

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**

125 The Characteristics of the Heretics- Part 3

WOSM Tuesday 04/29/08

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 over the last few broadcasts, we have been examining the first of the five characteristics of the heretics that Jude reveals to us here. Let's look closely at what Jude is telling us in the first part of verse 12:

These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear

Jude says here that the heretics who creep into the Church to destroy the people of God are like "hidden reefs" in our love feasts. Now we have already seen how that the Church commonly held what were called "Love Feasts" during the first century. And we have already seen that in these love feasts, the heretics would creep in to mingle with the believers in order to be come accepted with them. So, it was the duty and the responsibility of the leadership of the Church to watch and pray and to guard the souls of the sheep by weeding out

or dividing between the wheat and the chaff and to make sure that the heretics would not stay among the saints.

They did this in a number of ways. One way that the early Church had of verifying that those in the Church were genuinely saved was to teach and preach and expound Sound, Biblical, Doctrine on a regular basis in the Church. You see, dear friends, Truth is always the best defense against error. When Truth is taught rightly, fully, and consistently, error has a very hard time rearing its ugly head.

When Sound Doctrine is not taught- the people of the Church become susceptible to slick presentations of clever men who have great personalities who can very quickly lead the people astray.

This is why I highly recommend that the leadership of every Church sit down and hammer out a written Confession or Statement of Faith. And that Confession should be in as much detail as possible, and it should be completely Scriptural.

You see, many Churches have a tendency today to try to be as general and as vague as possible when it comes to Doctrinal Statements precisely because they want to be as attractive as possible to people from different backgrounds- so more people will want to come to their Church. But that logic is exactly backward.

Instead, we need to be as detailed as possible about what we believe and teach so it is clear what we believe and teach. And we need to not be lazy about this and go ahead and do our homework and hammer out a Confession of Faith that is Scriptural and then teach that Confession; know and understand that Confession; and practice and live and be proud about that Confession.

You see, beloved, if our Confession of Faith is Scriptural- there should be no problem with genuine believers. The only problem arises when the Confession is not Biblical, and we have members who are not truly saved.

For example- the written Confession or Statement of Faith needs to clearly articulate what the Church believes and teaches about the absolute Authority of Scripture; what the Church believes and teaches about the Character and Nature of God; it should also include a very detailed Biblical examination about the Person of Jesus Christ in both His Humanity and Deity; a complete and thorough explanation of how lost Man is justified before God and then the Confession of Faith

should go into details about how to put our Christian Faith into practice in our daily lives.

And that Confession of Faith should have Scriptural references for each, and every tenet of belief and this Confession should be written down and distributed freely to believers and non-believers alike and published on the Church Website.

You see, our Confession of Faith is like an announcement to both believers and non-believers crying out loudly and proudly- This is who we are; this is what we believe and teach; and this is why we believe it and why we teach it.

And by doing this and by periodically going over each tenet of the Confession to the members – the Church will *minimize* the opportunity for heretics to even come into the Church to begin with.

A strong, Biblical written and detailed Confession of Faith that is taught and believed and practiced by the members of the Church is the best weapon that we have against heresy in this hour. Those Churches who have one will be properly defended- those who do *not* have one or that have a vague and simplistic Confession are sitting ducks for slick, carnal, evil men to creep in and deceive the sheep.

You see, brothers and sisters, if we are going to “do” Church at all- why would we not do it right? I mean if we plan on having a Biblical Christian Church that will honor God and have Jesus as the Head and one that will edify believers and one that will win the lost to Jesus- it is inconceivable that we would not write down and explain in detail what we believe and what we teach and be proud about it.

But if Church is nothing more than a hobby; or a curiosity; or a social club; or if your Church is something that is based upon nothing more than family or friends or long term acquaintances- then it really isn't a Church anyway- it may be a lodge or an association or a social club- but it isn't a Church.

Beloved, we have to remember that Christianity isn't new- it is 2,000 years old. The Christian Church didn't just pop up out of the ground last Thursday. Church didn't just “happen.” Church isn't cute or sweet or foolish or simple or frivolous or shallow. The Church is not the invention of any man, and it does not exist for the pleasure of any man. The Christian Church is a creation of God and Jesus Christ owns it. Jesus bought and paid for the Church with His own Blood. Jesus owns His Church and Jesus controls His Church and His

Church exists to bring honor and glory to Him and it should be run in the prescribed way that Jesus said for it to be run in and not at the whim of the pastor or the new revelations of the so-called prophets or the carnal ideas of the board of elders or deacons or the historical pronouncements of the pope or the college of cardinals.

The Christian Church needs to be done right and it needs to be in subjection to her Head on every single area of operation. And the one single way that we know if we are doing that is to know the Bible and to teach the Bible and to obey the Bible.

Without sound, Scriptural Doctrines being taught on an ongoing basis- you will be so off base and so far removed from Biblical Christianity that you will be a target for every kook in the county to come in and prophesy goofy things and your Church will be a target for wicked and evil men to come in and teach your people off the wall stuff that will destroy their lives and their walk with God. And the blame of all of this will lay at the feet of the leadership of the Church because they didn't see the need or didn't have the time or didn't care to hammer out a written Sound, Biblical Confession of Faith that would comfort and care and protect the sheep.

Now some will say, *“Brother Blair, you are blowing all this way out of proportion. We don't need Doctrine in the 21st Century. We are all way beyond that. We need to build relationships- not seek after Divine Truth. We don't need to study the Bible- all we need to do is spend time together. We don't need to earnestly pray as a Body and weep between the porch and the altar- all we really need to do is talk to each other. We don't need Doctrine- what we need is love. We don't need to study the Bible- all we need is to love Jesus.”*

Beloved, those are the kinds of statements that are going around these days and that are sweeping over the modern Church. But the fact of the matter is that everyone on earth already *has* a Doctrine. We all already believe certain things and we reject other things- and so the real issue is not do we need Doctrine- because we already *have* Doctrine.

No, the real issue is that although many of us have already made up our minds about what we believe and what we don't believe- sadly- much of what we believe is not Scriptural. We believe it passionately; and we fully are persuaded about it- but God didn't say it.

I tell you that some of our most firmly held beliefs today are a combination of what momma taught us as a child ; combined with what we have personally experienced in life; mixed in with a little bit of what we have read in some books; combined with what we heard in Church and on Christian radio and TV; mixed in with what we heard on Oprah; and sprinkled with a little humanism and new age mentality and what they say on Rush and Fox News.

For example, many people today in the modern Church have confused American patriotism and American Free Enterprise and the American Constitution with Christianity. We have confused being a Republican or a conservative with being a Christian. We have bought into the lie that says as long as you are a member of the right organizations or as long as you petition your Congressman to vote on the right bills and as long as you are against abortion and homosexual marriage- it doesn't matter how you live or whether you are even saved.

We don't need Doctrine? All we need to do is love Jesus? Beloved, we don't even agree with Who Jesus is! For example- did Jesus actually and literally fulfill almost 400 specific OT Prophecies concerning His parents and His birthplace and His lineage and His royalty and His Deity? Is Jesus the Son of David and the Son of Man and the Son of God? Is Jesus really the only way to Heaven? Is every single soul on earth who is not born again going to burn in hell forever? Was Jesus a real Man or was He God wrapped up in human flesh- or was He both God and Man? Or maybe Jesus was Michael the arch angel- or maybe He was just a spiritual concept or maybe he married Mary Magdalene and went to France and had a child and his descendant was on Fox News the other day.

Did Jesus live a perfectly sinless life? Did Jesus actually obey all of His Father's Commandments perfectly never sinning in thought word or deed? Did Jesus literally earn His own way into Heaven- developing His Own Personal Righteousness through His sinless life? Did Jesus really die? And if so, then *why* did He die? Did Jesus physically rise from the dead? Why did He physically rise from the dead? Was the Resurrection on the first day of the week or was it on Saturday? Did Jesus physically ascend up into Heaven or did He walk through a cloud and come over here to America? Is Jesus sitting

in Majesty on the right hand of God the Father interceding for us right now or is Jesus floating around in space somewhere?

But there's more. Was Jesus of the very *same* substance with the Father or was He of a *similar* but different substance? Was Jesus always with the Father or was Jesus the first created Being? Is Jesus the Second Person of the Trinity or is Jesus another God or is Jesus not God at all?

But there's more. Is Man justified by keeping the Law of God or is Man justified by Grace through Faith in the finished Work of Christ alone? The righteousness that allows us to go to Heaven- do we in fact *earn* that righteousness through the accumulation of good deeds that we do over our lifetime or is that righteousness instantly imputed to us by a miracle of Mercy and Grace from a Sovereign God by Faith alone? Is Salvation an event that occurs one time through the Supernatural miracle of the Blood of Jesus being applied to a sinful heart or is Salvation a *process* that begins with infant baptism and extends over your lifetime up to and including a couple of hundred thousand years in Purgatory?

Now you may not really care about anything I just said- but each and everything I just said are vital foundational Teachings of some of the largest cults and false religions on earth that deceive millions of people every year. And that makes the answer to these issues very vital to us, beloved. The correct Biblical answer to every one of these questions are very, very important because how we answer these questions determines whether we are truly saved or simply deceived. So, it is incumbent on us to know how the Holy Bible answers all these questions and we need to know what God Himself reveals in Scripture about these questions and a vague, one page, general Statement of Faith simply will not suffice in answering these questions. Neither will it suffice to try to wing it or to try to make up our answers as we go along.

These are the great issues of life and eternity, and they deserve an in depth and Biblical response- not a flippant response off the top of our heads. And even if we don't see the need to do this- rest assured that the over 9,000 other false religions all do have an answer to these questions. Rest assured that the secular pagan world also attempts to answer these questions. But the problem with their answers is that they are all wrong and they are not true.

9,000 other man-made religions and all human based philosophical systems all give answers to the most crucial questions of life and eternity that are not inspired; they are not inerrant; they are not infallible; and they are not eternal. So why in the world would anyone want to trust in answers that originate from the mind of fallen man when you can get answers that originate from the Mind and Heart and Mouth of Almighty God?

Sound, Biblical Doctrine will answer each question fully and rightly. That is why we need Sound Doctrine; that is why we need Systematic Theology; that is why both our Doctrine, and our Theology must be from Scripture and from Scripture alone. And this is why Jude wrote this Epistle 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.

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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.