

Guarding Against Heresy

Jude 17-19

We have spent several weeks considering the character and devastation of the apostates among the church. Jude has revealed all of this in an effort to encourage and equip the church to mount a defense against their attacks. The **focus** of his letter centers on **contending for the faith**.

He desired to impart wisdom unto the church so that they might identify those who lived contrary to the faith. He realized that if they were to mount a defense, they must understand the nature and motives of the enemy.

The issue at hand in the book of Jude is one that has been consistent throughout the ages. The heart of the problem is a problem of the heart. Men's hearts are either submitted to the Lord or to the lusts of the flesh. Jesus well understood this timeless principle and warned of it in **Mk.7:20-23. And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. [21] For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, [22] Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: [23] All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.**

The evils that were present in Jesus' and Jude's day remain in our day. Times may have changed, but the commitment and desires of evil men have not. We must realize the need at hand and properly prepare if we are to overcome and preserve the faith that we have been entrusted with. As we look at our text verses, I want to consider the **principles** of: **Guarding Against Heresy**. Jude offers words of wisdom and importance in these verses.

I. Words of Exhortation (17) – **But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;** In this simple phrase, Jude reminds them of a couple of things that are essential in the struggle against the apostates. First he offers:

A. A Reminder of their Association – He refers to them again as **beloved**. Remember that identified them as those “*dear, esteemed, worthy of love.*” He identified with them as fellow believers, part of the family of God. They were not just casual acquaintances; they were dear to him because they too had received the Lord and were part of the church of the living God. He had a vested interest in their prosperity and survival.

- I fear that we often get complacent and apathetic with time. Surely all who are saved remember the joy and excitement of their salvation. You couldn't seem to get enough of the Word, of worship, and fellowship with the church. You wanted all you met to experience the saving grace of Christ as well.

- But sadly over time we lose our joy and commitment. We get to the place where we are no longer as concerned and dedicated as we once were. We no longer sense the urgency of our faith and the needs of others. We are tempted to let down our guard and shy away from taking a stand.
- I want to take a moment to remind us who we are! We are no longer strangers and foreigners. We are the redeemed of Christ!

B. A Reminder of their Obligation – After Jude reminds them of their association to the Lord and His church, he challenges them to [remember the words spoken before of the apostles of Jesus Christ](#). They were not the first to face such adversity. They were not sailing in uncharted waters. This was a battle they could win, but they must rise to the occasion and seek the Word of God for guidance. This was a fight that they were obligated to engage in. They were expected to stand upon the truths of the gospel and contend for the faith.

- Just as we need to be reminded of our association with the Lord and His church, we too need to be reminded of our obligation to them as well. If we don't stand, who will? This isn't something that we can just pass off to someone else. We are the church. We have an interest in its prosperity and survival. Every child of God ought to feel an obligation to contend for the faith! We would not be here tonight had someone not stood in the gap and made up the hedge in previous generations!
- So what exactly are we obligated to remember. Jude reveals some specific things in the coming verses. If we are to overcome and gain the victory, there are a few things that we must remember and make sure they remain precious and prevalent in our lives. We must remember:

1. Our Provision – The very foundation of our faith rests on the finished work of Calvary. It was there that Jesus offered Himself as the sacrificial atonement for all mankind. Were it not for His provision for us, we would have no hope, remaining in our sin. We must never reach the place that we forget the price that was paid at Calvary and its preeminence in our lives!

2. Our Pardon – As Jesus cried, **It is Finished**, He fully satisfied the righteous demands of God the Father. Sins debt was paid and all who have been cleansed in His precious blood are viewed as righteous in the eyes of God. The righteousness of Christ has been imputed to us!

- Our salvation was obtained by grace through faith, minus nothing, and nothing else is required. We are accepted of God through Christ and Christ alone. We are not working our way to heaven. Ours is not a “do” salvation; it is a “done” salvation!

3. Our Purpose – We are not here to live as the apostates, seeking only to please and satisfy the flesh. In fact, we are not here for our personal gain at all. We are here to bear

witness to the grace and mercy of our blessed Lord. We are here to reach the lost and edify the Savior!

4. Our Purity – The sanctification of believers is little mentioned in our day, but it is apparent that we face a great need for purity in our present society. The church is no longer viewed any differently than the world. God has called us to come out from among the world and live separated lives. We are to imitate the life that our Lord lived. We need to be reminded and remember our need for purity and holiness!

I. Words of Exhortation (17)

II. A Word of Exposure (18-19) – In the remainder of our text verses, Jude exposes the nature of apostates in the last days. He is referring to the warnings of the apostles concerning the coming heresy and rebellion. This was certainly not a new topic among the early church. It was an issue that had been discussed at length in the epistles. 2 Tim.3:13 – But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. 2 Jn. 7 – For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. So what does Jude expose in these verses? He exposes:

A. The Mockery of the Apostates (18a) – How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. Jude warns of the mockery of apostates in the last time. This speaks of those who “*mock and scoff at the things of God.*” There is no reverence or submission to the will and ways of God. They refuse to embrace salvation by grace through faith. They chose to develop a list of traditions and regulations that men must abide by. They sought to develop a religion that pleased the flesh and supported their lifestyle.

- I stand amazed at the rejection and rebellion toward God’s gift of salvation. It is so simple that a child can understand and receive this wonderful gift, but humanity rejects it outright. They mock and belittle the sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross. They refuse to believe that salvation rests solely in the work of God in the hearts of men. They refuse to submit their lives to the Lord and live according to His Word. Many today seek to develop a religion that pleases the flesh.
- This should come as no surprise to us. The Scriptures warn of such rebellion and rejection. Titus 1:16 – They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. 2 Pet.3:3-4 – Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, [4] And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

B. The Morals of the Apostates (18b) – **who should walk after their own ungodly lusts**. We have dealt with this much in the past weeks, but I am convinced that we need to be reminded and made increasingly aware of this plague on society. The apostate does not seek the holiness of God, the ways of God, or the good of the church. He is not interested in advancing the kingdom or encouraging the saints. He has one goal and that it to satisfy the flesh. His life is lived in light of his lusts and desires. The word **lusts** in the text means “*cravings, desiring those things that are forbidden.*”

- We live in a society where these things are not only prevalent, but they are encouraged and promoted. There are no longer any limits or restrictions. Society as a whole is pleasure driven. America’s motto is, “if it feels good, do it!” There is no consideration for the consequences of sin; it is promoted and flaunted as the new and accepted way.

C. The Motive of the Apostates (19a) – **These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit**. The apostate does not enjoy being associated with truth and right. He seeks to alienate himself from any resemblance of decency and holiness.

- This is why it is so important to recognize them and stand firmly against their doctrine and advancements. They seek to poison and disrupt the church. They seek a place that caters to their desires and promotes their agenda.

- If we will continue to stand for truth and commit to preserving the faith, the apostate will likely move on, seeking easier prey. They are not interested in worshipping the Lord. They don’t want to attend a church that makes Jesus the priority and center of everything. If they realize that we as a body of believers are determined to contend for the faith, at all costs, they will likely want to separate themselves from us. I am convinced that placing a high priority on the Word of God and living according to it would eliminate a lot of problems in our day.

D. The Mark of the Apostates (19b) – Jude reveals a telling mark that will be present in all apostates. They will be **sensual, having not the Spirit**. They will be easy to spot wherever they show up. They are **sensual**, having a “*sensuous nature in subjection to appetite and passion.*” Their lives are consumed with the desire to satisfy their passions.

- **They have not the Spirit**. This should come as no surprise. They have never met the Lord in salvation and have never been indwelt with the Spirit. One sure mark of an apostate is the lack of the Spirit.

- That usually isn’t too difficult to detect. There is no desire for the spiritual things, only the carnal things. **Rom.8:16 – The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:**

- We need to guard against those who seek only the things of the flesh. If they never bear witness of the Spirit or seek the things of the world, they need to be watched carefully! **Rom.8:9 – But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.** 1 Jn.4:13 – **Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.**

These have been challenging and enlightening verses. I trust that you have been reminded of your association and obligation to the Lord and His church. We are the ones living in this present generation. The health and welfare of the church for those to come depends, in large part, on the decisions and precautions that we make today.

I want to leave a legacy of truth for those to come. I want to do my part to ensure the furtherance of Fellowship Baptist Church. What about you; are you concerned and committed to the church? Is there an area in your life that needs attention? If so, why not bring it unto the Lord?