

Sunday Morning Message

September 16, 2021

Earnestly Contending for the Faith - Messages from Jude

Jude 1:14 - 15 – 16 The Enemies Among Us – Cautions from Our Predecessors – Part Two

Text – Jude 1:14 – 15; 17 - 19

Congregational Reading – Jude 1:17 - 19

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 first section of this letter, we looked at the examples that Jude cites from the Old Testament that would serve as warnings for the people of his day in that first century and for us today as well.

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)

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 next section of this epistle, we examined 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 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)**

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.

Then in vs. 12 – 13, we saw some more characteristics of those apostates 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)

I. They Complain About Everything

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

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

J. They Lack Control

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

K. They Compliment and Convince with Words

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

These people talk a lot, boasting about themselves, and often use flattery so they can butter up the people they are trying to deceive,

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.

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.

Transition - In today's text (v. 19), we see a few more of these characteristics:

M. They Separate (v. 19a)

We typically speak of separation as a good thing. The Bible says, *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you,"* (2 Corinthians 6:17). Jude is not speaking here about being separated from the world, however. These false prophets separate themselves in a bad way. They separate themselves from true prophets and teachers, and pull people away from sound doctrine.

Illustrate - Charles Taze Russell was once a Presbyterian, and then he became a Congregationalist; but later moved into Adventism, and ultimately formed what we know today as the Jehovah's Witnesses. He denied the Trinity, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of hellfire. He separated himself from true churches and pulled other people out of them as well.

Illustrate – Jim Jones was once a Methodist Student Pastor, and was also associated with the Assemblies of God.

Illustrate – There are preachers today who are separating themselves from their once fundamental position. They are changing and moving in the direction of liberalism. They change their music; they change their standards of Christian conduct, and they change their Bibles. Most of these people would not be in the same category as the false prophets that Jude is referring to here, but they are moving in that direction.

N. They are Sensual (v. 19b)

The word, “sensual,” means natural or earthly. These people are purely carnal. This is not a word that expresses unbridled lust like the word, “licentiousness” does (v. 4). This type of person is lost and believes only that which he can see and understand humanly. He relies solely on natural, human reasoning. These portray themselves as being spiritually minded but in reality they teach that the fleshly appetites can be satisfied. They would agree with the expression used so commonly today: “If it feels good, do it,” or “if it’s good for you, it’s good.”

"This wisdom descendeth not from above, but [is] earthly, sensual, devilish." (James 3:15)

Note – many today are promoting a “hyper-grace” position that teaches that the satisfaction of the flesh is totally permissible, even though it is clearly sin. They believe that committing sin is perfectly acceptable because we are not under the Law, but under grace. However, Paul refutes that lie from the devil:

"1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1-2)

O. They are not Saved (v. 19c)

"But the natural (ψυχικός – psychikos - same word translated sensual in Jude 19) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Corinthians 2:14)

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Romans 8:9)

The bottom line is that these false prophets are simply not saved. They are not genuine believers in Christ. They do not have the Spirit of God indwelling them. Jesus told us that the Spirit of God guides us into all truth, but because these false prophets don't have the Spirit, they cannot know the truth, and the only thing that they can lead people into is error.

John Phillips says:

That is the final point that Jude wants to make about the apostate. He is not a born again believer. He is worse, however, than the ordinary natural man. Many natural men have never so much as heard the gospel. The apostate, by contrast, *has* heard the Good News. He has fully understood the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. He might even have made some kind of profession of faith in Christ. However, he has repudiated all of that and deliberately embraced a Christ-rejecting, Bible-denying, soul-destroying, man-exalting theology. He is "sensual [soulish], having not the Spirit."¹

III. Cautions from Our Predecessors (vs. 14 – 15; 17 – 18)

The third division of the letter contain cautions from Jude's predecessors in the faith. These are good men from the past who have warned about the same things that Jude is warning us about today.

A. Enoch (vs. 14 – 15)

Last week, we looked at Enoch, the seventh from Adam who was a very interesting Old Testament character who was raptured by the Lord at the relatively young age of 365. The Scripture tells us that Enoch walked with the Lord, and God took him.

Jude gives us the prophecy that Enoch had written years before that the Lord was going to someday return with ten thousands of his saints (that will include the Church) to execute judgment on these Christ-denying troublemakers and false prophets, and also on those who reject the Lord's offer of salvation by grace through faith in shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. The Apostles

The Church was founded upon the teaching of the Apostles. The Apostles were men who had personally seen the resurrected Lord, and had been specifically called by Him into His service. The word "Apostle" means "sent one." The Apostles were sent and commissioned to be a witness of the resurrection.

¹ John Phillips, *Exploring the Epistle of Jude: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), Jud 18–19.

All of the New Testament was either written by an apostle or by someone that was closely associated with an apostle and had the authority of an apostle. Throughout the New Testament, the apostles have written things regarding false prophets that are very similar to what Jude is stating here in his letter. Here are a few examples:

"28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." (Acts 20:28-31)

"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 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, [and commanding] to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." (1 Timothy 4:1-3)

"1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. 6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, 7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. 9 But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all [men], as theirs also was." (2 Timothy 3:1-9)

"18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would [no doubt] have continued with us: but [they went out], that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." (1 John 2:18-19)

"1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. 2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that [spirit] of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. 4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. 5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. 6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." (1 John 4:1-6)

Read 2 Peter 2

"3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as [they were] from the beginning of the creation." (2 Peter 3:3-4)

Conclusion

As we conclude this section of this letter, let us make a few practical applications.

1. Be careful about preachers and churches who change:

"My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: [and] meddle not with them that are given to change:" (Proverbs 24:21)

Not all change is bad. Change is good, if it is moving in the right direction. Conforming to the image of Christ, and moving in the direction of fundamental, biblical doctrine is a good change. However, some people change, just because they are tired of what they had, and are looking for something new. Theologically, that can be very dangerous. "If it's new it's not true, and if it's true, it's not new."

Some people change out of a rebellion to what they once believed and belonged to.

2. Be careful about preachers who are always offering a new interpretation of Scripture.

All pastors and teachers will vary somewhat in their understanding of truth, but if you carefully study Bible believing preachers and teachers through the centuries, you will find that they agree far more than they disagree, especially on the important issues.

3. Be careful about watering down or compromising your belief based upon its acceptance in the culture.

Our culture is rapidly moving away from accepting sound doctrine. True Bible believers are now seen as extremist that are dangerous to society. What we teach about morality, and how are

children should be raised is not seen by the world as normal, and they will eventually become completely intolerant of us. We need to stand our ground, compassionately but firmly preaching the truth in love.

4. Be careful about getting too attached to this world. Stay close to the Lord and the Lord's people.

The wolves will typically prey upon the sheep that are not healthy, or the ones that have wandered too far away from the Shepherd. False prophets will not have much influence over you if you are closely walking with the Lord.