Epistle of Jude – 1:-

Introduction:– This is the last of the "general" epistles and is declared to have been written by Jude *"a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ and brother of James."* Although the authenticity has been questioned over the years, the soundest historical and internal evidence supports the truthfulness of the text. The epistle contains warnings to believers about the dangers of incipient gnosticism – that the material body was evil and only the spirit was of any consequence. This belief could lead to the idea that the Lord Jesus did not possess a human body for any body would have been evil. It also led to the teaching that there was no need to follow any moral code and that the body must be abused to fulfill 'spiritual' aims.

Verses 1 – 2: Identification, Salutation and Purpose:-
Jude identifies himself, describes his relationship to the Lord Jesus and identifies his readers, all in one short sentence.
Verse 2. Jude uses a typical Semitic greeting *"mercy . . . . peace and love"* - it is very similar to the *"grace, mercy and peace"* used by Paul in 2 Timothy chapter 1, verse 2.

Verses 3 – 4:-
The purpose of the letter is clearly stated as is its importance. Note the use of the phrase *"once for all delivered to the saints"*. The revealed faith cannot and must not be changed it is the fixed none repeatable point of our faith.
Verse 4. The occasion of the letter was the intrusion of ungodly persons into the fellowship of the church. These heretics were open to four charges: they entered secretly, they were previously 'designated' for condemnation, they are 'ungodly' (irreverent?) and they deny Christ as Master and Lord. Note the use of the word *"licentiousness"* - lacking in morality.

Verses 5 – 7:-
A reminder that not all those who were saved from the Land of Egypt arrived in the Promised Land – compare with the Epistle to the Hebrews chapters 3 and 4 and the last five verses of the Venite (Psalm 55).
A further illustration is the fall of the rebellious angels who erred from their calling by exalting themselves. (See Luke chapter 10, verse 18 and Genesis chapter 6, verses 1 – 4).
Lastly Jude uses the example of Sodom and Gomorrah. Throughout Scripture these cities are symbolic of divine judgment executed by fire. So their fate is a foretaste of professing believers who do not persevere in righteousness.

Read Ephesians chapter 6, verses 10 – 20.

1
Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armor on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies,
Through His eternal Son;
Strong in the Lord of Hosts,
And in His mighty pow'r,
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.

2
Stand then in His great might,
With all His strength endued;
And take, to arm you for the fight,
The panoply of God,
That, having all things done,
And all your conflicts past,
Ye may o'ercome through Christ alone,
And stand complete at last.

3
Leave no unguarded place,
No weakness of the soul,
Take every virtue, every grace,
And fortify the whole.
To keep your armor bright
Attend with constant care,
Still walking in your Captain's sight
And watching unto prayer.

4
From strength to strength go on;
Wrestle, and fight, and pray;
Tread all the powers of darkness down,
And win the well-fought day:
Still let the Spirit cry
In all His soldiers, "Come!"
Till Christ the Lord descend from high,
And take the conquerors home.

Charles Wesley 1749

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