

**THE BOOK OF JUDE**  
**(Lesson Three)**

*“Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. 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. 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.” - Jude 1:8-10*

**INTRODUCTION**

In the previous message on verses 4 - 7, we identified the apostate teachers by their immoral conduct. They were “ungodly”, lacking a reverence for God. They were “lawless” in that they believed that the grace of God freed them from all external authority so they were an authority unto themselves. This is known as antinomianism. The apostate sin or sins in Jude was basically a moral error as opposed to an intellectual error. They were “deniers of God,” in that their deeds revealed they were serving other masters rather than Jesus Christ. We also looked at three examples of God’s judgment on apostasy in the Old Testament. They were the cases of the Hebrews in the desert, the angels that sinned, and Sodom and Gomorrah. These sins consisted of unbelief of God’s word, rebellion against constituted authority, and sexual perversion. Jude now proceeds to link the lifestyles of the apostates of his day to those which God has judged in the Old Testament examples.

**II. JUDE’S ARGUMENT (Heretics Described) verses 4-19.**

**4. Three Main Characteristics of Their Sinful Conduct.**

Jude now uses three verbs to describe the conduct of the present apostates. They are defile (pollute), despise (reject), and slander (speak evil).

- a. **First, “they defile the flesh” - their immorality causes a moral stain on their characters.**

- (1) **A comparison made - “likewise”.**

Jude now uses the likewise, or in a like manner, to draw a comparison between the Old Testament sinners and the ones about whom he was writing. He describes

them as “dreamers” who defile or pollute their flesh. They do so in the manner of Sodom and Gomorrah.

**(2) A cause given - “these dreamers”.**

The word is used only one other time in the New Testament. In Acts 2:7, where it refers to a prophetic dream or vision. The Greek Septuagint uses the same verb to refer to the false dreams of the false prophets. cf. Deuteronomy 13:2, 3, 4; Isaiah 56:10; Jeremiah 23:25. In Deuteronomy 13:1-3 we read, **“If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proves you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”** A false prophet was one who was a dreamer of dreams. Also in Jeremiah 23:25, 26 we read, **“I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart.”** The false prophets were liars and self-deceived. Jude is describing men whose egos were so inflated they falsely claimed to have visionary revelations to justify their actions and beliefs.

Kenneth Hagin, a modern day apostate, who is known for telling tall tales and having false visions, claims that he was in the middle of a sermon when he was suddenly transported out of his body back in time. He ended up in the back seat of a car and watched a young woman from his church commit adultery with the driver. The entire experience lasted about fifteen minutes, after which he suddenly found himself back in church, calling on his hearers to pray. He also boasts of several visits to both heaven and hell. (Hagin, *The Glory of God*, pp. 13-15). False teachers feed on their proud egos. They are like dreamers who so fantasize or visualize in their minds what their senses desire, that they propagate the lies of Satan which they believe are the truth which comes from God. If a person does not have the Spirit of God, he does not have any lasting control over his human sinful desires. What is hidden within will usually become visible without.

b. **Second, they “despise dominion” - they reject authority or lordship.**

The word, “**dominion**”, is a broad word referring to constituted authority. The word, “**despise**” means “to set aside something that has been established, to reject.” Thus they reject or set aside any and every form of constituted authority which would hinder or restrain the impulses coming from their natural senses. In the parallel passage, Peter expresses it in this manner. “**But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. . .**” (II Peter 2:10). They set aside God’s divine order of constituted authority and become a law unto themselves.

God has established a headship or authority for all relationships of which He is head over all. This is expressed in I Corinthians 11:3, “**But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.**” Honor and due respect is to be recognized and displayed to the order which God has established. The various relationships in which order is established are set forth in Scripture.

(1) **Parent-child - Ephesians 6:1-3, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor your father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth.”**

The word “honor” means to “give due regard”. In this home or family relationship, the father is given the first position as the constituted head. He is given the responsibility to oversee the well-being of the family. Children are to be taught to respect their father in his appointed office. They are also to give equal respect to their mother as she is also head over them. They are not to give their father 100 percent honor and their mother 75 percent. They are to be given equal honor.

In doing so, they are to give regard to the wisdom which comes from age and experience. Proverbs 16:31 says, “**The hoary (gray) head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.**” A crown is an ornament of respect. All men are to respect their elders, or those who are older than they. In doing so they recognize the wisdom of God in putting their elders here on earth before themselves. They have seniority.

It is the mark of an apostate culture or church which places its honor upon its youth rather than its elderly. Proverbs 20:29 says, “**The glory of young men is their**

***strength: and the beauty of old men is the grey head.*** Youth may have their enthusiasm, but they need to be guided by the wisdom and experience of the elderly. We minister to our children the most, not by providing them with more amusement, but by explaining to them to respect God's constituted authority to honor their parents.

This duty extends in honoring our parents by supporting them in their old age. The relationship is not broken by age. Paul taught in I Timothy 5:4, ***"If any widow have children or nephews (grandchildren), let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite (repay) their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God."*** Also in verse 8, ***"but if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel (unbeliever)."*** Caring for one's parents is a good deed or work. Refusing to do so is a denial of God's lordship. This is what the apostates in Jude's life were doing.

(2) **Husband - wife - Ephesians 5:22-24 - *"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."***

The wife is to show due respect to her husband by submitting to his leadership. In doing so, she honors God, her husband, and her children by modeling true womanhood before them. A few years ago the Southern Baptist Convention inserted an article in the confession that wives were to lovingly submit to their husbands. It did not come as a surprise that the pagan society mocked the proposal, but the rage of huge numbers of churches and believers within the convention was startling. It has since led to many churches of longstanding to withdraw from the convention on the grounds of being given greater vision of enlightenment. What does this show? It shows how many apostates had crept privily into the movement through a side door. Like those in Jude's day, these would desire to retain the reputation of being Christians but they betray themselves as wolves in sheep's clothing by denying God His sovereign lordship to appoint the husband as the head of the wife.

**(3) Master - slave - Ephesians 6:5-8:** *“Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man does, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.”*

This is a relationship based on economics. Its counterpart today is that of the employer-employee. The employer is the head of the business. He or it negotiates a fare wage with the employee in exchange for the employee’s labor. Any violence, damage or injury done toward the employer by the employee during the time of his or her employment is a sign or disrespect toward the headship of the employer. This is a rejection of God’s authority to establish constituted order. This has much to say to relationships which exist today between company management and the laboring unions.

**(4) Government - citizen - Romans 13:1-7:** *“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resists the power, resists the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he bears not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that does evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.”*

Paul’s exhortation is straight to the point. Everyone, believer and unbeliever is to submit to the governing authorities. The reason is simple, every authority is established by God for the good of society in maintaining peace and tranquility. Governments have the authority to punish the lawbreakers. Citizens are to respect the various offices of government, pray for their leaders, pay their taxes, and obey

the laws. This leads to what Paul describes in I Timothy 2:2 ***“that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”***

(5) Church leaders - members - I Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17: ***“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. . . . Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”***

If honor is to be given to our secular leaders, double honor is to be shown to our church leaders. The officers in the church are elders and deacons. They watch over the spiritual well-being of our souls and are accountable to God for their actions. Church members are to pray for, support financially, and respect the decisions made by their chosen and appointed leaders. The role they play is that of headship and oversight. Members who do not support their leader or leaders by prayer, giving of the tithes, attending the preaching services, are showing great dishonor not only to their pastors but to God, and is a mark of apostasy to forsake ***“the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.”*** (Hebrews 10:25). God ceases to talk to or deal with those who fall into this category, for Paul goes on to say in Hebrews 10:26, ***“For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world has he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”***

(6) Social relationships - I Timothy 5:1,2, ***“Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.”***

Elderly men are to be honored as fathers. This means anyone older than you. Younger men are to be respected as brothers. Elderly women are to be honored as mothers, and younger women as sisters. If you are a male, you are to relate to all younger women as if they were your sisters, and refrain from any impure contact with them.

Whenever God's established order is upheld, a respect for superiors tends to a peaceful and prosperous society, by restraining the passions existing in both the body and spirit of human beings.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is designed to re-establish and build up the instituted orderly authority of God over all relationships, not to destroy them. The apostates in Jude's time were turning this gospel on its head and using the grace of God to overthrow all forms of law which restrained their sinful impulses.

**c. Third, they *"speak evil (slander) of dignities."***

The third thing which characterized the conduct of Jude's apostates was that they were so controlled by their own self-wills, they did not hesitate to speak evil of dignities.

**(1)An explanation made - *"dignities"*.**

The words, *"speak evil"* means to "slander or scoff at." The word *"dignities"* is literally the "glorious ones" referring to angels. Jude immediately introduces Michael, the archangel, and the devil, a fallen angel, to illustrate his point. Peter does the same thing in II Peter 2:10 where he says, *". . .presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities."* Then in verse 11 he introduces the conduct of the angels or the glorious ones. *"Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord."* The dignities refer to the angels, good or evil. In their creation, they were placed by God in ranks of authority, each possessing varying abilities and lordship. It is believed that Satan, before his fall, held the highest office, with Michael second in rank. Man was made under the headship of the angels. In Psalm 8:5-8 we read of man's creation, *"For you have made him a little lower than the angels, and has crowned him with glory and honor. You made him to have dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passes through the paths of the seas."* In the created order man was given headship over the lower creatures but was under the headship of the angels.

The false teachers were scoffing at this arrangement. Bible teachers are not agreed whether the angels being slandered are good or evil authorities. I believe the illustration of Michael and Satan lends itself to the position that the angels are

the evil or fallen ones. I do so for this reason. When the false teachers would be rebuked for their immoral and lawless behavior, they would also be warned of the danger of falling into the power of the devil and sharing in his condemnation. In response, the false teachers would laugh and scoff at the idea, denying that the devil had any power over them, and speak of the evil powers in skeptical slanderous terms. ***“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”*** (II Timothy 2:24-26)

(2) **An illustration given - verse 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.”***

Jude illustrates the proud arrogance of the false teachers by pointing to an encounter between the two highest ranking angels, Michael, the chief of the good angels, and Satan the chief of the evil angels. The dispute is over the burial of the body of Moses. This incident is not mentioned in the Old Testament. All we are told about Moses' death is that God ***“buried him in a valley in the end of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knows of his sepulcher unto this day.”*** (Deuteronomy 34:6).

However, the dispute referred to by Jude was recorded in the now lost ending of an apocryphal Jewish writing called the *Assumption (Ascension) of Moses*. But the tradition can be reconstructed from references to that account in a number of early Christian writings. (See Richard Bauckham, *WBC*, Vol. 50, pp. 65-76). A reconstructed outline of these writings portrays the incident in this manner.

“Joshua accompanied Moses up Mount Nebo, where God showed Moses the land of promise. Moses then sent Joshua back to the people to inform them of Moses' death, and Moses died. God sent the arch-angel Michael to remove the body of Moses to another place and bury it there, but Samma'el, the devil, opposed him, disputing Moses' right to an honorable burial . . . The devil brought against Moses a charge of murder because he smote the Egyptian and buried his body in the sand.



But this accusation was not better than slander against Moses, and Michael, not tolerating the slander, said to the devil, 'May the Lord rebuke you, devil!' At that the devil took flight, and Michael removed the body to the place commanded by God, where he buried it with his own hands. Thus no one saw the burial of Moses." (Bauckham, *WBC*, pp. 72, 72).

The incident is that which is found in a legal courtroom trial. Satan, the highest ranking of all the angels, is the prosecuting attorney. He is accusing Moses of being a sinner undeserving of an honorable burial. Michael, the second in rank, is the defense attorney, serving as Moses' advocate. Satan is the accuser of the brethren and Michael is the Lord's angel arguing Moses' case. It is similar to the scene in Zechariah 3:1,2 where we read, "And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan."

Jude observes that Michael, while he is refuting the Devil's claims, does not use slanderous and insulting language out of respect to the office which Satan held. Instead he appeals to the revealed word of God to decide the rightness of the matter. The point Jude is making is that if the greatest of the good angels refused to slander the authority of the greatest of the evil angels, surely no human in his right mind should scoff or speak evil of any angelic power or authority.

All this serves to help answer the questions which arise as to what does a person do when someone in authority over them abuses their authority, and acts in a wrong manner? What for example, is a wife to do when her husband asks her to do something which is contrary to God's word? She must point out that while she is mindful of her husband's headship, she would have him be mindful that both she and he are under God's headship and then point out what God's word says about the matter. If he will not listen, then she must say, "I must obey God and not man."

**(3) An observation concluded - v. 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."***

In slandering the angelic authorities, the false teachers show how little they actually understand of the spiritual world even though they claim direct revelation from God in the form of visions or dreams. While they think they are spiritual they are actually devoid of spiritual discernment and are giving in to their natural instincts. This lowers them to the lower level of the animal creation.

When a person rejects all forms of authority other than what his natural instincts tell him to do, he has made himself as God determining by self-will what is “good and evil.” Peter says in II Peter 2:12 of these people they are like “natural, brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed . . . and shall utterly perish in their own corruption.” When people’s instinctive desires scoff at the authority of God’s word, they are like trying to reason with an unreasoning animal and become like the tribe of Ephraim of which God said, **“Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.”** -

**Hosea 4:17**