

## **Jude 1:17-21—Weapons of the Snakes, Weapons of the Church**

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The Iranian leaders recently threatened to destroy the United States if it bombed Syria for using chemical or biological weapons on its citizens. They also threatened to abuse and kill the American president's daughters. While these Muslim religious leaders' intentions were clear, they were not credible. The President didn't shake in his boots. The President knew he had more powerful weapons and he knew the weakness of the Iranians. He is better equipped than his enemy, so he has no reason to fear or panic.

You too brothers must not shake in your boots when you see troubles in the church – when you see people advancing their own power and wealth by teaching false things (health and wealth Gospel/easy-believe-ism, women-run churches, etc.) from the pulpits and on television. And you must fight these men and women. I hope the previous verses of Jude have established that. But to fight, you have to know their weapons, and know your weapons. About these weapons God will remind you today.

Our headings are: **Know The Weapons of the Snakes**, and **Know the Weapons of the Church**.

Our goals are: **You will know the weapons the enemy often uses and that you will be prepared well with the weapons of the Lord to fight, so that the church of Jesus Christ can remain pure and that it can advance in the whole earth!**

### **Know The Weapons of the Snakes**

17 But you, beloved, remember the words which were **spoken before by the apostles** of our Lord Jesus Christ: 18 how they **told you that there would be mockers** in the **last time** who would walk according to their own **ungodly lusts**. 但你们呢，亲爱的，你们要记我们主耶稣基督的使徒从前所讲的话。他们曾经对你们说：“末世必有好讥笑的人，随着自己不敬虔的私欲行事。”

#### **1. Jude was the latest Apostle to warn of the weapons and the dangers of the snakes in the church.**

**Others did that before.** But why would Jude remind his readers of previous warnings from other Apostles? He knew that **multiple witnesses established truth more firmly, which in turn would embolden Christians to act against the dangerous snakes.**

#### **2. Look their weapons:**

**a. Savagery: Earlier the Apostle Paul warned the Ephesians that there would be dangerous men in the church. He chose to call them “savage wolves.”** These men were sometimes aggressive. In Jude's day they were present.

**Acts 20:29** "For I know this, that after my departure **savage wolves** 凶暴的豺狼 will come in among you, **not sparing the flock.**

**And don't we have have these snakes in the church who savagely attack** her? When a Toronto pastor told a poor unemployed woman that she should **borrow money to put in the offering plate** in church, wasn't that cruel? What guilt he was laying on her feet! If you are **not healed**

miraculously when “healers” pray for you they insist it is because you lack trust in God. What cruelty! If you are poor, they tell you it is because you don’t invest in the kingdom (which means you didn’t send money to them). What a painful stab in the heart!

**b. Mocking. Apostle Peter had predicted to the dispersed church in his 2<sup>nd</sup> Epistle** that these snakes would exist and would use mocking as a weapon. Jude confirmed it. The snakes knew that being ashamed was a powerful tool.

2Peter 3: 2 that you 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 Savior, 3 knowing this first: that scoffers 好讥笑的人 will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,

**Isn’t it also true that there are those who mock Christians-especially young Christians?** They say: “Our church doesn’t stop us from clubbing,” or “our church doesn’t stop us from dressing like this,” or “no one stops us from strange piercings and tattoos,” or “You are too old fashioned and you need to stop singing those old-fashioned songs and get with the modern times and sing fluffy songs.” So then, in order to avoid embarrassment, young people often choose to compromise and sin against God.

But remember what Jesus threatened to do to those who hurt young people. He said that it was better for a millstone to be tied around his neck and he be drowned in the depths of the sea. Hurting children is deadly to the perpetrator. I know I was mocked because I didn’t speak in tongues and because I didn’t hear God speaking to me directly through prophecies. I was even accused of not believing in the Holy Spirit.

I believe that Pentecostalism as a system has been a source of violence and mocking against the church of Jesus Christ. Pentecostalism attacks the fundamental doctrine of the Word of God and of the doctrine of God...and has led untold millions astray. To them, the Word of God is not the exclusive revelation of God to them...and God is not a sovereign God. These people are spots on the holy church. You need to know this danger so you can fight it.

**c. Enticement 诱惑 The snakes talked about “ungodly” lusts.** This is a Hebraic expression that means “vilest 最恶毒” lusts. Jude wasn’t simply saying the snakes were really bad; he was saying that the snakes were lures for Christians by the way they lived.

One of the vilest things that modern writers say, is that according to God, true success in life is found in the promotion of the “health and wealth” Gospel—a characteristic of Pentecostalism. This has undermined the church and lured her away from faithful study of God’s Word, and from being concerned about the glory of God through the spread of the kingdom and faithful worship! These churches consider success in life as going on expensive vacations, having gym memberships, and eating organic foods. They promote avarice. You need to fight them! They aren’t innocuous.

19 These are **sensual persons**, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.  
这些人分党结派 是属血气的, 没有圣灵

**d. Sensuality. Jude also pointed out that the snakes lived as “sensual persons”-** “animal-like.”  
1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Isn't it true that the appeal to sexuality is overwhelming in our culture today? And isn't it true that sometimes even Christians dress immodestly? Aren't Christians struggling with obesity 肥胖 as well as they over indulge with food? Hasn't sports so obsessed that one man remarked recently: "Sunday was made for football." These things kill.

**3. What is the result of savagery, mocking, lusts and sensuality? Divisions in the church!** How good and pleasant was not the sight...for brethren were not having delight...nor in one accord. Sin separates.

**4. What one thing characterized men who were savage, mocking, lusting, and sensual? They were all destitute of the Spirit of God.** Should not the people of God be led by the Spirit of God? But not these men! They were led by another spirit, but it was the spirit of Satan.

Romans 8:9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

**5. What is the role of elders here? It is normal to have people under discipline in the church.** Maybe some fool the elders because of their passion when they were examined, but when elders find snakes, they are required to act. They have to purify and protect the church of Jesus Christ. And you should support them by your prayer and by living a godly life so they can concentrate their time on dealing with snakes.

**6. By the way, do you notice when these things would take place? In the last times.** Question: When were these things taking place in reality? Answer: **During the life of Jude.** So the last (eschatos) times were during the life of Jude. Peter said the last days began 50 days after Jesus went to heaven: On the day of Pentecost. So when people try to tell you that we are living in the last day and the sky is about to fall, tell them (and show them) the last days began 2000 years ago. Heb 1.

### **Know the Weapons of the Church**

20 But you, beloved, **building yourselves** up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,

**1. Jude called on the leaders to prepare for the fight against the snakes by building themselves up in their souls and learning to use their heaven-sent weapons.** You understand how a prized fighter has to have the right diet, exercise, and mental preparation before a big fight. You know the preparation of one who goes to work on the International Space Station. That preparation takes years and requires many exercises and equipment. Surely, then, those who are fighting for God need to know more about his weapons and be better trained for spiritual jobs.

**2. Weapon: They were the beloved of God.** That was the most potent weapon 最强有力的武器. They were the Chosen, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. They had the all-powerful God of heaven and earth beside them – who would never leave them nor forsake them. What could man do to them? They could do all things through Christ who strengthened them.

**3. Weapon: They had faith in God.** But they needed to build up their faith in order to grow in grace and fight with the snakes in the church.

Ephesians 2:20 having been built on the **foundation of the apostles and prophets**, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, 21 in whom the

whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. **Colossians 2:7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.**

They could only build their faith up by listening and believing the preached Word of God, and asking for the Holy Spirit to work through the Word.

**4. Weapon: They were able to pray through the Holy Spirit** – quite opposite to the pretenders who did not have the Holy Spirit. As the beloved of God, the Holy Spirit applied the Word of God to their hearts. The Holy Spirit helped them to pray and he purified their prayers – as long as they didn't quench his work.

Romans 8:26 Likewise the **Spirit also helps in our weaknesses**. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.

21 keep yourselves in the **love of God**, looking **for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ** unto **eternal life**.

**5. Weapon: They had the love of God.** The more they listened to preaching and the more they prayed, the more they realized what God had done for them...and the more they realized what God had done for them, the more they loved him back. They showed their love back to him when they fought against the snakes and kept the Lord's church pure. Nothing makes people go to war more easily and nothing makes them more willing to stay at war than being assured of love at home.

**6. Weapon: Eternal life.** When you know that you are being preserved by the Lord Jesus Christ for eternity, it is easy to go about the task of fighting. Fear not the snakes. You will live forever.

### **Conclusion:**

The snakes in the church have potent weapons. These snakes come in **savage ways** or in **subtle ways** 细微的方式 and lure them into sin by false promises through guilt, lusts, and sensuality. Snakes want to satisfy themselves and don't care who gets hurt. But the church has far more potent weapons that come from an omnipotent 无所不能 Savior. The church knows that she is the **beloved of God**. The church **has faith through the knowledge of God's Word** - faith that can move mountains. The church **has the Holy Spirit** who comforts and keeps her in God...and he assures her that he loves her.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: You must fight these snakes. Why?

- a. You are **Christ's redeemed child and so you** have an **obligation** to fight.
- b. **Love for the church and for Christ** must move you.
- c. **You will win**. You have the might of God behind you. This gives you confidence.

So don't be ashamed or afraid when confronted with the health/wealth Gospel, with bad doctrines, with a weakened view of God, with women in office. Say to the snakes: "What

you are saying is popular, but it isn't right and God condemns that teaching," or say, "I reject what you are saying because though you think it is cool, it is not God-glorifying and God will condemn it." Reject a call to compromise. By doing this you might save their souls when they face their sins.

Finally: If you are not a Christian, God offers his mercy to you –who deserved to die. His mercy came in the form of Jesus Christ on the cross who died in the place of sinners. Accept God's offer of mercy today.