

Contend for the Faith

REVIEW: We are in our third week of the little book of Jude. I will guess that most of you will agree that Jude packs quite a punch. It just goes to show the adage true: Never judge a book by its cover - or in this case by its size. Jude may be a lil thing, but he has a lot to tell us so far.

The big idea of the book of Jude is that he wanted to write to his recipients about their common faith but had to shift gears to warn them about the false teachers that had slipped into their ranks, seemingly undetected.

While we do not know exactly what these individuals were doing, Jude has been dropping hints all along the way of the kinds of sins they were committing. All of what they were doing centered around one big, broad idea: they perverted the grace of God into a license to sin. Jude has since expanded on that idea some, but never quite comes out with a list of: top ten things these certain individuals did that was so bad.

INTRO: I have heard many Christians say that they believe that the OT is not valuable or at least, not as valuable to study as the NT is. One of the things that the book of Jude proves is that you cannot fully understand the NT without having a background in the OT. This morning is no exception. Jude refers back to more OT stories that his readers would have been very familiar with, and we should also be familiar with.

JUDE 11-13

I. Jude's examples of the false teachers from the OT - v. 11

A. Here Jude begins with a "Woe"

1. The English word is a transliteration of the Greek word (transliteration means a word from another language that we just did a simple letter substitution and brought into our language) - and the Greek word was a transliteration of the Hebrew word
 - a) The word was used most often by OT prophets to announce pain and suffering people would experience under God's judgement
 - b) It was a stern warning no one would want to receive
2. The "Woe oracle" was usually a reference to judgement and the reason for judgement
 - a) So in our verse Jude talks of the judgement (they have been destroyed)
 - b) And the reason for the judgement - going the way of Cain, Balaam's error, Korah's rebellion
3. The "woe" is one difference between this set of OT examples and the last set

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B. The other difference is that Jude does not mention examples and then apply them to the false teachers, he directly links them to the examples immediately

1. In this sense, the OT examples become a “type”

a) A Type in theological terms is someone in the OT that pre-figures the behavior of the someone in the NT

b) For example: one of the most famous types would be Melchizedek - he was both a priest and a king - he points forward to Jesus, who held both those offices plus the office of prophet

2. Also, while the OT example's action were in the past, and the passage was written in the past tense, because they are types their actions, in a sense, are timeless

a) So in a real way, these verses could be written in the present tense

b) Woe to them. They go the way of Cain, and abandon themselves to Balaam's error...etc

C. The first example is Cain

1. Cain murdered his brother Able out of envy

2. So how does Jude envision the false teachers going the way of Cain?

a) It could be that, like Cain murdering Able, the false teachers are murdering the souls of the people

b) There are two stories from Jewish tradition that might apply

(1) Cain became a skeptic about God, according to tradition, so perhaps Jude was suggesting that they were rejecting God's authority in similar fashion

(2) Another tradition has Cain as the corrupter of humankind - so Jude might be pointing out the false teaching of these people

(3) The fact is there is no way to know if Jude had any of these traditions in mind

(4) Or really how he was using them as an example

(5) So to force our thoughts on it would be foolish

D. Balaam is Jude's second example and might need a little more explanation

1. Balaam, in Numbers 22-24 was being hired to curse Israel for King Balak.

2. Balaam eventually refused to do so after a short talk with his donkey, and a longer chat with the angel of the Lord

3. Jude is most likely referring to to the greed of the false teachers

a) We have record of many traveling teachers in the ancient world that taught whatever people wanted for a price

b) These may have actually been some of those people - but we do not know for sure

E. Korah is the last example

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1. In Numbers 16, Korah lead a rebellion against Moses, leading 250 people with him
2. God's response to that was to open up the ground and swallow Korah, his followers and their households
3. Korah became a warning sign even in Moses lifetime against anyone that might try to rebel against the Lord and His leaders
4. Korah became an example of one who tries to throw off the restraints of morality, and this is likely how Jude is using Korah as an example here
5. Again, these examples are out of chronological order
 - a) It seems as if Jude wanted Korah to be last
 - b) Korah faced sudden and spectacular judgement - just like Jude is anticipating for the false teachers

II. Jude now applies more of why these false teachers are such bad news for his recipients

A. This time Jude abruptly begins the application process, whereas before he eased in with the phrase, "In the same..."

B. He gives us six different descriptions of these false teachers

1. "They are blemishes at your love feasts..."
 - a) The word "blemishes" is not quite as strong as the Greek word
 - (1) The Greek words mean "hidden reef"
 - (2) So are the false teachers that lie in wait to bring destruction
 - b) The word picture is clear enough
 - (1) Like a hidden reef that rips the bottom of a boat to shreds
 - (2) So are the false teachers that lie in wait to bring destruction
 - c) The New Jerusalem Bible translates it well, "they are a dangerous hazard at your love feasts..."
2. The love feasts were usually meals that incorporated both the Lord's Supper and a regular meal
 - a) It became a great tradition of the church - still in practice today in some denominations
 - b) Jude says that the false teachers participated in these feasts "without fear"
 - (1) To do so posed a threat to other believers
 - (2) They set an example of a libertine lifestyle that others might follow - believing that one could be a Christian and live such an open lifestyle to sin

C. The second example Jude gives is "Shepherds who feed only themselves."

1. A shepherd is the epitome of a selfless person
 - a) They "lay down their lives for the sheep"
 - b) Imagine throwing yourself in between a sheep and a charging bear - that's selfless folks

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2. The Lord Himself is called the Good Shepherd
 - a) You cannot get more selfless than that
 3. Leaders of God's people are also called shepherds
 - a) Which could be a hint that these people were leaders - although that is far from definitive proof
 4. These false teachers were not caring for others and thought only of themselves
 - a) Ezekiel 34:2 ““Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock?’¹”
 - b) This is probably the OT passage Jude had in mind when writing about these guys
- D. The next four examples come from nature, and whether Jude realized it or not, in the ancient world, these were the four regions of the earth
- E. So third, “the clouds without rain”
1. This is a natural metaphor for those that do not deliver on their promises
 2. Proverbs 25:14 “Like clouds and wind without rain is one who boasts of gifts never given. ²”
 3. So Jude is saying these people make claims about themselves or their teaching and they do not deliver on them
 4. To top it off, they are unstable being “blown along by the wind”
- F. Fourth, they are “autumn trees without fruit and uprooted - twice removed”
1. If a tree has no fruit in autumn it has not delivered on its purpose
 2. But why is the tree called uprooted and twice dead?
 - a) The Greek term is actually in reverse order, and reversing the order may help us better understand Jude's point
 - b) Also, to help us understand this, we need to understand that Jude is no longer talking about trees, but to the reality he is pointing at - the false teachers
 - c) The NT uses the term “second death” to refer to judgement at the end times
 - (1) So Jude is probably thinking about the false teachers death physically and well as spiritually
 - d) The idea of uprooting completes the picture and calls to mind Jesus parable about the fig tree that did not bear fruit from Luke 13
- G. Fifth is the wild waves of the sea

¹ *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011) Eze 34:2.

² *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011) Pr 25:14.

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1. Isaiah 57:20 “But the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud³”
2. This verse is the likely backdrop to what is going through Jude’s mind
 - a) Remember, any good Jew back in those days would know their OT scriptures very well
 - b) So while we wonder how they would remember all these verses, they knew them
 - c) It really points to our biblical weakness, and displays their biblical strength

H. Finally, they are wandering stars for whom the blackest night is reserved forever

1. Ancient people believed the heavens should display order
2. The planets seemed to wander across the sky to them - that is where we even get our word for planets - planao - wanderer
3. While there is some connection of the movements of the planets to evil angels by the ancients, it is unclear if Jude is trying to draw that parallel
4. What we can say for certain is Jude is stressing here the instability of these people

I. He concludes with a word of judgement

1. Darkness, along with fire are popular biblical images for judgement

III. Application

A. Today I have only two applications

B. The first is the biblical concept of “woe”

1. We have mentioned before the nicety of Christianity that has become so much a part of its fabric
 - a) Honestly we have lost some of its strength because of it
 - b) Not that I am advocating a return to “hellfire and brimstone” or confrontation void of compassion
2. But think about what Jude is doing here for a minute
 - a) He is pulling in the OT practice of proclaiming “woe” to someone
 - b) That was not just a warning like we use it today
 - (1) “Woe! You better quit it buster or you’re gunna get it!”
 - (2) It’s deeper than that
 - (3) It was a proclamation of judgement of the actions of another
 - (4) As well as laying out what would happen for the offense or if the offense was not stopped
3. We are not accustomed to making such bold statements nowadays
 - a) Perhaps because we feel unqualified to speak on behalf of God

³ *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011) Is 57:20.

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- b) Perhaps we have bought into the lie that Christianity never challenges, never confronts
 - c) Perhaps we are just too nice
 - 4. But think about the consequences when we remain silent
 - a) When in contention with those we do not know, we never give them an alternative to consider, or help them see the end of their personal ideas or philosophies
 - b) When in contention with those we know, we are not loving them
 - (1) They are headed down a path that will end in destruction
 - (2) Since when is standing on the sideline, being nice a loving act?
 - (3) We are loving them straight into judgement by God
 - 5. Again, I do not want to raise up a church that goes off “half cocked” and tries to take on the role of the Holy Spirit
 - a) But I want us to see that there are things that are worth not being nice about
 - b) There are things that we need to stand strong, be bold, and confront
 - 6. When we do this, let me remind you once again of what my apologetics professor taught us many years ago
 - a) You never do this out of excitement to “lay the smack down” on someone
 - b) You never do this with a superior attitude in place
 - c) You do this with a tear in your eye because it even has to be done
 - d) ESPECIALLY if it is someone you know and love
- C. Second application has to do with the uncomfortable topic of hell
- 1. Understand that Jude never used the word hell or even directly taught about it
 - 2. However the language he uses reveals that he assumes the reality of hell
 - 3. The word hell is taken from the Greek word gehenna
 - a) It literally means, “Valley of Hinnom”
 - b) The valley is a real place - a gorge just outside Jerusalem with an evil reputation
 - (1) In the period of the kings in the OT, children were burned as sacrifices there
 - c) In the OT prophets used it as a symbol of judgement
 - d) During the period between the testaments, Jews used the word to describe the last judgement
 - e) This is where Jesus picked up the idea to describe the end times punishment

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4. The NT teaches that after death God will punish “in hell” those that do not accept Christ - but Christians often differ on two issues: the nature of the punishment, and the duration
5. The nature of the punishment
 - a) Hell is commonly described as a place of fire and of a place of burning
 - (1) Jude even uses this language “punishment of eternal fire”
 - (2) Many have taken this literally, as if hell is a place of literal burning
 - b) Honestly I doubt that
 - (1) The word hell was associated with a place of burning
 - (2) So the idea of fire could come from the image - not a reality
 - (3) Fire is a common symbol used in judgement throughout Scripture
 - (4) And the strongest argument against it being literal fire is the contradiction of symbols
 - (a) Fire
 - (b) Darkness
 - (c) Can’t have both
 - c) I believe that God was using descriptions that people would understand to help us know what hell was like
 - (1) No one likes the idea of getting burned - its horrible
 - (2) No one likes the idea of darkness - its associated with fear or the unknown, and loneliness
 - (3) While the language of fire and darkness may be metaphorical, it points to serious punishment
6. How long will it last?
 - a) There are two primary schools of thought on this
 - (1) The traditional is that it will last eternally
 - (a) There are multiple references to which we could point on this
 - (2) The second has been gaining some ground and it is called annihilationism
 - (a) This view says that people will be punished for a time
 - (b) Then after the time is up, they will be annihilated from existence
 - (c) The primary reference for this is in Jude when he speaks of destroying the wicked
 - b) Which is right?
 - (1) Honestly annihilationism has points in its favor and should not be dismissed summarily - but in the end does not explain all of the evidence sufficiently
 - (2) The traditional view is probably the strongest as it deals far better with the idea of eternity

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- (a) Matthew 25:41 being the strongest defense
 - (b) Why would the word eternity mean a span of time for the wicked and not the righteous?
7. Let's be honest, none of us like the idea of hell
- a) Some of us think of the "hell fire" preachers and get embarrassed for the faith
 - b) Some of us want God to be more loving than that
 - (1) Cause we don't have a problem with hell for Hitler or Osama
 - (2) We have a problem with hell for Mrs. Johnson across the street that is the sweetest lady but lost her husband to cancer at an early age and has been mad at God ever since and wants nothing to do with him
 - c) This again leads us to confront our current Christian ideals and keep them balanced in light of all of Scripture and all of who God is
 - (1) God is loving - AMEN! and AMEN!!!
 - (2) But God is also holy and just
 - (a) When people in the Bible came into God's presence they fell to their knees in fear and shame
 - (b) Remember Isaiah's reaction - Woe is me, I am unclean!
 - (3) Sin cannot exist in God's presence
 - (a) The way God created, which is the only way God has ever revealed to us, for getting rid of sin is through Christ
 - (b) All other ideas are mere wishful thinking
 - d) On this area of hell, my main desire is for you to come to terms with the fact that it is absolutely real
 - (1) If you study Scripture and tell me that you believe annihilationism, so be it
 - (2) But do not hand me the argument that God is love and wouldn't punish sin
 - (a) He did in the Bible
 - (b) He promises to in the future
 - (c) And when you do that you are insulting God by not accepting Him as He has revealed Himself
 - e) My prayer is that the reality of hell pushes each of us to
 - (1) Pray harder for Mrs. Johnson across the street
 - (2) To seek ways to explain the gospel to her (and others)
 - (3) To start to see each person that we meet as someone that is in desperate need of a Savior - our Savior, Jesus Christ