

“EARNESTLY CONTEND: THE ENEMY’S PROFILE”

August 16, 2015

Jude 1:1-25

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

Jude wrote to fellow-believers, exhorting them to “earnestly contend for the faith.” Subtle, ungodly individuals had infiltrated the congregation of saints. Their presence threatened the spiritual welfare of each true believer. They had to be opposed and their influence brought to an end. Here is Jude’s description of these enemies who had “crept in unawares.”

1. They turn grace to lasciviousness (4). Grace is God’s favor toward man. It is never deserved, but always given freely; a manifestation of God’s goodness. Jude warned against people who indulge shameless immorality while claiming to believe in Christ. They alleged that God loves, and that He desires that we have pleasure, that His grace is a license for immorality. This directly contradicts Scripture (Gal. 5:13; I Pet. 2:16; II Pet. 2:19). Paul uses the same terminology to describe the shameful homosexuality of Sodom (II Pet. 2:7).

2. They deny Christ, the sovereign Lord (4). By their ungodly indulgence of lust they were saying, “I am my own and can do as I please.” This is a denial of sovereign rule of Christ, who is creator, Lord and sustainer of all. All things “were created by him and for him,” (Col. 1:16-18; Heb. 1:1-3).

3. They are “filthy dreamers” who pollute their flesh (8). The word “dreamers” may refer to self-proclaimed prophets who claim to have a special vision or revelation from God. Or it may refer to people whose mind is filled with vile fantasies. Whichever it is, it results in wanton, unbridled immorality (Rom. 1:24-27). This corresponds to v. 7, which reports the defilement of the Sodomites (Gen. 19:4-8) and the judgment that followed.

4. Their dreaming also compels them to reject God’s authority (8). God’s commands, and those who proclaim His commands, forbid the lasciviousness that they imagine and indulge. Enslaved by their lusts, they refuse to curtail their shameful behavior, rejecting the authority of God, of His Word and of any who affirm its truth. This rejection corresponds to v. 6, which reports the angels who rejected God’s authority, and are now detained by God, awaiting their judgment.

5. They slander dignities (8-10). The filthy dreaming that results in pollution of the flesh and rejection of God’s authority, resorts to slandering spiritual authorities. They speak evil of holy spiritual beings, having no conscience regarding their message. Unable to defend their disobedient, vile conduct, they speak evil of the One who forbids it. In this age, we hear this defense of immorality: “this is the way God made me.”

The “dignities” of v. 8 are spiritual beings. God’s law was put into effect by angels (Acts 7:53, 38; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2). The evil men Jude described were at war with anything representing

divine authority, thus the angels who were understood as having imparted God's law were the focus of their slander, even though the men were largely ignorant of what they were saying. In short, they reject and slander any spiritual authority. This corresponds to v. 5, in which the children of Israel spoke against God and Moses, and were destroyed (Num. 14:1-3).