

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**

130 The Characteristics of the Heretics- Part 8

WOSM Tuesday 05/06/08

Welcome again my beloved in Jesus Christ. We are continuing our verse by verse ‘Journey’ through the Epistle of Jude and today we are continuing to examine what Jude taught about “The Characteristics of the Heretics”. So, let’s read verses 12 & 13 of Jude again together:

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 on today’s broadcast- I want to look at one more thing about the first of the five natural phenomenoms that Jude compared the heretics to by looking again at verse 12, when Jude said that the heretics:

... when they feast with you without fear

This self centeredness and care for themselves is one of the hallmarks of heresy. All heretics make sure that the main one that is taken care of is themselves. They feed themselves and not the sheep. True ministers of the Gospel do just the opposite- they feed the sheep and not themselves. Let’s read what Jesus said about this in **John 10:11-15:**

11 "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

12 He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters *them*.

13 *He flees* because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me,

15 even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

Jesus said that those who feed themselves and do not feed the sheep are hirelings and are not true shepherds and we should be careful to never follow or listen to a hireling. You see, dear friends, we live in a very troubling day- a day of the professional minister; a day of rent-a-preacher and spiritual mercenaries- a day of hirelings masquerading as men of God; a day when the Pastor has become the CEO of the Corporation called the Church. A day when the people of God are “consumers” who need to be sold to; and a day when the “product” that needs to be “marketed” and “sold” is the Word of God. Beloved this is blasphemy.

Our generation is the first generation since the birth of the Church that has produced millionaire preachers who have become fat and rich off the Gospel. We live in a time when more and more young preachers are buying into the concept that people of God are nothing but the blocks on which they are to build their ministries; that sheep are the fodder for the preacher’s glorification; that the people of God are the tools that the preacher can use to become famous and pampered prima donnas. The people who feel this way about the sheep of God’s pasture are charlatans; they are fakes; they are phonies; and they are the hirelings that Jesus was talking about. Jude says they fed themselves without fear.

You can see them on the Hay, Wood, and Stubble Television Network saying things like, “*God tells me that there are 100 people out there that have \$5,000 to give to me*”. And I have always wondered- this guy says that God told him that 100 people are supposed to give. What if 103 people give? Does he then give back the money to the three that weren’t supposed to give?

I cried my eyes out the other night when I saw a famous preacher stand before the people as they all came up and threw money down at his feet so that they could all be blessed by God. This pompous “self

feeder” was taking money from the people of God just like the Roman priests did when they were building St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. Those false priests told the poor people of Europe that if they gave money to the Church- their loved one would flee from Purgatory earlier than normal.

In 1510, when Martin Luther went to Rome and saw how that Church had so perverted the Gospel- he was so aghast at what he saw- that he came home and on October 31, 1517, wrote 95 objections to what the Roman Church had done to the Gospel, and he nailed those 95 thesis on the door of the Church at Whittenburg. Among those 95 objections is this one, which reads in part *“If the pope has the power to release souls from Purgatory would he not rather do it for love than for money?”*

The false priests lied to the people and took advantage of them back then just like the many false teachers are doing it now. But God sees it and God knows about it and God has got their number. Look at what God told his prophet Ezekiel about the false shepherds who feed themselves in **Ezekiel 34:1-16:**

34 Then the word of the LORD came to me saying,

2 “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to those shepherds, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD , “Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock?”

3 “You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat *sheep* without feeding the flock.

4 “Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them.

5 “They were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and they became food for every beast of the field and were scattered.

6 “My flock wandered through all the mountains and on every high hill; My flock was scattered over all the surface of the earth, and there was no one to search or seek *for them.*””

7 Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD :

8 “As I live,” declares the Lord GOD , “surely because My flock has become a prey, My flock has even become food for all the beasts of the field for lack of

a shepherd, and My shepherds did not search for My flock, but *rather* the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock;

9 therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD :

10 ‘Thus says the Lord GOD , “Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will demand My sheep from them and make them cease from feeding sheep. So the shepherds will not feed themselves anymore, but I will deliver My flock from their mouth, so that they will not be food for them.””

11 For thus says the Lord GOD , “Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out.

12 “As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day.

13 “I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them to their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the inhabited places of the land.

14 “I will feed them in a good pasture, and their grazing ground will be on the mountain heights of Israel. There they will lie down on good grazing ground and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.

15 “I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest,” declares the Lord GOD .

16 “I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken and strengthen the sick; but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with judgment.

My brothers and sisters, the ministry is not a place for people who desire to be popular, famous, rich, or important. The ministry is a place where men go to die; where men go because they are called to go; because God commands that they go; because the Word of God must be preached; because Gods people must be called on to repent; because Truth must be spoken, because God wills that it be done.

The Apostle Paul used a very curious word to describe what the preacher does and who the preacher is. In **Ephesians 3:8**, Paul described the Gospel as being:

The unfathomable riches of Christ

Yet when he was describing the minister who preaches those unsearchable riches- Paul used a very different term. Let’s look at this in **2Corinthians 4:6&7**:

6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;

Now the phrase- "**earthen vessels**" has been translated by many as "clay pots", but that is not descriptive enough. The earthen vessel or clay pot that Paul was describing here was not just *any* clay pot. No, the phrase that Paul used here was only used to describe a special kind of clay pot- that was set aside for men to use the bathroom in. In his day in 19th century England, Charles Spurgeon referred to these clay pots as "privy pots".

So, While Paul says that the Gospel- the Word of God is in fact the glorious unsearchable riches of Christ- he is also saying that those who bring the word; those who minister the Gospel are nothing more than unattractive inglorious privy pots.

Paul was illustrating a very important concept when it comes to ministry and Church and preaching here. It is God Who is beautiful- not Man. It is God Who is important- not Man. It is God Who is valuable- not Man. It is what God says that is important- not what Man says. It is the Words of God that carry weight- not what Man speaks; and it is the Gospel that is the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ- not the minister- the minister- well- he is an earthen vessel; he is a clay pot; he is that special kind of pot that men use the bathroom in.

How could *anyone* get puffed up with that concept in mind? It is only because we have lost this Biblical concept of what the ministry is all about that we now have hirelings who feed themselves without fear instead of shepherds who fed the sheep.

The false teachers today are rich- but they make their hearers poor. The heretics are famous- but they make God more hidden to the people. The apostates feed themselves without fear today and have become wealthy and attractive and they gather large crowds like rock stars- but Jesus sits over in the corner unseen and unheard and unnoticed and unloved.

So, I beg you today- Pray for the true shepherds. Weep for them. Help to guard their soul. Hold them accountable to the Word of God. Warn them about following the latest fads and riding the latest spiritual hobby horses. Get them off the golf course and encourage them to spend time in prayer and in the study of the Word. Help these earthen vessels as they minister the Truth. Assist these clay pots as they proclaim God's Word. Bless these privy pots as they preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. And let us all 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.

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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.