

December 29, 2019 - Jude 17-25 - “Make a Difference in 2020”

Introduction:

So here we are it's now the last Sunday of 2019 and 2020 is waiting in the wing three days away. I wonder how the Church will fare next year. In 365 days, when the year is over, will we be looking back with joy, or with regret? Will we be satisfied with our accomplishments and if so will we have made a difference, a real differences for our spiritual well-being, for others in the Church of Jesus Christ. George Barna reveals we did poorly last year.

I have gathered some interesting facts relate to the Church as of 2019. Barna noted that “The problem facing the Christian Church is not that people lack a complete set of beliefs; the problem is that they have a full slate of beliefs in mind, which they think are consistent with Biblical teachings and they are not. They are neither open to being proven wrong nor to learning new insights. Many Millennials are unsure about the actual practice of evangelism. Almost half of Millennials (47%) agree that it is wrong to share one’s personal beliefs with someone of a different faith in hopes that they will one day share the same faith.

“Consequently, more and more people are engaged in hybrid faiths, mixing elements from different historical eras and divergent theological perspectives,” Listen to this as Barna stated. “In some ways, we are creating the ultimate ecumenical movement, where nothing is deemed right or wrong, and all ideas, beliefs and practices are assigned equal validity. Everyone is invited to join the dialogue, enjoy the ride, and feel connected to a far-reaching community of believers. 71% say they will develop their own slate of religious beliefs rather than accept a package of beliefs promoted by a church or denomination. Morality is relative and there are no absolutes. Only one-third (34%) believe in absolute moral truth

Three-quarters of adults (75%) believe that God is motivating them and others to connect with Him through different means and experiences than were common in the past. (We then have to trash Hebrews Chapter one and others) 68% of self-identified Christians have heard of spiritual gifts, a decline in the past decade; a minority (roughly one-third) can actually identify a biblical spiritual gift they claim to possess. Half of all self-identified Christians firmly believe that the Bible is totally accurate in all of the principles (not the facts, just the principles) that it teaches. Barely one-quarter of adults (27%) are confident that Satan exists.

There is a passage of Scripture in Jude that I believe can be of help to us as we look forward to 2020 - if we will apply it truth. If we are going to make a difference for the kingdom we must safeguards against apostasy. Therefore first ---

I We Must Defend the Faith vv. 1-4

1. Jude is the half-brother of the Lord and like James he too has author an epistle. This letter is written (verse 1) to born again believers who must be the defenders of the faith. Jude was intending to write an epistle regarding our common salvation (vv3) but God burden him to pen instruction on the much more needed subject of apostasy. It is so needed today.

2. What is apostasy? The word conveys the idea of abandonment and defection. Maxwell Coder defines an apostate as "one who has received light, but not life. He may have received, in some degree, the written word; but he has not received the living word, the Son of God.

3. Paul warned that in the latter days a great falling away would occur in the Church. **-2 Thess: 2:3.** Jude is the only book in the Bible devoted solely to this great apostasy which is to come upon Christendom before the Lord Jesus Christ returns. We would do well to heed its' instruction. If we are going to make a difference in this life one that counts let it begin with defending the faith. Let us take a stand for our values and beliefs.

4. We see in our day how there is a great falling away from the Church, from the truths of God's word...the Ten Commandments. We see homosexuals becoming ministers, same sex marriages accepted not to mention how much liberalism and corruption is within the church. Even the SBC now has spilt on the LBGT issue. The Southern Baptist Convention stood as one of the last denominations to reject homosexuality. Until recent years, president, Russell Moore, the SBC has taken a slow but decidedly noticeable shift in its position on the issue. Jude warns us, in fact he said, it was needful for me...the meaning of the Greek "needful" is to bear down upon, to compress. We must earnestly content for the Faith. Evils will success if good does nothing.

5. We are living in the last days and apostasy will worsen. Doctor J. Vernon McGee writes, "What was a little cloud the size of a man's hand in Jude's day is, in our day, a storm of hurricane proportions-because we are in the apostasy of which he foretold." Dr. McGee did not live to see this day of homosexual's ministers and same sex marriages.

II. Remember the Lord's Judgment. Vv. 5- 7

1. How can we make a difference and stay apostasy in our time. Note Jude is admonishing his readers to remember three well-known Old Testament examples of apostasy. These were:

- a. The historical example of Israel's unbelief. Vv5 they came to a place called Kadesh Barnea, on the threshold of the Promised Land. But at Kadesh Barnea, the people refused to trust God and go into the Promised Land of Canaan. Therefore almost none of the adult generation who left Egypt entered into the Promised Land. Numbers 14
- b. The historical example of those angels who kept not their first estate. Vv6
- c. The historical example of Sodom's destruction. Vv7

2. We are all familiar with the first and last examples of apostasy. The sin of Sodom was the transgressing of the male beyond the limitations imposed by God." Today liberal critic want you to believe the sin was a lack of hospitality! You might need a little explanation of the second. All of the apostasy was in the way of fornication whether it be spiritual or physical. The fact is all was sin.

3. The Scriptures are explicit that there exist two kinds of fallen angels-the unchained and those chained. The unchained at present have access to high places. (Eph. 6:12; Lk. 8:27). God will of course, someday judge these unchained angels. Their one main sin was that of following Satan in his rebellion against God (1 Cor. 6:3;). The chained are at present already incarcerated, as stated also by Peter (2 Pet. 2:4) and Jude. It is believed that the sin which led

to this premature punishment of a limited number of fallen angels can be directly linked to Genesis 6. A co-habiting of angels with the daughters of men, this was ungodly...

4. Suffice for now to understand this was Satan attempt to destroy God's plan of salvation by corrupting the human race so that Messiah could not redeem mankind. Of course it did not work. God destroy the Antediluvian race and we now contend with demons that are the disembodied spirits of this ungodly offspring.

III We Must Build Up Spiritually (vs. 20-25).

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith"

1. This is accomplished through the Word of God. We are to pray. "Praying in the Holy Ghost" (v. 20) . See Ephesians 6:18. You also need to schedule some definite time each day to pray & to read His Word. Pray for yourself & for your family & for people around you. Pray for the church, & for the missionaries. Prayer makes a difference. Pray for discernment because their apostate teaching is clever, subtle, deceptive, enticing, and delivered in multitudes of forms, the common way to recognize them is to look behind their false spiritual fronts and see their wicked lives.

IV. We are to Keep Ourselves in God's Love.

1. In verse 1 we are kept for Jesus, but here we are to keep in God's love. How is this done? While the believer cannot escape the boundary of God's love (Ps. 139:7-12), he can withdraw himself from the full blessings of this love... I'm assuming that since you're in church this morning that you believe God should be a part of your life. But when you begin to withdraw from Church, prayer and study you rob yourself of God's blessings. So ask yourself, "Who or what is most important in my life?" And I'm hoping that your answer will be, "My relationship with God, through Jesus Christ, is most important to me." We are to anticipate the rapture. "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life".

V. We are to Win the Lost (22, 23).

1. We are to have compassion. That may mean spending time to help someone or to share with someone. ...Now you can let your faith make a difference! There are individuals who live without hope and have doubts. There are those trouble by alcohol and drugs immorality and then those who are led astray by the cults.

2. Make a commitment that next year you'll give tracks.

Conclusion:

History is replete with examples of Christian's men and women who believe that God would work through them to make a significant difference. Joseph, Daniel and Esther... What is going to count is what difference I make for the better for others and for God? Lord please help us to use the 8,760 hours of this next year the wisest way we can for you and for your glory so we can make a difference that counts.