

NOTES ON THE EPISTLES TO TITUS AND PHILEMON, AND THE EPISTLE BY JUDE

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PAUL'S LETTERS TO TITUS AND PHILEMON - WHEN AND WHERE WRITTEN (W. BUNTING)

It is a striking fact that Titus is not mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles as accompanying Paul on any of his journeys. We learn from Gal.2:3¹ that Titus was a Greek, and that he was with Paul and Barnabas when they visited Jerusalem, and laid before those of repute the gospel preached among the Gentiles. In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul mentions Titus no less than nine times, and in one instance refers to him as my fellow-worker” (2 Cor.8:23²).

It would seem that Paul had recently visited Crete and left Titus there with the charge that he should “set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city” (Tit.1:5³). To assist Titus, the qualifications of the elders or overseers are clearly set out. It has been suggested that the letter was sent from Ephesus just before the apostle set out for Nicopolis, where he intended to winter, and Titus was asked to join him there (Tit.3:12⁴).

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.2.3>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.8.23>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.1.5>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.3.12>

When the apostle Paul completed the letter to the Colossians, and was about to send it by the hand of Tychicus, he wrote a remarkable letter to a wealthy citizen of Colossae, Philemon by name, about a runaway slave. How grateful we are that this personal letter has a place in the canon of Scripture. It reveals some aspects of the apostle's character which may not have been apparent to us otherwise. It has been said that it is the letter of a Christian gentleman, kindly, courteous, tactful, not too proud to beg a favour, and yet maintaining the dignity of his position as an ambassador of Christ. The recipient could not resist its appeal.

We are not at present dealing with the subject matter of the letter, but considering when and where it was written. Epaphras, who was from Colossae, must have spent much time with the apostle in the prison-house discussing the well-being of the church in that city and the individual saints who comprised it. The names of Philemon, Apphia, and Archippus would often be mentioned, and then the remarkable case of Onesimus, who had probably robbed his master Philemon, and later found his way to Rome itself.

The letter to Philemon was the sequel. The apostle writes as "Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus". The story of the runaway slave is told simply, and with telling effect. While Tychicus delivered the apostle's letter to the elders at Colossae, Onesimus made his way over ground he knew so well to the home of his master Philemon, and handed over the letter addressed to him. As master and slave confronted one another, it must have been a touching scene, and we leave them, thankful on our part that the letter which brought them together again has an honoured place in the New Testament.

COMMENTARY ON TITUS 1

Tit.1:1¹,2²,3³

Paul writes of himself as a bondservant of Jesus Christ, in Rom.1:1⁴, of himself and Timothy as bondservants of Christ Jesus in Phil.1:1⁵, and here of himself as a bondservant of God. All angels, save those who are fallen, and all redeemed men, are bondservants of God (Rev.19:10⁶). Paul was also an apostle (one who is sent) of Jesus Christ. He was an apostle “according to the faith of God’s elect.” Is this “faith” or “the Faith”? We think that it is the former. There is no definite article before “faith”. Even though persons are elect before the foundation of the world, they must exercise faith in the message that Paul was chosen to bring to them, for salvation is through faith. To this end Paul said that he endured all things for the elect’s sake, that they might obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory (2 Tim.2:10⁷).

Paul the herald of the divine message must reach the elect, some of whom were in prison and some free, for they must hear and believe the gospel in order to be saved. “Belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of (God or) Christ” (Rom.10:17⁸).

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.1.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%201.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%201.3>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.1>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.1.1>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.10>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.10>

“And the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness:” Paul joins two things together here, faith and the knowledge of the truth. This he does again in 1 Tim.2:4⁹, where he says that it is God’s will that “all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.” These two statements cover the apostle’s work among men: (1) faith and salvation, (2) the knowledge of the truth. The truth known and acted upon by believers results in godliness of life. Paul, as we have seen, was an apostle according to (1) the faith of God’s elect, and (2) the knowledge of the truth. Then he says that it was “in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal.” “In” here is in the Greek *epi* – “upon”; of this one has said, “The condition under which the apostolic mission rests.”

How useless would have been Paul’s apostleship, if it was not in the fulfilment of a promise of One who cannot lie, who promised eternal life to all believers before times eternal, namely, from eternity! Though the words “the hope of eternal life” in Tit.1:2¹⁰ and Tit.3:7¹¹ are alike, yet the connection in which they are found is different, and consequently their meaning is different. The promise of eternal life, which is the same as “His word,” was manifested in the message or proclamation with which Paul was entrusted. This message was to be manifested in His, or its, own seasons. All this was according to the commandment of God our Saviour. Here is stretched out before

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.10.17>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.2.4>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.1.2>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.3.7>

us the promise of eternal life before times eternal and the fulfilment of the promise in time in the message of the word of God which is received by faith on the part of God's elect.

Tit.1:4¹²

Paul calls Titus his true (genuine) child after a common faith; he described Timothy also as his true child in faith (1 Tim.1:2¹³). "In faith" and "a common faith" mean the same kind of faith, not "the Faith." It is faith common to all believers. Paul's salutation is, grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour. God is our Saviour in verse 3.

Tit.1:5¹⁴

Paul left Timothy in Ephesus, and Titus in Crete. Each was given his charge as to the need existing in the churches in those places. The work of Titus was to set in order things that were wanting, and the lack of recognised elders to care for and rule in the flock must have been outstanding amongst the things that were wanting in the churches in Crete. Some have postulated that, since we have today no apostles to appoint elders, as in Acts 14:21-23¹⁵, and no apostles' delegates, as Timothy and Titus, we can have no men recognised as elders now. Surely the work of feeding and shepherding the flock of God still exists, as in the time of the apostles, and there is the need for men being recognised who are fitted to do this. Also, what use would there

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.1.4>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.1.2>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.1.5>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2014.21-23>

be today for such portions of the word of God as 1 Tim.3:1-7¹⁶ and Tit.1:6-9¹⁷? None at all! There is no hidden satanic poison in the words “elder” and “overseer” that we should need to avoid their use, and substitute some other word coined by men in modern times to describe elders and overseers, the shepherds of the flock.

We definitely believe that the Scriptures teach the recognition and appointment of elders to care for the flock, and that such elders form an elderhood or presbytery. These are addressed collectively in a much wider sphere than the elders of an individual church. See in proof of this 1 Pet.5:1-11¹⁸, where the elders of the churches of God in five provinces in Asia (1 Pet.1:1¹⁹), which formed a spiritual house (of God) and a holy and royal priesthood (1 Pet.2:3-5²⁰,9²¹,10²²) are addressed as a whole “The elders therefore among you I exhort ... tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight.”

Tit.1:6²³,7²⁴,8²⁵,9²⁶

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.3.1-7>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.1.6-9>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.5.1-11>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.1.1>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.2.3-5>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet%202.9>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet%202.10>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.1.6>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%201.7>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%201.8>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%201.9>

Here again is a picture, as in 1 Tim.3:1-7²⁷, of the character and conduct of an elder or overseer. Having already, in 1 Tim.3²⁸, remarked on “the husband of one wife,” I suggest that this should be read. An elder must be blameless, one against whom no charge can be laid. He has to have but one wife. If he has believing children, they are not to be loose in behaviour or morals or unruly, that is, insubordinate. The overseer, as God’s steward in His house, must be free from any charge. He must not be self-willed or headstrong, not soon angry or passionate when his views and judgements are not accepted. He is not to be given to wine, and consequently not a brawler, not a striker, not greedy of base gain: so much for the negative side of his life. As to the positive, he is to be hospitable, that is, a lover of strangers, a lover of good, sober-minded, of sound mind, that is, discreet or self-restrained, just and holy (pious), temperate; holding to, or fast clinging to, or not letting go, the faithful word, which is according to the teaching which he had been taught. In consequence of his holding to what he had been taught, he would be able to exhort or encourage others in the sound and healthful doctrine, and also to convict or refute the gainsayers, such as question or contradict.

Tit.1:10²⁹,11³⁰

Whilst we shall be for ever indebted to men of Jewish race, such as the apostles and others, for the work they did at the beginning of this dispensation, and for the New Testament Scriptures

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.3.1-7>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.3>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.1.10>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%201.11>

which they left behind, we cannot fail to see in the New Testament how much the work of God suffered, both from Jews (they of the circumcision) who were in the churches of God, and also from Jews outside, who persecuted Paul and his fellow-workers continually. Here in these verses they of the circumcision are seen, with others, at their deadly, damaging work. They were insubordinate, men who would not be subject to authority, vain talkers and deceivers; a trio of badness which would ruin any community. Paul said that their mouths must be stopped. Though their mouths could not well be stopped in private, their mouths must be stopped in public by a public statement that such men were not allowed to speak. They were to be silenced in all gatherings of God's people. What serious work is indicated in the fact that they overthrow whole houses by teaching things that are not befitting, that is, that they teach what they ought not to teach, and they do it for the sake of base gain!

Tit.1:12³¹,13³²,14³³

The natural state of the Cretans was low; so much so, that their avarice, ferocity, fraud and begging, were proverbial, of which several ancient writers have written. Epimenides, a Cretan, and a prophet of their own, described them in the words quoted by Paul. Their ferocity is expressed in the words, "evil wild beasts," one of the lowest descriptions given of men. It is God's description of the coming antichrist, "the wild beast." Of their fraud, they were said to be always liars, and of their avarice and

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.1.12>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%201.13>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%201.14>

begging, they were lazy gluttons. One could hardly imagine a more demoralized people; and the miracle was that the gospel was received by many of them, and that there were churches of God in every city in Crete. There was ever the fear that they would slip back to their former manner of life, and Titus was told to reprove them sharply or severely, that they may be sound, or healthy, in the faith. Also, that they were not to give heed to Jewish fables and the commandments of men who were turning from the truth, such as those of the circumcision of verse 10.

Tit.1:15³⁴,16³⁵

Purity of mind is the result of the acting out by believers of healthful teaching. The word of God like pure water has a cleansing effect in the heart where it flows. Pure minds see pure things, but corrupt minds things that are corrupt. Two people may approach the city, the one with eyes and heart full of lust, to seek the dens of sin and the haunts of vice, the other with holy aspirations, to seek the companionship and homes of the godly. The bee flies over the field seeking the flower with its scent and honey. The blow-fly seeks the stench of the corrupting carcass. We ever seek out what we are ourselves, the pure, the things that are pure, but to the polluted saint and unbelieving sinner nothing is pure, because their minds and consciences are polluted. Profession and practice should agree. We should eschew what is implied in the words, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau" (Gen.27:22³⁶). What profit is there in professing before men that we know God and deny

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.1.15>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%201.16>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.27.22>

Him by our works? The one cancels out the other. Works such as being abominable, disobedient, and to every good work worthless, reveal a desperate plight in the conduct of any believer.

COMMENTARY ON TITUS 2

Tit.2:1¹,2²

How frequently Paul writes of healthy words and teaching! There cannot be a healthy spiritual life apart from health-giving instruction. Old men are to be temperate or sober; grave, that is, venerable or serious, not hilarious; discreet or of sound mind. They are to be sound or healthy in faith (not in the Faith here, though it is sound in the Faith in Tit.1:13³), and in their love and patience.

Tit.2:3⁴,4⁵,5⁶

Old women, like old men, were to be “in deportment as becomes sacred ones.” They were not to be slanderers. Slanderer here is the feminine of Gk. *diabolos*, devil. They were not to be given to much wine, but to be teachers of what is good, right or beautiful in conduct. The object was to school, admonish, counsel, rebuke, the young women in the holy arts of domestic life; to love their husbands and their children; to be sober-minded or discreet; to be chaste, pure, modest; to be keepers at home, that is, “diligent in homework”; to be kind or good; to be subject to their own

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.2.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%202.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.1.13>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.2.3>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%202.4>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%202.5>

husbands, such is a woman's place in relation to her husband as assigned to her by God. The object of all this is, that the word of God be not blasphemed or evil spoken of.

Tit.2:6⁷,7⁸,8⁹

The younger men were to be exhorted to be sober-minded or discreet. One is reminded of what is said of David while a youth, and shortly after he slew Goliath: "he behaved himself wisely"; "he behaved himself wisely in all his ways"; "he behaved himself very wisely"; and he "behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul" (1 Sam.18:5¹⁰,14¹¹,15¹²,30¹³). Titus was also to show himself a pattern in all good works. He was to be a model of the doctrine he taught. What Titus was in his behaviour he was to enjoin upon others. He was to manifest uncorruptness in teaching, in gravity, in sound or healthy speech, which could not be condemned. The object of this good behaviour, both in Titus and his hearers, was that those of the contrary part could say no evil thing of those in the churches in Crete.

Tit.2:9¹⁴,10¹⁵

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.2.6>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%202.7>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%202.8>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam.18.5>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam%2018.14>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam%2018.15>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam%2018.30>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.2.9>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%202.10>

Paul frequently gives instruction to slaves or bondservants, as in Eph.6:5-8¹⁶; Col.3:22-25¹⁷; 1 Tim.6:2¹⁸: Here again he returns to the subject. Christian slaves were to be in subjection to their masters and to be well-pleasing to them in all things. They were not to be contradictory when their masters spoke to them. They were not to embezzle or steal their masters' goods, but to show good fidelity, being trustworthy. In this way, before their masters and others, the doctrine they held, the doctrine of God our Saviour, would be adorned and beautified in their eyes. The excellence of the doctrine would be seen in the changed behaviour of those who were once liars, evil wild beasts, lazy gluttons (Tit.1:12¹⁹).

Tit.2:11²⁰

Appeared (Gk. epiphaino – to shine upon, give light to): the epiphany of grace is before the epiphany of glory (verse 13). The first is through the incarnation, atonement and resurrection of the Lord; the second is at His coming again. There is no original word for “bringing.” Salvation (Gk. soterios) is an adjective and is part of the subject “the grace of God.” Dr. Young in his version renders the verse, “For the saving grace of God was manifested to all men.” Alford also says that soterios is part of the subject. The gospel is like sunshine, the former shines to bring eternal health to the soul, the latter to give health to the body. Foolish people may hide themselves from both and die, both in soul and body.

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.5-8>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.3.22-25>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.6.2>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.1.12>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.2.11>

Tit.2:12²¹,13²²

The saving grace of God becomes the teacher of such as are saved by grace. It teaches us to deny, renounce, disown, ungodliness (we were once ungodly, Rom.5:6²³, persons in a fearful state, yet it was for such Christ died), and worldly lusts (see 1 Pet.4:2²⁴), and to live soberly, discreetly (behaviour in regard to ourselves), righteously (in regard to our neighbours) and godly (in regard to God's requirements) in this present age; looking for what God's grace teaches us to expect, even God's glory. This will be ours when the blessed hope will be realized in the coming again of the Lord, who has promised to return, at which time He will appear in glory to His own. This is not to be read as though the passage means two things, (1) the coming of the Lord, as Son of God, for His own, and (2) His coming, as Son of Man, with His saints. If it read the blessed Hope and the appearing of the glory, then there would be two things indicated, but there is no definite article before "appearing," hence only the Lord's coming to the air is in view. Note how the Deity of the Lord is clearly indicated in verse 13: Jesus Christ is our great God and Saviour. The AV/KJV is not correct here; it indicates two Persons, the Father and the Son.

Tit.2:14²⁵

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.2.12>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%202.13>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.6>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.4.2>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.2.14>

This verse again emphasizes the Deity of the Lord. Jehovah in a past dispensation redeemed Israel, so that they should be to Him a peculiar treasure. He said, "If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me from among all peoples: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Ex.19:5²⁶,6²⁷). Similarly today, but on a higher plane, the Lord gave Himself for us, not merely to redeem us from past sins, but from present lawlessness, that is, from doing our own will and being a law unto ourselves, and to purify unto Himself a peculiar (that is, excellent) people. The character and conduct of this people is to be, "zealous of good works." To many saved folk the thought of God having a people is not in their thoughts. To many, evangelism fills entirely their thoughts and time, but God's will is that He should have a peculiar people, a subject people under the authority of the Lord, who is our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Tit.2:15²⁸

In these instructions already given we have Paul authorizing Titus by the words of an inspired epistle to speak, exhort and reprove the disciples who were in the churches of God in Crete. In the carrying out of the apostle's commands no man was to despise him.

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.19.5>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ex%2019.6>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.2.15>

COMMENTARY ON TITUS 3

Tit.3:1¹,2²

Subjection is one of the basic truths of the Scriptures, subjection to rulers and authorities (Rom.13:1³), subjection of younger elders to older elders in the flock of God (1 Pet.5:5⁴), of wives to husbands (Col.3:18⁵; Tit.2:5⁶; 1 Pet.3:1⁷), servants to masters (Tit.2:9⁸; 1 Pet.2:18⁹), to those that help in the work and labour (1 Cor.16:16¹⁰), to one another (Eph.5:21¹¹). Also the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets; God has not taken the control of man out of his own hand (1 Cor.14:32¹²). In contrast, “The mind of the flesh ... is not subject to the law of God,” and it is evident in these days that it is not subject to any other law, save the law of sin and death (Rom.8:2¹³); the lawless are increasing like locusts in the earth, devouring peace with an insatiable appetite. Believers are also to be obedient, save

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.3.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%203.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.13.1>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.5.5>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.3.18>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.2.5>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.3.1>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.2.9>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.2.18>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.16.16>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.21>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.14.32>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.2>

in such a matter as where the will of God and of men clash (Acts 4:16-21¹⁴). They are also to be ready towards every good work, to speak evil of no one, not to be quarrelsome, to be gentle or mild, and to show meekness to all. These are all excellent Christian virtues.

Tit.3:3¹⁵

Who are the “we also”? It seems to me that there is here a contrast between “we” and “them” of verse 1: “Put them in mind,” that is the Cretans. The Cretans were always liars (Tit.1:12¹⁶), their state before conversion. Then Paul gives us an insight into the state of the Jews, that is, those who are described as “we also.” The Cretans, a pagan people, were degraded in their habits, but the Jews were really no better, for beneath a cloak of religion was a totally corrupted society. The Jews were without intelligence, disobedient (ever rebelling against God’s law and that of the Romans), led astray, and serving various lusts and pleasures. As to their social life, that also was in rags; the Jews were living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. The conduct of each was hateful to others and consequently they hated each other. An external religion is but a mask, a guise to cover the natural wickedness of the human heart.

Tit.3:4¹⁷,5¹⁸,6¹⁹,7²⁰

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%204.16-21>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.3.3>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.1.12>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.3.4>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%203.5>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%203.6>

God is our Saviour; He is the Source whence salvation comes. Jesus Christ is our Saviour; He is the One by whom salvation was wrought. Kindness means first of all utility, usefulness. To give a millionaire a shilling would be no kindness, but it would be to a hungry beggar. To give a man a suit of clothes who has twenty suits would be no kindness, but it would be to a man clothed in rags. How well suited to the need of those whose righteousness is as filthy rags is the kindness of God! God's kindness is born of His love toward men (Gk. philanthropia, philanthropy, only twice used in the New Testament, in Acts 28:2²¹, of the kindness of the pagans in Melita to Paul, and here of God's love toward mankind). God's philanthropy was manifested in the incarnation, atonement and resurrection of the Lord. This reaches us not through any good quality in ourselves or our works, for there is none that doeth good (Rom.3:10-12²²). It is according to His mercy He saved us.

We have been saved through or by means of the washing or laver of regeneration [Laver, Gk. loutron, is a noun here, not a verb; it is a laver or bath, though the use of the bath is implied, and may legitimately be rendered bathing or washing in a bath, whereby the whole person and not a part is washed or bathed.] Note the distinction the Lord makes, in Jn 13:10²³, between the washing of the feet in a basin and being bathed all over. "He that is bathed (in a Gk. loutron, laver) needeth not save to wash (in a Gk. nipter, basin) his feet, but is clean every whit"]. Regeneration

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%203.7>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2028.2>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.10-12>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2013.10>

(Gk. paliggenesia) literally means, being born again, and is equivalent to “born again” (Gk. gennaō anothen) in Jn 3:3²⁴,7²⁵: The laver of regeneration is the word of God, through which, when received by faith, through the message of the gospel in the power of the Spirit, the sinner is born again or regenerated (see Jn 3:3²⁶,7²⁷; 1:12²⁸,13²⁹; 1 Pet.1:23³⁰; 1 Jn 5:1³¹), and is made clean every whit (Jn 13:10³²; Jn 15:3³³; Heb.10:22³⁴; Eph.5:26³⁵), and in that state of purity he remains for ever, though his feet need to be washed, which means that the word of God needs to be applied to his ways and walk.

Palingenesia is found again only once in the New Testament, in Matt.19:28³⁶, where it is used in a different sense, not in connection with the regeneration of the individual soul, but in the regeneration of human society at the coming of the Son of Man to earth, when a fountain shall be opened for sin and uncleanness (Zech.13:1³⁷). “Renewing of the Holy Spirit”:

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.3>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%203.7>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.3>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%203.7>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%201.12>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%201.13>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.1.23>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.1>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2013.10>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2015.3>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.10.22>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.26>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.19.28>

renewing (Gk. anakainosis, found only here and in Rom.12:2³⁸, but see cognate verbs in 2 Cor.4:16³⁹; Col.3:10⁴⁰; Heb.6:6⁴¹) describes the complete renewal of the individual by the Holy Spirit. These two statements regarding regeneration and renewing are complementary, and describe the operation of the word and Spirit of God on the soul, as spoken of by the Lord to Nicodemus, when He said, “Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (Jn 3:5⁴²).

This act of God in grace is, Paul says, “poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.” Having been justified by grace (Rom.3:24⁴³), we have become heirs (of God and joint-heirs with Christ – Rom.8:17⁴⁴) according to the hope of eternal life. This is not the hope of having eternal life sometime in the future, but the hope that springs from and belongs to eternal life, in which state we were saved (Rom.8:16⁴⁵,17⁴⁶,24⁴⁷,25⁴⁸), in which

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.13.1>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.2>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.4.16>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.3.10>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.6.6>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.5>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.24>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.%2017>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.16>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.17>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.24>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.25>

hope we rejoice that one day we shall enter upon the inheritance of the saints in light, for which God has made us meet (Col.1:12⁴⁹,13⁵⁰).

Tit.3:8⁵¹,9⁵²

The “faithful saying” here is what Paul has been writing about, salvation, regeneration, and so forth. Such things were to be affirmed confidently. The present object of this is, that those so graced of God as to be saved, regenerated, renewed, justified, and to enjoy for ever a glorious inheritance, should maintain good works consistent with the grace they have received. Good works wrought by Christian people are both good and profitable to men. But what could be more inconsistent than that the heirs of heaven should be moving heavenward wrangling about what they have in the flesh, such as the Judaizers were doing, continually rhyming off their genealogies, as though to be children of sinners was to be compared with being children of God? The Lord said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” and flesh it remains with all its sin and troubles. But many Jewish believers never seemed to enter into the meaning of the Lord’s words and the teaching of the apostles, and were a continual menace to peace and a hindrance to the progress of the Lord’s work. Such questionings and genealogies and legal contentions begat strifes and fightings and were unprofitable and vain.

Tit.3:10⁵³,11⁵⁴

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.12>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col%201.13>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.3.8>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%203.9>

A heretical man is a self-chooser, a party man who by his practice and doctrine would make a sect, “a self-chosen and divergent form of religious belief and practice.” He is sectarian in out-look and intent, “one who creates a faction.” It can be seen how dangerous such a person would be to the Fellowship. He is to be given a first and second admonition publicly before the church, and if he is obdurate, he is to be refused or rejected by the church; they are to decline fellowship with him, not simply to close his mouth, as in chapter 1:11: See 1 Tim.5:11⁵⁵, where we have the same word. The younger widows were to be refused enrolment as widows to be supported by the church. See also 1 Tim.4:7⁵⁶; 2 Tim.2:23⁵⁷; Heb.12:25⁵⁸ for the same word. The heretical man is perverted (Gk. ekstrepheo, from ek, out of, and strepheo, to twist or turn round). It means “to turn inside out,” “to change for the worse,” “to become corrupt.” Such a one sinneth, is living in sin; it is his habit. He condemns himself.

Tit.3:12⁵⁹,13⁶⁰

Artemas is not elsewhere mentioned, but Tychicus is mentioned several times. Paul hoped to send either of these brethren to Crete to relieve Titus, whom Paul wished to come to him to Nicopolis (supposed to be Nicopolis in Thrace) where Paul had

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.3.10>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%203.11>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.5.11>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.4.7>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.23>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.12.25>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.3.12>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%203.13>

decided to winter. Zenas and Apollos had been in Crete, and Titus was exhorted to send them on their journey diligently and to see that nothing be lacking to them for the journey. The epistle was evidently written when Paul was at liberty, between his first and second imprisonment. It may have been written from Macedonia about the time of the writing of 1 Timothy.

Tit.3:14⁶¹

It is profitable here to note the importance of the word “also.” Titus was to set forward Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, and that nothing be wanting to them, and the saints also were to maintain good works for necessary uses. Why does Paul say this after he has spoken about the journey of these two servants of the Lord? It seems to me that if the saints did not give of their substance, then there would be meagre supplies for the Lord’s servants on their journey. Saints were to give, and Titus was to see that the Lord’s servants’ needs were met.

Tit.3:15⁶²

Those who were with Paul at the time of his writing, who are not mentioned by name, saluted Titus, and Titus was to salute those who loved (Gk. phileo) Paul and his co-workers in faith. Some translators think, though there is no definite article before faith, that it is implied in the grammatical construction, and that it should read, “Salute them that love us in (the) Faith.” Paul closes with his usual salutation in all his epistles – “Grace be with you all.”

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.3.14>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.3.15>

COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

Philn.1,2,3

This epistle was written, it is supposed, with those to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Hebrews, from Rome during Paul's first imprisonment. Here Paul states again that he is a prisoner of Christ Jesus, as he does in Eph.3:1¹, and in the Lord, in 4:1, and in Phil.1:13² he alludes to his bonds. In Philemon he associates Timothy with himself in verse 1: It may be that Timothy was also a prisoner with him, for, probably some little time later, he wrote to the Hebrews and said, "Know ye that our brother Timothy hath been set at liberty" (Heb.13:23³). The epistle was written by Paul concerning Onesimus, who, as we learn from Col.4:9⁴, belonged to Colossae. Then the references to Archippus in Col.4:17⁵ and Philemon 2 strengthen the view that Philemon also belonged to Colossae. Paul writes endearingly when he calls Philemon "the brother" and "our beloved," and commends also his labours as a fellow-worker, labours wrought with the apostle perhaps in Colossae or elsewhere. Some think that Apphia was the wife of Philemon, but this is conjecture, also that Archippus was one of the family or household; but whilst such are possibilities there is no proof.

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.1.13>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.13.23>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.4.9>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.4.17>

A church met at the house of Philemon, possibly part of the church of God in Colossae. Paul's salutation is common to his epistles.

Philn.4,5,6

There is a difference amongst translators, whether "always" belongs to "thank" or to "making mention." Hence, in contrast to RV above, some punctuate thus: "I thank my God, always making mention of thee in my prayers." It is a technical point in Greek grammar about which the learned may differ. Whichever way the verse is read, it shows the regularity of the intercession of Paul in his prayers for Philemon, a worthy example for us all! We can understand the love of Philemon toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints, and we can also understand his faith toward the Lord Jesus, but what does it mean when Paul refers to his faith toward the saints? The text of the RV in Eph.1:15⁶ is somewhat similar, though there is some doubt whether the text or the margin of the RV is correct. If we consider Jas.2:15-20⁷, it seems clear enough that we can show faith as well as love toward the saints. To see a brother in want and not minister to his need manifests a complete lack of faith as well as love for faith without works is both barren and dead.

So Paul wrote to Philemon of his faith and love toward all the saints as well as toward the Lord Jesus. Then Paul continues and writes "that the fellowship (fellowship, Gk. *koinonia*, has various meanings: community, fellowship, society, participation, communion, communications, alms, charity, and so forth) of thy

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.15>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.2.15-20>

faith may become effectual,” which I take to mean, as one has put it, “the communication of thy faith may become effectual,” that is, that it may be operative. Fellowship is not static; it is living and operative. It means sharing in common. Paul was touching a chord in this good man’s being which had been working for long, when he wrote of the full knowledge he had of what he called “of every good thing which is in you, unto Christ.” This is the regulator of Christian conduct; if saints are right toward or unto Christ, they will not fail to be right toward each other. Philemon had not only provided a meeting place for the church that met at his house, but quite evidently he was a large and good-hearted man who loved the Lord and His people and sought to care for them.

Philn.7

Here we have the work of Philemon laid open by Paul, in that the hearts (bowels, which describe the tenderest feelings) of the saints had been refreshed (given rest, quiet, refreshment) by him. This was undoubtedly a joy and comfort to the saints, as the knowledge of it was to Paul the prisoner. Paul ever rejoiced when it was well with the saints. He was like a good shepherd whose flock feeds quietly in the lush grass beside the still waters.

Philn.1:8,9,10

The aged father, Paul, pleads with Philemon concerning his child, Onesimus. One day, perhaps, the whole story will be told, and it will be a touching tale. Who and what was Onesimus? He was a brother in the flesh of Philemon (verse 16), and it appears that he was also a bondman or slave to his brother. Hereon

may hang a tale of waywardness on the part of Onesimus in his unconverted days. Paul says, “Who was aforesaid unprofitable to thee.” He left Philemon and Colossae, possibly ran away and turned up in Rome. How did he come into contact with Paul in prison? Had he joined the Praetorian guard? (Phil.1:13⁸). Or was he one of the soldiers that guarded Paul? (Acts 28:16⁹). Or was it worse than that: had he committed some crime which resulted in imprisonment, and thus he met Paul the prisoner? We cannot say. But we can picture to ourselves their meeting and think that we can follow the course of the conversation which led to Onesimus being led to Christ, “begotten,” as Paul says, “in my bonds.” Both knew Colossae and both knew Philemon. They met on common ground here, and soon they both stood on the common ground of being in Christ. Later Onesimus was added to the church in Rome, for Paul writes of him being in the Lord (verse 16). Paul could have enjoined upon Philemon the right Christian course to be followed by him towards Onesimus, but he took the better course of beseeching him for love’s sake.

Philn.1:11,12,13

There is perchance a long story of waywardness on the part of Onesimus in the statement, “Who was aforesaid unprofitable to thee.” Philemon may have lifted his brother and slave out of many troubles. Is this not true of many sinners, that their life is entirely unprofitable? “Destruction and misery are in their ways” (Rom.3:16¹⁰), but they are not beyond the power of God in the gospel to save them from a vain manner of life and entirely to

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.1.13>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2028.16>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.16>

transform them. There have been many such trophies of grace. Paul says that since Onesimus was converted he “now is profitable to thee and to me.” (Possibly we have here a play on the name of Onesimus, which means Helpful.) This is what is to be expected from the transforming power of divine grace, and where it is not in evidence, it makes one wonder whether the grace of God has indeed reached the heart, and the regenerating power of the Spirit has been known.

Paul would have kept Onesimus at Rome to minister unto him in the bonds of the gospel, but true conversion leads to rectification, as far as possible, of past wrongs. This is seen in the case of Zacchaeus, who said, after he had known the Lord, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold” (Lk.19:8¹¹). So grace taught Paul to send Onesimus to Colossae to Philemon his brother, so that past wrongs might be put right. In parting with Onesimus Paul parted with what he called “my very heart,” so dear had Onesimus become to him.

Philn.1:14,15,16

Paul would do nothing regarding Onesimus without having the mind of Philemon, that is, his decision or judgement. Paul wished to do nothing apart from this. Brethren should ever be careful that, where the interests and responsibilities of others are involved, there should be no action taken without having their mind or judgement. Often much trouble has been caused where the mind of others has not been sought. Paul also says that the goodness of Philemon should not be shown towards Onesimus

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.19.8>

out of necessity, but of free will. Paul lays the case before him in a masterly fashion, but brings no pressure to bear upon him. Philemon must be a free agent in what he does. Who knows the manifold working of God? Paul says that perhaps Onesimus was parted from Philemon for a season, that he might have him for ever, eternally, for during the interval Christ had reached and saved him. Now he returns to Philemon, not as a slave but much more, a brother beloved, to Paul especially, but much rather to Philemon, “both in the flesh and in the Lord.” Thus we see that Onesimus was a brother in a double sense, a natural brother of Philemon, and now also a brother in the Lord.

Philn.1:17,18,19

Those who are in the Fellowship or Partnership (Acts 2:42¹²; 1 Cor.1:9¹³) are fellows or partners. See Lk.5:10¹⁴: “James and John, sons of Zebedee, ... were partners with Simon.” Paul and Philemon were in the same Fellowship, for the churches of God are one, in one Fellowship; and the saints received one another when they moved about carrying letters of commendation from church to church. See Rom.16:1¹⁵,2¹⁶; 2 Cor.3:1¹⁷: Paul asks Philemon, and also the church at his house (note verses 1,2), to receive Onesimus as he would have received Paul himself. If there was anything which would hinder fellowship, such as past wrongs committed by Onesimus, whereby Philemon had

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.42>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.1.9>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.5.10>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.1>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2016.2>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.3.1>

suffered loss, he was to put that to Paul's account, who would repay him. It is dangerous doctrine to think and to say that because God forgives the sinner for all past wrongs, because of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, who has in His death paid the sinner's debts to God, that therefore all debts to men have to be regarded as repaid and forgiven. This is not so, as the story concerning Onesimus clearly teaches. Though Christ restored to God what He took not away (Ps.69:4¹⁸), there may still be restoration to men to be considered. Paul then touches lightly upon the point of the debt that Philemon owed to him, "I say not unto thee how that thou owest to me even thine own self besides." Here was a debt that Philemon had not paid and never could.

Philn.1:20,21

Paul hoped for joy and refreshment in the matter of Onesimus. As he committed this letter to Onesimus, so it is thought, he sent him forth on the long journey (in those days) back to Colossae; his arrival there would be like the return of the prodigal in Lk.15¹⁹: We can well believe, though the sequel of the story is hid from us, that the joy in Colossae would be similar to the joy in the father's heart and home, where the best robe, the ring and the sandals were brought for the long-lost son, and the fatted calf was killed. The joy that divine grace brings, the like of which there is not on the earth besides, would, we think, be in the home of Philemon when Onesimus arrived. Paul said that he had confidence in the obedience of Philemon, not to Paul, but to the teaching of divine grace, that he would do

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.69.4>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.15>

even beyond what Paul said. This letter shows a taste and touch in handling a domestic difficulty, where estrangement had, no doubt, existed, of the most exquisite kind. Such matters are often the most difficult to handle, where family love has been flouted. Divine grace must be poured in in large measure to heal wounds that have been made.

Philn. 1:22

“Prepare me also a lodging.” “Also” shows that Paul anticipated that Onesimus had found lodging with his brother. If this were so, Paul’s arrival in Colossae would fill the cup of each to overflowing. Here was the result of the Lord’s work as the Peace Offering. In the peace offering in the past the LORD had His portion of the fat and the blood, the offering priest had his, the priestly family theirs, the offerer had the major portion of the sacrifice, and of this everyone who was clean could eat. It was the fellowship offering, the offering which reconciled men to God and to one another. In our time it speaks of the hearts of saints being refreshed in Christ whose death has brought them together and given each a portion in Himself to enjoy together. Here the eyes and faces of each participant may glow with the love of Christ. For the liberation and coming of Paul Philemon was to pray, and we are of the opinion that Paul gained his liberty for a time.

Philn. 1:23,24,25

Epaphras is referred to in Col.1:7²⁰ and 4:12²¹: The Col. had become disciples by the ministry of this faithful man. It says, “Even as ye learned (as disciples) of (from) Epaphras.” He strove much in prayer for the saints in Colossae, and for those in the contiguous churches in Laodicea and Hierapolis. It is sad to think that by the time of the writing of the book of the Revelation, perhaps some thirty years afterwards, the churches in Colossae and Hierapolis no longer existed as churches owned by the Lord; only seven churches existed in Asia by that time, and even Laodicea was in a woeful condition of luke-warmness. When Paul wrote to Philemon, Epaphras was in prison, a fellow-prisoner of Paul: it might be that he was a prisoner when Paul wrote to the Colossians, though that is not stated. Paul evidently was quite near to Epaphras when he could write of the intensity of his prayers for the Colossians. Paul closes with his usual salutation of grace. “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.” This is one of the finest letters, probably the finest, that was ever written to reconcile those involved in a domestic difficulty.

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.7>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col%204.12>

COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

Jude 1¹,2²

Who he was who wrote this epistle cannot be dogmatically stated, whether he was the brother of James the brother of the Lord (Gal.1:19³), there being a James and a Jude as among the Lord's brothers (Matt.13:55⁴), or whether he was an apostle, as there was also a James and a Jude as among the apostles (Acts 1:13⁵,14⁶). James, the brother of John, was killed by Herod before the epistle of Jude was written (Acts 12:2⁷). Jude does not call himself an apostle, but simply a bondservant, as also does James, the writer of the epistle of James. Jude writes to the called ones, who are also beloved (the AV/KJV says, "sanctified") ones in God the Father, and kept ones in (RV says "for") Jesus Christ. The Lord in Jn 17:11⁸, in view of His being about to die, prayed that the Father might keep them in "Thy name which Thou hast given Me," which name is the name of Jesus, not "in Christ," in which name there is eternal security for all believers.

1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%201>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%201.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.1.19>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.13.55>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%201.13>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%201.14>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2012.2>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2017.11>

“In Jesus” is a term in which we see saints on earth seeking to carry out the truth of God (Eph.4:21⁹; Rev.1:9¹⁰). In Jn 17:12¹¹ the Lord says that while He was with them He had been keeping them in that name, the name of Jesus. The Lord not only kept them, but He guarded them. Here we have not only the thought of keeping or preserving His disciples in the matter of service, but also of guarding them in the matter of salvation, for as to eternal salvation all believers are in His hand and in His Father’s hand, so that they can never perish (Jn 10:28¹²,29¹³). Thus it was that the Lord said that not one of them perished, save the son of perdition; Judas was never one of His. I am of the view that “preserved in Jesus Christ,” as in the AV/KJV, is the correct rendering of Jude 1¹⁴, and not “kept for Jesus Christ,” as in the RV. Jude’s salutation of mercy, and peace and love be multiplied, is what we all feel the need of, and an increase of such excellencies of peace and love is greatly to be desired.

Jude 3¹⁵

Here we have an evidence of what Peter wrote, that “no prophecy ever came by the will of man” (2 Pet.1:21¹⁶), for while Jude had intended to write on the subject of salvation, he was constrained to write on contending for the Faith. This controlling power of

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.21>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.1.9>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2017.12>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2010.28>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2010.29>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%201>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%203>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet.1.21>

the Spirit over the words of the Scriptures is never more truly seen than in the case of Balaam the soothsayer, who, though intent on cursing Israel for the glittering rewards of Balak, king of Moab, was told by the angel of the LORD, “Go with the men: but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak” (Num.22:35¹⁷). Of Balaam’s words Balak said, “What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether” (Num.23:11¹⁸).

Balaam said later to Balak, “Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; what the LORD speaketh, that will I speak?” (Num.24:12¹⁹,13²⁰). The common salvation simply means the salvation which is common to all believers, and does not mean something that is common or inferior. Because of the need amongst God’s people at that time, the Spirit turned Jude from his original purpose, from writing of the common salvation to writing on the Faith, and on the need of contending earnestly for it. The reason for this was that certain men had crept in privily amongst the saints. They were to contend as athletes who were trained for the contest. The Greek word for “contend” is an athletic word. It is derived from *agon*, “a place of contest, stadium.” To what purpose would anyone enter the stadium to contend with athletes, if he had not first been under training? It would be futile.

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Num.22.35>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Num.23.11>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Num.24.12>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Num%2024.13>

The Faith is the body of doctrine committed to, and to be kept by, the saints of this dispensation, wherein is contained the will of God. It answers to the law of God which was given through Moses in Horeb for all Israel (Mal.4:4²¹). By the time that Jude wrote, the Faith had already been given to the saints. It was given “once for all,” but it was not given “all at once.” It was given like the teaching of the Lord, who gave His disciples His word according as they were able to bear His teaching. The Faith is called the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ (Jas.2:1²²). The fundamental principles of the Faith were given at the beginning of this dispensation, but certain matters were revealed and more clearly understood as time went on. It was so also with the law that was given on mount Horeb with its statutes and judgements, for Moses spoke of his doctrine coming upon Israel like the rain and the dew: “My doctrine shall drop as the rain, My speech shall distil as the dew; As the small rain upon the tender grass, And as the showers upon the herb” (Deut.32:2²³).

Jude 4²⁴

Jude does not say what Peter says about the false teachers of whom he writes; Peter’s words concerning them are – “denying even the Master that bought them” (2 Pet.2:1²⁵). Peter views the false teachers as men who had been bought by the Lord. This I would understand means buying in the sense of 1 Cor.6:20²⁶,

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mal.4.4>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.2.1>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.32.2>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%204>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet.2.1>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.6.20>

“Ye were bought with a price.” Some have thought that because they were in the field, the world, they were bought, but the Lord bought the field because of the treasure that was in it, that is, His saints (Matt.13:44²⁷). He did not buy the wicked that were in the world. Jude, in contrast, does not refer to these ungodly men as having been bought. They had crept in privily, disguised as sheep, whilst they were actually wolves. Paul said in his parting message to the elders of the church of God in Ephesus, “I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the (little) flock” (Acts 20:29²⁸). He did not stop there, he continued to say, “And from amongst your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them” (Acts 20:30²⁹).

Thus we see that, as the apostles were disappearing from the scene, two classes arose among God’s people, elders who taught things which were destructive of the Faith, and ungodly, unregenerate men, who crept in as wolves, men who did not spare the flock. Jude has the latter class specially before his mind as he writes, and, perchance, Peter has the former, though it might be difficult to detect a difference between them. Even Judas was not detected by the rest of the apostles until the end, when he came out in his true colours. The Lord warned His disciples with the words, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves” (Matt.7:15³⁰). These ungodly men turned the grace of God into

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.13.44>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.29>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.30>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.7.15>

lasciviousness, that is, lewdness, debauchery. They changed the freedom that believers enjoy, through divine grace, into an occasion for the flesh to run riot (Gal.5:13³¹). In contrast to this the grace of God teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world (age) (Tit.2:12³²). Instead of denying ungodliness, these ungodly men denied the Lord, whose example and teaching ever point in the direction of godly living.

Jude 5³³

Jude cites a few of the judgements which came upon those who rebelled against God, and he begins with the 603,548 men of Israel who were numbered at Sinai, who entered into a covenant of obedience to obey all that the LORD commanded them. All these later disbelieved and disobeyed God at Kadesh-barnea and were sentenced to death in the wilderness, and were not allowed by God to enter His rest in the land of Canaan. The Arabah became the graveyard of those rebellious men. Such are held up by Jude as a warning to the saints not to fall after the same example of disobedience (Num.14:29³⁴).

Jude 6³⁵

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.5.13>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.2.12>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%205>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Num.14.29>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%206>

The fallen angels, presumably the angels of the devil (Matt.25:41³⁶; Rev.12:7³⁷), who kept not their “first or original state, or state of dignity” and of their own volition left their own dwelling or habitation which was assigned to them by God, have been kept in everlasting bonds under darkness to the judgement of the great day. The devil will not be cast into the eternal fire of the Lake of Fire until after the Millennium (Rev.20:7-10³⁸), and the judgement of the great day possibly refers to the judgement of the Great White Throne (Rev.20:11-15³⁹). See my notes on 2 Pet.2:4⁴⁰: It is a great difficulty to apprehend how the angels that sinned who were cast down to hell (Tartarus, RVM) are in heaven, in Rev.12:7⁴¹, if the passages refer to the same angels.

Jude 7⁴²

This verse has been used by those who hold that the sons of God, in Gen.6:2⁴³, were fallen angels who married wives of the daughters of men, and had hybrid children by them, half angelic and half human. These words, “having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication, and gone after strange flesh” – that as Sodom and Gomorrah, etc. went after strange (other) flesh, they say, that the angels went after strange (Gk. heteros, different) flesh, flesh of another kind. The whole case

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.25.41>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.12.7>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.7-10>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.11-15>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet.2.4>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.12.7>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%207>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.6.2>

breaks down when we remember that angels are spirits (Heb.1:7⁴⁴,14⁴⁵), and have not got bodies of flesh at all; hence they could not go after other flesh when they themselves are not flesh. The whole idea of persons who are spirits marrying women with a body of flesh is a wild dream. Angels neither marry nor are given in marriage (Matt.22:30⁴⁶). What the verse says is this, that Sodom and Gomorrah, and the contiguous cities in like manner with Sodom and Gomorrah, gave themselves over to fornication and bestial practices (see Lev.18:23⁴⁷;20:15⁴⁸,16⁴⁹; Deut.27:21⁵⁰). These cities were veritable sinks of iniquity, and their punishment was such as is an example of God's wrath on such as similarly defile themselves. The inhabitants of these cities are suffering the punishment of eternal fire from then till now. "In like manner" does not refer to the angels that sinned at all.

Jude 8⁵¹,9⁵²

These carnal dreamers defiled themselves by their dreamings, and were like those of whom Peter writes, who had eyes full of an adulteress and could not cease from sin (2 Pet.2:14⁵³). They also set aside, or at nought, all lordship. They would be under

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.1.7>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%201.14>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.22.30>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lev.18.23>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lev%2020.15>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lev%2020.16>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.27.21>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%208>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%209>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet.2.14>

authority to no one, having denied the lordship, the absolute authority, of Christ (Jude 4⁵⁴). They also blasphemed or railed at glories. In contrast to their carnal and rebellious behaviour, so high a person as Michael, the archangel, durst not bring a railing judgement against the devil. Yet puny men often speak disparagingly of this great and dread being who is the deceiver of the whole world. The Scriptures do not reveal when this contention took place between Michael and the devil, but the body of Moses was the matter, or one of the matters, about which they disputed. Dan.10:12-21⁵⁵ sheds some light on what takes place in the realm of the unseen. The Lord alone may rebuke the devil (Zech.3:2⁵⁶). We do well not to go beyond the Scriptures when we speak of the evil one whose judgement and destiny are fixed by God.

Jude 10⁵⁷

A more gross and rebellious state could hardly be described, than for men to be compared to beasts or creatures without reason, who in their railing at things which they do not understand corrupt and defile themselves.

Jude 11⁵⁸

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%204>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.10.12-21>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.3.2>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%2010>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%2011>

What was the way of Cain? It was the way of a man who listened to the devil and rejected the way of God, who spoke to Cain twice at least before he committed the terrible act of slaying his brother. “And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother’s righteous” (1 Jn 3:12⁵⁹). What were his evil works? First in importance of these was Cain’s bringing of the fruit of the ground as an offering unto the LORD, whereas he should have brought a like offering to that of Abel his brother, an offering, the blood of which had been shed. The devil was behind Cain’s act. What of Balaam? He went hurriedly and rashly against the word of God also. He thought to enrich himself with the hire of wrong-doing. A dumb ass rebuked him for his mad folly, but he went on to sin and to reap the consequences of his sin. Then of Korah’s pride and rebellion we are well acquainted. He perished in the revolt which he headed against God and His servants Moses and Aaron. In the case of each of these men, Cain, Balaam and Korah, we see the same spirit at work; men, who knew the will of God, gave themselves to the evil one and rebelled against the plain word of God. These evil men of whom Jude writes would perish too in their sin and rebellion.

Jude 12⁶⁰,13⁶¹

Here we have a number of similes describing the character and works of the ungodly men who had crept in privily amongst the saints. They were sunken rocks, a danger to voyagers even in a calm sea, and the danger was more abundantly present, for

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.12>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%2012>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%201.13>

they ingratiated themselves with the saints as they feasted with them in love-feasts. They fed (there is no word for shepherds) or shepherded themselves and cared not for the flock. They were clouds without water. Their ministry was just words, words, and afforded no water for the thirsty and weary. They were autumn trees, trees of the harvest, but barren of fruit. They were said to be twice dead, a difficult description indeed! The words must bear relationship to autumn trees, plucked up by the roots.

In Rom.4:19⁶² Paul speaks the thoughts of Abraham when he considered the deadness of Sarah and of himself to produce naturally the son of promise: “And without being weakened in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb.” In the light of this, unfruitfulness is no doubt regarded as deadness, and besides, the barren fruit trees were actually dead. Thus we have a double state of deadness. The result is, such trees are not cut down, but pulled up by the roots. The Lord said, “Every plant which My heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up” (Matt.15:13⁶³). These evil men who had crept in privily had not been planted by God in His house, and, consequently, they were in due time rooted up. They were also wild waves of the sea, full of action and turbulence, but only foaming out their own shame (or shames): They were as the

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.4.19>

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.15.13>

wicked of Isa.57:20⁶⁴,21⁶⁵, as a troubled sea that cannot rest, whose “waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”

Then we have the fearful end of these ungodly men, “for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved for ever.” They were on earth like wandering stars (the planets, some suggest comets), always on the move, and they will be wanderers for ever in utter darkness. If Judas Iscariot could company with the apostles and was chosen by the Lord for the fell work of betraying Him, the Lord knowing his character from the beginning that he was a devil, it was no wonder that the wrong kind of material got in among the saints, persons who were inside only for what they could get.

Jude 14⁶⁶,15⁶⁷

Certain have thought that this prophecy of Enoch is derived from the apocryphal book of Enoch, which is thought to have been written about the time of Herod the Great, but this is thought by others to be very uncertain. I myself think it to be very uncertain. If a traditional account of Enoch’s prophecy existed in the time of Herod the Great, so as to be recounted in this apocryphal book of Enoch, then it would be equally well known to the apostles and the Jewish Christians of the early days then the Lord was on earth Whence Jude’s knowledge of this prophecy is derived is a matter of mystery about which it is

64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.57.20>

65. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2057.21>

66. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%2014>

67. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%201.15>

impossible to be dogmatic. As to the truth of the prophecy there can be no doubt, as Jude's epistle is an inspired epistle like the rest in the New Testament. Jude sees the same characteristics in the judgement of God which will overtake the ungodly, as overtook the ungodly in Noah's day, when they were swept away by the flood. Jude gives us a view of what existed in the Fellowship at the close of the apostolic period or shortly afterwards, when Judaism and other fatal doctrines of demons were taught by ministers of Satan.

These were in a frenzy of haste to bring to an end the testimony of the Lord which the apostles and their co-workers had raised in the churches of God. Four times Jude writes of "ungodly" and "ungodliness." In view of the oncoming tide of ungodliness no wonder that Paul wrote to Timothy of the need for godliness, and wrote to him of the Mystery of Godliness, even Christ, who was manifested in the flesh, in whom we learn what is proper conduct in the house of God. To be ungodly is to be bereft of the fear of God, that reverence and awe that is due to the Divine Being. There is no fear of God before the eyes of the ungodly (Rom.3:18⁶⁸).

Jude 16⁶⁹

Murmurers are persons who "utter secret and sullen discontent," which has a most harmful effect on the peace of any community. The world was never more full of this than it is today, and, woe to the Fellowship of God's Son if such people become numerous, for they will drive out peace before them. Complainers, these

68. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.18>

69. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%2016>

are fault-finders, persons such as the Lord described, who see motes in their brother's eye and do not see that they have a beam in their own (Matt.7:4⁷⁰,5⁷¹). "Thou hypocrite!" the Lord said to such. Jude said that such were walking after their own lusts. They were such as would put restrictions on others with their complaints, but would seek full scope for their own licence. David writes, in Ps.12:2-4⁷², of those who spoke to their neighbours with flattering lip and a double heart, and who claimed the right to speak as they would. Such were the men of Jude's time as indicated here. They were men with a glib tongue who uttered great swelling words, and showed respect of persons, that is, they admired persons for profit, a foul and nauseating course of conduct.

Jude 17⁷³,18⁷⁴

These words are similar to those of 2 Pet.3:2⁷⁵,3⁷⁶: Paul, Peter and now Jude, show the character of the last days of the apostolic period; the shades of night were falling and the wolves, of whom Paul spoke in Acts 20, were ravishing the flock. Not only were the last days of the apostolic period in view, but the last days before the Lord's coming also are indicated. Who can doubt that these are upon us? Our safety is found in the words which Paul spoke when he commended the elders of Ephesus to God

70. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.7.4>

71. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%207.5>

72. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.12.2-4>

73. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%2017>

74. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%201.18>

75. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet.3.2>

76. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet%203.3>

and to the word of His grace. Here Jude calls upon the saints to remember the words of the apostles of the Lord which had been spoken to them. This is ever the safeguard of saints in dark days. If we fail to read and to adhere to the Scriptures, we leave ourselves open to become a prey to the evil one and to the character of the times in which we live.

Jude 19⁷⁷

Here is further proof that these men had never been born again. They were mere natural (Gk. psuchikoi, soulish) men; men such as Paul describes in 1 Cor.2:14⁷⁸: “Now the natural (Gk. psuchikos, soulish) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged.” They had no powers of discernment, for they had not the Spirit. Hence, being led by mere natural reason, they caused separations. Paul speaks of certain, in Rom.16:17⁷⁹, who were causing divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which the saints had learned, and the saints were to turn away from such. What could be expected from men who had not the Spirit, than that they would blunder in spiritual things in the darkness of their own natural minds?

Jude 20⁸⁰,21⁸¹

77. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%2019>

78. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.2.14>

79. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.17>

80. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%2020>

81. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%201.21>

The Faith here is the same Faith, as in Jude 3⁸², which was once for all delivered to the saints, and for which they were to contend earnestly. It is here viewed as a foundation, and is the base of Christian conduct, both individual and collective. This is the foundation, and we are to be the builders. Then we are to be ever praying in the Holy Spirit. This is similar to Paul's words, in Eph.6:18⁸³, "praying at all seasons in the Spirit." Prayer, we learn from Eph.2:18⁸⁴, is to be made through the Lord Jesus, in the Spirit, unto the Father. "For through Him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father." We are to keep ourselves in the love of God, a continuous act of keeping ourselves in divine love by building ourselves upon the Faith and praying in the Holy Spirit. Does not this simply show to us that we keep ourselves in God's love, by listening to Him and doing what He says to us in the words of the Faith, which is His revealed will, and by seeking the ear of our God in prayer? If these two lines of communication are kept open and clear, God speaking to us and we to Him, then we shall indeed keep ourselves in His love, that love which He bears to those who are obedient to Him, "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life": this is to be our present continuous experience. Great will be that mercy of God to us, for there before us lies that eternal life, that condition of life for which we who have the gift of eternal life are already prepared (Rom.6:23⁸⁵). Then life within

82. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%203>

83. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.18>

84. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.18>

85. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.23>

and life without shall be in the fullest accord. The study of the words “eternal life” will be found fruitful to those who give time to it.

Jude 22⁸⁶,23⁸⁷

The RV marginal reading says that the Greek text here is uncertain. It would seem that the better rendering is, “And some who dispute, convict, but others save, from fire snatching them.” Of old Joshua the high priest was described as “a brand plucked out of the fire” (Zech.3:2⁸⁸). See also Jn 15:6⁸⁹: This use of fire, in a figurative way, shows a present destruction of the lives of believers, lives which might have been lived to God’s glory. On some they were to have mercy, but they were to hate the garment, the habits of the persons, which had been defiled by the flesh. They were to carry out this work in fear. Thus each case was to be treated on its merits, the contenders were to be convicted; those whom the fire was consuming were to be saved; and those whom the flesh had defiled were to be shown mercy. Such as seek to restore others are exhorted by Paul – “looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Gal.6:1⁹⁰).

Jude 24⁹¹,25⁹²

86. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%2022>

87. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%201.23>

88. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.3.2>

89. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2015.6>

90. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.6.1>

91. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%2024>

92. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%201.25>

What a day of exultation it will be when the Lord brings His saints in before His Father! “Wise” before God in the AV/KJV is omitted by many authorities and is omitted in the RV The Spirit-given words of Jude in his ascription of praise to God our Saviour of glory, majesty, dominion and power, will never cease throughout eternity’s unending ages. Here is one of the finest of doxologies, comparable to that with which Paul ends the epistle to the Romans. It is difficult to say who is referred to as “Him,” whether it is God the Father or the Lord Jesus. “Him” may refer to the Lord Jesus, and “His” in “His glory” is, I think, the Father’s glory. So that the Lord Jesus is able to guard us from stumbling with the object in view of setting us in the presence of the Father’s glory without blemish and that with exceeding joy. We sometimes sing of this in the hymn, “When Christ shall bring us in to Thee, We’ll praise Thy grace more worthily.”

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