

Good morning! Please pray with me.

The title of my message this morning is *As in the Past, so in the Future*. Please stand with me and turn to the book of Jude for the reading of God's word. Jude is the very short single chapter book directly before Revelation. This sermon will be a continuation of the sermon I preached on March 13th titled *Defending What Was Entrusted*.

The verses I'll be preaching on are Jude 5-7, but I'm going to read from verse 3 to remind you of the major application - that Jude is exhorting us to contend for the faith.

3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. 4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

5 But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. 6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; 7 as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

You may be seated.

I don't usually introduce the verses that I'm going to preach on and then turn immediately to another, but there is an important verse from 2 Timothy that I think will help introduce this message.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 says, **"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."**

That time is now. In no other time in history has it been so easy to **"heap up"** teachers for ourselves. There is no end to the teachers available on social media, podcasts, books, etc. For the mature believer, it is a blessing to have the sermons of many solid

bible teachers just a few clicks away, but for the new believer or the undiscerning, there is a great deal of danger.

Social media is perilous for the undiscerning Christian because the content it offers up is driven by algorithms that care about ad revenue - not your spiritual well-being. In fact, those algorithms may be more disposed to offer up false teachers precisely because preaching that itches the ears holds people's attention more easily than biblical preaching. False teaching is already compelling enough because it is attractive to our fallen nature, if we are seeing it offered up regularly, we could easily be convinced it was orthodox.

Jude wrote this letter to people who weren't discerning enough to recognize the false teachers in their local congregations who had "**crept in unnoticed**". Today, false teachers creep right into our social media news feeds. They sneak their way into our recommended videos presenting themselves as genuine teachers of God's word.

On one hand, technology has been a blessing in that it has expanded the reach of many solid bible teachers, but it has expanded the reach of false teachers at the same time. No longer is their influence restricted to a local church, they can reach millions without leaving their home. Never has it been more critical to develop real biblical discernment when it comes to deciding whose teaching we will sit under.

In my last sermon, I made the point that to discern a false teacher you need to examine their doctrine and their lives. In Matthew 7:15-16, Jesus said, "**Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits.**" The problem is: the separation allowed by technology makes it impossible to examine the fruit of their lives. This should make us pause before we click on that sermon from a preacher we don't know. Was Jesus exaggerating when He warned us about ravenous wolves? Was He merely being hyperbolic?

No, He used that illustration because it was fitting. What a ravenous (or starving) wolf does to a helpless lamb is what false teachers do spiritually to the immature, the undiscerning, and the naive.

I don't believe we take the threat of false teaching as seriously as we ought to. When I say we don't take it as seriously as we ought to, what I mean is: we don't take it as seriously as God takes it.

- Whatever He says about a thing is how it truly is.

- However bad He says something is, that is how bad it is.
- Whatever level of importance He gives something, that is how important it truly is.
- God is the arbiter of reality, not man.

When was the last time you were righteously angered at false teaching? It seems like the majority of Christians aren't angered by false teaching, they tolerate it. They don't want to be labeled "unloving" so they find ways to redeem or excuse false teaching. They point to the truth that false teachers preach or the good they've done and gloss over the error.

We do that because of the influence from our culture. This is one of the major points I made in my last sermon on Jude 1-4. Our culture is training us to accept living in confusion, to embrace contradictions, to tolerate opposing viewpoints, and to silence our opposition, but in verse 3, Jude is calling us to throw out that passivity and contend.

Maybe it's just my impression, but it seems like many Christians are apathetic when it comes to doctrine, theology, and sound teaching. Many would be more moved in the spirit if they were duped by an unqualified mechanic than a false bible teacher. Or, Imagine taking your sick child to a doctor only to learn the man was a fraud. You'd move heaven and earth to make sure that man could never practice medicine again.

A fraudulent doctor can do great harm, but the harm he can do is limited to this life - to this physical body. A false teacher can imperil your soul for eternity. I'm not downplaying the importance of qualified doctors, I'm trying to highlight the much greater significance of our spiritual condition.

If there is any apathy within us regarding false teachers and the product of their efforts - which is apostasy - these verses in Jude ought to destroy it and leave in its place trembling, diligence, zeal, and a desire to contend.

Jude gives us three Old Testament references to remind us about how God has dealt with apostates in the past. He says in verse 5, "**I want to remind you, though you once knew this....**" He's saying, "You know these stories, you're very familiar with them, but you're not applying them to your current situation." By identifying the false teachers among them with apostates in the Old Testament who received severe judgment, Jude is going to correct his readers (and our) understanding of how God sees them.

Each of these three references contains an element of surprise or reversal. Before judgment came, in our human understanding, we would see those who received God's judgment as blessed by Him. Look with me at verse 5 to see what I mean.

Jude 5 - But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

That leads me to lesson one on your bulletins.

The judgment of apostates is certain, even if they appear to be: Lesson One: among God's people.

There is a lot to unpack in verse 5. Jude is relying on his readers familiarity with each of these references to communicate his point, so he doesn't take any time to develop them further.

Let's think through why he brought this up. Take your mind back to the events that led to Israel's time in Egypt. God had raised Jacob's son Joseph to prominence and leadership in the Egyptian government during a time of severe famine. In that high position, he was able to save his family by inviting them into Egypt where they could be provided for. At the time Jacob entered Egypt there were a total of seventy of his direct descendants with him.

I've heard Pastor Scott say that God used Egypt as a womb to grow Israel into a significant nation. In fact, over time their incredible growth was actually what led the Egyptians to severely oppress them.

Exodus 1:8-12 - 8 Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. 9 And he said to his people, "Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; 10 come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land." 11 Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens . . . 12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.

Since they continued to multiply despite the hard bondage they were forced into, the king of Egypt thought to force the Hebrew midwives to kill all of the male babies, but they refused to obey. Next, he commanded all of the people to cast their male babies into the river to drown them.

We're familiar with the story of Moses, how his mother placed him (a mere infant) in an ark of bulrushes in the river and that he was discovered by Pharaoh's daughter. How, as an older man, he defended one of his fellow Hebrew's from an Egyptian that was beating him and having killed the man, hid his body in the sand. Despite his efforts to hide what happened, the matter became known, and he was forced to flee to Midian.

It was during Moses' time in Midian, that the groans of the children of Israel reached the throne of God.

Exodus 2:23-24 - 23 Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. 24 So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

In answer to their prayer, God spoke to Moses from the midst of the burning bush and called him to confront Pharaoh and demand to let His people go. You'll remember how Moses offered up excuse after excuse....

- **"Suppose they will not believe me"** (Exodus 4:1)
- **"I am not eloquent . . . I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."** (Exodus 4:10)
- **"O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send."** (Exodus 4:13)

God was angered at his disobedience, but graciously allowed Aaron to serve as his spokesperson to the people. When Moses and Aaron met with elders of their people and told them about all that God had said they responded very well.

Exodus 4:31 - 31 So the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.

That is an amazing response if you know the rest of the story. Because if we skip ahead after the plagues, after the events of the first Passover, after the Exodus, after the Red Sea, after Sinai, to the moment when God has led them near to the Promised Land in the Wilderness of Paran, we see something very different.

The Lord directed Moses to send spies into the land and twelve were selected, one from each of the tribes of Israel. They journeyed into the land and found that indeed it was a

good land flowing with milk and honey, and they even brought back a cluster of grapes that required two men to carry it between them on a pole. It was a good land they said, but what? Ten of the spies reported that the land was filled with strong people. The cities are fortified. The giants - the descendants of Anak live there and they gave a bad report of the land. They filled the people with fear and doubt.

Only two of the spies, Caleb and Joshua, encouraged the people to have faith in the Lord - to trust Him - that He would deliver the land to them despite all of the obstacles.

The people did not believe and they blasphemed God. Numbers 14:2-3 - **2 And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! 3 Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"**

I shared all of that backstory leading up to this point so that you could clearly see God's fingerprints on the history of Israel. I could have gone back even farther, I could have spoken of His promises to Abraham. The point I want to make absolutely clear is that God chose Israel as His people. He displayed His care for them beyond that of any others.

- He protected them from the famine.
- He grew them numerically.
- He freed them from Egyptian oppression through mighty wonders.
- He delivered them miraculously from Pharaoh's army.
- He led them through the wilderness.
- He revealed Himself and His law to them.
- He promised them an abundant land.

Despite their previous belief and worship of God, in the end, they heeded the voice of God rejecting unbelievers and they departed from the faith.

It seemed like they were among the faithful. It seemed as if they were truly a part of God's people. It seemed like of all the nations on earth they had God's approval. Their disobedience and apostasy proved otherwise.

God pronounced His judgment on them in Numbers 14:29-30 - **29 The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and**

above. 30 Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in.

Look at verse 5 again. **[T]he Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.**

Of all the people who God saved out of Egypt, only two over the age of twenty entered the Promised Land and those two were those who did not succumb to unbelief. That is how seriously God takes apostasy.

The overarching point Jude wants to make to his readers by referencing this account is that it doesn't matter what group you appear to belong to, what matters is enduring faithfulness. God had shown all of the children of Israel tremendous goodness by delivering them from bondage in Egypt with a strong arm, but that goodness did not stop His severe judgment from falling upon them when they rejected Him and turned from their faith.

It is very possible for a person to make their home among God's people, yet not be His in truth. Just as the Israelites who received God's judgment for their unbelief appeared to be among God's people, so too these false teachers - these "**certain men**" who "**crept in**" - appeared to belong in the church that received Jude's letter. They would likewise receive God's judgment for their unbelief.

If the faithful among Jude's recipients permitted them to stay - teaching their false gospel and denying the Lord Jesus Christ - the damage they could do was immense. Jude is saying, "*Look at the example of the Israelites in the wilderness. The vast majority of them were destroyed for their unbelief after they heard the bad report from the ten faithless spies. You must not allow that to happen in your congregation!*"

As humans who cannot see into people's hearts. We can be easily fooled by appearances. These men appeared as if they belonged - they appeared as if they were God's servants - after all they were teaching in the church! Jude says, no, they are condemned ungodly men because of their departure from the faith.

That leads me to lesson two on your bulletins:

The judgment of apostates is certain, even if they appear to be: Lesson Two: God's servants.

Take a look at verse 6 with me.

Jude 6 - And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day

When scripture warns us about apostasy it often uses words like “depart” to describe what happened. Or, depending on your translation, it may use “fall away” or “turn away.”

For instance:

Hebrews 3:12 - Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God....

1 Tim 4:1 - 4 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons....

That is an appropriate word to use, because like the angels in verse 6 who “**did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode**,” an apostate is someone who has “departed” from what they previously held to be true. They have turned away from what is proper to embrace what is improper.

As with the previous reference, Jude doesn’t provide many details. He expects his readers to be familiar enough with this reference to communicate an idea without fleshing it out. Indeed, there is a great deal of Jewish tradition and non-canonical writings that Jude seems to rely on in this epistle. That is one of the challenging aspects of the book of Jude. He references and even quotes non-inspired writings like the book of Enoch.

We should not assume that just because Jude quotes from those writings that he is endorsing the entire work as true. We should take what Jude has quoted from them, and then look to the rest of scripture to flesh out our understanding. So, with that in mind, who were these angels and what did they do?

From Jude we know that these angels sinned by leaving their proper domain and that God is now punishing them in “**everlasting chains under darkness**”.

1 Peter 3:19-20 gives us some further clues about their identity. These verses describe what Jesus did between His death and resurrection. He preached His victory over these imprisoned angels (or demons, rather).

1 Peter 3:19-20 - **He went and preached to the spirits in prison, 20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.**

So, we learn that these imprisoned angels were disobedient during the days of Noah when God patiently waited for the ark to be built before He flooded the world. That reference takes us to Genesis 6 which not only describes the flood, but also describes the sin of these angels.

Genesis 6:1-2 - **1 Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, 2 that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.**

Now, there are different theories about who “**the sons of God**” are. Some say these are men, others, who I believe are correct, say these are angels. I’m not going to go through those other theories. For one, I don’t have the time, but also because I’m certain the correct interpretation is that these are indeed angels. These are the angels that “**did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode**” by coming down to the earth and procreating with human women.

Job refers to angels as “**the sons of God**” as well. Job 1:6 says, “**Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.**” Another thing that lends weight to these being angels, is the peculiar nature of the offspring that resulted from these wicked unions. Listen to Genesis 6:4.

Genesis 6:4 - **4 There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.**

Since their offspring were not normal, but “**giants**” and “**mighty men**,” it stands to reason there was something unique about their conception. How can spiritual beings procreate with human women? Scripture doesn’t reveal that to us, but there are two possibilities that I see as plausible. First, the angels that were sent into Sodom to rescue Lot were able to manifest human-looking physical bodies, so that is one option. The second possibility is that these demons possessed humans and used their bodies. In the Gospels, we often see demon possession which shows demons have a desire to enter human bodies.

One such example is found in Luke 8:30-31 which also shows the demon's fear of being sent into the abyss.

Luke 8:30-31 - 30 Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him. 31 And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.

Why did Jude bring this up? What is the lesson that we should learn? These angels once stood in the glorious presence of God, but where are they now? They are **reserved in everlasting chains**. Jude uses a play on words that reveals the retaliatory nature of their punishment. Since they "did not keep" their proper place, God "has kept" them in darkness until final judgment.

Think of it. God created angels to obey His commands, minister to His people, to worship Him, to declare His messages, to carry out His purposes.... If God judged these angels who were once His servants, but left their proper home, He will certainly judge false teachers who appear to serve him, but turn people away from the truth. The angels could not appeal to their previous spiritual status with God to excuse them from their just sentence, and neither can any man who likewise rejects God's authority.

There is a disastrous and deadly false teaching that is prevalent in our country and I fear that it has given many a false assurance of salvation. It says if you, at any time, have prayed to accept Christ into your heart, you are saved. Everything is hinged upon that one-time act of faith. Now, justification IS a one-time, instantaneous event that occurs when a person comes to saving faith, BUT there are many who are deceived. There are many who are not genuine. That's not my opinion, it is the testimony of scripture.

It's as if we've forgotten:

- there will be tares among the wheat.
- there will be men clamoring to enter heaven saying "Lord, Lord," but Jesus will say to them, "I never knew you."
- that some people's faith is like seed that falls on stony ground and immediately springs up, but in time withers away when it is scorched by the sun.
- there were great swelling crowds that followed Jesus for a time, but then turned away when His teaching was hard to bear.

We have so many examples in scripture of those who appeared to follow Christ for a time, but fell away in the end. Let nobody who falls away think to say in their defense, "I

am assured of salvation because I previously made a decision to follow Jesus.” Let them not say, “God’s wrath won’t fall on me, because I was baptized.”

Have you made a profession of faith? Good! Are you still walking with Him today? Don’t think that when you stand before God you might protest saying, “Yes, I turned away from You. Yes, I rejected Your word and Your authority. Yes, I lived to fulfill the desires of my flesh, but Your hands are tied. You have to forgive me, because I repeated the sinner’s prayer when I was at summer camp thirty years ago.

The deficiency of that faith is not that it has no meritorious works (as if there is any such thing), the deficiency is that it does not bear the biblical marks of regeneration. Has God done a work in you? Has He removed your heart of stone and given you a heart of flesh? Has He changed you? Have you been made new? Has He made you a new creation? Have you been born from above?

1 John 3:9 - No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.

That low view of salvation - that a man can say a few words in a passing moment of conviction, then depart into a life of rebellious sin and somehow escape the wrath of God is unknown to scripture.

Can that sort of powerless so-called faith save a man?

No! We become confused because they may have appeared to walk in faith for a time. Were they actually saved? Did they lose their salvation?

1 John 2:19 provides some clarity. It says, **“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.”**

Do not be confused. If someone falls away it is because they were never faithful to begin with. The reason we can be absolutely certain that genuine faith will endure, and not turn away like these angels, is because our endurance is not dependent on our power alone. Look ahead to Jude 24, briefly.

Jude 24 - Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy....

God is involved in Christian endurance. He will not let His children stumble so that we should fall. By His power, which never fails, we can be certain of the Christian's ability to persevere.

You've heard me use the word "appeared" a number of times because each of these Old Testament references have an element of reversal to them. We see one thing from our human perspective, but God is showing us in these verses that appearances can be deceiving.

At one time, the generation of adult Israelites that God rescued from Egypt appeared to be among His people, but it turned out they really weren't. At one time, these fallen angels appeared to be God's servants, but it turned out they really weren't either.

Now, take a look at verse 7 with me.

Jude 7 - as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

At first glance, you may not see the element of reversal in this verse. It looks straightforward, right? The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah gave themselves over to sexual immorality, and God poured out His wrath upon them leaving an example and a warning to others.

Let me share a couple of verses and I trust the element of reversal will become clear.

Genesis 13:10 - And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar.

Ezekiel 16:49 - Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

The land was abundant and appealed to Lot as someone who owned a great deal of livestock. The people are described as having more than enough food, and it was apparently easy to come by since they were also idle.

From a human perspective, anyone who considered Sodom and Gomorrah would think the people were very....? Blessed. And, they would have no idea that to God they were worthy of severe judgment.

That brings me to lesson three on your bulletins.

The judgment of apostates is certain, even if they appear to be: Lesson Three: blessed.

One of the largest motivators that drives false teachers is financial gain. They are not in the church to serve others, but to serve themselves. Jude 11 says they “**have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit.**” Balaam’s error was that he profited by teaching the Moabite king how to bring Israel under a curse by enticing them to sin.

2 Peter 2:15 says false teachers “...**have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.**”

1 Tim 6:5 says false teachers “**suppose that godliness is a means of gain.**”

The goal of a false teacher is often to grow a large congregation and extract the maximum giving from them to line their own pockets. Ever wonder why many of the largest churches have terrible theology? It’s because oftentimes their primary goal is not faithfully preaching the word and shepherding the children of God, it is growth and giving.

It is hard, laborious, and prayer-filled work to grow a congregation when you faithfully preach the word of God week after week. It’s difficult, because to preach faithfully, you’re going to preach:

- repentance from sin.
- denial of self.
- the necessity of suffering.
- the holiness, justice, and wrath of God.
- the depravity of man.
- the inability of man to redeem himself.
- the reality of Hell.
- the spiritual responsibilities of fathers.
- the submission of wives to their husbands.

That is not the sort of preaching that “itches the ears.” It’s not the sort of preaching that draws in big crowds. Why? Because unbelievers are going to find it very difficult to stick

around for long in a church that is teaching the full counsel of God. The message of the bible - when faithfully preached - is foolishness to those who are perishing. It is completely opposed to their fallen nature. They are either going to come to Christ for salvation in response to that preaching, or they will flee.

The faithful preacher is content with that. Oh, his heart aches that they have rejected the Gospel, but he is not tempted to change the message in the slightest. To change the message would be to preach a lie. It would dishonor God, and honoring God is the primary driver of the faithful preacher. They would rather shepherd a small church faithfully, than compromise the message and grow a church filled with false converts.

From the perspective of worldly wisdom, that looks very unsuccessful. It would be very easy (but completely wrong) to conclude, God must not bless that kind of preaching. If you look at it from the other direction, what sort of preaching looks most successful? What sort of preaching looks the most blessed by God? The sort that brings in the biggest crowds and produces the most giving.

If you have no fidelity to God's word, the path to church growth is not difficult. You give the people what they want. You give them entertainment. You give them what their itching ears want to hear. You tell them:

- how good they are.
- how much God loves them.
- God wants to heal their sicknesses.
- how pleased God is with them.
- God wants to make them wealthy.
- God wants them to be happy.

You can fill up a building quickly preaching that way and it will look incredibly successful. If you judge success based on attendance and giving, it will look as if God has abundantly blessed that ministry. But has He?

Sodom and Gomorrah appeared blessed right up until the moment God poured fire and brimstone down upon them. You could have convinced yourself that God must approve of the sin they were guilty of because of their prosperity. That is pragmatism and it has no place in the church.

Jude doesn't reveal to us how successful, impressive, wealthy, or charismatic these men were. However, the fact that he needed to write this letter exhorting the congregation to contend with them says a great deal. The fact that he needed to go

through these three OT accounts reminding the church of God's severe judgment for those who turned away from the truth is proof enough that the church was thinking pragmatically rather than seeing them the way God saw them.

Jude 4 makes it clear that the false teachers in their midst had fallen away from the truth of the gospel, teaching that God's grace provided freedom to sin with impunity. They were rebellious just like Sodomites, but their rebellion was cloaked in religion.

They also "**deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.**" In my last sermon I made the point that this was probably not a verbal denial, at least not in the beginning when they were attempting to creep in unnoticed. Their denial of Christ was through the testimony of their lives in the same spirit of Titus 1:16, which says, "**They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.**"

It is a fact of life, which the bible does not shy away from, that wicked people sometimes appear to be the most blessed in this life. Read Psalm 73. Asaph had a crisis of faith when he saw the prosperity of the wicked. It was not until he contemplated their final end that he was able to find clarity and peace.

The apparent blessings enjoyed by the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were no sign of God's approval, and neither are any apparent blessings enjoyed by false teachers. They may appear to be very successful and blessed, but their fate is the same as the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah - to suffer **the vengeance of eternal fire.**

These three verses in Jude have given you a look into the final end of false teachers and those they lead astray. My sincere desire is that these verses might correct any unbiblical thinking we might have regarding the seriousness with which God deals with them. As we close, I want to help you see why God deals with them so severely and why Jude is charging us all to contend against them.

Just before Paul warned the Ephesian church elders about the "savage wolves" (the false teachers) that would soon torment them after his departure, he said this:

Acts 20:26-27 - 26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

That is the role of a faithful preacher - to proclaim and teach God's message - the whole counsel of God. Withholding nothing. Twisting nothing. Adding nothing. Preaching the

Gospel as it truly is. Preaching the condition of man as he truly is. There are a million and one false ways, but the faithful preacher rejects them all and preaches God's way of salvation. It is by grace through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

When he has warned every man, and declared the truth to every man, in that way he is **"innocent of the blood of all men."** Many men have sat under faithful preaching and having rejected it, died in their sins. Their blood - or their condemnation - is on their own hands because they heard the truth and did not believe.

What about the man who stands in the position of a preacher or teacher of God's word and conceals the truth or misrepresents the truth? What about the man who teaches lies in God's name?

I want you to listen to a few verses from Ezekiel that will help us understand the guilt they bear.

Listen to Ezekiel 33:2-6 - **When I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from their territory and make him their watchman, 3 when he sees the sword coming upon the land, if he blows the trumpet and warns the people, 4 then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, if the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be on his own head. . . .But he who takes warning will save his life. 6 But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand.'**

False teachers have a great deal of blood on their hands. Their condemnation is just. When they turn someone's ears away from the truth it is like a bloody murder has taken place, only it's much worse, because it is eternal.

As someone who teaches in this church, that is incredibly sobering, and I want you to know that I take the responsibility seriously. James 3:1 - **My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.**

I'll be up front after service, I'd love to have the chance to talk with you or to answer any questions you might have.

Let's pray.