

REMEMBER THE WORDS SPOKEN BEFORE
(SUNDAY, MAY 26, 2019)

Scripture: Numbers 26:1-11; Jude 11-19

INTRODUCTION

According to the CIA World Factbook, there are 7.3 billion people living as of July 2016.

Further, the percentage of people identified as being Christian is 31.4% or almost 2.3 billion people.

Of this 2.3 billion, how many truly know and love the Lord Jesus Christ?

A good percentage in this 2.3 billion would be connected with the gospel-denying and gospel-confusing Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches.

And among Protestants, there are still many millions connected with mainline churches that are all over the map when it comes to orthodoxy.

And even among denominations that we call more conservative, more Bible-believing we see so much compromise.

What confusing times in which we live!

At one level it might even seem that we are part of a very small number that holds to the authority of Scripture, the doctrines of grace, the message of salvation by God's grace alone through faith alone.

There is pressure to compromise!

How important that we are directed and encouraged by Scripture. We hate the compromise, but we know that Scripture told us we would always have to fight against such.

The Lord gave Jude a heavy burden to write this short letter.

There was the danger of compromise!

There was also the danger of thinking that this somehow was something new or unexpected in terms of God's plan.

As you read this letter, especially as you read it out loud, you see this is a powerful letter.

It is powerful in its description and warning concerning the false teachers.

And at the heart of this letter is a prophecy about the return of our Lord and the Day of Judgment.

Remember the words that were spoke before by the apostles and know that the Lord Jesus Christ will execute judgment.

We will look at verses 11-19 in two parts:

- 1) Danger and Description of the Ungodly False Teachers, verses 11-13 and 16-19
- 2) Behold the Lord Comes, verses 14-15

1) DANGER AND DESCRIPTION OF THE UNGODLY FALSE TEACHERS, vv. 11-13, 16-19

Look back to verse 4.

Jude 4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we discussed two weeks ago, Jude doesn't identify these false teachers by name, but he knows who they are.

These troublemakers or false teachers likely were travelling teachers.¹ They moved from place to place.

¹ Bauckham, 35.

In this case they were moving place to place spreading their false doctrine, and they were able to enter into Christian churches by sneaking in.²

There is probably a verbal play between the verb delivered (v. 3) and the verb crept in unnoticed (v. 4).

This is the danger.

Now given their abhorrent teaching and lifestyle, why were they successful in spreading their false message?

I mentioned two possible reasons last week:

- (1) We are not as strong in opposing evil or alert as we think we are in many cases.
- (2) Too many in the church want the world and just enough Jesus to get them out of trouble.

Verse 4 contains the two-part summary of their error:

- 1) They used grace as a cover for perversion.
- 2) They denied the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

In verse 8, Jude says that as part of their justification for error, they claimed special revelation for their false message. They are dreamers.

I just read yesterday a story about Vision Church in Atlanta that now has a psychic on staff.

Lakara Foster claims God has given her the gift of communicating with the dead as a medium and spiritual teacher.³

At the heart of these false teachers past and present is a rejection of God's authority and the authority of God's Word.

In verse 11, Jude brings a word of warning and judgment against them.

² "παρεισδύω (παρεισδύνω)," BDAG, 774.

³ <https://www.christianpost.com/news/vision-church-atlanta-psychic-medium-ministerial-staff.html>

Woe to them!

Woe is a word of warning or judgment found 47 times in the NT.

In the OT, this word is frequently used in the writings of the prophets, which parallels Jude's usage here.⁴

Jesus used this word in speaking against the cities who rejected Him and against the scribes and Pharisees.

Then Jude uses three examples as he likes to do from the OT Scriptures in describing the danger of these people.

Jude compares these false teachers to Cain, Balaam, and Korah.

What is it about these three infamous people from the OT?

Cain is the most well-known. Cain murdered his brother.

Were these false teachers guilty of murder? Not necessarily, but certainly Jude is saying they are motivated by hatred.

They have the spirit of Cain, if not the same actions.⁵

What about Balaam?

Balaam as you know was hired in order to curse Israel.

Did Balaam curse Israel? No, he did not. But this we know was not the end of the story.

Balaam did not curse God's people, but he was successful in encouraging Israel to fall into horrible sin. **And this he did for profit.**

Korah is probably the least known figure in this list, but we should remember what happened to Korah and those who joined with him.

⁴ Davids, 65.

⁵ Davids, 65.

Korah was upset with Moses and Aaron and accused them of exalting themselves above the assembly of the Lord.

Korah was not alone in his protest. He was joined by Dathan and Abiram and 250 leaders in Israel.

This was an attempted coup against God and Moses.

How did it end for them?

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were swallowed up by the earth. And then a fire came from the LORD and consumed the 250 men who were part of the rebellion.

The commentator Davids wrote: "Cain was exiled. Baalam was killed in battle. Korah went down into the ground. These teachers will end up in hell."⁶

Jude does not end with these comparisons. In verses 12-13, he further describes these false teachers and their dangers.

With verse 12 we see how these false teachers were connected with the local churches.

They participated in the services. **But their presence was not a blessing but one of judgment.**

They attend the love feasts, but they are dangerous.

- Spots: probably better translated as hidden rocks or reefs.
- They are there just for the food.
- With the reference to clouds and trees Jude is saying that they appear to be helpful, but they add nothing
- There is no profit in what they do.
- Even worse, what we see in verse 13

⁶ Davids, 68.

- Raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame
- Stars were used for navigation in the ancient world.
- But these false teachers are wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever

We will look at verses 14-15 in our second point, so let's move to verses 16-19.

They are grumblers and complainers.

Who are they complaining against? Most likely Jude is making a comparison between these false teachers and Israel of old in disputing the authority of God and of Christ.⁷

This is part of their antinomian, anti-law, spirit.

Further, they walk according to their own lusts. Rather than do what God calls them to do, they do instead what they want to do.

It is the end of verse 16 which shows again why these false teachers were so dangerous to the church.

Though living in an abhorrent way, they were able to **attract people and their money through enticing words.**⁸

The final description of these false teachers is given in verse 19.

Again, Jude uses a triplet description: sensual, causing divisions, not having the Spirit.

- Sensual has the meaning of that which is typical of human nature in contrast to that which is under the control of God's Spirit.
- These false teachers were still a part of the church and yet they were causing divisions within the church.
- Clearly the Holy Spirit was not in them.

⁷ Bauckham, 98.

⁸ Davids, 84.

Let's look next at verses 17 and 18.

Here is the first command in the book of Jude.

The challenge of the book of Jude is that we earnestly contend for the faith.

One of the ways that we do this is by remembering the words of the apostles who said that there would be mockers and those who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.

Jude says that what Peter and Paul said would take place starting in the 1st century was now taking place.

This is all horrible. We don't take any delight in it, of course, but we should not be surprised.

Listen to three warning passages that Jude could have had in mind.

1 Tim. 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

2 Tim. 3:1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,

2 Pet. 2:1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

From this we realize there were no "good old days" of the early church.

There has never been a time in church history where there has not been a battle for truth.

It is not that we love picking fights or that we want to show how we are better than other people.

Not at all. We love God's truth, and we want to see God's truth proclaimed and received.

And we know that as much as we love God's truth, Satan and false teachers work to subvert and twist God's truth and lead people astray.

We have to be vigilant!

2) BEHOLD THE LORD COMES, VERSES 14-15

Verses 14 and 15 are in some way the center of this book.

In the first sermon on Jude, I mentioned the pseudepigraphical book called 1 Enoch.

The entire book of Enoch was lost for many years and was discovered in Ethiopia in 1773.

Copies of parts of 1 Enoch were found later as part of the Dead Sea Scrolls. So at least the first part of 1 Enoch dates to the time before Christ.⁹

In the translation by Richard Laurence done in 1883 from Ethiopic, the book has 105 chapters. Some of the chapters are very short, just a verse in length.

Listen to 1 Enoch 2:1 (1:9 in some translations):

Behold, he comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon them, and destroy the wicked, and reprove all the carnal for everything which the sinful and ungodly have done, and committed against him.

This quotation is similar to what we read in verses 14 and 15.

Is Jude quoting this book?

There is a possibility, but it is also possible that Jude was quoting from an oral tradition even older than the written text of 1 Enoch.¹⁰

Why would Jude quote from this work or this older tradition instead of something from the prophets?

⁹ <http://www.inspiredbooks.com/1Enoch.htm>

¹⁰ NET Bible note, s.v. Jude 14.

Jude is making an important point.

Enoch was the seventh in line starting with Adam.

We are going way back in time, even before the flood.

Enoch in Genesis 5 is described as someone who walked with God.

Twice in Genesis 5 this is the description given of Enoch.

Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

Enoch did not die a physical death, but rather was brought directly into God's presence.

Enoch named his son, Methuselah. The name Methuselah likely was given as a prophecy of the coming flood.

As we have noted in Sunday School recently, Methuselah died the year of the flood, and his name means, "when he dies, it comes."

Enoch was a prophet.

Though Enoch lived over 600 years before the flood came, he may well have lived in a time of rebellion and wickedness.

Jude in verse 14, says that Enoch prophesied about the false teachers of his own day.

How do we understand this?

I would suggest two related possibilities.

It maybe that Jude is saying that what Enoch prophesied is applicable to his own age.

Or it may be that Jude, guided by the Holy Spirit, is saying, Enoch's prophecy, given thousands of years in advance, was specifically given for the time of Jude.

Jude's prophecy is that one day the Lord Jesus Christ will return with countless thousands of His saints to execute judgment and convict all who are ungodly.

Jesus Christ will come to bring about judgment and conviction for all ungodly deeds and all the wicked things spoken against Him.

The key word here is the word ungodly, which is used in Jude as a noun, adjective, and verb.

In all its forms the root word is used 6x in Jude, **four times in just verse 15.**

The translation ungodly is a good one. The basic meaning of the word is a lack of reverence for God, His truth, and His people.¹¹

These false teachers claim to honor God, but they **live with total disrespect to the Lord. There is no ultimate reverence for God and His truth.**

What awaits those who live without true fear of God is the most fearful day of the coming judgment of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jude as I mentioned and we will note more next week, Lord willing, calls us to do a number of things as related to earnestly contending for the faith.

As important as our duty is in light of the call of Jude and Scripture, we must ultimately keep in mind that there will be a Day of Judgment.

Now we don't also deny a judgment in time.

But even when we don't see a judgment in time, we are never to imagine that God is letting the wicked get away with their evil.

As David wrote in Psalm 37:

Psa. 37:1 Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.

8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret—*it only causes harm.*

9 For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth.

¹¹ "ἀσεβεια," BDAG, 141.

It is certainly right to be concerned about truth and to be aware of what is taking place, especially as it concerns the church of Jesus Christ.

Holiness is not a lack of concern.

But we have to be very careful to not let concern turn to ungodly anger and worry.

As David and God's Word in Psalm 37 commands, we have to be focused on trusting in the Lord, delighting in the Lord, committing our way unto Him, resting, and waiting patiently for God to work.

CONCLUSION

Remember the words that were spoke before by the apostles and know that the Lord Jesus Christ will execute judgment.

The challenge that we face today consists both of false or compromising teachers and false or compromising teaching.

- 1) Discarding the supremacy and authority of God's Word or restricting its application for life and society today.
- 2) Confusion over what should be clear in terms of marriage, basic morality, etc.
- 3) A twisting or denial of the gospel

Heidelberg Catechism:

52. What comfort is it to you that Christ "shall come to judge the living and the dead"?

That in all my sorrows and persecutions, I, with uplifted head, look for the very One who offered Himself for me to the judgment of God, and removed all curse from me, to come as Judge from heaven, who shall cast all His and my enemies into everlasting condemnation, but shall take me with all His chosen ones to Himself into heavenly joy and glory.

Prayer

Hymn 484

BENEDICTION: 2 PETER 3:17-18

You therefore, beloved, since you know *this* beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked;

but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory both now and forever. Amen.