

Jude 1:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken
before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Analysis

But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; Jude transitions from describing false teachers (vv. 4-16) to exhorting believers (vv. 17-23). "But, beloved" (Greek *hymeis de, agapētoi, ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀγαπητοί*) creates strong contrast—unlike the ungodly false teachers, you beloved believers should respond differently. The affectionate address reinforces that Jude writes from love, desiring their perseverance and protection from error.

"Remember ye the words which were spoken before" (Greek *mnēsthēte tōn rhēmatōn tōn proeirēmenōn, μνήσθητε τῶν ῥημάτων τῶν προειρημένων*) commands active recall of apostolic teaching. "Remember" is imperative—not optional suggestion but command. "Spoken before" indicates prior teaching, possibly when apostles were with them or through earlier writings. The remedy for false teaching isn't new revelation but remembering established truth. "Of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Greek *hypo tōn apostolōn tou kyriou hēmōn Iēsou Christou, ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*) establishes authority—these aren't human opinions but teachings from Christ's authorized representatives.

The phrase suggests Jude wrote after most apostles had died, in the second generation of Christianity when the church depended on transmitted apostolic teaching rather than living apostolic presence. This makes preservation and

remembrance of apostolic doctrine crucial. The definite article "the apostles" indicates a known, defined group—the original witnesses commissioned by Christ.

Historical Context

As the apostolic generation aged and died (Peter, Paul, James), the church faced critical transition: from direct apostolic guidance to dependence on transmitted apostolic teaching. Would Christianity maintain doctrinal purity or fragment into competing interpretations? The apostles anticipated this challenge, establishing structures to preserve sound doctrine—written Scriptures, appointed elders, catechetical instruction, credal summaries (1 Corinthians 15:1-8).

This verse reflects emerging recognition of apostolic authority as standard for measuring teaching. "Remember the apostles" became rallying cry against innovation. Second-century church fathers (Irenaeus, Tertullian) developed doctrine of apostolic succession—legitimate teaching must trace lineage to apostles. While Protestants reject ecclesiastical succession, they maintain scriptural succession—apostolic writings (New Testament) provide permanent standard.

The command to "remember" counters false teachers' claims to new revelations or superior knowledge. Apostolic Christianity isn't evolving toward higher truth but maintaining delivered truth (v. 3). Innovation in doctrine isn't progress but departure. Churches guard truth not by adding to apostolic teaching but by faithfully preserving and proclaiming it.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What specific practices help believers 'remember' apostolic teaching and guard against forgetting?
2. How can churches balance contextual application with unchanging apostolic truth?
3. Why is it crucial to test every new teaching against apostolic doctrine rather than accepting claims to spiritual authority?

Interlinear Text

Ἑμεῖς δέ, ἀγαπητοί, μνήσθητε τοῦ ῥημάτων τοῦ
ye But beloved remember which the words which
G5210 G1161 G27 G3415 G3588 G4487 G3588

προειρημένων ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀποστόλων τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν
were spoken before of which the apostles which Lord of our
G4280 G5259 G3588 G652 G3588 G2962 G2257

Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
Jesus Christ
G2424 G5547

Additional Cross-References

2 Peter 3:2 (Word): That ye 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 Saviour:

1 John 4:6 (Parallel theme): We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

Ephesians 4:11 (Parallel theme): And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Acts 20:35 (Word): I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Malachi 4:4 (Word): Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

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