

Jude 1:22-23 – Caring for the Sickly and the Snakes

Robertson, Gill, GreekLexicon, TSK, Trapp, JFB, Geneva, Poole, Clarke, Manton?

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Jude didn't mince words in describing what should be done to **the snakes** who introduced false and dangerous doctrines in the church, destroying **the weak, sickly ones by violence or lure**. The church had to pronounce God's judgment on the snakes and excommunicate (开除教藉, 逐出教会) them -showing them hell - literally. God was angry with the weak also who were led astray by the snakes and were in bad spiritual condition.

But the Lord is merciful and a gracious (仁慈的) God- to the sickly and the snakes. God's justice does not negate his mercy. God is a gracious God who opened up the door to care for those who were sickly and those who were snakes. And he identified two ways of care for them. That is what God will speak to you about today.

Our headings are: **Save the sickly with Compassion**, and **Save the Snakes with Fear**.

Our goals are: That **you will learn how to save those who are struggling in their Christian lives and by doing so, bring glory to your Redeemer**.

Save the Sickly with Compassion:

22 And on some have compassion, making a distinction;

- 1. It is easy to want to “bring the hammer down” and make your point...**and teach some serious discipline. Some fathers are like that and they cause harm to their children because they are always – every single time – bringing the hammer down on their children. But Jude pointed the Christian leaders in a different direction. Jude challenged the leaders to **show compassion to (have gut feelings for) the weak**. Yes, you must use strong words when necessary, but as Manton said, your words must have bowels (feelings) with your strong rebukes...feelings of compassion. **There must be tears in your eyes, Manton said, with the rod in your hand**. Compassion comes from a word that means to have warm, tender, affections and emotions and attitude. It is a force that moves.
- 2. But who were the weak ones for whom Jude asked compassion?** Surely he was not asking for **compassion for the stone** hearted rebel (铁石心肠的悖逆者) who was bent on destroying the church of Jesus Christ...those who wanted to treat the church savagely or lure them into sin. No, the ones on whom Jude asked for compassion were the simple and ignorant ones who sinned from weakness...and they sinned in less important areas. Maybe they had doubts and were driven about like the waves of the sea being tossed about by the wind. (James 1:6) All men have doubts from time to time in their lives. The goal: If the weak were wounded in their hearts by the preaching of the Word and from godly rebukes, if they expressed remorse for their sins, then God's people would show them mercy.

Matthew 18:33 ‘Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’

3. Christian leaders in the churches were bound to show compassion because they were children of the compassionate Christ. Out of compassion he (指基督) left heaven to come into this sin-cursed world to rescue man. (因着怜悯, 基督从天上下到这个因罪而被咒诅的世界, 为的是拯救人类。)

Matthew 9:36 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.
Matthew 18:27 "Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. (“于是这个仆人的主人动了慈心, 释放了他, 并免了他的债。”)

Out of compassion he gave food to those who were hungry.

Matthew 15:32 Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint (晕倒) on the way."

Out of compassion he healed the sick...including the blind.

Matthew 14:14 And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.

Out of compassion he wept for the stubborn rebellious Jew (顽固悖逆的犹太人) .

Luke 19:41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it.

Out of compassion he asked John to care for his mother.

Out of compassion Jesus healed the demon possessed (被鬼附的人) . Mark 9.

Out of compassion Jesus healed the leprous (麻风病人) ... one who was ostracized by society (那些被社会所排斥的人) .

The church was even commanded to sing of God's compassion.

Psalms 86:15 - But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.

4. In showing compassion the leaders would show that there was a difference between the stiff-necked rebel – the snakes – and those who were spiritually struggling in their souls (那些灵里挣扎的人) .

Save the Weak with Fear

23 but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

1. Look now at the hope that God offered to the snakes – those who were harming his church and promoting their own selfish advantage. Jude wrote that these men need more than a gentle talk. They had arrogantly (傲慢地) assumed to themselves the elders' authority. So Jude wanted the elders to shock them into repentance (悔改) . He wanted to grab them by the scruff (颈背) of the throat, shake them, and warn them of the danger ahead. Jude said this because he

knew that no one is beyond the reach of God's grace (没有人不在上帝的恩典所及之处). The snakes may have seemed obstinate (执拗的, 固执的) and their relationship with God may have seemed irreconcilable (不可调和的), but God is a great God who could work in the heart. What wondrous love!

2. What would have shocked the snakes of Jude's day? Sharp warnings (尖锐的警告) that would put fear in them! The elders had to denounce (谴责) the sin of the snakes and announce (宣告) God's awful judgment on them... judgment in this life and in the life to come. They had to make mention of hell and all its horrors and eternal damnation (地狱) in order to put fear in the hearts of the hearers and speak of the hope and joys of heaven.

3. You see, fear is not always a bad thing. Good fear is a gift of God. This fear keeps you from falling off the edge of a cliff. This fear alarms who when a rattlesnake (响尾蛇) is nearby...and causes your eyes dilate (放大, 扩大), and causes your stomach to stop wasting energy digesting food...and causes your heart to beat faster to get oxygen to your muscles...and causes your adrenal gland (肾上腺) to produce more adrenaline (肾上腺素). Isn't this what firemen do to save bodies? They use fear to warn children of the danger of playing with matches and they warn adults of the danger of smoking in bed? And isn't this what you should do to rescue the weak their deception and save them from hell...a far more serious problem that to be physical burned (身体被灼烧)? Imagine what the fear of the fiery furnace (炙热的火炉) of hell forever would do to the hearer!

4. This is surely what the Lord Jesus intended when he used very harsh (严厉的) words on the Jews – even as a hammer on their heads. He called the wicked white-washed tombs (粉饰的坟墓) and snakes. He even pronounced judgment – eternal judgment on them...to shock them...to put fear in them...in order that they might repent, believe, and find him a kind and gentle Savior.

Matthew 23:27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites (伪善者)! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness (污秽).

Matthew 23:33 "Serpents, brood of vipers (毒蛇的种类)! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?"

Luke 12:5 "But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! (“我要指示你们当怕的是谁; 当怕那杀了以后, 又有权柄丢在地狱里的; 我实在告诉你们, 正要怕他。”)

But never forget that the when you use the hammer, it must be from a desire to honor Christ; it must not be used as a means of getting revenge, or to prove how wise you are.

5. But even while offering hope to the sinner, the leaders of the churches were required to keep themselves from the bad influences of these men. The leaders were to stay away from these men just like you would not want to have dirty spots on your clothes. These snakes were wicked (savage at times and luring at times 有时凶残, 有时迷惑人) and so had their clothes, as it were, were defiled by nocturnal (夜间的) pollutions. You can read about this in detail in Leviticus 15. The Apostle Peter wrote a few years before Jude that these men were dirty spots.

2Peter 2:13 and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, (“行的不义，就得了不义的工价；这些人喜爱白昼宴乐，他们已被玷污，又有瑕疵，正与你们一同坐席，就以自己的诡诈为快乐。”)

6. And of course, the priest who touched anything unclean, was himself made unclean. So the challenge was to keep clean and pure from the wicked – who were unclean. In short, this was a warning not to compromise as they battled. (简单来说，要记住在争战中不能妥协。) No doubt they were able to use warnings like these from the Old Testament. **(On a side note, this was why it became popular to wear white clothes for baptism. It was a symbol of purity.)** Today, it is easy to want to compromise with false teachers in the churches who attack doctrines (教义) like the doctrine of God or the doctrine of the sufficiency of the Scriptures. It seems that sometimes Christians are so desperate (极其渴望的，急切的) to marry someone from a church with weak doctrines – or have good friendships with them – that they make an unbiblical concession that their weak churches are good. But the truth is, you have to examine their lives and their doctrines. Don't worry about the size of the Reformed church. The Lord will save by many or by few.

7. What is the result of the snakes being plucked out of the fire – which is the language of Scripture – Amos 4:11? Heaven. Hope. Holiness. There God literally had to pluck Lot out of Sodom and Gomorrah and save him. Another example: Look at another example of rescue.

Zechariah 3:2 And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! /s this not a brand plucked from the fire?"

1Corinthians 5:5 deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Instead of being polluted by the dirty clothes of the snakes, the goal of the church leaders was to promote clean clothes – the righteousness of Jesus Christ...and a clean life – the holiness of God for the snakes.

Conclusion:

God required his people **to show compassion** to his weak children who were deceived by the wicked and consequently strayed from his fold. God **required harsh words** to those who were in imminent danger to being destroyed for sometimes being savages on his people and sometimes luring them into sin. Both weapons of compassion and fear flowed from love – God's rich love in Jesus Christ.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ, **continues to call you to save the weak ones** who have weak consciences or weak knowledge, or have been deceived by liars. The weak are still the children of Jesus Christ. With love and compassion you are to save the young in faith and weak in faith. But know that you must also work to **put fear into the hearts of the wicked ones.** You must not write them off the wicked as hopeless...as if God's harsh

talk meant that they had no hope. There always is hope while man tarries in this world. At the same time, guard yourself so that you do not compromise with the wicked and accept partial bad doctrines (有偏差错误的教义). Don't settle for less...as you are manager of the Lord's business. It is his kingdom. He paid for his church with his own blood and his church is precious to him. You are merely his servants. So call out Roman Catholics...and Mormons...and Jehovah's Witnesses...and Pentecostals...and liberal churches... This is the only way you can save them!

Finally, hell indeed is an awful place...so awful that you cannot even imagine it. Your body will be tortured...and your soul will be tortured...and all for eternity. That is your guaranteed home if you continue living the way you are. But if you call on Jesus Christ to take away your sins and make you his child, you can be sure he will hear and answer you...and take you to the home that he has prepared for his holy redeemed children.