

Commentary on Jude 17-25

By L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Series*) for **Sunday, April 10 , 2011**, is from **Jude 17-25**. Five **Questions for Discussion** follow the *Bible Lesson Commentary* below.

Jude 17-25

17 But you, beloved, must remember the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Jude calls us to think about the predictions and prophecies in the Bible, especially the predictions of the apostles as they travelled with Jesus and learned from Him the prophecies He would fulfill in His first coming and those He would fulfill in His second coming. We need to be watching what is happening in our world today and consider the predictions in the Bible as we make ready for the Lord's return.

18 for they said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, indulging their own ungodly lusts."

What we know as selfish, self-centered, self-indulgent, sinful worldly pleasures Jude labels "ungodly lusts." Those who are motivated to indulge these ungodly lusts scoff at God, at the Bible, at Bible-believing Christians, whether Christians try to encourage them and offer to help them change their behavior or not. As the second coming of Jesus Christ draws near, such ridicule and scoffing by unbelievers will increase in volume and intensity, often leading to persecution. Moreover, such scoffers will develop their own belief system or theology or adopt an established one or find a church that will enable them to live an ungodly life, harden their conscience, and disregard the truth of God.

19 It is these worldly people, devoid of the Spirit, who are causing divisions.

Unfortunately, Jude needed to recognize and warn people about situations we also know of by experience today. In the church, we find worldly people who do not follow Jesus Christ and His teachings, people who do not believe the Bible is the infallible word of God (without error in all that the Bible affirms). These people are not indwelt by the Holy Spirit; indeed, they actually call God a liar when they reject the Bible's clear and consistent teachings on the most basic moral and theological truths that Jesus and the apostles especially upheld as of first importance for all believers and the church in all times and places. They reject the leading and teaching of the Holy Spirit as He tries to teach them the meaning of the Bible and help them apply the Bible's teachings to their behaviors and beliefs. Such people cause divisions in the church, divisions that we experience or hear about almost everyday, divisions we try to overcome in Christ.

20 But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit;

Our response as Bible-believing Christians to such self-centered people and sinful situations must begin with increasing our own faith in the face of such disappointments within the church. We need to increase our most “holy faith,” a “holy faith” that loves, trusts, and obeys the Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. We do this with constant prayer as we study the word of God written, the Bible, to hear from God with a purpose to obey God and go wherever God leads. We pray with the Holy Spirit and in the Holy Spirit, Who indwells us as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit prays (or intercedes) for us even in our grief and groaning.

21 keep yourselves in the love of God; look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

Furthermore, we want to knowingly remain within the circle of God's love by obeying His commands in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus declared: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Though believers sin from time to time, rather than live in the practice of known sin (of which they are ashamed) as they did in the past, we look to the merciful forgiveness and grace of Jesus Christ to save us and lead us into eternal life – now and forever. In these troubled days, to “look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life” gives us a heartwarming blessedness.

22 And have mercy on some who are wavering;

The pressures from those who are worldly in the church and the temptations the world puts before us to lead us astray can become so great that some may waver in their faith and temporarily walk into sin. Believers need to have mercy on these weak Christians or these times of weakness in strong Christians (knowing that the same could happen to any of us) as we try to build everyone up in their faith in Jesus Christ, Who alone can save us and show us the way of escape.

23 save others by snatching them out of the fire; and have mercy on still others with fear, hating even the tunic defiled by their bodies.

There may be some believers that we can physically and mentally lead away from the false teaching and sinful temptations toward which they are committing themselves. We need to have mercy on many, with the fear and certain knowledge that if it were not for the Lord's sustaining grace and power we would be headed in the wrong direction too. Unhappily, some can have so defiled themselves through sinful practices that we can even hate the clothing they wear, especially when their clothing and appearance sometimes advertises their sinful preferences and desires to entrap others in their lifestyle.

24 Now to him who is able to keep you from falling, and to make you stand without blemish in the presence of his glory with rejoicing,

The pressures of sin and temptation in this world are so great that we cannot save ourselves from falling or walking into sin. We have all sinned in the past, and only Jesus Christ can free us from our slavery to sin or preference for sin. Only one Person can save us and bestow eternal life upon us – God in Jesus Christ – so we must turn to Jesus Christ moment-by-moment when the world tries to shape us into its mold. Only Jesus can cleanse us and help us so live that we will be able to stand before Him with a rejoicing heart when we meet Him face to face.

25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Pray only to God our Savior. Pray to God our Father in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Pray as Jesus taught us to pray: Jesus taught us to pray to the Father in His Name and make our requests known to God in His Name. Pray to God in the power and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In prayer and by the way we live, we also want to offer God our recognition that all glory, majesty, power, and authority belong to God alone, and not to any other being. We look forward to the time when the glory, majesty, power, and authority of God are obvious to all beings in heaven and on earth and wherever God has placed them. We look forward to the time when all will bow before God and acknowledge He is King of the universe.

Five Questions for Discussion

1. Why is it important for us as believers to remember some of the predictions that Jesus Christ fulfilled in the past? In what ways does knowing the “yet to be fulfilled predictions” help you in your daily life?
2. In what specific ways do some scoff at Christians and Christian beliefs today? Pray for any who scoff at Christ and Christian teachings today.
3. What does “most holy faith” mean to you? Is there any distinction between “faith” and “most holy faith”?
4. In what ways can you keep yourself in the love of God? How can the church help people keep themselves in the love of God?
5. In what ways can believers and the church show mercy toward others today? Why must the mercy we show be “the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ” instead of simply our own mercy? What is the difference between the two types?

Write your comments, suggestions, and thoughts on the [Bible Lesson Forum](#). Read the [International Bible Lessons](#) at <http://internationalbiblelessons.org>.

– © Copyright 2011 by L.G. Parkhurst, Jr. Permission Granted for Not for Profit Use.