

“Book of Jude – Engaging in the Battle”

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January 22nd, 2023

Scripture

Jude 17-23:

“But you, beloved, ought to **remember the words** that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,

that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts."

These are the ones **who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.**

But you, beloved, **building yourselves up** on your most holy faith, **praying in the Holy Spirit,**

keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

And **have mercy on some**, who are doubting;

save others, snatching them out of the fire; and **on some have mercy with fear**, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.”

Engaging in the Battle

Last time, we looked at Enoch and we considered more about the character of apostates and then we contemplated the end result their apostasy which was prophesied to be eternal destruction and Hell.

This is the fate of all those who are not in Christ. It’s not like the apostates have a special place in Hell. They are just part of the deluded many.

This week, **we look at the other side of the group: faithful believers**

Jude reminds us about what we are to do in the face of apostasy.

Remembering What We’ve Been Told

Jude 17-18

“But you, beloved, ought to **remember** the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.”

First, “But you, beloved” where Jude notes that his audience is a group of the faithful

The faithful are called “the beloved”, those in whom that agape love of Jesus resides -> Jude 1 refers to them as “the called”.

Jude wanted to both encourage believers and strengthen them in their present circumstances.

“What should we do, Jude?” -> since we have apostates hitting us in the face every day of our lives.

You’ve told us to earnestly contend for the faith, yes, but:

How are we to deal with the bombardment with false teaching and heretical leaders?

Jude **reminds believers** is that we are to remember something.

In fact, this is the first imperative in the original language as Jude **commands** his audience to remember something that has been written previously.

When we are faced with apostasy at our front door, we are to remember “the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ” concerning apostates.

Which apostles spoke of apostates?

We have covered many of them already:

- Paul to the Ephesian Elders (Acts 20)
- Paul to Timothy (1 Timothy 4:1-2; 2 Timothy 3:1-2, 4:1-2)
- Peter (2 Peter 2:1 to 3:4)
- John (1 John 2:18; 2 John 7-11)

Many of these are emphatically written to make us aware that it was going to happen so that the believers are not surprised that “In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts”.

2 Peter 3:1-6

“Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come **with their mocking**, following after their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.” For when they maintain this, it **escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago** and the earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.”

Note that Peter mentions that one of the telltale signs of apostasy is that these individuals are criticizing the creation story and using God’s patience as a testimony that there are NO consequences to living any way you like. They also would criticize God’s judgment via the flood.

Apostates are the example as they follow after their own lusts – ignoring God’s creation and judgment.

Why should believers remember this? -> We should expect it, shouldn’t we?

Simply, so that we are not discouraged when it happens right in front of us.

Instead, **we should BE encouraged** that the Word of the Lord is true, faithful, and reliable.

Apostates will be “mockers” or “scoffers”. So, **what does a mocker or scoffer do?**

There is a blog entry from Bayside Life Church about four types of people we might encounter:

<https://baysidelifechurch.com/blog/2020/01/21/there-s-four-types-of-people>

Pastor Donny describes a mocker as “**like the fool on steroids**”.

Mockers (also called “scoffers” in Scripture) defy and renounce truth and good things, not only to their own detriment and destruction, but that of others. They are provokers of others to wrong, strife, and evil.”

The original Greek describes the person as “someone playing a trick” on another.

Jude 19

“These are the ones who **cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.**”

Jude writes that they cause divisions.

They create levels of spirituality in the church in order to divide those “who are in” and those “who are not quite at that spiritual level” that they believe they are.

They use the flattery of many to build that higher level group or clique to lead them astray deluding them into believing that THEY are the spiritual ones of the church.

They usually promote and prey on younger members of the church who can more easily be persuaded and deceived.

Jude sees this preying on others as a “**worldly minded**” -> something that is more physical than spiritual.

The Greek word here means “**soul-ish**” meaning more of the natural or physical mind vs. the Spirit.

The human condition is comprised of the spirit, the mind or soul, and the physical bios:

1 Thessalonians 5:23

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and **may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete**, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Hebrews 4:12

“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword and **piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit**, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

Mockers and scoffers usually highlight the mind, intelligence, higher knowledge, and education to the exclusion of missional, transformational spiritual activity.

Once they get their group in a position of authority, they will try to divide the church over some worldly-minded initiatives and then try to “sell it” as a spiritual reason for the division.

The obvious protection against that division, according to the writer of Hebrews, is a focus on the Word of God. We'll talk of this a bit later on.

There is a reason why these scoffers act this way since Jude writes that they are **“devoid of the Spirit”**.

There is no spiritual life in them.

They are simply not believers and cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God because they lack the Spirit's presence in their lives.

1 Corinthians 2:14

“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.”

Jude then returns to another command for his audience of believers -> **We are to focus on three practices.**

Have you noticed that Jude likes everything in threes?

Building, Praying and Keeping

Jude 20-21

“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.”

Jude first writes that we should focus on building ourselves up on our most holy faith.

How do we build ourselves up in our faith?

Acts 20:32

“And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”

Paul writes that devotion to the Word of God is what builds us up.

If we are constantly being bombarded with false teaching, **how do we counter that effect?**

We focus on the truth and we continually study it.

1 Thessalonians 5:8-11

“But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. **Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.”**

Here, Paul speaks of continually reinforcing our core beliefs in Jesus Christ as a building up activity.

How can we do that?

We continually study the Word of God, and also get together with other believers for support of our core beliefs.

Second, Jude writes that we should be “praying in the Holy Spirit”.

This is not some ethereal or ecstatic praying in tongues kind of event.

It is a simple focus on consistent prayer in the example of the Lord’s Prayer from Jesus in Matthew 6.

We should be committed to a life of prayer as the Spirit aligns us to the will of God, the Father in our lives.

Third, we should “keep ourselves in the love of God”.

How do we keep ourselves in the love of God?

The word “keep” here means “to guard or protect” as in protecting a physical location.

We are to remain in the love and not depart from it.

A good example of this is in the parable of the Prodigal Son where the younger son chose to leave his father’s home and go out on his own.

Believers are not to leave the faith, or more specifically in this case, the life of obedience to God and His word.

We are to remain, as **John 15 speaks about using the term abide**:

There are branches that bear fruit and there are branches that do not bear fruit.

These are two types of people: the branches that **do not bear fruit are apostates** and the ones that **do bear fruit are believers**.

Jesus calls on those 11 remaining disciples to simply “abide”.

There is nothing mystical about that command as it simply means “to remain in the faith” which is the same command that Jude repeats here for his audience.

Believers are to do these three things and be “waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life”

Jude doesn’t stop there, however.

He calls on his audience to stay busy rather than idly pass their time until the Lord returns.

If there are mockers and scoffers in their midst, they need to continually reach out to the flock through encouragement and evangelism.

Engaging in the Battle

Jude 22-23

“And **have mercy on some**, who are doubting; **save others**, snatching them out of the fire; and **on some have mercy with fear**, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

Jude describes **three groups of people** (you see, the man loved threes!).

First, we are “to save” **some who are doubting**.

The Greek for “save” here is the general word for salvation or rescue.

Obviously, only the Lord can eternally save or rescue someone from Hell.

We can, though, rescue those who are going astray from the influence of an apostate, false teacher.

We must remind ourselves that some “good” people are being victimized by the apostates

We should have compassion and mercy on them.

Do we know anyone in this group?

For these individuals, we need to reach out to them and attempt to bring them back into the fold.

This can be some dirty work, because the apostate leader is not going to let go easily.

Satan has deluded their mind and they work for the other side. We should, however, having mercy on them and reach out to those who have been deluded along with the apostate leader because they deserve our compassion.

I call this group of individuals the “lower ranks”.

Second, we are to save others by **snatching them out of the fire**.

This group of individuals I will call “middle management” in the apostasy.

These individuals have been more deeply entrenched in the apostasy such that they are on a fast course for Hell and need immediate and urgent redirection.

They need serious intervention **as in rescuing them from a cult**.

Their end will not be good unless we can get to them, patiently explain the error of their ways because their delusion is greater than the lower ranks.

Third, there is a group where we need to **have mercy with fear**.

This group is the upper management of the apostasy and may even be the apostate leader.

For this group, believers should be fearful because their skill of persuasion and flattery is SO extreme that believers can be sucked into the apostasy along with the leader.

This group is thoroughly polluted with the apostate doctrine and should not be taken on by a young believer.

Only a mature believer should begin to dance with this group so that they are protected from being caught up in the apostate muck.

Jude writes that this kind of warfare is so extreme that it can leave a polluted garment.

Believers should be “hating even the garment polluted by the flesh” because it leads to an apostate life which can be contagious to the unprotected believer.

Prayer

Benediction