

## Sunday Morning Message

August 29, 2021

*Earnestly Contending for the Faith - Messages from Jude*

*Jude 1:5 – 16 – The Enemies Among Us – Characteristics in Our Present – Part One*

Text – Jude 1:8 - 10; 12 – 13; 16

Congregational Reading – Jude 1:8 - 10

### Introduction

We have been examining this little Epistle of Jude, which was written not to a specific church or person, but was intended to be circulated and used to instruct all Christians in all local churches in Jude's day. Of course, the Holy Spirit superintended over this writing and included it in the canon of Scripture where it would be used for millennia to help churches fight off error. The great emphasis of this letter is the encouragement for us to "earnestly contend for the faith:"

*"3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort [you] that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 1:3)*

The reason for our defending the faith is given in verse 4:

*"4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness (ἀσελγειαν from ἀσελγεια – aselgeia – NASF – unbridled lust; excess), and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." (Jude 1:4)*

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

In the past three sermons from this letter, we looked at the examples that Jude cites from the Old Testament that would serve as warnings for the people of Jude's day in the first century and for us today.

##### A. The Rebels Who Opposed God in the Wilderness (v. 5)

In verse five, Jude talks about the Israelites who were delivered miraculously out from the bondage of slavery out of the land of Egypt in the days of Moses, only to later rebel against the God who saved them by refusing to trust Him to bring them into the Promised Land in Canaan. They didn't think their God was big enough, wise enough, or

powerful enough to overcome all of the obstacles and giants that awaited them on the other side of the Jordan River:

*"5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not." (Jude 1:5)*

### **B. Fallen Angels (v. 6)**

Then in verse six, Jude reminds us of fallen angels that committed sins that were so heinous that God bound them in a spiritual prison until the great day of judgment:

*"6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." (Jude 1:6)*

Though we cannot be absolutely sure, we believe that these particular angels were the “sons of God” mentioned in Genesis six who cohabited with human women and produced offspring that were described in the Bible as “giants in the earth” and “men of renown” (Genesis 6:4) This period of time was just prior to Noah’s flood when the “wickedness of man was great in the earth” (Genesis 6:5).

### **C. Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7; Genesis 19)**

Next, we examined from verse seven the wickedness of sexual impurity in general, and homosexuality in particular through the Old Testament example of Sodom and Gomorrah:

*"7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." (Jude 1:7)*

In verses eight through ten, Jude will make the connection to the problems and people that we may face today in our New Testament churches:

*"8 Likewise also these [filthy] dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. 9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. 10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what*

*they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves."* (Jude 1:8-10)

Notice the reference to Michael the Archangel contending with a devil over the body of Moses. We have no account in the Old Testament that discusses this event, though we know that it did happen because God included it here in the New Testament. The point that Jude seems to be making is that the angel Michael did not take this devil on in his own power or authority, but deferred to the power and authority of God. We will examine these three verses (8 – 10) when we get to the next section of our study (Characteristics that are Present).

Three more Old Testament illustrations are given in verse 11:

*"11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core."* (Jude 1:11)

#### **D. Cain – A Works-Based Religion Rather than a Faith-Based Righteousness (v. 11a; Genesis 4)**

Next, we examined the first part of this verse and considered Cain, the first of the three characters mentioned here. Cain tried to offer up to God the fruit of his hands – his own works as an acceptable sacrifice for sin. God was not pleased with his offering. Cain represents a works-based religion, or a works-based righteousness.

#### **E. Balaam – A Preacher Corrupted by Greed**

Last week, we looked at Balaam, who sold out the people of God for money. He was hired by an enemy king to curse the nation of Israel, and even though he was unable to do that, he did show the Moabites how to corrupt the Israelites by infiltrating them from the inside with pagan women and idolatry.

#### **F. Core (Korah – v. 11c; Numbers 16)**

Korah was the man that was a cousin of Moses and Aaron that led a rebellion against them, attempting to overthrow the God called and God ordained leadership of Israel. His rebellion ultimately caused the death of his family and thousands of others who were infected by his poison.

#### **Transition**

Today we are transitioning from the characters from the past and will now look into what Job has to say about the characteristics that are in our present. These were the things that were happening in Jude's present day, that are likely still relevant for us to know about today. And, as a church, we need to earnestly contend against these things.

## II. Characteristics in Our Present

You will notice that in each of the three sections of Scripture that we have classified as "characteristics in our present" begin with the word "these." Notice vs. 8 – 10; vs. 12 – 13; and v. 16.

Notice in v. 10 that the people referred to as "these" are also called "filthy dreamers" (ένυπνιαζόμενοι from ένυπνιάζομαι – *enygniazomai*), which could either refer to the fact that these people claimed to have received visions, and may actually have, but they did not get these dreams from God. It could also refer to their imaginations. They fantasize about filthy, or immoral things.

**Practical Note** – be careful about your imaginations. If you are not careful, you may find yourself escaping reality by fantasizing about things that are immoral or against the will of God for your life. Be careful about your thought life.

*"5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"*  
(2 Corinthians 10:5)

*"8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things [are] honest, whatsoever things [are] just, whatsoever things [are] pure, whatsoever things [are] lovely, whatsoever things [are] of good report; if [there be] any virtue, and if [there be] any praise, think on these things."* (Philippians 4:8)

These dreamers leave what is real and true and conjure up things in their mind that are wicked, and then they teach them as doctrine to whoever will listen.

*"3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away [their] ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."* (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

### A. Defile the Flesh (v. 8a)

Defiling the flesh has to do with sexual morality. We live in a morally depraved culture. Jude already discussed the homosexuality of Sodom in v. 7, and he re-emphasizes the point here. He uses the word “likewise” in v. 8 to connect this thought back to the discussion in v. 7.

John Phillips states this:

The apostate, having trampled underfoot the great biblical truths and doctrines of Scripture, has no compunction in scorning the laws and moral structure of human society. Jude calls these people “filthy dreamers” and says that they “defile the flesh.” Thus, he exposes *their sordid vices*. In this they are like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. They say and do monstrous things in their pornographic fantasies. They become deadened to all sense of decency.<sup>1</sup>

The Church was at one time, the only voice that was standing for God’s moral principle, but the message of the Church has been clouded and even muddied due to the immoral scandals from within her own ranks. I like what Peter said:

*"17 For the time [is come] that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if [it] first [begin] at us, what shall the end [be] of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:17)*

Paul also strongly condemned what was going on in the lives of people of faith.

*"21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? 22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? 23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? 24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written." (Romans 2:21-24)*

The point is this: we as a church are certainly principally opposed to all of the immoral practices that have infested our national culture, but we are not innocent. There is a lot of immorality, and thus, hypocrisy, going on in our own ranks. We must clean up our act within the church if we are going to effectively stand for and communicate the message of the Bible. We need to purge the church of pornography and all forms of immorality,

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<sup>1</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring the Epistle of Jude: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), Jud 8.

and that will take humility and repentance. We first have to admit that we have not been innocent in this area, and then agree with God about what are lives should consist of, which is purity and holiness, and then we need to ask God to help us live morally pure lives that will better back up and support the message of Christ.

### **B. Despise Dominion (v. 8b)**

Despising dominion means to reject authority. Again, we can point back to the Characters from the past and see this same characteristic in the fallen angels (v. 6) as well as in Korah (v. 11).

Rebellion against authority of any kind is a characteristic of our fleshly natures. It all began with Satan. He wasn't content to be a very high ranking angel, he wanted to be like God, and he led a rebellion consisting of one third of the angels against God.

Eve also went against the instruction of her husband and ate of the fruit of the tree of the Garden. She wanted to be like God, knowing good and evil. She only picked up evil in that transaction, by the way. Previously, all that she knew was good. The eating of the fruit only brought evil into her life.

By nature, we are rebels. We do not like to be told what to do. We want to do what we want. Yet, the Bible admonishes us to submit ourselves to God and specific people in our lives and in our world:

*"7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7)*

### **In Society:**

*"13 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;" (1 Peter 2:13)*

*"1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. 2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to [execute] wrath upon him that doeth evil. 5 Wherefore [ye] must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also*

*for conscience sake. 6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. 7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute [is due]; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour." (Romans 13:1-7)*

#### **In the Home:**

*"18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." (Colossians 3:18)*

*"20 Children, obey [your] parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." (Colossians 3:20)*

#### **In the Church:**

*"17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that [is] unprofitable for you." (Hebrews 13:17)*

*"5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all [of you] be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." (1 Peter 5:5)*

#### **C. Denounce Dignities (v. 8c)**

Because these filthy dreamers despise dominion and reject authority, they speak out against them. They speak evil (βλασφημοῦσιν from βλασφημέω – *blasphēmeō*) of dignities (δόξας from δόξα – *doxa*), which literally means that they blaspheme against glorious ones.

This statement by Jude is very similar to what Peter stated in his first recorded letter:

*"10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous [are they], selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. 11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord." (2 Peter 2:10-11)*

The specific reference in Jude 8 may be to angels as would be supported by the illustration Jude gives in v. 9, but it could also by application be a reference to all those who are in authority.

The illustration Jude gives in v. 9 speaks about Michael's dispute with the devil over the body of Moses. The Bible tells us that God buried Moses, and that no man knew where he was buried.

*"5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. 6 And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."* (Deuteronomy 34:5-6)

Apparently, there was some kind of a cosmic battle over the body of Moses. Some believe that Satan wanted to make a shrine out of Moses' burying place in order for people to come and worship Moses. We really do not know specifically what this angelic battle was all about, but what we do know is that Michael, even though he has great authority as an archangel, did not go beyond his authority either in word or deed regarding the devil. He said: "the Lord rebuke thee." In other words, he obeyed God's orders implicitly, and he respected the high ranking position that the devil once held. The New American Commentary states this:

Michael did not take upon himself to pass judgment on the devil but entreated the Lord to judge him. Yet the intruders in Jude's community felt no compunction about reviling demons. The adversaries may have reviled these glories because they claimed that demons could not hurt those belonging to God. If this is the case, they underestimated the power of evil; for these angels, though evil, still retained glory, even though that glory had now been deformed by evil.<sup>2</sup>

### **Conclusion (v. 10)**

Verse eleven seems to sum up the sentiment that Jude is expressing in v. 8. These filthy dreamers don't know what they are talking about, but yet, that does not stop them from speaking. They are obviously speaking evil about the sound doctrine which was being taught in the church, and they were also denouncing those that were faithfully preaching and teaching the Bible.

What they did know was the works of the flesh. They knew their own human nature, and they were not at all shy about corrupting themselves and their hearers. They had no trouble promoting their fleshly and immoral lifestyles, and denouncing anyone who

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 458.



would rightly try to promote a Holy Spirit-filled life that is yielded to the will and Word of God. This is exactly what Jude was warning us about. Look again at v. 4:

*"4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." (Jude 1:4)*

Who are you going to listen to? There are a lot of voices out there in our world and many even within the churches that are promoting their own version of Christian doctrine. There are those who espouse "hyper grace," which basically states that since we are saved by God's grace we can now do anything we want to do. We can yield to whatever our flesh desires. Yet, the Bible clearly states:

*"11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."*  
(Titus 2:11-14)

This is why we need to be people of the Book – people who are rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

This is why we preach through whole Books and Letters of the Bible.

This is why we have a Bible Institute that will go through the entire Bible in three years. We want you to have the complete picture – the whole counsel of God. This way, you won't be duped by all of the false teachers out there who are corrupting the clear teaching of the Word of God.

Let me challenge you to read the Bible, and study the Bible diligently, and teach the Bible to your children. Everything principle that you will need to be successful in this life is taught in this Book. The reason why our nation is in the mess it is in is because we have abandoned the Bible, and we need to get back to Bible literacy once again. But, it all begins right here in our church, and also in your home.

Jesus said:

*"32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)*