

Sunday, January 25, 2009
Living Hope EFC

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2 & 3 John and Jude

INTRO: Plantinga. **We have a yearning for completeness!**

"In several of his writings the Christian author C.S. Lewis explores this phenomenon of human longing or yearning...When we have it, we are seeking union with something from which we are separated. For example, we want to be reunited with a happy time or a lovely place or a good friend. We look for a green valley and want to crawl under its covers. We think of a happy home and want to dwell in its center. We keep wanting to "get back" or to "get in."

What's remarkable is that these longings are unfulfillable. We can't merge with the music we love. Nor can we climb inside nature...The same is true of future situations in our lives. We may want a good career or a family or a particular kind of life, and these things may come to us. But if so, they will not fill all our niches because we want more than these things can give. Even if we fall deeply in love and marry another human being, we discover that our spiritual and sexual oneness isn't final. It's wonderful, but not final...Nor can we go back into our past and steep ourselves in its joys. For one thing, some of its joys weren't as good as we think...Nostalgia is a yearning for what is over now.

The truth is that nothing in this earth can finally satisfy us. Much can make us content for a time, but nothing can fill us to the brim. The reason is that our final joy lies "beyond the walls of this world," as J.R.R. Tolkien put it.

Augustine addressed the *summum bonum* of the world: "O Lord," prayed Augustine, "you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you." -*Engaging God's World*, 4-6

While we want completeness and like to focus on love, happiness, harmony...the fact is – our yearning won't be satisfied until heaven. And we must focus on the reality of living in a fallen world.

This is what Jude said, verse 3-4: "Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. 4For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord."

"I'd like to talk to you about heaven...but I need to warn you about evil men in our midst!"

God sent His Son to be our Way to heaven. Satan sends out his messengers to deceive men and keep them from "completeness."

So...we see that many of the epistles, written later in the first century, have to deal with these "false prophets."

2 John (85-95AD)

To whom is it written?

- 1 – To an unknown woman and her kids.
- 2 – To a church personified as “the chosen lady” & its members.
- This is most likely as the plural is used after verse 5.

Main Topic: Beware of false teachers traveling about the land!

Vs.7 – “Many deceivers” have gone out. They are anti-Christ.

- They deny the physical reality of Jesus Christ.

Vs.8 – False teachers are to be seen as dangerous!

- A Christian can get caught up in false teaching and get sidetracked in his devotion to Christ & the truth.
- While God wouldn't forget what they had done for him in the past, the fullness of their reward in future service is in jeopardy

Vs.9 – Be sure! **One denying teaching about Christ does not have God in his life!** You can't have God– without having Christ.

So – how should one respond to these false teachers? Vs.10:

(1) Don't offer traveling teachers a place to stay!

- In the Greco-Roman world a traveling philosopher or religious teacher was a familiar sight. Christian preachers traveled and relied on local believers for support & hospitality.
- POINT: Be discriminating! Don't in any way support antichrists.

(2) Don't greet him with, “Hey, good to see you!”

- In no way condone the activity of false teachers.

LESSON: New Testament Apostles and believers were not tolerant of false teachers!

They saw heaven & hell as realities and that Christ was the ONLY way to be saved from judgment.

Have we become too tolerant of false teachers in the church?

3 John – Is a letter to a personal friend,
and addresses the exact opposite of 2 John.

Main Topic: Be sure you welcome true teachers of Christ!

Vs.1-4 – **Gaius** is evidently a friend of John's, and his convert.

Vs.5-8 – Commendation for helping Christian itinerate teachers!

- Vs. 7 - In the 1st C., (1) If the gospel was going to be spread, men and women had to travel and share it in other cities.
(2) The churches needed teachers to teach N.T. doctrine. These first Christian teachers were not well financed.
- Inns were notoriously immoral places.
- Traveling evangelists & teachers depended on a network of hospitable, Christian homes for food & lodging.
 - Jesus modeled this in sending out of 12: **Matt.10:11,42**

EXAMPLES:

- Peter stayed with Simon the Tanner: Acts 9:43.

- Paul, Silas, Timothy & Luke stayed with Lydia in Thyatira: 16:15
Immediately hospitality was her way of showing appreciation
- Philemon, in Colosse, was known for his loving spirit & open home Vs.5, 22.
- Gaius, (in Corinth – Rom.16:23), opened his home to church.
- Gaius (3 Jn) extended hospitality to strangers (Vs.5), most likely traveling teachers.
- It was not proper for them to ask for support from unbelievers.
- This was & is a practical way to demonstrate our value for those who minister in the Name of Christ!
- **John exhorts Gaius to treat them with hospitality worthy of God's name and of their commitment to Christ's mission.**
- Show them hospitality when there. Help them with their trip.
- This is the picture of the Church as a real Family of God!

BUT...not everyone was willing to help these "true" teachers!

Vs.9 – **Diotrephes** – appears to be the head pastor, perhaps "bishop" of the local church, motivated by his own personal self-advancement. He loved to be the focus of the church!

- *He gave no heed to the Apostle John's authority!!!*

Vs. 10 – He gossiped maliciously: "words of unjustified, evil charges." - Against the Apostle!

- **He refused to welcome those spreading the gospel!?**
- AND...he stopped others from helping them – with the threat of excommunication!

Q: What kind of a church leader/ pastor acts this way toward those on the same team?

- 1 & 2 John warn that there were many false teachers to be aware of and resist.
WHY act this way toward believers?

This is the picture of a pastor/ leader who gets so caught-up in promoting himself, his agenda, his ministry, his reputation, that he will even do harm to other committed Christians/ministries – in order to gain accolades for himself. Maybe – to get more \$.

- **This is always a temptation to those in ministry.** We forget that we are servants, not the Master, and want to be first.
- **Mark 10:35-45** James & John made this very mistake!

John's encourages Gaius not to follow this bad example–Vs.11,12

Jude (67-80AD)

Main Topic: Beware of apostates in your midst!

- Jude = the half-brother of Christ, brother of James (Acts15).
- He writes with a lot of figures of speech, dynamic.
- His main concern was false teachers within the church.

Warnings against those who pervert grace: Vs.3-4

Jude would rather talk about our salvation prospects...

But the need was to warn believers about false teachers.

- Jude goes beyond other epistles in relentless denunciation.
- They are subtle, secretive, deceiving, promoting immorality.
- The church must "contend for the faith" (body of N.T. truth).

Reminder: God will judge those who live contrary to His Will:V.5,16

Vs.5-7 – Three Examples: Israel, fallen angels, Sodom & Gomorrah

- All 3 rejected God's authority and were judged for it.
- V.8-10 – These false teachers are under the same sentence.

Vs.11 - Three Examples of those who opposed God's revealed will

- Cain – devised his own way to worship God.
- Balaam – served out of greed, brought immorality into Israel.
- Korah – assumed he had equal authority to Moses.

Vs.12-16 – False teachers are selfish, lifeless, spiritually dead, perilous to follow. God has severe judgment awaiting them!

Vs.17-23 – Guidelines for protections against such threats:

Vs.17-19 – Know and live by what the Apostles taught us.

- They warned about these men: Acts 20:29,30; 2 Pet.32:1-3.

Vs.20 – Build yourselves up in the truth. Know God's Word!

- The best way to discern counterfeit is to handle authentic.

Vs.21 – Keep loving God & others, & wait for Christ's appearing.

Vs.22 – Seek to foster eternal life in all your relationships.

Vs.24 – Jesus Christ will take you to His presence soon.

The Epistles have given us an idea of the threat upon God's Word and His Church – at the end of the 1st C. and for the last 2000 years. AND YET God has sovereignly preserved His Word and His Church.

Revelation will take us into the future and the threat that is awaiting opportunity – to engulf the whole world in a cosmic rebellion against God, when Anti-Christ comes in person and takes his stand against God. This is our next reading.