



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Commit Yourself to Spiritual Maturity (Jude 17-25)

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BIBLE STUDY

JUDE

Location:

122 CAP

Time:

2ND TUESDAYS (MONTHLY) @ NOON

Jude 17-25

“Commit Yourself to Spiritual Maturity”

Introduction

When concerts are held in large auditoriums, the “riggers” are the individuals who walk the rafter beams, which are often a hundred feet above the concrete floor, to secure the sound speakers and spotlights. They often confess that they are not bothered by the height. What they do not like is working in auditoriums that have false ceilings consisting of acoustical tile, which is only a couple feet below the rafters. The tile gives the workers a false sense of security because if they slipped they would fall through the flimsy tile. They do not like the deceptive look because it lulls them into being careless.

The enemy of our soul uses similar tactics by making dangerous things appear safe. The enemy does not seek to scare us to death, but gives a false sense of security that the danger of a spiritual fall is only minimal. For this reason, 1 Peter 5:9 exhorts believers to be firm in their faith. God’s Word has already exhorted us to be courageous by persevering with divine provision and revelation (vv. 1-4), and by remembering the biblical past and the prophecies (vv. 5-16). Verses 17-25 exhort us with regard to protecting ourselves by commitment to spiritual maturity through studying Scripture, praying in God’s power, abiding in God’s love by obedience, and expectant waiting.

BE COMMITTED TO REMAIN AND RESCUE

(vv. 17-23) Verses 17-19 remind us to remember the past warnings and prophetic announcements. Having warned us to recognize those who threaten the Christian faith (vv. 5-16), we are now exhorted positively to motivate us to persevere faithfully in spite of the spiritual dangers that we may encounter. Whereas the Epistle of Jude began with a passionate denunciation of apostates, the last verses

(vv. 17-23) provide loving encouragement and guidance to believers even amid apostasy.

... WE ARE NOW EXHORTED POSITIVELY TO MOTIVATE US TO PERSEVERE FAITHFULLY...

Verses 20-21 exhort those of us who are believing/trusting in the Lord Jesus for salvation to remain constant in our pursuit of sanctification (from the Hebrew and Greek, to be sanctified is “to be set apart” from common use, i.e. “to be made holy”). The nature of sanctification is twofold: (1) believers are made holy by grace through faith in Christ; and (2) believers continue to mature in and strive for holiness by obeying the indwelling Holy Spirit (by studying and heeding God’s Word; cf. John 14:23-26 and Eph 1:13-21) until we experience ultimate conformity to Christ (viz. glorification).

Verse 20 (cf. v. 3) instructs us explicitly to study God’s Word so that we are able to gain discernment and wisdom in our faith, and the process will be spiritual strength for encountering the challenges of life. Secondly, we are to pray, knowing that the Holy Spirit enables our prayers (cf. Rom 8). We should pray that God will sustain us so that our attitudes will be glorifying to Him, and that our memory of Scripture will cause us to live its truths, as is pleasing to our Savior.

... STUDY GOD’S WORD SO THAT WE ARE ABLE TO GAIN DISCERNMENT AND WISDOM IN OUR FAITH, AND THE PROCESS WILL BE SPIRITUAL STRENGTH...

Verse 21 commands us to keep ourselves “in the love of God.” The instruction here is abide in and obey God’s Word. Do not be a prodigal who abandons the blessings of God’s love (cf. Luke 15:11-32). We are also exhorted to be “waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.” “Waiting” is an action verb, which means we are to live with expectancy (in the same manner as one would be prepared for a special guest until they actually arrive). The three exhortations in verses 20-21 (build yourself; pray; keep yourself) are foundational for “contending earnestly for the faith,” and also cause us to have good expectation with regard to the outcome, as we expectantly await the Lord’s arrival.

Verses 22-23 instruct us to rescue as many apostates as possible. If the church is to survive, believers must be engaged in this spiritual battle. Believers are instructed to engage three different kinds of individuals who are associated with apostasy. *First*, we are to exercise mercy in the attempt to rescue those “who are doubting” (i.e. confused with regard to the biblical faith). If you have been “building” yourself upon “your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit” (v. 20), your merciful response will be beneficial.

CAPITOL COMMISSION (INTERIM) BIBLE STUDIES

SECOND TUESDAYS OF THE MONTH @ NOON, 122 CAP (open to the entire Capitol community)

The language that Scripture uses may cause you to think in terms of a fireman, which would be appropriate. There are individuals who are near the fire, and even fascinated by it, yet they are in danger as they move closer to that which will ruin them. In mercy, believers are instructed to give warning with regard to the dangers that are inherent in their fascination. Do you know someone like this who could use your merciful warning in his/her life? Do not be fearful to speak the truth of God's Word in love (Eph 4:15)!

DO NOT BE FEARFUL TO SPEAK THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD IN LOVE (EPH 4:15)!

Second, we are to courageously rescue those who are dabbling in sinful actions and thoughts. There is no warning with these individuals because they are *in* the fire and need to be snatched from it. Just as in real life, you do not worry with regard to being tactful when rescuing someone from fire. Emergency situations demand emergency responses, and may even cause you to experience pain in the process. However, the effort is certainly worthwhile.

YOUR DEFENSE IS TO BE CONSTANT IN YOUR PURSUIT OF SANCTIFICATION. . . . LIVING IN FAITH AND OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD IS YOUR MEANS FOR REMAINING PURE.

Third, we are to cautiously rescue those who are deceiving themselves by their polluted religion. Such individuals are not only *in* the fire, but also *on* fire; hence, the warning to believers not to become contaminated like those they are seeking to rescue. Your defense is to be constant in your pursuit of sanctification (vv. 20-21). Living in faith and obedience to God's Word is your means for remaining pure.

BE UNDERSTANDING WITH REGARD TO APOSTASY

According to English dictionaries, the meaning of apostasy is to abandon one's religious or other faith. In the Greek New Testament, there are two words for apostasy. The noun *apostasía* is a compound word (*apo*, "from," and *istēmi*, "to stand") meaning religious abandonment, or "to stand from" religious teachings in the sense of not affirming fundamental beliefs (cf. Josh 22:22; 2 Chron 29:19; 1 Macc 2:15; Acts 21:21; 2 Thess 2:3). The verb *piptō* is translated "fall," which means "to fall" from faith in the moral or religious sense (cf. Prov 11:28; Rom 11:11, 22; 1 Cor 10:12; Heb 4:11). The New Testament prophesies a trend toward apostasy within the professing church that culminates at the end of the age.

Not all persecution of the church will come from those directly opposed to Christianity. There are major biblical passages that address the subject of apostasy, which is a challenge to Bible teachers to communicate the plain truth that the end of the age will be characterized by apostasy (cf. Matt 24:4-26; 2 Thess 2:1-12; 1 Tim 4:1-3; 2 Tim 3:1-9; 4:3-4; 2 Pet 2:1—3:18; Jude 3-19; Rev 3:14-16; 6:1—19:21). Some of the characteristics of the end of the age include a denial of the following: God (Luke 17:26; 2 Tim 3:4-5); Christ (1

John 2:18; 4:3; 2 Pet 2:6); the second coming (2 Pet 3:3-4); *the* faith (i.e. cardinal doctrines of Christianity) (1 Tim 4:1-2; Jude 3-4); sound doctrine (2 Tim 4:3-4); morality (2 Tim 3:1-8, 13; Jude 18); Christian liberty (1 Tim 4:3-4); and, authority (2 Tim 3:4).

The New Testament prophesies of a progression of heterodoxy (false doctrine) and heteropraxy (false practice) at the end of the age among the professing church (which is logical since false, unbiblical doctrine and practice are inseparable). Therefore, continual warnings are given to the true church to be discerning against doctrinal apostasy from false teachings within the church. These false teachers will seek influence within the church but they will not actually be regenerate. The manifestation of characteristics that belong to those who are not saved (unregenerate) may occur among those who profess "a form of godliness" (2 Tim 3:1-5). Having denied the power of the blood of Christ (cf. 2 Tim 3:5 with Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 1:23-24; 2 Tim 4:2-4), the indication is that those who have a form of righteousness will be unregenerate individuals from whom nothing spiritual can proceed (cf. Jer 13:23; John 6:44-45; 1 Cor 2:14; 2 Cor 4:3-4). During these "last days" (i.e. the time between the first coming and second coming of Messiah), the true church will be preserved in holiness by the grace of God (Eph 5:25-27).

BE COMMITTED TO GOD'S REASSURANCE

(*vv. 24-25*) The reason we are to remain pursuing a life of being sanctified and to rescue as many apostates as possible is based upon the reassurance that the end of our lifetime of spiritual warfare will be rewarded. The reason we will be rewarded for perseverance is because God is faithful to His people. Therefore, the last verses of Jude are a doxology that praises God's faithfulness to His people.

THE REASON WE WILL BE REWARDED FOR PERSEVERANCE IS BECAUSE GOD IS FAITHFUL TO HIS PEOPLE.

Although the majority of Jude is focused upon those who fell into apostasy (viz. angels who fell, false teachers who fell, and others), believers are instructed to try to rescue as many of these people as possible. There is no reason to be a spiritual coward because God "is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy" (v. 24). We certainly do not need to know anymore to survive bravely in any environment of real dangers and hazards. God cares most deeply with regard to our life commitments. *If I may help you in your commitment to spiritual maturity, please let me know, as this is why the ministry of Capitol Commission exists.*

ABOUT CAPITOL COMMISSION

Capitol Commission state directors are pastors/missionaries who teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for legislators, lobbyists, and staff members. These Bible studies are hand-distributed to each legislative office, emailed, and made available throughout the Capitol community. The love and grace of God compels us to proclaim the truth of the Gospel with compassion for the Capitol community, to faithfully teach and apply the Word of God, and to build meaningful relationships that bear fruit for an eternity to come. With the Bible as our foundation and authority, the mission of Capitol Commission is obedience to the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) within the Capitol communities of the world. We are not a lobbying group attempting to garner votes or reform society. Our mandate is to see the hearts and lives of elected officials transformed with the Word of God. Capitol Commission is a ministry of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message, and to help believers mature through the verse-by-verse teaching of Scripture. In the Bible, we see God's great love for the world, especially for those who have been placed in authority. This is the foundation for our ministry to you. The church is instructed to submit and to honor government leaders (Rom 13:1-7), and to pray for their eternal salvation (1 Tim 2:1-4). The desire of Capitol Commission is to witness God transform the hearts and lives of elected officials, lobbyists, and staff members. We apply this mandate to four major areas of making disciples: (1) *evangelize* those who have not experienced saving faith in Jesus Christ; (2) *establish* those who desire to grow in their faith and knowledge of Scripture; (3) *equip* those called to spiritual leadership; and, (4) *encourage* churches to participate with us in ministry.