

A Contemporary Prophet Reminder (vv.17-18)

A Church Age Prophecy (v.17)

VERSE 17 But you, beloved (*Ἑμεῖς δέ, ἀγαπητοί [pro.n.p., su + conj, de + adj.voc.m.p., agapetos, beloved]*), **ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ** (*μνήσθητε τῶν ῥημάτων τῶν προειρημένων ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [aor.pass.imper.2.p., μιμνήσκομαι, mimneskomai, remember + def.art.w/gen.nt.p., hrema, word, utterance + pf.pass.pt.gen.nt.p., προλέγω, prolego, speak beforehand, predict; cp. 2Pet.3:2 + prep., hupo w/def.art.w/gen.m.p., apostolos, apostle + def.art.w/gen.m.s., kurios + pro.gen.p., ego + gen.m.s., Iesus Christos]*),

Its Content (v.18)

VERSE 18 that they were saying to you (*ὅτι ἔλεγον ὑμῖν [conj., hoti + imperf.act.ind.3.p., lego, say + pro.acc.p., su]*), **"In the last time there will be mockers** (*[ὅτι] Ἐπ' ἐσχάτου [τοῦ] χρόνου ἔσονται ἐμπαῖκται [conj. hoti + prep.epi.w/adj.gen.m.s., eschatos, last + gen.m.s., chronos, time + fut.mid.ind.3.p., eimi + n.m.p., ἐμπαίτης, empaites, mocker, one who makes fun of another; 2x: 2Pet.3:3]*), **following after their own ungodly lusts** (*πορευόμενοι κατὰ τὰς ἑαυτῶν τῶν ἀσεβειῶν ἐπιθυμίας [pres.dep.pt.n.m.p., poreuomai, go, follow after + pro.reflex.gen.m.p., heautou + def.art.w/gen.f.p., asebeia, ungodly + prep., kata w/acc.f.p., epithumia, lust; we have here an unusual Greek construction. "following after lusts—their own ungodly manifestations]."*)

ANALYSIS: VERSES 17-18

1. Jude has appealed to the ancient prophecy of Enoch, preserved via oral tradition and mentioned in the apocryphal book *1 Enoch*; now he reminds his readers of the words of the apostles.
2. The false teachers (*houtoi*, "these men") have ignored the legacy, "but you (*humeis de*) remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ".
3. The verb "remember" is an aorist imperative.
4. The translation is simply, "But you, beloved remember...".
5. The Greek for "words" is *hrema*, which means "utterances" or "sayings".
6. Forgetfulness of the warnings of God in Scripture is a major cause of falling into error.
7. Jude points out that there is nothing in the current attack that could not have been expected.
8. The apostles had foretold it.
9. The use of the term "spoken beforehand" (*proeipon*) means simply that the apostles made mention of the rise of these types before it came to pass.

10. Indeed, the apostles said it “to you” (*humin* of v.18)– palpable evidence that we are dealing with historical contemporaries of the apostles.
11. This certainly includes the Twelve, and may include certain others of special association with the Twelve (like Barnabas; cp. Acts.14:14; 2Cor.8:23 “messengers”; Phil.2:25 “messenger”); but see point 23 below.
12. The main line apostles acted as prophets to the church and made predictions regarding last things.
13. They acted in the same capacity as the prophets of the OT, who addressed the same issue (cp. 2Pet.3:1-3).
14. Appeal to apostolic teaching would be very proper in one like Jude, who was not an apostle, and a very modest man (see comments on v.1).
15. It is noteworthy that he does not say, like 2Peter, “your apostles”, which could well include the writer (2Pet.1:1), but rather “the apostles”.
16. Paul predicted the rise of false teachers in Acts.20:29-30.
17. There is abundant evidence in the NT that this trend was well under way before the Twelve passed from the scene (e.g., 2Cor.11:13; Rev.2:2, et al).
18. Jesus predicted the rise of false prophets and messiahs (Mk.13:22-24).
19. Today these types are brought into homes via television (2Tim.3:6 a prophecy of trends of the last days).
20. The dismay and bewilderment, with the emergence of novelties in belief and behavior, is offset by Jude’s reminder.
21. His appeal is that there is no cause for undue dismay, since the apostles themselves have given an unambiguous forecast of precisely these alarming developments.
22. Adjusted believers should rather regard these dangers as a challenge to stand fast with respect to the apostolic witness and give help, whenever it is solicited, to unsettled brethren.
23. There is a solemn note in “the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ”, which compels us to take it as referring strictly to the original Twelve.
24. Again, we should observe that Jude does not include himself among “the apostles”, and he does not call himself one in the letter’s salutation.
25. The imperfect tense of “they were saying to you” stresses the repeated nature of the apostolic warning, *in situ*.
26. Clearly, warnings like Acts.20:29-30; 2Thess.2:5; 1Tim.4:1-3; and 2Tim.3:1ff (not to mention a host of other written correspondence as well as face-to-face communication) are meant.
27. The particular warning that follows is substantially identical with 2Pet.3:3.
28. Peter and Jude must have borrowed from a common source.
29. The hypothesis of a common source, designed for common use against false teachers, is supported by the use the two letters make of this quotation.
30. Peter applies it to those who scoffed at the doctrine of the Second Advent, and who were slaves to their lusts.
31. Jude, while not making explicit mention of the doctrine of the Lord’s return, cites their total lack of true spirituality in v.19.
32. Both writers are applying the prophecy to unbelievers of a libertine persuasion, whose agenda was to upset the good morals and sound doctrine of Christians.
33. The Greek noun *empaiktai*, translated “mockers”, is found only here and in 2Pet.3:3 in the whole NT, but quite often in the LXX.

34. Jude's use of the word "ungodly" is remarkable.
35. The word is absent from Peter's citation, and Jude has, in fact, used it four times in v.15, once more than the *1 Enoch* prophecy which he was quoting.
36. His repeated stress upon *asebeia* shows the revulsion of a sensitive godly man to those who make pious pretensions, but utterly belie them in their behavior.
37. It is used here as a descriptive genitive in the phrase "their own ungodly lusts" (cp. "ungodly sinners" in v.15).
38. The words "ungodly lusts" versus just "lusts" suggests their advocacy of moral and sexual freedom in the name of Christianity.
39. They scoffed at men who had moral scruples as "old-fashioned" and "repressive", unlike the enlightened and liberated teachers who were exploiting their Christian freedom!
40. They abused grace and claimed that all sinning was incidental.
41. They probably held to incipient Gnostic doctrine that became prominent in the second century.
42. The time frame for the fruition of this prophecy is said to be "in the last time" (Ἐπ' ἐσχάτου [τοῦ] χρόνου) which clearly refers to the course of the church age and onward to the Second Advent (cp. Heb.1:2; 1Pet.1:20).
43. The word "time" (*chronos*) means a span of time.
44. It is equivalent to the designation "last days" of 2Tim.3:1 and Jam.5:3.
45. In the OT, the phrase refers to the end-time fulfillment of OT prophecies (Isa.2:2; Jer.23:20; 49:39; Ezek.38:16; Hos.3:5; Micah.4:1; Acts.2:17).
46. In intertestamental and Christian sources it denotes the time of the fulfillment of the OT prophecies.
47. It is used in the NT in reference to the First Advent of Christ (Acts.2:17; Heb.1:2; 1Pet.1:20) and to their own present (1Jn.2:18) as well as the outstanding future (1Pet.1:5).
48. The First Advent marks the *terminus a quo* and the Second Advent the *terminus ad quem*.
49. The thing that drives false teachers is "their own lusts", be it power, approbation, sex, or monetary lust or some combination thereof.
50. They are constantly "following after" (present participle *poreuomai*) the call of the flesh and not God the HS, who leads us into all truth.

Concluding Characterization (v.19)

VERSE 19 These are the ones who cause divisions (Οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἀποδιорίζοντες [*pro.demonstr.n.m.p., houtos, this + pres.act.ind.3.p., eimi + def.art.w/pres.act.pt.n.m.p., ἀποδιорίζω, apodiorizo, strictly, separate off by placing boundaries, cause divisions; 1x*]), **worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit** (ψυχικοί μὴ ἔχοντες πνεῦμα [*adj.n.m.p., psuchikos, natural; 6x: 1Cor.2:14; 15:44,46; Jam.3:15; Jude.19 + neg.w/pres.act.pt.n.m.p., echo, have + acc.nt.s., pneuma, spirit, human spirit*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 19

1. For the third time (cf. vv.12, 16) Jude launches out with a contemptuous *houtoi*, “these types”.
2. And, as in v.17, he contrasts it with “but you, beloved”; so here he uses the same phrase in v.20.
3. What else can he have to say about the heretics?
4. This verse reveals a lot.
5. He starts by using a very rare word and calls them “the ones who cause divisions”, or “who divide” you, or “create divisions”.
6. It may be used (as in Aristotle) to mean, “the men that make distinctions” (*i.e.*, invidious distinctions between themselves and other people).
7. The word (ἀποδιорίζω), found only here in the Bible, denotes those superior people who keep themselves to themselves—a manifestation of Christian Phariseeism.
8. The verb means strictly, “to separate off by placing boundaries”; hence, “set up distinctions” or “cause divisions”.
9. The ways in which this divisiveness exhibited itself was that they probably formed a clique of their own at the Agape meals (v.12).
10. They certainly despised the simple pastors set over the churches (v.8), and attached themselves to the well-to-do (v.16).
11. Now, on the whole, the rich would have been the educated.
12. “It was out of this state of things that Gnosticism arose. It was the revolt of the well-to-do, half-educated bourgeois class” (Bigg).
13. It was probably with a prototype of Gnosticism that we have to do here.
14. These men were arrogant because they had arrived, spiritually and intellectually.
15. They were the *elite*.
16. That is why they kept themselves to themselves.
17. They were, indeed, very much like Pharisees, and Jude deals with them like Jesus dealt with the Pharisees.
18. The derivation of the name Pharisee probably means “separated”, and denotes the exclusive people who divided themselves off.
19. And Jesus told them they were indeed separated—from the God they claimed to know! (Mk.3:23-26, Gk.).
20. Here Jude does the same.
21. They claim to be separated off.
22. He agrees. They are!
23. Exclusiveness always hurts the exclusive man more than those from whom he separates himself.
24. It seems they despised the ordinary believer, and called themselves *psuchikoi* (transl. “worldly-minded”), men governed by the natural life, not spiritual.
25. They themselves claimed to be *pneumatikoi*, to have the fullness of the Spirit, and not bound by the restrictions and inhibitions of ordinary Christians.
26. They were the spiritual aristocracy, immune to the laws of conduct, which bound ordinary believers.
27. So far from being filled and led by God the HS they did not have the Spirit at all.
28. And those who do not have God the HS indwelling them are classified as unbelievers (Rom.8:9b “*But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.*”).

29. So the words “devoid of the Spirit” or literally, “not having the Spirit”, supports the position taken in the interpretation of 2Peter and Jude, that these heretics had never come to saving faith.
30. The designation “wordly-minded” or better “natural men” is to be compared with 1Cor.2:14 where Paul teaches that “*a natural man (ψυχικός άνθρωπος) does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually (πνευματικῶς) apppraised*”.
31. All human viewpoint is the product of the natural man’s thinking and so is ψυχικός (Jam.3:15).
32. For the designation “spiritual” (πνευματικός) see 1Cor.2:15 “*But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one.*”.
33. Believers out of fellowship are not experientially spiritual (1Cor.3:1; 14:37; Gal.6:1).
34. The teachers who were insinuating themselves into the lives and communities of Christians were clearly counterfeit Christians.
35. The mystery cults, which for a time constituted a threat to Christianity, used language like this.
36. A German scholar (Reitzenstein) cites a prayer of the Mithras cult in which “natural human (*psuchike*) ability” is contrasted with the “holy spirit” conferred in the mystery.
37. It is not impossible that the false teachers borrowed their invidious distinctions (and the language to go with them) from the mystery cults?
38. Jude saddles them with their own petard, as he exploits the same terminology for orthodox ends.
39. That is why we are enjoined “*not to believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*” (1Jn.4:1).
40. Of course, they are going to employ the same terminology to try and trip up the unwary.
41. These types formulate their insidious teachings in very clever ways, so as to sound orthodox.
42. But, when we look beneath the surface, we find the real theology.
43. The surface is designed to lure people in (as with the Mormons and their ads).
44. A lot of organizations are reticent to publish the unvarnished version, but the truth as to what they really mean is attainable.
45. Various authors have done exposés on the cults.