

Sermon unto the saints of God assembled at Topeka – Sunday, Nov. 3, 2019

Continuing our closer look at the book of Jude from last Sunday – one additional point to be made on verse 1:

Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: - Jude 1

Though there is little doubt that Jude was the child of Joseph and Mary, and therefore was Christ's 'half-brother' in the flesh, he didn't recognize that as a way in which he was connected to Christ, even though he specifically announces that connection to James. Though he was a blood relative of Christ, he announces himself as a bondservant of Him, completely disregarding as unimportant any other flesh connection, much in the way that Christ showed forth the relative unimportance of any blood connections in our spiritual walk:

And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother. – Mk. 3:33-35

Jude 4. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.¹

This is the introduction of false doctrine into the church, that is accepted or held, if but for a time – and such introduction is nearly invisible. Unawares. Nobody saw it coming. Some expositors view this as marking only the persons themselves who aspire to leadership roles or are chosen and accepted by the body as such. More broadly, however, it is the introduction and acceptance of any scriptural error, or unsound doctrine, into the church, by whatever vessel it is introduced. Of a truth, those who espouse and suggest error, or false doctrine, must appear in the church from age to age and season to season, in the Providence of God, as an agent of spiritual exercise:

For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. – 1Cor. 11:19

The English 'heresies' is derivative of the original Greek - *hairesis* (hah'-ee-res-is), which means: a body of men following their own tenets (sect or party), and/or the dissensions, schisms and divisions arising from diversity of opinions and aims.

Gill: These "must be"; because God has decreed they shall, whose counsel is immutable, and his purpose unalterable; and since this always was the case, that there were false prophets under the former dispensation, it must be expected that false teachers will arise in the churches now, bringing in damnable heresies; and since Satan is always busy to sow the tares of false doctrine; and human nature, being both weak and wicked, is so susceptible thereof, and so easily imposed upon and deceived, it cannot be thought that it should be otherwise.

The manifestation of those who are approved comes by way of either continual or episodic spiritual exercise of eventually identifying, by reason of "rightly dividing the word of truth," and excising the heresies from amongst the body from time to time. The key to this particular admonition, beloved, is that the heresy introduced is brought in *unawares*. How does a thing happen *unawares*? Certainly, Christ warned of one main strain of this phenomena:

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. – Mt. 7:15

Gill: There are some men who appear to be humble, and fear God in a deceitful and hypocritical way, but inwardly lay wait: this humility (the Jewish scholars) call "wolfish humility".

There is absolutely a sense in which we are warned of and should watch for those who we come across and who want to join themselves to this little body, outwardly claiming some religious authority as official 'teachers' (pastors, preachers, elders, etc.), but who are inwardly ravening wolves who scatter the sheep (Jer. 23:1), subvert whole houses (Titus 1:11), and weary the Lord with their words.

Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment? – Mal. 2:17

But I ask you to consider, beloved, that to a certain extent, we all should and do teach one another, and we all influence one another – and further, we are also influenced, ever so subtly, by the world around us. So, I further ask you to consider that this admonition is not strictly speaking *only* to a person who enters the body as one having Bible authority, and therefore claims and is given some sense of teaching authority within the church. Included in the warning? Absolutely. Thereby excluding all other forms of invisible introduction of false doctrine into the body? No. Anyone can and has introduced error into the churches. I ask you to consider the warning more broadly. Consider Spurgeon's warning: "*Satan knows right well that one devil in the church can do far more than a thousand devils outside her bounds.*"

It has always been foreordained that these would enter in unawares and have been condemned to do so. They are called 'ungodly,' which simply means that they are contrary to God – not only

in the letter of His word, but even when seemingly in agreement as to the letter, still contrary in the spirit of its meaning, and in consistency with how the rest of scripture hangs around it.

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. – 2Tim. 3:5

(and please take particular note of the long list of attributes mentioned right before this verse in 2Tim. 3:1-4 – these are attributes of some church members who at least for a time are held in good standing inside the churches in the last days).

No matter how holy, or nice, or popular, or wise, or friendly they appear outwardly (again, for a time), they disregard God on a fundamental level – though hidden for that time.

Henry: *Ungodly men are the great enemies of the faith of Christ and the peace of the church. Those who deny or corrupt the one, and disturb the other, are here expressly styled ungodly men. We might have truth with peace (a most desirable thing) were there none (ministers or private Christians) in our particular churches and congregations but truly godly men — a blessing scarcely to be looked or hoped for on this side heaven. Ungodly men raise scruples, start questions, cause divisions, widen breaches, merely to advance and promote their own selfish, ambitious, and covetous ends. This has been the plague of the church in all past ages, and I am afraid no age is, or will be, wholly free from such men and such practices as long as time shall last. Observe, nothing cuts us off from the church but that which cuts us off from Christ; namely, reigning infidelity and ungodliness.*

Turning the grace of God into lasciviousness and denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ is *here* not the work of loud, bossy lesbians or prating fags on a glittery pride parade float. It is the work of those who have crept in unawares – so therefore people who look like, sound like, and are accepted as (again, from time to time and for a time) members in good standing in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gill: *The doctrine of grace (is here meant), which though lasciviousness is not in its nature, nor has it any natural tendency to it, yet wicked men turn or transfer it from its original nature, design, and use, to a foreign one. And they may be said to turn it into lasciviousness by making the doctrine of grace universal, extending it equally alike to all mankind, and thereby harden and encourage men in sin.*

The notion of turning the grace of God into lasciviousness can be subtle; over time, turning the liberty of salvation into license, and brushing coats of varnish on the blessed word of God by both winking at or excusing sin on an insincere accounting of grace and making some sin (again, over time) not seem exceeding sinful. Denying the only Lord God, *here*, is not the work rendered by outwardly rebellious and proud sinners, or atheists, but by those who look ‘squared away,’ from a faith standpoint. The denial of God is not in His existence, nor in His power (when claimed

with the mouth), but the denial of His power in their hearts, and the denial of His sovereignty in willfully perverting His truth, ever so slightly – finally denying our total reliance in Him and that He would make strait paths for our feet. And the encouraging of that sinful outlook is not always explicitly stated. Else, it would not be ‘unawares.’

Jude 5. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.²

Remembering is very important. It is not to just call a fact into mind – and we can ‘intellectually know’ a scriptural thing all day long, but if we don’t practice it and if it doesn’t burn in our bosom to perform it, than we have practically ‘forgotten’ a thing. Remembering isn’t commanded because we’ve simply forgotten about something; it is commanded because it cements us into any truth of God that much deeper. With the blessed word of God, there is always more depth to be had, should the Lord bless us with it. Jude knew he wasn’t telling them, or us, anything new. They were already taught this example, but they needed to hear it again and to apply it to their present situation. Spurgeon on being put in remembrance: “*As for the root facts, the fundamental doctrines, the primary truths of Scripture, we must from day to day insist upon them. We must never say of them, ‘Everybody knows them’; for, alas! everybody forgets them.*” Calvin adds: “*The use of God’s Word is not only to teach what we could not have otherwise known, but also to rouse us to a serious meditation of those things which we already understand, and not to suffer us to grow torpid in a cold knowledge.*”

The people upon whom God put His name were marvelously delivered out of bondage, saved from a terrible army and despot at the parting of the Red Sea, had a blueprint for their lives delivered to them at Mount Sinai, experienced the merciful, miraculous provision of manna in the wilderness, and yet still murmured about their lots and refused to trust in God at Kadesh Barnea. No matter how good it looked for them in being specifically labelled as the people of God, and having their reputation amongst the heathen nations as favored of God, the overwhelming majority of them did not trust in the Lord and feared Him with only a servile fear. God wasn’t sufficient for many of them – they needed something else. Even early on, they waxed nostalgic for the land of their bondage in comparison to their deliverance *from* that bondage.

Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness. – Ex. 14:12

And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for

ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. – Ex. 16:3

They continued to long for Egypt. Do we have an Egypt?

Jude 6. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.³

Poole: Kept not their first estate – or that in which they were created - their original excellency, truth, holiness, purity, and glory as servants of the Most High. But left their own habitation, or a heavenly one, from whence, though they were righteously thrust out by God, (2Pe 2:4) yet they may be truly said to have left it themselves, in that they voluntarily rebelled against the law of their creation, and committed that sin which they knew would certainly be punished with such a dejection.

Yet neither Satan nor the fallen horde are currently in hell, in any final sense. That eternal punishment is still future (though already reserved in a state primed and guaranteed of it), following the millennial reign of Christ (during which time Satanic influence will be nil) and then the devil's final rebellion (upon being loosed from the bottomless pit for a short season). For the present, Satan prowls around like a roaring lion, and his rebellious cohorts torment whomever they find vulnerable. Both Satan and his minions are and have been hard at work, and exceeding desperate, knowing that their time is short:

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: - 1Pet. 5:8

And, behold, they (devils) cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? – Mt. 8:29

Jude 7. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.⁴

When we read of Sodom and Gomorrah, I think most of us immediately think the destruction of the Lord upon the ungodly – as we should think and as the scriptures teach, both here and elsewhere:

And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; - 2Pet. 2:6

Prior to that destruction, Sodom and Gomorrah were blessed, privileged places.

And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. – Gen. 13:10

The verse in Jude specifically states the sins for which the inhabitants of those cities suffered the vengeance of God, but elsewhere in scripture, even the description of Sodom's other sins painted a picture of a very prosperous and temporally blessed lot for most:

Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. – Eze. 16:49

All three of these examples, (deliverance from Egypt, the angels losing their first estate, and Sodom and Gomorrah) show us, in the context of these verses, at least two things. First, they assure us that the *certain men* causing trouble will be judged, no matter how much they looked to have been in perfectly blessed situations in the past. Secondly, they warn us that we also must continue our walk, looking diligently, watching, being apt to teach in earnest, laying aside every weight and the sins that do so easily beset every one of us, and part of this is eradicating error. Or some subtle encouragement to sin. Or looking for some ideological alignment of earnest religious interests with worldly pursuits or ease. If the blessings of the past didn't guarantee their future spiritual state, then neither does ours.

Jude 8. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.⁵

Again, these are not the rainbow mohawk, pride parade, feather boa skaters – these are people who mostly look, sound and act like 'Christians.' But however religious they sound for a time, they typically will mix sound scriptural reasoning with fleshly reasoning – or will even say something that is absolutely scripturally right, but insist upon, or maybe even subtly suggest, a faulty application of it.

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. – Pr. 14:12

They proclaim their own version of God's truth (relying upon their own dreams, or ideas of how they think God should be) They reject the absolute lordship of Jesus over their lives in deed, though they claim it in words and in behaviors that are pleasing to them in the first place. They tend to redefine the divine government of God in terms that they are comfortable with. And they reject legitimate religious authority and oversight, though never with any outward admission of such, but rather always with a view to suggesting an alternative, holier take that satisfies their flesh (and encourage others in it).

Such principles can be brought in as simply as from the workplace culture or from a current mainstream world view. Many of our bosses ask us to ‘buy into’ some view of leadership training, or development, that embraces subtly unscriptural notions. It is what we are taught, it is what we are paid to do, and it is expected of us. But there can be a tipping point, where we find some of these ideas being effective in the workplace, as worldly people may respond well to them, so we begin to like them more for ourselves in leadership or management capacities and might even notice ourselves responding well to them (in the flesh). Then, over time, we mix them in with scriptural notions in our minds, or maybe even just look at scripture through the lens of a few of these ‘learned principles’ that we have been asked to embrace, and we could be off to the races. Or, for instance, our culture today encourages us to question and reject authority and to recognize *self* as the only real authority in our lives. We can do this with the Bible, by choosing to only believe certain passages. We can do it with our beliefs, by choosing at the “salad bar” of religion. We can do it with our lifestyle, by making our own rules and not recognizing the proper authorities God has established, or by subtly perverting God’s standards by mixing them with other standards.

In the darkest days of Israel, here is how the society was characterized (in part):

In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.
– Judges 21:25

Jude 9. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.⁶

There are many differing theories about what this disputation was about – and I certainly don’t have anything dispositive to say on the matter. I do have my inklings, but for the current purposes, my desire is for us not to drift off into the weeds. I will say that whatever the dispute, if it was really about the literal body of Moses, it would have had to transpire between Moses’ burial and his appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration with Christ and Elijah. Because from that point on, there is no body of Moses to dispute about, save his glorious transfigured form, which is wholly claimed by Christ. There are many views of this matter, and I am not convinced of the lead pipe lock nature of any of them, although I have my desirous leanings. We don’t know for sure where Jude received his information about this dispute (other than pure divine inspiration). There are, however, many expositors who attribute Jude’s practical knowledge of this dispute to a non-canonical source called ‘The Testament (or Assumption) of Moses.’ It was a book, much like the book of Enoch (also quoted by Jude) that was popularly read and the former was used as a ‘proof’ for Christ being the coming of the Messiah in 29 AD. In this account, Satan had laid claim to the corpse of Moses for his kingdom of darkness because Moses had killed an Egyptian (Exod. 2:12). He was therefore a murderer, however virtuous his subsequent

achievements, and so was unworthy of honorable burial. Satan, in his ancient role of accuser of God's people (Rev. 12:10), was seeking to prove Moses' guilt. In response to the charge, Michael did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against Satan, suggesting Jude's meaning: "*If the greatest of the good angels refused to speak evil of the greatest of the evil angels, even in circumstances like that, surely no human being may speak evil of any angel (or dignity).*" (Barclay)

Jude 10. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.⁷

In contrast to the blessed example in verse 9, these (who crept in unawares) spoke, and speak, evil – especially when they rejected authority and spoke against the deep glories and wisdom of God (and instead offered 'alternative,' not wholly scriptural accounts). Perhaps not in so blatant a fashion as an atheist or someone in open, proud rebellion, but as someone who tries to convince you that they are about serving the Lord, when they are secretly about serving themselves. They pretend to be spiritual, having a *form* of godliness, but what they know, they know naturally – and corrupt themselves in those things.

Jude 11. Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.⁸

Jude suggests that Cain typifies a way that the *certain men* have gone in. It is the way of disbelief and empty religion, which leads to jealousy, covetousness, persecution and accusation of the truly godly, and eventually to rage and murderous anger. Cain was mad at God because God did not accept him doing things his own way – there was a pattern for sacrifice, as there is a pattern for all things in the economy of God. Cain had a form of godliness (a sacrifice) but denied the power thereof (commanded obedience). He ended up in a murderous rage against a person who had been given a heart to know his God. The result of this godless curriculum was that the first man born on this earth murdered the second man born on this earth – over pure religion and unfeigned faith.

Balaam was swept up in the fame and fortune of being recognized and desired by king Balak for having legitimate powers and knowledge as a prophet. He did what he did for position, not out of a pure heart. Balak hired Balaam to curse the people, but as he eventually spoke forth God's word, he did not curse Israel – instead he blessed her each time. When he was unsuccessful in cursing Israel, Balaam advised Balak on how to bring Israel under a curse. Instead of trying to have a prophet curse Israel, he should lead her into fornication and idolatry and then God would curse a disobedient Israel.

But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. – Rev. 2:14

Korah and his followers vainly thought themselves to be religious authorities and holy, and both coveted and resented the authority God gave to Moses and Aaron and accused them of taking it for themselves in an unholy, exultant manner.

Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: and they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD? – Nu. 16:1-3

The rebellion of Korah lies in the broader idea of a contemptuous and determined assertion of self-will against divinely appointed ordinances and persons. In all three situations, or types that the Holy Spirit puts forth through brother Jude's pen, these are men who are not ultimately concerned about humbly following and submitting themselves to God – even though they are joined to the people of God; but are self-willed, speaking and acting in wholly undisciplined ways. No matter how close they are to true servants of God, and no matter what outwardly religious titles and lots they find themselves in or wiggle themselves into, there is a pernicious, pervading perfidy coming out of them (though coming in unawares for a time). Though these three men were in some ways quite different (farmer, prophet, leader), apostacy and the introduction of error is never confined to one group of people – "There are apostates in the pulpit, in the palace and in the poorhouse." (Coder).

Jude 12. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;⁹

There are some expositors who speak of these feasts of charity as being the Lord's Supper – I am not wholly satisfied with their answers but I have nothing to say of a dispositive nature on this topic today. There is quite a bit of scholarship out there, including some of the expositors that we generally take a close look at, that suggests that Jude 12, 2Pet. 2:13 and 1Cor. 11 all make reference to 'love feasts' or 'agapae' – here's the gist of this position: among the ancients, the wealthier members of the Church made an occasional general feast, at which all the members attended, and the poor and the rich ate together. The fatherless, the widows, and the strangers were invited to these feasts, and their eating together was a proof of their love to

each other and time for comfortable fellowship. The love feasts were at first celebrated before the Lord's Supper; in process of time they appear to have been celebrated after it. But they were never considered as the Lord's Supper, nor any substitute for it. These feasts took place until roughly the 4th century AD, though some early Reformation churches revived the practice for a time. If such scholarship holds water, then it would equate to having comfortable fellowship with dangerous heresies, without always knowing it. If the Lord's Supper is meant, then much the same holds.

The clouds without water refers to the real emptiness of something that appears full. Waterless clouds give the appearance of refreshment, but ultimately disappoint. You can see a cloud, but if it does not manifest in water, it is quite useless (aside from brief potential shade, should it be positioned just so).

Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain. – Pr. 25:14

The winds they are carried about of are the fickleness and unsoundness of the flesh reasoning to which they attempt to force scriptural meaning. The trees appear to have fruit, but the fruit withereth, and ultimately the tree is without real fruit (of the Gospel). By twice dead, Gill suggests: *entirely, thoroughly, and really dead in trespasses and sins, notwithstanding their pretensions to religion and godliness; or the sense may be, that they were not only liable to a corporeal death, common to them with all mankind, but also to an eternal one, or to the death both of soul and body in hell.* Being plucked up by the roots signifies the eternal decree of damnation by God, in juxtaposition to good roots grown down.

Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit. – Jer. 17:7,8

Jude 13. Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

Knowledge puffs up – it makes us well up in pride. If a person has received the doctrine of grace in truth, the tendency is for it to humble the soul over time. Patterns of noisiness, restlessness, uneasiness, turbulent spirits, and a furious, wrathful or doubtful disposition eventually emerge (again, over time) in those who are not tempered and humbled by the operation of grace. Raging waves make for shipwreck and steering off course – hidden reefs can also destroy a boat from the bottom without careful, proper steering. Gill: *Wandering stars (or running stars – meteors) are called "stars," because they have the appearance of such, and blaze for a while, in seeming light, zeal, and warmth, and in fame and reputation; not comparable to the planets, which go their regular course, but to fiery exhalations, gliding and running stars; because they wander*

about, never being settled in their principles, nor at a point in religion; and wander also after their own carnal lusts, and cause others to wander likewise, and at last become falling stars; not from real grace and sanctified knowledge, which they never had; but from truth to error, and from a seemingly holy life and conversation, to a vicious one; and from a profession of religion, to open profaneness (or real denial of Christ in word and deed).

Jude 14,15 *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints. To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.*

The first that we know of to prophesy of the second coming of Christ. These all (those that crept in unawares, plus all of the examples used throughout Jude) will then be convicted in their own consciences, by that clear evidence, and full light, in which things will be set and framed by Him – their sure destruction now being accomplished.

Jude 16 *These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.¹⁰*

Complaining about their lots, but always subtly using scripture to try to justify it. Complaining about situations in their lots that come up, but always having a gloss of religion to their pitch. Using emotional appeals that are laced with scriptural references. Accusing the brethren of sin, or of hypocrisy, or of a lack of true religion when behaviors or words don't suit their flesh. But always doing so with a certain appeal that often sounds sincere.

The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords. - Psa 55:21

Flattery, charm, personality, looks, general social adeptness or even speaking a particular person's 'language' are all ways of gaining the admiration of men – and when you admire a person you will typically be more trusting of their words and be more amenable to their positions or ideas. Jude is telling Christians to be careful there – not over the top, and therefore without the right spiritual perspective, but careful. This is very serious business. There is a big difference between me making you feel good and offering proper, godly comforting words to you. Making you feel good is about you (and that can be done in ways that appeal to the flesh yet sound scriptural) but being comforted is being comforted in the Lord - that we would be reminded afresh of His goodness, love and mercy. We should evidence these things, in the limited manners that we are led in, sometimes impeded by our weak flesh, by our submission unto the spirit of God.

Jude 17-19 *But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.*

Brothers Paul and Peter, most notably, had warned of such heresies creeping in unawares and the ungodly men who would feign pure religion in the last days.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. – 2Tim. 3:1-5

Jude 20-23 *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.*

On the application of compassion, Gill writes: *That is, of such who have gone astray, being drawn aside; who sin through infirmity, and the force of temptation; and who are tractable and open to conviction, and whose mistakes are in lesser matters of religion; as also such who are convicted and wounded in their consciences for their sins and mistakes: and to these compassion is to be shown, by praying with them, and for them, with ardency and affection; instructing them in meekness; giving friendly and brotherly reproofs to them; expressing on all occasions a tender concern for their good; doing them all the good that can be done, both for their souls and bodies.*

Making a difference is putting a difference between these two types of souls and the godly help or remedies to apply.

Poole on verse 23: *And others; those that are further gone, not so easily reducible, and in great danger. Save, or labour to save them, as instruments under God. With fear; by more severe courses, sharper reprehensions, setting before them God's judgments against obstinate sinners, (1Cor. 5:5) Pulling them out of the fire: it is a proverbial speech, (Zec 3:2): the sense is, that as they that are in the fire, and like to be destroyed by it, must not be gently exhorted to come out of it of themselves, but speedily and forcibly pulled out, in consideration of their eminent danger; so they that are more stubborn sinners, being in apparent danger of being destroyed by the fire of their lusts, anger or discontentment and being as it were in the mouth of hell, must be more harshly and severely dealt with, by setting the Lord's terrors before them and inflicting church censures on them.*

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. – 2Cor. 5:11

(Poole continued): ***Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh:*** it is an allusion to that ceremonial law, (Lev 15:4,17) where he that touched a defiled garment was himself defiled. The sense is, either:

1. *That where there is danger of infection from heretics and obstinate sinners, all converse with them, and anything whereby the contagion of their doctrine or manners may reach us, is to be avoided: or:*
2. *That when we censure, denounce or rebuke others, we should do it with suitable affections, and though we would save themselves, we should hate their vices or sins, and anything that promotes them or savours of them.*

Jude 24,25 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, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Ultimately, we must always cast all our care upon Christ, as we have no strength of our own – though we must remain watchful, vigilant. We must constantly put one another in remembrance of that faultless presentation of us to God via the imputed righteousness of Christ, and the measure of faith and grace that He provides to sustain us. His name be glorified. All power is His, none ours. All dominion and authority is His, none ours. Eternally.

We must constantly gaze upon the cross of Christ, and we must be faithful watchers not only for each other, but also for the introduction of error, which isn't always easy to spot. Sometimes it grows organically, regardless of how it is introduced. Sometimes it is introduced ever so subtly, over time - but it must be watched against diligently and fended off at every turn, that the Lord would keep the candlestick burning in this place, and that we could help one another to overcome in this foward generation.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. – Rev. 2:7

I love you all.

¹ But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. – 2Pet. 2:1

² And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; - 2Pet. 2:5

³ For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; - 2Pet.2:4

⁴ And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) – 2Pet. 2:6-8

⁵ But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. – 2Pet. 2:10

⁶ Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. – 2Pet. 2:11

⁷ But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; - 2Pet. 2:12

⁸ Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet. – 2Pet. 2:15-16

⁹ These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. – 2Pet. 2:17

¹⁰ For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. – 2Pet. 2:18,19