**Discord and Division – Alistair Begg**

You must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.” It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.

[**Jude 1:17-19**](https://www.truthforlife.org/bible/Jude+1:17-19)

People seeking to cause division were not unique to the first-century church; they have been alive and well throughout the church’s history. Jude’s instruction here is therefore as practical for us today as it was for the believers to whom he first wrote. Those causing division in the early church shared in a harmful combination of moral and doctrinal error. They were devoid of the Spirit, promoting sensuality and “following their own sinful desires” (Jude 16), yet they had somehow managed to creep in among God’s people. Jude describes them as “hidden reefs” (v 12), which lie just far enough below the water’s surface to go undetected and yet are capable of wreaking absolute havoc if any vessel runs into them. Indeed, those reefs are capable of sinking that vessel.

In response to these charlatans, Jude urged his fellow believers not to forget “the predictions of the apostles,” who had warned that “in the last time”—the time between the ascension and the return of the Lord—there would be those who scoffed at the teaching of Christ and His chosen apostles and who tolerated or even promoted behavior driven by our desires. In God’s providence, the early church was forewarned so as not to be caught off guard by those who in this way would cause divisions—and so, indeed, are we. Yet God’s word doesn’t just call us to be on the lookout for those who create discord and division; it also directs us to deal mercifully with those struggling with genuine doubt. We are to “have mercy on those who doubt” and “save others by snatching them out of the fire” of error and sin (Jude 22-23), even as we resist the teaching and aims of false teachers. Since God has saved and kept you, you are called to be alert to danger and pull others out of the flame, boldly but gently. And you are called to keep yourself in the love of God and to pray diligently (Jude 20), that you would be able to spot error and resist those who would divide God’s church. Then you will be able to stand with your brothers and sisters and say with Jude. *“To the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen” (v 25).*