

II Peter 2:17-22 (tx: Jude 12-16)

## THE FAITH-FORSAKERS IDENTIFIED (II)

III. Their character is corrupt

IV. Their condemnation is certain

## INTRODUCTION

Well, we have been studying **Jude**, starting several months ago, who calls us to contend for the faith.

- to fight for the truths of God's Word against all who twist them.
- so far we have seen how Jude is describing these faith-forsakers to warn us not to be deceived.
  - because they are so dangerous, for disguise themselves to like one of us to cause confusion & dissensions to lead us astray.
  - so Jude warn us to be alert & not be deceived by their disguises.”

We have seen then that **Jude** commands us Christians to fight for the faith.

- it is because we can be deceived by faith-forsakers who cleverly come among us to lead us away from God & His saving truths.
- & to warn us we have seen Jude calls us to remember the past.
  - how God acted against those who had rebelled against Him.
  - all to warn us of what will happen to us if we do the same.

Then, several months ago, we begin in **Jude 8** to consider his description of these apostates who sneak into the Church with their wickedness & wrong.

- & we looked at their sinful conduct: they defile their bodies, reject authority, ridicule the sacred.
- we also saw that puts them into the bad company of Cain & Baalim & Korah.
  - with those who rejected God's only true way of salvation & the way to eternal life.

But now we want to look at how **Jude** continues in vs. 12-16 to **IDENTIFY THE FAITH-FORSAKERS**.

- **1<sup>st</sup>** that their character is corrupt; & **2<sup>nd</sup>** their condemnation is certain.

## III. THEIR CHARACTER IS CORRUPT

Now, **Jude** uses many interesting allegories from nature to describe the **CORRUPT CHARACTER** of godless adversaries to the truth.

- **1<sup>st</sup>**, he says in vs.12: “They are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualms—shepherds who feed only themselves.”
- & the word, blemish, as IIPet.2 says, means a blot or dirt, a spot or stain that mars an appearance.

But change 1 letter & the word can also mean **hidden reefs, dangerous obstacles.**

- it refers then to sunken rocks on which ships can run aground & be wrecked.
- later this word became to mean spots on a stone.

Well, the point **Bible** is making is that apostates, with their evil & errors, are like hidden rocks or reefs in the Church upon which Christians can be destroyed.

- & they are like blots & blemishes in our midst.
- for, with their immorality, rejection of authority, animal-like behavior, & divisive work, they soil Christians gathering in their worship & love feasts & the like.

Now, in the early Church, Christians ate a common meal together in connection with their church service to show their brotherly love for one another.

- more particularly the love feasts were done with the partaking of the Lord's Supper.
- they were a fitting introduction or conclusion to the sacrament where they remembered & proclaimed God's saving love that binds us all together.

But now, **Jude** says these faith-forsakers had no hesitation, no scruples & shame to sit & eat with Christians at their fellowship meetings, even at the sacraments & **love feasts.**

- & they weren't just spectators sitting & looking on from the sidelines.
- but they boldly & brazenly came & mingled with Church members.
  - they were very active then in the life & worship & work of the Church.
  - they were very religious & regularly gathered with God's people in Bible study & prayer.
  - they even participated as shepherds or leaders to guide the Church.

But they are really dangerous & dirt-stained rocks seeking our destruction.

- they are in the Church only for themselves.
- for Jude says they are like "shepherds who feed only themselves".

Th'fore, faith-forsakers made a mockery of the early Church's gatherings & activities.

- they exerted a strong influence on how these were to be conducted.
- & in that way they perverted the sacraments & love feasts & the other meetings by using them to promote their own ends.
  - they made them a time to only satisfy their own evil, immoral desires.
  - to gratify their physical appetites & consuming, flaming lusts.

So those apostates were a disgrace & a blot on the Church as they acted selfishly with no real regard for Lord.

- or for the sacred meaning of worship & the sacraments.
- & they had no love or concern for others except to get people to support them.
  - to take all & to give nothings.

And the results were devastating in the early Church.

- as someone said: “What should have been a unique time of Christian fellowship & powerful witness to pagan neighbors they became instead an ugly sore in the Church.”
- people were led astray from God’s Word & will regarding proper conduct.
- th’fore, the love feast was eventually abandoned because of their abuse.

Now Bible says that’s the way it is with all false teachers in the Church, even today.

- they are like hidden, dangerous rocks & blemishes who seek our destruction.
- they infiltrate & use the Church’s worship & work to promote wickedness & wrong.
- & the consequences are the Church loses it real, loving fellowship & vital witness to the world.

Th’fore, we must ask ourselves this question:

- why & how do we worship Lord, fellowship with each other, & celebrate the sacraments in Church?
- do we just participate in the Church’s life to satisfy our own desires for prestige & prosperity?
- & what about our conduct when we get together as a Christian church, or as families, or as friends?
  - at weddings receptions, parties, & other social gatherings?
  - is it just to gratify our selfish, sinful cravings?

Could it be that by what we say & do, we are reefs upon which the Church & fellow Christians & other people are being destroyed?

- are we being blemishes & stumbling blocks that make our Christian witness ineffective in our neighborhoods & society, in our community & country?
  - or are our gatherings really Christ-centered & God-honoring & glorifying?
- & in that way the Church is strengthened, others are brought in to eternal life.
  - all because they see Jesus in us & that we really believe & obey & love Him.

Well, Jude continues, by using 4 other analogies from nature, to describe the true character of those who proclaim & practice evil & error, even in the Church.

- 1<sup>st</sup>, vs.12 says: “They are like clouds without rain”, & that symbolize deceit & deception.
- for faith-forsakers are like those big, black clouds that roll in, looking like they will give refreshing rain.
  - but they drift past without given a single drop of water.

That is to say, apostates are pretenders.

- they look good, claim nice things, & promise much.
- they do a lot of talking, say they have the answers for everything, the solution to all our problems & pain, & they promise us the world: real freedom, life, & happiness, as II Pt.2:19 says.

But they don’t really produce anything substantial or real or eternal.

- IIPt.2 says: “They appeal to the lustful desires of the human nature [to] entice people. They mouth empty, boastful words [of salvation & real living] while they themselves are slaves of depravity.”
- & so their beliefs & behavior are really false & destructive.

That’s because they are driven in every direction by every kind of doctrine & deeds that suit their fancy.

- they are really slaves of Satan & sin & their own selfish desires so that they have no real purpose.
- they are then useless & unstable, whose ways are stormy, & only bring harm spiritually & eternally.

Th’fore, our **text** says apostates are also like “autumn trees without fruit, uprooted—twice dead.”

- that symbolizes utter uselessness, unproductively, profitlessness.
- you see, they are like trees in the harvest season which are supposed to produce fruit, but don’t.
  - so to the farmer these trees are 1<sup>st</sup> dead because they are useless & fruitless.
  - then they are 2<sup>nd</sup> dead because he uproots them so they can’t ever produce again.
  - they are then twice or totally dead.

Well, **Bible** says, that’s the way it is with those who forsake God’s Word & will for falsehood & filth.

- with all their talk & promises, they still don’t produce real, spiritual, eternal fruit for genuine joy-filled, peace-filled, secure living.
- that’s because they aren’t rooted in God’s Word that only brings real life.
  - they are far from Lord without Holy Spirit, the only authentic Source & Giver of life.

And so they are twice dead.

- completely spiritually dead without Jesus Christ as their only Savior & Lord.
- & they will be eternally dead in hell itself, which Rev.21 calls the 2<sup>nd</sup> death.

All their fine words & works then are a lot of wind & motion.

- they are just a nice, outward sound & show.
- th’fore, they only have useless, false lives cut off from God which means eternal death, as Jo.14 says.

Then too, **Jude** tells us that the faith-forsakers are morally “like the wild waves of the sea, foaming up shame.”

- & that’s the Scripture’s way to describe the troubled, terrible life of a sinner.
  - they are like a restless sea with its relentless waves.
- Isa.57:20 says: “But the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mud.”

And, if you have ever walked along the shore of a polluted lake or on the beach of an ocean after a storm, you can understand what **Jude & Isaiah** are saying.

- for the water is foul & stinking; there are deposits of foam & scum & debris on the beach.
- the shore is littered with unsightly & unlovely trash.

Now our **text** says that's the picture of the ugly, useless, character & conduct of apostates.

- with wicked hearts & lives they are like a troubled, storm-tossed sea.
- they are always foaming with shameful, sinful words & works.
  - they pour out false beliefs, stir up filthy behavior against Lord & the truth.
- they are always sinning so really their lives are miserable & chaotic as they relentlessly & restlessly they seek to passionately gratify their burning lusts.

But, too, like a raging sea, their terrible beliefs & practices are forceful & untamed.

- they affect & hurt those around them.
- that's why we must stay as far away from their polluted words & deeds as we can.
  - just like we must stand far away on a seashore to avoid its spray & the pull of the waves.

Then **Jude 13** adds another characteristic of faith-forsakers: that they are like "wandering stars, for whom the blackest darkness has been reserved forever".

- well, as you know, there some planets & stars that wander through the sky, like meteors or shooting stars that sudden flash through the heavens & then disappear in darkness.
- those, of course, we can't rely on for navigational purposes, can we?
  - for we can't find them & set the right direction & course to go by.

Now, **Jude** warns that's the way it is regarding the promoters of evil & error.

- they are like erratic, wandering stars that rise & fall.
- for awhile they look like a true light & are bright for a brief time so that they attract & appeal to many.

But sooner or later their light goes out & fades away because they are false.

- they are constantly shifting positions & practices to suit themselves & to gain other.
- that's because they have not a real way to follow when they are without God & His Word.

And so by what apostates say & do we can't chart a straight path for genuine salvation & life.

- for to follow their words & works only leads to the darkness of horrible slavery & misery.
- & eventually, with them, we will end up in the absolute, blackest darkness & oblivion of all—hell!

Th'fore, Christians, must recognize the true & terrible character & conduct of those who forsake the faith.

- be aware of those who come with a Bible in their hands, with pious words that seem so correct on the surface.
  - but they are really proclaiming wrong beliefs, as today's cults.
- that's because they are empty & useless with no real light & life.
  - for they have rejected God's Word & Jesus Christ, as God Himself & a real man, the only true Light & Way to eternal life.
- they are like wandering stars that can't guide us to Lord & life forevermore.

But now, **Jude** sums up the true character of faith-forsakers in vs.16&19.

- he says: "They are grumblers & faultfinders."
- they like fallen angels discontented with their God-given place.
  - like Israel discontented with God's care; like Korah with God's Mediator, Moses.
  - like Cain they are discontented with God's way of sacrifice & salvation.
  - & like Baalim discontented with God's Word & will.
- all those wanted their own way, be their own god, gain all the glory so they rebelled against the Lord.

Well, that's what all apostates are: they find fault with their lot.

- they aren't content with the place God has given them in life.
- they grumble & complain & hurl criticisms against Him.
- they are dissatisfied with His Word & ways.

Instead, vs.16&18 say: "Follow their own ungodly, evil desires."

- they constantly seek their own satisfaction, are enslaved by their sinful cravings, & commit all kinds of ungodly acts.
  - that's because they can never get enough pleasures & possessions.
- & so they are unable to be truly & totally content, for Bible says: "Without godliness there is no real contentment."

Vs.16 also says faith-forsakers "boast about themselves".

- it really says: "Their mouths speak haughty words" as they speak seemly beautiful words, talk eloquently & arrogantly about everything, especially about themselves.
- & they promise real, free, exciting living if you follow them.

Th'fore, **Jude** states they do that "to flatter others for their own advantage."

- they play up to people to deceive them & seduce the unwary.
- they water down the truths of Scripture in the pulpits & the pews to please people & get their praises.

But again, when it comes down to it, their talk & walk are empty & erroneous.

- for IIPt.2 says they have forsaken Lord & the Word of life so they are dirty with evil.
  - they are like a sick dog eating their own vomit, & a pig wallowing in mud.
- all their nice words & pious promises are just a lot of noise like a dog's bark & a pig's squeal.

And **Jude 19** says these apostates also “divide you” or cause dissensions in the ranks.

- they elevate themselves above others as being the spiritually elite with greater & higher knowledge.
  - they claim they are so superior religiously in their doctrines & deeds.
- & in that way they bring factions into the Church to separate Christians from the fellowship of believers.

But **Jude** says they aren't so spiritual for “they follow their own, mere natural instincts”.

- & so they may claim they are so spiritual & morally free.
- but Bible states in vs.19 these godless people really “do not have the Spirit at all”.

Th'fore, the conclusion to the whole matter is this: faith-forsakers are really worldly.

- they live only for the material & temporal, & not in & by & for the Spirit.
- they then are in no conceivable way Christians at all, & have no real place in the Church!
  - for Rom.8 says if you don't have HSpirit, you don't belong to Jesus Christ.

#### IV. THEIR CONDEMNATION IS CERTAIN

And so **Jude 14&15** point out the end of these faith-forsakers is **CERTAIN CONDEMNATION.**

- their wrong words & wicked ways will only bring divine judgment & punishment.
- & Jude points to past history to show this will surely happen.
  - he says: “Enoch, the 7<sup>th</sup> from Adam, prophesied about [them].”

Now here again we learn from **Jude** an interesting fact of history we would never know if he hadn't recorded it.

- he tells us Enoch was God's prophet.
- & in case we don't know who this Enoch was, he adds: “The one 7 generations from Adam.”
  - he does that to identify him as that ancient Christian who lived before the flood.

Th'fore, this is the **Enoch** mentioned in **Gen.5 & Heb.11** who walked so close to God that 1 day he walked so far that he never came back.

- he just kept on walking right into heaven without dying to be with Lord.
- now the fact Jude says Enoch was the 7<sup>th</sup> generation from Adam shows God's prophecy regarding the destruction of faith-forsakers is a very old one.
  - it goes back even before the flood, from almost the very time sin entered the world.

Well then, **Jude 14** says already way back in history **Enoch** prophesied to the ungodly people of his day that God would punish them for their sins.

- & He eventually did—with the flood.
- the greatest evidence of divine judgment & punishment of sin until Christ returns & there is the final judgment & punishment.

Now it is also interesting to note that **Enoch's** prophecy of divine punishment may have come through the name he gave his son: the name **Methuselah**.

- Genesis says Enoch gave birth to Methuselah when he was 65.
- then he walked with God 300 years in an even closer fellowship with Him.

Well, why did **Enoch** walk closer to God after **Methuselah's** birth?

- the answer can be seen in the fact Methuselah means “when he is dead, it shall be sent”.
- that means, when Methuselah was born, God revealed by that name, when Methuselah died, the earth would be destroyed for its sin.

So **Enoch** walked even closer to Lord when he heard that.

- for after all, the time was so short; the world would be destroyed, as we know it was by the flood.
- nothing else then matter or was as important as serving God.

You see, **Bible** says the greatest reason to believe in Lord & live in obedience to Him is because the end near.

- because Jesus' return & the final judgment & destruction of unbelievers are coming soon.

But, as we know, the people rejected **Enoch's** warning, even when 1 day he was no more.

- wickedness increased, & for 969 years of Methuselah's life & as Noah also prophesied, God patiently & mercifully held off His punishment.
  - He did it to give people the opportunity to believe & obey & be saved.
- but they ridiculed & refused Noah's call to repentance & righteousness, so that finally they were destroyed by the flood.

Now **Jude 14&15** says **Enoch** didn't just predict the coming of divine punishment to the people of his day.

- this is also a prophecy of Christ's coming to punish all those who forsake the faith in Jude's day, & in our day too.
- to all these Enoch still proclaims, Jude says: “See, Lord is coming with 1000s upon 1000s of his holy ones to judge everyone, & to convict all the ungodly [for] the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, & [for] all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

So certain is this going to happen that **Enoch & Jude** recorded it as an event that has already happened.

- the Greek actually says God came, not will come, in judgment—it's a done deal.
- in other words, God will surely come to punish all faith-forsakers as He said through His prophets.
  - & His Word is eternal & unchangeable so that it always comes true.
- & He sure did come in judgment with the coming of the flood & with Jesus' 1<sup>st</sup> coming.



And because He did, we can be certain His Word will come true about Jesus' 2<sup>nd</sup> coming to judge all & punish all the ungodly.

- for again, that's what Lord says through Enoch, His other prophets, the NT. apostles, & His Word even though the delay may seem so long that we begin to wonder.
  - & people feel so secure in their sin.
- yet Enoch says God came & is coming to judge with 1000s of His holy ones.
  - that is to say Christ will return with a huge host of angels & departed believers, as Matt.25, Col.3, IThes.3 all say.

He will come again to judge & reward each & every person.

- all will stand before Him to give an account of every thought, word, & deed.
- & those who believe & belong to Jesus will receive eternal glory.
- while the ungodly will be condemned to eternal death because of their unbelief & evil behavior.

## CONCLUSION

That's the true character & sure condemnation of all faith-forsakers.

- so Bible warns & commands us to recognize & resist them.
- to stand fast & firm in the faith & in all the truths of Scripture.

Th'fore, **Christian**, chosen, called, loved, kept by Lord, as **Jude** calls us, we must remain faithful in love for Him & live His Word & will only.

- do not be destructive rocks, but stepping stones to the only Savior.
- do not be waterless, wind-driven clouds, but in Christ sources of living water.
- do not be dead trees, but fruitful vines filled with H Spirit, producing lives of holiness, honesty, love, peace, joy, justice, & all the rest.
- do not be wandering stars, but shining lights so people can chart their live according to our message & manner of living for Lord.
  - all so they & we will find true peace & joy, & life everlasting.

AMEN