

Strangers in Time
From the book of Jude
Copyright, J. Michael Strawn

From the Book of Jude. STRANGERS IN TIME.
PART 1: THE NON-RATIONAL STANDARD , v.1, 2. #1.

When Jude became a Christian, his understanding took a dramatic turn. Consider his language..."Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James", v.1.

#2. Uncompromising terms these, and not overstatements. As a "bond-servant" of Jesus Christ, Jude offered up to the Lord his autonomy, his personal will, his control of events, his individual freedom.

#3. Jude, having accepted that state of being, surrendered mastery of his own life; and that to Someone that he could not see. He was willing to accept what came to him because of his service to the Lord. Such ideas are not rational ideas (conceived by men in time). They are non-rational thoughts, conceived by the Eternal. Jude considered his future to be synonymous with the will of and the purpose of God.

#4. JUDE HAD BECOME A STRANGER IN TIME. His willingness to bow to the Lord as a "bond-servant" was not organic to time, materiality nor to human experience.

#5. Writing to fellow strangers in time, that he understood as "called", "beloved in God the Father", "and kept for Jesus Christ" (v.1), he addressed their importance. And their importance was a spiritual designation. Those people, in time, were the focus of divine interest; "called" by the Almighty into a relation with Him; "beloved" by a determining invisible personage and "kept" in a durable state of affairs unto the end; and that by the power of God.

#6. Jude understood the gravity of those articles of faith. All of that ruled out any pursuit of what is called "values judgment". "Values" are derived by human consensus, not by revelation. The issue: Jude had elevated the absolute importance of those spiritual conditions above any temporal, social and or material achievement. Pursuit of "values" demotes the absolute importance of spiritual states of being.

#7. Something or Someone must take action to "multiply(ied)" (v.2) such intangibles as "mercy and peace and love".

#8. Those intangibles, put by the Lord, become *the absolute determining environment* of those choosing to live as STRANGERS IN TIME.

Question: Do I see the intrinsic importance of that?

From the Book of Jude. STRANGERS IN TIME.
PART 2: THE PROBLEM OF THE PERFUNCTORY, v.2, 5.

#1. There is, as there has always been, a contradiction between *THE TRUTHS OF REVEALED IMPORTANCE* and *PERFUNCTORY (WITHOUT MUCH THOUGHT, OR CURSORY) READING OF SCRIPTURE*.

#2. The unstated question that Jude asks us is this:

#3. What do you believe? For example: "May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you", 1:2.

#4. That is not a meaningless statement, nor a mere perfunctory remark. Since the Bible was not written in a perfunctory (without much thought) way, then the Word of God is not to be read perfunctorily.

#5. Revealed biblical truth is of the highest order of language organization. It merits the most significant and committed attention.

#6. Any perfunctory understanding of v.2 by-passes its meaning in the temporal.

#6. A generalization is that the terms of the verse constitute *THE ABSOLUTE DETERMINING ENVIRONMENT* of those who choose to live as STRANGERS IN TIME. This means that *the blessings of God have the power to displace material/temporal magnitudes*.

#7. So, once such an idea is put forward, the question is: Does one believe it? But a perfunctory understanding of the verse would affirm the belief that those words are too distant from the universe of material facts to be trusted. Jude calls to mind this historical precedent; "Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe", v.5.

#8. The Israelites had been presented with revealed supernatural meaning: they knew "all things once for all". Yet they "did not believe" it. Their understanding had turned to the perfunctory and was considered by the Lord to be a form of unbelief.

#9. Surely, it is beyond dispute that the contemporary perspective on the Bible is increasingly perfunctory; within and without the church. There is only one sufficient explanation for this turn to the perfunctory. Individual believers and whole churches do not want to think, speak and behave as STRANGERS IN TIME.

From the Book of Jude. STRANGERS IN TIME.
PART #3: THE INSIDIOUS, v.3, 4.

#1. Jude wrote regarding an anticipated problem; something that must be addressed and for which preparations must be made. Jude identified a vulnerability. "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints", v.3.

#2. Human personal "salvation" was vulnerable to deliberate attack. And that most precious of possessions could be lost.

#4. Jude warns that it is absolutely required that those with the spirit of faithfulness stand up, be identified and "contend earnestly for the faith", v.3.

#5. *A forced polarization* has to be put into effect within the churches. *Necessary division* must be a permanent feature of the collective. The fault line is between those who respect and defend the gospel *as revealed*, not subject to amendment, having been "once for all handed down to the saints" and those who are devoted to its alteration. No other divisions are permitted.

#6. The "salvation" about which Jude was concerned is singular and relative to apostolic revealed truth. "For certain persons (identifiable by behavior and speech) have crept in unnoticed (insidious), those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ", v.4.

#7. *This is the problem of the insidious*. The issue is not differences of opinion (subjectivism); the issue is subversion!

#8. The "faith" was handed down to the saints. From there on it is transmitted with all its veracity to all subsequent generations. Cultural, social influence (drift) is countered, along with "ungodly persons" as agents of apostasy.

#9. Today, some believers are quite ready to embrace worldly concerns (homosexuality for example). The argument: Since Jesus loves everyone then He must love homosexuals and approve their natural selves.

#10. "Unconditional love" is just such a guise. It is used as a pitch for "licentiousness". These influences are always at work in the churches. Our salvation is always under attack and the "faith" always must be defended by every generation.

From the Book of Jude. STRANGERS IN TIME.
PART 4: THREE AXES OF DEGRADATION, v.5-7.

#1. Jude addresses 3 axes of degradation. All 3 axes can be personified and can therefore move through time.

#2. Each of them is teleological (moving to a certain end): which is disaster. Each axis has a beginning point in time and each will terminate in time. Every axis can be mapped through time; each has a history.

#3. Notable aspect: These behaviors are *the pre-conditions* for the Almighty to directly act upon a people, any people in time and circumstance.

#4. THE 3 AXES

- One: INCONSTANCY, v.5. The ancient Israelites were only marginal in faith. Depending upon circumstance they could go either way. Their inconstancy of faith made room for *opportunistic sin*. Spiritually unreliable relative to the demands of the will of God, those Israelites were destroyed because of unbelief. "Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe". No inherent destruction in that behavior, it was supernatural direct action.
- Two: ARROGANCE, v.6. Even angels are governed by the laws of faith. Some angels "abandoned their proper abode"; "did not keep their own domain". These invisible beings crossed boundaries forbidden to them. Outright defiance of the Almighty resulted in their detention. "...kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day".
- Three: IMMORALITY, v.7. "...Sodom and Gomorrah..." have long been "example(s)" of "undergoing the punishment of eternal fire". Misusing free will "...these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh..." No perversion was off-limits. No restraint was acknowledged.

#5. The danger implicit in these 3 axes of degradation is in the provocation of God to direct action upon us.

From the Book of Jude. STRANGERS IN TIME.

PART 5: PERFECT KNOWLEDGE, v.5, 6, 7.

#1. In order to live according to the biblical standard of faith, which makes us STRANGERS IN TIME, one needs a unique kind of knowledge.

#2. Jude offers 3 examples of what may accurately be called PERFECT KNOWLEDGE.

#3. It is a mistake to read the Bible trying to connect past to present. Scripture connects the reader to God and the Invisible Reality presents His wisdom through the revelation. That particular structure guarantees PERFECT KNOWLEDGE.

#4. It is this PERFECT KNOWLEDGE that one brings to bear upon one's contemporary circumstances.

#5. *The reflexive structure between God and the word of God sets the grammatical rules for language in any time reference and circumstance.*

#6. Jude's admonition about

(1)THE INCONSTANCY OF THE ANCIENT ISRAELITES, v.5;
(2)ARROGANT ANGELS, v.6;
(3)IMMORAL SODOM and GOMORRAH, v.7,
are manifestations of PERFECT KNOWLEDGE which leads to PERFECT LANGUAGE, UNDERSTANDING and BEHAVIOR.

#7. In other words, time, changing circumstance, or the arrival of new subsequent generations are not allowed to evolve language. This is not accepted by contemporary believers.

#8. Reiteration: The relation of God to the word of God produces PERFECT KNOWLEDGE! That is knowledge, not ever relative to time, events, circumstances nor to human wisdom and experience.

#9. This why Jude wrote, "Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all..."(v.5) about these 3 examples of PERFECT KNOWLEDGE.

#10. The first attack on the credibility of PERFECT KNOWLEDGE occurs in Genesis 3.

#11. PERFECT KNOWLEDGE is not recognized by contemporary believers. The Bible is often read as interesting yet largely irrelevant "history". The 3 examples given by Jude and the sins of INCONSTANCY, REBELLION and IMMORALITY were perpetrated in defiance of revealed PERFECT KNOWLEDGE.

From the Book of Jude. STRANGERS IN TIME.
PART 6: PERFECT KNOWLEDGE, v.5, 6, 7.

#1. PERFECT KNOWLEDGE is a reflexive structure. Scripture connects the reader to God; how He thinks, what He expects, what He requires, how He perceives human behavior, His powers over time and the significance of His promises. And the Almighty communicates His will through His word.

#2. PERFECT KNOWLEDGE, then, is a closed loop. Within this reflexive loop there are no errors, weaknesses, overstatements nor lies.

#3. Inconstancy of the Israelites (v.5) was sufficient proof that they persistently underestimated PERFECT KNOWLEDGE. Such underestimation transforms into a kind

of behavior. Their behavior was firmly grounded in human lived experience and human wisdom, human will. PERFECT KNOWLEDGE held no influence over their reasoning, language and behavior. And that is why "...the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe". Underestimation is a form of unbelief. However, PERFECT KNOWLEDGE owes no obligation to time, materiality nor to human rational terms.

#4. Angelic rebellion (v.6) puts into evidence that some of the Lord's created angelic beings, themselves quite proximate to the source of PERFECT KNOWLEDGE, rejected its authority over independent will. The angels must have been created with free will. "...who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode".

#5. Blatant immorality, purposely personified by "Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them" (v.7) proves an equally blatant disregard of any PERFECT KNOWLEDGE. They, accordingly, exemplify that which is worthy of "the punishment of eternal fire".

#6. There is, throughout the Bible, a permanent contradiction between PERFECT KNOWLEDGE and rational knowledge (that which is generated by human intelligence coming to bear upon human experience).

#7. In order to remain STRANGERS IN TIME, it is necessary for rational knowledge to be brought subject to PERFECT KNOWLEDGE. The Book of Jude supplies the doctrine for that necessity.

From the Book of Jude. STRANGERS IN TIME.

PART 7: THE DOCTRINE OF PERFECT KNOWLEDGE, v.5, 6, 7.

#1. Jude makes the case that *true faith always contracts back upon PERFECT KNOWLEDGE*. The Israelites (v.5) dismissed any obligation of such a contraction. The angelic rebels (v.6) disputed any authority and the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah (v.7) believed that the will of God contracts back upon human desire.

#2. Verses 5, 6, and 7 are but 3 examples teaching the DOCTRINE OF PERFECT KNOWLEDGE. There are many others.

#3. PERFECT KNOWLEDGE being precursor, then PERFECT REASONING (opposing imperfect reasoning) must follow, transcending into PERFECT BEHAVIOR.

#4. This state of PERFECTION is relative to God and His revelation; it is surely more than objectionable to the universe of unbelief and it is not in anyway relative to time nor circumstance.

#5. There is, presented in Scripture, what may be called *THE CONTINUUM OF PERFECTION*. Biblical faith requires its application to temporal conditions and circumstance.

#6. This CONTINUUM OF PERFECTION displaces the limpid and inconstant faith of the Israelites, who "believed" as long as it matched their preference for rational outcomes. Immediate fears and concerns of personal danger redirected their reasoning and behavior. A very human proclivity.

#7. THE APPLICATION OF PERFECTION displaces the rebellious spirit posed by some of the angelic host. Like many men who defy and revile the Almighty because from their point of view, He overrules their personal ambitions.

#8. THE CONTINUUM OF PERFECTION displaces the inordinate and uncontrolled desire for all manner of fleshly experience, like that exhibited by the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. A state of affairs where the claims of conscience and higher spiritual understanding are blotted out of relevance.

#9. Jude is vitally concerned with the faithless reasoning and its consort, faithless behavior.

From the Book of Jude. STRANGERS IN TIME.

PART 8: THE CONTINUUM OF PERFECTION APPLIED.

#1. PERFECT KNOWLEDGE--> leads to PERFECT REASONING (from the Lord's point of view)--> both of which are precursors to PERFECT BEHAVIOR.

#2. It is this CONTINUUM OF PERFECTION that believers push into circumstance and conditions. It is this structure of thought, speech and behavior that the ancient Israelites (v.5) never counted as precious, the angelic rebels (v.6) despised, and the Sodomites (7) avoided.

#3. This continuum, Abraham pushed into the material conditions of his life and that of his wife and son (Isaac), Genesis 22; Hebrews 11:8-11, 17-19. Abraham forced the CONTINUUM OF PERFECTION into the hopelessness of old age and physiology. It changed everything.

#4. A father with heavy heart, yet hoping beyond circumstance to save his moribund son, applied the CONTINUUM OF PERFECTION to a hopeless clinical condition. "Jesus said to him, 'Go; your son lives'", John 4:46-54.

#5. The desert generation of Israelites "trapped" at the Red Sea, consumed with fear and bereft of the hope of survival, witnessed the incalculable benefit of PERFECTED BEHAVIOR when all rational hope has gone, Exodus 14.

#6. "Paul and Silas", under arrest in Philippi, without resort to despondency, "...about midnight...were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; and suddenly..." (Acts 16:25, 26) all the rules changed. THE CONTINUUM OF PERFECTION alters historical conditions.

#7. The prophet Daniel made a decision that immediately put his life in peril, Daniel 6. He pushed PERFECT KNOWLEDGE into the situation effecting PERFECT REASONING and causing Daniel to conduct himself according to PERFECT BEHAVIOR. "Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before God, as he had been doing previously", v.10.

That is how believers handle peril of whatever design. Lion's dens are not necessarily the end of the road!

From the Book of Jude. STRANGERS IN TIME.
PART 9: CONTEMPORARY REENACTMENT, v.8

#1. False teachers had "crept in unnoticed", v.4. These were known by the Almighty from before the beginning of time. In every generation they are understood to be (a) condemned, (b) ungodly, (c) licentious and (d) in denial of "the Master and Lord, Jesus Christ".

#2. Their motives are precisely stipulated. Their personal aspirations overrule the revealed truth; "...in the same way these men, also by dreaming...(v.8) generate lies by means of *distorted minds*. Subtlety is their method ("unnoticed").

#3. False teachers in every time reference do not simply offer up contrasting opinions; their aim is subversion of THE CONTINUUM OF PERFECTION. In consequence, "these men" (a) "defile the flesh"; challenging the Lord's demands of personal corporeal purity, driven by spiritual conviction. *Conviction must yield to spiritual laxity*.

#4. Then (b) they "reject authority", v.8. In this case these false teachers assume the authority that rightly belongs only to the Almighty Himself. They "reject" a universe reacting to the "authority" of an invisible and all powerful God; naturalism in the extreme. Some men become gods. This means that naturalism is not the expulsion of "religion". To the contrary it is *religion reformulated* to the deification of men. This is called idolatry. Naturalism is idolatry.

#5. And (c) they "revile angelic majesties". False teachers in the world today disparage any true faith in an invisible yet real dimension that can reach into time and human circumstance (including Satan). In the churches naturalism is the precondition for reading the Bible. Any serious look to the spiritual realm for determinant solutions is considered superfluous, unrealistic and not thoroughly trustworthy.

#6. The Book of Jude demonstrates a danger: There is the concern that the gods of naturalism not be permitted by stealth or indifference to invade the churches.

From the Book of Jude. STRANGERS IN TIME.
PART 10: THE FUNDAMENTAL PREMISE, v.9, 10.

#1. There is a premise, revealed, that is so foundational that without it the cohesion of Scripture collapses. The premise: There is a realm of "spiritual majesties" (v.8) determinant in temporal matters. This is the origin, the only origin, of cause --> to effect.

#2. The spiritual realm, therefore, is the only significant reality standing as the context of the material dimension.

#3. This premise includes and confirms the factual and active relation between the invisible and the visible. The revealed premise can only come to the understanding of men through revelation.

#4. Accordingly, such a factor of human existence should be greatly respected by men in time. "But these men (false teachers) revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed", v.10.

#5. These richly corrupt men had no use for the Word of God. They turned to the flesh as the only source of thought, speech and behavior. The only realm of knowledge that mattered was that derived by men in time and by human lived experience.

#6. For them there was no higher order of mind nor of conduct than man himself. These people of growing influence not only disparaged revelation, they also liquidated the surrounding unseen spiritual realities from relevance.

#7. Their "knowledge base" was too narrow, limited, too truncated. "Instinct" had displaced revelation. These men were in danger, though they would not have believed it. Understanding by revelation was rejected, so they had none. And reliance upon instinct, as "unreasoning animals" carried its own charge of destruction.

#8. If this is not a portrait of the contemporary, then what is? Men in time and materiality cannot live properly without THE FUNDAMENTAL PREMISE.

#9. "Michael the archangel" (v.9) was so sensitive to the ruling FUNDAMENTAL PREMISE that "when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses", he being a purely spiritual being, "did not dare pronounce against him (Satan) a railing judgment". "The Lord rebuke you!" was Michael's only response.

#10. The devil is all bad but he is still numbered among the spiritual realities and outranks man. This end we are on here, is the low end.

From the Book of Jude. STRANGERS IN TIME.
PART 11: THE FUNCTION OF BIBLICAL ANALOGY, v.11-13.

#1. Analogies are comparisons between two things that bear, significant correspondence one to the other. Analogy is a means to explanation. But biblical analogies represent a very different order of explanation.

#2. Biblical analogies demonstrate the relation of supernatural wisdom to temporal conditions. And by that, a higher and more accurate perception can be pushed into human circumstance.

#3. The implication is that believers are not permitted to assign "meanings" to things, situations and conditions generated by common sense.

#4. The analogies:

- "Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain...",v.11. Cain is an example of a personality who *makes everything relative to his/her will*, Genesis 4. The will of God, the life of his own brother and his conscience were all made relative to his own will. That is what murderers do.
- "and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam", v11. "Balaam" was a prophet; he was charged to deliver the word of God and that only, Numbers 22. But he was corruptible by means of material gain. Eternal truth was not Balaam's priority. Money and recognition superseded prophetic duty. A certain kind of "professionalism" epitomizes the error of Balaam. This man "rushed headlong" toward acquisition and away from duty.
- "and perished in the rebellion of Korah", v.11. Korah was an instigator, a provocateur and a rebel, Numbers 16. He and numerous others, being prominent men (of "renown", 16:2) objected to Moses' singular leadership. Resentment had grown because the Lord's appointment of Moses had bypassed the consensus of those who considered themselves, at least equal to and perhaps better than God's chosen voice. Theirs was not a rebellion against Moses; but against the Almighty Himself. Revelation was displaced by consensual wisdom. Moses was maligned and publicly rebuked. The issue was human pride. They were destroyed.

#5. These analogies generalize to a revealed perception: Time cannot and does not transcend the reach of Scripture, the reach of revealed meaning.

From the Book of Jude. STRANGERS IN TIME.
PART 12: THE FUNCTION OF BIBLICAL ANALOGY, v.11-13.

#1. THE REVEALED ANALOGICAL FUNCTION is a stipulation about the Word of God and its relation to time and materiality. The stipulated function of analogy closes any significance that some often attach to the time gap between the text of Scripture and the present.

#2. Biblical analogy encompasses time and circumstance, not the other way around. This analogical principle upends common sense interpretations of time!

#3. The analogies continue:

- (d) "These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts...", v.12. Obfuscation is the word. They obfuscated (render obscure) their true character. Those people were hiding their true motives ("caring for themselves") and were quite confident ("without fear").
- (e) "clouds without water", v.12. These men were present but with no constructive measures to promote spiritual growth; being spiritually aimless, "carried along by the winds".
- (f) "autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted", v.12. Personified personal spiritual decay had "crept in unnoticed", v.4. The brethren in the church did not know, initially, with whom they were dealing. Spiritual life had never been born in their consciousness (the false teachers). A facade was carefully generated and just as carefully groomed.
- (g) "wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam", v.13. These men sullied the "beach" with the shame of their aforementioned sins, v.11.
- (h) "wandering stars", v.13. Interesting but irrelevant to the hard task of developing spiritual maturity.

#4. The meaning of these analogies is not in nature; the meaning is in the revealed language. The meaning is in how the Holy Spirit employs these examples.

#5. The key: The historical events and conditions associated with "Cain", "Balaam" and "Korah" (v11), as examples, had no control over the revealed language about them. It was the revealed language that served as the control element of the event or situation. It is the word of God alone that determines meaning of all of time.

#6. Thereby any "supposed distance" between the Scripture and the present collapses.

From the Book of Jude. STRANGERS IN TIME.
PART 13: THE UNBRIDGEABLE CHASM, v.14-16.

#1. In the seventh generation from Adam, the prophet "Enoch" was given a very early advanced understanding about what we may call THE ULTIMATE FUTURE OF TIME.

#2. And that future is constituted of a cataclysmic encounter between God and "all the ungodly" of the earth, v.15.

#3. This ULTIMATE FUTURE is predicated on an irretrievable condition of time: WHICH IS THE GREAT UNBRIDGEABLE CHASM THAT EXISTS BETWEEN GOD and THE UNGODLY PEOPLE OF THE WORLD.

#4. This is the great polarity that governs time, materiality and historical conditions. It is, as well, the factor that determines the living profile of faith in the world (how Christians behave in time).

#5. Progress is not a true interpretation of time. There must be a daily performed appraisal of the behavior of men in time by the Almighty. In the mind of God there is a constant clash between the will of God, the word of God and the "grumblers, finding fault, following their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage", v.16.

#6. The "ungodly" are self-willed antagonists of the Eternal God and His revelation to man. Theirs is a way of life determined by a language manifold (v.16) forged specifically to contest revealed truth. Language is a shared conditionality with God, but the "ungodly" have purged the Lord from their language.

#7. Believers, however, put Him back at the axis of language, as did Enoch. "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones (v.15) to execute judgment upon all...to convict all the ungodly of...ungodly deeds...way(s)...and all of the harsh things...spoken against Him", v.15. #8. Jude reminds us that "It was also about these men that Enoch...prophesied..." many centuries past, v.14. Time does not overtake the word of God. That is the habitual practice of the "ungodly" in every generation.

From the Book of Jude. STRANGERS IN TIME.

PART 14: THE TITANIC STRUGGLE FOR LANGUAGE, v.11-16.

#1. The historical conditions of the time, exerted no control over the language of God regarding the exemplary episodes of "Cain", "Balaam" and "Korah", v. 11.

#2. Then revealed language is brought to bear upon elements of routine human experience like those mentioned in v.12, 13.

#3. True meaning does not originate in time, nature nor in human lived experience. Meaning is imposed upon the temporal order from above.

#4. Time, life, history possess no control measures over the Word of God. The control dynamics are generated by evil people who reject the imposition of revelation, 14-16.

#5. A well circulated idea, purporting that time and history are so persistent in their effects upon Scripture that reliable knowledge is not possible. But THE BIBLICAL FUNCTION OF ANALOGY, taught in this text, dispels that misconception!

#6. Although it is not always profoundly evident to the reader, these teachings from Jude herald the ever present TITANIC STRUGGLE FOR LANGUAGE.

#7. Human language is a shared conditionality with God. We are language users because that capacity first resides in the Almighty. In order to live by faith, the Word of God must provide the grammatical authority over our use of language; spoken, written and cognitive.

#8. In the absence of reliance upon Scripture to control our language use, men always grasp language as a natural characteristic and then assume authority over language; the divine capacity.

#9. The TITANIC STRUGGLE FOR LANGUAGE is the struggle for the soul of man. All false teachers, charlatans and confidence men know as much. Niels Bohr, Danish physicist, suggested that we are all suspended in language. That is not possible while the Bible exerts all grammatical influence over the execution of language. Representations are applied to this world of human experience by the rules derived from revelation or by human personal desire.

#10. Jude has us know that every believer is engaged (aware or not) in a TITANIC STRUGGLE FOR LANGUAGE and therefore, a personal struggle for faith, righteousness and salvation!

From the Book of Jude. STRANGERS IN TIME.

PART 15: THE PARAMETER PROBLEM. Generalizing from Jude.

#1. PARAMETERS set the conditions for operation of a system.

#2. From Genesis 3 forward in the Bible, many people preferred to believe that the FUNDAMENTAL PARAMETER OF NATURE IS ENERGY. The belief is that the phenomenon of energy sets the conditions for the way things are in time and materiality.

#3. The Israelites of the Exodus (v.5) accepted the energy parameter without question (Numbers 13, 14). Outcomes, they believed, in the natural order were affected by the key parameter of energy.

#4. The revealed contradiction: GOD IS THE PARAMETER, SETTING CONDITIONS ON THE NATURAL ORDER and SUPPLANTING ENERGY. The Israelites of that time

were "subsequently destroyed" because most of them "did not believe", v.5. They had rejected the revealed truth that the Almighty was the effective parameter of personal circumstance. If one believes in that, then, concordant behavior must follow.

#5. Angelic rebels set aside the revealed parameter, putting in its place parameters of their own choosing, v.6. Those celestial beings overruled God.

#6. Ignoring *the absolute parameter*, the inhabitants of "Sodom and Gomorrah"..."indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh...", v.7.

#7. THE PARAMETER PROBLEM is an axial issue in revealed faith. Received faith refers to those faith elements that one is taught by handed down traditions. But revealed faith comes to us through only one direct source; that being the word of God.

#8. The energy parameter is usually enfolded into human experience and historical conditions. And then it disappears. But the GOD PARAMETER is pushed, by faith, into thought, speech and behavior.

#9. The efficacy of prayer and obedience only fit within the revealed parameter. "Cain", "Balaam, "Korah" (v.11) acted in contradiction to the GOD PARAMETER.

#10. The parameter problem has to be settled by every believer and it will be. True faith firmly rests only upon the GOD PARAMETER.

From the Book of Jude. STRANGERS IN TIME.

PART 16: THE ART OF SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING, v.17-18.

#1. Christians do not fold the particulars of revelation into the general of human experience. To do that is to set the stage for the disappearance of revealed wisdom. Once enfolded, revealed truth becomes subject to general experience; and it will disappear from relevance.

#2. Jude urges believers to impose revealed truth, firmly, upon human experience. The outcome of this is SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING.

#3. One may observe that the application of revealed truth to material existence is an art. This ART OF SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING can be learned, can be personally expressed; showing supernatural understanding of human lived experience.

#4. FIRST: THE STARTING POINT. "But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ", v.17. Christians are obligated to apostolic revelation. "The words" delivered by the apostles to the churches, form a distinct manifold of meaning. This formulated meaning, then, is presented as the administration of the "Lord Jesus Christ". It is not, therefore, subject to human wisdom (interpretation). And that necessarily means that the revelatory apostolic

words PRECEDE --> THE UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. Under no conditions is experience to be allowed to serve as the starting point.

THE ART OF SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING takes the entire realm of comprehension off the natural plane. By this an unfortunate and unnecessary and disastrous arrangement can be avoided. Which is that human lived experience becomes the starting point of a false understanding of the Bible. The language of Jude insists the no perception of experience can be reliable without the precedential appeal to the apostolic word. Bringing the apostolic word to bear upon experience must presuppose a non-trivial *biblical literacy*. THE ART OF SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING begins with the word of God and transcends limited focus on "doctrine". Faith must be mapped on to personal experience.

From the Book of Jude. STRANGERS IN TIME.
PART 17: THE ART OF SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING, v.17-19.

SECOND: THE ASYMMETRY OF DESIRE. "That they were saying to you, 'In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly desires'", v.18. There are two supreme motives supplying the drive for thought, speech and behavior in the world and in the churches. Because of the nature of these two motives, there can be no symmetry between the two. One of them will displace the other.

One may pursue THE ART OF SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING or "ungodly desires", but one cannot pursue both at the same time. This fact inevitably leads to asymmetrical reasoning, asymmetrical language and most certainly results in asymmetrical behavior. Differences between the two chief motives could not be more severe. Ungodly desires are purely of the flesh; of this world and bear no obligation to the eternal and immaterial realities.

"Mockers" hold SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING in contempt, disdain and scorn. But the motive of SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING overrules that which is ungodly and exposes its methods and means. The churches are to be peopled by those driven in accordance with the desire to obtain ever increasing SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING. Mediocrity and indifference do not fit well with the spiritual motive. Jude has us look beyond appearances, to the asymmetry of motive. The two cannot be enfolded (blended). How do the godly deal with that which is ungodly? They exceed it! That is the key!

THIRD: EVERYTHING DEPENDS UPON SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING. "These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit", v.19. Two influences compete for our loyalty. And influences bear a certain causative power. These influences are personifications of two very contrary paths of comprehension. One is grounded in the substance of this world, "devoid of the Spirit"; the other in the world of "the Spirit". The cohesion of the churches depends upon THE ART OF SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING. With a sufficient deficit of that, then, "divisions" are caused.

Division signals lack of SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING. Divisions are not inherent; they are caused. Ignorance of revealed truth is causal! Psychology offers no reprieve, no curation. The phenomenon of "worldly-minded(ness)" is causal of dissolution of human relations. THE ART OF SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING is causal of strength, unity and invulnerability to corruption. Marriage, parenting, comradeship, brotherly relations are effects of one of two causes.

From the Book of Jude. STRANGERS IN TIME.
PART 18: SPIRITUAL MOMENTUM OVER STASIS, v.20-23.

#1. Human beings have an acute capacity. That is the ability to "settle in". We make adjustments based on where we are and in regard to what is before us. We can accept the way things are, so to speak. Becoming familiar with the surroundings, one frames habits of thought, practice and behavior.

#2. However, Christians are saddled with a thing we may call existential anxiety; "...waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life", v.21. There is a way of thinking involved here. Existential pertains to what is real, actual and existent. Jude is concerned that believers not "settle in" here on earth and in time. There is another set of realities, spiritual in nature and just as existential as materiality.

#3. Jude admonishes; "And have mercy on some, who are doubting", v.22. There were some, still uncertain about existential spiritual reality. Trying to deal with something made known to them only by revelation, they held on to the possibility that material existence gives the best definition and meaning of life! ONE FOOT IN THE WORD OF GOD and THE OTHER IN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. Not lost to spiritual truth, yet not fully convinced of Heaven and "eternal life".

#4. Not spiritually lost but at the point of decision. Jude warns us that SPIRITUAL MOMENTUM IS NECESSARY TO OVERRIDE STASIS. Stasis is a condition of slow movement or none at all. "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God...", v.20. SPIRITUAL MOMENTUM is the absolute reaction to this world. The Lord does not countenance STASIS OF FAITH and PRAYER.

#5. Stasis is very dangerous. "Doubting" is not resolved, v.22. Some were giving up their salvation, prompting Jude to exclaim; "save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh", v.23.

#6. That which is immaterial (spiritual/invisible) is the true and existential universe of advantage. But some doubted that proposition. So, they were busy going after things perishable! SPIRITUAL MOMENTUM is how believers transcend the present state of faith and present devotion to prayer.

#7. STASIS OF FAITH and PRAYER is, in fact a commentary on revealed truth. As that develops we are settling in down here. There are spiritual parameters and those

temporal. A choice is being made day by day, moment by moment, episode by episode. "keep yourselves in the love of God...", is a choice, v.21.

#8. SPIRITUAL STASIS of understanding holds one's mind, firmly within the vice of personal doubt and fleshly inclination. SPIRITUAL MOMENTUM strikes those chains off our hands. Somebody better tell the churches!

From the Book of Jude. STRANGERS IN TIME.
PART 19: THE ETERNAL SENTINEL, v.24, 25.

#1. The life of faith is difficult and exigent (urgent). Believers are, at every point, stressed to guard the revealed truth and the faith to be manifested in it.

#2. This task requires more than close human attention and personal commitment. There is the necessary ABSOLUTE CAUSATION. "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy", v.24.

#3. Implicit in these words is a reflection of our human struggle to defend faith in the Almighty and in revealed truth. Jude more than implies that that SUPERNATURAL AGENCY is added to our struggle. Which means that human efforts, in this regard, are commanded but are not determinant. It is the power of God that "keep(s) you from stumbling...".

#4. Therefore, our labors and sacrifices on behalf of the Lord, here in time, are being underwritten by Him. That must be the will of God, that we should make great exertion and succeed. Our work of faith is a joint effort between believers in time, while in apparent jeopardy, often overwhelmed and "...Him who is able to keep you...and to make you stand (before Him) blameless with great joy".

#5. Our struggle is, then, encompassed by something greater than our immediate natural awareness can detect. It is circumscribed by the MONOTHEISTIC GOD ("the only God", v.25) and His essential nature.

#6. And the Lord's essential nature is more than extended in time. His "glory", "majesty", "dominion" and "authority" (v.25) are infinite absolute attributes, inscribing our fight for the faith within them.

#7. "Jesus Christ our Lord" lead the way through this ground of struggle and sacrifice. He categorically relied upon "the only God our Savior", renouncing Himself so as to complete the will of God in this world.

#8. He succeeded. The same mission falls to His people. They will succeed as well. Our understanding must ever expand to the point that we fully trust in THE ETERNAL

SENTINEL and His power that was, "before all time", is "now" and will be "forever".
"Amen".