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"ALL CHRISTIANS TO ACTION STATIONS!! "

An outline study of Jude – an important little book for today.

By Rev Ivan Foster.

Part 7: Remembering the words of the apostles about the latter-day apostasy

"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. 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," Jude 1:16-19.

Verses 16-17 of the epistle of Jude underscore for us yet again how events in the last days feature large in the Word of God.

In our last study, we considered the words of a man, the prophet Enoch, and what he had to say about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Enoch's ministry would have had the earliest generations of mankind sit under it, and that most likely included Adam!

Here, in this penultimate book of the Bible, we are told of the warnings issued by the apostles regarding the character of those who would arise in the close of this age.

Events at the close of this age are very much to the fore in God's Word!

I. HERE IS AN EXHORTATION TO STUDY THE PROPHETIC WORDS OF THE APOSTLES

"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."

I think that it is a reasonable thing to say that you cannot 'remember' that which you have not considered closely and studied in depth.

The word 'remember' literally means to 'fill your mind' or be 'mindful.' Here are some references where this same word is translated by the English word 'mindful.'

"Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy," 2 Timothy 1:4.

"That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour," 2 Peter 3:2.

Significantly, this second use of the word 'mindful' appears in a parallel exhortation by Peter to that written here by Jude.

It is appropriate that we consider what Peter says.

"This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the



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water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen," 2 Peter 3:1-18.

Peter tells us here that:

1. The mocking of the latter day scoffers stems from their willing ignorance of the Holy Scriptures. If you are ignorant of God's Word then you invariably mock the statements of believers regarding the coming again of Christ. "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Peter 3:4), says the mocker. This scepticism stems from ignorance says Peter. "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Peter 3:5-7).

The abundant evidence of the world-wide flood of Noah's day is totally discounted by ungodly men, and this we say, irrespective of their vaunted knowledge, ludicrous theories and preposterous speculations about the origins of life on this earth and their attempts to explain away the fossil records which cry aloud of a catastrophic flood which wiped out creatures of every kind, including men, in a bygone era.

Blinding themselves to this great act of judgment in the past by the Lord, they easily dismiss the Bible's warnings of a yet greater judgment which will overtake mankind.

Peter says that the earth is "kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" by God. This statement on its own will demolish men's dire predictions about global warming and rising sea levels wiping out life on the planet. It is rather strange that those who dismiss the clear evidence of just such a flood in the past are prepared to cobble together "evidence" that a great flood will destroy the earth in the future!

The devil thus deceives men as to what is really coming by creating a diversion about a flood with the same impact as that Biblical flood which, ironically, he has already deceived men into rejecting!

How blind and foolish is mankind!

2. Irrespective of ungodly men's ignorance, the Christian is to be aware of the Bible's teaching on this issue. So says Peter. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing," 2 Peter 3:8.

The delay of which men complain (verse 4) is explained by the fact that a thousand years does not carry the same significance to God as it does to men. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day



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is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," 2 Peter 3:8. Two thousand years have passed since Christ bade farewell to His disciples and promised to return. However, long as that might appear to men, it is not long to God!

What appears as a very long time for man is, for God, "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy" (Isaiah 57:15) as nothing! The Lord Jesus Christ, Whose return in power and great glory will mark the beginning of the "Day of the Lord", is the One described by Micah as He, "that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting," Micah 5:2.

As I have said, "the Day of the Lord" commences with the return of Christ in glory. But it is a day, that is a length or period of time. It is not a 24-hour day any more than was the hour spoken of by Christ in Luke 22:53 a 60-minute period. The Saviour said of the time when He was given into the hands of men and arrested and crucified, "but this is your hour, and the power of darkness". It is the context in which the word is used that decides for us the length of time indicated. We know that the days spoken of in Genesis 1 are periods of 24 hours for we are told that the period was bounded by the "evening and the morning."

We frequently use the word 'day' to indicate a period of time in history, an era, as it is used in the phrase 'in Shakespeare's day.'

This era in which we live has been called the 'times of the Gentiles' - "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24) when the Gentiles dominate the world, Israel being under their power and dominion. But "the Day of the Lord" is that time when "the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one" (Zechariah 14:9)!

The "Day" begins with His coming "in the clouds with great power and glory" (Mark 13:26) and will end with the final judgment, described by Peter in 2 Peter 3:10. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

Amillennialism

This verse, it has to be said, is set forth by Amillennialists (those who reject the Bible's teaching on the millennial reign of Christ) as proof positive that there is no millennial reign. They claim that when Jesus Christ comes again, "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." That is the end of creation as we know it now, and, they claim, there is no mention, no place for a millennial reign after Christ's return according to Peter.

Every word of God

The difference between Amillennialists and those who belong, as I do, to that school of prophetic teaching called Pre-millennialists or Futurists, is that we pay reverent attention to EVERY word of God for we believe that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," 2 Timothy 3:16.

That being so, there are three words in 2 Peter 3:10 of which we should take particular notice. Peter says that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise . . ." The three words to be carefully noted are "in the which."

The "which" referred to by Peter is the "Day of the Lord". It is "in" or "during" or "within" that Day that "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise." In other words, this is one of the events, the final event as it turns out, that will mark that wonderful period which begins with the return of Christ in glory. The Bible makes it clear that the Day that will begin with Christ's Second Advent and will end with the heavens passing away will contain many wonderful events which must of necessity occupy lengthy periods of time.



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For instance, Isaiah 2:12 reads "For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low." The description of the events of that wonderful day begins in verse 1. Here we read of the exalting of the mountain of the Lord's House in Jerusalem and the flowing of the nations to it. "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD," Isaiah 2:3-5.

Such activities will take place at the beginning of the Millennial Reign of Christ and continue until its end. If there is no Millennial Reign then when do these events take place? Please note that it is a time of great peace. "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Has that taken place yet? I am very sure that no one will be so foolish as to claim that it has!

But it will take place in the Millennial Reign of Christ.

If the reader cares to read on from Isaiah 2:12 (and one should) and its opening phrase, "For the day of the LORD of hosts . . ." they will encounter another little phrase: "in that day." I would contend that it is a reference to the same "day" mentioned in 2:12 and it enlarges upon that which will happen in that day. Please consider the phrase, "in that day" in the following verses: 2:11, 17, 20, 3:7, 18, 4:1, 2. Are these not activities which are said to take place during the "Day of the Lord" and thereby is implied that the "Day" is of considerable length? Its exact length is given precisely six times in Revelation 20:1-6. It is a millennium or one thousand years.

That is one day that is a thousand years!

Another example of what I am saying is found in Zechariah 14:1 where we again have the phrase 'the day of the Lord' and it is then followed by many verses which contain the phrase 'in that day' all of which illustrate the same fact of much activity over a lengthy period taking place subsequent to the beginning of the 'Day of the Lord.'

We could add many more references but I think that these illustrate that is clear that in the "Day of the Lord" there is going to be a multiplicity of events and happenings that must clearly show that the dawning of that "Day" does not end time as the Amillennialist would have us believe.

But to return to the words of Jude.

II WE HAVE A VERY DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE 'MOCKERS' OF THE LAST DAYS

"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. . . . who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit," verses 18 and 19.

Here are seven descriptive phrases employed to detail the character of these latter-day mocking blasphemers.

Seven is considered as the number associated with 'fullness or completeness.' We certainly have a complete description here of the apostate of the last days.

These are derogatory terms! Jude was not afraid to be colourful in his language. Of course, we must bear in mind that the words written by Jude were given him by the Holy Ghost so we are looking in actual fact at the terminology of the Holy Ghost!



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Free Presbyterianism in the past

Free Presbyterianism in the past was often censured by ecumenists and modernists for resorting to expressions such as these here employed by Jude. How right we were back then in our denunciations of the apostasy! May God fill our tongues again with such terms when we speak of God's enemies.

Please quickly note the seven titles given to these mockers.

1. They were 'murmurers'. This is a unique word, appearing only here in the New Testament though a closely related word is used elsewhere. The word refers to those who 'discontentedly complain against God.' It suggests a secretive muttering against the Lord, against His Person, His Word, His Laws and Commandments - just about everything that is of the Lord. Nothing about Him pleases them. They would change Him wherever they can. Thus they promulgate and proclaim new views on His deity, His sinlessness, His knowledge, His miracles and His teachings. They cast off His laws on morality, marriage, the Sabbath, abortion, modesty and just about everything He has instituted.

There is nothing about God that pleases them so they 'murmur'! It was to such that the Psalmist referred. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us," Psalm 2:1-3. Murmuring leads to defiance and rebellion. That is where the great apostasy of today is going.

2. They are 'complainers'. This is a word close in meaning to 'murmurers'. This divine emphasis must be noted for when the Lord repeats Himself He wants us to take note. The word refers to 'complaining of one's lot, querulous, discontented.' They chafe under the yoke of God and would be rid of it. They lead the chorus of protests and grumbling against God.

Please note that the secret murmurings have broken out into public complaining. Here is a bold advancing in their rebellion. It is the spirit of those depicted in the parable of the 'certain nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return', that we read about in Luke 19:11-28. The parable contains the line: "his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us."

The rebellion against God's law, exemplified in the legalising of abortion, sodomy and same-sex marriages, is that spirit embodied in this word 'complainers' and the parable of Luke 19 and is rising all around us, growing louder every day.

3. They are those 'walking after their own lusts'. Having rejected God's rule and God's commandments, they follow the dictates of their own filthy lusts. Their compass and map are their own depraved appetites. We see this before our very eyes here in Ulster as well as across the world. The Irish Republic recently voted overwhelmingly to cast off God's Law on same-sex marriage and many here in Ulster, who are in sympathy with such a decision, are now clamouring for such a change in the law to take place here also. It is to be noted that in polls conducted amongst the public, the majority in favour of such a change is to be found amongst the younger generation, those who are the product of the teaching of ecumenism in the last forty years.

4. They are those whose 'mouth speaketh great swelling words'. The abuse of God pouring forth from their mouths has become as a river which has burst its banks. It is in full flood. It is said of the Beast, the Antichrist, that "he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven," Revelation 13:6. We are hearing the beginnings of that tirade today!

5. They are those who have 'men's persons in admiration because of advantage'. They live and rule with their eyes upon men in order to obtain man's favour. In this they are not as God. "For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward," Deuteronomy 10:17. Thus a system of government, based upon greed and self-



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advancement, will become more and more evident in complete contrast to that desired of by God. "Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous," Deuteronomy 16:19.

Do we not daily see and hear of evidence of this spirit at work in the Houses of Parliament at Westminster? Is it not the very foundation of the present Stormont regime?

6. These are 'they who separate themselves'. They separate themselves, not from sin and immorality, which would be a commendable thing, but from the people of God and godliness. They are separated unto wickedness!

How often we have seen those in public life separate themselves from aspects of Bible teaching because it was deemed detrimental to their career. We had a clear example of this some time ago. Here is the headline of an article in the 'Belfast Telegraph' of July 13th, 2015. "Adrian Cochrane-Watson: 'I respect the gay community... they have stayed at my B&B'" This man is a member of the Ulster Unionist Party who was recently co-opted as a member of the Stormont Assembly. But he sang a different tune in former days. In the article in the 'Belfast Telegraph' he is clearly seen to back-pedal because it is not good for one's political career within Ulster Unionism today to be an anti-sodomite!!!

7. They are 'sensual, having not the Spirit.' They are moved and motivated, not by the Holy Spirit toward purity and holiness but by the base spirit of man toward earthliness and corruption. 'Sensual' literally means 'such as gave themselves up to sensual lusts and pleasures.' The headlines in today's press, as I write this article, illustrates this word very succinctly. "Police have launched a criminal investigation after former Deputy Lords Speaker Lord Sewel was filmed allegedly taking drugs with prostitutes." **BBC news site**, 28th July, 2015.

We are further down the road to the looming conflict between this world and the God of Heaven, which will culminate in the return of Christ, than, sadly, most Christians are aware.

The Lord bless you.

Ivan Foster.

August 1st 2015.