

Contend Earnestly For the Faith Which Was Once For All Handed Down to the Saints

An Expository Study of the **Epistle of Jude**

Chapter 12- The Characteristics of the Heretics **Jude 12-13**

123 The Characteristics of the Heretics- Part 1

WOSM Friday 04/25/08

Welcome again my brothers and sisters in Christ. We are continuing our verse by verse study of the Book of Jude and we are now at the point where we are going to examine the characteristics of the heretics. So, let's read verses 12 & 13 of Jude:

12 These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; 13 wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.

Now as we read these verses, we can see that Jude listed five separate characteristics that we need to look at. Jude said that the heretics are:

- 1. hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear**
- 2. Clouds without water, carried along by winds**
- 3. Autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted**
- 4. Wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam**
- 5. Wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.**

Now I want to look at each of these five characteristics to see what Jude was telling us.

1. Hidden Reefs in Your Love Feasts

The early Church had what were called “love feasts”. And these banquets were held by the first Christians for several reasons. The *main* reason was that they were used to provide opportunities for fellowship among believers. There is nothing more suitable for fellowship than for believers to eat together. When Christians labor together and then eat together, love and fellowship; and harmony and relationships are built that will help us all to get to know each other and to understand one another so we know each other’s burdens and we learn how to love one another and how to pray one for another.

Another reason that the Church held love feasts was to fulfill the Lord’s command to feed the hungry. These love feasts were not just available for believers- but also for the people outside the Church. Sinners would come in and would sit down to eat with believers and they would see firsthand the love and the fellowship and the kindness that Christ had bestowed upon the people who were called Christians.

Now beside prayer and remaining steadfast in the Apostle’s Doctrine through serious line upon line; and precept upon precept Bible Studies- these love feasts were one of the most important things that the early Church did. How tragic today that many go to Church with people that they really don’t ever get to know. How can we as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ justify sitting next to someone in a pew for years and yet never really getting to know that person? How can you possibly pray for someone if you don’t know them? How can you possibly say that you love someone when you don’t know anything about them?

If the Lord thought enough about that person to save his soul and bring him into the Church, who are you to stay away from them? This division within the Christian Church is a sin and it must stop if we are to ever see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Now I don’t believe in racism as the world speaks about it. I believe that racism that we hear about all the time is an invention of the unsaved world. It is an insidious lie that deceives and corrupts and makes people bitter and envious of each other. But while I don’t believe that racism exists- I do believe that division exists. There is division among people. And some people are divided with others over race. But some are divided with others over gender while still others are divided over social or economic or cultural status. Some people are divided over power and recognition and pride and arrogance.

And all these divisions are manifestations of sin and must be avoided in the House of God. Let's read **Romans 16:17&18:**

17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

And let's also read **1Corinthians 3:3-9:**

3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?

4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not *mere* men?

5 What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave *opportunity* to each one.

6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.

7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.

8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

Now division was a huge problem in the early Church. For centuries, the Jews had been taught that the Gentiles were dirty and sinful and pagan and for the most part, that teaching was correct. The Jew was taught that they should not even look upon a Gentile, much less eat or feast with him and they sure would never be caught dead worshipping God with him. This mentality was huge among the Jews of Jesus' day. The Jews of Jesus' day had perverted the true meaning of holiness to mean that they should not allow for the possibility that Gentiles could even be saved. But Jesus proved them wrong and in so doing- He really disturbed their man- made religious system of self-righteous behavior.

Jesus began to make strange sounding statements about the Gentiles that the Jews really didn't like. To the Jewish mind- the

Romans were pagan invaders who had come into their country by force and had taken it over. The Jew hated the Roman and wanted them dead and gone. The physical vanquishing of the Roman army and the returning of the Promised Land back to the Jews was what the Jew understood when he heard the word- "Salvation".

To the Jewish mind- the promised Messiah was a promise of a conquering warrior- who would annihilate the pagan invaders and come triumphantly into Jerusalem riding a white stallion and who would walk into the Temple in Jerusalem and sit down in the throne of King David and restore the natural physical land back to God's chosen people and Who would rule the world with a rod of iron.

But Jesus spoke strange things to his Jewish listeners like love and forgiveness- even toward their Roman tormentors. And while we see that Teaching today as fundamental Christianity- this kind of talk from Jesus did not melt the heart of the Jews- it infuriated them.

We have to understand that during that time- a Roman soldier would walk over to a Jew and would slap him across his face- knowing that the Jew wouldn't dare strike him back. The Roman soldier would then rip the coat off the Jew's back and laugh at him. The Jews prayed for the day when they could rip the armor off the backs of the Roman soldiers and hit them back and make them the slaves.

But Jesus spoke about different things. Look what Jesus told them about this in **Luke 6:29**:

Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either.

Forgive and be nice to the very people who were hurting them? Are you kidding me? Turn the other cheek to a Roman? Give your coat to a pagan Gentile? Truly these Words of Jesus brought no comfort at all to the Jews- but they disturbed the people of God very, very deeply.

And one of the most loved and most quoted verses in the entire Bible was made under this type of situation. In **John 3:16**, we read:

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Now when we read this verse today - we center on the word,

“believes” and we correctly understand that Salvation comes to those who believe and not those who work to earn it- and we rejoice at that. But to the Jew of that day- they centered on the word, “whoever” which to them meant that Jesus was teaching that Salvation was not just for the Jew, but that God was opening up Heaven to the pagan Gentiles as well and they didn’t like that at all.

So, in reality- the Lord was showing His Jewish listeners that not only were the Jews God’s chosen people- but that God had also chosen people who were *not* Jews from every nation, tribe, people and languages and Jesus was going to die for them and they too would be saved. So, these Words of Jesus that thrill our hearts today didn’t make the Jews happy at all because it was so contrary to everything that they had been taught all their lives.

So, when Gentiles began to hear the Gospel and as God began to save some of them and as they began to come into the Church- the Jewish believers really had a very difficult time with all of this. One day a pagan Gentile was worshipping a totem pole and sacrificing his children to a group of gods and the next day, he gets saved and is now sitting next to the Jew in Church hearing the Word of God and worshipping Jesus Christ. The Jew struggled with that.

And this division over race and culture became so big a problem that God had to Sovereignly intervene and show once and for all that God was going to save people based upon the good pleasure of His Own Will- and not based upon anything that Man was or that Man was not.

So, in **The Acts 10**, we read about God visiting the Apostle Peter with a Vision three times. In the vision a sheet was let down by the four corners and inside the sheet were all kinds of animals that the Jew was forbidden to eat. As Peter saw the Vision and saw all the unclean animals, God spoke to Peter and said, **“Get up, Peter, kill and eat!”**. (**The Acts 10:13**)

But Peter responded to the Lord’s command like any good Jew of that day would, **“By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean.”** (**The Acts 10:14**)

But at this point- God spoke Words to Peter that changed the course of history and open the door for the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ to be preached to the pagan Gentile world. God told Peter, **“What God hath cleansed, no longer consider unholy”** (**The Acts 10:15**)

Now there may be many today who are confused about what all this meant, but Peter was not confused at all. Peter understood very clearly what the Lord was telling him in the vision and he said so in **The Acts 10:34&35**, when he said:

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

35 but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.

It was now clear that God was going to save people- who before the Advent of the New Covenant- were unacceptable to the Jews. And God is still doing the same today. Those whom God brings through the front door of the Church are to be given the same opportunity to be saved as everyone else- regardless of how poor or how uneducated or how uncultured or how simple or how rich or how powerful or how ugly or how tall or how small they are and regardless of how much sin they have been involved in.

And when the Blood of Jesus washes their sins away, we are to love them as brothers and sisters and welcome them into the family of God and not make meat out of one and fish out of another. I tell you that we must take heed to ourselves that the Church doesn't become a social club where people show off their latest clothing fashions and where people are divided over things that are sinful; and this is why we all need to earnestly contend for the Faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints. Well, I've got to stop right here. But please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our Journey through the Epistle of **Jude**. May God help us all.

© 2007- 2023 by Enjoying God Ministries, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America
Enjoying God Ministries, Inc. PO Box 147 Saucier, Mississippi 39574 www.covenantofpeace.net

Scripture quotations, except those noted otherwise, are from *The New American Standard Bible* © 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

This is a single transcript in a larger series of teachings taken from a verse- by- verse Journey through the **Epistle of Jude**. You are free to reproduce it and distribute it as the Lord leads you- without cost or reimbursement to us with the stipulation that you may not add anything or take anything away from this transcript without the express written permission of The Covenant of Peace Church and that this complete copyright statement be at the end of all copies.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.