



BIBLE
EXPOSITOR
AND
ILLUMINATOR

“Let him
take
the water
of life
freely”

Revelation 22:17

Spring Quarter

March | April | May

2025

Bible Expositor and Illuminator

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LOOKING AHEAD

This quarter, we consider “The Climax of History.” By covering key passages from the New Testament letters and selections from Revelation, we survey the biblical view of the end times. Our lessons walk through difficult texts and help readers dispel misconceptions about history’s conclusion.

Our first unit reads through Jude, the Bible’s penultimate book. Lesson 1 (Jude 1:1-13) focuses on Jude’s warning against false teachers, a message still pertinent today. In the second half of the letter (1:17-25), Jude shifts his focus to the faithful among his audience, exhorting them to build up their faith. We consider these verses in lesson 2.

Our second unit begins with II Peter 3:3-15a. Peter anticipates Jesus’ return and addresses those who deny the Second Coming. Peter assures his audience the Lord is not slow; rather, He is patient. One day, Christ will come and exercise judgment.

Lessons 4–6 expound upon portions of Revelation 4, 5, and 7, respectively. Each of these visions captures the worship of God and Christ. Lesson 4 describes the ceaseless praise before the throne of God. Lesson 5 records the praises of the twenty-four elders and angels as Christ comes to open the sealed scroll. And lesson 6 documents the resounding worship of the innumerable multitude.

Following, lesson 7 considers the messages of the three angels, with particular focus on the second one’s proclamation concerning Babylon. God’s wrath will be poured out upon those who stray from Him and worship the evil figures.

In lesson 8 we pause our study of Revelation to reflect on Easter. Luke 24:32-49 describes the Risen Lord’s interactions and lessons. Christ explains that He is the fulfillment of the Scriptures.

We return to Revelation with our third unit: “The Final Victory.” Lessons 9–13 cover the final chapters of Revelation. Lesson 9 considers the Lamb’s wedding feast, capturing the final consummation of Christ and His church. In the remaining four lessons, we turn our attention to different aspects of the new heaven and new earth. These vivid images provide hope for Christians suffering in the world today. The last of these lessons concludes the quarter by exploring the final verses of the Bible.

—Andrew Rudolf

PLEASE NOTE: Fundamental, sound doctrine is the objective of LifeStone Ministries, Union Gospel Press. The writers are prayerfully selected for their Bible knowledge and willingness to submit to the Spirit of Truth, each writing in his own style as enlightened by the Holy Spirit. At best we know in part only. “They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).

The Face of God

TOM GREENE

The promises that God makes are absolutely staggering. He will create a new heaven and a new earth, and “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev. 21:4). All the pain and sorrow we have experienced will be behind us, and we will feel joy unlike anything we have imagined or dreamed.

Central to heaven’s joys is the promise that we “shall see his face; and his name shall be [on our] foreheads” (22:4). The throne of God and the Lamb is in clear focus in Revelation 4, 5, 7, and 14. Chapter 19 talks about the wedding feast of the Lamb, and we again see the throne of God in chapters 21 and 22. God’s glorious presence and His worship are central to our experience of heaven.

But what does it mean to see the face of God? John struggles to describe what he sees in his vision: “And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald” (4:3). Does this mean that the Father will literally have a physical manifestation we can see? Maybe, but we also understand that many things in Revelation symbolically convey spiritual realities. For example, the “candlesticks” represent the seven churches (1:12-20).

John’s description of God on His throne sounds like Ezekiel 1:26-28, where Ezekiel described what he saw as a “likeness.” Further, John wrote that “no man hath seen God at any time”

(John 1:18), which includes Ezekiel. The point is that while we may not rule out the possibility of the Father having a physical manifestation, we should examine what else it means for us to “see God’s face.”

In the Old Testament, we are called to seek the face of God (Ps. 27:8). Seeing the face of God is associated with preservation and peace (Num. 6:24-26), blessing and grace (Ps. 67:1), restoration (80:19), instruction (119:135), and hope after death (17:15). Its absence is cause for deep distress (102:2).

Significantly, Moses used to talk to God face-to-face, yet when he asked God to reveal His glory, God replied that Moses could not see His face (Ex. 33:11, 18-20). From this, we recognize that “seeing God’s face” is not used in merely one way in the Bible. Critically, we also recognize that “seeing God’s glory” is almost synonymous with the type of “seeing God’s face” that is currently impossible on earth. We experience God in true and profound ways; but as finite beings we should not expect to fully comprehend God’s glory any more than we would expect to fit Mount Everest into a backpack.

In the New Testament, we come to understand that Jesus reveals the Father to us (John 1:18) because we see “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (II Cor. 4:6). But for now we see in a mirror dimly (I Cor. 13:12). Seeing God relates to moral purity (III John 1:11), and as we see God, it changes us more and more into His image (II Cor. 3:18). When

(Editorials continued on page 186)

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

JUDE 1:1 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:

2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

3 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.

4 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.

5 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.

6 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.

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrhah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to forni-

cation, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

8 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

9 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.

10 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.

11 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.

12 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;

13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

NOTES

Beware of False Teachers

Lesson Text: Jude 1:1-13

Related Scriptures: II Thessalonians 1:1-10; II Timothy 3:1-9; II Peter 2:1-22

TIME: about A.D. 70

PLACE: unknown

GOLDEN TEXT—“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” (Jude 1:3b).

Introduction

Where there is the true, there will be the false. Where there is the genuine, there will be the counterfeit.

But it is not always easy to spot counterfeits. The goal of counterfeiting, after all, is to look enough like the real thing to fool people. Someone not familiar with a hundred dollar bill's marks of authenticity can easily be fooled by a good counterfeiter. The same is true in religion. At times, false prophets are difficult to spot, particularly when they claim to believe in the same God, serve the same Savior, and read the same Bible as we do. That was the situation

Jude and other Christians faced in the first century. As the church grew exponentially, false teaching increased.

In an effort to encourage fidelity to the true gospel, as well as to identify false teachers and their motives and methods, Jude penned this brief epistle.

LESSON OUTLINE

- I. INTRODUCTION—Jude 1:1-2
- II. CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH—Jude 1:3-4
- III. CORRUPT TEACHERS—Jude 1:5-13

Exposition: Verse by Verse

INTRODUCTION

JUDE 1:1 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:

2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

Resembling many of the letters found in the New Testament, the book begins by identifying the letter's sender: “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.” That Jude identifies himself simply as the “brother of James” is of particular interest. Both names were extremely common in