

Contend Earnestly For the Faith Which Was Once For All Handed Down to the Saints

An Expository Study of the **Epistle of Jude**

Chapter 16- Winning Souls in an Age of Apostasy **Jude 22-23**

192 Winning Souls in an Age of Apostasy Part 4

WOSM Thursday 07/31/08

Welcome again my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the **Epistle of Jude** and today we are going to continue to examine what Jude taught about "How to Win Souls in an Age of Apostasy." So, let's read **Jude 22& 23** again together:

22 And have mercy on some, who are doubting;
23 save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

Now in our previous broadcast, we began to look at just how fear can work in pulling some people out of the fire of deception and of being led astray. As I have told you before, our modern culture despises godly fear and many today in the Church would push aside any notion that God would ever desire that we have fear actively working in our lives. But that false thinking comes from an unbiblical view of God and an unbiblical view of Man, and a wrong view of just how serious God is about the Truth.

Brothers and sisters, we have to come to terms with the reality that it is not only a sin to *do* something wrong; but it is also a sin to *believe* something that is wrong. And for some strange reason- those who would be quick to say that us doing something that God has forbidden are many times the very same people who also say that it really doesn't matter what we believe. But we must understand that what we believe will eventually translate into how we live, and it will translate into how we look at both the temporary issue of life and also those things that are eternal.

Many times, we hear people who say that although they believe one thing- they feel as though they are free to live contrary to how they

say that they believe. But how could this be possible? Isn't what we believe the very foundation of our lives? Isn't what we believe central to how we form our views of life and death and God and Sin and righteous living?

I mean if something is valuable enough to you for you to believe in it- if something is important enough for you to sign on to it- doesn't that mean by default that you are ascribing to what it says and means?

And that is why what we believe is the single most important factor of our lives- far more important than the house you live in or the clothes you wear or the money in your account. What you believe is central to how you function as a human being and cannot be separated from you.

What you believe about life and about God and about your relationship with your wife and how to raise your children and what to do with your money and what you believe about Man and Sin and Heaven and Hell is what guides you through life and is what motivates you to agree with something or to disagree with something.

So, what you believe; that which guides and leads you and motivates you is what is called "Doctrine." And as I have said many times in this study- you already have a Doctrine- everybody already has a Doctrine that they believe in and that fashions their lives.

Everybody on earth believes certain things about every issue of life and every issue about eternity. People have already formed an opinion about every issue of life. But even more importantly- everyone has already formulated an opinion about eternal matters as well- about God and about Sin and about heaven and Hell.

And if you notice- those private, invisible beliefs don't stay private or invisible. They always turn into actions that are very public and very visible.

So, the issue is not whether we *need* Doctrine or whether or not we *have* a Doctrine- because we all have a Doctrine already. No, the real issue is: on what do we *base* our Doctrine? What is the foundation on which our beliefs *stand*?

Is your Doctrine; your beliefs based upon personal opinions and human reasoning and personal experiences? Do you say that something is true simply because it *appeals* to you; or because it personally *benefits* you; or because it sounds cool, or hip, or logical?

If any of these things are the basis of your Doctrine- then please hear me when I tell you that you are deceived and you are in real and serious danger... because God has already spoken.

The Owner and the Creator of the Universe has already revealed His Word- which is Divine, Absolute, Propositional, and Eternal Truth. So, God has already determined what is “right” and what is “wrong,” and God has already given true and sound Doctrine. God has already settled the debate about all the issues of both life and godliness and therefore- nobody else has the right or the authority to teach or to believe or to do contrary to what the Almighty has said.

So, since we already have the written; divinely inspired Revelation of God – that is finished and complete and sufficient- our job is not to seek new and different revelation- because that would mean that we are not happy or content or satisfied with what God has already said. No, our job is to learn and be taught and to understand and to believe and obey and to love and to propagate what God has already said. So, our job; our duty; yea- our joy and privilege as sons and daughters of the Lord Christ- is to humbly and joyfully submit to the Authority of Holy Scripture in our daily lives by the Power of the Holy Spirit- all to the Glory of God.

There is not a single human being or organization on earth- either in or out of the Church- who has the right or the authority or the liberty to make up our own beliefs or to formulate our own Doctrine. No man; no group of men; no organization, no country; no government and no institution on this earth has the freedom or liberty to believe and teach whatever the dog drags in through the front door and call it “Truth.”

Nobody has the right to formulate their own religion or their own philosophy or their own morality. And that is true because the one, true, living God has already done all of that and in His singular Omnipotence- God *imposed* that Truth and that morality and that Doctrine on every human on earth. And that same God will hold every human accountable to that one single Doctrine and Morality and Truth when they stand before Him.

So, the fear of God will restrain fallen Man’s desire to rise up and contradict the Almighty. The fear of God will cause wise men to fall before this God and not argue with Him about what he said. The fear of God will motivate smart people to humble themselves before the God

Who hold the stars in His Right Hand and beg Him to give them the honor to obey what He has already spoken.

Only fools try to change God's Word, dear friends. People who are totally absent any fear of God at all are the ones who stand up and say that God has revealed new and exciting revelation directly to them. People who are without any fear and thus who are without any wisdom and knowledge are the ones who want you to think that they have some special "hot line" to heaven and can hear and see and receive things that nobody else can. These are the heretics and the false teachers that Jude has been warning us about in this Journey.

You see, when we form beliefs based upon frail, faulty, weak human reasoning or personal experiences or human logic- we are saying that we trust our human ability to reason and what we *think* we have seen and our own logic- much more than we trust that which God has inspired. We are saying that we place more value on what our minds conjure up than we do with what God has said- and that is the height of human arrogance and self-righteousness- which is the very opposite of the fear of the Lord.

When we form beliefs on personal opinions- we are saying that we value our own opinion more than we value God's. When we formulate Doctrine based upon how we feel about something or from church history or pronouncements by popes- or from anything other than God's Word- we are in fact saying that we place a higher value on those things; we trust those things more than we value and trust that which God has said- and beloved we must never do that.

And proper and correct and Biblical godly fear will stop us from forming doctrine and beliefs based upon anything other than God's Word.

For example- when we say that we don't think that God would do thus and so and what we say is based upon our own human system of fairness and justice- we are placing that human system of what we think is fair and just above God's.

When we say, for example, that we don't think that God would ever create a hurricane that did so much damage to the Gulf Coast because we have formed a personal opinion about what God does and does not do- ignoring what the Bible clearly says that He does do- and ignoring all that the Bible says about God's absolute Sovereignty and God's complete dominion over all that He created- we may not realize it-

but we are ascribing attributes to God that the Bible does not ascribe. We are painting a picture about what God will and will not do; we are portraying God's Character and Nature in light of how we *wish* Him to be- rather than what the Bible clearly reveals Him to be. Beloved, when we do that- we are creating a God that is *different* from the God of the Bible and we are creating a "god" that is made in *our* image and that is after *our* likeness and that is the textbook definition of idolatry.

We must openly and loudly and proudly herald that God is precisely everything that the Scriptures reveal Him to be. We must repeat what God has said about Himself- never giving our own personal opinion and never placing our own original thoughts about God and what we think God does and what we think God does not do.

So, while it is true that everyone has their own Doctrine- that doesn't mean that all doctrines are correct. Simply because we earnestly believe something does not make that belief to be true. Simply because we are passionate about something doesn't make it right. It is good to be passionate; it is admirable to be earnest; but earnestness and passion are poor substitutes for Objective Absolute Divine Truth and so beliefs that are not divinely inspired Truth are not eternal and they are not permanent, and they are trustworthy, and they are not reliable, and they should never be the basis of what we believe.

And the Bible says that Godly fear will motivate us to spend time with God so that we may know that what we believe is Biblical. While human arrogance and foolishness will encourage us to try to wing it and go it alone and do things our own way.

The fear that Jude is talking about in verse 23 is the kind of fear that is based in humble submission to the Word of God and the dying of self- all to the Glory of God. So, this fear; this reverential respect will not allow us to develop beliefs based upon anything other than Gods' Word. And so, this fear will keep us away from false teachings and heresies and apostasies- no matter how popular they might be.

So, since that is true, then the very opposite is also true. A lack of this godly fear; a lack of proper reverential respect toward God and a lack of respect for Absolute Truth will allows us to formulate our own beliefs; make up our own personal theology; it will allow us to believe whatever our carnal hearts desire- and we will view God and Man and Sin and Righteousness and Salvation and Heaven and Hell through the prism of our own human eyes rather than through the divinely revealed

and inspired Word of the living God and when we do that- we cannot help but to be off base; and it is only a matter of time until we are completely deceived.

So what Jude is telling us here is that fear can indeed pull us out of the fire of deception. So wise and faithful servants of God engage in those things which will develop and strengthen a healthy and biblical and godly reverential fear of God so that we will not be led astray.

Did you know that words like humility; submission; faithfulness; and obedience all are connected to godly fear? Do you know that no one can ever be faithful to God if they do not fear God? No one can ever humble themselves to God unless they fear God? No one can ever submit to God unless he fears God? No one can ever obey God until and unless they learn the fear of the Lord?

Think about it. Why would you submit to someone you do not respect? Why would you humble yourself to someone who you do not have a deep and lasting reverence for? Why would you be faithful to someone who you do not stand in awe of? Why would you ever obey someone who you do not honor?

Ah, but some would say, "I do not fear. I love. I follow God because I love God; I humble myself to God because I love God; I obey God because I love God; I submit to God because I love God.

But to them I would say, "Yes, but you love because you fear. You love God precisely because you respect and admire God."

It is true- it is love that motivates us to serve and to follow and to submit and to obey- but what brought about that love? How did this kind of Love manifest itself in you?

Certainly, we did not have this love for God when we were out in sin. When we were out in sin we didn't submit, and we didn't follow, and we didn't obey, and we weren't faithful. So where did we get this Love?

It is certain that while we were dead in our sins and trespasses that we didn't have this Love. When we were dead in trespasses and sins we served ourselves; we did what was right in our own eyes; we followed our hearts; we obeyed the lusts of our flesh. So where did we get this Love?

It is also certain that when we were strangers from the promises of God; and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and while we were without God and without hope in the world we didn't have this Love for

God. While we were in that state we never submitted to God; we never followed God; we didn't humble ourselves; and we didn't obey. So where did we get this Love?

Beloved God's Love is not manifested through human effort. We were not born with it, and it didn't come from us. We cannot rub the two sticks of our own willpower and our own desires together to develop this kind of Love. No, Love *for* God is a gift *from* God.

And this kind of Love was given to us by the God Who saved us. So, this Love for God that causes us to humble ourselves; and causes us to submit to His ways; and causes us to follow and causes us to obey did not come from us- but came from God and is part of the new divine nature that God gave us through Jesus Christ.

And the Bible teaches that this love is made strong; this Love is enhanced; this love becomes overwhelming when we grow in our Knowledge of Who God is and what God has done for us through Jesus Christ.

So as we read and study that which God has revealed to us about Himself through the pages of Holy Scripture and we begin to see how that the death of the Son of God and the damnation of unrepentant human beings are the loudest shouts under heaven that God is infinitely holy, and that Sin is infinitely offensive, and that Wrath is infinitely just, and that Grace is infinitely precious and as we stand between these two extremes of God's Glory- the cries of the souls who are in hell and the praises of the redeemed in heaven- we fear- yes we rightly fear- and we tremble and we bow and we humble ourselves and we worship and then value and then we adore and then we love and then we submit and then we follow and then we obey.

So, Jude was right. We have a need; a great need to correctly and properly fear the Lord and the Bible says that this fear will pull some people out of the fire.

Well, I have 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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