

November 27-December 3, 2023

1–3 John; Jude

“GOD IS LOVE”

Summary: *1 John 1. The Saints gain fellowship with God by obedience—We must confess our sins to gain forgiveness.*

1 John 2. Christ is our Advocate with the Father—We know God by obedience—Love not the world—Anti-Christ will come in the last days.

1 John 3. The sons of God will become like Christ—Love for others is required to gain eternal life—Obedience ensures us an answer to our prayers.

1 John 4. Try the spirits—God is love and dwells in those who love Him.

1 John 5. Saints are born of God through belief in Christ—Water, blood, and the Spirit testify of Christ—Belief in Christ is required in order to gain eternal life.

2 John 1 John rejoices because the children of the elect lady are true and faithful.

3 John 1. John commends Gaius for his help to those who love the truth.

Jude. Contend for the faith—Some angels kept not their first estate—Michael disputed about the body of Moses—Enoch prophesied of the Second Coming—Mockers will come in the last days.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What wine is served at a wedding – first?

John’s witness of
the Savior is poetic

and full of tender imagery. He allows the account of one event to become part of an overall lesson, always pointing to the Lord’s mission. Among many and Jewish interesting features in the first three chapters of John is a simple chiasmus featuring one of the lesser-known names of the Messiah, the “new Wine.” A few comments about marriage festivities two millennia ago may be helpful in imagining the account of Jesus and his mother at a wedding in Cana. It is appropriate to bring one’s “fruit of the vine” to the celebration. The host has the prerogative to sample each wine offering. The older wine usually has the better flavor and is usually given

to the guests first. The newer (more recent) wine is kept for the last.

How did old and new wine become part of Sabbath celebrations?

The biblical metaphor of “old wine” may be what the Jews still follow every beginning of Sabbath before nightfall of what we call a Friday evening, as they partake of a sip of wine followed by a piece of bread. The prayers connected with this practice await a future deliverance, greater than from Egypt under Moses’ direction. After Jesus’ atonement, the practice among Christian believers became the “new wine” with bread taken first and followed by wine. This is done in remembrance of the greatest deliverance. An insight about the “new wine” can be derived from the prophet Joel’s statements: drunkards

(wine drinkers) prefer old wine, the new wine is taken away (dried up), and then new wine will be returned when the temple is built again. "Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth." (Joel 1:5) "The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth." (Joel 1:10) "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD . . ." (Joel 3:18) As new wine is a name of the Lord, John uses several other names to identify the Savior, such as "The Word." The opening statement of the Book of John is a chiasmus (beginning, Word was with God, Word was God, beginning). "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." (John 1:1-2) He is "The Life" and He is "The Light." "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth . . ." (John 1:4-5) He was born of God. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:13) He is the New Wine. (It seems that Mary and Jesus knew that one of his names was "New Wine" and Jesus is saying that the wedding feast in Cana was not the time for Him to fulfill or become the "New Wine," yet graciously, He made water into wine – new and better than the old!) ". . . They have no wine . . . Jesus saith unto her . . . mine hour is not yet come." ". . . When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine . . . (he) . . . saith unto him . . . thou hast kept the good wine until now." (John 2:3-10)

How can I be born of God.

"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and

of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." (John 3:5-7) We receive everlasting life by coming to the light. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." (John 3:21) We are to accept the words of God. "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." (John 3:34) Consider that mortal life comes to us by clothing the body (flesh) with our eternal spirit. The resurrection (being born again) clothes the spirit with a new eternal body – made possible by our Savior!

How great is "Love?"

John's beautiful language also uses the word "love" to portray the name and the immense gift God gave to us. The use of the words love and fear, although opposites, have related meanings about God. The following statements from Jewish sages may be helpful in the discussion of love and God. "The Hebrew word for "revere" is (*yirah*) which is usually translated as "fear," and that for "love" is (*aha'vah*). These two concepts, although they may seem contradictory at first glance, are the essence of Judaism's view of man's attitude to God." "The "fear" referred to is not the fright or scaredness which a person feels when he is confronted, for example, with a hungry lion. It is rather a feeling of awe or reverence felt when witnessing greatness or grandeur. The view of a major natural wonder, for instance, is breathtaking and inspires the beholder with awe. It is this kind of feeling that is meant by the "fear of God"; that is, awe at the thought of the

infinity and greatness of God.” “Love of God implies a more intimate relationship, which is much closer to a personal relationship; a person does not love a natural phenomenon but something near to him.” “The two terms, then, express the paradoxical nature of man's relationship to God. On the one hand, God is infinite, great and far away (the philosophers use the word "transcendental") and on the other hand, He is close and involved in every human being's affairs ("immanent"). This idea is expressed very frequently in the prayers by the way God is addressed. The phrase *Avinu malkeinu*, "Our Father, Our King," in particular is indicative: you are close to and love your father but you stand in awe of a king.” “Another aspect of these two ideas is that awe or reverence implies obedience, while love means the willingness to sacrifice for one's beloved. This is very strongly expressed by the first sentence of the *Shema*: (Jewish faith expression – **Deuteronomy 6:4–9, 11:13–21**; and **Numbers 15:37–41** – an integral part of evening and morning prayers) "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (**Deuteronomy 6:5**).” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

How does love and fear relate to each other?

“The idea of love and fear (awe) of God has played a central role in all Jewish thinking throughout the ages because believing in God demands an explanation of man's relationship to Him . . . He is both near and far; both Father and King.” “A third century *Rabbi, Abbaye*, who worked in his fields at night so that he could study during the day, gave some teaching that are still quoted today. He taught that the commandment to love God means that "God should come to be loved by other people through your behavior.” “In Jewish tradition, Abraham's life is an example to this day of supreme faith and devotion to God, and of love for one's fellow man.”

“The first verse of the *Keri'at Shema*, the declaration of faith that every Jew is required to recite twice daily, reads: "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." The rabbis asked: How is it possible to command a human being to love? And they answered that this commandment in fact means that the human being must try to imitate God as much as he can: "Just as He is merciful, so must you be merciful; just as He is gracious, so must you be gracious; just as He helps the needy, so must you too help the needy." Thus, God is the ultimate example for man.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

What are the different types of love in some languages?

“Many kinds of love are represented in the Bible --- the sensuous love between man and woman; affection; concern; the theological idea of love between man and God. The most common term used is ahav. Parents have a special compassionate love for their children; affection, esteem and loyalty formed the essential relationship between David and Jonathan, or Naomi and Ruth. Love between man and woman is almost always connected with marriage or the intention to marry. The Song of Songs, described by the rabbis as an allegory of God's love for Israel, has been classed among the world's great love poetry. Its lyric quality and range of imagery have pictured the generosity and understanding which love creates and sustains and have made these the ideal in human relationships. Love of God is sometimes signified indirectly, such as loving justice, or loving His commandments.” “Love of one's fellow man is a biblical commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:18). This law is the basis for all the other laws which prohibit unfair dealings and the bearing of grudges, and stress concern

for the defenseless. The great sages *Akiva* and *Hillel* regarded love of one's fellow as a basic precept of the Torah. From this commandment was drawn moral responsibility toward all men, including gentiles. In the last century, technology has brought the world and all its people closer together so that all mankind are essentially "neighbors." Recent Jewish philosophy has stressed this. Samson Raphael Hirsch makes the love of all mankind a condition of being a Jew. Sympathy for one's neighbor is basic to Martin Buber's I-Thou philosophy." **(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)**

What can I learn from Moses' departure speech?

"Just before he died, and on the eve of the Children of Israel's entry into the Promised Land, Moses made a farewell speech to the Jews. In it, he reviewed their history and gave direction for their future. In one sentence **(Deuteronomy 10:12)** he summed up what the Bible considers to be the entire purpose of human existence: "And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God demand of you? Only this: to revere (fear) the Lord your God, to walk only in His paths, to love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and soul." **(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)** A beautiful reminder of the Lord's continual presence and thus His many names can be found in additional scriptures. "Which glory is that of the church of the Firstborn, even of God, the

holiest of all, through Jesus Christ his Son-- He that ascended up on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth; Which truth shineth. This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made. As also he is in the moon, and is the light of the moon, and the power thereof by which it was made; As also the light of the stars, and the power thereof by which they were made; And the earth also, and the power thereof, even the earth upon which you stand. And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings; Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space-The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things." **(Doctrine and Covenants 88:5-13)** "Yea, they were encircled about with everlasting darkness and destruction; but behold, he has brought them into his everlasting light, yea, into everlasting salvation; and they are encircled about with the matchless bounty of his love; yea, and we have been instruments in his hands of doing this great and marvelous work." **(Alma 26:15)**