than conquerors through Christ who loved us, in His name we pray, amen.

ENDNOTES:

1. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Ps 26:8). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.
2. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Ps 122:1). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.
3. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Jud 4–7). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Righteous Judgment

R.J. Rushdoony

Let us worship God.

“The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.”

“He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.”

“O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.”

Let us pray.

Oh Lord our God we come unto thee mindful of the greatness of our need, we do need thee every hour. We pray our Father that thou wouldst work in us that which thou pleases and give us grace to rejoice in Thee, even though thy will confounds our will. Make us joyful in The word that by thy Spirit we may behold wondrous things out of thy law. Guide us all the days of our life into faithfulness, into joyful service, and into communion and community in Christ. In His name we pray, amen.

Our Scripture this morning is Jude verses 8-16, our subject ‘Righteous Judgment,’ Jude 8-16.

“Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. 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. 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. 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. 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; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

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

Irreverence is the scene Jude now sites as basic to the ungodly. In fact in particular the sin of those who pretend to be true believers and are not. In verse eight, the Authorized Version, reads: “filthy dreamers” and ‘filthy’ is italicized which means it is not in the Greek original. But the word is used here implies a loss of reality of the sinful nature. Their dreaming, or false imagination, or fallen imagination, leads to first a contempt of the flesh, or of man’s humanity. They want to see man as far more than man.

Second, they despise dominion. Dominion; ‘kyriotēs’, from the word Lord, ‘kyrios’ in the Greek, refers

to angelic offices in a number of passages such as Ephesians 1:21, Colossians 1:16, and II Peter 2:10. These alien peoples in the church want authorities other than the God-given ones.

Third; 'dignities' refers to other authorities in the Biblical scheme of things, and they are despised by these enemies of the faith who speak evil of them. In verses nine and ten, we find a clear statement about the use of language which ties in very clearly with what James had to say about the tongue. When the archangel Michael was contending with the Devil about the body of Moses, and we know nothing about that episode, he did not dare make a railing accusation against the Devil, simply saying: "The Lord rebuke thee." Judgment is the prerogative of God, where God empowers us and requires us to render judgments, then we can do so. Otherwise, like Michael, we leave it to God. Very clearly, judgment is to be exercised only as God permits it, and Michael's restraint here is very telling and instructive.

It is a bit shocking for us in the namby-pamby twentieth century to go back to the end of the first century and the beginning of the second, at the time when the second generation of Christians, and some of the first, comprised the church. What we find was required at the communion service would make it virtually impossible for church members now to take communion. Because they were plainly told that if you dislike anyone here in the fellowship of Jesus Christ, and you think ill of them, or you are critical of them, you cannot take communion for God will bring His judgment upon you if you do. Now that's how strongly what Jude is talking about here was practiced by the early church. Not even Michael the archangel could criticize Satan, it was God's prerogative. God can condemn, and anyone whom God appoints through law-abiding channels to give judgment has a right to give judgment, but no-one else. Well the Gnostic element in the church was especially discernible because they were the fastest on the draw with a judgment about someone else.

In verses nine and ten we find a clear statement about the use of language which ties in clearly with what James had to say about the tongue. Michael's restraint in these verses is very telling, very instructive. The enemies of Christ who are within the church are very ready to speak evil of those things which they know not; their only source of knowledge is like that of animals, simply a physical one. They have no religious insight, and in their judgment on others: "...they corrupt themselves....," quite a statement! We are all sinners saved by grace, but if we judge one another what do we do? We corrupt ourselves Jude says, which is quite a statement.

In verse eleven, Jude says that such people run frantically and wildly in the very ways of Cain, Balaam, and Core. These three are examples of men who should have known the truth clearly but were totally wedded to error by their sin. Cain is a type of unrighteousness, Balaam of deceit and covetousness, and Core of rebellion against godly authority. Such people are against all godly authority because they refuse to acknowledge any authority except their own. Can you imagine what would happen to most Bible-believing churches today if they applied this standard, or the standard of the early church in the generation after the Apostles? You cannot partake if you harbor judgment and ill-will towards anyone else in the fellowship of Jesus Christ.

Well, all such are a blight on the church scene. Their presence at the church love-feasts, or dinners, is an ugly one. Apparently they fed themselves gluttonously, although unwilling to help. They were clearly like clouds without water, they were unfit to be regarded as at all giving nourishment, they were like a drought in the church. They were also, verse twelve tells us, dead trees: "...without fruit, twice dead..." because rootless. The reference to feeding themselves without fear is to Ezekiel 34:2,8, as pretended leaders they were to feed the flock, not to be parasites on it, which they were. In their self-importance they felt entitled to whatever they wanted.

I'm reminded of one man I knew when I was a student at the university who later went into the ministry

of a very prestigious church. And one of the first things he did was to have his secretary pass out to all the members a list of the things he wanted for Christmas, and before purchasing they were to check with the church secretary to make sure that no-one else had reserved that as their present. I'm happy to say that his misconduct in time put him out of the priesthood.

In verse thirteen, Jude continues his description of these pretenders to the faith. In their false claims to wisdom, they are comparable to: "Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame." They are thus a troublesome hindrance to the church; they are also like: "...wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." The reference is to dead heavenly bodies, lifeless and barren, which are visible in the sky but useless. That's an interesting verse to me because it tells you a great deal about the ability and observation of people at that time. They're not too many people now who can identify the planets and the stars at night. But in those days people could identify all the planets and hundreds upon hundreds of stars. And they could even discern, and this is what the verse refers to, that here and there it had to be some kind of dead asteroid or a star that was hurtling through space. Of course, there were no urban lights at night to cut the night vision, and in summertime people slept out on the flat roof-tops, and it was easy to learn the sky at night.

Then in verses fourteen and fifteen, Jude refers to a statement by Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who prophesied of these saying:

"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, 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. "

At this point is important to call attention to the fact that in verse nine we have a reference to Michael which appears only in an apocryphal work, the assumption of Moses, and here in verses fourteen and fifteen, a reference to Enoch which appears in the Book of Enoch, both apocryphal books. Was Jude quoting from them? Or rather, was not Jude citing two historical statements which were well-known and used by apocryphal writers also? We know that the apocryphal so-called 'gospels' did quote from the legitimate ones. Jude was citing a source used by others as well.

Jude then summarizes his views of these heretics. These are murmurers he says in verse sixteen, "...complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage." Their priorities are all man-centered. One scholar, JE Huther, noted that Jude depicts these intruders as teachers of the worst sort, and as destructive in nature. To quote him: "...these words indicate their emptiness, and the fact that being thus empty they are born along anywhither, and consequently are unsafe to follow." Interesting that quotation because of the use of a word we no longer use; 'anywhither.' 'Anywhere,' we would say. But at any rate, these are men whose goal is personal advantage. At this point it is important to contrast what Jude says here with what Michael said to Satan in verses nine and ten. Michael says to Satan simply "the Lord rebuke Thee." Whereas Jude very bluntly condemns the false teachers with strong language, we must recognize that Jude can do this because Jude by inspiration is speaking for God. God himself is rebuking these Gnostic teachers; Jude's words are more than his own. We, even more than Michael, must watch our tongue.

Jude calls attention to the evil character of these false leaders. First; they are grumblers, complainers, whose pretense to greater holiness is based upon their supposed sensitivity. Nothing pleases them against themselves. If you were to go back and read the surviving writings of these Gnostics, both those in the church and outside the church (and they both sounded the same) you would be amazed at their pretentiousness and their stupidity. They were deluging everyone with super-scientific, super-philosophical terminology that very few would ever be able to follow, and overwhelming them with

their supposed wisdom.

Second, then; these false leaders are malcontents whom nothing pleases because they believe nothing and they are determined to bring down the truth, to bring down the faith. Third, their soul guide is their passionate love of advantage. We must conclude then, righteous judgment as our Lord said in John 7:24, is necessary, it must be exercised by the leaders of the community and only upon a few occasions by the members also. Let us pray.

Our Father we give thanks unto thee for thy words through thy servant Jude. We would pray that thou wouldst burn these words upon our hearts, minds, and being. That our speech may be godly speech, that our tongue may be controlled by our faith. Guide us in the way that we should go, speak to us the word that we need, and make us strong in thy truth, in Christ's name, amen.

ENDNOTES:

1. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Ps 145:18–19). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.
2. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Ps 65:2). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.
3. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Jud 8–16). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.

The Battle

R.J. Rushdoony

Let us worship God.

“Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.”

“It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.”

“Oh taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the man that trusteth in Him.”

Let us pray.

Almighty God our heavenly Father we thank thee that Thou hast promised thy blessings to all who trust in thee. O Lord our God increase our faith, give us a day by day total trust and reliance on thee, that in all things we may learn to commit ourselves totally into thy keeping, to take hands-off our lives in the confidence that what thou hast begun Thou wilt accomplish. Bless us this day and by thy word and by thy Spirit speak to us the word that we need, empower us for thy service, in Christ's name, amen.

Our scripture is Jude verses seventeen to twenty-five our subject 'The Battle.'

“But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

Faced by false teachers, many in the church have been, and are today, easily discouraged. Some leave large denominations that are clearly astray, only to find that there are problems in smaller and reform-minded churches and groups. Their despairing attitude becomes: “what's the use?!” Jude now warns against this danger. What can they expect? Will the enemy lie down and die because they have come to the truth? Will he not in fact rage all the more? In verses seventeen through twenty, Jude reminds his readers that the Apostles predicted such a development. Jesus Christ has created a new human race by His atoning grace and resurrection, and by His regenerating power they are involved in the great of the ages. And it will not be settled at once, nor in their lifetime, nor in ours. Therefore, Jude says: “remember the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In verse eighteen he refers to ‘the last days,’ meaning thereby, as does every such reference, the time from Christ's resurrection to the general resurrection at the end of time. These are the last times in which all Christians live. These last times are marked, Jude says, by ‘mockers.’ Their purpose is to put down Christ, His disciples, and His people, by mockery. In verse fifteen, the word ‘ungodly’ is used four times to describe Christ's enemies. It is used here again in verse eighteen. History now sees that

mockery, a savage contempt and hostility to Christ and His people. Holiness is a separation to God, but the ungodly have their own form of separation to unholiness. These unholy people, verse nineteen says, having not the Spirit separate themselves to a purely sensual or physical existence. Meaning for them is radically personal, not cosmic, man-centered and not God-centered.

Jude tells his readers that is against this, they must grow and build themselves “on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit” he says in verse twenty. As against the self-righteousness of their enemies, they grow by prayer. Prayer is a recognition of our needs and of our dependence on the triune God. Knowing our sins and shortcomings we keep ourselves, verse twenty, “...in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” Our salvation is an act of mercy and grace on Christ’s part, and Jude reminds Christians of this fact. They must not presume on the Lord’s grace by assuming, once saved, that they are now a member of a deserving group, from the start to finish they are entirely dependent on the Lord’s grace and mercy.

In verse twenty-two Jude having spoken very plainly about the heretics, the false teachers, the trouble-makers, now makes a distinction. Some are not of the same sort as the others, but are rather redeemable, have compassion, and make a difference between them. This does not mean being less clear about their errors and sins. Like firemen, pull them out of the fire. As we do so we must be fearful of the contagion of sin. Thus, our kindness to them is not our indifference to their sin. “Hating even the garments spotted by the flesh,” verse twenty-three, refers to the care of someone with a contagious disease. Jude speaks of sin as a contagious disease. Our concern for their recovery does not blind us to the need of care, lest we be infected.

In verses twenty-four and twenty-five we have a superb benediction, much used over the generations, it tells us first that God preserves His own. He keeps us from falling. This is the doctrine of ‘the preservation of the saints.’ Second; God shall present us in time to the very fullness of His glory “... with exceeding joy.” Therefore, third; we must ascribe: “To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” verse twenty-five concludes. For all eternity God will be joyfully praised, God is our infinite, almighty, and omniscient resource, and His praise is a well-spring of life and joy.

In verse three, Jude spoke of our common salvation, that is the same for all. The Gnostics had an elitists faith, one reserved for intellectuals who could follow their scientific and philosophical thinking into strange byways. Antinomianism marked them because their faith was metaphysical and not ethical. Isn’t it interesting? To this day the heirs of the Gnostics stress metaphysics, not ethics, not morality. For Marcion, God being superior, meant that He did not judge, interesting how the superior religiously feel they are above us Bible-believers, they ‘don’t judge,’ except judging us, of course. How constant the strains of heresy are! Way back then were the Gnostics, you had the ‘love babies’ who loved everybody except those who disagreed with them and called attention to their errors.

Well, we can see why Jude’s condemnation, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is so sharp. We can also understand contemporary gnosticism whether called ‘New Age’ thinking, theosophy, Aquarian age ideas, or anything else, because all seek to live beyond good and evil and beyond morality. They are metaphysical, they are superior. As against contemporary faiths which by-pass morality as the Bible defines it for worship of life and nature, Jude’s brief letter is a devastating indictment. A more wretched and beggarly faith than gnosticism is hard to imagine, and yet in each new form over the centuries, in fact generation after generation after generation, its followers have been legion. Their position is for anything but the truth, and anyone other than Jesus Christ. Those who love the truth will be hated by all who love and believe in a lie, and such people are now very, very many. The direction of antinomianism is a religion without morality, it is another spiritual gnosticism. Let us pray.

Our Father we give thanks unto thee for Jude's letter and for His warning. Indeed we see the same evil all around us, and we thank thee that by thy grace and mercy we have been summoned, not because of our good sense, but because of thy grace into thy truth. Make us strong there-in, grant that day by day our total reliance is on thee and on thy word, and that we may serve thee with all our heart, mind, and being. In Christ's name, amen.

ENDNOTES:

1. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Ps 124:8). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.
2. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Ps 118:8). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.
3. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Ps 34:8). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.
4. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Jud 17–25). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.

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