Jude

Lesson Four

Response To Error
Jude 20 – 25

Introduction:
1. The previous section of the book gave vivid descriptions of and sober warnings against false teachers.
2. Verse 19 concluded that description.
3. However, verses 17 and 18 also gave the first response of the Christian to false teachers and their error.
4. To protect itself from error, the church must remember the words of the inspired apostles and heed their solemn warnings.
5. The further response of the Christian to error is the message of this final section of the book of Jude.

1:20a But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith

A. The word 'but' indicates a contrast between the faithful child of God and the sinful false teachers.
B. In response to error, the Christian is to build upon faith.
   1. The foundation upon which they were to build was faith.
   2. This includes "the faith" – the Gospel – for which they were to contend (Col. 2:7; Matt. 7:24-27).
   3. It also includes one's personal faith (Heb. 11:1; 2 Pet. 1:5).
C. The structure to be built is a holy temple (1 Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:21-22).
   1. A holy temple is built upon holy faith – separate from the doctrines of men and true to the word of God.
   2. A structure built upon error stands upon unholy faith and can be only an unholy temple.
D. When confronted with error, we must go back to the Word of God and build up our understanding of truth and our determination to resist false doctrine.

1:20b Praying in the Holy Ghost

A. In response to error, the Christian is to pray in the Holy Ghost.
B. It should be noted that this phrase is parallel to the previous one.
   1. Building on holy faith
   2. Praying in holy spirit
   3. Man's spirit is holy when submissive to God (cf. 1 Tim. 2:8).
   4. However, this is likely a reference to the Holy Spirit.
C. This statement is often misunderstood and misused in the religious world.
   1. Pentecostalism teaches an uncontrolled, ecstatic, miraculous praying – often in "tongues" or unknown languages.
      a. Even in the age of miracles this kind of behavior did not happen (cf. 1 Cor. 14:32, 33, 40).
      b. And, the 'tongues' of the Bible are known languages (Acts 2:4, 6, 8)

2. In New Testament times, there were miraculous, inspired prayers (cf. 1 Cor. 14:12-17, 26-33).
   a. Thus, to pray "in the Holy Ghost" originally meant to pray by inspiration.
   b. Today, the age of miracles has ended (cf. 1 Cor. 13:8-13).
   c. Yet, we must still be guided by the Holy Spirit in our prayers.
   d. This guidance is given to us by the revelation of the Spirit – the Bible (cf. Eph. 3:3-4).
   e. When we pray in harmony with the will of God, we are praying in the Holy Ghost.
3. This phrase also serves as a reminder about the fellowship that exists between God and the Christian.
   a. To pray "in the Holy Ghost," one must be in fellowship with the Holy Ghost.
   b. That fellowship is established by the cleansing of sin through the blood of Jesus (Eph. 2:12-13; 1 John 1:3, 7; cf. Gal. 4:6).
   c. Thus, when a Christian prays in harmony with the will of God, he or she is praying in the Holy Spirit.
4. Finally, this phrase indicates that the Holy Spirit has a part to play in the prayers of Christians (Romans 8:26-28).
   a. There are times of deep distress, trouble, and struggle during which one may not know exactly what to pray or to request.
   b. On these occasions, the Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf before the throne of God in Heaven.
   c. When we are unable to put the thoughts of our hearts into words, the Holy Spirit makes those thoughts known to God.
   d. Thus, we are to pray always – even when we are not sure what to pray.
   e. This, too, is part of "praying in the Holy Ghost."

D. There is great confidence to be found in understanding God's concern for His children and His desire to hear their prayers.

1:21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life

A. The goal of their building up themselves and praying was to keep themselves in the love of God.
B. This is accomplished by submitting to and obeying His Word (John 15:9-10).
C. Obviously, this command implies that it is possible to fail at keeping one's self in the love of God.
   1. It is possible for one to lose his love for God and, thus, to leave his first love (cf. Rev. 2:4).
   2. It is also possible for one to remove himself from the sphere of God's love.
      a. God loves the whole world (John 3:16).
      b. Yet, only the obedient are saved and receive the benefit of His love.
   3. Thus, it is possible for the saved to become lost.
D. The motivation for remaining faithful to God and His Word is the mercy of the Lord that will bring eternal life.
   1. The mercy of Jesus sums up the provision of salvation made possible by His sacrifice for sins.
   2. Those who are faithful unto death will receive eternal life.

1:22 And of some have compassion, making a difference

A. The first response to error must be to guard one's self against it.
   1. Keeping one's self in the love of God
   2. By building one's self up in faith – *study*
   3. By praying in the Holy Ghost – *prayer*
   4. By looking for mercy unto life – *perseverance*
B. However, another response must be to save others from error and its penalties.
C. Some who believe and practice error do so in ignorance but with honesty.
   1. The ASV renders this verse: "And on some have mercy, who are in doubt."
   2. Brother Woods calls these men "honest doubters."
   3. A person with an honest heart can be shown the way out of error.
D. They must be approached with compassion, mercy, and pity.
   1. The truth must be taught without compromise.
   2. But, it must be taught with patience and kindness (2 Tim. 2:24-26; Jam. 5:19-20; 1 Pet. 3:15; 1 John 5:16-18).
E. The phrase "making a difference" indicates that the Christian must consider the heart and mindset of one who is in error and alter his approach accordingly (cf. 1 Cor. 9:19-23).

1:23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh

A. Others who believe and practice error present a different kind of challenge.
   1. Their persistence in sin is due to an attitude of stubborn rebelliousness.
   2. Or, they have digressed so far into error that the chances of repentance have become small (cf. Heb. 6:4-6).
B. These must be saved with fear – meaning, sober warnings of the severity of sin and its punishment, including the horrors of Hell.
   1. This may include withdrawal of fellowship (cf. 1 Cor. 5:5).
   2. It definitely includes "hard preaching" (cf. Acts 5:5, 11; Rom. 11:19-22; Phil 2:12; 1 Tim. 5:20; Heb. 4:1).
C. The imagery suggest snatching a burning branch out of the fire before it can be consumed (cf. Amos 4:11) – a "most narrow escape."
D. The Christian must do these things with a hatred for a life that is polluted by sin.
   1. The soiled garment represents the sinful life (cf. Zech. 3:1-4; Rev. 3:4).
   2. The Christian must hate sin as God does.
   3. Thus, we seek to help others cleanse their lives of sin.
   4. Yet, we must not become partakers in their error (Gal. 6:1).
E. In contending for the faith, the child of God has a responsibility both to himself and to others.

1:24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy

A. The final response to error is to remember the faithfulness of God!
B. The Lord is able to keep His faithful followers from falling.
   1. The word for 'keep' means, "To guard."
   2. The word for 'falling' means, "Not stumbling; standing firm."
   3. This does not exclude man's role in his salvation (cf. vs. 21).

4. This does not teach a miraculous protection (cf. Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 10:13).
5. This does not teach the impossibility of apostasy (cf. vs. 5-6).
6. It does teach that the Lord guides and protects those who are faithful to Him – and that they can be kept from stumbling.

C. The Lord is able to present the faithful as faultless before God the Father.
1. The word for 'present' means, "To cause to stand; to make firm."
2. By His blood, man is cleansed from sin and made blameless.
3. Those who faithfully "walk in the light" even "unto death" will be made to stand firm in their redemption.
4. There is confidence in Heaven for the faithful child of God.

D. Thus, the Christian has and will have "exceeding joy" because of his standing before God – forgiven, saved, redeemed.

1:25 To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

A. Thus, appropriately, the epistle ends with praise to God.
B. He is the only God.
C. He is a God of wisdom – belonging to no other being.
D. He is our Savior.
E. Thus, glory, majesty (greatness), dominion (strength, virtue), and power (authority) are His and are to be acknowledge by man.
F. This is true eternally – "before all time, now, and for evermore" (ASV).