**JUDE**

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**Chapter Eleven**

**“But You, Beloved . . .”**

*But you*, *beloved*, *building yourselves up on your most holy faith*,*praying in the Holy Spirit*,

*keep yourselves in the love of God*,*looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*.

*And on some have compassion*,*making a distinction*;

*but others save with fear*, *pulling them out of the fire*,*hating even the garment defiled by the flesh*.

*Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling*,*and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy*,

*To God our Savior*,*who alone is wise*, *be glory and majesty*,*dominion and power*,*both now and forever*.*Amen*(**Jude 20-25**)

As foretold in **Jude 17-19** and **2 Peter 3:3ff**, “*mockers*” will appear “*in the last time*” with *a pseudo message concerning Christ*’*s return*. They will follow a uniformitarian philosophy that nothing has changed in the past, and nothing is going to change in the future. God has not intervened in affairs as they relate to the earth or man in the past, and He is not going to intervene in the future. By and through this form of reasoning, *originating from man*’*s wisdom during Man*’*s Day*, mockers appearing in Christendom during the latter days will *scoff at*, *make light of*, *belittle*, *the great doctrines surrounding Christ*’*s return*.

The Old Testament counterpart to that which Scripture has foretold will occur in Christendom during the latter days is *the experiences of the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai during the time Moses was on the mountain*. A word study of “*mockers*” from **Jude 18** will lead directly to this particular time in the history of Israel, referred to in **1 Corinthians 10:7** (ref.Chapter 10 in this book).

And Christians have been instructed in **1 Corinthians 10:6**, **11** that “*all these things*” occurred within the sphere of God’s sovereign direction and control of all things in order that He might have these experiences to draw upon in teaching Christians the deep things pertaining to His plans and purposes relating to man and the earth.

Moses in the type, before departing the camp of Israel and ascending the mountain, left specific instructions for his people: “*Wait here for us* [Joshua accompanied Moses], *until we come back to* *you* . . . .” (**Exodus 24:14**)

The people of Israel were to tarry in the wilderness of Sinai, awaiting Moses’ (and Joshua’s) return.

But after a lengthy period of time, seeing that “Moses delayed to come down out of the mount,” the people grew weary and sought new leadership. They went to Aaron (who, along with Hur, had been left in charge [**Exodus 24:14**]) and said:

*Come*, *make us gods that shall go before us*; *for as for this Moses*, *the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt*, *we do not know what has become of him*. (**Exodus 32:1b**).

Aaron, acceding to their request, collected gold from the people, melted the gold, and formed “*a molded calf*.” The people then offered sacrifices unto the calf, worshipped the calf, and engaged in times of festivities surrounding the sacrifices and worship. In this manner the people of Israel, during the wilderness journey, became involved in *pagan idolatry* (**Exodus 32:2ff**).

Because of this lapse into idolatry, God’s thoughts turned toward the destruction of the entire nation. God revealed both the idolatry and His intentions to Moses while he was still on the mountain, and Moses then interceded and fasted for “*forty days and forty nights*” on behalf of the nation. As a result, God stayed His hand (cf.**Exodus 32:10-14**; **Deuteronomy 9:13**, **14**, **18-20**, **25-29**).

But upon Moses’ return from the mountain, even though the nation itself had been spared, God’s judgment still fell upon His people. The molded calf was burned and ground to powder. The powder was then thrown “*into the brook that descended from the mountain*,” and the children of Israel were made to drink of the water. Following this, three thousand Israelites were slain by the sword; and a plague was sent throughout the camp (cf.**Exodus 32:15ff**; **Deuteronomy 9:21**).

Had the Israelites believed Moses and followed his instructions — *tarrying in the wilderness of Sinai*, *awaiting his return* — they would not have fallen into idolatry, incurring God’s wrath.

Thus, carrying this over into the antitype, one can immediately see the importance of Christians understanding and following exact biblical guidelines concerning activity during Christ’s absence while awaiting His return.

Christ, as Moses, is away from the camp today. He is in heaven, interceding on our behalf; and He has been there for an extensive period of time.

(“Forty” is a number showing *completeness*, and the number is used extensively throughout Scripture in this manner [e.g., **Genesis 7:17**; **Numbers 13:25**; **Luke 4:12**; **Acts 1:3**; **7:23**, **30**]. Moses’ intercession for “*forty days and forty nights*” on behalf of the Israelites because of their sins foreshadowed Christ’s present intercession as High Priest on behalf of sinning Christians. And, as Moses, Christ is interceding in this manner for *a complete period of time — the entire dispensation*.)

Before His departure into heaven, Christ, as Moses before his departure to the mountain, left specific instructions for His people:

So he called ten of his servants [“ten,” the number ofordinal completion,signifying all His servants], *delivered to them ten minas* [signifying all His business], *and said to them*, “*Do business till I come*.” (**Luke 19:13**)

All Christians, by direct command from their Lord, are *to be engaged in His business* (*not their business*, *but His business*, *left in their charge*), *AWAITING His return*.And also by direct command from their Lord, they are *to remain engaged in His business* (*again*, *not their business*, *but His business*, *left in their charge*), *UNTIL He returns*.

However, Christians, as the Israelites, have taken their eyes off this command. They have grown weary, ceased to be engaged in the Lord’s business, and ceased to await His return. And they, as the Israelites, have become involved in other things, namely *idolatry*.

The “molde*d calf*,” formed by Aaron during Moses’ stay on the mountain, was an idol apparently derived from the Israelites’ former association with Egypt. According to **Joshua 24:14**, the Israelites had previously worshipped the false gods of Egypt; and the ox was the principle Egyptian god (“Apis”) with which the Israelites had been familiar.

In the antitype, idolatry in which Christians find themselves involved during the time Christ is in heaven, has, in like manner, been derived from their former association with the world. Anything coming between a Christian and God, in actuality, constitutes an idol (e.g.,note that “covetousness” is called *idolatry* in **Ephesians 5:5**); and the Church today is filled with Christians following *the ways and practices of the world from which they have been delivered*.

*One need only look at the state of Christendom today to see that idolatry of this nature is rampant.*

Nakedness, Shame

Scripture reveals three very significant points concerning Israel’s degenerate condition at the time Moses returned (**Exodus 32:25** [KJV]):

1. The people were *naked*.
2. The people were *ashamed*.
3. Aaron, the one (with Hur) left in charge, was held *responsible*.

This refers, in the antitype, to a parallel degeneracy that will exist in Christendom at the time Christ returns:

1. The people will be *naked*.
2. The people will be *ashamed*.
3. The leaders (shepherds of the flock) will be held *responsible*.

(The Hebrew word translated “naked” [KJV] in **Exodus 32:25** has to do with “loosening,” from the idea of *loosening* or *casting off* one’s garments, *shaving* the head, etc. [cf.**Leviticus 10:6**; **13:45**; **21:10**; **Numbers 5:18**; **2 Chronicles 28:19**]. Most translators and interpreters have understood the thought of “loosening” in this verse to be a reference to the *removal of all restraints* upon individuals, i.e.,to “lawlessness,” to “running wild,” etc. [ref.NASB, NIV]. However, understanding the word in this latter sense is still only another apt illustration of Christians in the latter days, with *nakedness* at Christ’s return still being seen as the end result.)

*Nakedness* and *shame* are subjects that have their roots in the **second** and **third** chapters of **Genesis**, in Scriptures surrounding the creation and fall of man. Adam and Eve, in an un-fallen state, following their creation, were both “*naked*”and were “*not ashamed.*”

However, in a fallen state, following the entrance of sin, they “knew that they were *naked*”and were “*afraid*.”They attempted to hide their nakedness by constructing fig-leaf aprons, and they then *“hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden*” (**Genesis 2:25**; **3:6-10**).

God, rejecting their fig-leaf aprons as completely unsuitable for covering their nakedness, provided His own covering made from animal skins (**Genesis 3:21**). This provision was from God:

*He performed the work to bring about the covering*.

*A vicarious sacrifice was involved*.

*Blood was shed*.

This is the method that God used at the very beginning to cover fallen man’s nakedness, i.e.,to effect fallen man’s redemption; and this method, originally set forth by God in **Genesis**, establishes a pattern that can never change throughout Scripture.

The promised Redeemer in **Genesis 3:15**,at some following point in time, MUST effect man’s redemption after the established pattern in **Genesis 3:21**. That is:

*First*, *the Redeemer must be God*, *for only God can perform the work of redemption*.

*Second*, *the Redeemer must provide a vicarious sacrifice*.

*Third*, *blood must be shed*.

Christians today, because of Christ’s vicarious sacrifice and shed blood, are clothed in the righteousness of Christ — the antitype of Adam and Eve clothed with the provided animal skins in **Genesis 3:21**. Christians, in this respect, now possess a right relationship with God, for this relationship is based entirely on the righteousness of Christ and His finished work. Nothing that man does — typified by the fig-leaf aprons — can have anything to do with either establishing or adding to this right relationship. Man’s reception of imputed righteousness is *entirely of God*.Man can bring nothing whatsoever into a work — either before or after his salvation — which God Himself, in the person of His Son, has finished.

Consequently, Christians MUSTremain clothed in the righteousness of Christ forever, else the completeness, sufficiency, etc. of the very redemptive work of God Himself would be brought into question. Hence, in this respect, Christians can NEVERbe found naked.

Thus far the subject under discussion has been “nakedness” relative to *the righteousness of Christ and eternal salvation*.However, there is another type of “nakedness” in Scripture. The Israelites had appropriated the blood of the paschal lambs in Egypt. Yet, they were later found “naked” in the wilderness (or in a “lawless” state, which would, of necessity, be associated with *nakedness* by and through the exact meaning of the Hebrew word in relation to the antitype).

Individuals in the Laodicean church in **Revelation 3:14ff** (saved individuals, those clothed in the righteousness of Christ, those who [in the preceding respect] could never be looked upon as naked) were said, among other things, to be “*naked*” (v. **17**). In **Romans 8:35**, “*nakedness*” is mentioned alongside six other things — “*tribulation*,” “*distress*,” “*persecution*,” “*famine*,” “*peril*,” and “*sword*” — as something possible for Christians to experience.

The main thrust of this verse though has to do with something that Christians cannot experience — *separation* “*from the love of Christ*.” Since the things listed in this verse cannot separate one from the love of Christ, it becomes evident immediately that “*nakedness*,” as used here, can have nothing to do with Christians being clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Rather, the possibility of Christians appearing *naked*, as in **Romans 8:35**, as well as in **Revelation 3:17**, refers to something else entirely (cf.**Revelation 16:15**).

Two Justifications

Understanding the matter surrounding more than one type of nakedness is contingent on understanding that there is more than one type justification. This is dealt with in **James** chapter **two** (vv. **14-26**). There is *a justification by faith*,and there is also *a justification by works*.Accordingly, there is a covering for one’s nakedness associated with each.

*Justification* *by faith* has to do with the salvation that we presently possess, *the salvation of the spirit*; and *justification by works* has to do with the salvation to be revealed at the time of our Lord’s return, *the salvation of the soul*.

*The covering for nakedness* that we presently possess, associated with eternal salvation, is *the righteousness of Christ*;and *the covering for nakedness*, associated with the hope set before Christians, is *the* *righteous acts of the saints —* the wedding garment (**Revelation 19:8**).

“Justification” is NEVER *by faith and works* (i.e.,a single justification where faith and works are both involved). It is always by one or the other, NEVERa combination of the two (though, in the salvation of the soul, works emanate out of faith); and justification *by faith* MUST *always precede any mention of justification by works*.

*Justification by works* emanates out of *a person*’*s faithfulness following his justification by faith*, and works of this nature bring faith (a Christian’s faithfulness) to its proper goal (**James 2:22**; **1 Peter 1:9**). Thus, a person MUSTfirst be in a position to exercise faith before works can enter. That is to say, he MUST *first be justified by faith before he can be justified by works*.

*The wedding garment* (“*fine linen*”) in **Revelation 19:8** is specifically said to be made up of “*the righteous acts* [works] *of the saints*” (NKJV; ASV). The word translated “*righteous acts*” (“righteousness,” KJV) is plural in the Greek text (*dikaiomata*)and cannot refer to the imputed righteousness of Christ. *Dikaiomata* in this verse has to do with “*righteous acts*” producing *justification*.

In this respect, these are “justifying acts” *of the saints* (the same word, appearing in the singular, is translated “justification” and “righteousness” [referring to *justification by faith*,made possible through Christ’s *righteous*, *justifying act*] in **Romans 5:16**, **18**; and the cognate verb [from *dikaioo*] is translated “*justified*” in **James 2:24** [referring to both *justification by faith* and *justification by works* — *a justification by faith* (*Christians exercising faithfulness*) *which is inseparably connected with a justification by works*]).

*Justification by faith*, inseparably connected with *justification by works*, in **James 2:24** has to do with the saved alone, with Christians, with those *who have already been justified by faith* (completely apart from works) as seen in **Romans 5:16**, **18**. **James 2:24** has to do with *works emanating out of faith*, with justification seen in connection with both in this respect (cf. **James 2:14-23**). And *works emanating out of faith*, *resulting in justification by works*, *provide the Christian with a wedding garment*.

(For additional information on *faith and works* in the book of **James**, refer to the author’s book, Salvation of the Soul, Chapter 5, “Faith Made Mature.”)

Apart from the wedding garment, a Christian will be found *naked* at the time of Christ’s return. Having been justified by faith and clothed in the righteousness of Christ, he can never be separated from the love of Christ. He can never be found *naked* relative to his justification by faith. But, failing to be justified by works *following* his justification by faith — resulting in no wedding garment (*nakedness relative to justification by works*) — dire consequences will follow at the time of Christ’s return (note: “judgment” on the basis of *works* [**1 Corinthians 3:12-15**; cf.**Matthew 16:24-27**; **Luke 19:15-26**]).

Appearing in the presence of Christ without a wedding garment is portrayed in **Matthew 22:11-14** by the man appearing at the marriage festivities without a wedding garment (the man from among the “*guests*” [Greek: *anakeimenon,* “reclining ones” —i.e., not ‘guests,’ but *those reclining at the table*]). This man would not have been at these festivities in the first place had he not previously been justified by faith.

This section of Scripture is prophetic in its scope of fulfillment. The festivities portrayed here have to do with festivities surrounding the marriage of the Lamb; and these festivities will occur *in heaven at the end of the present dispensation*.

The man without a wedding garment was questioned concerning both *his presence at the marriage festivities* and *the manner in which he appeared*. The subtle distinction between two different negatives in the Greek text of verses **eleven** and **twelve** (*ou* and *me*) show that *the man knew he was supposed to have a wedding garment*, *but he knowingly*, *defiantly*, *appeared without the necessary attire*.

Because the man was not properly clothed, he was denied admittance, bound, and cast into the darkness outside. That is, *he was found naked*; and, as a result, *he was denied admittance*, *bound*, *and cast into a place comparable to a darkened courtyard outside a brilliantly lighted banqueting hall*.

This man sets forth the fate awaiting, not unsaved individuals, but certain saved individuals. The wedding garment (righteous acts of the saints) is in view, not the imputed righteousness of Christ.

This man typifies those Christians who, in that coming day following their removal from the earth, seek admittance to the festivities surrounding the marriage of God’s Son without being clothed in the proper attire — the wedding garment.

Apostasy in the camp of Israel during Moses’ day could have been prevented had the Israelites followed Moses’ instructions: “*Wait here for us until we come again to you*.”

Apostasy in Christendom today could, likewise, have been prevented had Christians followed Christ’s instructions: “*Do business until I come*.*”*

During Moses’ day the blame for the Israelites’ departure from Moses’ instructions was laid directly at the feet of *the leadership in the camp during the time Moses was on the mountain* (**Deuteronomy 9:20**; **Jeremiah 23:1**, **2**).

And the blame for Christians presently refusing to follow Christ’s instructions must, in like manner, be laid directly at the feet of *the leadership in Christendom during the time Christ is in heaven* (**Matthew 24:45-51**; **1 Peter 5:1-4**).

The shepherds in Christendom, the ones who are supposed to keep the great truths surrounding Christ’s return ever before the people, have become engaged in other activities; and they have led their flocks into these other activities. The end result, foretold thirty-five hundred years ago during the days of Moses, has been *apostasy*.The mockers are present, and the Laodicean church of the end-time is in existence.

*It is all exactly as foretold*. We’re seeing on every hand in Christendom today the antitype of activities in the camp of Israel *immediately before Moses descended the mountain*, and it is only a matter of time before we witness in Christendom the antitype of activities in the camp of Israel *at and following the time Moses descended the mountain.*

Building Oneself Up, Praying…

Immediately preceding Jude’s discourse on apostasy (vv. **4-19**), he exhorted Christians to “*contend earnestly for* [‘earnestly strive with respect to’] *the faith*.” Then, immediately following Jude’s discourse on apostasy, he again refers to the proper place which “faith” is *to continuously occupy in a Christian’s life*:

*But you*, *beloved*, *building yourselves up on your most holy faith*, *praying in the Holy Spirit*.” (**Jude 20**).

Rather than an exhortation though, as in verse **three**, verse **twenty** simply refers to *Christians being built up in the faith*.

The thought from the Greek text has to do with building upon an existing foundation. Verse **twenty** is actually a continuation of verse **three**, with the intervening section on apostasy separating the verses. Jude exhorted Christians concerning “*the faith*” prior to his discourse on apostasy; and now, having completed this discourse, he picks up with the Christians’ relationship to faith exactly where his discourse leaves off.

How does a person “*contend earnestly for* [‘earnestly strive with respect to’] *the faith*”? Jude’s response concerning the manner in which this exhortation is to be carried out is given in the continuation of the subject in verse **twenty**. A person *earnestly strives with respect to* “*the faith*” through *building himself up by means of his faith*. This is in perfect agreement with the parallel section to **Jude 3** in **2 Peter 1:5-8**. In this parallel section, Christians are exhorted to “*add to* [‘abundantly supply in’] *your faith* . . . .” **Second Peter** **1:5-8** and **Jude 3**, **20** refer to the same thing (ref.Chapter 2 in this book).

Christians are presently engaged in a battle. This battle is *spiritual*. It is not against “*flesh and blood*,” but “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places [‘against the spirit forces of wickedness in heavenly places’].” In this battle, Christians are to properly equip themselves with an armor, and among the pieces of this armor is “*the shield of faith*.” Christians holding forth this shield in the warfare against the spirit forces of wickedness will be able “*to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one*” (**Ephesians 6:11-17**).

According to **Romans 10:17**, “*faith comes by* [‘out of’] *hearing*, *and hearing by* [‘through’] *the Word of God*.” Individuals equip themselves with the shield of faith by being *built up in* “*the faith*.” It is in this manner, *and in this manner alone*, that Christians are able to protect themselves from the wiles of Satan — his “*fiery darts*” in the form of *apostasy*,as in **Jude**, etc.

Immediately following the statement concerning individuals being *built up* by means of their “*most holy faith*,” **Jude** refers to “*praying in the Holy Spirit*.” The divine commentary on this verse is **Romans 8:26**, **27**:

*Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses*. *For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought*, *but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*.

*Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is*, *because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God*.

Praying in the Holy Spirit is prayer motivated by the Holy Spirit that emanates from the man of spirit. It is praying by means of and dependence upon the indwelling Holy Spirit. Prayer of this nature plays an integral part in Christians being built up in the faith. The Word of God is “*spiritually discerned*,” and Christians receiving this Word into their saved human spirits MUSTrely upon the indwelling Holy Spirit to lead them “*into all truth*” (**1 Corinthians 2:14**; **John 16:13**). Christians MUSTever combine their study with prayer after this fashion.

Concluding Exhortation

Jude, in his discourse on faith and apostasy, has been building toward a climactic exhortation. He previously exhorted Christians to *contend* (strive) *earnestly with respect to* “*the faith*” (v. **3**); he warned Christians concerning *standing away from* “*the faith*” (vv. **4-19**); and he then came back to the positive side of *the Christian*’*s relationship to faith* (v. **20**), continuing from verse **three**. All things in the first twenty verses point to that which Jude states in verse **twenty-one**:

*Keep yourselves in the love of God*, *looking for* [awaiting] *the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life* [unto life for the age]. (**Jude 21**)

The “*love of God*” in which Christians are to keep themselves is the same love previously mentioned in verse **two**. The word “*love*” in both instances is *agape* in the Greek text, the same as in **2 Peter 1:7**. *Agape* refers to “divine love,” *which God is in His character and nature*.“*God is love*,” i.e., *God is Agape* (**1 John 4:8**). This is the highest type of love attainable. It is the love produced in the life of faithful believers by the indwelling Holy Spirit, and Christians are to keep themselves within the sphere of this love.

*Agape* appears at the conclusion of the list of things to be “abundantly supplied in” a Christian’s faith in **2 Peter 1:5-8**. And it is placed last, as also in **Jude 20**, **21**, because it is the height of Christian experience, and nothing can be added therein.

Christians — being brought to *maturity* by and through being built up in the faith (v. **20**; cf.“*knowledge*,” Greek: *epignosis* [**2 Peter 1:8**]), keeping themselves in *the love of God* (v. **21a**) — are *to await* “*the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life* [‘unto life for the age’]” (v. **21b**). This, of course, is the goal upon which all things in the present pilgrim walk focus.

The goal of faith is the salvation of the soul (life), which has to do with life in the coming age. The entire concept concerning *faith* in relation to *one*’*s calling* and *life in the coming age* set forth by Jude is identical to that set forth by Paul in **1 Timothy 6:12**:

*Fight the good fight of faith*, *lay hold on eternal life* [lit.,“Strive in the good contest of the faith; lay hold on life for the age”], *to which you were also called*…

Jude directs his entire epistle toward *exhorting and warning Christians*, with one thing in view. Jude looked out toward that day when Christians would be called to an accounting and, at that time, either realize or be denied the goal of their calling.

Jude’s concluding exhortation centers on Christians awaiting Christ’s return in a prepared, ready manner. The failure of innumerable Christians to do so has resulted in the present apostasy throughout Christendom — *as Israel in the wilderness of Sinai*, *so Christians in the world today*.To those who “*eagerly wait for Him*” He will “*appear a second time*, *apart from sin*, *for salvation*” (**Hebrews 9:28**). No such promise is given to *those who do not eagerly await His return*.

Concluding Thoughts

*And on some have compassion*, *making a distinction* [lit.,“And you show mercy to the ones who are wavering (or ‘doubting,’ ‘being contentious’)”];

*but others save with fear*, *pulling them out of the fire*, *hating even the garment defiled by the flesh*. (**Jude 22**, **23**)

As Christians are to await “*the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ*,” they are themselves, to show mercy, have compassion on other Christians. The words, “*making a distinction*” (NKJV) in verse **twenty-two** are the translation of the Greek word *diakrino*,which is often used in other portions of the New Testament in the sense of “*wavering*,” “*doubting*,” or “*being contentious*” (cf.**Matthew 21:21**; **Acts 10:20**; **11:2**, **12**; **Romans 14:23**; **James 1:6**; **Jude 9**). This would appear to be the way it should be understood in **Jude 22**. Those Christians who are wavering, doubting, or being contentious concerning the great truths set forth in verses **twenty** and **twenty-one** are to receive mercy at the hands of Christians who understand these truths, *not* a contentious, doubting, or wavering spirit in return. Such responses as the latter will only serve to further alienate them. *Mercy* is the quality that must be exhibited to win them.

The salvation in verse **twenty-three** has nothing to do with eternal life. That’s not the issue being dealt with at all. The text is dealing with *Christians awaiting* “*the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ*” *to life for the age* (vv. **22**, **23**). The same basic thought is set forth in **James 5:19**, **20**:

*Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth*, *and someone turns him back* [turns him back to the truth],

*let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins*.

Turning Christians either to the truth or back to the truth, as in **James 5:19**, **20** and **Jude 22**, **23**, has to do with *the salvation of the soul* alone. The entire matter of the unique relationship that Christians have with one another occurs on the basis of the fact that both are *new creations* “*in Christ*”; but, within this relationship, Christians MUSTlook from the present *forward to the land set before them*, not from the present back to the land that they left (typified by Egypt). Christians MUST *keep their eyes fixed on the goal of their calling*, *the goal of faith*, *the salvation of their souls*.

The thought of pulling Christians “*out of the fire*, *hating even the garment defiled by the flesh*” (v. **23**) is similar to Joshua the high priest in **Zechariah 3:1-7** being clothed in filthy garments and plucked as a brand “*out of the fire*.” The thought in **Jude** though would have to be brought over into the context of Christians being clothed in the wedding garment rather than unsaved individuals, as portrayed by Joshua, being clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

The thought in **Jude** extends into the area with which Joshua found himself confronted *following* his being plucked as a brand from the fire and being clothed with a change of raiment. He was then told:

. . . *If you will walk in My ways*, *and if you will keep My command*, *then you shall also judge My house* . . . . (**Zechariah 3:7**)

Just as there are two different justifications and two different garments in connection with these justifications, there are also dual truths on being removed as a brand from the fire. **Zechariah 3:2-4** sets forth one and **Jude 23** sets forth the other.

How are Christians able to so live as Jude has previously exhorted? How are Christians able to govern their lives in such a manner that an *abundant entrance* “*into the everlasting* [‘age-lasting’] *kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” will be their portion? (**2 Peter 1:11**).

They are able to so live and govern their lives in this manner only because the One who loved them and gave Himself for them continues to love them and is “*able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think*, *according to the power that works in us*” (**Ephesians 3:20**). The concluding words of Jude sum up his entire epistle after this fashion:

*Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling*, *and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy*,

*To God our Savior*, *who alone is wise*, *be glory and majesty*, *dominion and power*, *both now and forever*. *Amen*.

— **Jude 24**, **25**