

**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
139 The Characteristics of the Heretics- Part 17

WOSM Monday 05/19/08

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 is comparing the heretics who creep into the Church to bring in damnable heresy with five natural phenomenon- spots or hidden reefs; clouds with no water; trees with no fruit; waves of the sea; and wandering stars.

Now we have already looked at the spots or hidden reefs and the waterless clouds and now we are examining just what Jude meant when he said that the false teachers were like fruitless trees- so let’s read the last part of verse 12 again together:

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

Now we must realize that a vine is good for nothing unless it has fruit on it. For example, a grape vine has the capacity to grow very large. Thick, beautiful green leaves cover the grape vine. But it isn’t the growth of the vine, nor the leaves that interest the people who own the vineyard- it is the fruit that the vine produces- in this case- the

grapes. Neither the length of the vine, nor the luscious leaves interest the vineyard owner- all he wants is fruit. Without grapes all the growth and all the green leaves in the world are absolutely useless.

So, it is in the spiritual realm. Many times, a heretic will fool people with new and supposedly fresh information that causes the hearer to think that what the false teacher is saying is a new wave of God's Glory- when in reality it is nothing but quick growth and green leaves- but no fruit.

Beloved good spiritual fruit doesn't come simply from more information. We don't bear good fruit simply because we hear some new thing about God or because we feel excited about what God is doing or any of those things. We can listen to tapes about the "six secrets of prayer" and the "seven covenants of prosperity;" we can go to conferences and cry and listen to great swelling words- but unless and until holy and divine Words of Scripture fall on the good ground of a humble and broken heart- any growth that comes will be temporary at best. Let's see what Jesus said about this in **Matthew 13:3-9**:

3 ... Behold, the sower went out to sow;

4 and as he sowed, some *seeds* fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up.

5 "Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil.

6 "But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

7 "Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out.

8 "And others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.

9 "He who has ears, let him hear."

Now I want you to notice that all four groups heard the Word of God. And notice that all four groups heard the very same Word. All four groups were subjected to the very same inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of the living God. But only one group bore fruit long term that was measurable.

So, the difference here between these four groups is not in the

Word or even in the speaker- it is in the composition of the soil of the one who hears. Three of the four groups had bad soil and only one had good soil.

Now this is one of the few parables in the New Testament that Jesus later gave the meaning to. So, let's look at what Jesus said was the meaning of this parable by reading **Matthew 13:18-23**:

18 "Hear then the parable of the sower.

19 "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil *one* comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.

20 "The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;

21 yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only* temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.

22 "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

23 "And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."

Again, notice that all four groups heard the same Word- yet only one group bore measurable and lasting fruit. The first group had no heart to understand. This allowed the devil to come and steal the seed away from him.

The second group received the Word initially with great joy- but because they had no root- they soon fell away. But notice *why* they fell away. These people were just fine as long as God didn't require anything of them. These people could rejoice all day long and praise God and dance around and love Jesus as long as it was on their own terms and as long as it didn't cost them anything.

But when they began to be persecuted for the Word's sake; when these people were required to be faithful in their sufferings- when serving God began to actually cost them something- they threw their hands up and said, "*I didn't sign up for this!*" and very quickly walked away from Jesus- proving that they were never truly saved to begin with.

These are the people who, when they are persecuted or when sufferings come, say, *“Why did God allow all this evil to come upon me when I have been so good to Him? I mean, as much as I have given up to serve Jesus and this is how He treats me? Just who does God think He is?”*

Well, God thinks that He is God and He thinks that He is Sovereign and He thinks that He owns you and He thinks that for His Own good pleasure and for His Own purposes that He may or may not share with you- He has determined that you should go through persecution.

But the issue is not should you and me suffer or not suffer- that is not our decision to make. No, this is an issue of love. You see, we were lost, and wretched sinners and we deserved to go to hell and instead of eternal damnation that God would have been perfectly just in giving to us- God gave us Mercy and Grace instead. So, since Jesus Christ has bought and paid for us- we are now bond slaves who live only to please the Master and whatever the Master Sovereignly allows to come into our lives should be just fine by us.

If God should choose to glorify Himself through our sufferings and through our persecution- then may God be praised. If we love Him- then the path that God has chosen for us to walk on should be done with humility and gratefulness- not murmuring and complaining.

Now I realize that what I have just said is diametrically the opposite from what many of you have been taught, but that just shows you how badly we have all been taught because what I have just said is the Biblical view of suffering.

This second group that Jesus talked about was ill prepared to serve God under any hardship because their relationship with God was only based on what was good for them- not what was good for God. I call this having a “Man- centered Theology;” rather than a “God centered Theology.” So, when God demanded something of them that they didn’t like- they got offended and took their ball and went home and pouted.

But you see, dear friends, everyone who comes to Christ will be offended sooner or later unless and until He dies to himself so that the offense of the Cross no longer offends him. But because real bad and unbiblical teaching about the role that suffering, and persecution plays in the life of a believer abounds- we really believe that God exists to do

nothing but to please us- rather than the other way around and it is this unbiblical self centered mentality that is corrupting Christianity.

Christianity demands that the self of Man die- not be built up and exalted; Jesus doesn't request- no, He demands that we crucify our flesh; that we mortify the deeds of our bodies; and that we deny our selves daily while picking up the cross that God has chosen for us to carry. And if we don't do these things- Jesus said that we are not His disciples. And remember that I didn't say these things- Jesus did.

The "gospel of self" that has replaced the Gospel of God in far too many American churches teaches that we are everything and that God would never require anything of us that might crimp our style or inconvenience us in any way and that is simply not true.

Since God is Sovereign- He is also Sovereign over our trials and over our sufferings and over our persecutions and He allows us to go through tough things so that we might glorify Him- not simply escape hardship and live the good life.

Serving God is not simply about God blessing you. Serving God is about you obeying Him and loving Him enough to go where He wants you to go and to say what He wants you to say and to do what He wants you to do- even when it is inconvenient; even when it costs you something; and even when it costs you everything.

This second group heard the Word; they got excited about the Word; they jumped up and began to show a little response to the Word- but they didn't fall in love with Jesus; they didn't say, "*Not my will- but thine be done*"; they didn't look at Christianity as a means to die to themselves and live unto Him; they simply never dreamed that as good as they had been to God that God would ever allow them to be disappointed- so in other words- they were never truly born again. And the result is that they quickly fell away. Needless to say- this second group occupies a lot of pews in the modern Church.

Now the third group also heard the Word. And they also believe the Word to be true. So, these are the people who have *mentally* agreed with the information that they have heard about God. But this group- like the other two are not really saved because they don't last. You see, saved people may get weak and they may stumble- but saved people will eventually get with God and get strong and they will persevere unto the end.

But not this third group. These people heard the Word, but the

three deadly thorns caught them. The cares of this life; the deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things entering in. The Bible says that these three things have the unique ability to actually choke the Word of God out of a person's life.

But notice that verse 22 doesn't say the *sin* of this world- but the *worry* of this world. So, Jesus wasn't talking here about adultery or murder or blasphemy- He was talking about the worries of our daily life. The worry of the world are those things that are necessary to live on this earth that are not sinful in and of themselves like working and paying bills and paying taxes and raising children, etc.

So even though these things are necessary in order to live- they carry with them the ability to choke the Word of God until the Word is no longer fruitful in our lives. That is why we need to become strong in the Lord and develop a consistent and effectual and fervent prayer life; that is why we need to study the Bible in a consistent; systematic approach that gets the Word off the pages of the Bible and into your heart. And this is why we need consistent times of godly fellowship with other fellow laborers who do battle with the same things that we do battle with.

The worry of the world that we all have to confront in order to live will overwhelm you and they will choke the Word unless you are strong. And we can debate all day long about this- but as I see it- we only have two choices here. We can keep doing what we are doing and stay weak and then the worry of the world will eventually choke the Word and we will become unfruitful- or we can pray without ceasing and we can make time to diligently and consistently study God's Word and we can engage ourselves in fellowship about the things of God- not the ball game- on an ongoing basis and we can get strong in the Lord and in the power of His might so that we can resist the choking that the worry of the world has upon the Word of God in our lives so that we may bear good fruit for the glory of God and no longer be unfruitful.

And this is why we all need too 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.