

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**

146 The Characteristics of the Heretics- Part 24

WOSM Wednesday 05/28/08

Welcome again my beloved in Jesus Christ. We are continuing our verse by verse “journey” through the Epistle of Jude and today we want to continue to look at what Jude taught about “The Characteristics of the Heretics.” So, let’s open our Bibles and 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 in these two verses, Jude says that the heretics are like five natural phenomenoms:

- Nautical “Spots” or Hidden Reefs waiting to cause shipwreck
- Clouds Without Water
- Autumn Trees Without Fruit
- Wild Waves of the Sea
- Wandering Stars

Now in our study, we have already covered the first four characteristics and today I want to begin to examine the fifth metaphor that Jude used to describe the false teachers. Jude says that the heretics are like:

wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

Now what Jude is telling us here, in the last part of verse 13, is that the deceivers are like shooting stars; or meteors; which blaze across the sky in a moment of glorious brilliance and yet that brilliance lasts only for a season and then they go into the blackness of space forever.

This is the standard method of operation for the false teachers. They come up with a fantastic new “take” on Scripture; a powerful new “revelation”; a glorious new “slant”; or a fresh “approach” to Scripture or some other brilliant flash of glory that brings them notoriety for a season and then they quickly fade away never to be heard from again.

And over the last 2,000 years of Church history- there have been literally thousands of these people. They come; they make a big splash; they bring forth their heresy; and then they either get caught up in a scandal- usually over infidelity or money- or they die; or they just fade away- leaving behind them- a literal “sea” of broken and shattered people who bought into their teachings and were misled.

Now there are two reasons why people are led astray by men who come to them with a great open show of Glory and then fade into blackness. The first reason is that we humans are in a constant search for a short cut into being spiritual. It is human nature to try to achieve as much as we can with as little effort as possible.

And when you are talking about building cars- that is a good thing. Innovation and technological advancements have made building automobiles faster and better with fewer people involved than ever before. If we built cars today like we built them in the 1950’s a car would cost \$75,000 on just the man hours alone.

So too, communication and the internet and managing information have all exploded in recent years to enable us to do in mere minutes what used to take many hours to do before. All of these modern advancements are wonderful, and they are fine for us to enjoy and benefit from.

The problem arises when you try to implement this same pragmatism to the things of God- because that is not a good thing at all. You see, dear friends, God has designed spiritual growth in such a way that it takes time on purpose. Growing in Christ is slow- sometimes painfully slow. But true genuine spiritual growth and the development of spiritual power and authority is purposely designed so that there are no shortcuts; there are no quick fixes; and there are no simpler ways to

come into these things other than by spending an entire lifetime of devotion and service and study and research and prayer and fasting and repentance and meditation and by living a life of self- denial and by crucifying the flesh; mortifying the deeds of our bodies; denying ourselves daily and by picking up our crosses and following Jesus. Let's read what Jesus said about this in **Matthew 16:24**:

If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.

... and look at what Paul said in **Galatians 6:14**:

But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

And look at what Peter said in **1Peter 5:10**:

After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you.

So, any attempt to subvert this God given method or to find a quicker way into true genuine Biblical spirituality simply will not work- but it *will* bring great harm to those who attempt it because it will *cheapen* what we are doing; it will *devalue* the majesty of it, and it will bring God down to our level- which is the definition of blasphemy.

Yet when some yahoo comes to town to peddle his snake oil lineament that he says can cure cancer; make your clothes whiter and brighter and give you super duper spiritual power and authority by just laying hands on you and speaking over you- the thrill of "getting without earning" is too great for many to overcome. So far too many people get caught up in these wandering stars that breeze in and then quickly flame out.

The Puritans wrote about this tendency that we have to follow the wandering stars often in their writings. God used these men to warn the rest of us that wandering stars that quickly appear and then fade away are a fact of life and that the only remedy for them is to know and understand and to teach and obey and love solid, sound Doctrine that cannot be refuted.

But because so many today in the modern Church have placed Sound Doctrine on the back burner- by default- these wandering stars have filled the void that men have to become spiritual with their fantastic claims to a quick and easy and no cost way into being spiritual and of obtaining Power and Authority in Jesus Christ.

Now when I spake of wandering stars, and the false doctrine that they teach- I am fully aware that there are some people who honestly believe that they have personally benefited from these people. And the improvement that they look to is usually financial. So, because these people have personally benefitted financially from false teaching on a temporary basis- this causes them to place their “seal of approval” on the wandering star and the wrong things that they teach- even though they are blatantly at odds with Holy Scripture.

This notion that says, “*If it works, it must be right*” is a cop out on the duty that we have as believers to test the spirits to see if they are of God and to hold what is taught accountable to Scripture.

It also tends to cause us to ignore or excuse the things that are done and said that are blatantly unscriptural and to rationalize them. And 6,000 years of human history teaches us that this happens all the time.

The true measurement of whether a Movement is of God is not in how many people like it and agree with it; nor is it how many people have personally benefited from it. The one and only measurement by which we judge a thing to be of God or not is by its faithfulness to Scripture.

If a man is preaching something that is enormously popular and is in high demand and many people testify that he is helping them, but he is in fact preaching and teaching things that are wrong or that are a perversion of what the Bible says- then that man is a wandering star and the fact that some may be personally benefited from his ministry is meaningless to God and should be meaningless to us.

God values faithfulness- not popularity. God esteems those who speak Truth in love- not those who give people what they want.

Now what I am about to say is going to offend many of you- but I beg you to hear me out. What I am about to say is true and we must recognize this if we are to avoid the wandering stars and their teachings.

Most people who go to Church today have no idea what is good for them spiritually. They are so untrained and inexperienced about the things of God- that they are in no position whatsoever to determine what is good for them and what is not. Most people in Church today do not use spiritual discernment to weed out the false from the true. They simply sit in the pew and nod their heads at what is taught- regardless if it is right or not. These people reason that as long as it is exciting or emotional- it must be of God. What a shallow way to discern Truth! These people have never been taught Sound Doctrine and many Churches have no plans to ever teach Doctrine. So the people of those churches are far weaker; far more susceptible to error and false teaching; they are more gullible and easier to lead astray than any generation of Church members since the birth of the Church in the Upper Room. And that is not totally their fault.

Some of the blame for this lack of knowledge does lay at each individual's feet to be sure- for we are held responsible to God for what we believe and what we do not believe. But the leadership of the Church has a sacred and solemn duty to teach and edify the believers under their care or God said that He will jerk a knot in their head.

But the truth of the matter is that genuine godly leadership is in short supply these days. There are scores of well meaning and sincere men who lead Churches- but they spend precious little time in actually studying and in actually researching the important aspects of the Bible- because they are so busy trying to copy the latest wandering star on television that has 32,000 people in his congregation.

They copy his sermons; copy his dress; copy his speech and they copy his mannerisms in the hope that something that this latest wandering star has will rub off on them- so that they can see the same measure of carnal human success that the wandering star has seen. The modern minister has become so desperate for people to fill the pews of his Church that many today are willing to do and say just about anything in order to catch what Rick Warren says is the next "spiritual wave" to surf on.

How different all this is to what Paul told Timothy to do as the Pastor of his Church. Let's read **2Timothy 4:1-5:**

1 I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

- 2** preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.
- 3** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,
- 4** and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.
- 5** But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

What did the Holy Spirit inspire Paul to write that we as ministers are supposed to do? Preach the Word. Don't preach *about* the Word. Don't preach the latest fad and sprinkle it with a few Scriptures in order to sanctify it- no, Paul told Timothy to preach the Word. But how can we preach what we do not know? How can we preach what we have not studied? How can we preach what we have not put into practice in our own lives?

In the same passage that Paul commanded Timothy to preach the Word of God rightly, fully, and fearlessly- he also prophesied to Timothy that the day will come when the people of the Church will not want this holy Word preached and they will not even be able to endure Sound Doctrine. They won't be able to stand it; it will bore them; it will be over their head.

How tragic it is that God's precious Word bores the people of God. How backslidden we are that Sound Doctrine cannot be endured by the very ones that Jesus has saved? What a reproach to our Lord that bled and died for us that Prayer Meetings and Bible Studies are being cancelled out due to lack of interest in Church after Church across this land and replaced with yoga classes and weight loss seminars and pottery classes.

Ministers tell me all the time that they can't preach certain things in their Church because their people won't stand for it. But since when do ministers get their sermons from the people? Paul said to preach the Word- not what the people want.

Now I'm not talking about being dictatorial or cruel when I mention these things. We are to minister in love and by love. But a pastor is like a father and no father worth his salt consults his children about what they want him to teach them. A good father, a responsible father; a godly father already knows what he is going to teach his

children before they are born. He teaches his children what they *need* to know- not just what they *want* to know.

A schoolteacher does not consult with his students about what parts of math and science to teach the students. He teaches them all the parts; the good parts and the bad parts; the easy parts and the hard parts. And he also keeps order and requires his students to pass tests before he will graduate them. That is a good teacher.

And a good minister preaches the Word, and he teaches Sound Doctrine when everybody likes it and he preaches the Word and teaches Sound Doctrine when nobody likes it and he requires the same thing from the people that Scripture requires of them and he expects those who say that they are saved to actually walk with God and this is why we all need to earnestly contend for the Faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints. 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.