

"Jude: Deceivers and their Punishment"

Jude 5-16

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Introduction:

Most of us here this morning have probably been deceived at least one time in our lives—most of us probably a lot more than that. Perhaps you are thinking of a television commercial that promised more than the product delivered. Perhaps you are thinking of a politician who told you what you wanted to hear in order to get your vote. Perhaps you are thinking of a teacher who twisted the facts in order to convince you of a distorted view of the past. Perhaps you are thinking of a salesperson who failed to describe the shortcomings of a product you just purchased.

Personally, I remember a situation from several years ago when we took our old van, yet again, to get another batch of recall work done. At this point, the van had nearly 150,000 miles, and we had already done the research and were getting ready to purchase the van we now own. I had been sleeping with the brochure—guys, you know how that is! So when I went in to get the recall work done on our old van, I sat down in the waiting room and picked up the latest issue of Car and Driver. On the front of that magazine there was a reference to an article where the Honda Odyssey was just chosen as the "minivan of the year." That was all the convincing I needed, but just for the fun of it, I walked into the showroom and looked at the new models of the van we were getting repaired. I was immediately approached by a salesperson, and he started in with a string of lies unlike almost anything I have seen since then. He made bold and confident statements cutting on the van we were about to purchase, I asked some probing questions (obviously knowing more than he did), and as he spoke I kept wondering to myself, "Is this man lying, or is he ignorant?" I couldn't figure out which was worse. Finally, I just had to say it, "You are lying to me." He had a shocked look on his face, and I believe it was later that week we went and purchased our new van. Ever since then, whenever I hear the commercials for that dealership, I can literally feel my blood pressure rising, because all of us hate being deceived.

We know that deception is dangerous not only for the one being deceived, but also ultimately for the deceiver. Some time ago, I read the story about a farmer who became frustrated that someone was stealing the melons right out of his field. Every night, they would stop by and steal a few melons. The farmer became desperately frustrated, so in an attempt to save the crop from the thieves, he decided to put up a sign. The sign had a skull and crossbones on it and said, "One of these melons is poisoned." And of course, only the farmer knew that the sign was not true. Well, for several nights not a single melon was missing. But after the third night, the farmer noticed that his sign had been changed. Someone had scratched out the word "one"

and had replaced it with another word so that the sign now indicated that "two" of the melons had been poisoned! So here is a farmer who was trying to save his whole crop through deception, but actually ended up losing it all. I think we might agree with the words of Sir Walter Scott, the famous Scottish poet, "Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when we practice to deceive!"

Since there are so many people out there in the world who are eager to deceive, even in matters of faith, I wonder if there is anything that we can do to protect ourselves. With that question in mind, I'd like for us to continue, this morning with the second in a series of four lessons from the New Testament book of **Jude**.

You might remember from last week that the book was most likely written by Jude (or Judas) who was the Lord's little brother, and the brother of James, who wrote the book of James. We found that the Lord's brothers at one time were not believers, and yet we find that after the resurrection the brothers have had a change of heart. In fact, we find in **1 Corinthians 9:5** that the brothers of the Lord (and their wives) were being financially supported by the church as missionaries.

We found last week that the book of Jude is one of only five one-chapter books in the Bible, but it is a powerful book. We found that Jude started out wanting to write about a very positive subject, ****PPT**** but he ends up changing his topic at the very last moment. As he says in **verses 3-4**, ***"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 which was once for all handed down to the saints. For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."*** Jude reminds us, then, that the Christian faith is worth fighting for and needs to be defended. It is not possible to remain neutral, but the word of God has to be defended from those who are trying to turn the grace of God into a license to sin.

This morning, as we think about the danger of religious deception, ****PPT**** I'd like for us to continue by looking at **verses 5-16**, as Jude gives us a description of those who deceive, a picture of what they are doing, and then finally a warning concerning their future. But first, if you will, please look with me at the book of **Jude, verses 5-16**...

⁵ Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. ⁶ And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, ⁷ just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. ⁸ Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile 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 a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" ¹⁰ But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. ¹¹ Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. ¹² These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; ¹³ wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever. ¹⁴ It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, ¹⁵ to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." ¹⁶ These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.

I. First of all, this morning, we need to look at THE SEVEN EXAMPLES THAT JUDE GIVES US IN VERSES 5-11.

A. He starts in verse 5 with a description of the Children of Israel in the days of the Exodus. **PPT******

On recent Wednesday evenings, we've been looking at this in detail. After having been Egypt for 430 years, the Children of Israel were led out into the wilderness by Moses. They saw the Ten Plagues. They were released from Egyptian slavery. They were led by a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire. They crossed the Red Sea on dry land. They had seen the waters come crashing down on the Egyptian army. They were given manna from heaven. They were given water from the rock. We will find that their shoes did not wear out on the journey. God thought of everything. They were blessed in every possible way. And yet in spite of the abundance of evidence, they were a nation of whiners. They were always complaining. They were always doubting. And when they finally get to the Promised Land, ten of the twelve spies come back saying that God's promise was impossible. And unfortunately, the people believed the ten spies. God was so upset that he killed the ten spies immediately, and He said that the Israelites would therefore wander in the Sinai Desert for 40 years (one year for each day the spies viewed the land) and that everyone over the age of 20 at the time of the Red Sea crossing would die in the wilderness as a result of their unbelief. The only exception would be Joshua and Caleb—the two faithful spies. And so we have a powerful opening shot from Jude, the Lord's brother. Jude was making the point that some people have every advantage, they are blessed by God, and yet they insist on turning away. And at least with the Israelites, the natural

consequence was that they would die in the wilderness. The very people God saved from Egypt He destroyed in the desert. Jude was making the point that God knows how to deal with unbelief. He has dealt with it before, and He will deal with it again.

B. In verse 6, Jude gives another example by writing about the rebellious angels. **PPT******

We seem to have passing references to this in **Luke 10:18** and **Revelation 12** about the angels who rebelled against God and declared war in heaven and were therefore expelled from heaven. Like the Israelites, the angels had also seen the power and love of God. Jude is giving a second warning, then, that if angels can turn against God, then people who were at one time faithful can also turn away. It doesn't matter how faithful a person has been in the past, what matters is the present. And again we are reminded that certain angels have left their assigned positions, and are now (as a result) being ***"...kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day."*** Once again, God knows how to deal with those who are rebellious unbelievers. As one commentary pointed out, "The mutiny against their Maker ended in disaster." This should be a warning to us today that it is possible to turn away from God. We need to remember Peter's warning in **2 Peter 2** that Christians who turn away from God are like dogs who return to their own vomit. It is a disgusting reminder of a dangerous situation.

C. In verse 7, Jude gives a third example by referring to the residents of Sodom and Gomorrah. **PPT******

We know what happened there, and we know that it had a huge impact on the Bible writers. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is referred to close to twenty times in the Bible. The account of what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah tells us that the people in those cities were blessed by Lot (who is referred to as a righteous man in **2 Peter 2:8**). They were blessed by having Abraham living in the area—the "Father of the Faithful." God eventually sent two angels to check out the situation, and the men of the city wanted to take the angels and lay with them by force. When Lot refused to open the door, the men of the city threatened to break it down, until the angels struck them blind, and even then they continued groping for the door. And so in spite of any good influences, the people were caught up in the sin of homosexuality, and they were destroyed off the face of the earth. Jude says in **verse 7** that those men are now, ***"...exhibited as an example of undergoing the punishment of eternal fire."***

D. Not only can we look at the example of Sodom and Gomorrah, but we also see the example of Satan himself. **PPT******

In **verses 8-9**, we have a short and rather strange account of something that we only read about here in Jude, as we find that there was an argument between Michael the archangel and Satan concerning the body of Moses. Apparently, Satan wanted the body of Moses. We can only imagine that it would have been turned into some kind of idol to be worshiped by the Israelites, but whatever the case was, Satan

"...reviled the angelic majesties." But what is interesting here is how Michael the archangel dealt with the situation. Instead of getting into a long argument, Michael simply says, **"The Lord rebuke you!"** In other words, Michael turned the matter over to God. Michael knew that God would handle the situation. Michael knew that God would be fair and just and would hand out the appropriate punishment.

In **verse 10**, Jude goes on to explain that such people really don't have a clue. They may come across as knowledgeable on certain issues, but ultimately they are speaking by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things (Jude says), **"...they are destroyed."** It is their lofty thinking that brings them down.

- E. And then in verse 11, we have three other very quick and passing examples, starting with a warning for those who have gone the way of Cain. ****PPT******

Out of jealousy, Cain killed his brother. Jude is comparing spiritual deception to murder. Cain and Abel were two of the sons of Adam and Eve, and we know that when God called for a sacrifice, Abel's sacrifice was acceptable, but Cain's was not. And as a result of that rejection, Cain got mad and murdered his own brother. We know that Cain paid the price for that sin by being banished to a life of wandering.

- F. The next example given in verse 11 comes in the form of a warning about the danger of rushing headlong into the error of Balaam. ****PPT******

In **Numbers 22-24**, we read about Balaam accepting a bribe in order to curse the people of God. Balaam was a prophet, he was a man of God, but he agreed to change his prophecy so that he could make some money. Well, it's interesting that God did not allow Balaam to make the prophecy, so Balaam did something else—he encouraged the men of Israel to marry pagan women, and as a result they were led into the worship of Baal. And as a result of that deception, we read in **Numbers 31:8** about the death that Balaam suffered because of what he had done. Balaam is forever remembered as the false teacher, according to **2 Peter 2:15**, who **"...loved the wages of unrighteousness."** So money is sometimes a motivating factor in pulling people away from the truth.

- G. The final example in verse 11 is a man by the name of Korah. ****PPT******

We read about Korah in **Numbers 16**, as Korah gets a group of people together, and their plan is to overthrow the rule of Moses and remove Aaron as the high priest. As we know from our recent studies in the book of Exodus, Moses was not a perfect leader—he was a fugitive from justice (for killing the Egyptian). He was terrified to speak in public. He had a terrible marriage. He lost his temper on several occasions. And yet Moses was God's appointed leader. Moses was the man. But Korah didn't like God's choice. As a result of Korah's rebellion, God told Moses to draw a line in the sand—everybody with Moses was to stand on one side of the line, and everybody with Korah was to stand on the other side of the line. And what happens next has to

be one of the most frightening scenes in the entire Bible as the earth opens up and swallows Korah and all of those with him and then closes back over them. God has some creative ways of dealing with those who cause division among His people.

Jude, therefore, gives us seven examples of how various false teachers might behave. He tells us to keep these things in mind as we contend earnestly for the faith.

II. **As we move on to verses 12-13, we have a dramatic picture of those in error. ****PPT******

We find that these men are **"...hidden reefs in your love feasts, when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves."** If you've done any boating, then you know the danger of hitting something just underneath the surface of the water. A reef or a rock can tear a hole in a boat, and it is so hard to see it coming. It seems that Jude is trying to get us to be extremely careful.

There are several ways of looking at the **"love feasts"** here in **verse 12**. Some say it refers to the Lord's Supper (and perhaps it might), but in my opinion Jude is talking about those times when the early church would eat together. We are told in **Acts 2:46** that the early Christians were **"...taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart."** And so it appears to me that false teachers were using those opportunities of fellowship to play politics, to introduce their doctrines quietly, to slowly work their way into a position of respect. And then when they see that the time is right, the congregation hits the reef. The congregation runs aground.

Through this whole process, we find that these men do these things **"without fear."** There is no fear of God. There is no fear of the damage that they are doing to the fellowship of the church.

Jude goes on to say that these people can be compared to **"clouds without water."** I don't know about you, but the grass at our house is rather crispy. We have not had any good rain for some time, and the forecast is not calling for rain anywhere in the next ten days. And so Jude says that the false teachers give false hope to people—the people are thirsty for God's word, the teacher appears to know what he's talking about, but in the end...nothing happens—there is no good that comes from it. Nobody is led to Christ as a result of his efforts—like a cloud without water.

Jude also says that the false teachers can be compared to **"...autumn trees, without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted."** And so not only does the tree appear to be dead (as in the autumn), but it is really dead, and it does no good at all.

In **verse 13**, Jude compares these people to **"...wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam."** We know about the damage done by hurricanes and the waves of the sea and the death and destruction left behind. Jude says that these men are like that—leaving destruction in their path. They are the Hurricane Katrina's of the church. They are the dirty ring of foam around the bathtub.

He compares them in **verse 13** to "**wandering stars.**" What good is a wandering star? Imagine going out at night and trying to navigate, but looking up and seeing that all of the stars are wandering! We would not be able to find our way. And in the same way, Jude says that false teachers can be compared to, "**...wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.**"

III. Speaking of eternal black darkness, that brings us to the final reminder. Not only do we have several examples, and not only do we have a description of these people, but in verses 14-16, we are reminded of the punishment that is coming. **PPT******

Jude tells us about a prophecy made by Enoch (Noah's great-grandfather), who prophesied that God would some day come, "**...with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment,**" and to "**...convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way.**" Part of a reason for such a harsh punishment is found in **verse 16** as we are reminded how these people will operate within a congregation—they are, "**...grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.**" They will campaign, as if running for public office. By using big words and flattering speech they may impress for a while, but in the end it all boils down to their own ideas and opinions. Jude tells us that their teaching dies with the grave. Like Enoch, we need to warn each other about the consequences of being led away from the truth.

Conclusion & Invitation:

As we close this morning, we need to remind ourselves that there will always be false teachers who must be opposed. God's church is the body of His Son, and Satan wants to do everything possible to destroy the body of Christ. Satan does not want to waste his time on weak congregations, but he appears to focus on those he considers to be a threat.

We have learned this morning that good men and women need to stand up to those evil people who would lead the church into apostasy. Do we have the courage to keep on contending earnestly for the faith? That is the message of this book. Do we have the courage to protect the Lord's church? Do we have what it takes to be patriots for the cause of Christ?

I think most of us are probably familiar with the statement that was supposedly made by the Irish statesman, Edmund Burke, "**The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.**" That statement is so true, and I believe that Jude (the Lord's brother) would certainly agree with the thought behind it.

There may be someone here this morning who has not yet accepted the gospel. The gospel is the good news that Jesus died, was buried, and was raised up by the power

of God. We obey the gospel by dying to sin (also known as repentance)—doing whatever it takes to stop sinning. We are then buried with Christ in baptism. At that point, our sins are covered by the blood of Christ—our sins are forgiven. And then we are raised up with Christ to live a new life. If you have any questions, we would love to talk with you as soon as possible. But if you are ready to become a Christian right now, you can let us know by coming to the front as we sing the next song. Let's stand and sing...

To comment on this lesson: church@fourlakescoc.org

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