

## Sunday Morning Message

September 12, 2021

*Earnestly Contending for the Faith - Messages from Jude*

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

Text – Jude 1:8 - 10; 12 – 13; 16

Congregational Reading – Jude 1:12 – 13; 16

### 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.

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)**

Then in last week’s message from vs. 12 – 13. We saw some more characteristics of those that may creep into our churches today:

**D. They are Problems**

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

**E. They are Profitable to Themselves**

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

**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)*

**G. They are Passionate**

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

**H. They are Passing**

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

**Transition**

Today, we will continue discussing these *Characteristics in Our Present* as we look at v. 16:

*"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 1:16)

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

### **I. They Complain About Everything**

*"16 These are murmurers (γογγυσταί from γογγυστής – gongystēs), complainers (μεμψίμοιροι from μεμψίμοιρος – mempsimoiros),"* (v. 16a)

Jude has already referred back to Old Testament illustrations in this letter. The congregation of Israel, especially during their wilderness wanderings were known for their griping and complaining, and it did not please the Lord at all. They complained about Moses; they complained about not having enough water; they complained about not having food, and then when God gave them food, they complained about that; they wanted something different. When God was about to bring them into the land of Canaan the first time, they complained because it was going to be too hard. God got fed up with them:

*"27 How long [shall I bear with] this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. 28 Say unto them, [As truly as] I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: 29 Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, 30 Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, [concerning] which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun."* (Numbers 14:27-30)

Murmuring accomplishes nothing except to discourage the people who you complain to. We are murmurers by nature.

*"10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer."* (1 Corinthians 10:10)

*"14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings: 15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; 16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."* (Philippians 2:14-16)

Note – there is nothing wrong with constructive criticism, or bringing suggestions to those who are in authority; but, it needs to be done in the right spirit, and it needs to be communicated to the person who can do something about it.

#### J. They Lack Control

*"...walking after their own lusts;"* (v. 16b)

We have referred before in our study of Jude to the similarities to what Peter said:

*"9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: 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. ... 18 For when they speak great swelling [words] of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, [through much] wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. 19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."*** (2 Peter 2:9-10, 18-19)

One of the reasons that these people complain a lot is because they have no control over their tongues. They say whatever comes into their head. Their intentions are to tear down instead of building up. The only people that they want to build up is themselves.

*"29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."* (Ephesians 4:29)

#### K. They Compliment and Convince with Words

*"...and their mouth speaketh great swelling [words],"* (v. 16c)

Paul warned the believers in Rome about these types of people:

*"17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. 18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." (Romans 16:17-18)*

1. They talk a lot

This carries the idea of somebody who can talk a good game. They most of all like to talk about themselves.

2. They boast about themselves.

"Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people." (Eleanor Roosevelt)

3. They use flattery, and are certainly not bound by Truth.

*"28 A lying tongue hateth [those that are] afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin." (Proverbs 26:28)*

*"1 [[To the chief Musician upon Sheminith, A Psalm of David.]] Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. 2 They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: [with] flattering lips [and] with a double heart do they speak. 3 The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, [and] the tongue that speaketh proud things: 4 Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips [are] our own: who [is] lord over us?" (Psalm 12:1-4)*

Paul warned us that in the last days there would be people who would try to win us over with flattery:

*"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*

KJV)

**L. They Connect with People Who Can Promote Them**

*"...having men's persons in admiration because of advantage." (v. 16d)*

These people know just who to gravitate to. They become friendly with people who can promote them or who can profit them. They care nothing about people who are in need.

*"23 These [things] also [belong] to the wise. [It is] not good to have respect of persons in judgment." (Proverbs 24:23)*

*"21 To have respect of persons [is] not good: for for a piece of bread [that] man will transgress." (Proverbs 28:21)*

*"1 My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, [the Lord] of glory, with respect of persons. 2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; 3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: 4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? 5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? 6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? 7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? 8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: 9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. 10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one [point], he is guilty of all. 11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment." (James 2:1-13)*

They also connect with people whom they have discerned to be leaning in their direction. In other words, they can spot people who are likeminded; people who they can influence. Birds of a feather flock together.

## Conclusion

### 1. Recognize These Characteristics in Yourself



In this third part of *Characteristics That are Present* we have discussed many things that we may be guilty of. We would like to think that Jude is just talking about evil heretics sent in from Satan who are trying to destroy the church, but we have to be honest with ourselves. Some of these characteristics are in us. We are murmurers and complainers; we talk too much, especially about ourselves; we flatter and boast; and, all too often, we walk after our own lusts.

## **2. Repent of Whatever God Reveals to You**

Repentance is not just for salvation. It is something that needs to be done often in our lives after we are saved. Why? Because our flesh is constantly trying to rebel against the will of God. These fleshly attributes or characteristics that were consistent with the Christ denying false prophets of Jude's day, are often found in saved church members as well, including you and me at times.

## **3. Resolve to Keep These Things Corrected in Your Life**

Ask God to help you to be filled with His Holy Spirit and yielded to His will in these areas.