

STUDIES IN JUDE – 2

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Scripture: Jude 1:1-8

Last week we started in this short letter of Jude, 1 chapter of 25 verses. We broke it down and said that it falls into straightforward parts.

We have two bookends: the introduction – the purpose of this letter, and at the end, the conclusion or the wonderful doxology that Jude has put together. And in between is the whole message that he wants us to think about. And the message has to do with false teaching – to be careful about false teaching that was rampant in the church at that time. As we look at it, we begin to appropriate it in our own lives as well.

From vs. 5 -23 was the whole crux of his letter.

- 5-16 had to do with the false teachers, the past judgment of false teachers, what happened to false teachers in the past. Then the present characteristics of these false teachers, how you could recognize them. Then what would be the future judgment of these false teachers.
- 16-23 Then we see also how to equip the church to have a defense against false teachers.

We looked at the purpose of the letter, the first 4 verses, and at the end of it, we came away with two really good thoughts to ponder on.

1. Are we fighting for the faith? Are we contending for the faith? Are we standing up for what we believe? And are we fighting heresies? Are we able to recognize heresies or heretical thought that is coming into the church and able to stand up against it, point it out?
2. Just looking introspectively at our own lives and asking the question: Are we at any point in our lives, cheapening God's grace by sin that we are covering up, saying God's grace will cover a multitude of my sins.

Today, let's start reading from v.5 and establish a bit of context.

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.

False Teachers in the Past.

In this section, we look at what's in the past. He points out how false teachers in the past have come up and how they were dealt with by God. In vs. 5-7, he reminds them of what has happened to people in the past who didn't believe. It's interesting here that he's actually equating false doctrine to unbelief. Why? because by not believing God, you are actually believing something else that is false. When you don't believe the things of God, you are believing something else which then comes under the whole gambit of false doctrine. He says that those who didn't believe, paid the penalty for relying on false doctrines or teachings rather than the truth of God.

A STRONG REMINDER!

Further he says, "I choose to remind you even though you know these things." He is echoing Peter in 2 Peter 1:12 where Peter says, "Therefore I will always remind you about these things – even though you already know them and are standing firm in the truth you have been taught." Even though they are standing firm in the truth they have been taught, Peter says he is still going to remind them. And that's what Jude is emphasizing as well.

Let us pause here and think about these two statements. Both these men thought it was wise to remind Christians that, in spite of knowing what was right and being grounded in right teaching, that it was possible to fall away from the truth and pursue false teaching. And he gives 3 examples of this:

- 1) **The Israelites** (v.5). The Lord first rescued the nation of Israel from Egypt, but later he destroyed those who did not remain faithful. God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt and then didn't allow some of them to cross into Canaan. What happened? At the threshold, they sent in 12 spies to check out the land. And this is the land that God has already given to them. "Go and see how best to take this land." And they went in and ten of them came out saying that it was not possible to take this land that God has already given to them. Two of them, Joshua and Caleb, came out saying that it was possible, let's go in. And the consequence for their lack of belief was that God said that none of them would enter the Promised Land. Those above 20 would die in the wilderness where they would roam for 40 years. One year for every day that the spies had been in the land trying to see how best to go in and take what God had said was theirs. Unbelief. They didn't believe what God had told them.

And Jude is saying that unbelief is the same as false teaching. The teaching that says: You can only believe God so far. Don't believe for other things. Trust is only as far as you can imagine trusting God. God told them, "Those who have grumbled against Me will not enter. Your corpses will fall in the wilderness. You will not see the land I brought you up to live in. your sons will be shepherds for 40 years, the number of days the spies remained checking out Canaan." We read this in Numbers 13:33. There's a line here that is so telling. It says, "They came back and said: We saw ourselves as grasshoppers, and that is how they saw us as well." There's a truism here, that the way you see yourself is the way the world sees you. The way you think about yourself is the way the world thinks about you. None of them, except Joshua and Caleb, saw themselves as children of the Most High God. None of them saw themselves as ones who God had said, "I will deliver them", and brought them out of bondage. None of them stood there saying, "I know Yahweh who parted the sea so that we could walk on dry land." No! They saw themselves as grasshoppers.

Think about this church. At the very threshold of entry into the Promised Land, they were denied it. They didn't make it because of their disobedience. It's such a good reminder to us that even with the greatest privilege that we have of knowing God and following Him, that it is possible through disobedience to fall away at the end. At the threshold, they didn't cross over..

John Stone Jeffrey tells of a great man who absolutely refused to have his life story written before his death. "I have seen too many men fall out on the last lap"

John Wesley warned, "Let therefore, none presume on past mercies, as if they were out of danger." If you remember, John Bunyan saw that even from the gates of heaven, in his

dream, there was a way to hell.” It’s a warning which each of us also should heed very, very carefully.

- 2) **Angels who have strayed.** (v. 6). Angels who did not stay within the limits of authority God gave them, but left the place where they belonged. God has kept them securely chained in prisons of darkness, waiting for the great day of judgment.

This verse is a bit more difficult to understand because of the paucity of literature that surrounds the whole area of Satan and his beginning. But in Isaiah 14:12 we see, “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” And then Jesus says in Luke 10:18 “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.” Why? Because Satan wasn’t satisfied with the place that God had given him. He wanted more. He wanted to be like God. He wanted the worship that was only due to God. You remember in the wilderness when Jesus was tempted: What did Satan say to Jesus? He said, “I will give you all the nations of the world if you will bow down and worship me.” He forgot his place in the created order that God had created.

- 3) **Sodom and Gomorrah.** He takes us to Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring towns which were filled with immorality and every kind of sexual perversion. Those cities were destroyed by fire and serve as a warning of the eternal fire of God’s judgment. We read this in Genesis 19: two angelic visitors have come to visit Lot, and the people of Sodom hear about it, and they come to Lot’s house. They surround the house and tell Lot to bring them out so that they can have homosexual relations with them. Lot refused, and finally the angelic beings took charge and made them blind so that they couldn’t see. And Jude says their punishment is that they are undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

Three examples from the past to remind us of what disobedience and unbelief as they sit on false teaching can do, and did, in these three situations.

What were the sins that they committed?

- Doubting God’s goodness, provision, and leading in spite of everything God had done for them.
- Pride – wanting to be like God, wanting everything that God had.
- Unbridled lust and perversion.

v. 5 “So I remind you though you already know these things.” He’s reminding us that sin has its consequences. That’s a wonderful reminder for us as well. Let us see whether any of this would fit where we are in life.

- Doubting God’s goodness, provision in spite of everything that God has done for you and me. Are we in danger of that? When you look at the children of Israel, they had a rough time. The journey from Egypt to the Promised Land must have been arduous, difficult. It involved a nomadic lifestyle, moving from place to place. There was no settled home for them, hardships along the way. They had to trust God completely for everything. This was unlike Egypt where they had a steady predictable lifestyle although under the yoke of slavery. Food wouldn’t have been a problem for them, nor water. Hard labor, yes, but maybe a comfortable home in the evening. Or so they thought. They had forgotten that they were grumbling against God. They had forgotten what had made them cry out to God in the first place.

We read in Exodus 2:23-25 “Years passed, and the king of Egypt died. But the Israelites continued to groan under their burden of slavery. They cried out for help and their cry rose

up to God. God heard their groaning and He remembered His covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He looked down on the people of Israel and knew it was time to act.” Why did God act? God heard their cry for help and their groaning. And after God brought them out, as He was taking them to the Promised Land, they had forgotten all of that. This was where they focused and said, “This is terrible. We wish we were back there in Egypt.”

Sometimes the road for us too gets difficult, if we are honest with ourselves. The road can get arduous and scary. Take away our sense of control that I know where I’m going rather than having to trust God whether to turn to the left or the right. And sometimes we murmur and grumble about how much we’re doing. And we cry ourselves to sleep because of the weight of our problems, maybe. Being where we were, in a far country, in bondage, sin, addictive patterns, may look like an easier lifestyle. That’s exactly where the children of Israel were. They forgot where God had brought them from, what God had saved them from, what God had hammered out to bring them out. They forgot all that when they were going through difficulty.

I wonder today whether you’re going through difficulty yourself on that journey. You’re saying it’s getting hard. The lessons I’m learning are hard lessons; wonder if it was easier just to be in my old place. Cannot be, beloved, as a child of God, as one whom God has redeemed. He’s doing a work in you and me, purifying. And purifying always is difficult. And yet, we need to stay in that moment. For the flip side is to lose everything, as the children of Israel did. Imagine coming to the Promised Land, seeing it, and then not being able to get in. What lie are you believing today that is making you grumble or mumble against God, or wish you hadn’t taken the steps? Are you recognizing it as a lie from Satan? Do you need to reconnect with God, hold His hand again?

- Sin of pride, not giving God His due, trying to usurp His glory, claiming that who you are is because you have made yourself that – I am a self-made man or woman – forgetting what God has done in your life.

The Bible has so many references about pride, especially in Proverbs. Arrogant eyes are at the top of the list of 7 things that the Lord hates the most.

Proverbs 11:2 Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

Proverbs 15:33 Humility leads to honor.

Proverbs 18:12 Prides leads to a downfall.

Proverbs 21:4 Haughty eyes and an arrogant heart indicates sin.

Proverbs 21:24 Mocking others is a reflection of excessive pride.

Proverbs 22:4 Humility leads to godly fear.

Proverbs 29:23 Pride will ultimately humble a person.

The greatest example of pride in the Bible is Satan, and the greatest example of humility in the Bible is Jesus.

Paul writes in Philippians saying, “Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humility, consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also the interests of others. Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus.

Pride, arrogance – maybe time for a good spiritual check to see if there are things that we have taken from God that rightly belongs to Him. Over the 27 years that we’ve been here at

CAP, I keep coming back to Isaiah where God says, "My glory I will not share with another." God is so particular that we never try to usurp His glory.

- Unbridled lust and perversion. Look what they were trying to do in Sodom and Gomorrah. I wonder today whether there are things that you are into that are lustful, that you're going after, that is a perversion of not only the moral law of God, but the natural inclinations that He has placed in humanity. How careful we need to be that we don't allow this to corrupt our journey. A good place I think for us to park, asking the hard questions, dealing with the answers we get, making course corrections if we need to, lifestyle changes that should be made. And then, beloved, making absolutely sure that like Paul we can say: I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have kept the faith. Amen.
