

Scripture Text Commentaries

Patrick Damonse

Iouda

Study Guide for Iouda 1

Issued in 2014 by the General Council of the Followers of IESO.

Printed in South-Africa by the Followers of IESO in Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa.

Ekklesias in the Western Cape, South Africa.

Ekklesias in Cape Town.

Sonop Building, First Floor, 5 Louis Trichardt Street, Parow
7500

P. O, Box 489, Kuilsriver, 7579, Tel: 021 829 0311,
Cell: 061 427 1174 Fax: 086 6500 1084.

Website: www.ieso.co.za,

Email address: info@ieso.co.za

Registration Number: 2011/149093/07

Patrick Damonse :: Study Guide for Iouda 1

Contending for the Faith

These shorter letters of the Prophetic Scriptures (New Testament) are often neglected, but the neglect of this important letter says more about us than it does about the Book of Iouda. "Its neglect reflects more the superficiality of the generation that neglects it than the irrelevance of its burning message."

A. The danger that prompted Iouda to write this letter.

1. (Iouda 1:1) The author and the readers.

Iouda, a bondservant of IESO The Anointed One, and brother of Iakobo, To those who are called, sanctified by Aleim the Father, and preserved in IESO The Anointed One:

a. **Iouda:** The name is literally "Iouda." But to avoid connection with Iouda Iscariot, the infamous man who betrayed IESO, most English translators have used the name "**Iouda**."

i. There are six people named "Iouda" mentioned in the Prophetic Scriptures (New Testament), but the best evidence identifies this as the one mentioned in Matthio 13:55 and Marhko 6:3: **Iouda**, the half-brother of IESO.

ii. **Iouda**, like the other half-brothers of IESO (including Iakobo), didn't believe in IESO as the Moseea until after the resurrection of IESO (Ioanne 7:5 and Acts 1:14).

b. **A bondservant of IESO The Anointed One:** Iouda was a *blood relative* of IESO, but he considered himself only as a **bondservant of IESO The Anointed One**. The fact that he wanted himself to be known this way instead of introducing himself as "Iouda, the half-brother of IESO" tells us something of the humility of Iouda and the relative unimportance of being connected to IESO by human relationships.

i. IESO spoke of this relative unimportance in passage such as Marhko 3:31-35 and Louka 11:27-28.

ii. Without a doubt, Iouda valued the fact that IESO was his half-brother and that he grew up in the same household as IESO. But even more valuable to him was his *new* relationship with IESO. To Iouda, the blood of the tree that saved him was more important than the family blood in his veins that related him to IESO. Iouda could say with Paulo, "*Even though we have known The Anointed One according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer*" (2 Corinthians 5:16).

c. **And brother of Iakobo:** Iakobo was an important leader of the Ekklesia in Jerusalem and the author of the Prophetic Scriptures (New Testament) letter that bears his name. Both Iakobo and Iouda were half-brothers of IESO.

d. **To those who are called:** Iouda wrote to Followers. This is not an evangelistic tract and it deals with things that believers need to hear, but often don't want to.

i. Iouda identified his readers as Followers in three specific ways:

· They were **called**. A person is a Follower because Aleim has **called** him. The important thing is to *answer* the call when it comes, just as we answer the telephone when it is ringing.

· They were **sanctified by Aleim the Father**. This means that they were *set apart* – set apart from the world and set apart

unto Aleim.

· They were **preserved** in IESO. IESO The Anointed One is our guardian and our protector.

2. (Iouda 1:2) Iouda gives a warm and typical greeting.

Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

a. **Mercy, peace, and love:** This is not the same greeting as found in most of Paulo's letters (which usually begin with some variation of "Grace and peace unto you"). Yet it is substantially the same.

b. **Be multiplied to you:** In the mind and heart of Iouda, it wasn't enough to have **mercy, peace, and love** *added* to the life of the Follower. He looked for *multiplication* instead of simple *addition*.

3. (Iouda 1:3) The call to defend the faith.

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the Faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

a. **I was very diligent to write to you:** Iouda's initial desire was to write about our **common salvation**. But something happened – Iouda **found it necessary to write** a different letter. We might say that this was the letter that didn't *want* to be written.

i. The letter of Iouda is essentially a sermon. In it, Iouda preached against the dangerous *practices* and *doctrines* that put the Glad Tidings of IESO The Anointed One in peril. These were serious issues and Iouda dealt with them seriously.

ii. We should be happy that Iouda was sensitive to the Holy Spirit here. What might have only been a letter from a leader to a particular Ekklesia instead became a precious instrument inspired by the Holy Spirit and valuable as a warning in these last days.

b. **Concerning our common salvation:** Our salvation isn't **common** in the sense that it is cheap or that everyone has it. It is **common** in the sense that we are saved in **common**, in community. Aleim doesn't have one way for the rich and another way for the poor, or one way for the good and another way for the bad. We all come to Aleim the same way. If it isn't a **common salvation**, it isn't *Aleim's* salvation – and it isn't **salvation** at all.

i. An individual Follower may not know it, understand it, or benefit by it, but to be a Follower is to be a part of a community. To be a Follower means you stand shoulder to shoulder with millions of Followers who have gone before. We stand with strong Followers and weak Followers, brave Followers and cowardly Followers, old Followers and young Followers. We are part of an invisible, mighty army that spans back through the generations.

ii. "Upon other matters there are distinctions among believers, but yet there is a common salvation enjoyed by the Arminian as well as by the Calvinist, possessed by the Presbyterian as well as by the Episcopalian, prized by the Quaker as well as by the Baptist. Those who are in The Anointed One are more near of kin than they know of, and their intense unity in deep essential truth is a greater force than most of them imagine: only give it scope and it will work wonders." (Edgar Phillips)

iii. In the 1980's a survey poll found that 70% of Americans who go to Ekklesia say that you can be a *good* Follower

without going to Ekklesia. This doesn't match with Iouda's idea of a **common salvation**.

c. **Exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith:** This was the great need that Iouda interrupted his intended letter to address. The ancient Greek word translated "**contend**" comes from the athletic world – from the wrestling mat. It is a *strengthened* form of the word meaning "to agonize." Therefore "**contend**" speaks of hard and diligent work.

i. The verb translated **contend earnestly** is (in the grammar of the ancient Greek) in the *present infinitive*, showing that the Follower struggle is continuous.

ii. We **contend earnestly for the faith** because it is valuable. If you walk into an art gallery and there are no guards or no sort of security system, you must draw one conclusion: there is nothing very valuable in that art gallery. Valuables are protected; worthless things are not.

d. **Exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith:** If we emphasize the word **you**, we see that this was something that Iouda wanted each individual Follower to do. There are many ways that every Follower can **contend earnestly for the faith**.

i. We contend for the faith in a *positive* sense when we give an unflinching witness, distribute tracts, make possible the training of faithful ambassadors for IESO, or when we strengthen the hands of faithful pastors who honour the Word of Aleim in their pulpits. These are a few among many ways that we can **contend earnestly for the faith** in a *positive* sense.

ii. We contend for the faith in a *negative* way when we withhold support and encouragement from false teachers.

iii. We contend for the faith in a *practical* sense when we live uncompromising Follower lives and give credit to the Ruler who changed us.

iv. Obviously, faithful missionaries and evangelists **contend earnestly for the faith**. But so does the Sunday School teacher or the home group leaders, who is faithful to the Scriptures. People like this contend for the faith just as much as a front-line missionary does, and each one of us should contend for the Glad Tidings wherever Aleim puts us.

e. **Contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints:** Here, Iouda tells us what we are contending *for*. There is a lot of earnest contention in the world but usually not for the right things. **The faith once for all delivered to the saints** is something *worth* contending for.

i. "**The Faith**" doesn't mean our own personal belief, or **faith** in the sense of our trust in Aleim. The phrase **the Faith** means "The essential truths of the Glad Tidings that all true Followers hold in common." **The faith** is used in this sense repeatedly in the Prophetic Scriptures (New Testament) (Acts 6:7, 13:8, 14:22, 16:5, 24:24; Romans 1:5 and 16:26; Colossians 2:7, and 1 Timotheo 1:2 are just some of the examples). We must **contend earnestly** for the *truth*. "*The faith* is the body of truth that very early in the Ekklesia's history took on a definite form (cf. Acts 2:42; Romans 6:17; Galatians 1:23)." (Peter Damonse)

ii. **Once** means that the **faith** was **delivered** one time, and doesn't need to be **delivered** again. Of course, we *distribute* this truth again and again. But it was delivered by Aleim to the world through the apostles and prophets **once** (Ephesians

2:20). Aleim may speak today, but *never* in the authoritative way that He spoke through the first apostles and prophets as recorded in the Prophetic Scriptures (New Testament). "There is no other Glad Tidings, there will be none. Its content will be more fully understood, its implications will be developed, its predictions will be fulfilled; but it will never be supplemented or succeeded or supplanted."

iii. **For all** means that this **faith** is for *everybody*. We don't have the option to simply make up our own faith and still be true to Aleim. This faith is for **all**, but today, it isn't popular to really believe in **the faith once for all delivered to the saints**. Instead, most people want to believe in **the faith** they make up as they go along and decide is right for them. More people believe in "the faith that is in my heart" than **the faith once for all delivered to the saints**.

iv. In the book *Habits of the Heart*, Robert Bellah and his colleagues wrote about an interview with a young nurse named Sheila Larson, whom they described as representing many American's experience and views on religion. Speaking about her own faith and how it operated in her life, she said: "I believe in Aleim. I'm not a religious fanatic. I can't remember the last time I went to Ekklesia. My faith has carried me a long way. It is 'Sheilaism.' Just my own little voice." We might say that this highly individualistic faith is the most popular religion in the world, but the idea that we *can* or *should* put together our own faith is wrong. We have one **Faith**, which was **once for all delivered to the saints**.

4. (Iouda 1:4) We need to contend for the faith because there are dangerous men among Followers.

For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, wicked men, who turn the grace of our Aleim into lewdness and deny the only Ruler Aleim and our Ruler IESO The Anointed One.

a. **Certain men have crept in unnoticed:** In part, this is what makes them so dangerous – they are **unnoticed**. No one noticed that they were dangerous. They didn't wear a "Danger: False Teacher" name tag. These **certain men** probably claimed to be *more* Scriptural than anybody else was.

i. **Crept in** means, "To slip in secretly as if by a side door." "Satan knows right well that one devil in the Ekklesia can do far more than a thousand devils outside her bounds." (Edgar Phillips)

b. **Who long ago were marked out for this condemnation:** These **certain men** have a destiny – the destiny of every false teacher and leader. They are **marked** and destined **for this condemnation**, and it is enough to say that they are **wicked men**. They are **wicked** simply in the sense that they are not like Aleim and no matter the outward appearances, they disregard Aleim.

i. They were **unnoticed** by men, but not by Aleim. The Ruler is not wringing His hands in heaven, worrying about those who deceive others through their teaching and through their lifestyles. They may be hidden to some believers but as far as Aleim is concerned, their **condemnation** was **marked out** long ago. Their judgment is assured. The truth will win out; our responsibility is to be on the side with the truth.

c. **Who turn the grace of our Aleim into lewdness:** These

certain men had received something of the **grace of Aleim**. But when they received it, they turned it into an excuse for their **lewdness**.

i. The idea behind the ancient word **lewdness** is sin that is practiced without shame, without any sense of conscience or decency. Usually the word is used in the sense of sensual sins, such as sexual immorality. But it can also be used in the sense of brazen anti-scriptural teaching, when the truth is denied and lies are taught without shame. Iouda probably had both ideas in mind here, because as the rest of the letter will develop, these **certain men** had *both* moral problems and doctrinal problems.

ii. These words of Iouda show that there is a *danger* in preaching grace. There are some who may take the truth of Aleim's grace and **turn the grace of our Aleim into lewdness**. But this doesn't mean there is anything wrong or dangerous about the message of Aleim's grace. It simply shows how corrupt the human heart is.

d. And deny the only Ruler Aleim and our Ruler IESO The Anointed One: These *certain men* **deny** the Ruler IESO The Anointed One. They do this by refusing to recognize who IESO said He was, and therefore they also deny who Aleim the Father is also.

i. We are not told specifically how these men **deny the only Ruler Aleim**. It may be that they denied Him with their wicked living or it may be that they denied Him with their heretical doctrines. Probably both were true.

B. Three examples that show the certainty of Aleim's judgment against the *certain men*.

1. (Iouda 1:5) The example of the people of Israhel.

But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Ruler, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

a. **But I want to remind you, though you once knew this:** Iouda knew he wasn't telling them anything new. They were already taught this example, but they needed to hear it again and to apply it to their present situation.

i. Ideally, every Follower would read these allusions to the Scriptures (Old Testament) and say, "Yes Iouda, I know *exactly* what you are talking about." If we don't know what Iouda wrote about, it shows we need to deepen our understanding of the Scriptures.

ii. "As for the root facts, the fundamental doctrines, the primary truths of Scripture, we must from day to day insist upon them. We must never say of them, 'Everybody knows them'; for, alas! everybody forgets them." (Edgar Phillips)

iii. "The use of Aleim's Word is not only to teach what we could not have otherwise known, but also to rouse us to a serious meditation of those things which we already understand, and not to suffer us to grow torpid in a cold knowledge." (Phillip Prins)

b. **The Ruler, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt:** Iouda reminds us of what happened in 4th Mouse (Numbers) 14. Aleim delivered the people of Israhel out of slavery in Egypt. They went out of Egypt and without unintended delays came to a place called Kadesh Barnea, on the threshold of the Promised Land. But at Kadesh Barnea, the people refused to trust Aleim and go into the Promised Land

of Canaan. Therefore almost none of the adult generation who left Egypt entered into the Promised Land.

i. Think of what Aleim did for the people of Israhel in this situation, and then how they responded to Him. They experienced Aleim's miraculous deliverance at the Red Sea. They heard the very voice of Aleim at Mount Sinai. They received His daily care and provision of manna in the wilderness. Yet they *still* lapsed into unbelief, and never entered into the place of blessing and rest Aleim had for them.

c. **Afterward destroyed those who did not believe:** Those who doubted and rejected Aleim at Kadesh Barnea paid a bigger price than just not entering the Promised Land. They also received the judgment of Aleim. Psalm 95 describes how the Ruler reacted to them: *For forty years I was grieved with that generation, and said, "It is a people who go astray in their hearts, and they do not know My ways. So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest"* (Psalm 95:10-11).

i. The warning through Iouda is clear. The people of Israhel started out from Egypt well enough. They had many blessings from Aleim along the way. But they did not endure to the end, because they **did not believe** Aleim's promise of power and protection.

ii. This example gives two lessons. First, it *assures* us that the *certain men* causing trouble will certainly be judged, even though they may have started out well in their walk with Aleim. Iouda says, "The certain men might have started out well. But so did the children of Israhel, and Aleim **afterward destroyed those who did not believe**." Secondly, it warns us that *we also* must follow IESO to the end, and never be among **those who did not believe**. The final test of our Faith is *endurance*. Some start the race but never finish it.

2. (Iouda 1:6) The example of the angels who sinned.

And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;

a. **The angels who did not keep their proper domain:** Iouda's letter is famous for bringing up obscure or controversial points, and this is one of them. Iouda speaks of **the angels** who sinned, who are now imprisoned and awaiting a future day of judgment.

i. "It is not too much to say that the Prophetic Scriptures (New Testament) no where else presents so many strange phenomenon, or raises so many curious questions within so narrow a space." (Salmond, *Pulpit Commentary*)

b. **Angels who did not keep their proper domain:** There is some measure of controversy about the identity of these particular angels. We only have two places in the Scriptures where it speaks of angels sinning. First, there was the original rebellion of some angels against Aleim (Isaia 14:12-14, Revelation 12:4). Secondly, there was the sin of the *sons of Aleim* described in 1st Mouse (Genesis) 6:1-2.

i. 1st Mouse (Genesis) 6:1-2 is a controversial passage all on its own. It says, *Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of Aleim saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose*. There is a significant debate as to if the *sons of Aleim* are angelic beings, or just another way of saying

“followers of Aleim” among humans. Iouda helps us answer this question.

c. **Did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode:** This offence was connected with some kind of *sexual* sin, such as the sexual union between rebellious angelic beings (the *sons of Aleim* in 1st Mouse (Genesis) 6:2) and the human beings (the *daughters of men* in 1st Mouse (Genesis) 6:2). We know that there was some sexual aspect to this sin because Iouda tells us in the following verse, Iouda 7: as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh. The words *in a similar manner to these* refers back to the **angels** of Iouda 6, and the words *gone after strange flesh* refers to their unnatural sexual union.

i. We know some things about this unnatural sexual union from 1st Mouse (Genesis) 6. We know that this unnatural union produced unnatural offspring. The unnatural union corrupted the genetic pool of mankind, so Aleim had to find Noe, a man *perfect in his generations* (1st Mouse (Genesis) 6:9) – that is, “pure in his genetics.” This unnatural union prompted an incredibly drastic judgment of Aleim – a global flood, wiping out all of mankind except for eight people.

ii. We can add another piece of knowledge from Iouda 6. This unnatural union prompted Aleim to uniquely imprison the angels who sinned in this way. They are **reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day**.

iii. As for the *specific* details of this unnatural union, it is useless to speculate. We don’t know how “fallen angel” genetic material could mix with human genetic material. Perhaps it happened through a unique form of demon possession and the fallen angel worked through a human host. We know that angels have the ability to assume human appearance at least temporarily, but we don’t know more than that.

d. **He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day:** Aleim judged these wicked angels, setting them in **everlasting chains**. Apparently some fallen angels are in bondage while others are unbound and active among mankind as demons.

i. By not keeping their **proper** place, they are now kept in **chains**. Their sinful pursuit of freedom put them in bondage. In the same way, those who insist on the freedom to do whatever they want are like these angels – bound with **everlasting chains**. True freedom comes from obedience.

ii. If angels cannot break the chains sin brought upon them, we are foolish to think that humans can break them. We can’t set ourselves free from these chains, but we can only be set free by IESO.

iii. This reminds us that these angels who sinned with an unnatural sexual union are no longer active. With His radical judgment back in the days of Noe, Aleim put an end to this kind of unnatural sexual union.

iv. This example gives two lessons. First, it *assures* us that the *certain men* causing trouble will be judged, no matter what their spiritual status had been. These angels at one time stood in the immediate, glorious presence of Aleim – and now they are in **everlasting chains**. If Aleim judged the angels who

sinned, He will judge these *certain men*. Secondly, it warns us that *we also* must continue walking with IESO. If the past spiritual experience of these angels didn’t guarantee their future spiritual state, then neither does ours. We must keep walking and be on guard.

3. (Iouda 1:7) The example of Sodom and Gomorrah.

As Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

a. **As Sodom and Gomorrah:** These two cities (**and the cities around them**) also stand as examples of Aleim’s judgment. Their sin – which was most conspicuously homosexuality, but included other sins as well – brought forth Aleim’s judgment.

i. Sodom and Gomorrah were blessed, privileged places. They were situated in a blessed area: it was *well watered everywhere... like the garden of the Ruler* (1st Mouse (Genesis) 13:10).

b. **Having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh:** Iouda refers to the account in 1st Mouse (Genesis) 19, where the homosexual conduct of the men of Sodom is described. Ezekiel 16:49 tells us of other sins of Sodom: *Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy*. Sexual depravity was not their *only* sin, but it was certainly *among* their sins, and Iouda makes this plain.

i. The sins described in Ezekiel 16:49 show that Sodom and Gomorrah were indeed prosperous, blessed areas. You don’t have *fullness of food, and abundance of idleness* if you don’t have material blessings. But despite their great blessing from Aleim and material prosperity, they sinned and were judged.

c. **Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire:** In 1st Mouse (Genesis) 19, Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed with fire from heaven. But that wasn’t the end of their judgment by fire. Far worse than what happened in 1st Mouse (Genesis) 19, they suffered **the vengeance of eternal fire**.

i. This example gives two lessons. First, it *assures* us that the *certain men* causing trouble will be judged, no matter how much they had been blessed in the past. Just as Sodom and Gomorrah were once wonderfully blessed but eventually suffered **the vengeance of eternal fire**, so will it be with these *certain men*. Secondly, it warns us that *we also* must continue walking with IESO. If the blessings of the past didn’t guarantee their future spiritual state, then neither does ours.

C. More sins of the *certain men*.

1. (Iouda 1:8) The character of these dangerous *certain men*.

Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries.

a. **Likewise also:** Iouda connected the *certain men* with the people of Sodom and Gomorrah in their *sensuality* (**defile the flesh**) and in their rejection of Aleim’s authority (**reject authority**).

i. When Iouda pointed out that these *certain men* **reject authority**, it meant that *they* wanted to be in authority. Therefore they rejected the authority of Aleim and they

rejected those Aleim put in authority.

ii. Today, our culture encourages us to **reject authority** and to recognize *self* as the only real authority in our lives. We can do this with the Scriptures, by choosing to only believe certain passages. We can do it with our beliefs, by choosing at the “salad bar” of religion. Or we can do it with our lifestyle, by making our own rules and not recognizing the proper authorities Aleim has established.

iii. In the darkest days of Isrhael, society was characterized by a term: *every man did what was right in his own eyes* (Judges 21:25). Today, this is the pattern of all the world and especially Western civilization.

b. **These dreamers:** It is possible that Iouda meant that the *certain men* were out of touch with reality. It is more likely that he meant they claimed to have prophetic dreams which were really deceptions.

c. **Speak evil of dignitaries:** Probably these **dignitaries** were the apostles or other leaders in the Ekklesia. Their rejection of **authority** was connected with their speaking **evil of dignitaries**.

2. (Iouda 1:9) Michael the archangel as an example of someone who would not speak evil of dignitaries.

Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of MoUse, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Ruler rebuke you!”

a. **Michael the archangel... the devil:** Iouda mentioned two kinds of angelic beings. **Michael** is among the angelic beings faithful to Aleim, who are the servants of Aleim and man. **The devil** is among the angelic beings rebelling against Aleim, who are the enemies of man.

i. There are invisible, angelic beings all around us. There are ministering spirits sent by Aleim to assist us, and demonic spirits who want to defeat us. The devil can’t unsave a saved person; but through his deceptions he can corrupt and defile a Follower who is supposed to walk in purity and freedom. To the devil, we are time bombs, ready to wreck his work – bombs that he would like to defuse and make ineffective.

ii. Many people today don’t believe **the devil** exists, but the Scriptures says he does. Or, if they believe he exists, they think of him in funny images from the Middle Ages. Back then, *miracle plays* were a chief form of entertainment. They were sort of a pageant where religious stories were acted out on stage. The audience learned to look for one character that was always dressed in red, wore horns on his head, and had a tail dangling behind him. His shoes looked like cloven hoofs, and he had a pitchfork in his hand. The audience was amused by this silly characterization of Satan, and got the idea that he was sort of a comical character. The devil doesn’t mind being thought of this way.

b. **Michael the archangel:** This angelic being is mentioned by name in four passages of the Scriptures: Danuel 10, Danuel 12, Revelation 12 and here in Iouda. Every time **Michael** appears, it is in the context of battle or readiness to fight. He is an **archangel**, which simply means a “leading angel.”

i. If **the devil** has an opposite, it certainly isn’t Aleim. It is **Michael the archangel** – another high ranking angelic being.

ii. “Let it be observed that the word *archangel* is never found

in the *plural* number in the sacred writings. There can be properly only one *archangel*, one chief or head of all the angelic host. Nor is the word *devil*, as applied to the great enemy of mankind, ever found in the plural; there can be but one monarch of all fallen spirits.” (Edgar Phillips)

c. **When he disputed about the body of MoUse:** This is another obscure reference by Iouda. The last we read about **the body of MoUse** is in 5th Mouse (Deuteronomy) 34:5-6: *So MoUse, the servant of the Ruler died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Ruler. And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows the grave to this day.*

i. We don’t know where Iouda received his information about this dispute. He may have received a unique revelation from Aleim. But according to teachers in the early Ekklesia, Iouda referred to an apocryphal book known as the *Assumption of MoUse*, of which only small portions survive.

ii. We don’t even exactly know why there was a dispute **about the body of MoUse**. Some have said that the devil wanted to use MoUse’ body as an object of worship to lead Isrhael astray into idolatry. Others have thought that Satan wanted to desecrate the body of MoUse, and claimed a right to it because MoUse had murdered an Egyptian.

iii. It is more likely that the devil anticipated a purpose Aleim had for MoUse’ body, and the devil tried to defeat that plan. We know that after his death, MoUse appeared in bodily form at the Transfiguration (Matthio 17:1-3) with Elia (whose body was caught up to heaven in 2 Kings 2). Perhaps also MoUse and Elia are the two witnesses of Revelation 11, and Aleim needed MoUse’ body for that future plan.

iv. But for Iouda, the main point isn’t *why* Michael was disputed, but *how* he disputed with the devil.

d. **Dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Ruler rebuke you!”** The manner of Michael’s fight is a model for spiritual warfare. First, we see that Michael was *in a battle*. Secondly, we see that he battled in the *Ruler’s authority*.

i. This proves to us that Michael is *not* IESO, as some heretical groups have thought. IESO rebuked the devil in *His own* authority, but Michael did not. “The point of contrast is that Michael could not reject the devil’s accusation on his own authority.”

ii. Significantly, Michael **dared not bring against him a reviling accusation**. Michael did not mock or accuse the devil. Aleim hasn’t called us to judge the devil, to condemn the devil, to mock him or accuse him, but to battle against him in the name of the Ruler.

iii. This relates to the *certain men* by a “how much more” line of thinking. If Michael **dared not bring against him a reviling accusation** against *the devil*, how much more should these *certain men* not speak evil of dignitaries.

3. (Iouda 1:10) More of the bad character of the *certain men*.

But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.

a. **But these speak evil:** In contrast to Michael, who would not even speak evil of the devil, these *certain men* spoke evil, especially when they rejected authority and spoke against

dignitaries.

b. **Of whatever they do not know:** The *certain men* didn't even know the things or the people they spoke evil about. Their evil speech was made worse by their ignorance.

i. Since they also spoke against dignitaries and rejected authority, these *certain men* did **not know** about true spiritual leadership and authority – so they found it easy to **speak evil** against it.

c. **Whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves:** These *certain men* pretended to be spiritual, but their only knowledge was really *natural*. Even what they knew **naturally**, they still used to corrupt themselves with an unspiritual mind.

i. **Brute beasts** can be smart or clever in an instinctive way, but they obviously do not have spiritual knowledge. It was the same way with these *certain men*.

ii. "How ironical that when men should claim to be knowledgeable, they should actually be ignorant; when they think themselves superior to the common man they should actually be on the same level as animals, and be corrupted by the very practices in which they seek liberty and self-expression."

D. Three examples of the *certain men*.

1. (Iouda 1:11a) The *certain men* have gone in the way of Kain.

Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Kain,

a. **The way of Kain:** Kain's story is found in 1st Mouse (Genesis) 4. Each of the sons of Adam and Euan brought an offering to the Ruler. Kain (being a farmer) brought an offering from his harvest. Abel (being a shepherd) brought an offering from his flocks. Aleim accepted Abel's offering, but He rejected Kain's sacrifice.

i. Many people assume that because Abel brought a blood sacrifice and Kain brought a grain sacrifice, that the difference between the two offerings was sacrificial blood. But the real difference was between *faith* and *unbelief*. Hebrews 11:4 makes this plain: *By faith Abel offered to Aleim a more excellent sacrifice than Kain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, Aleim testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.*

ii. Kain's sacrifice was probably more pleasing to the senses than the carcass of a dead lamb. But his sacrifice was offered without faith, and therefore it was unacceptable to Aleim. You can give to Aleim whatever you have or whatever you are, but you must offer it *in faith*.

b. **The way of Kain:** 1st Mouse (Genesis) 4:5 says that after Aleim rejected his sacrifice, *Kain was very angry, and his countenance fell*. He became angry because he knew he was rejected by Aleim. In a fit of anger Kain murdered Abel, and then he lied about it to Aleim.

i. 1 Ioanne 3:12 tells us that Kain murdered his brother because Abel's works were righteous (by faith), while Kain's own were wicked. Kain's lack was not in works, but in faith.

c. **The way of Kain:** Iouda says that Kain typifies a **way** that the *certain men* follow in. It is **the way of** unbelief and empty religion, which leads to jealousy, persecution of the truly divine, and eventually to murderous anger.

i. There is no greater curse on the earth than empty, vain

religion; those who have *a form of diviness but denying its power* (2 Timotheo 3:5). No wonder Paulo added, *and from such people turn away!*

ii. Many Followers are afraid of secular humanism or atheism or the world. But dead religion is far more dangerous, and sends more people to hell than anything else. These *certain men* were **in the way of Kain**, which is the way of dead religion.

2. (Iouda 1:11b) The *certain men* are in the error of Balaam.

Have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit,

a. **The error of Balaam:** Balaam's story is in 4th Mouse (Numbers) 22 to 25 and 31. During the time of the 2nd Mouse (Exodus), Isrhael advanced to the land of Moab, after defeating the Amorites. When the Israelites came near, King Balak of Moab sought the help of a prophet named Balaam.

i. The first delegation from King Balak arrived and Aleim told Balaam to have nothing to do with them. Aleim's initial words to Balaam were, "*You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed*" (4th Mouse (Numbers) 22:12).

ii. After the first visit another, more prestigious delegation came with great riches. Balaam wanted to go with them and Aleim allowed him to go. Balaam lusted after the riches and prestige offered to him and Aleim gave him over to his own sin.

iii. Aleim warned Balaam to turn back when he was on the way to see Balak. Yet his heart was set on the rich reward King Balak promised and he continued on. Balaam even ignored a talking donkey, sent to warn him to turn back.

iv. Balaam knew that he has done wrong. In 4th Mouse (Numbers) 22:34, he said to Aleim *I have sinned... Now therefore, if it displeases You, I will turn back*. But he didn't turn back. He continued on, refusing to see that when Aleim says no, we must take it as a no. Instead, Aleim gave Balaam what his sinful heart desired.

v. After meeting with King Balak of Moab, Balaam prophesied over Isrhael four times. But as he spoke forth Aleim's word, he did not curse Isrhael – instead he blessed her each time. When he was unsuccessful in cursing Isrhael, Balaam advised Balak on how to bring Isrhael under a curse. Instead of trying to have a prophet curse Isrhael, he should lead her into fornication and idolatry and then Aleim would curse a disobedient Isrhael.

vi. Balak did just that, sending his young women into the camp of Isrhael to lead Isrhael into sexual immorality and idolatry. Because of the people's sin, Aleim did curse Isrhael – He brought a plague of judgment upon Isrhael that killed 24,000. Therefore Balaam was guilty of the greatest of sins: deliberately leading others into sin. Worse yet, he did it for money.

b. **Greedily in the error of Balaam for profit:** The greedy **error of Balaam** was that he was willing to compromise everything for money. The *certain men* Iouda warned about had the same heart.

i. Many Followers would never deny IESO under persecution, but might deny Him if offered a large sum of money. There is not a single sin that corrupt man will not commit for the sake of money. Covetousness is such a dangerous sin that it killed

IESO – 30 pieces of silver helped put IESO on the tree.

ii. **Have run greedily** is literally “they were poured out” (Peter Damonse). This is a strong picture of excessive indulgence. But Paulo also uses the same term for the extravagant way Aleim loves us: *the love of Aleim has been poured out in our hearts* (Romans 5:5).

3. (Iouda 1:11c) The *certain men* live out the rebellion of Korha.

And perished in the rebellion of Korha.

a. **The rebellion of Korha:** Korha’s story is found in 4th Mouse (Numbers) 16. He was a prominent man in Isrhael, and one day came to MoUse, saying, *You take too much upon yourself, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Ruler is among them. Why then do you exalt yourself about the congregation of the Ruler?* (4th Mouse (Numbers) 16:3) Korha and his followers resented the authority Aleim gave to MoUse and Aarhon.

i. When Korha said this, MoUse fell on his face, knowing Aleim’s judgment would soon come. MoUse then proposed a test: each group took censers (for burning incense) and came before the Ruler. The Ruler Himself would choose which man He wanted to represent Him: MoUse or Korha.

ii. When they both came before Aleim, the Ruler told MoUse to step away. Then, the ground opened up and swallowed Korha and his followers. After that, fire came down from heaven and burned up all of his supporters. They all **perished**.

b. **Rebellion:** Korha was a Levite, but not of the priestly family of Aarhon. As a Levite, he had his own Aleim-appointed sphere of ministry, yet he was not content with it. He wanted the ministry and the authority of MoUse.

i. Korha needed to learn this essential lesson: we should work hard to fulfill everything Aleim has called us to be. At the same time, we should never try to be what Aleim has *not* called us to be.

c. **The rebellion of Korha:** This was also a rejection of Aleim’s appointed leaders, especially Aleim’s appointed Mediator. When the *certain men* rejected authority and spoke evil against dignitaries, they walked in **the rebellion of Korha**.

i. The rebellion of Korha “lies in the broader idea of a contemptuous and determined assertion of self against divinely appointed ordinances.” (Salmond, *The Pulpit Commentary*)

ii. These three men came from quite different backgrounds: Kain was a farmer, Balaam was a prophet, and Korha was a leader in Isrhael. Apostasy is never confined to one group of people. “There are apostates in the pulpit, in the palace, and in the poorhouse.”

E. What the future holds for these *certain men*.

1. (Iouda 1:12-13) A vivid description of the depravity of these *certain men*.

These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

a. **Spots in your love feasts:** The early Followers often met for a common meal, something like a potluck dinner. They called these meals **love feasts**, or “Agape Feasts.” When these *certain men* came, they were **serving only themselves**. They ate greedily at the **love feasts** while others went hungry.

i. At the Agape Feast, everybody brought what they could – some a little, some a lot; but they all shared it together. For some slaves who were Followers it might have been the only decent meal they regularly ate. The selfishness of these *certain men* spoiled the fellowship. 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 describes a similar problem in the Corinthian Ekklesia.

ii. It always spoils fellowship when we come to Ekklesia with a selfish “bless me” attitude. Many who would never eat selfishly at a Ekklesia meal still come to Ekklesia concerned with **serving only themselves**.

iii. **Spots:** Some Greek scholars think this word should be translated “hidden rocks” instead of **spots**. One way or another, it doesn’t make much real difference to the meaning of the passage.

iv. **Serving only themselves:** Literally in the ancient Greek this is “shepherding themselves” (Peter Damonse). They were shepherds of a sort – but only shepherding **themselves**.

b. **Clouds without water, carried by the winds:** Clouds without water are good for nothing. They bring no life-giving rain and they only block out the sun. They exist just for themselves. The *certain men* were like these **clouds**.

i. Once while driving by a factory, my daughter Sandi looked at the billows of white smoke coming from the smoke stacks. She said, “That’s where they make clouds!” These *certain men* were like those empty clouds – good for nothing, **carried by the winds**, floating on the breeze from one fad to another.

c. **Late autumn trees without fruit:** By **late autumn**, trees should have **fruit**. But these *certain men* did not bear **fruit** even when they should. They were like trees that only take instead of give.

d. **Raging waves of the sea:** For modern man, the sea is often a thing of beauty. But to ancient man, especially in Scriptural cultures, the sea was an unmanageable terror. Isaia 57:20 expresses this idea: *But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.* These *certain men* were busy and active like the **raging waves of the sea**, but all it brought was **foaming up their own shame**.

i. Busyness is no mark of correctness. The fruit of these men was like the foam or scum at the seashore. Iouda has in mind the ugly shoreline after a storm has washed up all sorts of driftwood, seaweed and debris.

e. **Wandering stars:** Like comets streaking through the sky, these *certain men* astonished the world for a time, and then vanished into darkness. An unpredictable star was no good for guidance and navigation. Even so these deceivers were useless and untrustworthy.

f. **Blackness of darkness forever:** This described their destiny. Unless they repent, they would end up in hell – and be there **forever**.

i. The punishment of hell is **forever** because a *mere man* is paying for his own sins, offering an imperfect sacrifice which must be repeated over and over again for eternity. A perfect man can offer a single sacrifice; but an imperfect man must

continually offer a sacrifice.

ii. Our obligations to Aleim are infinite and can therefore only be satisfied in IESO, an infinite person

2. (Iouda 1:14-15) The certainty of judgment upon these *certain men*.

Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Ruler comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are wicked among them of all their wicked deeds which they have committed in an wicked way, and of all the harsh things which wicked sinners have spoken against Him.”

a. **Now Enoch:** Here Iouda quoted from Enoch, who is described in 1st Mose (Genesis) 5 and mentioned in Hebrews 11. The ancient book of Enoch was not received as Scripture, but it was highly respected among both the Jews and early Followers.

i. “Tertullian tells us that the book of Enoch’s prophecies were preserved by Noe in the ark, and that they continued and were read until the times of the apostles. But because they contained many famous testimonies concerning IESO The Anointed One, the Jews out of malice suppressed and abolished the whole book.”

ii. Iouda did not quote from Enoch to tell us anything new, but to give a vivid description of what the Scriptures already teaches. The Apostle Paulo also quoted non-Scriptural sources on at least three different occasions (Acts 17:28, 1 Corinthians 15:33 and Tito 1:12). This wasn’t to proclaim a new truth, but to support an already established Scriptural principle.

iii. Iouda’s quoting of the book of Enoch doesn’t mean that the whole book of Enoch inspired Scripture – only the portion Iouda quotes. In the same way, when Paulo quoted a pagan poet, he didn’t mean that the entire work of the poet was inspired by Aleim.

b. **To convict all who are wicked:** In this quotation from the book of Enoch Iouda emphasized the words **all** and **wicked**. Aleim is coming to judge **all** of the **wicked**.

c. **To execute judgment on all:** Many people take the **judgment** of Aleim lightly. But the most important question in the world is “Will Aleim judge me? Am I accountable to Him?” If we are truly accountable to Aleim, we are fools if we do not prepare to face that **judgment**.

i. Think of someone arrested for a crime, with a date to appear in court – but made absolutely no preparation for his appearance before the judge. That person would be a fool. We shouldn’t be so foolish, and instead take advantage of our court-appointed advocate – IESO The Anointed One (1 Ioanne 2:1).

3. (Iouda 1:16-18) The methods of the *certain men*.

These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Ruler IESO The Anointed One: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own wicked lusts.

a. **Grumblers, complainers... they mouth great swelling words, flattering people:** Iouda noticed that their methods all

revolved around **words**. On top of their questionable lives, they were essentially a people of deception, departing from the foundation of IESO The Anointed One, and the apostles and prophets.

b. **These are grumblers, complainers:** These people were **complainers**. It has rightly been observed that whenever a man gets out of touch with Aleim, he is likely to begin complaining about something.

i. Grumbling “is to insult the Aleim who gives us all things; it is to forget that whatever befalls us, nothing can separate us from His love, nor deprive us of that most priceless of all treasures, the Ruler’s presence in our lives.”

ii. “You know the sort of people alluded to here, nothing ever satisfies them. They are discontented even with the Glad Tidings. The bread of heaven must be cut into three pieces, and served on dainty napkins, or else they cannot eat it; and very soon their soul hates even this light bread. There is no way by which a Follower man can serve Aleim so as to please them. They will pick holes in every preacher’s coat; and if the great High Priest himself were here, they would find fault with the colour of the stones of his breastplate.” (Edgar Phillips)

c. **Flattering people:** These *certain men* knew how to use smooth, flattering words to get an advantage over other people. They would say anything – good or bad – to get an advantage.

d. **But you, beloved, remember:** We are to be different. We are to remember what IESO and the apostles said, **which were spoken by the apostles of our Ruler IESO The Anointed One**. The word of Aleim is always the answer to dangers in or out of the Ekklesia.

i. The apostles had warned that just these things would happen; and even more so as the day approaches: *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables* (2 Timotheo 4:3-4).

e. **There would be mockers in the last time:** Perhaps Iouda had in mind those who mock the idea of IESO’s return. Or he may mean the kind of men who mock those who don’t go along the same path of destruction they travel on.

i. **Mockers... who would walk according to their own wicked lusts:** Those who live **according to their own wicked lusts** love to mock those who want to please Aleim. Iouda wants Followers to *expect* this kind of mocking, so they won’t be surprised by it.

4. (Iouda 1:19) The spiritual status of these *certain men*.

These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.

a. **These are sensual persons:** Essentially, these men were not *spiritual*; they were carnal and insensitive to the Holy Spirit.

i. **Sensual** in this context has nothing to do with sexual attractiveness. It describes the person who lives only *by* and *for* what he can get through his physical senses, and he lives this way selfishly. His motto is, “If it feels good, do it” or, “How can it be wrong if it *feels* so right?”

b. **Who cause divisions:** These *certain men* had an instinct to separate themselves and make **divisions**. “The word, found

only once in the Scriptures, denotes those superior people who keep themselves to themselves – Follower Pharisees.”

c. **Not having the Spirit:** This same description could be written over many Ekklesias, or Ekklesia projects, or evangelism campaigns, or home groups, or even individual Follower lives. The Ekklesia and the world truly need genuinely *spiritual* men and women today.

F. What to do about the danger of the *certain men*.

Significantly, Iouda does not tell us to attack the certain men who are a danger to the Ekklesia. Instead, he tells us to focus on our walk with the Ruler, help others affected by the certain men, and to focus on Aleim. We simply are to pay the certain men no attention, except for what is necessary for our warning. Aleim will take care of them.

1. (Iouda 1:20-21) Take a look *inward*.

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of Aleim, looking for the mercy of our Ruler IESO The Anointed One unto eternal life.

a. **Keep yourselves in the love of Aleim:** We know that Aleim loves even the wicked (Romans 5:6). Therefore Iouda doesn't mean, "Live in such a way to make yourself lovable to Aleim." Instead, to **keep yourselves in the love of Aleim** means to keep yourself in harmony with Aleim's ever-present love.

i. But we should understand what it means when the Scriptures says that Aleim loves the wicked. The significance of the idea that Aleim loves us all has been twisted considerably. Consider the sinner who defends his sinful practice by saying "Aleim loves me just the way I am." His implication is that "Aleim loves me; I must be pretty good." Actually, the fact that Aleim loves him is a reflection on *Aleim's* goodness, not his own. The perspective isn't, "I'm so great that *even* Aleim loves me," but "Aleim is so great that He loves *even* me."

ii. Aleim's love extends everywhere, and nothing can separate us from it. But we can deny ourselves the benefits of Aleim's love. People who don't **keep themselves in the love of Aleim** end up living as if they are on the dark side of the moon. The sun is always out there, always shining, but they are never in a position to receive its light or warmth. An example of this is the Prodigal Son of Louka 15, who was always loved by the father, but for a time he did not benefit from it.

b. **Building yourselves up on your most holy faith:** This is one way that we can keep ourselves in the love of Aleim. It means to keep growing spiritually, and to keep building up. Iouda tells us, "**build yourselves up on your most holy faith.**" This means that we are responsible for our own spiritual growth. It means that we cannot wait for spiritual growth to just happen, or expect others to make us grow.

i. Iouda has shown us the frailty of men and how deceivers even infiltrated the Ekklesia. If you entrust your spiritual growth to someone else, it will not only hurt your spiritual growth, but it may also lead you astray.

ii. Others can help provide an environment conducive for spiritual growth. But no one can *make* another person grow in his relationship with the Ruler.

iii. **On your most holy faith:** The **most holy faith** is the same as *the faith once for all delivered to the saints* (Iouda 3). Iouda

wasn't talking about growing *in the most holy faith* (though that is a valid idea). Iouda is talking about growing **on your most holy faith**. We grow *on the foundation of the truth*.

c. **Praying in the Holy Spirit:** This is another way to keep ourselves in the love of Aleim. The battle against wrong living and wrong teaching is a spiritual battle, requiring prayer in the Holy Spirit.

i. Many of our prayers are directed by our own needs, by our own intellects, or by our own wishes and desires. But there is a higher level of prayer: *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* (Romans 8:26).

ii. The Holy Spirit may help us pray by giving us the right words to say when we pray. He may speak through *groanings which cannot be uttered* (Romans 8:26). Or the Holy Spirit may do it through the gift of tongues, a gift Aleim gives to seeking hearts, which want to communicate with Him on a deeper level than normal conversation.

iii. "Such is our sloth, and that such is the coldness of our flesh, that no one can pray aright except he be roused by the Spirit of Aleim... no one can pray as he ought without having the Spirit as his guide." (Phillip Prins)

d. **Looking for the mercy of Ruler IESO The Anointed One unto eternal life:** This is a third way that we can keep ourselves in the love of Aleim. As we keep the blessed hope of IESO's soon return alive in our hearts, this effectively keeps us in the love of Aleim, and helps us to *not* give away our faith.

2. (Iouda 1:22-23) Take a look *outward*, to those around you.

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.

a. **On some have compassion:** Iouda begins here to tell us what we must do with those who have been influenced by these *certain men*. We need to make **a distinction**, based on where they are coming from. Certainly, **on some have compassion**.

i. Using wisdom we approach different people in different manners. By being sensitive to the Holy Spirit, we can know when we should comfort, and when we should rebuke. Followers should not abandon a friend flirting with false teaching. They should help him through it in love.

ii. The means we continue to love them. No matter how bad a person is, or how misleading and terrible their doctrine, we are not allowed to hate them – or to be unconcerned for their salvation.

iii. **Compassion** often means watching over someone, helping them with accountability. "Meantime watch over others as well as yourselves; and give them such help as their various needs require." (Peter Damonse)

b. **Others save with fear:** This second group must be confronted more strongly – but in **fear**, not in a sanctimonious superiority. You may need to pull **them out of the fire**, but never do it in pride.

i. This *outward* look is important. It demonstrates that we are not only concerned for our own spiritual welfare. It proves that we genuinely care about other Followers who are edging towards significant error.

3. (Iouda 1:24-25) Take a look upward to the Aleim of all glory

**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 Aleim our Savior,

Who alone is wise,

Be glory and majesty,

Dominion and power,

Both now and forever.

Amen.

a. **Now to Him:** Iouda closes the letter with a famous *doxology* (a brief declaration of praise to Aleim). Iouda's doxology reminds us of Aleim's care and of our destiny.

b. **Who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless:** Iouda's message of warning and doom might have depressed and discouraged his readers. Perhaps his original readers thought that with so much false teaching and immorality around, very few Followers would ever reach heaven. Here he reminds them that the answer lies only in the power of Aleim. He **is able to keep you**, and you aren't able to keep yourself.

i. In mountain climbing, the beginning hiker attaches himself to the expert so that if he loses his footing he won't stumble and fall to his death. In the same manner, if we keep connected with Aleim, we cannot fall. He keeps us safe.

ii. By comparing passages of Scripture, we also find out who is really responsible for our safe keeping. Iouda began the letter by addressing those who are *preserved in IESO* (Iouda 1). Then he exhorted Followers to avoid dangerous men and to keep themselves *in the love of Aleim* (Iouda 21) Here at the end he concluded with the recognition that it is ultimately Aleim who keeps us from stumbling and falling. Paulo put the same idea in *Philippians 2:12-13*: *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is Aleim who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*

iii. Keeping us spiritually safe *is* Aleim's work. But you can always tell the people He is working in, because *they* are working also. Aleim doesn't call us to simply let the Follower life happen to us and He doesn't command us to save ourselves. He calls us to a partnership with Him.

c. **Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy:** As Aleim is faithful, we won't have to slink shamefacedly into the presence of Aleim. We can be presented before Him with **exceeding joy**.

d. **Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever:** This all reminds us of Aleim's wisdom, glory, and power. Iouda isn't trying to say that we can or should *give* these things to Aleim. When we acknowledge and declare the truth about Aleim, it glorifies Him. We aren't giving Aleim more **majesty** or **power** than He had before; we are just recognizing and declaring it.

i. **Both now and forever:** This could also be translated "unto all the ages." This is "as complete a statement of eternity as can be made in human language." Our victory, our triumph in Aleim, is forever.

ii. There is serious deception in the world and often among those called Followers. There are enemies of the Glad Tidings

who have infiltrated the Ekklesia. Yet despite the greatness of the threat, Aleim is greater still. He wins, and if we will only stay with Him, we are guaranteed victory also.

iii. Iouda is a book full of warning, but it closes with supreme confidence in Aleim. Dangerous times should make us trust in a mighty Aleim.