

The Apostate and the Oracles of Woe

A Sermon on Jude 1: 5-16

by
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1. Introduction

2. Three Examples of God's Judgement (vv. 5-7)

- a. The three examples serve as an illustration to compare the apostates of old to those within the church.
- b. The first example is unbelieving Israel.
 - i. The Israelites legitimately experienced the grace and deliverance of God when He called them out of Egypt, yet they did not abide in faith.
 - ii. They grumbled against the Lord and accused Him of taking them out into the desert to die at the hands of men in the Promised Land.
 - iii. As a result, they are doomed to wander the desert for 40 years until the entire unbelieving generation dies off.
- c. The second two examples are related: the angels who left their abode, and Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - i. Both engaged in sexual relations which “exchanged their proper use”.
 - ii. The angels went after “strange flesh” – which means they sought to fornicate with the daughters of men (Gen. 6).
 1. As a result, these apostate angels and their offspring are judged fiercely.
 2. They are kept forever in bonds of darkness for final judgment.

iii. The men of Sodom and Gomorrah are also judged for their debauchery (Gen. 19).

1. Men come and seek to rape the angels visiting Lot and telling him of the impending doom.
2. The angels blind the men, and the men are in such a wicked fervor that they exhaust themselves trying to find the door to rape them.
3. They exchanged the “natural use” by seeking to fornicate with angels who took the form of men.

d. These illustrations serve as an example for the apostate’s eternal judgment.

3. **Jude pronounces oracles of Woe against the apostate (8-11)**

a. By calling them “dreamers” Jude is dialing in on the method the apostates use to hold authority in the church.

- i. They claim to have revelatory dreams from God that give them license to sin.
- ii. The church age is one where incredible miracles are happening – all to validate Christ’s ministry and the appointing of the apostles.

b. Jude lists three sins deserving of “woe” which also serve as a determinate in marking out these apostates in the community.

- i. They defile the flesh with their gross misconduct.
- ii. They reject the sovereign authority of God.
- iii. They revile, or blaspheme, against angelic majesties.

c. Yet notice Jude makes sure to call out their folly with his example of the archangel Michael in v. 9.

- i. Michael resigned himself to the Lord's divine judgment rather than rebuke Satan.
- ii. This is an absolutely fascinating part of the text that can cause many questions, but it alludes back to Deut. 34 and Jewish tradition.
 - 1. The Lord commissions Michael to bury Moses in the desert, and Satan disputes that he should have a proper burial because Moses killed an Egyptian.
 - 2. The point of this example is to serve as a contrast between those who speak foolishly against angelic beings, and those who trust in God's ultimate justice.
 - 3. They are ultimately guilty of seeking to usurp God's divine right to judgment. That is particularly why their condemnation is so severe.
- d. Jude then demonstrates these men, though claiming to be wise in heavenly affairs, are utter fools (v. 10).
 - i. They have no understanding of the things they slander against.
 - ii. Yet what they know by nature (think in terms of eating, intercourse, etc.) they are consumed by.
 - 1. Jude links this back to the three sins of v. 8 and then he just says they are irrational creatures, meaning they do not even have the ability to reason.
 - 2. They are brute animals who only follow their instincts, and thereby, are killed by the very things they lust after.
- e. These things all serve for Jude's pronouncement of woe upon them.

i. Jude then gives three additional Old Testament examples: They go the way of Cain, they rush headlong into the error of Balaam for money, and they perished in the rebellion of Korah.

1. The way of Cain is a specific phrase indicating they go their own way and reject God's way of doing things.

2. The error of Balaam is that he went against the people of God for sordid gain.

3. The rebellion of Korah is bound in his rejection of authority figures that God had put in place.

ii. As a result, all of these people were met with fierce and terrible judgment.

4. **The Qualities of the Apostate (vv. 12-13)**

a. Here Jude uses these metaphors to describe the nature of the apostates who have abandoned their purpose and cause calamity, and why their condemnation is just.

i. They are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves.

1. Picture a ship trying to make safe passage, only to strike a reef and capsize, leaving her crew to perish.

2. The "love feast" was a celebration of the church culminating in the Lord's Supper.

a. The apostate would gather under the pretense of love, yet wait to destroy the saints with their corrupt doctrine and lifestyle.

b. They had no pangs of conscience in what they were doing.

c. They only cared for, literally shepherded, themselves.

- ii. Jude then gives four more metaphors from nature to describe them.
 - 1. They are clouds without water, carried along by the winds.
 - a. The picture here is that they have the appearance of a rain cloud, yet never release rain.
 - 2. They are autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted.
 - a. Again, there is a sense of purpose that's missing because they should bear fruit, but they never do.
 - b. Jude mixes metaphors here with "doubly dead, uprooted" to show the extent of their "deadness".
 - 3. They are wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam.
 - a. It depicts this sort of calamity caused by the sea, yet also the residue left over from it.
 - b. In essence, they drag up all the nasty much from the bottom of the sea and spew it out on the shore for all to see.
 - 4. They are wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.
 - a. They were intended to be this constant, this static, unmoving light for people to navigate by, yet they wander aimlessly.
 - b. As a result, the only thing that awaits them is a darkness so dark it absorbs all light.

5. The Prophecy of Enoch (14-16)

- a. These verses are linked to verse four where Jude speaks of those appointed for this condemnation.
 - i. This is ultimately why their judgment is immovable, for it was foretold by Enoch.
 1. What's interesting to note though is that even the prophecy he delivers speaks of this judgment occurring in the past, long before Enoch uttered it.
 - ii. This is one of those teachings that can sneak past you if you don't stop to think about it for a little bit.
 1. It should be an immense comfort to those whom He has called to eternal life, because He will surely execute His justice.
- b. Verse 15 is the apex of Jude's pronouncement against them.
 - i. He uses the term "ungodly" four times in one verse to really bring it home. They're anti-God.
 - ii. They know how they ought to function, but they function in complete opposition to the Lord.
- c. In verse 16 then, Jude brings his argument to a close by summarizing everything he has said up to this point.
 - i. They are grumblers who find fault with the Lord.
 - ii. They follow after their own lusts.
 - iii. They speak arrogantly.
 - iv. They flatter people for the sake of gaining an advantage.

6. Conclusion

- a. What Jude has done throughout this entire section is set up what the natural and unnatural “use” of the people of God is.
 - i. The unnatural use is everything we’ve just heard about the apostate. It is being anti-God and living out a life marked out by rebellion.
 - ii. The natural use of the Christian then is everything in antithesis to this lifestyle of rebellion. In other words: it’s a living faith.
- b. This is going to be a battle, but it is ultimately how you contend for the faith. You must pour out every effort to live in harmony with what God would have of us. Don’t grow weary.
- c. If you’re not a Christian, this passage should utterly terrify you. The only thing that awaits is the sure, unending wrath of God.