

"17 But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, 18 that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts." 19 These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit. 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. 22 And have mercy on some, who are doubting; 23 save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. 24 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, 25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen." Jude 1:17-25, NAS95.

Last week we finished with verse 7 of Jude where he was reminding the brethren of the former days and the judgments that were prosecuted by God against Israelites, angels and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. In each case he was referring to the final judgment that would come by fire. Then we examined a doctrine called Annihilationism, that is taught by some teachers, even today, which completely disregards Jesus' teaching of eternal torment by fire.

We concluded that any teaching that contradicts the clear statements of Scripture perverts the character of God. To deny judgment by fire and eternal torment perverts the character of Christ to the hearers of the false teachers. To deny the 2nd coming of Christ would do the same. To deny his death as truly being efficacious to pay the price for the sins of those who believe and repent does the same.

This is what the false teachers taught and continue to teach. This is the attitude of the mockers and scorners that Peter made mention of in 2nd Peter.

Jude's intent was to exhort the brethren to contend for the faith. Peter said, "I constantly remind you of these things and want you to remember them." or as Paul would say, "fight the good fight of faith."

Each of these wrote these things in the face of false prophets and the effect of their false doctrines and were warnings not to let the doctrines or the teachers infiltrate the church.

I would like to remind you of what I said last week at the end of our study.

This not a definitive list or a how to manual. It is simply some things I have learned over the years.

Every believer is to contend for the faith. We should be so concerned about the character of God being misrepresented that we do all we can to make sure we do not misrepresent Jesus Christ.

How is this possible?

First, we must be serious students of the Bible. We need to understand the big picture of God's historic redemptive purpose. And that it culminates in the person of Jesus Christ.

Second, we must engage ourselves primarily, when possible, with other believers who are serious about the Scriptures and who desire to not only know the truth but live it.

Third, we need to be committed to bring the truth to others and count the cost for teaching the truth as God has given it to us not as men want to believe it.

Fourth, we must not turn example into law or let narrative story telling dictate doctrine to us. Many false teachers do this.

Fifth, we must realize that some passages of Scripture are not as easy to understand as others. Some may have the possibility of being understood in one way or another. There is only one way that is absolutely correct. However, we may not always know which it is. However, this will not occur with the fundamental truths and doctrines that we need to understand. So, be careful about being dogmatic.

Sixth, all of our study needs to be supported in prayer and trusting that the holy Spirit will teach us as we look to the promises of God for us in Christ Jesus.

Sometimes teaching sounds so good but a closer look will reveal that is really not sound doctrine. Don't judge the Word of God by the teacher. Do it comparing Scripture to Scripture. Judge the teacher by the Word of God.

In verse 8 Jude is speaking of contemporary false teachers.

"8 Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties." Jude 1:8, NAS95.

These men refers to vs.4,

"4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, 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." Jude 1:4, NAS95.

Jude is saying that destructive heresies and false teachers who are ungodly are as much of a reality in his time as they had been before and we need to remember the same is true today.

We will not look too closely to verses 8-16 because we have discussed the character and nature of these false teachers in our study of 2nd Peter.

In summary these men are driven by natural desires and teach that God accommodates these things because we cannot control them anyway. So immorality by God's standards is not really immorality. They are intentional in attempting to deceive believers and especially new believers, not grounded in sound doctrine.

They are so detestable that they are compared to Cain, a prophet killer and the first man to commit fratricide. They are compared to Baalam as false prophets and as rebels compared to those involved in Korah's rebellion. "Woe to them", Jude says.

Everything about them is false, clouds without water, trees without fruit in season, selfish, unstable and condemned, "for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever", vs. 13.

Verse 14 can be difficult for some so we want to examine it more closely.

Jude quotes from the prophecy attributed to Enoch in order to confirm the impending and certain punishment of these men. The description of Enoch as being the seventh from Adam (cf. Gn. 5:1-18) occurs in the Book of Enoch, as does the quotation which follows. This book was well known in NT days and so the reference is relevant.

The Lord is God himself, and the thousands upon thousands of his holy ones are the angels in the Old Testament context(cf. Dt. 33:2; Zc. 14:5). For the Christian the words refer to Christ's second coming with his angels (Mt. 25:31; 2 Thes. 1:7).

Ungodly in vs 15 is used four times to describe these people—it refers to them, their character and their behavior, all of which is rooted in an insolent attitude which has no respect for God.

Any ungodly person is of the same character. They do not have to be false teachers.

This is why we are instructed in Scripture to keep ourselves from all ungodliness.

Vs.16 says they are grumblers against God and his ways (cf. Ex. 16:2-12; 17:3; 1 Cor. 10:10). This behavior was characteristic of Israel in the wilderness.

They are fault-finders. They cannot accept the circumstances of their lives especially in the context of a Sovereign God. These people are dissatisfied with God's ways of truth and justice because they want to fulfill their evil desires. They boast about themselves when they have no reason or right to do so (the same word is used in 2 Pet. 2:18) and they flatter others simply for what they can get in return. Such behavior is different from God's and how it should be lived out through His people,(Acts 10:34; Jas. 2:1-7).

"34 Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality," Acts 10:34, NAS95.

"1 My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. 2 For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, 3 and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," 4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? 5 Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? 7 Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?" James 2:1-7, NAS95.

In vs.17-23 we find the Christian antidote to these poisonous people.

By contrast, Christians are charged to keep in mind the apostolic warnings, especially as these people bring in divisions. The positive way to avoid them and their effect is by Christian growth in the life of faith(living what we believe), prayer in the Spirit, abiding in God's love, looking for the completion of God's work in us and reaching out to others

There should be a definite contrast between the scoffers and true believers. It should be noticed. Jude, like Peter says remember what you have been taught. The presence of 'scoffers' (cf. 2 Pet. 3:3) was foretold in Acts 20:29-30; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-9 and in Jesus own words,

"23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him. 24 "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. 25 "Behold, I have told you in advance." Matthew 24:23-25, NAS95.

In v.18 said or saying can refer to writings and need not imply that Jude's readers had actually heard the apostles. The last times (cf. 1 Pet. 1:20) is the period between the ascension and the return of Christ. We have been and are presently in the last days.

Jude is quoting what seems to be a familiar saying that may have been apostolic but not recorded and is similar to 2 Pet. 3:4 which suggests the content of their mockery.

According to vs.19 these infiltrators divide the church by setting themselves up as superior to ordinary Christians, as the Gnostics did, dividing the church into 'spiritual' and 'worldly' members. In actual fact, says Jude, they themselves are the worldly ones, since they do not possess the Spirit, as is evidenced by their lack of his fruit.

They are also worldly-minded as in the sense of 1 Cor. 2:14-16,

"14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. 15 But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. 16 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ." 1 Corinthians 2:14-16, NAS95.

The natural man, the worldly minded man, dead in trespasses and sins and ruled by worldly values is what these people are. They are spiritually dead, they are devoid or without the Spirit. It does not matter how spiritual they may sound or how deep their words seem to be sound. They have none of the Spirit and are therefore dead.

Rather than being influenced by such as these the believers are to be doing other things.

In vs. 20 the opening words of vs. 17 are repeated for emphasis. Most holy faith refers, as in v 3, to the content of the Christian revelation, to the body of doctrine that we hold to be the truth.

Our faith is most holy because it is given it is given by God, in these last days it is fully revealed in Jesus Christ, the Holy One and, when rightly applied, leads to holy living.

Praying in the Holy Spirit refers to the experience of abiding in communion with God through Jesus Christ by the agency of the Holy Spirit (see Rom. 8:9, 16, 26; Eph. 6:18). Prayer helps to accomplish this. When we pray it is only effective because of the agency of the Holy Spirit. Here is the idea in Scripture,

"9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him." Romans 8:9, NAS95.

"16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God," Romans 8:16, NAS95.

"26 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; 27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God." Romans 8:26, 27, NAS95.

"18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints," Ephesians 6:18, NAS95.

So, we are to grow in doctrinal understanding, we are to pray in the Spirit and

Vs. 21 says, Keep yourselves in God's love which complements what was said of their position in v 1,

"1 Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ:" Jude 1:1, NAS95.

Once people have realized that they are the unworthy objects of the love of God in Jesus Christ they are challenged to respond in love. That love must be shown in behavior. Jn. 15:9-10 shows that such response is the way to remain in the

consciousness of God's love,

"9 "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love." John 15:9, NAS95.

Not to do this will deaden the heart to God's love and will result finally in the loss of this consciousness. The instruction continues and we are to wait for the mercy of God.: Here it is pointing to the final mercy of being delivered from this world and these false teachers.

Error in doctrine and living is best avoided by a keen sense of expectation of the Lord's return, when his mercy, already experienced initially (1) and daily (2; cf. La. 3:22-23) will be finally realized as the work of salvation is completed.

Tit. 2:11-14; 1 Pet. 4:7 and 2 Pet. 3:11-12 lay similar stress on Christ's return for hope as a motive for godly living and this is not for the sake of being prodded to good works for rewards but to see Christ and know final redemption..

Now in 22-23 in case the reader should think from the last two verses that true faith is simply quietism or a passive existence living and waiting for Christ to return, while nourishing one's own spiritual life, Jude here turns to our responsibility for others.

We examined these verses last week but will review them.

There may be two or three groups of people in mind: (a) those who are in two minds about the false teaching (some readings suggest they are to be won by arguments); (b) those more deeply involved with heresy, whose position is so serious that they must be snatched as from a fire (see Zc. 3:2, already quoted in v 9, and Am. 4:11); (c) and those who can only be pitied in the spirit of the fear of God which acknowledges that 'there, but for the grace of God, go I'. The end result is that there is work to do until Jesus comes. We actively live for Christ as those who are contending for the faith until Jesus comes. And we do this to preach the gospel to all kinds of people, even the scoffers.

The clothing-garments of vs 23 pictures the contaminating effect of their sin. Like the leper whose clothing was polluted by the disease (Lv. 13:34; 14:8), they are to be

The end of the letter is a commendation and ascription of praise.

After these sad possibilities of error and apostasy, Jude ends on the positive note of pointing his readers to God and what he can do for us. His goal is to keep us from falling to the end of time and present us without fault with great joy into eternity. In view of this Jude ascribes all glory and might here and now to God our Saviour whose praises his ransomed people will be singing through all eternity.

We are kept by the power of Gods even as Peter wrote in 1 Pet. 1:5. We are kept from stumbling-from falling in a permanant way as in 2 Pet. 1:10 where we are shown how this is to be achieved. We are kept so that we may be presented to Christ.

Present is a formal word suggesting introduction to a dignitary. Without fault is used in 1 Pet. 1:19. The Christian, now completely sanctified, can be identified fully with the character of our glorious Saviour. Joy is such an intensive word, the verbal form being especially dear to Peter (1 Pet. 1:6, 8; 4:13).

Vs. 25 can be taken in two ways. It may suggest that the words are in answer to what the false teachers were already portraying as a hierarchy of gods and demi-gods, as the later Gnostics did, or it may be to emphasize that our salvation is the work of God alone.

Of the four qualities ascribed to God, glory stresses his splendor, as the radiance of light (cf. the description of heaven in Rev. 21:23; 22:5), majesty, his position (cf. Heb. 1:3), power, his ability to carry out his sovereign will, and authority, the fact that he has the absolute right to do so. These qualities have always been his, and always will be, for they are the very qualities of eternity by which he created our world of space and time. Through Jesus Christ could refer back to God our Saviour (the words are closer in the Greek), reminding us that only through Jesus has God saved us (Acts 4:12), or that our praises are to be through Jesus (cf. 1 Pet. 2:5; 4:11). To such a vision of the Almighty God the believing soul can only breathe in response a humble yet fervent Amen —so be it!