

## Sunday Morning Message

September 5, 2021

*Earnestly Contending for the Faith - Messages from Jude*

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

Text – Jude 1:8 - 10; 12 – 13; 16

Congregational Reading – Jude 1:12 - 13

### 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**

Then 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.

## **II. Characteristics in Our Present (vs. 1:8 - 10; 12 – 13; 16)**

In the last message, we started examining what Jude had to say about the ungodly characteristics that were present in his day, that are also remain in our day as well. These characteristics, and those who possess them and proliferate them need to be contended against; we need to fight to keep these characteristics out of our churches, and out of our homes.

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.

Last week, in part one of *Characteristics in Our Present* we examined vs. 8 – 10, where we learned that in Jude’s day as well as in ours there were filthy dreamers who:

- A. Defile the Flesh (v. 8a)
- B. Despise Dominion (v. 8b)
- C. Denounce Dignities (v. 8c)

## Transition

Today, we will continue discussing these *Characteristics in Our Present* as we look into vs. 12 – 13, and v. 16:

*"12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds [they are] without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; 13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. ... 16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling [words], having men's persons in admiration because of advantage."* (Jude 1:12-13, 16)

Note – we will examine vs. 14 and 15 next week as Jude shares a caution from Enoch, one of our predecessors.

In this series of messages from the Epistle of Jude we have compared what Jude had to say about these troublemakers to what was stated in 2 Peter. Notice once again the similarity of Jude’s writing to Peter’s:

*"1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. ... 12 But these, as*

*natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; 13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, [as] they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. **Spots [they are] and blemishes**, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; ... 17 **These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.**" (2 Peter 2:1, 12-13, 17)*

Notice in vs 12 and 13, some more of the characteristics of these false prophets:

#### **D. They are Problems**

*"These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, (v. 12a)*

The word translated "spots" here (σπλάδες from σπλάς – *spilas*) actually refers to a rock that may appear as only a spot on the surface of the sea, but actually has a hidden mass under the surface that can wreck a ship.

Peter called them spots and blemishes, which has the idea of a stain.

The thing about spots is that they like to stand out. They like attention. They want the spotlight on them. When you have a dirt spot on your clean shirt, it attracts attention, but not the kind of attention you want.

Illustrate – One of the churches that got themselves in trouble last year during the lockdowns very quietly decided that it was going to open up against the governor's executive order. A man within that church was not content with just quietly opening the church, under the radar. He wanted to tell the world that his church and pastor weren't afraid of the government's unconstitutional order, so he called the radio station. This brought a lot of attention to the church, including the governor's attention, and he went after them with citations. This man wanted attention; he wanted the spotlight.

Our philosophy and practice during this pandemic has been to pray and quietly practice our faith by continuing to worship the Lord corporately:

*"1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, [and] giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and [for] all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this [is] good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:1-4)*

#### **E. They are Profitable to Themselves**

*"feeding themselves without fear:" (v. 12b)*

One of the characteristics of false prophets is that they make sure that they are taken care of. They feed themselves. They are at the head of the buffet line. A true shepherd will take care of the needs of his people before he feeds himself.

#### **F. They are Pointless**

*"clouds [they are] without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;" (v. 12c)*

In the arid middle eastern climate, there is nothing more useless than a cloud that looks like it will bring rain, but carries no water. Or, how about a fruit tree that carries no fruit, or whose fruit just withers and dies.

Illustrate – We planted pumpkin seeds in our garden this year, which produced these beautiful vines with yellow that spread all over the backyard, but no pumpkins that survived. A couple of weeks ago, I spotted a little pumpkin that looked promising, but a week later, it was just a blob of mush. No fruit.

These false prophets may have some kind of food for you, but it either has no spiritually nutritious value at all; or worse, it is poisonous.

Notice the reason that they are pointless. They have no root system, or they are rooted in evil.

1. True believers are rooted in love:

*"17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love," (Ephesians 3:17)*

2. True believers are rooted in Christ and His salvation.

*"6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, [so] walk ye in him: 7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." (Colossians 2:6-7)*

3. True believers are rooted in the Scriptures:

*"15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Timothy 3:15)*

*"23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and [be] not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, [and] which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;" (Colossians)*

What a contrast there is from these fruitless false prophets to the true believer:

*"1 Blessed [is] the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight [is] in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The ungodly [are] not so: but [are] like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." (Psalm 1:1-6)*

### **G. They are Passionate**

*"13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; (v. 13a)*

Being pointless, however, does not stop them from being passionate. There is nothing worse than someone who is passionate about something that is pointless. They say about preachers that if they have no substance in their messages, they will often substitute with shouting. They are loud and boisterous, but they have nothing of value to say. False prophets are often bullies who very loudly intimidate weaker Christians into following them.

The illustration Jude uses is of raging waves in the ocean.

Illustration – A couple of weeks ago we were down at the beach when there was a tropical storm out on the ocean to the east of us that was churning up the water quite a bit. Those waves were big and potentially very dangerous. They were coming in big and fast, and if you weren't prepared, they would plow you right over.

Isaiah said: *"20 But the wicked [are] like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." (Isaiah 57:20)*

There is something very valuable about a true believer who quietly and consistently lives out his faith in front of others. Isn't this what Peter wrote instructing specifically wives, but certainly applicable to both men and women:

*"1 Likewise, ye wives, [be] in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 2 While they behold your chaste conversation [coupled] with fear. 3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward [adorning] of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But [let it be] the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, [even the ornament] of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."*

(1 Peter 3:1-4)

## **H. They are Passing**

*"wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." (v. 1:13b)*

The good thing about false prophets is that, generally speaking, they do not last. They are just like a shooting star that flies very brightly through the sky, but soon fizzles out.

I said, "generally speaking" because there are a few false prophets out there that at one time were among true Christian congregations that have actually lasted for quite a while (Jehovah's witnesses; Mormons).

## **Conclusion**

As we have seen from these five characteristics, the false prophets not only creep in, they sometimes roll into town very loudly, spewing out their philosophies, and pressuring people to follow them. We need to stand up to these bullies and be willing to take a strong stand by contending against them, and especially against their false ideologies and doctrines.

We will be able to do that if we are grounded in the truth. Jesus said:

*"32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. ... 36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John 8:32, 36)*

### **1. Diligently Learn the Truth from the Word of God**

*"15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)*

*"8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."*

(Joshua 1:8)



*"16 All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*

Be consistent in daily devotions: Reading, Meditation, Memorization

Illustrate – This Back to School time is a great time to reorganize your time and reprioritize your spiritual habits.

Study the Scriptures as part of a corporate Bible Study.

Hear the Bible Preached soundly and doctrinally.

## **2. Quietly Live the Truth Before Others**

Illustrate – Ray Chaney and Doug Kaiser

## **3. Boldly Proclaim the Truth**

Not obnoxiously, but confidently share with others what you know to be true.