

The Judgment of False Teachers – Part 4

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – Jude applies the apocalyptic judgments of the past to the false teachers of the present
2. aim – to cause us to seek the purity of the gospel of grace and warn those who attempt to pervert it
3. passage – Jude 5-16

b. outline

1. The Judgments Upon Rebels (Jude 5-7)
2. The Judgments Upon Blasphemers (Jude 8-13)
3. The Judgments Upon Malcontents (Jude 14-16)

c. opening

1. the **schedule** of this pericope
 - a. preaching on the acceptance of the good works of the believer on Saturday at the DSFC
 - b. I intend to preach that sermon *here* next Sunday, so this passage will be “broken” up by it
2. the **content** of this pericope
 - a. **vv. 5-16** is an **apocalyptic** passage and the **main argument** supporting the thesis of the letter
 1. **v. 4**: that “*certain people*” (**i.e.** false teachers) have “*crept in unnoticed*” (**i.e.** hiding themselves under the guise of being followers of Christ) who ...
 - a. are “*designated*” for (this) condemnation (which Jude outlined in **vv. 5-7**)
 1. like those who rebelled against Jesus (**i.e.** the preincarnate Son) at the Golden Calf incident, or like the angels who rebelled with Satan, or those who died at Sodom, et. al.
 2. these “*certain people*” will be judged in the same way by Jesus, the Lord of the Church
 3. or, their actions are *similar* to the rebellion of these groups, perverting the purpose of the gospel into something other than its good intention, and they will be judged for it
 - b. (**also**) are “*ungodly*” and “*pervert the grace of our God*” into “*sensuality*” and “*deny*” the Lordship of Christ as “*our only Master*” (which Jude will now discuss in **vv. 8-16**)
 2. **LOW**: in **vv. 5-7**, Jude described what he meant by the phrase “*this condemnation*” in **v. 4**, but now he turns his attention back to explain another part of his thesis in **vv. 8-13**
 1. **v. 8** becomes his *Thesis: Part 2* – a return to a *descriptor* introduced in **v. 4**: specifically, that these “*ungodly*” teachers “*pervert the grace of God into sensuality*”
 2. in **vv. 8-13**, Jude will explain what he means by this *perversion*
 - a. he will first describe the nature of these people and what **drives them** (**v. 8**)
 - b. he will then some examples of what these people are **really doing** (**vv. 9-11**)
 - c. he will then outline some of the ways these people are **dangerous** (**vv. 12-13**)
 3. **future**: in **vv. 14-16**, Jude will complete his thesis by examining the final *descriptor* in **v. 4**: that these “*ungodly*” teachers “*deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ*”
 3. the **difficulty (handicap)** of this passage
 - a. Jude will use language that is both 1) difficult to interpret into English, and 2) obsolete within the modern church – **i.e. v. 8** uses words that are *uncommon*, to both the N.T. and the modern ear
 - b. **e.g.** Jude will describe these people as **blasphemers** (in **vv. 8, 9, 10**) – but, this is a word *rarely heard* even amongst strong supporters of the centrality of Scripture in the church
 - c. **i.e.** negative words like blasphemy, heresy or heretic, fornication, hell, etc., but also positive theological terms like justification, sanctification, propitiation, etc. have gone missing
 - d. **LOW**: the difficulty of this passage (its *handicap*) is in the fact that the central *idea* spoken of within it is no longer considered “*real*” or “*possible*” within the church – to understand Jude here (particularly the example of Michael) becomes problematic if you have “*lost*” the very concept from the thinking of the church down through time
 - e. so ... we will need to **carefully exegete v. 8**, defining the terms Jude uses in it, coming out on the backend with an understanding of what he is referring to **and its significance**
3. **thesis: part 2 – those who come to pervert the grace of God in the gospel start from a basis of emotionalism rather than an objective standard of truth, and they ignore (or deny) the grave danger that they put themselves (and others) in by doing so**

II. The Judgments Upon Blasphemers (Jude 8-13)

Content

a. the nature of the blasphemers (v. 8)

1. they are “*relying on their dreams*” = they make up “the gospel” (its intentions) out of their *imagination*s
 - a. the phrase is a single 14-letter present-tense verb in the Greek: *enypniazomenoi*, the root is only found twice in the N.T., and it is very difficult to translate into English
 1. **e.g.** KJV: “*these filthy dreamers*”; NASB: “*these men, also by dreaming*”; NIV: “*on the strength of their dreams*”; RSV: “*these men in their dreamings*”; HCSB: “*these dreamers*”
 2. the ordinary word for “*dream*” (*onar*) is used in **Matthew 1-2** for Joseph, and **Matthew 27:19** for the wife of Pilate – **i.e.** the only references to the normal “visions” perceived during REM sleep, but (in these cases) having *revelatory purpose* (**i.e.** the angel of the Lord)
 3. but, this word has an *entirely different intention*, as seen in its only other usage (**Acts 2:17**)
“*And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams ...*”
 - a. Peter quotes from **Joel 2:28ff** about what is taking place at Pentecost (**i.e.** the apparent “drunkenness” of the disciples) as the Spirit falls upon them
 - b. Peter insists that this outpouring of the Spirit is the *fulfillment* of the prophecy of Joel: that the coming of the Spirit means *new revelation from God through his Spirit*
 1. **i.e.** prophesying, seeing visions, and dreaming dreams will be people (now), under the influence of the Spirit, coming to understand things not understandable before
 2. **e.g.** Peter himself seeing Joel fulfilled, *and quoting it* – something that would *not have been possible* prior to this *even in the presence of Christ Jesus himself* (**e.g. John 14:26**)
 3. **i.e.** the “drunkenness” of the disciples is simply (Peter explains) the Spirit of God giving new insights and abilities to discern and disseminate the gospel message of Jesus
 - b. so, the word (**i.e.** to “*dream dreams*”) is being used in **Acts 2** in the **positive sense** of people “seeing” things revealed by the Spirit that will advance the cause of Christ
 1. **i.e.** the fullness of the gospel coming through men like Peter, Paul, James, Jude, etc. – the fullness of what God had *purposed in Christ* now revealed *through the church* to the world
 - c. but, Jude uses the word in the **negative sense** – it is *obvious from the context* that Jude thinks this form of “dreaming” is wrong and inconsistent with how the Spirit *actually* works
 1. instead of “revelation” coming by the Spirit (**i.e.** through the means *he* has ordained; the Scriptures; **2 Timothy 3:16**), it is “ideas” coming out of men’s “imagination”s
 - a. it is not *true* revelation that works its way through Scripture, the embrace of the church down through its history, the “sanding off” of error through debate and time, etc. (**i.e. orthodoxy**)
 - b. rather, it is the *perversion* of the gospel by adding to it things that men simply “make up” as they go along – things they *think up* as true, and then impose them as “truth” over others
 - c. **e.g.** “the Lord spoke to me and told me I should (divorce my wife, stop going to church) ...”
 - d. the ESV translation of “*relying on their dreams*” is instructive: instead of relying on *objective truth*, such men come to rely heavily on **human opinion** as basis of the gospel
 1. **i.e.** I believe that what it means to be a Christian is ...
 2. **principle: the abandonment of sola Scripture by wide swaths of the Christian church has inevitably led them to embrace understandings of the gospel clearly different from the original apostolic message (e.g. social justice in the mainline denominations)**
 - e. **Jude contends that false teachers rely on their “imagination”s more than anything else**
 2. they “*defile the flesh*” = they place *physical* and *emotional happiness* above obedience and holiness
 - a. “*defile*” (*miainō*) = to stain; to ruin; to make unclean (**e.g. John 18:28** re: the Passover)
 - b. “*flesh*” (*sarx*) = the physical body; the outward nature of a human being (as distinct from the soul)
 - c. defile the flesh = to stain the physical nature by using it in ways *not originally intended* (**i.e.** sinfully)
 1. **immediate context: v. 5** – engaging in forms of sexual immorality; perverting the *natural* use of the body for *unnatural* uses; to indulge in *physical forms* of “*sensuality*” (**v. 4**)
 - a. **note:** the amount of material in the N.T. epistles re: sexuality within the church (and the influence of *pagan sexual practices*; **i.e. 1 Thess. 4:3ff**) strongly suggests that there has *always* been a strain of perverse sexuality that has infected the church and its orthodoxy
 2. **larger context: v. 4** – since the issue *isn’t* sexuality, but the reality of *false teaching* (perverting the grace of God), it is *likely* that Jude is referring to another way that we “defile” the flesh
 - a. as physical (and emotional) creatures, we have a tendency (in our fallen state) to *hyper-focus* on the material world – to be *myopically* fixated on “stuff” and to ignore the spiritual

- b. the result is the constant pull towards “happiness” – the drive to achieve an *emotional* state of “bliss” – to feel good about ourselves and our circumstances
 - 1. **note:** this is *utterly unlike* the biblical concepts of “hope” and “contentment,” which focus on the *long-term* nature of our experiences for their *eternal value*
- c. **IMO:** Jude is referring to the false teachers making the gospel *primarily* about our happiness
 - 1. **e.g.** the **feminization** of the church since the early 20th C – making worship primarily about how we “feel” about Jesus vs. what we “know” *about* Jesus (as Yahweh)
- d. **Jude contends that false teachers are more concerned with “feelings” than knowledge**
- 3. they “*reject authority*” = they reject the *authority* and *Lordship* of Christ for their own authority
 - a. “*authority*” (*kyriotēs*) = ruling power; supernatural power; lit. Lordship; those who, *by virtue of their exalted nature* rule with *unquestionable* power; a power that comes out of *status* (**Ephesians 1:21**)
“[Christ sits, because of his ascension to the right hand of God] far above all rule and authority and power and *dominion*, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.”
 - 1. **i.e.** the authority of Christ *over his church* – over its membership, its doctrine, its practice, its mission, its purpose, its goal, its success, its relevance, even its reaction from the world
 - b. the unfortunate truth is that human beings **lust for power** – it is a part of the Fall that human beings would exalt *themselves* above God *and test every limit of their power in the world*
 - 1. and, that this would become a part of the church (**e.g.** power over people through *ritualism*)
 - 2. thus, the false teacher *rejects* the authority of *Christ* as the *final arbiter* of the teachings of the church, insisting on *his own* teaching as “more” authoritative (**e.g.** the Judaizers contradicting the teachings and authority of the Apostle Paul with their own)
 - c. **Jude contends that false teachers usurp the authority of Christ and turn the people to obey them rather than Christ – they “resist” the Lordship of Christ as “an unnecessary distraction” to “faith” (as they define it)**
 - 1. but ... there is one (1) *additional* reality about the false teachers that Jude raises ...
- 4. **the perversion of the gospel into “sensuality” is accomplished by men who “dream up” new ideas, couch them in the language of “happiness”, and then insist it’s the better way**
“Soft totalitarianism exploits **decadent** modern man’s preference for personal pleasure over principles [**or doctrinal truths**], including political liberties [**or the health of the church**]. The public will support, or at least not oppose, the coming soft totalitarianism, not because it fears the imposition of cruel punishments but because it will be more or less satisfied by hedonistic comforts [**or emotional happiness**] ... an informal arrangement in which people will surrender political rights [**or biblical truth**] in exchange for guarantees of personal pleasure.” (Rod Dreher, *Live Not By Lies*, © 2020 Penguin Random House LLC, pgs. 10-11, *change of emphasis mine*)