

Seeing Christ Through Apostasy

by Stephen Kaung

Stephen Kaung's sermon emphasizes the urgent need for believers to recognize and resist apostasy while contending for the faith once delivered to the saints.

Duration: 1:15:55

Scripture: Jude 1:22

Topics: "Apostasy"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the seriousness of falling away from the faith that was delivered to the saints. He urges believers to stand on the grace of God and allow it to sanctify their lives completely. The preacher warns about apostasy and describes the characteristics of apostates, who are dreamers that defile the flesh, despise worship, and speak against dignities. He draws parallels between the book of Jude and 2 Peter, highlighting the similarity in their descriptions of apostates. The sermon also references biblical examples of judgment against those who turned away from God, such as the destruction of those who did not believe in the Lord's deliverance from Egypt and the eternal punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Transcript

The Epistle of Jude. We will read the whole epistle. It's a very short one.

Only 25 verses. Now the reason why I like to read it because probably you have never read it before. Jude, born man of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to the called ones, beloved in God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ, mercy to you and peace and love be multiplied.

Beloved, using all diligence to write you of our common salvation, I have been obliged to write to you exhorting you to contain earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. For certain men have gotten unnoticed. They who of old were mocked out beforehand to this sentence, ungodly persons, turning the grace of our God into dissoluteness and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

But I will put you in remembrance. You who once knew all things that the Lord having saved a people out of the land of Egypt in the second place destroyed those who had not believed and angels who had not kept their own original state but had abandoned their own dwelling. He keeps in eternal chains under gloomy darkness to the judgment of the great day.

As Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them committed greedily fornication, in like manner with them and going after other flesh, lie there as an example undergoing the judgment of eternal fire. Yet in like manner these dreamers also defile the flesh and despise lordship and speak ravingly against dignities. For Michael the archangel, when disputing with the devil, he reasoned about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a raving judgment against him, but said the Lord rebuked thee.

But these, whatever things they know not, they speak ravingly against. For what even as the irrational animals they understand by mere nature, in these things they corrupt themselves. Rude to them because they have gone in the way of Cain and given themselves up to the error of Balaam for reward and perished in the gainsaying of Korah.

These are spots, or rocks, in your love feasts, feeding, feasting together with you without fear, castrating themselves. Clouds without water, carried along by the winds, optimal trees without fruit, Christ dead, rooted up. Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shames, wandering stars, to whom has been reserved the gloom of darkness for eternity.

And Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied also as to these, saying, Behold the Lord has come, amidst his holy myriads, to execute judgment against all, and to convict all the ungodly of them of all their works of ungodliness, which they have wrought ungodly, and of all the half things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their lusts, and their mouths speak swelling words, admiring persons for the sake of profit. But ye, beloved, remember the words spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they say to you that at the end of the time there shall be mockers walking after their own lusts of ungodlinesses.

These are they who set themselves apart, natural men, not having the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keeping yourself in the love of God, awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And some of, and of some, have compassion, making a difference, but others say with fear, snatching them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

But to him that is able to keep you without stumbling, and to set you with exhortation, blameless before his glory, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, might, and authority from before the whole age, and now, and to all the ages. Amen. Shall we pray? Dear Heavenly Father, we do thank Thee for the privilege of remembering Thy Son together this morning.

Oh, how we praise and thank Thee that through Thy beloved Son we are now accepted by Thee, that we belong to Thee, to the family of God. We do praise and thank Thee that Thou has given us holy boldness to enter into the holiest of all, even Thy very presence, to behold the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ. And our Father, we just ask Thee at this moment that by Thy Holy Spirit Thou will enlighten Thy word to our hearts, that Thy word may not just be letters, but they may be life and spirit to us.

To the praise of Thy glory we ask in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen. This little book of Jude is one that is very much neglected by God's people.

Probably some of the Lord's people have never read it, and yet, this little letter is most relevant to our days. Why is it so? It is because this letter gives us some history, certain things that happened to the early church after the time of the book of Acts. We know the book of Acts gives us the beginning history of the church.

But this little letter of Jude that is written after the book of Acts is finished, in other words, it gives us some history that happened in the church after the record of the book of Acts is finished. In a sense, it testifies of the church period, which gives us the beginning of church history is the act of this little letter of Jude, which gives us the history of what would happen at the end of the church period can be called the act of the apostates. Why? Because it is through apostasy that introduced to the world the man of sin, the man of perdition.

Brothers and sisters, speaking prophetically, the last period of the church age is the Laodicean period. As we find in the book of Revelation, the seven churches, prophetically speaking, the last church, the church in Laodicea, represents the church in its last stage. And we are living at the end of the last days.

Therefore you find, generally speaking, we are living in a Laodicean period. And what is the characteristic of Laodicea? One word, lukewarmness. The church is lukewarm, neither hot nor cold.

And you know, leaven, it is going to leaven the whole loaf, needs a lukewarm temperature. You remember our Lord Jesus said, the mystery of the kingdom of the heavens is like a woman who puts leaven into three measures of meal. And this leaven begins to work until the whole loaf is puffed up.

As a matter of fact, you find that even towards the end of the apostolic period, the leaven is already being secretly put into the three meals, three measure of meals. And it continues to work until when it comes to the Laodicean period, with that kind of lukewarm temperature, it is just the right temperature for it to work in such an extent that the whole loaf, which represents the whole church, seems to be completely leavened. And this is the period that we are living in.

And because this is the time that we live in, therefore it is of utmost importance to us to know what is happening today in the church, to recognize it, and by the grace of God to avoid it, to keep away from it, and to keep on course towards the Lord. And that is the reason why this little book of Jude is so relevant and so important to us. This letter was written by Jude, born man of Jesus Christ, brother of James.

Now Jude, or Judas, is the same word. It's a very common name at that time. And even in the New Testament, you will find five persons in the New Testament had the name Jude, or Judas.

Of the twelve apostles of our Lord Jesus, in Matthew chapter 10, you'll find one of them, the last one, the one who betrayed our Lord Jesus, is Judas the Iscariot. Now you have one Judas there. And among the twelve apostles there is another Judas.

Judas of James. You'll find that in Acts chapter 1. Because in Matthew chapter 10, it uses another name, Claudius. He is Judas of James.

And maybe in some of your versions you'll find in parenthesis the brother of James. In the original, it just said Judas of James. But the translators think, well, probably that is the brother of James.

But in the original, it's not there. And according to the usage of that time, whenever it said someone of someone, it means he is the son of someone. So actually, that Judas is the son of James.

Not the brother of James. It is that Jude, you remember, in John chapter 14, he asked the Lord Jesus a question. He said, is Judas not of Iscariot? So, among the apostles of our Lord Jesus, there are two Judas.

And then if you turn to the book of Acts chapter 9, you'll find when the Lord appeared to Ananias and tell him to go to see Saul. And see Saul live in the house of Judas of Damascus. So you have the third Judas.

And again, you'll find that in Acts chapter 15, the church in Jerusalem, when they send that letter to the churches of the Gentiles, they sent two brothers with the letter. And one of them is Judas, also called Basibus. So you have the fourth Judas.

And then you have the fifth one. And the fifth one is a brother according to the flesh of our Lord Jesus. You'll find that in Matthew chapter 13, you'll find that in Mark chapter 6, of the brethren according to the flesh.

Our Lord has a number of brothers. And one of them is Judas, or Jude. Now, which of the five Judas, or Jude, is the writer of this little letter? It seems that all agree that this Jude is the brother of our Lord Jesus according to the flesh.

There are many reasons. But we are not going into it. Now, this brother of our Lord Jesus according to the flesh, he calls himself bondman of Jesus Christ.

Instead of saying brother of Jesus Christ. Now, if we are the brother of Jesus Christ according to the flesh, probably that will be what we will be putting in. But you'll find that instead of doing that, he said he is a bondman of Jesus Christ.

Well, maybe on the one hand it is because when our Lord Jesus was living on earth, he as a brother according to the flesh did not believe in the Lord Jesus. It was after the resurrection of our Lord Jesus that his brother according to the flesh all came to know our Lord as their Lord. And maybe because of that he felt that he couldn't he didn't want to use that because he was unworthy.

But I think there is a better reason behind it. Because you'll find that our relationship with the Lord Jesus is never according to the flesh. Our relationship with the Lord Jesus is always according to the Spirit.

And even though he might be our brother to our Lord according to the flesh, but that will not be the relationship anymore. The relationship is a relationship in the Spirit. And that spiritual relationship is he is a bond slave to the Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus is his Lord and Master. And he is but a love slave to him. And dear brothers and sisters, I think it is most appropriate and this is what our relationship with our Lord is today.

And yet he wants to identify himself so he said brother of James. Now everybody knew James at that time. Because James was the leading brother in the church in Jerusalem.

So by calling himself brother of James, everybody knows which Jude or Judas he was. Now this is the writer of the letter. And he wrote to certain people.

The letter does not tell us to whom he wrote. But most likely he must write the letter to the same people who received the letter of James and the letter of Peter. That would be most likely.

But instead of specifying to which place or what kind of people he wrote, he just said he wrote to the called ones. To those who are called. Beloved in God the Father and preserved or kept in Christ Jesus.

So you find he specifies in a sense the qualifications of those who received that letter. The called, the beloved and the kept. Now that includes all of us.

Are we not the called ones? Thank God we are. Out of every tribe, every tongue, every nation, every people God has called us unto his beloved son. God has chosen us even before the foundation of the world in Christ Jesus.

He has called us by mercy and glory. He has called us by his grace. We are not volunteers.

If you volunteer in, you can volunteer out. But we are called and once you are called, you are caught. Thank God we are the called ones.

And we are not only the called ones, but we are the beloved in God the Father. We are dear to our Heavenly Father. He loves us dearly.

We are dear to him. And we are preserved in Christ Jesus. We are being kept by him and in him.

Now this is the preservation. This is the perseverance of the saints. You know, sometimes you hear a term called the perseverance of the saints.

Actually, the perseverance of the saints is the perseverance of Christ. Because he is the one who has preserved us. He has kept us.

And thank God we are not only called, we are loved and we are kept. And it is to these people that the letter is addressed. So dear brothers and sisters, this letter is addressed to us.

Now when Jude started to write this letter, he really had something in his mind. He wanted to write about the common salvation. In other words, he wanted to write about the salvation that we all shared in Christ Jesus.

And this was a subject very dear to his heart. But when he started to write, he was moved by the Spirit of God to write something else. To write an exhortation.

Instead of describing our common salvation, he was turned by the Holy Spirit to give us an exhortation. Why? Because he was stirred in his spirit by what he saw in the church. Or coming to the church.

And he felt constrained by the Spirit of God to give us an exhortation. Now we know what an exhortation is. Exhortation means two things.

On the one hand it is a warning. On the other hand, it is an encouragement. Exhortation always includes these two elements.

It warns and it encourages. It warns us against something that is not of God. And it encourages us into something that is of God.

Now that is exhortation. So he said, I have been obliged, I feel urged to write to you. Exhorting you to contain earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

You know there is the faith once delivered to the saints. Now what is the faith once delivered to the saints? The faith once delivered to the saints include all the revelations, all the truth that God has given to us, to the church, through the apostles and the prophets. It is our heritage.

It is our faith. It is that on which we build. It is the faith once delivered.

It is called once delivered because we know all the truth of God that controls our faith is all being delivered to us in the word of God. In other words, all the revealed truth have once been delivered to us and it is all now in this New Testament or in the whole Bible. There is no more new truth, new revelation as such because all the truth that compose the faith has been once delivered to the church.

So thank God we have the faith that was once delivered to the church. And it is said to contain earnestly for the truth, faith, once delivered to the church. Now this verse has been very wrongly used.

Why? Because we find it is said to contain earnestly for the faith. And some people, you know, get very enthusiastic, very zealous, and they argue with people, they fight with people over what they call the faith. For instance, some people fight with other people on the truth they call rapture.

And they say now rapture, this is what rapture is. And if you don't believe the same way they will throw you out. And they say it is because we have to contain earnestly for the faith.

And you find in Christianity over the two thousand years, how God's people have fought against each other over certain aspects of our faith. And you find you cannot give in, you cannot compromise, because if you do, then you give up your faith, and therefore you have to fight to death. And you find this is happening in Christianity over two thousand years.

Actually, this verse is wrongly used. Why? Because to contain earnestly does not mean that we have to fight to death for what interpretation we hold, according as to the truth. Actually, the word to contain means to agonize.

It means to strive. And it does, it simply means we need to agonize in reference to the faith once delivered to the saints. We need to strive for the faith once delivered to the saints.

And what does it mean? Just like Paul said, I have fought the good fight, I have run the race, I have finished the course. In other words, there is the faith once delivered to the saints. And this is the faith that we must strive after.

This is the faith that we must win. This is the faith that we must agonize over, so that we may have the faith once delivered to the saints. That we may not lose out in anything that God has given to us in grace in Christ Jesus.

Now that is what is meant here. In other words, it is not to use what you call faith to fight with one another. Instead, seeing the faith, you strive after it, you diligently seek after it, lest you miss out.

Now this is what is meant here. You know, we live in the time of apostasy. And that is the reason why we have to contain earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

Otherwise, we will fall away just as other people do. And that is the meaning here. Do not give up the faith once delivered to the saints, living it, work for it, strive after it, agonize over it, until you win it, you gain it.

Until that faith becomes your heritage, your property, your possession. Now that is what is meant here. Now this letter to Jude is a letter on apostasy.

Now the word apostasy is not used in this letter. But the substance is there. Now what is apostasy? Apostasy in English has no meaning.

Because it is not an English word in the beginning. It is a transliteration of a Greek word. Apostasia.

And the translator instead of translate it, they just transliterate it. In other words, turn a Greek word into an English word. So in Greek it is apostasia.

And in English it is apostasy. Apostasia comes from a combination of two words in Greek. Apo, which means from, species, which means to stand.

So when you put these two words together it means to stand away from. To stand away from that which you originally stand. And that is the reason why it means departure.

Departing. Falling away. Stand away from where you originally stand.

You fall away from what you originally possess. And that is what apostasy means. You know in 2 Thessalonians 2 verse 3, it tells us that there will be a falling away.

An apostasy. Before the sun of sin. That is the sun of perdition shall appear upon this earth.

And we know the sun of sin, the sun of perdition is the Antichrist. One day the Antichrist will appear upon this earth. But before he shall appear there will first be a general departure.

A general falling away in the church. And because the church begins to fall away from where it originally stands. Because God's people begin to lose what they originally had.

That prepares the way for the Antichrist to appear. Brothers and sisters, we are living in the day of apostasy. You know apostasy or apostate strictly speaking do not refer to unbelievers.

Why? Because an unbeliever they have never had that stand in the first place. Now if some ground that you never have stood on, you cannot fall away from it. You cannot depart from something that you have never possessed.

So in the first place you'll find that you do possess these things. But you begin to fall away from them. And that's apostasy.

You know if you read Hebrews chapter 6 for instance there you'll find the writer of Hebrews described certain situations. And he said now if you have laid the foundation, well the foundation, and we found the foundation includes repentance from dead works, faith in God, the doctrines of washings, imposition of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. In other words, here you'll find the believers.

They are believers. Because they have already had the foundation laid. They believe they have repented from dead works.

And they have faith in God. And they know the teaching of washing, of baptism, and they also know the meaning of the laying of hands, which is identification. And they know the resurrection of the dead, and they also believe in eternal judgment.

In other words, you'll find these people they have already had the foundation, they are believers. And he describes it, they have been once enlightened, tasted of the heavenly gift, partakers of the Holy Spirit,

tasted the good word of God, and the works of the power of the age to come. Now these are not unbelievers.

Enlightened, tasted the gift, heavenly gift, eternal life, partakers of the Holy Spirit, and not only they have heard of the Holy Spirit, they have the Holy Spirit, tasted the good word of God, they know God's word, and the good taste of it, and even all the works of the power of the coming age. Now these are believers, but they fall away, apostatized, they fall away. And then if you go to Hebrews chapter 10, you'll find again is described there, verse 26, for wherein we sing willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth.

Now the word knowledge there is epignosis, the full knowledge of the truth. See? After we have received the full knowledge of the truth, not just a little knowledge of the truth, the full knowledge, we come to know even the purpose of God in Christ Jesus, and yet if we sing willfully, it is like what? Like we have trodden underfoot the Son of God, esteemed the blood of His covenant whereby He has been sanctified common, and insulted the Spirit of grace. So in other words, you find these people, they have known the Son of God, but they fall away.

They tread the Son of God under their feet. They have been sanctified by the blood of the covenant, but then they consider the blood as karma, as nothing. They have the Holy Spirit, but they insult the Holy Spirit.

So dear brothers and sisters, you find that apostasy is not something in the world. Apostasy is something in the church. People who have believed in the Lord Jesus, who have known the Lord, who have received from the Lord, and yet you find they fall away.

They leave their early faith. It's a serious thing. Very serious.

And of course we know there are different degrees of apostasy. Because if you read Hebrews, you will find those who apostatized in Hebrews chapter 6 is not as serious as those who apostatized in Hebrews chapter 10. You can see the difference there.

There are different degrees of falling away. But, the point is these faiths, once delivered to us, we are to hold on to it, to strive after it, to agonize over it, lest we fall away. It is serious.

Brothers and sisters, look at the church today. We find that Christianity today has fallen away so far from the faith once delivered to the church. We live in the time of apostasy.

Now, who are the apostates? In the book of Jude, it says in verse 4, For certain men have gotten unnoticed. They who of old were mocked out beforehand to dissenters, ungodly persons, turning the grace of our God into dissoluteness and denying our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ. You know, there is a similarity between the book of Jude and 2 Peter.

When we talk about 2 Peter, we mention that we will leave off something until we come to Jude. Now, in 2 Peter, especially chapter 2, you find that 2 Peter chapter 2 and Jude, there is much similarity there. So, the question is, who copies who? And, of course, we find that there are different opinions.

But personally, I would think that Jude used Peter's writings. Why? Because if you read 2 Peter chapter 2, what Peter said, he said there shall be, or there will be, among you false teachers who were bringing destructive heresies, denying the Master who bought them. And their judgment is certain.

In other words, you'll find what Peter says is, there will be among you false teachers. But Jude said, certain men have gotten unnoticed, turning the grace of God into dissonantness and denying our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ. So, in other words, Peter is saying that false teachers will be coming in.

And Jude said, they have already got in. They have already got in. So, that's the reason why I believe Jude make use of Peter's writings.

But anyway, you'll find who are those who apostatize? Who are the apostates? Turning the grace of our God into dissonantness. The grace of God. These people know the grace of God.

The grace of God in Christ Jesus. What is the grace of God? To put it very simply, the grace of God is His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. God's grace is His Son.

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. The Lord Jesus is the grace of God. It is through our Lord Jesus that we receive grace.

Give. Free gift. Undeserved gift.

Eternal life. Through our Lord Jesus. Now, these people, they know the grace of God.

In other words, the grace of God has been upon them. And yet, they turn the grace of God into dissoluteness. Dear brothers and sisters, we all have received the grace of God.

We need to stand upon the grace of God. We should not waste the grace of God. We should not turn the grace of God into dissoluteness.

Like people said, because God is so gracious, God has so much grace, so it doesn't matter if we sin. It doesn't matter if we live a loose life. After all, God is gracious.

He will forgive us. You can live your life self-willed because the grace of God is so great. Now, in doing that, you are turning the grace of God into ungodliness.

The grace of God is given to us that we may be holy. That is what the grace of God is for. The grace of God is to make us holy.

Without the grace of God, how can we be holy? How can we be separated? How can we be completely belong to God? How can we be godly, like God, with that character of God within us? It's impossible. But the grace of God in Christ Jesus has been shown to us that we may be holy. That we may be a separated people.

That we may be sanctified. That we may serve God. We may glorify God.

That is what the grace of God is for. But sometimes you find people turn the grace of God into dissoluteness. Into licentiousness.

Into loose living. Into self-will. That apostasy, that makes you an apostate.

And denying our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ. Deny. You cannot deny what you have never confessed before.

But here you find they have not denied Jesus as their Saviour yet. Now some apostates, they even go to the extent of denying the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. And this is the spirit of Antichrist that John wrote about in his first letter.

But these people in Jude, they haven't denied the Lord Jesus as their Saviour yet. They haven't denied the name of the Lord Jesus yet. But what did they deny? They deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ.

You know the word Lord here is a special word. The word Lord here in Greek is despot. A despot.

You know it's a bad word in English today. An absolute monarch who is a despot. You know he does everything according to his wish and he can kill people and do anything he likes, you know.

Despotism. But in Greek this is that word. Not in a bad connotation.

But in a good connotation of that our Lord Jesus, one who has bought us with such a price, with his own blood, he is to us our absolute monarch. In other words, you do not belong to yourself. You belong to him absolutely.

He can do anything he likes with you. He is your despot. He is your benevolent despot.

He is your Lord and Master. And you are his. And you should obey him and you should surrender, you should yield to him completely and absolutely.

Now that's what you ought to do. But instead of doing that they deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ. In other words they may not have denied his name yet and yet they deny him as their absolute monarch.

They want to live their own lives. They want to do their own things. They do not care about the Lord's interest.

They will not subject themselves under the authority of Christ. Now, this is apostasy. Dear brothers and sisters, should not we be warned about this? Lest in callousness we too may have turned the grace of God into dissoluteness.

Lest in callousness we too may deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ. It is serious. That we'll be fallen away from the faith once delivered to the saints.

Oh, how we need to stand on the grace of God and let the grace of God so work in our lives that our lives may be sanctified wholly for God. How we need to confess our Lord Jesus as our absolute Lord and Master. And surrender our life completely to Him.

Lest in any way we begin to do our own will and go our own way. How we need to be warned about it. And how the church have fallen away.

Now, who are these apostates? In verse 8. Yet in like manner these dreamers also defile the flesh and despise worship and speak railingly against dignities. In other words, these apostates are dreamers. You know there are two kinds of dreamers.

One kind of dreamers are good. We need to dream. But these dreams come from above.

Vision. Vision. God has given us vision.

He revealed to us His mind and His heart in our spirit. But there is another kind of dreamer that is bad. In other words, it does not come from above.

It has come from their own lust. It has come from their own desire. Freshly desire.

You know, when you are thinking a lot about certain things, you begin to dream about it. It's not something given to you, it is something created from you. And these are the dreamers.

They are not people who receive heavenly vision, but they are people who dream of their own dreams. They defile the flesh. As they dream, so they are.

What are you dreaming? You will become what you dream about. If you dream of the Lord, you will be like Him. If you dream of the world, you will be like the world.

They defile their flesh. In other words, they walk according to the flesh, not according to the spirit. They despise lordship and speak gratingly against dignity.

In other words, they do not obey authorities. To them, they despise all authorities. All authorities come from God.

And in despise all authorities, despise God. In other words, they want to be their own master and their own authority. These are the apostates.

They will speak badly against things they even do not know. And what they do know, they corrupt themselves. That's what they are.

And in verse 16 it says, These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their lusts, and their mouths speak squirting words, admiring persons for the sake of profit. They are murmurers. They murmur all the time.

They complain. And they speak squirting words, big words, in order to gain. These are the apostates.

In the Church today, there are many apostates. Many false teachers, false prophets. The spirit of Antichrist is already here in the Church.

We live in the days of apostasy. Now how do you recognize them? By their ways, by their actions, you know them. So here you'll find, we can recognize them because they have gone in the way of Cain.

Now what is the way of Cain? That goes back to Genesis chapter 4. And in Genesis chapter 4 you'll find Cain. He offered the produce of his land to God as his sacrifice. In other words, he thinks that he is good enough for God.

He does not recognize himself as a sinner that needs to be redeemed by the shedding of the blood. He thinks that he is good enough. And he tried to offer his good works to God thinking that he would be accepted.

But he is rejected. And the result is he got angry and killed his brother, Abel. The way of Cain.

We can recognize those apostates by the way they go. You'll find they do not go in the way of the Lamb of God. You'll find they despise the blood of the Lord Jesus.

You'll find they are so self-confident that they think that they have enough good and merit to please God. They can be accepted on their own merits. The way of Cain.

And secondly, you'll find that they have given themselves up to the error of Balaam for reward. That goes back to Numbers chapter 22 to 24. You remember the Gentile prophet? He was employed by Balak, the Midianite, to curse the children of Israel.

But God would not allow him to curse. God changed his curse to a blessing. And because of that, he counseled the Midianites how to entrap the children of Israel into seeing that they may be cursed.

He sold his prophetic power for money. For gain. Dear brothers and sisters, we can recognize these apostates because they always enter into the error of Balaam.

God may have given them prophetic gifts. But they try to use it for their own gain. Instead of faithfully uttering the oracle of God.

And then number three. They perish in a game-saying of Korah. That is Numbers chapter 16.

There you'll find Korah. He was of the tribe of Levi. And his conspirators, those leaders among the children of Israel, they conspired against Moses and Aaron because they wanted to get the position.

They wanted to get the power. And they began to speak evilly of Moses and of Aaron. The game-saying of Korah.

And they perish. Brothers and sisters, these apostates, they always try to get some place, some position, something they are ambitious. Something that God has not given to them.

They are not satisfied with what God has given to them. Want something more? And finally, you'll find they perish in it. And the Scripture used several ways to describe them.

They are like the spots. Now the word spots in the original can be translated rocks. They are like spots in the Love Feast.

Now because when you say rocks in the Love Feast, it doesn't make sense. So the translator translated spots in the Love Feast. Now we know in the early church they used to come together to have what they call love, agape.

The word agape is for the feast. In other words, they come together to eat together as an expression of love. You know, the early church used to do that.

But these people, you know, they are in the church so they come, but they are right like the spots or the rocks in the Love Feast. You know, like the sunken rocks with a little water over it, and when the ship goes, then it sunk. You know, so they are like the rocks there.

You know, and they are pasturing themselves. Everything is for their own. Now that's these apostates.

And they are like clouds without water. You see the clouds, you may think there must be rain, but there is no water there. It is just a pretense.

Hypocrisy. And you find they are like optimal trees without fruit. There is no fruit there.

No fruit. Only an appearance. And they are like waves of the sea filling out their own shades.

You know, and they are like wandering stars. End up in destruction. So thus it is here you find these are the apostates.

And their punishment will come quick. We do not have time to go into it, but you read it and you find that the Lord will come and judge them. Let us be warned of apostasy.

Lest we too may fall away from the faith once delivered to us. But thank God this letter does not end here. If it ends here it will be negative.

Now even though he feels, he felt constrained to exhort. To contain earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. And he did not have the time to write about the common salvation.

And yet you know deep down in his heart is still the common salvation. So here you will find from verse 20 he turns back to the positive side. Now you brothers and sisters who are called beloved in God the Father and preserved in Christ Jesus.

Now what should you do when you live in such a time of apostasy? In other words you find people apostatized all around you. But is it because they fall away that you too can fall away? No. Because you find apostasy around you therefore you need to strive even more than ever before for the faith was delivered unto you.

That is what you should do. Building yourselves up on your most holy faith. Brothers and sisters when people are losing faith when people are falling away from faith, this is the time that you should build up on the most holy faith.

You know one thing if you are not going forward you are going backward. You are not able to stand. And that's the reason why in Hebrews chapter 6 it says we have to press on unto perfection.

We have to press on unto maturity. Why? Because you find there are other people who are falling away or falling back. The only way for you to keep on is to press on.

Is to build up. If you don't build up you are torn down. We cannot afford to stand still.

Brothers and sisters let there not be an unholy contentment. There must be a holy discontentment in us. In other words don't be so contented of your own spiritual condition or so contented of the brothers and sisters or the meetings the assembly where you are in.

You are so contented you think that you have arrived. That you have everything now. There is nothing more you need to contain.

You need to strive after. Now if you have that kind of attitude beware lest you fall. The only way to keep us from falling away is to build up.

Oh we need to build up. Continually building up on the most holy faith. There can be no let up.

There can be no let down. We have to continue to press on, to strive after, to agonize over and to wean it and to build up on the most holy faith. You remember the word of Peter 2nd Peter chapter 2? How beautiful it is.

Peter said, but for this very reason also using therewith all diligence. In your faith have also virtue. In virtue knowledge.

In knowledge temperance. In temperance endurance. In endurance godliness.

In godliness brotherly love. In brotherly love love. For these things exist and abounding in you make you to be neither idle nor unfruitful as regards the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wherefore be read, brethren, use diligence to make your calling and election sure. For doing these things you will never fall. For thus shall the entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be richly furnished unto you.

Brothers and sisters we have to build up on the most holy faith. How do you build? From faith to faith. From faith to virtue.

From virtue to knowledge. From knowledge to temperance. From temperance to godliness.

From godliness to love. And from brotherly love to love. You have to build.

Continually build on your most holy faith. And number two. Praying in the Holy Spirit.

Now praying in the Holy Spirit does not mean praying in tongues. Some people think praying in the Holy Spirit is praying in tongues. Now if you read 1 Corinthians 14 it's praying with the tongue.

It is praying with the tongue. Praying in the Holy Spirit whether it is in tongues or whether it is in plain words. It simply means that when we pray we do not pray according to our own mind and words.

We pray relying on the Holy Spirit to help us to teach us how to pray. That we may be praying according to God. That is praying in the Holy Spirit.

Why do we need to pray in the Holy Spirit? Because if you want to build on the most holy faith you discover that how helpless you are. If you do not try you think you are able. But if you try you find that how difficult it is.

That you can never make it on your own. You begin to realize your own weakness and feebleness and thank God the Holy Spirit is here to help you in your infirmities. And pray so that you depend on Him.

That's why you pray. And you pray in the Holy Spirit as the Holy Spirit reveals to you your own weakness and feebleness. And you pray according to the mind of God.

Keep yourself in the love of God. This is the way to be kept in the love of God. How are you to be kept in the love of God? In John chapter 15 it says if you keep your commandment then you'll love me.

And you will be loved by me. In other words here you'll find we are trying to build up and we are praying and by the grace of God we find we are able to obey. And as we obey the commandment of God, keep the commandment of God then we are kept in His love.

Awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And all the time we are waiting. Waiting for the return of our Lord Jesus.

When He shall return He will show mercy to us. It is all mercy. We don't deserve it.

Do not think that you have accomplished something. It is all by His grace. It is mercy.

And it is still mercy that we are waiting for at His coming. Brothers and sisters this is the way that we have to strive after the faith once delivered to the saints. And best of all is the last.

To Him that is able to keep you without stumbling and to set you with exaltation blameless before His glory to the only God and our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord the glory and majesty, might and authority from before the whole age and now and to all the ages. Amen. After everything is done you have to see that it is God who has kept us.

Dear brothers and sisters we cannot keep ourselves. But thank God we know He is able to keep us. He is able to keep us from falling.

He is able to keep us from stumbling. Not only that but He is able to present us with rejoicing without thought, blameless even before His glory. Dear brothers and sisters this is our blessed hope.

This is our confidence. Our confidence is not in ourselves. Do not think that we are better than anybody else.

Brothers and sisters we will fall just like anybody else will fall. It is all because of Him who is able to keep us from falling. And to present us faultless before the presence of His glory.

Now to Him be glory and majesty and honor and power forever and ever. Amen. Shall we pray? Dear Heavenly Father Thou has warned us that we live in the days of apostasy.

Oh we do acknowledge that if it is left to ourselves we will fall just as other people. But we do praise and thank Thee we know that Thou art our God. And Thou art able to keep us from falling.

And not only from falling but even to present us blameless before Thy glory. Oh our Father we just desire to commit ourselves to Thee. We want to tell Thee as Paul says I know whom I have believed.

And I am assured fully persuaded that You are able to keep that which I have committed to You until that day. So our Father today we commit ourselves to Thee. Spirit, soul and body.

To Thy keeping Lord. And we believe that Thou art able to keep us until that day. Oh our Father we do praise and thank Thee because Thou art our confidence.

Thou art our perseverance. Father we do pray that if there be those who have begun to fall away that Thou will restore because Thou art the God of compassion and of love. We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus.

Amen.

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