

Text: Jude 8-10

Title: The Ungodly, Part 1

Truth: The ungodly of the present are like those of the past—in behavior and destiny.

Date/Location: Sunday January 11, 2015 at FBC

Introduction

The people that Jude is worried about are described in verse 4:

1. They are “**creepy**.” They snuck into the churches by stealth. They **crept** in unnoticed.
2. They are **ungodly**.
3. They are **licentious**.
4. They are **deniers** of the sovereign Lord Jesus Christ.

We will learn a number of other characteristics of “these” people in verses 8-19, of which we will examine a portion in these notes.

I. Observations About the Text

- A. In our study of God’s Word, we need to train our reading eyes to notice important words and repetition of words. A word that occurs in verses 8-16 should cause your eyes to widen a little bit: it is the word **these**:
- v. 8: Likewise also **these** dreamers defile the flesh...
 - v. 10: But **these** speak evil...
 - v. 12: **These** are spots in your love feasts...
 - v. 14: Now Enoch...prophesied about **these** men also...
 - v. 16: **These** are grumblers, complainers, walking...
 - v. 19: **These** are sensual persons, who cause divisions...
1. The word **these** is called a demonstrative pronoun. It stands in place of a noun—in this case “certain ungodly men” from verse 4—as a shorthand way to refer back to the same people as before. The word serves to point them out for further description so that we can clearly identify them.
 2. The repetition of **these** helps us to understand that Jude is writing about basically one thing in his letter, and that is the ungodly people—who they are, what their end is, and how we need to deal with them.
- B. Another observation is that Jude makes numerous references to the Old Testament in a way that shows us he expects us to understand it very well.
1. Michael, the archangel and his argument with the devil.
 2. Cain, who murdered his brother out of jealousy and anger.
 3. Balaam, who was a money-grubbing prophet.
 4. Korah, a rebel against God’s ordained leadership of Israel.
 5. Enoch, a prophet who condemned the same ungodliness Jude warns about.
 6. Adam, clearly portrayed as the literal first man on earth.

II. Further Descriptions of the Ungodly, v. 8

- A. **Dreamers.** This “dreamer” is not the unpractical or idealistic youth that has fantastic thoughts about what he or she might accomplish. Rather, they may claim to visions in their dreams that they promote and live by. They may suggest that these visions are from God. But they connect these visions with the sinful behaviors listed next.
- B. **Defile the flesh.** What is supposed to be pure they pollute by immoral behavior. See verse 10 for more on this.
- C. **Reject authority.**
1. They deny, declare as invalid, ignore, or do not recognize authority.
 2. The word *authority* refers to the idea of “lordship.” That is, they reject the ruling power, the dominion, the kingship, the sovereign authority of God. The ungodly opponents of the church reject any authority, and especially God’s dominion. They don’t want any constraints on their immorality (Psalm 2:3).
 3. This verse is not a polemic against those who reject “lordship salvation” per se. Whatever your view about that issue, if you think it is OK to reject God’s rule in your life, even for a short time, you have a serious problem.
 4. The kind of life lived without any authority is going to be a troubled one. While you are in your parents home, they have authority over you. In the classroom, the teacher has authority. In the society, the police have authority. You cannot just trample that authority and expect there to be no consequences because “I’m entitled!” In the church, there is a leadership structure, not like the unbelievers have (Luke 22:25-26), but where there are leaders and those who follow the leaders (Heb. 13:17). In the home with husband and wife there is as well. In all of life, each and every one of us is under the rule of God, whether we like it or not. You cannot buck those authority structures—put in place by *God*—and expect zero consequences.
- D. **Speak evil** of dignitaries. This will be explained as we examine the illustration contained in verse 9.

III. The Assumption of Moses, v. 9

- A. Supposedly Jude relied upon a non-canonical book *The Assumption of Moses*, which is also called *The Testament of Moses*. A few ancient church writers such as Origen said Jude used this book.
1. What text is known of this apocryphal and pseudepigraphal book is available online.¹ Experts believe it was written in the first century AD.²

¹ <http://wesley.nnu.edu/index.php?id=2124>

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assumption_of_Moses

2. However, the text available today comes from a bishop named Ceriani, who discovered a poor copy of the text and published it in 1861. The manuscript does not mention Moses' burial or any dispute about his body, although as much as one third of the manuscript appears to be missing. Apparently, no known manuscript that includes the dispute exists today.

B. What is the point of this?

1. First, although some early church writers claim that Jude depends on the apocryphal work, we cannot prove it with the evidence we have.
2. Second, even if Jude did refer to or quote a non-canonical book, that in no way damages our view of inspiration. Jude was writing as God's instrument and everything he wrote was without error.
3. Third, and probably most important, the meaning of the text of Scripture is in the text; it is not found outside the text. Without access to *The Assumption*, we can fully understand the meaning intended by Jude.

IV. Illustration of Michael, v. 9

- A. In its context, verse 9 is an illustration of how bad the ungodly people are. The ungodly people will speak evil of glorious ones (dignitaries) who rank way above them. But not even the highest angel of all, Michael, would speak evil of the most evil one of all, Satan. This illustration shows that the ungodly people Jude is talking about are literally 180 degrees out of step with godliness. Michael is an illustration of godliness. He permits God to do the rebuking, and just does the job God gave him to do. He did have to contend with Satan to do the job. Satan, of all beings, deserves a rebuke, but Michael does not do so because he respects the power of Satan because of his very high rank in the creation of God.
- B. Michael is mentioned elsewhere in Scripture in Daniel 10:13, 10:21, 12:1, and Revelation 12:7. He is mentioned as a helper to the servants of God in the battle against forces of evil in the spiritual realm. He is pictured in Daniel 12 as a powerful protector of the people of Israel. And in Revelation 12 he is the leader of the heavenly army at war against Satan.
- C. The precise nature of the dispute between these two powerful angelic beings is secondary to Jude's point, so he does not give us much detail.
1. We know it has to do with Moses' dead body, which we believe God buried according to Deut. 34:5-6. God used Michael as his agent to do the burial. The burial location was never known by man.
 2. I speculate that God afforded Moses a special burial in order to avoid his being worshipped by later Jews, perhaps with a shrine.
 3. Whatever our speculation might be on the reason why, we know that Satan was in a dispute with Michael about what to do with the body. Michael had the authority of God to do what God wanted. Satan, as usual, wanted to do something other than what God wanted. He may have wanted to desecrate

Moses' body or use it to cause a stumbling block to the nation of Israel. Whether it is the bronze serpent or the temple or whatever, Satan will use even the things of God to turn people against God.

V. Expansion of Two of the Descriptions of the Ungodly, v. 10

- A. **Speak evil.** In contrast to Michael's conduct, these ungodly people *blaspheme*.
1. They slander, speak irreverently or disrespectfully to or about others, especially about those who are higher than themselves, like God.
 2. And in their talking and slandering, they do not understand the things of which they speak. Perhaps you have had the sad experience of hearing an irreverent person speak about God as if He doesn't exist or is irrelevant. Maybe you have heard some ungodly person spout off and you can see right through their moral ignorance. They don't know what they are talking about.
 3. Michael knew Satan and the situation and said basically nothing; these don't know and fill the air with their filthy talk. Proverbs tells us that a man who speaks of what he does not know is a fool (Prov. 18:13, 17). Being hasty in words shows that a man is worse than a fool (Prov. 29:20). When there are a lot of words, sin is not lacking, but the one who restrains his tongue is wise (Prov. 10:19). Better to keep your mouth shut if you don't know what you are talking about! But a characteristic of the ungodly is that they revile away.
- B. So, whatever the ungodly *don't know*, they speak insolently about. But what they *do know* they **do according to instinct**. And in doing it, they do so to their own destruction. This is a further elaboration of the "defiling the flesh" from verse 8.
1. The things they know are described as coming from their natural instincts, like animals that are driven by instinct (irrational beings unlike humans). There is a heavy note here of base lewdness (sexual immorality). They behave like animals (those in heat), and these very behaviors will destroy them.
 2. Actually, the text uses the present tense to say that their behavior *is destroying* them, indicating a destruction that is ongoing but will be brought to completion in the future. Sin is always destructive.
 3. The translation "corrupt themselves" could fit here also because it refers to the causing of deterioration in the soul. But "corrupt themselves" sounds like a middle voice verb whereas the text has it passive, more like "they are being destroyed."

Conclusion

Jude reminded us in verses 5-8 about the judgment on such ungodly people. And now we have had occasion to study their characteristics a bit more in detail. As we conclude, I think it is fitting to exhort you that your life must look nothing like the ungodly. There should not be any rejecting of God-given authority; no defiling the flesh in sexual immorality; and no careless or blaspheming speech about God or Christ or other heavenly beings.

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