

Watch out and keep out

Book of Jude

I went to business trips often years ago. I remember my co-workers always told me to watch out for pick-pocket thieves in certain countries. Many true stories about those thieves, people had lost money, passports and jewelries during those trips. Whenever I am in a foreign trip, I always **watch out** for my surrounding, and **keep** my hand **in** my pocket to **keep** the thief's hand **out**. The similar concept of safeguarding is illustrated in the book of Jude to watch out for the evils, keep them out and be remain in God.

The book of Jude was written by Jude which is a brother of James (also a brother of Jesus). This was a letter to members in a local church. This was written sometime between AD60 to AD80. Jude wrote the letter to warn his readers against false teachers. These teachers claimed to be Christians, but these ungodly persons were being a great danger to the church and Christians at that time. Jude described the consequence of those evil followers, and how Christians should follow the truth from God instead.

1) Evil is out there

Evils have infiltrated these people's heart. These people became ungodly (verse 4, 12 & 13). However, they stayed in the church and caused problems. There are same situations happening today in churches. The book of Jude described many events in the past as examples. Jude pointed out it was happening in the past, happening now and will happen in the future.

a) Evil in the past

Jude gave an example in verse 5 on how God's people were freed from Egypt and later destroyed because of not believe. He described the fallen angels in verse 6. The history of Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns was mentioned in verse 7. More examples were listed in verse 11. These people were judged and punished.

b) Evil in the present

Jude saw the same situation within local churches at that time. The same is happening today in some of our churches.

c) Evil in the future

"In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires" (Verse 18). These ungodly persons will be present in the future like at the end time.

2) God is always present also

Jude listed all the examples showing God is present at all times and takes actions in His time. Verse 25 states God has glory, majesty, power and authority before all ages, now and forevermore. God has authority over evils.

God can keep you from stumbling, and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy (verse 24). This is very comforting!

3) Keep out and keep in

a) To **keep out all the evil** influence as stated earlier (Jude vs. 4-19). The church leaders and members have to stand together to keep evils out. The church leaders have to point the ungodly deeds out based on God's word, and the members have to watch out and keep them out. The evil follower/doer can be you or others. If it is you, you need to repent. If it is others, you need to help to correct. If he/she has no repentance, keep him/her out of the church.

b) To keep in is to **keep God in** the center of your life.

1. Know His Word. Verse 20 states "building yourselves up in your most holy faith". This means to know Him and be an imitator of God. Remain in Him as stated in John 15:4 (Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.)
2. Have confidence in God. In addition, verse 21 states "**keep yourselves in** God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life." God's love never leave you. Thus, you have the assurance and protection from God due to His love and mercy. Christians have the eternal hope for living eternally in Heaven with Him.
3. Pray always (I Thes. 5:16-17). The second half of verse 20 states "praying in the Holy Spirit". Pray to God can help you to know God's will. Through Prayer, God can also help you to understand His characters, and He can provide you comfort and encouragement.
4. The other aspect of **Keep God in** is to obey God in action
Verse 22 states "Be merciful to those who doubt". You have to understand your Christian brothers and sisters, have patience with them, have mercy on their weakness, forgive their wrong doings, point them to the correct way, and help them to grow in Christ.
Verse 23 mentioned about save others by snatching them from the fire. This is an important action for each of us to watch over your Christian brothers and sisters and prevent them from falling.

I encourage you to always remember to "keep out" evils and "keep in" God!