

The Judgment of False Teachers – Part 9

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. returning to our examination of **Jude 11**
2. **thesis: part 2 (v. 8) – 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**
 - a. **IOW:** those who “blaspheme” are belittling the evil spiritual realm by failing to grasp the danger of being manipulated by it – **i.e.** those who are **driven by emotion** are easy prey for manipulation
 - b. so, Jude continues this thesis by turning to speak more *specifically* of the danger the false teachers bring upon themselves and their hearers by using **three (3) examples** of such men
 1. **Cain** – a man who flirted with the danger of thinking that *he* set the terms of approaching God
 - a. the false teachers teach the same: **come to God on your terms**
 2. **Balaam** – a man who flirted with the danger of thinking that he could suit his *own* ends
 - a. the false teachers teach the same: **come to God to seek your advancement**
 3. **Korah** – a man who flirted with the danger of thinking that God answered *to him*
 - a. the false teachers teach the same: **come to God to satisfy your every want**
 - c. **(now)** Jude builds on this point by describing the false teachers **as utterly useless to the life of the church, a uselessness that becomes dangerous in the end**

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

Content

e. the danger of the blasphemers (vv. 12-13)

1. the introduction to this “continuing” line of thought (**v. 12a**)
 - a. **i.e.** the examples of **v. 11** give way to a series of “natural” ones that help make the point
 - b. “*hidden reefs*” = either 1) lit. submerged reefs (or sandbars) or 2) blemishes or stains
 1. **note:** the only place *this form* of the word is used in the N.T. (**i.e.** the idea of a reef)
 2. however, other forms imply the concept of a spot, blemish, or stain (**e.g. Ephesians 5:27**)
“[Christ gave himself up] so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.”
 3. so, the word (**in context**) probably means some sort of *hidden* blemish; something not *immediately* noticed (**i.e. v. 4** – they “*crept in unnoticed*” – they are **hidden in plain sight**)
 - c. “*at your love feasts*” = a part of the normal life of the church body (**i.e.** its primary duties)
 1. **note:** in ~60AD, the primitive church was much more *informal* than today: the believers (typically) met in homes around a common meal in which worship and fellowship combined
 - a. singing, praying, preaching, fellowship, and the Lord’s Supper all around a common table
 - b. **note:** the parallel passage in **2 Peter 2:13** says “*while they feast with you*”
 2. **note:** the church will gradually build a more *formalized* communal life, centered around buildings, liturgies, and a hierarchy of leadership (**i.e.** bishops, elders, deacons, etc.) during the Imperial Church (**i.e.** Fourth Century; once the church comes out of “hiding” from persecution)
 3. thus, this is probably a First Century reference to the totality of the communal life of a local body of believers, centered around its most important ritual (Sunday worship)
 - d. **IOW:** Jude describes the false teachers (again) as a “hidden” part of the life of the church – it is this description which leads him into his *next set* of examples as to their *danger*
 - e. **thesis: the uselessness of the false teachers becomes their dangerousness ...**

2. the examples of uselessness that applies to the false teachers
 - a. shepherds who feed themselves = shepherds who are no use to the sheep
 1. **picture:** a sheepfold full of sheep, ready to go out to pasture for food, but a shepherd who is ignoring the sheep's needs and simply sitting and eating his own lunch
 2. although the shepherd is *supposed* to put the needs of the sheep above himself, these shepherds are simply "*feeding themselves*" – **i.e.** worthless to the sheep
 3. **note:** the sheep/shepherd metaphor is very popular in the Bible (**e.g. John 10**)
 - a. Jesus as "*the good shepherd*" (**v. 11**), the elect as his "*sheep*" (**v. 27**), the false teacher as a "*hireling*" (**v. 12**) who flees before danger, etc.
 - b. Jesus is the good shepherd because *he gives himself completely for his people* – he shepherds the elect to the very presence of God accomplishing *everything* for them
 4. **point:** the false teachers are *useless* like self-indulgent shepherds, caring only for themselves
 - b. waterless clouds = clouds that are no use to the farmer
 1. **picture:** a cloud passing overhead during a time when rain is needed for the crops to mature, but no rain comes from it as it is swept away by the wind
 2. **note:** *by definition*, a "*waterless cloud*" is an **oxymoron** – clouds are visible collections of water vapor in the air, thus they are "literally" made out of water
 - a. so, Jude must mean "*waterless*" as a lack of *rain* falling from a cloud passing overhead
 1. **i.e.** when the water vapor in the cloud condenses into large enough drops (under the right temperature and humidity levels) gravity pulls them down as rain
 2. although the farmer *needs* the water to mature his crops, the clouds passing overhead produce no such rain – **i.e.** they are *useless* to the farmer (**e.g. rain in Baldwin County**)
 3. **point:** the false teachers are *useless* like rainclouds that produce no rain, leaving only drought
 - c. fruitless trees = trees that are no use to the hungry man
 1. **picture:** the hungry man coming, at the time of harvest, to a tree that is completely barren of leaves, fruit, and bark, utterly dead and uprooted, leaving him without food
 2. **note** the adjectives:
 - a. "*fruitless*" = barren of fruit (and leaves); showing no external signs of life (or purpose)
 - b. "*twice dead*" = not just dead, but having no possibility of life again (maybe bark-free)
 - c. "*uprooted*" = fallen over due to a lack of roothold (**e.g. many trees after Sally**)
 3. "*in late autumn*" = the time of harvest; the time of *expectation* that the tree has produced
 - a. **e.g.** Jesus cursing the fig tree outside of Bethany for being fruitless (**Mark 11:12ff**) – **i.e.** a "hungry man" coming to a tree *with a certain expectation of it at that time of the year*
 - b. **note:** Jesus (later) uses the withered tree to make the point that faith in God **is a trust in something that will never disappoint** (**i.e.** God's promises always "bear fruit")
 4. **point:** the false teachers are *useless* like fruit trees that produce no fruit, but stand dead
 - d. wild waves of the sea = crashing water that is no use to the land
 1. **picture:** a rocky and steep shoreline with giant waves crashing upon the rocks, sending huge billows of water into the air that come down to form a layer of foam
 - a. **i.e.** not the "gentle" waves that lap the shore in Gulf Shores; much more powerful ones
 2. **question:** what does crashing waves *produce* – what *value* is there to them?
 - a. **answer:** all they produce is *erosion* – they don't "build up" anything, but only destroy
 - b. **e.g.** we spend a lot of time and money attempting to prevent beach erosion
 - c. **i.e.** the waves exert a lot of energy upon the land, but only tear it down, not build it up
 3. **note:** Jude (for the first time) connects this analogy to the false teachers *directly*
 - a. the "*foam*" = the energy exerted by the false teachers does nothing more than fill the church with a "foam" that is *useless* (**i.e.** a lot of talk, no results)
 - b. as "*their own shame*" = this energy exerted by them doesn't "build up" the people – it doesn't advance them in their knowledge of Christ nor in their sanctification
 1. it becomes "*their shame*" in that it shows *who they really are*
 2. their message/methods reveals who they really are – **men manipulated by evil**
 4. **point:** the false teachers are *useless* like waves tearing down the shoreline, throwing up shame
 - e. wandering stars = navigation points that are no use to the sailor
 1. **picture:** a sailor attempting to navigate his course using a very bright star in the sky, only to discover that the star is not fixed in place and his navigation is now completely confused
 2. "*wandering star*" (*planētēs*) = the modern word for planets; celestial bodies that are magnitudes brighter than other stars, but are not fixed in the sky due to their own orbits in relation to us
 - a. Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn = all visible to the naked eye, but "moving" very quickly across the sky from night to night (all other stars remaining fixed in place)

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- b. **i.e.** in the First Century the *distinction* between stars and planets was very primitive; but, their nature as “*wandering*” was well understood, even from ancient times
- c. **IOW:** the false teachers bring a “theology” that “wanders” – **not a fixed set of truth** that can be relied upon, but “changes” to suit the temporal needs of the hearer
- 3. **note (again):** Jude connects this analogy to the false teachers *directly*
 - a. the “*gloom of utter darkness*” = like the stars, set against a background of deep darkness
 - 1. darkness = a picture of emptiness; a lack of light; a lack of understanding; confusion
 - b. “*reserved forever*” = a place of emptiness and lack of light existing forever
 - 1. **i.e.** possibly a reference to *judgment*, particularly the judgment of *hell* (**Matthew 8:11f**)
“I tell you, many will come from east and west [Gentiles] and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom [Jews] will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
 - 2. **i.e.** hell as a place where no *revelation* is given; the reprobate continuing to live *forever* in a state of utter ignorance about God, themselves, life, etc. (hopelessness)
 - c. **IOW:** the false teachers are both “dark” (ignorant) and are *destined* for eternal darkness
- 4. **point:** the false teachers are *useless* like wandering stars, providing no solid bearing for life
- 3. the application of this uselessness to danger in following the false teachers
 - a. **question:** when does *useless* become *dangerous*? **answer:** **when the useless is relied upon**
 - 1. **e.g.** car brakes that fail become useless, in which relying on them makes them dangerous
 - b. **example:** the young (gay) pastor on TikTok who insisted that Jesus made a “racist” statement in calling the Syrophenician woman (who begged him to cure her daughter) a “dog,” and that he “repented” of it when she pressed him on it (**Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30**)
 - 1. clearly, this “pastor” is ignorant of a) an exegetical understanding of the story itself, b) the nature of Jesus as sinless, and c) what true (biblical) racism is as compared to its view today
 - 2. **IOW:** he is attempting to “crowbar” into the biblical narrative of Jesus the *postmodern* idea of racism in order to *justify* that the church *today* needs to repent of its inherent “racism”
 - 3. **point:** his theology is *useless* ... but it becomes *dangerous* when people listen to him ...
 - a. **i.e.** to teach people that Jesus was just an ordinary man who suffered from the “typical” racisms that we all do is to *utterly negate the value of Jesus as the means of salvation*
 - 1. the “Jesus” of this “gospel” cannot save; he cannot lead people to God
 - b. **so:** people who *rely* on this man’s teachings, who allow themselves to be *led by him*, **are being led away from God**, and are in danger of hearing Jesus say “I never knew you”
 - c. **application:** there is grave danger in following men who are not completely committed to “*the faith once for all delivered to the saints*” – their useless teachings **will** lead you with them into “*utter darkness*” (in this life and the next)