

Jude 17-21

Intro

We are nearing the end of the letter of Jude

And in the section of vs 20-23 Jude is summarising the letter and making seven short exhortations

Today we look at the first four and next week Peter will look at the last three.

As well as looking at the end of the letter

But before that Jude refers to a final reference or example:

The Apostles' prophecy

Jude refers to what other apostles had already written

^ v17

Not only to establish his case further

But also as a summary of all his points that he made before

What are they again?

The congregation was infiltrated by a group

Who taught that it was OK to live a life of sin as Jesus had redeemed them

of sin, as Jesus had redeemed them

They only accepted the grace that Jesus won for them, but not the cost of being obedient to God the Father

In the previous section Jude used many Old Testament and other Jewish writing as examples

Where those who live a life of sin were denounced and ultimately punished by God

And now he uses what Jesus' apostles had written as further evidence that God still does not accept this kind of behaviour

△ v18

But he assumes that the readers of his letter do already know these!

So we have a summary quotation

“In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.”

△ v18

This seems directly borrowed from 2 Peter 3:3

³ Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires.

△ 2 Peter 3:3

Other Examples from the New Testament

True and False Prophets

¹⁵ “Watch out for false prophets. They

come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.¹⁶ By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?¹⁷ Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.²⁰ Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.

△ Matthew 7:15-20, 11

²² For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

△ Mark 13:22

²⁹ I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.³⁰ Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

△ Acts 20:29-30

4 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.² Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.³ They forbid people to marry and order them to obtain from certain foods, which God

abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.

^ 1 Tim 4:1-3

3 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days.

^ 2 Tim 3:1

3 For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

^ 2 Tim 4:3-4

"Scoffers"

a strong derogatory term denoting mocking of religion or of the righteous

By attitude, word or deed

Three-fold application of the prophecy

These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.

^ v19

They divide you

They follow mere natural instincts

They do not have the Spirit

1. They divide you

By convincing other members of the fellowship they put a wedge between all

Therefore the unity that they should have in

Christ is lacking

And of course it does not make for a pleasant community if people constantly disagree with each other

2. They follow mere natural instincts

"Worldly people"

Christians should be in the world, but not of the world

By allowing themselves to be tempted by sinful behaviour they distance themselves from Christ

And make allegiance to world or even Satan

3. They do not have the Spirit

If they had the Spirit living in them, they would not behave in a way that is abhorrent to God for a long time

As the Spirit convicts us of our sin

"This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel

after that time," declares the Lord.

"I will put my law in their minds
and write it on their hearts.

I will be their God,

and they will be my people.

^ Jer 31:33

This happens because the Spirit of God lives within us

In Dunamis speak: This is the Spirit within

4 of 7 Exhortations

Jude now moves to the question:
what should they do?

As I said earlier we discuss here the

AS I SAID EARLIER WE DISCUSS HERE THE first four, for the other three you have to wait till next week!

They are:

Build yourselves up in your most holy faith

Pray in the Holy Spirit

Keep yourselves in God's love

Wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you eternal life

1. Build yourselves up in your most holy faith

Jude pictures the faithful Church as a temple where members are a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices to God

⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

^ 1 Peter 2:5

²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

^ Ephesians 2:20-22

It is a spiritual discipline to work on our

sanctification

Yes, the Holy Spirit living in us, will make us more like Christ, or how Christ wants us to be

But we have to co-operate

And listen to his voice in our hearts

Or the instructions in the bible

And obey those!

2. Pray in the Holy Spirit

In Dunamis speak this is the work of the Spirit Upon

Christians that have been baptised by the Spirit, experience the Spirit working through them

The spiritual gifts listed in 1 Cor 12:7-10

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, ¹⁰ to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.

And this praying in the Spirit refers to these gifts

It refers to prayer under the inspiration and control of the Holy Spirit

This may manifest itself by praying in tongues, but this is not necessary the case for everyone

Not for everyone as

¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

But it is being open to receive words of knowledge, wisdom, distinguishing of spirits, perhaps even prophecy

To shape the way that we pray

Therefore we do not pray our agenda, but God's agenda

This exhortation contrasts the church that is able to pray in this Spirit with the false teachers

They proclaim they have the Spirit, but that is not true

The Spirit does not live in them

3. Keep yourselves in God's love

This refers to God's love for us, not our love for God

⁹ “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love.

△ John 15:9-10

¹⁶ And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

△ 1 John 4:16

So our proper response to God is to remain in his love, by obeying him

The false teachers however, do not obey God

4. Wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you eternal life

Jude exhorts the fellowship to be patient for the second coming of Christ

It may relate to the 2nd coming (the parousia)

Which the early Christians felt was imminent

We may find that more difficult, as we are already waiting for two millenia, or how whole lives

But in principle the second coming is just as imminent for us as it was for them

As it could happen tomorrow!

It may also relate to our own end of life, where we will be taken into Christ's glory

But whatever, Jude also speaks about that as human beings we can be impatient

and develop our own theology or measures or new ways of believing

As the waiting is so long

Like the false teachers

But Jude exhorts to stick to what we have learned

Even though the world seems to change

Or that our patience grows thin

Patience itself is of course a fruit of the Spirit living in us

So if we lack it - pray for it!

Conclusion

We continue next week

Live our lives according to the will of God

But we now know that even though we have been forgiven by Jesus Christ

And are being saved

It is not an excuse to live the life our 'flesh' is desiring

With examples for the Old and New Testament, we know that God abhors that

So we should change our discipline to live according to how God wants us to live

And not as how the world things we ought to live

Yes, and if we get it wrong, Jesus will forgive us - if we ask him for forgiveness

How do we maintain that?

Build yourselves up in your most holy faith

Do not be satisfied with what you achieved but try to be more sanctified

Pray in the Holy Spirit

Pray according to God's will

Keep yourselves in God's love

Stay in the presence of God

Wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus
Christ to bring you eternal life

and be patient

Amen