



A Systematic Expository Study on the General Epistle of JUDE

STUDY 5: CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY AMIDST PREVAILING APOSTASY

Jude 17-23

Having recounted the historic judgement of the past apostates, followed by the description and the fate of modern apostates, Jude goes on to outline the proper defense of the believers in the face of such evil apostates.

The Christian has great responsibility amidst prevailing apostasy. Apart from earnestly contending for the faith or rather as part of it, the believers have the responsibility to remember the warning of inscripturated revelation about the rise of the apostasy and the spiritual condition of the apostates (Jude 17-19); to develop themselves in every area of their life (Jude 20-21); to make a distinction between committed apostates and deceived apostates, seeking to win the victimized subjects of the false teaching (Jude 22) and to have a saving attitude towards the lost (Jude 23).

Though the believers are not to tolerate false teaching and error, they were to show mercy on those who deviate from Christian doctrine and attempt to rescue them and also reach out in active evangelism to those who are yet in the regions of darkness.

REMEMBRANCE OF DIVINE SCRIPTURE

Jude 17-19; 2 Peter 3:1-10; 1:12-15; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:1-9; 4:3,4; Jude 4,5; Exodus 13:3; 20:8; Numbers 15:39,40; Joshua 1:13; Psalm 103:17,18; 119:9,11; John 15:20; Acts 20:31,35; Hebrews 2:1-3; Deuteronomy 4:9; 6:10-12; 8:11; 1 Timothy 4:6.

Man is prone to forgetting even the most important things in life but the scriptures enjoin us time and again to remember. There must be a conscious effort made at remembrance. If we forget we will fall into hurtful lusts, into traps set by the enemy and make a shipwreck of the faith. It is necessary to remember if we are to live holy lives and walk in the path of God's choosing and do according to His bidding.

However what are we to remember? What is the nature of our remembrance? We should remember the words that were spoken by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are not just to remember the mere words which are only skeletons but the essence of the words, their spiritual content and eternal implications. The essence is that separatists, sensualists, mockers will come in the last time (end time) walking after their own ungodly lusts — despising the cross of Christ, ridiculing the saints of God, holding in derision all that savours of godliness. The believers are exhorted to have an awareness of the prevailing apostasy.

These mockers are devoid of God's Spirit, they are individualists hating all that is corporate worship, they sever and distance themselves from God's children. They cause rancour and division in the church.

RESPONSIBILITY TO DEVELOP SELF

Jude 20-21; 2 Corinthians 9:10; Ephesians 4:15; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:10; Colossians 1:10; Hebrews 6:1; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 1:5-11; 3:18; 1 Chronicles 16:11; Matthew 26:41 Luke 18:1; Ephesians 6:18; Romans 8:26; 2 Timothy 1:14; Romans 8:35-39; 1 John 3:3; Hebrews 12:15; 2 Peter 3:13,14; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Colossians 4:2; Philippians 4:6; James 5:13

In relationship to themselves, the believers were responsible to develop themselves. They were to do four things: (1) to fortify themselves in doctrinal orthodoxy; (2) to pray in the Spirit; (3) to keep themselves in the love of God; (4) and to look for Christ's coming.

This is basically an exhortation to the believers to maintain the right spiritual attitude and consequently build up their own spiritual life as the grand security against apostasy. The building implies a various and skillful use of the materials necessary to that end : regular attendance at fellowships, personal effort in Bible reading and study, mutual exhortation amidst believers (Malachi 3:16; 2 Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 3:13; 10:25). We are to grow in grace and grow up in Christ in all things, adding to faith all the virtues. True prayer is a glorious resource we have in building up our spiritual life. Our preservation in the midst of heresy and apostasy depends on our dwelling in God's love. We cannot keep ourselves in God's love without having our own love deeply stirred. God's love is our safeguard against seduction and it is linked to the expectation of Christ's return. He that has this glorious hope of Christ's return will purify himself and remain in God's love.

RESPONSIBILITY TO DECEIVED SAINTS

Jude 22; Acts 20:35; Romans 14:1; 15:1; Galatians 6:1,2; Colossians 3:12; Hebrews 13:3; 1 Corinthians 9:22; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; James 5:19,20; Luke 22:30-32; Hosea 6:1-3; 2 Timothy 2:25,26; 1 Corinthians 5:1-7; 6:1-10.

The believers are exhorted to have a saving attitude toward the deceived. We must be discriminating in our dealings with people. Our attitude towards those whose gullibility has lead them astray into error should be that of compassion. We should seek to win back to the fold those who were formerly believers but are presently victims of false teaching, restore the prodigal son that has gone away from the Father's love into the far country of sin and degradation.

Many of the deceived have fallen through ignorance and blinded zeal, instability and argumentative attitude. Their minds are restless and they are entangled with doubts. They are to be regarded as fit objects for considerate, pitiful treatment. Wisdom is needed in dealing with the fallen and deceived. Some will be won by love who will be repelled by severity. We are to restore the fallen in the spirit of meekness.

RESPONSIBILITY TO DAMNED SINNERS

Jude 23; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; Proverbs 11:30; Daniel 12:3; Luke 19:13; 14:23; Romans 1:14; 10:9-15; Ezekiel 3:17-21; 33:7-9; James 1:27; 1 Peter 2:11,12; Galatians 2:17; 1 Corinthians 9:16-27.

Though amidst prevailing apostasy the believers were not supposed to withdraw to their cocoons suffocating with idleness, they were to have an evangelical vision, an impassioned zeal to save the lost. While abhorring sin, they were to rescue the perishing (James 1:27; 11,12; Jude 23).

Believers who enjoy the blessing of mercy from Christ are required to show mercy to others. You have been saved to serve so that others also can be saved. If the corrupt, the erring and the sinful are neglected by the followers of Christ, how can they be warned, saved and preserved from the coming judgement? They are to be snatched like a half-burnt brand from the fire lest they be entirely lost and consumed. The promptness of our action may save them from the extremity of danger and eternal peril. When last did you speak of Christ to a lost soul? When last did you compel sinners to come into the kingdom? The harvest is ripe and plenteous, only foolish sons sleep at harvest time (Matthew 9:36-38; 20:1; John 4:35-38; Proverbs 10:5).

*If you are blessed by these bible study outlines, we'd like to hear from you.
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