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Num 3	Ezek 47-48	Job 1-2	3 John 1 & Jude
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Numbering the Children of Levi (Numbers 3)

Though God had chosen the family of Aaron to serve as the priesthood of Israel, He had also earlier mentioned that the firstborn of all the tribes of Israel were to be His—and therefore directly in His service, evidently to support the work of Aaron's family in caring for the tabernacle and instructing the people in God's ways. But the incident with the golden calf demonstrated the general unworthiness of the people as a whole. Yet at that time, the tribe of Levi, to which Moses and Aaron belonged, stood with Moses "on the Lord's side" (Exodus 32:26). And this stand for God was apparently part of the reason that God determined to choose the entire tribe of Levi as His direct servants. They were to, in this sense, replace the firstborn (verses 11-13).

As we have already read, the tribe of Levi was to encamp around the tabernacle, take care of it and administer all the sacrifices and rites (Numbers 1:50-53). The Aaronic priesthood was a subset of the general Levitical priesthood—albeit the leading subset. Aaron and his sons were to be the priests, while the rest of the Levites were divided into family groups to serve in the physical areas, such as setting up and taking down the tabernacle and as ushers, porters, teachers, scribes, musicians, officers and judges, etc. (see 1 Chronicles 23).

It is interesting to note in Numbers 3 the different method of numbering used to count the Levites. Whereas the count for the rest of the Israelites was according to men 20 years and up, the Levites were counted even as male infants one month old—and still the Levites were the smallest of all the tribes at only 22,000 men and boys (verse 39). So small, in fact, that there weren't enough Levites to redeem merely the firstborn males a month and older of the other Israelite tribes (verses 40-43). Therefore, the Israelites of other tribes had to make up the difference in money (verse 49).

Ezekiel 48

Ezekiel is now taken again to the door of the temple itself, and shown something that either he failed to notice or describe the first time he toured the inner court, or that was not there prior to Christ's arrival. The river of the water of life begins at the very throne of God in the Most Holy Place (43:7). This parallels the description of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:1), which will still be in heaven during the Millennium, to descend to earth afterward. In both cases, there is evidently a literal river—but the river symbolizes the living waters of God's Holy Spirit.

In the millennial temple, the river emerges from beneath the eastern threshold, proceeding past the south side of the altar (also defined as the "right" side, as one faces east).

Ezekiel is then taken out the northern gates and around to the outer eastern gate, outside of the temple complex, to again see the river as it emerges on the south (right) side of the eastern gate. They move along the river to measure the depth of the water by wading across at 1,000-cubit intervals. By the time they reach 4,000 cubits (1.6 miles) from the eastern gate, the river is too deep to wade across.

Ezekiel mentions fruit-bearing and medicinal trees along the river (47:7, 12), again similar to the description of the New Jerusalem, in which we see the tree of life bearing 12 different fruits and leaves with healing properties (Revelation 22:2). According to Zechariah 14:8, the river will split, part of it flowing west to the Mediterranean and the other part flowing east to the Dead Sea. Ezekiel goes on to describe the effect of this river on the Dead Sea, which will spring forth with life and become a wonderful place to go fishing.

Besides the literal application, there is a wonderfully symbolic picture in all this. Again, the river represents the out flowing of the Holy Spirit, bringing life to the lifeless. In the fruitful, medicinal trees we may see God's Spirit working in and through the lives of His righteous servants. For not only are the righteous to partake of the tree of life, they are in a sense to be trees of life themselves. Nourished by the stream of Holy Spirit, they are to produce godly fruit and be a life-giving blessing to others. A godly person who continually meditates on and lives according to God's law is "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper" (Psalm 1:3).

Finally, Ezekiel is given the borders of the land. They actually correspond very closely to the borders defined by Moses in Numbers 34:1-12.

Yet "this list of borders does not coincide with Israelite settlement in any period, but rather reflects the Egyptian province of Canaan, as defined in the Egyptian-Hittite treaty signed following the battle of Kedesh. These, then, were the borders of the Land of Canaan which the Israelite tribes found upon their arrival" (Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*, 1968, p. 41). "Ezekiel 'modernized' them by working into his description contemporary geographical names, including several of the Babylonian provinces of his day" (p. 106).

Apparently, God will give the Israelites all of the land He originally intended they should have. It differs from both the ancient and modern borders primarily by including the area of Lebanon and southwestern Syria. Also interesting to note in this passage is that the Promised Land will be for the Israelites “and for the strangers who dwell among you” (Ezekiel 47:22).

Ezekiel 48 – Division of the Land

Although Ezekiel is given a list of the tribes who receive their inheritance, elsewhere he says they would receive it by lot (47:22), probably referring to the distribution of the land within each tribe. God says Joseph is to receive two portions (47:13), to keep the number of inheriting tribes at 12, even though Levi is not to receive a normal inheritance. As shown on the accompanying map, seven of the tribes are given land north of the temple while the remaining five tribes are south of it.

Between Judah on the north and Benjamin on the south is the 25,000-cubit- (10-mile-) wide strip of land we first saw in chapter 45, apparently stretching all the way from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River/Dead Sea border. The east and west portions of this strip are for the prince. But in the middle is the capital district, which is also 25,000 cubits long to form a square. All but a 5,000-cubit (2-mile) strip of this land is given to the priests and Levites, for their homes and towns and for the temple complex. But this chapter goes into a little more detail about the capital city itself, which will be located about three miles south of the temple complex, in this remaining 2 x 10-mile piece of land. That would put it about a mile northeast of Bethlehem.

The capital city occupies a 2 x 2-mile square in the center of the strip. The sides of the city proper are given as 4,500 cubits, surrounded by a 250-cubit easement (verses 16-17). This leaves two 2 x 4-mile stretches of land on either side of the city, described as the farmland for the workers of the city to grow their own food (verse 18-19). Inhabitants come from every tribe (verse 19). Three gates are on each of the four sides of the city, each one named for a different tribe (this time Joseph only receiving one gate). The New Jerusalem, beyond the Millennium, will have gates of pearl, precious foundation stones bearing the names of the 12 apostles and streets of gold (Revelation 12:12-21). Perhaps some of these features will be incorporated in the millennial Jerusalem as well.

Throughout these chapters, Ezekiel never actually mentions the name “Jerusalem.” Other passages seem to indicate the area will still be called by its ancient name (e.g., Zechariah 14), but Ezekiel says it will receive another name at this time: Yhwh Shammah in Hebrew. This incredible name, meaning “The Lord Is There,” implies that God is watching over this city to protect and bless it (compare Ezekiel 35:10 with Isaiah 33:20-21; see also Jeremiah 3:17).

While this concludes Ezekiel’s grand vision of the future and provides a wonderful conclusion to his book, God gave him two last messages to record after this, as we will see in our next reading.

God Allows Job to Suffer at Satan's Hand (Job 1-2)

As the book opens we encounter Job, whom God declares blameless and upright, fearing God and shunning evil (1:1, 8). This does not mean that Job was perfect—that he never sinned in any way. As Romans 3:23 tells us, all human beings have sinned—except for Jesus Christ, that is. As The Expositor's Bible Commentary explains: "That Job was 'blameless' (tam) and 'upright' (yasar) should not be construed to imply he was [utterly] sinless (cf. 13:26; 14:16-17).

The former, from the root 'be complete' (tmm), usually refers to a person's spiritual maturity and the integrity (purity) of his inner being. The latter, meaning 'straight,' 'right' (ysr), is used in many contexts dealing with human behavior that is in line with God's ways. Together they provided an idiomatic way to describe Job's high moral character" (note on verses 1-5).

The translation "blameless" gives the sense of being beyond reproach—that is, having no obvious sins to criticize. In the New Testament, we find that John the Baptist's parents, Zacharias and Elizabeth, were blameless (Luke 1:6), as was the apostle Paul (Philippians 3:6). Indeed, all elders and deacons in the Church are expected to be blameless (1 Timothy 3:2, 10; Titus 1:6-7). In Job's case, it seems clear that it was difficult to find any specific transgressions of God's law of which to accuse him.

Job 1:6 tells us of a remarkable event—the "sons of God" coming to present themselves before the Lord. As the book later says that the "sons of God" were present at the creation of the earth (38:6-7)-, it is clear that the reference is to the angels—God's "sons" by virtue of His having created them. Even more remarkable on this occasion is that Satan comes among the angels appearing before God, leading to a dialogue between God and Satan. Many believe this event occurred in God's heavenly court. Yet it seems highly unlikely that God the Father would allow Satan to be in His direct presence and defile His celestial throne room. Indeed, nothing abominable or profane is permitted to enter the holy city of God, the New Jerusalem, that now waits in heaven (Revelation 21:27). God cast Satan down from heaven prior to man's creation and will later do so again at the end of the age in response to a last demonic assault. Why would the Father grant Satan casual access to heaven in between? In a related vein, some think Satan's constant accusation of God's people before God in Revelation 12:10 occurs in heaven. However, we should consider that whenever God's people pray to Him they are coming before His throne (see Hebrews 4:16). Surely Satan's words too, though spoken on earth, are heard before God the Father in heaven. Yet is that what was happening in the book of Job?

In considering the matter, it is nowhere specified that God in Job 1 was God the Father or that the Lord in this chapter was in heaven at all. It seems much more likely that the Lord here in the book of Job, who later spoke to Job, was God the Word (see John 1:1-3), the One who would become Jesus Christ (verse 14). The preincarnate Christ walked on the earth in patriarchal times. Recall that He was the Lord who walked and talked with Abraham while in the company of angels (see Genesis 18). God, as we know from other passages, has angels walking about on the earth who report back to Him. And consider that Ezekiel 1 and 10 portray the preincarnate Jesus in possession of a portable throne on which to travel about the world. With

that in mind, it should be easier to imagine reconnoitering angels appearing before the preincarnate Christ somewhere on the earth and then Satan—whom God has allowed to remain as the ruler of this world for the time being—coming upon this gathering.

The Lord mentions the righteous life of Job to Satan, who is quick to argue that God has essentially “bought” Job’s loyalty through protecting and blessing him (Job 1:8-11). Take away the hedge of protection, Satan argues, and Job will “curse” God. We should note that, oddly enough, the word for the verb “curse” used throughout this passage (verses 5, 11; 2:5, 9), *barak*, normally actually means “bless.” Gleason Archer’s *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* offers this possible explanation: “The verb *berak* means ‘say goodbye to’ in Genesis 24:60; [31:55]; 47:10; Joshua 22:6; 2 Samuel 13:25; and 1 Kings 8:66, generally with the connotation of invoking a parting blessing on the person taking his leave. From this usage we may surmise that an insolent sinner might say goodbye to God Himself, with the intention of dismissing Him from his mind and conscience, of totally abandoning Him.... [Commentator] Delitzsch (Keil and Delitzsch, Job, 2:51) calls this use of *berak* an antiphrastic euphemism. He feels that in Job 2:9 it clearly means... ‘say goodbye to’... as a benedictory salutation at parting. But in his general handling of these negative usages, he prefers to render it ‘dismiss God from one’s heart’ (ibid., 2:49)” (p. 237).

Surprisingly, God responds to Satan’s challenge by putting Job’s possessions and family in the destroyer’s power. Yet note that God does not at this time permit Satan to do Job any bodily harm (verse 12). This demonstrates that God has total power over what Satan is permitted to do. While this fact should provide us with comfort, for many it is extremely disturbing that God would allow Satan to hurt Job in any way, especially given the great loss of family he suffers.

Verses 16 and 19 apparently speak of lightning and a destructive tornado respectively, showing that weather calamities can be acts of Satan. Yet these events were by the express permission of God. Indeed, God later acknowledges this, saying to Satan: “...You incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause” (2:3). This may shockingly appear to say that there was no reason at all for what God allowed to befall Job—and that God can be prodded into doing things contrary to His will. But this is not what God is saying. He is simply saying that Satan presented no reason for any punitive action against this man. Moreover, the fact that Satan was provocative does not mean that this is what motivated God to act. Indeed, God initiated the discussion with Satan over Job—surely knowing what Satan’s response would be.

Job 1:18-19 seems to say that Job lost all his children, though 19:17 may indicate that at least two of them were not in attendance at the ill-fated banquet and therefore survived. In any case, Job’s loss of children and his wealth in a single day is difficult to fathom. Yet his reaction to it is stunning. Though he grieved deeply, Job’s response was one of humbly worshiping God, acknowledging God’s sovereignty over all circumstances (1:20-21). This is truly amazing considering that Job did not have the special knowledge the reader of the account has regarding the discussion between God and Satan. Despite the horror of what had happened, and the seeming abandonment by God that he must have felt, he did not sin (verse 22). Instead, God

says that he held fast to his “integrity” (2:3), the Hebrew word here having the same root as the word for “blameless” in chapter 1. In fact, “when Job said, ‘May the name of the Lord be praised’ (v. 21), he was using...the same word that Satan used in v. 11 as an euphemism with the opposite meaning. The play on the root brk (‘bless’) is forceful. It stresses how the Accuser is foiled at this point. Instead of cursing God to his face, Job praised him” (Expositor’s, note on verses 20-22).

Once again, Satan comes upon an angelic presentation before God and God presents him with Job’s unswerving devotion. This time Satan presses the issue by saying that if God will remove His protection and allow him to attack Job’s physical health, Job will reject God as he had predicted. God then allows the devil to cross that line. But, demonstrating his power and authority over Satan, He still imposes a limit—Satan is not allowed to kill Job. Yet what Satan is allowed to do—afflict Job with painful boils from head to toe—was no doubt extremely and unrelentingly agonizing. And on top of the psychological pain of losing his family, it must have been all the more excruciating.

Job’s wife urges him to “curse God and die!” (verse 9). Many today imagine her as an impious, unsympathetic, bitter nag or even that she wanted to be rid of Job, thinking the loss of their children must have been his fault—that he had done something to deserve punishment from God. But it seems more likely that Job’s wife, having been so close to him and witnessing his unceasing devotion to God even now, would have perceived him just as God described him—as blameless. We should consider that besides losing her family, she was now watching her husband suffer intolerable pain and anguish. It was no doubt difficult for her to understand why God would allow her faithful husband to be stricken. Indeed, it is difficult for most people today to understand it! She may well have been quite angry with God. Moreover, she perhaps said what she did thinking that Job’s illness was terminal anyway and that he could with just a few words find immediate relief from his suffering. This great man, however, remarks on the foolishness of such a course and remains persistent in his faithfulness (verse 10).

Lastly in chapter 2, we see the coming of Job’s three friends Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar (verse 11). It was evidently months before they got the news, arranged to meet and at last arrived (compare 7:3). Perhaps their initial intent was simply to go through a typical proper mourning ritual. But what they found made them aghast. It is evident that they cared for Job because they wept and remained close to him in silence for an entire week (2:12-13)—probably deeming it inappropriate to speak before Job himself spoke. Yet as we will see, these men will soon fail miserably in their role as Job’s comforters, even wrongly accusing him of sin.

Finally, in looking at Job 1-2, people reasonably wonder why, if Job was such a devoted saint, God would allow Satan to harm him. The impression many have is that there was some kind of contest or one-upmanship going on between God and Satan—and that Job was just a pawn in this frivolous, heartless game. Indeed, many reject the story as fictitious for this reason, unable to accept that a loving God would ever hand his faithful servants over to Satan’s abuses. But the perspective of Job as a pawn in some inane spiritual contest is totally off base. While the events

of these chapters were probably intended to demonstrate God's sovereignty over Satan, we should note that the defeated enemy drops out of the account at this point—yet Job's suffering goes on. As we will see at the end of the book, Job, despite his upright character, still needed to grow spiritually and come to really know God. That being said, we should recognize that there is indeed an unwitting pawn in the story—Satan the devil. God, knowing Satan's nature and temperament, provokes him into taking action against Job—not to show Job's steadfastness off to His adversary but for the ultimate purpose of perfecting Job's character, making him an even better person than he was in preparation for a future in God's Kingdom.

3 John 1

INTRODUCTION TO 3 JOHN

This epistle was written by the Apostle John, who calls himself an "elder", as in the preceding, and is inscribed to a friend of his, whom he mentions by name, and expresses a very great affection for, on account of his steady adherence to the truths of the Gospel, 3Jo 1:1; he wishes him bodily health equal to that prosperity of soul he was indulged with, 3Jo 1:2; congratulates him upon the testimony the brethren that came from him gave him of the truth being in him, and of his walking in it, and upon hearing that his children also trod in the same path, 3Jo 1:3; commends him for his hospitality and charity, of which testimonies were given before the church; and encourages him to go on doing the same acts of beneficence, since it was to such persons that went forth for the sake of Christ, and preaching in his name, and had nothing of the Gentiles for so doing; wherefore they ought to be received, and entertained by those of ability, that they might be fellow helpers to the truth with them, 3Jo 1:5.

He complains of Diotrephes as a proud, haughty, and overbearing man in the church, where Gaius was a member, who would neither receive the letters the apostle sent, nor the brethren that came with them; nay, forbid them that would, and cast them out of the church for it, and prated against them with malicious words, whom he threatens to remember when he himself should come thither, 3Jo 1:9;

wherefore he exhorts Gaius not to follow such an ill example, but that which is good in any person; since he that does good appears to be of God, and he that does evil, it looks as if he had never known him, 3Jo 1:11.

And particularly he recommends Demetrius, who had a good report of all men, and of the truth itself, and had a testimony from the apostle, and those that were with him, which was known to be a true one, 3Jo 1:12.

But though he had many things to say, both of one, and of the other, he determines to write no more at present, hoping he should shortly see him, and personally converse together; and closes the epistle with his own good wish, and with mutual salutations of friends, 3Jo 1:13.

Ver. 1. The elder unto the well beloved Gaius,.... The elder is the writer of the epistle, the Apostle John, who so styles himself on account of his age, and office, as in the preceding

epistle. The person to whom he writes is “the well beloved Gaius”; not that Gaius, who was the Apostle Paul’s host, Ro 16:23, for though their characters agree, being both hospitable men, yet neither the place nor time in which they lived.

The Apostle Paul’s Gaius lived at Corinth, this is in some place near to Ephesus, for the apostle in his old age purposed to come and see him shortly; the other was contemporary with Paul, this with John; there were thirty or forty years difference between them: besides, the Corinthian Gaius was baptized by Paul, and was doubtless one of his spiritual children, or converts, whereas this Gaius was one of the Apostle John’s spiritual children, 3Jo 1:4;

nor does he seem to be the same with Gaius of Macedonia, Ac 19:29, or with Gaius of Derbe, Ac 20:4, who seem to be two different persons by their country, though both companions in travel of the Apostle Paul; for which reason, as well as the time of their living, neither of them can be this Gaius, who was a settled housekeeper, and resided at some certain place. His name is a Roman name, and the same with Caius, though he seems to have been a Jew, as he might, it being usual with the Jews in other countries to take Gentile names.

His character is, that he was “well beloved”; that is, of God, as it appears he was from the grace bestowed on him, from the prosperous estate of his soul, and from the truth that was in him, and his walking in it; and of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the same reasons; and also of all the brethren and saints that knew him; he being a person not only truly gracious, and of faithfulness and integrity, but of great liberality and beneficence, which must gain him much love and esteem among them; and he was well beloved by the Apostle John; and so the Syriac version renders it, “to my beloved Gaius”: though his love to him is expressed in the following clause, whom I love in the truth; as being in it, or for the sake of it, or truly and sincerely; See Gill on “2Jo 1:1”.

3 John 1:2, Ver. 2. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper,.... Or succeed in all temporal affairs, in the business of life, in which he was; and as success of this sort depends upon the blessing of God, which maketh rich, it is to be wished and prayed for from him: and be in health; that is, of body, which above all things above all outward mercies, is the most desirable; for without this, what are the richest dainties, the largest possessions, or the best of friends? without this there can be no comfortable enjoyment of either of them; and therefore of this sort of mercies, it is in the first place, and above all others, to be wished for, and desired by one friend for another. The rule and measure of this wish is according to the prosperity of his soul, even as thy soul prospereth: the soul is diseased with sin, and may be said to be in good health, when all its iniquities are forgiven; and may be said to prosper, when having a spiritual appetite for the Gospel, the sincere milk of the word, it feeds upon it, is nourished by it, and grows thereby; when it is in the lively exercise of faith, hope, and love; when spiritual knowledge is increased, or it grows in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus; when the inward man is renewed day by day with fresh strength; and when it enjoys communion with God, has the light of his countenance, and the joys of his salvation; and when it is fruitful in every good work. John 1:3

Ver. 3. For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came,.... From the place where Gaius lived, to that where John now resided; these brethren seem to be preachers of the word, who travelled from place to place to spread the Gospel: and testified of the truth that is in thee; either of Christ, who was formed in him; or of the Gospel, which had a place in his heart; or of the truth of grace that was in him, as well as of that faithfulness, integrity, and sincerity he appeared to be possessed of, being an Israelite indeed, and without guile: even as thou walkest in the truth: in Christ, and in the Gospel, and as became it, and with all uprightness; see 2Jo 1:4;

and this occasioned great joy in the apostle; as it is matter of joy to everyone that truly loves Christ, and his Gospel; or has the true grace of charity in him, which envies not the gifts and graces of others, but rejoiceth in the truth, wherever it is found; and especially to the faithful ministers of the word, when they hear of the truth of grace in any souls, and that such continue walking in the truth of the Gospel, and particularly those who have been wrought upon under their ministry, as follows. 3 John 1:4

Ver. 4. I have no greater joy,.... Nothing that causes greater joy. The Vulgate Latin version reads “grace” or “thanks”; and then the sense is, that he had nothing to be more thankful for: than to hear that my children walk in truth; meaning his spiritual children, those whose conversion he had been the instrument of; and among these it seems Gaius was one.

3 John 1:5

Ver. 5. Beloved, thou doest faithfully,.... Or a faithful thing, and as became a faithful man, a believer in Christ; in all his beneficence and charity he acted the upright part; he did not do it in an hypocritical way, to be seen of men, and gain applause from them, but from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God: whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; which may design either different persons; and by “brethren” may be meant the poor brethren of the church that Gaius belonged to, and others that were well known to him; and by “the strangers”, not unconverted persons, but such of the saints as came from foreign parts, and travelled about to spread the Gospel, and enlarge the interest of Christ: or else the same persons may be intended, for the words may be read, as they are in the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and in the Vulgate Latin version, “what thou doest to the brethren, and this to strangers”; that is, as the Arabic version renders it, “to strange brethren”; or, as the Syriac version, “to the brethren, [and] especially [them] that are strangers”; so that Gaius was a very hospitable man, one that entertained and lodged strangers, and used them very civilly and courteously, with great liberality, and with much integrity and sincerity. 3 John 1:6

Ver. 6. Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church,.... At Ephesus, where John was; these brethren and strangers coming thither, and being greatly affected with Gaius’s kindness and liberality to them, could not forbear speaking of it to his praise, in the presence of the members of the church, as well as acquainted the Apostle John with it; the Syriac version reads, “before the whole church”; they bore testimony of his liberality in a very public manner And this the apostle mentions to encourage Gaius to go on, and continue in his kindness to the

same persons, since they retained such a grateful sense of past favors; and whereas they were now returning back, he desires that he would give them some further assistance: whom if thou bring forward on their journey; the word here used signifies, to send on before, as in Ac 15:3, and is used by the Septuagint in the same sense as here, and in the above places, in Ge 18:16; where it is said, that "Abraham went with them (the angels) to bring them on in the way", Mxlvi, "to send them on", or "send them away"; dismiss them, take his leave of them in a friendly and honourable way.

The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan render it, Nwhyawwlal, "to accompany them"; and so this Greek word, which seems to answer to the Hebrew phrase, signifies an honourable accompanying, leading forth, and taking leave of friends; and so the apostle encourages Gaius to behave in like manner to the brethren and strangers; meaning, either by accompanying them in person, or by sending his servants along with them, both to direct them the way, and to secure them from danger, and chiefly by furnishing them with everything necessary for them;

see Tit 3:13. And this he would have him do, after a godly sort; or "worthy of God"; in imitation of God, who is merciful, kind, and beneficent; or as it became him whom God had called by his grace to his kingdom and glory; or as it was fit and proper such servants of God, as those brethren were, should be used; and this would be doing well: thou shalt do well; what is grateful and well pleasing to God, and beautiful and lovely in the eyes of his people. 3 John 1:7

Ver. 7. Because that for his name's sake they went forth,.... From Judea; either of their own accord to preach the Gospel, or being drove out by the unbelieving Jews, for professing the name of Christ; and be it which it will, there was good reason why they should be regarded, and especially since they did as follows, taking nothing of the Gentiles; even of those who were converted, though their preaching the Gospel, to whom they ministered, for of others, the unconverted Gentiles, they could not expect to receive; and this they did, as the apostles before them, because they would not be chargeable to them, and lest it should be thought they sought their own worldly interest, and not the good of souls and glory of Christ, and so a stumbling block be laid in the way of the Gospel, to hinder the progress of it. The Ethiopic version reads this in the singular number, "and I went forth for his name's sake, taking nothing of the Gentiles". 3 John 1:8

Ver. 8. We therefore ought to receive such,.... We who are Jews, that have believed in Christ, for such an one Gaius, it seems, as well, as the apostle, were, ought to receive such preachers of the word into our houses, and entertain them cheerfully, while they continue, and supply them with all necessaries when they depart: that we might be fellow helpers to the truth; that is, to the Gospel, and the propagation of it in the world: some are helpers to it, in preaching of it, by making use of the ministerial gifts bestowed upon them; and others are fellow helpers with them, to the same good work, by their purses, communicating freely to the support of those, who labour in the word and doctrine; and these latter have the honour to be co-workers, or fellow laborer's with the former, as the word here used signifies. The

Alexandrian copy reads, “fellow helpers to the church”, that so the whole burden of taking care of these ministers might not lie upon them. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, “fellow helpers of the truth”. 3 John 1:9

Ver. 9. I wrote unto the church,.... Where Gaius was a member: those who take Gaius to be the same with Paul’s host, and whom he baptized at Corinth, think the church at Corinth is here meant; but it seems rather to be meant of some church in Asia nearer Ephesus; nor is it likely that John’s first epistle should be here intended, which makes no mention of relieving the brethren, the ministers of the Gospel, that came from Judea: and that this epistle should not be preserved, need not seem strange; for it cannot be thought that everything that was written by him to particular persons, or churches, should be continued. The Alexandrian copy and one of Stephens’s read, “I wrote something to the church”; upon this head, concerning receiving and supporting ministers of the Gospel, and so prevents an objection that Gaius might make, why did he not write to the church about it? The Vulgate Latin version reads, “I should”, or “would have wrote”: and the Syriac version, “I desired”, or “wished to have wrote”; suggesting, that though he had not wrote, yet it was much upon his mind, he had a great desire to it: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not; which hindered him from writing, or was the reason why he wrote now to Gaius since Diotrephes gave no heed to what he had wrote, suppressed his letter, and would not suffer it to be read to the brethren. This Diotrephes, by his name, which signifies one “nourished”, or “brought up by Jupiter”, was a Gentile; there was one of this name, who was one of the kings of Athens {a}; and what may confirm this is, his slighting and rejecting the brethren that came from Judea: it is very likely he was more than a private member in the church, and that he was an officer, and it may be the pastor; and though there is a preeminence, which of right belongs to such an officer, as to preside over the church, to govern, guide, and direct, according to the laws of Christ, he being set over the church, as a ruler, governor, and guide; yet this may be carried too far, as it was by this man, who coveted more than was his due, and lorded it over God’s heritage, ruled the flock with force and cruelty, and usurped a tyrannical power over them; whereas everything in a church ought to be done, by pastor and people, in love, meekness, and with mutual consent. And it may be also, that he sought to have the preeminence over the rest of the elders of the church, for in those large churches there were oftentimes more elders and pastors than one; see Ac 20:17.

This ambitious spirit prevailed and obtained among the false teachers, who set up themselves at the head of parties, and above the apostles of Christ, and paved the way for antichrist, who assumed the title of universal bishop, which has introduced all the errors and impieties of the Romish church. Now this man such an ambitious, lordly, and governing spirit, received not the Apostle John, and those that were with him; meaning not their persons, for as yet he and they were not in person where he was; but his letter, his orders, and instructions; these he paid no regard to, concealed them from the church, and would not admit them to be read: or else the apostle’s sense is, that he received not the brethren that came from him, and were

recommended by him, and whom he affectionately loved, and who were near and dear to him as himself; and therefore not receiving them is interpreted by him as not receiving himself.

{a} Vid. Fabricii Bibliograph. Antiqu. p. 211. 3 John 1:10

Ver. 10. Wherefore, if I come,.... Where both Gaius and Diotrephes lived, as he trusted he should shortly, 3Jo 1:14; I will remember his deeds which he doth; meaning, not only that he would tell him of them to his face, but make mention of them, and expose them to the whole church, and reprove him for them: and which are as follow, prating against us with malicious words; it is a common thing for ministers of the Gospel to be prated against, not only by the men of the world, but by professors of religion, and by such who call themselves preachers also; nor need it be wondered at, since John, an apostle of Christ, the beloved disciple, who was so harmless and inoffensive in his conversation, so kind and loving in his disposition and temper, so meek and humble in his deportment, and now in such an advanced age, was prated against by a Diotrephes: and what is said against Christ's ministers is no other than prating; silly, idle, trifling, and empty stuff, as the word used signifies; for want of greater things, they take up any little matter, and improve it against them; and this is often done with a malicious intent, to hurt their characters, spoil their usefulness, and render their ministry unprofitable.

And not content herewith; with prating against the Apostle John, and the ministers with him, in this wicked way: neither doth he himself receive the brethren; the meaning is not, that he did not receive them into the church, for they were there, since afterwards mention is made of his casting them out from thence; but he did not receive them into his house, and entertain them as he ought to have done; for a minister of the Gospel, and a pastor of a church, ought to be hospitable, and given to hospitality, and entertain strangers, especially those who are brethren in Christ, and fellow ministers of the word: and the rather these were to be received, since they travelled about to spread the Gospel among the Gentiles, and took nothing of them.

And this was not all, he not only did not receive them himself, and reject them, but was not willing that others should receive them: and forbiddeth them that would; on such who had a heart, as well as ability, to receive and entertain these poor brethren, he laid his injunctions, and gave them strict orders, in his lordly and tyrannical way, not to show any respect unto them; and casteth [them] out of the church; that is, he excommunicated them, either those that entertained them, or rather the brethren themselves; which was an abuse of the ordinance of excommunication, as that ordinance is abused, when any single person, a pastor, or any other, as here, assumes the power of doing it himself, and does it without the church; whereas it is a punishment or censure, to be inflicted by many, or to be done by the joint suffrage of the church; and when it is done in a wrong cause, for some small trifling matter, or none at all, and not in a case of heresy or immorality, obstinately persisted in; and when it is done from wrong principles, and with wrong ends, as to gratify the pride and passion of some; and not for the good of the person cast out, or to prevent others from falling into the same snare, or for the honour of religion, and the glory of God. The phrase seems to be taken from the Jews, who expressed

their excommunication, or putting out of the synagogue, by a casting out; see Joh 9:34. 3 John 1:11

Ver. 11. Beloved, follow not that which is evil,.... Follow not evil in general, it being hateful to God, contrary to his nature and will, and bad in itself, as well as pernicious in its consequences; and particularly follow not, or do not imitate the particular evil or evils in Diotrephes; as his pride, ambition, love of preeminence, and tyrannical government in the church, and especially his hard heartedness, cruelty, and inhospitality to the poor saints; and so the Arabic version reads, “do not imitate him in evil”; the examples of persons in office and authority have great influence, especially in cases of charity, when men can be excused thereby, and save their money, or be freed from an expense: but that which is good; follow and imitate that, be a follower of God, imitate him in acts of kindness and beneficence, be merciful as he is; copy the deeds of Jesus Christ, who went about doing good, and declared it to be more blessed to give than to receive; and tread in the steps of those good men, who have shown love to the name of Christ, by ministering to his saints; for though the apostle may mean everything that is good, which is to be followed and imitated in any, yet he chiefly designs acts of kindness and beneficence to poor saints and ministers: to which he encourages by the following, he that doeth good is of God; he is a child of God, he appears to be so, in that he is like to his heavenly Father, who is kind and merciful; he is born of God, he is passed from death to life, which his love to the brethren shows; he has the grace of God, and strength from Christ, and the assistance of the Spirit, without either of which he could not do that which is good:

but he that doeth evil hath not seen God; has had no spiritual saving sight of God in Christ; for if he had, he would abhor that which is evil, and, with Job, abhor himself for it, and reckon himself, with Isaiah, as undone, Job 42:6, for such effects has the sight of God on the souls of men; such an one knows not God, nor what it is to have communion with him: for those who live in sin, in whom it is a governing principle, cannot have fellowship with God; nor has such an one ever felt the love of God in his soul, or been made a partaker of his grace, which would teach and constrain him to act otherwise.

Compare this text with 1Jo 3:10, which shows the Apostle John to be the writer of this epistle. The Ethiopic version reads, “shall not see God”; that is, hereafter, in the world to come. 3 John 1:12

Ver. 12. Demetrius hath good report of all [men], This man was of a quite different cast from Diotrephes, and therefore the apostle makes mention of him to Gaius, to be followed by him, and not the other; he was either the same with Demas, which is a contraction of this name, or the person that John sent from Ephesus with this letter: we read of an Ephesian of this name, Ac 19:24; though not the same person; or else one that also was a member of the same church with Gaius and Diotrephes; and he being kind and beneficent, obtained a good report of the generality of men, not only of the brethren, but of those that were without; for a liberal man is universally respected. The Syriac version adds, “and of the church itself”; as distinct from all men, or the generality of the men of the world: and of the truth itself; that is, whoever speaks

truth must give him a good character, for this cannot be understood with any propriety of the Gospel, nor of Jesus Christ: yea, and we also bear record; or a testimony to the character of Demetrius; that is, I, John, the apostle, and the saints at Ephesus: and ye know that our record is true; faithful, and to be depended upon. The Alexandrian copy, and several others, read, “thou knowest”, as does also the Vulgate Latin version, which seems most agreeable, since this epistle is directed to a single person; compare this with Joh 19:35; and it will give a further proof of this epistle being the Apostle John’s. 3 John 1:13

Ver. 13. I have many things to write,.... With regard to churches, and particular persons, and concerning hospitality to the poor brethren: but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee; suggesting he should take another method of communicating his mind to him, which he next mentions. 3 John 1:14

Ver. 14. But I trust I shall shortly see thee,.... Either at Ephesus, where John was, or rather at the place where Gaius lived, see 3Jo 1:10; and we shall speak face to face; freely and familiarly converse together about these things, which were not thought proper to be committed to writing: peace [be] to thee; which was the usual form of salutation with the Jews, and John was one; See Gill on “Joh 20:19”; [our] friends salute thee; or send their Christian salutation to thee, wishing all health and prosperity in soul and body; meaning the members of the church at Ephesus: the Arabic version reads, “thy friends”; such at Ephesus as had a particular knowledge of him, and affection for him. The Vulgate Latin version reads, “the friends”: the members in general; and the Alexandrian copy reads, “the brethren”; and the Syriac version, our brethren: and then the epistle is closed thus, greet the friends by name; meaning those that were where Gaius lived, to whom the apostle sends his salutation, and desires it might be delivered to each of them, as if they had been mentioned by name. This and the epistle of James are the only epistles which are concluded without the word “Amen”.

Jud 1:1 Yehud’ah, a servant of Yeshua Messiah, and brother of Ya’aqob, to those who are called, set-apart by Elohim the Father, and preserved in Yeshua Messiah:

Jud 1:2 Compassion, and peace, and love be increased to you.

Jud 1:3 Beloved ones, making all haste to write to you concerning our common deliverance, I felt the necessity to write to you urging you to earnestly contend for the belief which was once for all delivered to the set-apart ones.

Jud 1:4 For certain men have slipped in, whose judgment was written about long ago, wicked ones¹ perverting the favour of our Elohim for indecency, and denying the only Master Yehovah and our Master Yeshua Messiah. Footnote: ¹See Mt. 13, ²Thess. 2.

Jud 1:5 But I intend to remind you, though you once knew this, that Yehovah, having saved a people out of the land of Mitsrayim, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

Jud 1:6 And the messengers who did not keep their own principality, but left their own dwelling, He has kept in everlasting shackles under darkness for the judgment of the great day.

Jud 1:7 Even as Sed'om and Amorah and the cities around them in a similar way to these, having given themselves over to whoring and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, undergoing judicial punishment of everlasting fire.

Jud 1:8 In the same way, indeed, these dreamers defile the flesh, and reject authority, and speak evil of esteemed ones.

Jud 1:9 But Mik'a'el the chief messenger, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Mosheh, presumed not to bring against him a blasphemous accusation, but said, "Yehovah rebuke you!"

Jud 1:10 But these blaspheme that which they do not know. And that which they know naturally, like unreasoning beasts, in these they corrupt themselves.

Jud 1:11 Woe to them! Because they have gone in the way of Qayin, and gave themselves to the delusion of Bil'am for a reward, and perished in the rebellion of Qorah.

Jud 1:12 These are rocky reefs in your love feasts, feasting with you, feeding themselves without fear, waterless clouds borne about by the winds, late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots,

Jud 1:13 wild waves of the sea foaming up their own shame, straying stars for whom blackness of darkness is kept forever.

Jud 1:14 And H'anok, the seventh from Adam, also prophesied of these, saying, "See, Yehovah comes with His myriads of set-apart ones,

Jud 1:15 to execute judgment on all, to punish all who are wicked among them concerning all their wicked works which they have committed in a wicked way, and concerning all the harsh words which wicked sinners have spoken against Him."

Jud 1:16 These are grumblers, complainers, who walk according to their own lusts, and their mouth speaks proudly, admiring faces of others for the sake of gain.

Jud 1:17 But you, beloved ones, remember the words spoken before by the emissaries of our Master Yeshua Messiah,

Jud 1:18 because they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own wicked lusts.

Jud 1:19 These are the ones who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.

Jud 1:20 But you, beloved ones, building yourselves up on your most set-apart belief, praying in the Set-apart Spirit,

Jud 1:21 keep yourselves in the love of Elohim, looking for the compassion of our Master Yeshua Messiah unto everlasting life.

Jud 1:22 And show compassion toward some who are doubting,

Jud 1:23 but others save with fear, snatching them out of the fire, hating, even the garment defiled by the flesh.¹ Footnote: ¹See Gal. 5:19-21, Rom. 8:5-10.

Jud 1:24 And to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you blameless before the presence of His esteem with exceeding joy,

Jud 1:25 to the only wise Elohim, our Saviour, be esteem and greatness and might and authority, both now and forever. Am'n.