

1) Ok, picking up where we left off last week with perhaps a little review ...

Jude 3–4 (NASB 2020)

³ Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all *time* handed down to the saints. ⁴ For certain people have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into indecent behavior and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

2) Jude continues with what may be for the New Testament epistles an unprecedented statement about the way this letter began and finished.

a) He had one thing in mind yet there is an urgency in something entirely different that he must share with them.

i) I think the reason he injects this comment is to impress on them perhaps the urgency he obviously feels.

b) We of course are not told what transpired to cause this urgent shift in themes for the letter but what we do know is that it is serious.

c) The real idea here is that Jude was writing a letter – perhaps even in the middle of it when it became more necessary to change horses so to speak.

i) We can almost see him writing and then (if it were in today’s times) taking the piece of paper, wadding it up, throwing it in the trash and beginning all over again.

ii) Now, in truth, that probably was not the case.

iii) Papyrus was not exactly like our cheap paper today.

iv) It was much more difficult come by and would not be wasted.

d) The idea is still the same – he considered it vital to switch subjects and begin again.

3) He begins by calling on them to “contend earnestly for the faith.”

4) “The faith” refers to all that they had for beliefs that had been taught by the apostles and held by the Christians everywhere.

5) Now, as to the urgent matter.

6) As we said earlier, we do not know how Jude was informed of this problem, but it was serious enough to warrant this letter.

a) First and foremost, here we are dealing with sin – worse yet, we are dealing with people who are teaching sin.

b) As we just read, the NASB calls these folks:

“ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into indecent behavior and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”

c) The NIV calls them:

“They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.”

d) The BHGNT translates this as:

“ungodly people, who pervert our God’s favor into sensuality and deny our sole Sovereign and Lord, Jesus the Messiah.”

7) To boil this down to the blunt facts we are talking about these folks teaching that because of God’s grace you can just do anything you would like with your body.

a) Jude will make this clearer in the next few verses; he gets rather pointed as a matter of fact.

b) This idea is a precursor to the full-blown Gnosticism of the second century where the real crux of the teaching was that flesh was evil, and spirit was good, and you really did not have to worry about what the flesh did if your spirit was right.

c) Of course, we know this is not how grace works.

i) Paul tells us in Romans...

Romans 6:1–3 (NASB 2020)

Believers Are Dead to Sin, Alive to God

¹ What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? ² Far from it! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

8) The other thing Jude points out clearly is that both the teaching and the actions caused by the teaching result in a denial of Christ.

9) As I thought about the situation that Jude describes here, I tried to imagine what it would take in our congregation for something like this to happen.

a) I think we would all agree that it would take a lot for something like this to really happen.

10) We know without doubt that the early church (mid to late first century especially) had a major problem with false teachings.

What are some things that you can think of that might make their situation different from ours today?

a) If we go back for a moment to that “faith” that they are contending for.

i) They had teachings from the apostles.

ii) The Gospels were likely not written yet. (Mark perhaps at best).

iii) Obviously, no bibles, no canonization to speak of.

(1) If they were fortunate, they might have a copy of Septuagint.

iv) At this point they likely did not have the collection of Paul’s letters.

(1) If they were lucky, they had perhaps one or two.

v) The most experienced preacher among them could have no more than 20 to 30 years’ experience.

vi) Their elders were likely new Christians themselves and had very little experience beyond what they had as members of their congregation.

b) All that makes them, I personally think, much more vulnerable than we would be in the same situation.

- c) We might also consider the fact that the situation itself could more easily arise because if one listened to his own desires there was very little in the way of checks and balances.
 - i) If a person had a strong personality and a message, he would have little in the way of countering opinions in many cases.
 - (1) Because of lack of knowledge and teaching they would not have the basis to stand in opposition to the errant “false teaching”.
- d) Though I have in a way defended these folks, I would still point out that they were likely Jewish Christians and, as Jude will point out next, they do know the history and Law.
 - i) So, they are not off the hook entirely!
 - ii) As James pointed out to a similar audience, Moses (meaning the Law) was taught in the synagogues so they should be aware that this radical behavior would not be right.
 - iii) In fact, Jude is going to mention this fact very quickly.

- 1) Well, Jude has got their attention with the urgency and the situation...
- 2) Now, we are going to get to a little bit of a reminder of what might happen if they buy into this false teaching and start falling into the sin it causes...

Jude 5–7 (NASB 2020)

⁵Now I want to remind you, though you know everything once *and* for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. ⁶And angels who did not keep their own domain but abandoned their proper dwelling place, *these* He has kept in eternal restraints under darkness for the judgment of the great day, ⁷just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these *angels* indulged in sexual perversion and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

- 3) He begins with a series of reminders of how God deals with those who do not obey Him – not just human beings but even angels will be punished for their unrepented sins.
- 4) His first reminder of three is God’s dealings with the children of Israel after their escape from Egypt.
 - a) As such, it would be obvious that they knew the details for the stories of the Exodus which Jude is referring to.
 - b) God dealt harshly with the children of Israel when they rebelled against Him.
 - i) They had seen the miracles.
 - ii) They had been saved from 400 years of slavery in the land of Egypt but many of them just could not get a grip on the fact that God was who He was.
 - iii) The punishment for this disobedience was destruction – death!
- 5) The second reminder he gives is a little more tangled than the first.
 - a) He refers to the angels of Gen 6 ...

Genesis 6:1–2 (NASB 2020)

The Corruption of Mankind

¹ Now it came about, when mankind began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, ² that the sons of God saw that the daughters of mankind were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.

- b) Though this scripture describes the sin of these angels and Jude will tie this to Sodom and Gomorrah shortly, his point is that God put them away awaiting judgement.
 - i) The reason being that they like the Israelites were not satisfied with their station in life and rebelled against God.
 - (1) These are angels. The same phrasing is used in Job 1:6.
 - (2) As Jude says: “They abandoned their proper dwelling place”
 - ii) Their punishment is described differently – “kept in eternal restraints under darkness for the judgment of the great day”.
 - c) This is not to say that the destroyed Israelites would not face judgement, but they were not “kept in eternal restraints”.
- 6) The third and final reminder is tied directly to the sin of the angels – Sodom and Gomorrah.
- a) They “in the same way as these *angels* indulged in sexual perversion and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.”
 - b) This is more than appropriate since, as we shall see, this is the sin of the false teaching also.
- 1) Jude continues talking directly about the false prophets he is addressing, and I might add not in very nice terms.

Jude 8–10 (NASB 2020)

⁸ Yet in the same way these people also, dreaming, defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak abusively of *angelic* majesties. ⁹ But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him an abusive judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” ¹⁰ But these people disparage all the things that they do not understand; and all the things that they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed.

- 2) Jude refers to these people as “dreaming”.
- a) They use dreams and visions as sources of their prophecy or false teachings.
 - b) Basically, I think what he is saying is they were making things up as they go along.
 - c) Since there was no one to refute what they came up with it was basically ok.
- 3) The results are that they:
- a) **Defile their own flesh** – in other words, they commit sins like the peoples of Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - i) Anything they desire physically, they think they can do and there are no consequences.
 - ii) Promiscuity, licentiousness, and even homosexuality – nothing is off limits for these folks.
 - b) **Reject authority.**

- i) This could refer to any church leaders and perhaps the Lord Himself.
- c) **Speak Abusively of angelic majesties.**
 - i) Angels are not to be worshiped but, they are due a respect as beings that God has created for His benefit and as contact persons between Himself and certain people and in certain circumstances.
 - ii) These false teachers not only disrespect the beings they slander or lie about them.
- 4) As I put these last few thoughts together, one thing that struck me odd was how could, as Jude says back in vs. 4, “For certain people have crept in unnoticed ...”
 - a) One commentary indicates these might have been traveling teachers who had come and established themselves.
 - b) Their sole aim was perversion of the Christian gospel.
 - c) Their teaching may not have sounded wrong at first because it was subtle and easy to follow.
 - d) As an example, they were possibly teaching that Christians could do whatever they wanted without fear of God’s punishment.
 - i) Basically, this is a perversion of grace as scripture presents it.

Do you think we would be susceptible to this kind of teaching?

If YES, then why?

If NO, then why not?

- 5) Verses 9 and 10 are an amplification by example of how far off base these false teachers are:
 - a) Michael was an archangel when he argued with Satan, he himself did not slander or call down punishment on Satan but rather he said simply “The Lord rebuke you!”
 - b) In contrast, these false teachers are guilty of slandering angels – primarily because they had no respect for them – fallen or otherwise.
- 6) According to the “The Assumption of Moses” Michael was prepared to bury Moses per God’s instructions “in the valley opposite Beth Peor”.
 - a) But the devil disputed with Michael because he thought the body should belong to him because Moses had committed murder (Exodus 2:12).
 - b) Michael, instead of using his own authority left the matter in his Master’s hands, saying simply “The Lord rebuke you!”
- 7) In stark contrast, we see vs. 10

10 But these people disparage all the things that they do not understand; and all the things that they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed.

- a) Looking back at vs. 8, Jude tells us that they “speak abusively of angelic majesties”.
- b) Falling under that same umbrella so to speak is the fact that they tare down things they do not understand.
 - i) There are several things that can fall under this category:

- (1) A little knowledge is a dangerous thing – if I know just enough about something and get the opinion that I can tare it down and I do that then that is a bad thing.
- c) As we are told here their only understanding is instinct – they are like unreasoning animals.
- d) I think what Jude is saying here is they want to apply their own ideas of right and wrong rather than that of God.
- e) If we have no real control of our ideas, then basically whatever we decide is right is right.
- f) If we then are so brazen that we apply God’s grace to anything we want, then the sky is the limit – as we said a moment ago, they can and are doing anything they want.
- g) All this leads to their destruction.