

JUDGMENT ON THE UNGODLY

Jude 5-16

INTRO

- Second week of series on Jude – how is your homework?
[READ Jude 5-16]
- Remember: Jude is warning believers then and now of a threat and instructing them how to respond
- **The Threat?** A group of people who had crept into the Christian community to twist the good news about Jesus Christ for selfish gain (false teachers)
 - Using God’s grace as an excuse to sin
 - Denying Jesus as Master and Lord
- **Respond?** Contend for the faith – to hold fast to the truth of God’s word and to Jesus as Master.

We face the same threat today. I believe contending for the faith is especially tricky in the South where almost everyone has some knowledge about God and Jesus – the result is a Christianity in name only, not in the heart.

Many have a thin veneer of “Christian-ness,” but look no different than unbelievers. “God is a God of love,” they emphasize, “so we should not be so picky about sin.”

The truth is that God is far more a God of love than they ever dared hope. But they miss that **unless we know Jesus as Master, we will never know ourselves as God’s beloved. And unless we know ourselves as God’s beloved, we will never be rooted enough to contend for the faith** in a culture of deception and self-obsession.

Jude’s letter divides into four sections:

- #1) Intro (Author, Audience, Purpose – the threat and how to respond)
- #3) How to respond? What does contending for the faith look like?
- #4) Benediction
- Section #2 (today): Deep dive into the threat – who are these false teachers?

[If they are wolves in sheep’s clothing, today we’re lifting up the sheep’s clothing to see the vicious wolf underneath, mangy fur and all].

The sermon title is: *God's Judgment on the 'Ungodly.'* By 'the ungodly,' Jude means these wolves – the false teachers who twisted the gospel and denied Jesus as Master. But it also includes those who are deceived by these teachers and don't repent. By 'judgment,' Jude means eternal judgment, everlasting torment and separation from God in hell.

I'll be honest, this is the heaviest sermon I've ever preached. Eternal judgment on those who reject God is not easy to talk about, but Jude sees it as critical for us to remember.

Amidst the ever-present threat of deceptive teaching, Jude urges believers to contend for the faith they have long held true. "Don't give in," Jude says, "don't lose heart and water the truth of the gospel down – cling to it more tightly than ever, for God will ensure that these deceptive, ungodly ones do not have the last word."

This is a message of hope for the believer: right now, it feels like evil is winning, but it is not.

Jude describes God's judgment on these ungodly ones in three sections (see bulletin), and each section follows the same two-step pattern: 1) OT Examples of God's Judgment, 2) How those examples foreshadow God's judgment on the ungodly of his day and ours.

I. Judgment on the 'Ungodly' Was Always God's Plan (vv. 5-10)

Ungodly opposition to God is nothing new. And neither is God's Judgment on them.

Jude gives three OT examples:

A. Examples (5-7)

1. Israel in Wilderness – God "destroyed those who did not believe" (v. 5) referring to God's people rescued from Egypt and about to enter Promised Land – believed the fear-motivated "false teaching" of the ten spies

*Jude intends as a *warning*: even those God brought out of Egypt, he judged. Not just judgment against those ten spies, but against all who followed them (everyone except Caleb and Joshua).

2. Rebel Angels –

What did these angels do? (v. 6) “did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling”

Jude was likely referring to a popular Jewish tradition of his day, interpreting events in Genesis 6:

The tradition goes that fallen angels (demons) “possessed mortal men and cohabited with women.”¹ This was so outside the bounds of their proper place that Jude says God “*kept* them in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day,” the end of history when God “will bring final salvation to his people and eternal judgment to his enemies.”²

Jude connects God’s judgment on the fallen angels to that on Sodom and Gomorrah:

3. Sodom and Gomorrah – both the rebel angels and these cities were judged in large part for sexual sin. For Sodom and Gomorrah, Jude highlights their homosexual practices³ – term “unnatural desire”. Just as the angels left God’s design for them and engaged in sexual relations with humans, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah left God’s design for sex within marriage between one man and one woman to engage in same-sex lust.

And we see the result: to this day, they “serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire”

[Application: There is a connection between denying God’s authority and sexual sin. Why? If not submitting to the authority of Christ and experiencing his love, you’ll have to find it somewhere else – the human heart will go to great lengths to feel loved apart from God.]

B. “These People Also”

¹ John MacArthur, *II Peter and Jude*, p. 86.

² Douglas Moo, *II Peter, Jude*, p. 241.

³ Moo, p. 242.

(In v. 8) Jude connects the dots between the three OT examples of judgment on ungodly opposition and the false teachers of his day and ours. Jude is saying, “these are the expected end-time enemies of God and his people.”⁴

“relying on their dreams” – apparently based their immoral behavior on revelatory visions they claim to have had⁵

- Like the angels and Sodomites, they “defiled the flesh”
 - Like all three examples, they rejected God’s authority
 - “blaspheme the glorious ones (angels)”? In the words of one scholar, most likely means that they laughed off the notion that they will face a forever judgment for their actions at the hands of Jesus and his angels.⁶
- (v. 9) One of the chief angels, Michael, and the devil “disputing about the body of Moses.” This event is not found in Scripture, but “was likely a historical event that Jude was familiar with because it was passed down in Jewish tradition.⁷ It is recorded in a Jewish work called *The Assumption of Moses*.
 - Whatever the source, Jude’s point comes through: not even an angel as powerful as Michael would blaspheme Satan – instead, he said, “*The Lord rebuke you.*”
 - (v. 10) These enemies of God, however, are loose cannons “blaspheming all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively”
 - What do they understand instinctively? Sin – it comes natural to them, and they are destroyed by it – the same kind of destruction faced by unbelieving Israel, the fallen angels, and Sodom and Gomorrah.

[When we see opponents of God today, we should not be surprised. Both their presence and their future judgment are no surprise to God.]

II. Judgment on the ‘Ungodly’ Is as Good as Done (vv. 11-13)

A. OT Examples

⁴ Frank Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament*, p. 517.

⁵ Moo, p. 244.

⁶ Thielman, p. 515.

⁷ R.C. Sproul, ed., *Reformation Study Bible*, p. 2292.

Like the first section, Jude gives three OT examples in v. 11, and he compares them to the opponents of God in his and our day.

But one difference: (v. 11) “Woe to them (the false teachers)! For they *walked...*” Past tense – why?

Jude is saying that their judgment is so certain, it’s as if it has already happened.

Cain, Balaam, and Korah were well-known “bad guys” of the OT. They serve as “types” or “pre-figures” of those opponents of God to come in Jude’s day and ours.⁸

What do these figures foreshadow about the ungodly opposition Jude faced, and we face today?

1. “They walked in the way of Cain” – violence to Abel’s body
>> these commit violence to people’s souls⁹ (real spiritual danger)
2. They “abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam’s error”
What was Balaam’s error? (Numbers 22-24) Balaam was a prophet hired by the king of Moab to curse Israel – his error? Out of greed, he attempted to prophecy against God– that never ends well.
>> the opponents of God are motivated by self-obsession
3. They “perished in Korah’s rebellion” – In Numbers 16, Korah led a rebellion against the leadership of Moses and Aaron.

A common thread in each of these examples – they experienced God’s judgment:

- Cain – banished as a wanderer
- Balaam – killed by Israelite army
- Korah – swallowed alive by the earth – Jude saves most dramatic judgment for last as a stark picture of what awaits those who oppose God¹⁰

⁸ Moo, p. 257.

⁹ Moo, p. 257.

¹⁰ Moo, p. 258.

B. These People –

Jude gives six brief, yet searing descriptions of these enemies whose judgment is as good as done. (most relate to things in nature)

We're lifting the sheep's wool – are you ready?

1) "hidden reefs at your love feasts"

"love feasts" were community meals between believers with two parts: A joyful fellowship meal and celebration of the Lord's Supper¹¹

These deceptive teachers, who lived in unrepentant sexual and other sin, were attending these meals, we're told, "without fear" – without the slightest hesitation.

Jude calls them "hidden reefs" (lit. "submerged rocks")¹² – dangerous for two reasons – hidden, and reef – can rip the bottom of a boat open.¹³

These people, who live however they wanted, saddle up next to a believer – it's confusing and tempting for the believer: "maybe I can live like this guy, who says he's a believer, and still call myself a Christian."¹⁴

2) "Shepherds who..." – messed up – whole purpose of a shepherd is to care for the sheep, but all they care about is themselves

3) "waterless clouds" – agrarian society, clouds meant rain – no rain

4) "fruitless trees in late autumn" – nothing at harvest time – something fundamentally wrong – barren lives – dead "twice" – physically and spiritually (judgment)¹⁵

¹¹ Moo, p. 259.

¹² Zerwick, A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek NT, p. 740.

¹³ Moo, p. 259.

¹⁴ Moo, p. 259.

¹⁵ Moo, p. 260.

- 5) “Wild waves...casting up shame” – when shake them up, shameful lifestyle bubbles to the surface
- 6) “wandering stars” – unstable

“gloom of utter darkness reserved forever” – darkness = popular biblical image of God’s judgment – away from Jesus, the Light of the world...FOREVER¹⁶

If you’re growing weary of hearing of God’s judgment on those who reject him, that’s the point. Jude keeps hammering this in because we must get this to contend for the faith and not throw in the towel.

III. If You Haven’t Picked Up on It by Now, God Will Judge the ‘Ungodly’ (vv. 14-16)

- A. OT Example (this time just one, and unconventional)
 -quotes a prophecy from Enoch found in *I Enoch*, a compilation of writings popular in Jude’s day that is not considered inspired Scripture.

***Timeout:** Jude gets grief for referencing Jewish works not in Scripture like *I Enoch* and *The Assumption of Moses*. Just because he references them does not mean he believes they are inspired Scripture. Certainly, Jude’s specific uses of them are inspired, but Jude is not endorsing that we add these books to our Bibles.

Why use them? Jude’s readers would have been familiar with the traditions in these works (passed down orally), so they would illustrate his point well.¹⁷

We’re back. Enoch was the mysterious figure in Genesis 5 who, we read, “walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.”

¹⁶ Moo, p. 261.

¹⁷ Reformation Study Bible, *Jude: Special Issues*, p. 2288-2289.

It's fitting that Jude use this prophecy attributed to Enoch as his final example because it captures the two themes he emphasizes: The nature of God's end-time enemies and their fate:

- a) Their nature: repeats one word: look at v. 15 – can you guess? Out of all their characteristics, this is the heart of it.
- b) Their fate: “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones to execute judgment”

B. “These” –

Jude ties this prophecy to the teachers of his day and ours with one more scathing list of their attributes (sheep's wool is off):

*Notice most are sins of speech –

- “grumblers” – against God's authority – like Israel in desert
- “malcontents” – (Grk) people who complain about their lot in life¹⁸

- “loud-mouthed boasters” – Grk “their mouth speaks bombastic things” – arrogant, self-inflated¹⁹

Why would Jude focus on sins of speech?

Speech reveals what is in the heart – Jesus: “I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, ³⁷ for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” Why? “For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks....” (Mt. 12:36, 34).

Their speech showed their hearts and betrayed their true identity as the end-times enemies of God and his people. And God's eternal judgment awaits them.

Three Takeaways from Jude 5-16:

¹⁸ William Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 226.

¹⁹ Moo, p. 271; Zerwick, p. 740.

1. Take Courage: we can rest assured that evil, even in all its boasted pomp in the world today, will not have the last word. Do you believe this? Don't lose heart, brothers and sisters.
2. Worship the Whole God: God the Merciful and Compassionate King is also God the Righteous and Just Judge – we miss part of God's character when we only focus on the first
3. Let God's Coming Judgment Move You
 - a. For Yourself: evaluate your heart – how tightly am I holding to truth of God's word? God is coming to judge the ungodly – what ungodliness clings to me? Am I more guided by God's word or by my feelings/cultural pressures?
 - b. For Others: Friend who is not a Christian: "Often I think believers don't truly believe in hell – [if they did, they would be more urgent on mission.]"

We should never hear of God's judgment on those who oppose him and not be moved to sadness, compassion, and renewed urgency for the spread of the gospel, even among those in the South who know enough to give them a false sense of hope.