

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 9



*Contend
for the faith
which was
once delivered
to the saints
Jude 1:3*

THEY WHO SEPARATE THEMSELVES

Scripture Text: Jude 19

This verse contains the last words that Jude used to describe the condition of apostates. They give a plain and simple summarization of what an apostate does and why.

MEMORY VERSE: *Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life (John 6:68).*

Promoters of Division

These be they who separate themselves. To understand whom Jude was speaking of in this phrase, look back to **verse 18**, to the word *mockers*. The words *these* and *they* in **verse 19** both refer to this word. Those who have the spirit of mockery and make fun and jeer at the truth, the standard, God's man, and God's people are trying to accomplish a purpose through their mocking. They are attempting to embarrass God's people away from their stand for the truth.

Jude said, *These . . . separate themselves*. The Greek word that *separate* comes from is *apodiorizo*. This word is composed of several portions. *Apo* means "from," *dio* means "asunder," and *horizo* means "to limit." Together, they simply mean those who have put themselves asunder from the limits. One scholar's translation of this word is, "they who bring about divisions because of borderlines, or limits." Martin Luther interpreted it as "those who make factions."

The "limits" are boundaries that God has set in His Word for the control of our humanity and conduct. Men who have yielded themselves to the spirit of apostasy scoff and mock at the law of God. They deny the authority of the Scriptures and refuse to submit to its dictates. Spiritually, they are outside the body of Christ, even though they continue to profess and try to allure others to their way of thinking. To induce, promote, or further division is SIN!

Galatians 5:19-21 lists the works of the flesh. **Verse 21** declares, "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." **Verse 20** mentions "heresies," which in the Greek language is interpreted *sects*, or *parties*. In **1 Corinthians 1:10** and **1 Corinthians 12:25**, Paul earnestly told the Corinthians that they should have no divisions among them. **1 Corinthians 1:13** asks the question, "Is Christ divided?" The obvious answer is "No."

The clear inference is that His body should not be divided either. However, there are men who *separate themselves*. Sad as it is, this act of separation is a revealing work. **1 John 2:19** says, "They went out from us, but they were not of us [how do we know?]: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us." **1 Corinthians 11:19** states, "For there must be also heresies [sects] among you [why?], that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." Heresy and division help to reveal those who really are holding to the truth and are in the family of God.

A Sensual Manner

Sensual. What does this word mean? The Greek word that it comes from is used six times in the New Testament. It is translated twice as *sensual*: here, in our text, and in **James 3:15**. (In James it is used to show a change in one's thinking from "earthly" to "devilish.")

The Greek word that *sensual* is derived from is *psychikos* (a form of the word *psyche*, which refers to the soul). The word *psychikos* refers to man in his earthly nature, but it goes deeper and also reveals why he is under the power of that nature. This lets us know that the condition of men's souls, this *sensual* condition, is what

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causes apostates to behave in such a way that they will work to “subvert whole houses” (**Titus 1:11**). Now what causes this *sensual* condition?

The Religious Spirits

Having not the Spirit. If there is any question as to whether apostates may perhaps be merely misguided believers, this phrase lays that question to rest. **Romans 8:9** plainly says, “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Man is a three-part being consisting of “spirit and soul and body” (**1 Thessalonians 5:23**). He is first a soul. He has a body, and he possesses a spirit. Man is what he is and does what he does because of the spirit he possesses. The ones in our text are referred to as *having not the Spirit*. Why should we notice this? (There were multitudes of people who did not have the *Spirit*.) We should notice this because the “mockers” claimed to be part of God’s church!

Apostates still say they are part of the church, but the *Spirit* has taken His departure from their lives. They became “empty” and thus a prey for religious spirits. **Matthew 12:44-45** says that when “. . . he findeth it [a spiritual house] empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself and they enter in and dwell there.”

Prophetically, the seven spirits are the religious spirits that motivate the “seven women” in **Isaiah 4:1**. They are the religious spirits that the church has faced in the seven periods of the Gospel Day. The spirit we are facing today is the ecumenical spirit that is portrayed in **Revelation, Chapter 17**. The people overcome by this spirit think everyone has some good points and is right. They readily fellowship everyone; that is, everyone except the ones in the truth. They feel those people are too judgmental.

What is the lesson? Ones *having not the Spirit*, do have a spirit—a religious spirit. These are not merely misguided men who have “the spirit of the world” (**1 Corinthians 2:12**). These people have become possessed with the spirit of apostasy that promotes division and the rise of religious groups not based in the truth. Though these individuals consider themselves to be very spiritual, Jude has proclaimed the truth—they do not even have the *Spirit*!

Grieve Not the Spirit

The importance of the *Spirit* cannot be stressed enough! It is the *Spirit* that convicts (**John 16:8**). It is the *Spirit* that God uses to give spiritual life (**Romans 8:10**). The *Spirit* guides us and empowers us to be witnesses (**John 16:13** and **Acts 1:8**). The *Spirit* brings us spiritual understanding (**Ephesians 1:18**). Seven times in **Revelation, Chapters 2 and 3**, Jesus said, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith.”

In this period of the Gospel Day, when unclean spirits have “come out” (**Revelation 16:13**) and gone into the whole world, it would be best for each of us to do as **Malachi 2:16** admonishes: “take heed to your spirit.” Make certain that you do not grieve, or hurt, the Holy *Spirit* (**Ephesians 4:30**). If you do, He may take His departure from your life, leaving you defenseless against a religious spirit. Cherish the presence of the Holy *Spirit* and do all that He bids you to do. The ones in our text did not do that, and they ended up separating *themselves*.

JUST A THOUGHT

If you are feeling the effects of truth decay, try brushing up on your Bible reading.