

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**

137 The Characteristics of the Heretics- Part 15

WOSM Thursday 05/15/08

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 we are continuing to examine the third of the five characteristics of the heretics that Jude mentions here in these two verses. Let’s look at how Jude described this particular characteristic. Jude said that the heretics are:

autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; ...

As we saw on the last broadcast, Jude likens the apostates empty profession and utter lack of spiritual life to a barren harvest. This goes back to a very important spiritual Principle that we all need to know:

Corrupt Doctrine Produces Corrupt Fruit.

Now on the last broadcast, we began to see how important fruit is to Jesus Christ. And I want to continue this thought by looking again at **John 15:1-8**:

- 1 **I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.**
- 2 **"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.**
- 3 **"You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.**
- 4 **"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me.**
- 5 **"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.**
- 6 **"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.**
- 7 **"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.**
- 8 **"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and *so* prove to be My disciples.**

Jesus plainly tells us here in verse 4 that no one can bear fruit in and of himself. Only saved people can bear godly fruit because they are endowed with Power from on high and God has given them a new Divine nature that enables them to bear that good fruit. Lost people have neither the inclination nor the ability to bring forth godly fruit on an ongoing basis.

So, Jude says that the heretics bear no fruit at all. He says that the false teachers are trees without any good or lasting fruit.

Now as **John 15:8** tells us, Jesus is only glorified through His people when His people bear fruit. That fruit should not be sporadic or haphazard, but that fruit should be plentiful; abundant; and that fruit should remain. Let's read **John 15:16**:

You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.

Now this is one of the most misquoted and misunderstood verses of Scripture in the entire Bible. Far too many people take this verse to mean that God will give to us whatever the heart craves after- even if it is wrong. So, they quote this verse to justify their covetousness and their materialism and their worldliness and their self- centeredness and

their love of money- and that is *not* what this verse says at all. Then they make up strange and elaborate theological points to show that if the human heart can imagine something- then that proves that God wants to give it to them- which is not what this verse is saying either.

Now the fact that these people twist the Scriptures like this shows their lack of understanding about Salvation and the Will of God because the heart of a saved soul does not desire *anything* that is not God's Will. That is what unconverted people do- but not saved people. Saved people want God to be glorified- not themselves. They want to honor God- not themselves. They want all the attention and the praise and the glory and the honor to go to Jesus Christ- not themselves.

So saved people do not ask God to satisfy their covetousness. Saved people do not ask God to meet their lustful desires. Saved people do not ask God to fulfill their selfish and ambitious dreams. Lost people do that but not saved people. Saved people desire to be blessed but only so that God's Will can be accomplished in their lives and in the world.

So, by playing on the natural desire that sinful man has to be great and to get ahead and to have more stuff and to become important- the heretics deceive people into thinking that God is nothing more than the dispenser of whatever will temporarily satisfy their carnal whims. But Jude says here that the more they misuse the Word of God like this; the more that they emotionally manipulate the people; the more they twist the Scriptures to suite themselves- the more barren they become.

The Bible clearly teaches that there are two kinds of fruit- good fruit and bad fruit. Some people bring forth good fruit and others bring forth bad fruit. Let's read **Matthew 7:13-20**:

13 Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.

14 "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

15 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

16 "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?

17 "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.

18 "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.

19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

20 "So then, you will know them by their fruits.

Now look very closely again at verse 18. The red letter words of Jesus Christ say:

A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.

Jesus didn't say that a good tree *should not* bring forth bad fruit. Jesus didn't say that a good tree *ought not* bring forth bad fruit- no, Jesus Christ said that a good tree **cannot** bring forth bad fruit neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

A bad tree; an unholy tree; or in other words- a heretic or a lost person does not possess the power or the ability to bring forth good fruit. That is because these people are not saved and do not have the Holy Spirit living in their lives and these people do not have the new divine nature; and these people do not have the will, nor do they have the power to live for God.

But Jude says that these people nevertheless creep into the Church calling themselves Christians and bring with them damnable heresy that will destroy men's souls.

Then in verse 19, Jesus gives us the key by which we can determine if a person is of God or not.

So then, you will know them by their fruits.

What is difficult to imagine is that we are living in a day when that which constitutes good fruit and that which constitutes bad fruit is not known by very many people in the modern church.

We have gone so long and traveled so far without the Word and without spiritual discernment and without proper training and without sound doctrine that far too many in Church today don't know bad fruit when they look right at it.

These people cannot possibly fulfill verse 19 because they don't know the difference between good fruit and bad fruit.

A man can stand before 100,000 people and blow on them as the cue for them to fall down; some will get up and testify that they have been healed. Others will say that they have received a miracle. So, to the average Church member- it doesn't really matter what this man is teaching because after all, Brother Blair, he *must* be right because so many people are following him.

A man can pastor a huge Church and write a book and absolutely twist the Scriptures to teach false doctrine and yet he and his book and his teaching are praised because after all- he is successful- so he *must* be right.

These people and many others like them are dripping with bad fruit and false teaching and ungodly lives; adultery; homosexuality; alcoholism; unfaithfulness- I mean real *serious* sin- and yet they command millions of followers and people praise them as being great men of God. But they are not men of God- they are false prophets, and they are telling lies and they are the modern manifestation of trees without fruit.

Unfortunately, having a big Church in our day doesn't necessarily mean that you are bearing good fruit. All that it means in our day is that you are popular. Being wealthy in the richest nation in the history of the world is also not bearing good godly fruit- rank infidels can and do prosper in our economy.

In fact- in an age of a great falling away- having a big church and being wealthy and owning lots of stuff could very well be proof that you are *not* right with God rather than the other way around.

These false teachers may well begin with a great show- but a discerning eye will soon catch the error. Do they promote the carnal lusts of man through covetousness, or do they promote a godly life of self denial? Do they promote and teach that wealth and riches and possessions are a sign of God's good pleasure, or do they teach that faithfulness is a sign or God's good pleasure? Do they teach that godliness with contentment is great gain, or do they teach people to be discontented with what God has already provided until God gives them something new and shiny?

Do they value and promote, and practice forgotten things like repentance; the exposure and confession of sin; fasting; prayer; in depth, serious, line upon line; precept upon precept Bible Studies- or do they skim the surface and pick the parts of Scripture that will tickle the

ears of lukewarm churchgoers and leave the rest behind?

Are they committed to earnest and fervent prayer early in the morning and late at night or do they simply relegate prayer to something that they do before and after something else?

Are they committed to the Authority of Scripture in their ministry, or do they place pragmatism; human reasoning; human logic; tradition and history *above* Scripture?

Is their Doctrinal Statement or Confession of Faith a shallow, vague, one page “bulletized” document designed to be as unclear and un-offensive as possible so that more people will be attracted to it or is their Confession of Faith serious and detailed and complete and spelled out and thoroughly backed up with Scripture and comes from the Bible and the Bible alone?

Are they committed to expository preaching and to Objective, Propositional, Divine, inspired, infallible; inerrant Sound Doctrine-making the Word of God clear to the people or do they treat the Scriptures lightly and preach shallow sermonettes for shallow christianettes?

The answer to these and many other questions will determine if the fruit that these people bear is good fruit or bad fruit, and this is why we 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.