

Sunday Morning Message

July 18, 2021

Earnestly Contending for the Faith - Messages from Jude

Jude 1:5 – 16 – The Enemies Among Us – Part One – The Rebels Who Opposed God in the Wilderness

Text – Jude 1:5

Congregational Reading – Jude 1:1 - 5

Introduction

A couple of weeks ago, we looked at just the first four verses and introduced this Epistle General of Jude, and we discovered that Jude was the brother of the Lord Jesus Christ and also the brother of James, the writer of the Letter that bears his name. We learned that these two men were most likely not disciples of the Lord, though they were His brothers, until after the Lord rose from the dead.

After examining the necessary salutations in vs. 1 and 2, we saw in v. 3 that Jude expressed the great need for soldiers who would be willing to earnestly contend for the faith. The reason that these spiritual warriors were needed was due to the fact that Satan was always sending into the church people who were actively working against the cause of Christ by distorting and sometimes even dismissing sound Bible doctrine.

We talked about the fact that, as Christians, we should not like to fight. In fact, we are encouraged to: *“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men”* (Romans 12:18). We are taught by the Lord to *“... Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;”* (Matthew 5:44).

We shouldn't be contentious as Christians, but Jude tells us that there are times that we need to contend for the faith. We don't like to fight, but we stated last week that when our family is under attack, we will fight; when the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ is under attack, we will fight; and when our freedom to practice our faith is under attack, we will fight.

As we continue studying this letter today, we will look at exactly who these people were who were causing problems within the local churches in Jude's day. Jude will show us by way of many Old Testament examples that God has always had these types of people who caused problems for true believers, and Jude will also remind us of the judgment that these trouble makers eventually received.

Transition

In this messages, we will learn what to look for. What do these troublemakers say and do. We don't want to fight against the wrong people. Here, in verses 5 – 16, Jude will show how to spot *the enemies that are among us*.

We will eventually see in this study the characteristics that are present in these troublemakers, and also some cautions that were given through our predecessors in the faith, but first we will look at some:

I. Characters from the Past (vs. 5 – 7, 11)

This letter contains many Old Testament illustrations or examples of troublemakers who caused problems for the people of God in the past. It is important to understand, and will hopefully become apparent as we study this letter, that the people we are talking about here are not believers who were just a little out of sorts, perhaps having a bad day or a temporary struggle with their faith, Neither were they unbelievers who were not bothering anybody. These people were actively causing trouble, fighting against what God was doing. These people were not just walking in the counsel of the ungodly or standing in the way of sinners; they were the ones sitting in the seat of the scornful, actively rebelling against the work of God.

Today, we will only be able to examine the first group from verse 5:

- A. **The Rebels Who Opposed God in the Wilderness** (v. 5) – In the Old Testament Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy we see the account of the Israelites who were saved out of the bondage of slavery in Egypt, who later were destroyed by the Lord because of their lack of faith and rebellion against God, and against Moses and Aaron, the men that God had given to lead them through the wilderness into the Promised Land.

Paul also wrote about these events in his letter to the Corinthians:

“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as [were] some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication,

as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. ... The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10:1-12, 16)

Also, in the Book of Hebrews:

"15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. 16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. 17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? [was it] not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." (Hebrews 3:15-19)

There are many examples of this in the Pentateuch, but three that stand out are:

1. **The Naysayers** - The spies that delivered an evil report after searching out the Land of Canaan (Numbers 13:25 – 14:4). God sent them in to see how wonderful the land was, and they came back and discouraged the congregation of Israel by telling them about all of the obstacles – the giants that were in the land:

"And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land. And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this [is] the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people [be] strong that dwell in the land, and the cities [are] walled, [and] very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan." (Numbers 13:26-29)

Only two of the twelve spies – Joshua and Caleb – believed that God was well able to conquer any obstacle that was in the way:

“And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.” (Numbers 13:30)

But the voices of the naysayers were louder:

“But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they [are] stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, [is] a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it [are] men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, [which come] of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.”

(Numbers 13:30-33)

The lack of faith from these ten leaders of Israel, caused all of the people in the congregation to fear the will of God:

“And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt. Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.” (Numbers 14:1-5)

The end result was that God would destroy in the wilderness all the congregation that lacked the faith to follow God into the land in victory. Israel would be forced to wander in the wilderness for forty long years, until these faithless people died off. Only Joshua and Caleb and the people in the congregation who were children at the time of this rebellion were permitted to enter into the Land of Canaan.

These people were faithless and fearful, and then spread their negativity like a cancer to the rest of the congregation.

2. The Opportunists - The People Who Worshipped the Golden Calf (Exodus 32)

In this account, the congregation of Israel was waiting while Moses was up on Mt. Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments from the Lord, but they God tired of waiting, so they decided to create their own God and their own new religion surrounding a golden calf. They even coerced Aaron the high priest and Moses’ own brother to make the calf for them.

When Moses came down from the mount to see what was going on, the people were dancing naked around this calf.

Moses was very angry, and even threw down and broke the tables of stone which contained God's Word. He drew a line in the sand, and demanded the people to choose whether or not they were going to follow the Lord. He shouted: Who is on the Lord's side? Most of the congregation wisely followed the Lord and Moses; but 3,000 troublemakers were slain because of their rebellion.

These people were also unbelievers who were looking for the right opportunity to replace Moses, and worship a god of their own creation.

Paul wrote about these folks in Romans 1:

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified [him] not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.” (Romans 1:21-25)

3. The Complainers – The People of God were always complaining about something. “We have no water.” So, God provided water. “We have no food.” So God provided food. “We are sick of this manna; we want something new.” So God provided quail for them to eat. Their complaining got so bad that they openly stated that they were better off when they were slaves in Egypt.

"4 And the mixt multitude that [was] among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? 5 We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: 6 But now our soul [is] dried away: [there is] nothing at all, beside this manna, [before] our eyes. ... 10 Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased. ... 18 And say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow, and ye shall eat flesh: for ye have wept in the ears of the LORD, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for [it was] well with us in Egypt: therefore the LORD will give you flesh, and ye shall eat. 19 Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; 20

[But] even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the LORD which [is] among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt? ... 31 And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the sea, and let [them] fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits [high] upon the face of the earth. 32 And the people stood up all that day, and all [that] night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers: and they spread [them] all abroad for themselves round about the camp. 33 And while the flesh [was] yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD smote the people with a very great plague." (Numbers 11:4-6, 10, 18-20, 31-33)

All of these great sins from the wilderness wandering were rooted in a lack of faith. The **Naysayers** didn't believe God, so they feared their circumstances and spread their fear so that it infected the rest of the congregation. Without faith, your obstacles will always be bigger than your ability to overcome them; but if you have faith, you understand and trust that your God is bigger than any obstacle or giant that is blocking the path.

The **Opportunists** who created the golden calf did not believe that Moses was ever going to return from the Mount, and they saw that as an opportunity to create their own god, and their own religion; a religion that they controlled. People who like to control have a hard time submitting themselves to the Lord.

The **Complainers** saw God do so many miraculous things, but the minute their flesh lacked something they lusted after, they would murmur and complain about God, and about God's man, Moses.

I heard a preacher once say: "God killed more people in the Old Testament for griping than for anything else." That is probably very true. There is nothing wrong with asking God for things – that is faith; but complaining to other people about your circumstances, and especially blaming your situation on the leaders that God gives you represents a lack of faith.

- II. Characteristics that are Present (vs. 8 - 10, 12 – 13; 16)
- III. Cautions from our Predecessors (vs. 14 – 15)