

**Text:** Jude 17-19

**Title:** Remember the Teaching

**Truth:** One of the primary ways to contend for the faith is to remember what you were taught from Scripture.

**Date/Location:** Sunday February 1, 2015

## **Introduction**

With our Bibles open before us, we need to let our eyes rove back to verses 3 and 4, where Jude states his purpose in writing and the reason for his writing. First, his purpose is to get the readers to contend earnestly for the faith. Second, his reason for doing so is that certain ungodly people have crept into the church and threaten to cause great damage in the lives of the believers.

Jude then expanded on the second of these ideas in verses 5-16 and gives a detailed description of false teachers. Just like the police would like you to give an accurate description of a thief or other criminal that you observed, so Jude gives a lot of characteristics that guide us to be able to determine who is an ungodly “creep.” You will know them by their fruits, as our Lord said (Matthew 7:20). I have attempted not to pigeon-hole these people as false teachers or apostates only, but more generally as ungodly types. I do not believe one has to be in the role of teacher to fit many of the descriptions that Jude gives.

Finally at verse 17 Jude returns to the first of his important statements, and tells us more about what it means to contend for the faith. He tells us to remember apostolic teaching. He tells us to build each other up in the faith, to keep on praying, persevering, and looking for the coming mercy of Christ. He also tells us to proclaim the good news of Jesus so as to save some people from eternal fire. The task is difficult and dangerous, but God is able to protect you and present you faultless before His throne.

Observe that verse 17 starts out with “but you” as does verse 20. Jude’s focus now is not on “these” ungodly men, but on “you.”

## **I. Remember Apostolic Teaching, v. 17**

A. The apostles were the special designates of our Lord Himself. Jesus sent out the 11 + Matthias + Paul as specially commissioned preachers. What they spoke is uniquely significant in history and especially authoritative for the church age in which we find ourselves today. They have continuing binding authority. The apostles were eyewitnesses of Jesus’ ministry from his baptism forward to his crucifixion and resurrection and

ascension (Acts 1:21-22). The apostles worked miracles as authenticating signs to prove that they were from God (2 Cor. 12:12).

- B. The readers are exhorted to *remember*. This is a command, and it necessitates that we have access to what the apostles said and that we know that material.
  - 1. We have access to them in the New Testament Scriptures. No one has an excuse in that regard, not at least in the vast majority of the world. Granted, there are languages into which the Bible needs to be translated, but that is not a problem for us in English.
  - 2. The problem for us is that we are often too lazy to know the Scriptures that are easily available to us. If we don't know them, we will not remember them in times of need! And knowing/remembering is crucial to contending for the faith.
- C. We are to remember the *words* of the apostles. Here's a little plug for knowing the Bible specifically, as in memorizing it. We must acknowledge that the words have an important standing. God communicated to us through *words*. The words are His words. They are not to be messed with or added to or subtracted from. We believe in *verbal* inspiration—that God breathed out the very words of Scripture.

## **II. Specifically, Remember Their Message About Ungodly Mockers, v. 18**

- A. *Mockers* are described with other words and phrases like: deride, show contempt, ridicule, scorn, make fun of, trick, and deceive. Obviously the object of their scorn is God and His truth and His people. In short, they hate the faith once-for-all delivered to the saints and want to get rid of it.
- B. Mockers were predicted for the last days. Where did the apostles say things like this? 2 Peter 3:3 is from the pen of an apostle, and it says that in the last days scoffers will come, ridiculing the things of God and walking after their own lusts. They deny the second coming of Christ; they deny that God has ever intervened in history, or that God exists at all. While this is the only specific Scriptural reference that we have to the idea of mockers in the last time, this message was undoubtedly prevalent in the teaching of all the apostles. Other passages like 2 Timothy 3:1-9 and 1 Timothy 4:1-5 fit in here too.
- C. We are in the last time. 1 John 2:18 warns us about this, and if they were in the last time at the end of the first century, we are even moreso today.

- D. The ungodly walk according their own ungodly lusts. Whatever they want to do, opposed to God as it is, they go ahead and do. Their lusts are impious, meaning that they live entirely opposite to the standard of God.
- E. You can hear the mocking scorn all around if you just listen, and see the ungodly lusts if you just have eyes to see.
- F. Note that Scripture says God will not ultimately be mocked. That's because what a man sows in mocking, he will reap in results later (Galatians 6:7). Sow the wind, reap the whirlwind (Hosea 8:7). Sow righteousness, reap in mercy and steadfast love (Hosea 10:12). This principle or "law" of sowing and reaping must be important in our minds. God is just. Justice may not be done in every case today in our cursed world, but it will be done ultimately. Thankfully God is also merciful, and can be so because His retributive justice was poured out upon Jesus Christ. All who acknowledge Him as risen Lord and Savior enter into the benefit of having their sins forgiven so they can escape 'pure justice' and receive mercy.

### III. More About the Ungodly Apostates, v. 19

The apostolic teaching goes further and reminds us that these ungodly people are:

- A. **Divisive.** This word occurs first in the Greek text (NKJV has it second). The word means to divide or separate, particularly people from one another and from the truth. This is one of seven things God calls out as especially hate-worthy in Proverbs 6:16-19.
- B. **Sensual.** This does not mean *only* that they are sexually immoral or perverted. It means that, to be sure, but it is more than that. They "run" on things that are fleshly, worldly, and have to do with nature instead of those things that have to do with the Holy Spirit. They are "psu-ki-ka'y," that is, all about the soulish or animal nature. From this word we get "psychic."

This word "soulish" is a real attack on those who believed the Gnostic heresies. While the full-blown form of heresy did not exist until some years later in the second century, early forms or variations were around during Jude's day. In fact, it was not a single religion per se, but a collection of religions. Gnostics taught that through gnosis or knowledge (enlightenment) one could escape the material world and be part of the spiritual realm. Material and flesh were seen as the antithesis of the spirit realm and were to be shunned, through giving away material

possessions, poverty, celibacy, and other ascetic behaviors. There were three types of people according to their belief system:

1. Hylics or somatics. These were the lowest of the three types of humans, bound by matter in their soma or body. They might be those who listened to the Gnostic-type teaching, but did not live it.
2. Then there was the second level, the “psychic” types. These were people who still dwelt in matter or physical bodies, but were enlightened to some extent.
3. Those who were fully initiated were called “pneumatics” who were immaterial, free of matter. This was the highest state of existence for a human and is what the true gnostics strove to achieve.

Jude says that the apostate, ungodly, false teachers are indeed psychic—soulless, like mere brutes. Remember that they are like brutish animals as it says in verse 10. They are driven by that which is worldly.

What about modern ‘psychics’? The origin of the term and its religious associations say something about where they are spiritually. Christians should have *nothing* to do with psychics and card/palm readers, séances, and the like. These are all part of the darkness of this world, the fleshly and brute animalistic components of life.

This three-fold division of humanity seems parallel to the three-fold division some Christian teachers promote—that there are people in the flesh (#1), carnal Christians (#2), and spiritual Christians (#3). The reality is there are only two kinds—Romans 8:8-9. There are those who are in the flesh, and there are those who have the Spirit. There is no middle ground, no in-between state, no sort-of-OK person. You either are saved or you aren't. If you are riding the fence, make a decision to follow the Lord for real!

- C. These ungodly people are **devoid of the Spirit**. That is, they are definitely *not* pneumatic in the Christian sense! Correlate this passage carefully with Romans 8:9. The presence of the Spirit marks a saved person. No Spirit? No salvation. The Spirit is present? Then yes, there is salvation.

## Conclusion

Despite the last verse, the focus of Jude’s teaching is on “you” and not “them.” We are to recognize the false believers, and remember what we have been taught. There should be no surprise about mockers. They are a God-predicted reality and we have to deal with them.