

Jude

Lesson Three

Warnings Against Error

Jude 5 – 19

1:5 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

- A. Verses 5-7 present three examples as a reminder of God's judgment upon those who are rebellious and disobedient.
- B. Jude sought to remind them of these important facts, even though they had heard and known these things before.
- C. The first example is the punishment of the unfaithful Israelites after their exodus from Egypt.
 - 1. They escaped Egypt by the power and providence of God.
 - 2. Clearly, they believed in God; for His power and presence was manifested to them throughout their time in the wilderness.
 - 3. Yet, they became disobedient – showing that they “believed not” (cf. Num. 20:12; Psalm 78; 106).
 - 4. Thus, God punished them, causing them to wander in the wilderness until an entire generation died – save Joshua and Caleb (cf. 1 Cor. 10:1-11).
 - 5. Imagine over a million people who died in the wilderness because of their sins!
- D. The point made by Jude is that God would also judge and destroy the false teachers who threatened the church.

1:6 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

- A. As a second example, Jude reminded them of the angels who sinned.
 - 1. This reference is similar to that in 2 Peter 2:4.
 - 2. Angels are created beings who have the ability to sin (Heb. 1:14; 2:16).
- B. These angels did not keep their place by rebelling and sinning against God.
 - 1. There is much speculation in the world about the things mentioned here.
 - 2. However, the Bible does not reveal specific detail about the sins of these angels.
 - 3. Isaiah 14:12-15 may relate to this; however, its primary reference is to Babylon.
- C. As a result, they are kept in chains awaiting the final Day of Judgment (cf. Matt. 25:41).
- D. Again, the point made by Jude is that God will not overlook the punishment of false teachers.

1:7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, 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

- A. The third example is a reminder of the destruction of Sodom, Gomorrah, and the cities of the plains (Gen. 19).
- B. "In like manner" means that they also rebelled and sinned against God.
- C. The sin of these people is explained clearly:
 - 1. They gave themselves "over to fornication" – meaning, "To be utterly unchaste; to go a whoring; to indulge completely in unlawful lusts."
 - 2. Also, they "turned aside" and "went away" after strange flesh – meaning, "Unlawful lustful practices."
- D. Their punishment became an example to all of the consequences of disobeying God.
- E. The fire and brimstone that rained down upon those cities was only a glimpse of the eternal suffering to be found in Hell (Matt. 25:41; Mark 9:43-49; etc.).
- F. Again, the point made by Jude is that false teachers will not escape the judgment and punishment of God.

1:8 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities

- A. Like those in the examples given, these false teachers were "filthy dreamers" – focusing their minds on evil and sin.
- B. They defiled the flesh by their immoral actions (cf. Rom. 1:18-32).
- C. They despised dominion by rejecting any authority over their lives – whether from man or God.
- D. They spoke evil of or blasphemed men of position and honor – including God and the godly.

1:9 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"

- A. In contrast, Michael the archangel would not even rail against Satan!
 - 1. Michael is mentioned in Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1; and Revelation 12:7.
 - 2. The term 'archangel' means, "Chief or captain of angels."
- B. The details of the event mentioned here are not found anywhere else in Scripture.
- C. The point of the passage is to demonstrate the subjection of Michael to the Lord in contrast with the rebellious attitude of the false teachers.

1:10 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

- A. While even Michael would not bring a “railing accusation” against Satan, these false teachers “speak evil” of things they do not know or understand.
 - 1. The same root word is used for both ideas – the Greek for “blaspheme.”
 - 2. In verse 8, it was emphasized that they speak evil of dignities.
 - 3. Here, the emphasis is on the fact that for all their talk, they really do not know what they are talking about!
- B. “Things which they know not” are the spiritual, eternal truths of the Gospel.
- C. What they did know were the things of the natural realm – the physical, earthly, and sensual (cf. Col. 2:18-19).
- D. In fact, they knew them so well that they corrupted themselves in those things.
 - 1. They behave like “brute beasts” – meaning, “Irrational, unreasoning animals.”
 - 2. All the while, they claim to be enlightened teachers of the way of God.

1:11 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

- A. Thus, Jude exclaimed, “Woe unto them!”
 - 1. This is a statement of their spiritual condition and the misery that will befall them.
 - 2. Or, perhaps Jude was speaking in the form of a curse: “Woe be unto them.”
- B. Jude revealed the true character of these false teachers by comparing to three notorious sinners of the Old Testament.
- C. First, they followed or pursued the way of Cain (Gen. 4; 1 John 3:12ff).
 - 1. The way of Cain is the way of disobedience – following man’s wisdom instead of God’s will.
 - 2. False teachers claim to follow God, but in reality they are followers of Cain and, therefore, of Satan.
 - 3. They choose man’s wisdom over the Word of God.
- D. Next, they “gushed forth” the error of Balaam for reward (Num. 22 – 24; 31:16).
 - 1. Balaam was privileged to proclaim an inspired message from God; yet, he sought an opportunity to teach error in order to please men and receive wealth.
 - 2. Likewise, these false teachers had abandoned the truth of the Gospel for error that provided the rewards of the flesh.
- E. Finally, they destroyed themselves in the contradiction and rebellion of Korah (Num. 16; 26:9-10).
 - 1. Korah led a rebellion against the authority of God by rejecting the leadership of Moses.
 - 2. By teaching and following the doctrines of men, false teachers reject the authority of God and of Jesus.
 - 3. As the earth opened up and swallowed Korah, so these false teachers will receive punishment and destruction from God.

1:12 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

- A. The Greek word for 'spots' actually means, "A rock in the sea; a reef or ledge of rock in the sea."
 - 1. The idea is of a hidden reef that when struck by a ship would cause it to sink.
 - 2. These false teachers participated in the activities of the congregation, presenting themselves as faithful, trustworthy members of the church.
 - 3. However, their error would cause the faith and souls of their brethren to become shipwreck (cf. 1 Tim. 1:19-20).
- B. The 'feasts of charity' (or, "love feasts") were meals at which the members of the congregation gathered for fellowship.
 - 1. This practice developed from the continual fellowship and dining together of the early church (Acts 2:46).
 - 2. It seems to have become a common meal as wealthier members sought an opportunity to provide for their less fortunate brethren.
 - 3. Sadly, this good work was sometimes abused by some members.
 - 4. In Corinth, their division manifested itself in their meals and carried over into their partaking of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:17-34).
 - 5. Here, false teachers used it as a means of infiltrating the congregation with subtlety in order to spread their error.
 - 6. Eventually, this practice ceased due to the errors of Gnostics and others turning them into a time of revelry and evil.
- C. These false teachers were said to be "feeding themselves without fear."
 - 1. The Greek word for 'feeding' is *poimaino*, meaning, "To feed, to shepherd, or to tend a flock."
 - 2. It is the same word that is used for the work of elders (Ac. 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2).
 - 3. Here, it means that these false teachers were shepherding themselves – rather than submitting to the Lord or the elders of the local congregation.
 - 4. They fearlessly rejected God for their own wisdom and leadership, seeking only to feed themselves.
 - 5. Sadly, they also thought that they should be the shepherds for others!
- D. Like clouds without water, they promised life and refreshment but merely drifted by with the wind, bringing nothing of value to those who trusted in them.
- E. Like trees without fruit, they were good for nothing but to be uprooted.
 - 1. The Greek word for 'whose fruit withereth' actually means, "Stripped of leaves; thus, trees of late autumn."
 - 2. Autumn is the time of harvest, when the trees should have been filled with fruit ripe for the picking.
 - 3. These trees were barren at the time of harvest.
 - 4. Likewise, the false teachers would bear no fruit to salvation, only to condemnation.
 - 5. Furthermore, they were "twice dead" and uprooted – unable and incapable of producing any fruit at all!
- F. Such is the nature of all false teachers and their doctrines of error.

1:13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever

- A. Like wild waves of the sea cast up foam, so these false teachers brought forth only shame and disgrace.
- B. Like a wandering star, they drift away into the gloom of utter darkness.

1:14-15 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him

- A. The Bible record about Enoch is brief, but powerful (Gen. 5:18, 21-24; Heb. 11:5).
 - 1. Enoch was the father of Methuselah, the oldest man to ever live.
 - 2. Enoch walked with God – meaning, he lived in submission and obedience to God.
 - 3. Enoch “was not” – meaning that he ceased to exist in this physical realm (cf. Gen. 37:30; 42:36; Jer. 31:15; Matt. 2:18).
 - 4. Enoch was translated – taken by God from this life into the next, without suffering death (cf. 2 Kings 2:11).
 - 5. Enoch was the 7th from Adam – Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah.
- B. Jude teaches that Enoch was a prophet of God, whose prophecy applied to false teachers then and now.
 - 1. This prophecy was not recorded in the Old Testament.
 - 2. However, not all Old Testament prophecies were written down.
 - 3. Jude received his message by inspiration, meaning that the words attributed to Enoch are also inspired of God.
 - 4. There is a statement in the apocryphal Book of Enoch that is similar to the words recorded here:
 - a. *“Behold he comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon them, and to destroy the wicked, and to strive (at law) with all the carnal for everything which the sinful and ungodly have done and committed against him.”*
 - b. Note that it is not an exact duplication.
 - 5. It has not been determined with any certainty when this book was written.
 - a. Some have suggested that it was written about 100 years before Jude and, therefore, Jude must have quoted from it.
 - b. However, the best evidence gives it a date around the 3rd century AD – 200 years after Jude.
 - c. It is more likely that the apocryphal book quoted from Jude!
- C. Enoch prophesied about the judgment of God upon the ungodly.
 - 1. In His judgment, the Lord would be accompanied by thousands of His “holy ones” – angelic beings (cf. Matt. 25:31; Deut. 33:2-3; Zech. 14:5).
 - 2. In His judgment, the ungodly would be convicted of their sinfulness.
 - 3. They would be exposed for their severe words against God.
- D. This passage illustrates that there was knowledge of the Day of Judgment even from the early history of man.

1:16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaking great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage

- A. A murmurer is one who grumbles and a complainer is one who blames fate or is discontent with his lot in life.
 - 1. They did not trust in the providence of God and try to find the good in the situations of life.
 - 2. Instead, they were displeased with life and with God and His Word.
- B. These men chose to walk after their own lusts instead of following the will of God.
 - 1. Because they were dissatisfied with the truth of God, they rejected it for their own desires.
 - 2. Or, because they chose their own wishes, they became displeased with the Word of God.
- C. Thus, they used great swelling words to justify themselves and convince others to follow their wicked ways.
 - 1. The ESV calls them "loud-mouthed boasters."
 - 2. Peter called them "great swelling words of vanity" that "allure through the lusts of the flesh" (2 Peter 2:18).
- D. Also, they showed "respect of persons" in order to gain some advantage.
 - 1. They would seek out the wealthy, the powerful, and the influential.
 - 2. One such convert could influence many others to follow them as well.
- E. They were concerned only with themselves, not the welfare and salvation of others.

1:17-18 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts

- A. Jude encouraged the faithful to remember the words of the apostles of Christ.
- B. The inspired apostles had warned of mockers who would reject the truth for their own ungodly lusts (cf. 2 Pet. 3:1-4; Acts 20:29; 1 Tim. 4:1ff; 2 Tim. 4:1ff; etc.).

1:19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit

- A. Jude concluded his description of the false teachers with three interesting terms.
- B. First, they are those who "separate themselves."
 - 1. The idea is that they themselves separate.
 - 2. It means that they cause divisions or form factions in the church.
- C. Next, they are "sensual" – meaning, "Worldly, natural as opposed to spiritual; animal-like; governed by their appetites and passions" (cf. 1 Cor. 2:14).
- D. Finally, they are described as "having not the Spirit."
 - 1. This indicates that their fellowship with God has been severed by the error and sin.
 - 2. Furthermore, they are not guided by the Holy Spirit because they have rejected His revelation – the Word of God.
 - 3. By choosing human wisdom over Heaven's revelation, they had become "earthly, sensual, devilish" (Jam. 3:15).
- E. Against such false teachers the faithful must "earnestly contend for the faith!"