

04. The Book of Jude—1:4-5

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(3/4/20)

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As we said last time, the book of Jude falls into 2 main sections—

- **A Call to Action Against Apostasy—verses 3-19**
- **A Command to Christians to Live Faithfully—verses 20-23**

I. A Call to Action Against Apostasy—verses 3-19

A. Christians—contend earnestly for the faith against apostates—verses 3-4

Jude 1:3-4 (NKJV)

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.

Much of what follows is meant by Jude to identify these “**certain men**” (apostates/false teachers) who have crept into the churches “**unnoticed**” (*‘secretly, undercover’*).

He makes sure his readers understand that, even though these deceivers have been able to sneak into the church unnoticed—they are not fooling God Who knows who they are:

1. “who long ago were marked out for this condemnation” (verse 4a)

Jude is telling us that these ungodly deceivers didn’t take God by surprise—He knew they would infiltrate the Church and had marked them for judgment (hell) long ago (before the foundation of the world).

As we said last week, God allows Satan and his servants (false prophets) to infiltrate churches—to keep us sharp and vigilant—but also because they act like ‘spiritual magnets’ that draw out of the church those who think like them.

2. “**[They’re] ungodly men**” (verse 4b)

The word ‘**ungodly**’ is another way of saying “*unlike God*.”

People in the church who teach false doctrine (lies) are not *God-like*—they are ‘*ungod-like*’ or ‘**ungodly**’ in that God is a God of truth and His Word is truth.

Those who are like God teach it faithfully and would never twist His Word into lies to deceive. How do these apostates twist what God has said? —

3. “**[They] turn the grace of our God into lewdness**” (verse 4c)

These people pervert the doctrine of God’s grace and use it as a license to sin.

Apostates rationalize it this way—*“If God’s grace is greater than all of my sin, the more I sin, the more God’s grace will be put on display—to His glory!”* (Rom. 6:1–2).

The idea behind the ancient word **“lewdness”** is—*“sin that is practiced without shame, without any sense of conscience or decency”*.

One pastor and author said—

*“Usually the word is used in the sense of sensual sins, such as sexual immorality—but it can also be used in the sense of brazen anti-biblical teaching, when the truth is denied and lies are taught without shame. Jude probably had both ideas in mind here, because as the rest of the letter will develop, these **certain men** had both moral problems and doctrinal problems.”*

Apostates, (like cultists), use the Word of God to promote and defend their false doctrines—they seduce young, immature Christians who have not yet been grounded in the Scriptures.

2 Peter 2:13-14, 19 (NKJV)

¹³ ... *They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you,* ¹⁴ *having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children...*

¹⁹ *While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.*

4. “[They] deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.” (verse 4d)

Most of the other translations say, **“and denying Jesus Christ, our only Master and Lord”**.

“Deny” is a strong term meaning *“to refuse,” “to be unwilling,”* or *“to firmly say no.”*

What exactly does that mean?

It means to deny the Lord by rejecting His Person and work—to be unwilling to accept who He claimed to be and the power of what He did for us on Calvary.

2 Timothy 3:5 (NKJV)

⁵ *having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*

Throughout the history of the Church, there have always been heretics who have taught that Jesus’ blood shed on Calvary’s cross didn’t atone for our sins (or only partially atoned for them and now we have to *finish* the work of atonement in our lives through our works).

By denying the true gospel (the way of the cross—the narrow way), and in its place preach a false gospel—a tolerant, inclusive ‘broad way’ gospel of being a good person, helping others (social gospel), believing whatever you want as long as you’re sincere and doing other good works to please God and get into heaven.

One pastor and author said—

*“The Bible is clear that **many** more people follow the broad way that leads to destruction than adhere to the narrow way that leads to life (Matthew 7:13–14; cf. 24:10–12). In part, credit is due to false teachers for the*

popularity of the “wide road,” as they usher people onto the broad way and encourage them not to look back. Their message of independence, personal freedom, and self-exaltation is inherently appealing to fallen human hearts, who would rather serve themselves than submit to Christ.”

As evangelical, born-again Christians we can ‘deny’ the Lord by ‘ungodly’ living (living that is not like God).

The goal of the Christian life is not to be ‘world-like’ (worldly) but ‘God-like’ (godly).

➤ How do we do that?—by “*looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.*”

How did Jesus live? What did Jesus do? How would Jesus respond?—Must be the way we constantly live our lives.

B. Christians—remember God has judged apostates in the past—verses 5-7

Jude 1:5 (NKJV)

⁵ But I want to remind you, though you once knew this...

Jude is talking to those who knew the Jewish Scriptures (both Jew and Gentile Christians) calling them to remember how God in the past has judged apostates and then gives 3 examples—His judgment upon: *apostate Israelites (verse 5); apostate angels (verse 6); and apostate Gentiles (verse 7).*

1. The example of apostate Israelites—verse 5

Jude 1:5 (NKJV)

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.

So that we fully understand the point Jude is making—we must interpret the passage correctly. First of all, keep in mind that, even though God delivered the entire nation of Israel from Egypt—that didn’t mean that each Jew delivered was *personally* saved.

Let me break it down this way—there were 3 groups of people that came out of Egypt:

1. Those Jews who were genuinely saved, that were strong in their faith and Spirit-filled.
2. Those Jews who were genuinely saved, but who were weak in their faith and carnally minded.
3. The mixed multitude (probably made up of some Gentiles)—those who were unbelievers that said they believed in the God of Israel but who didn’t have saving faith.

I believe I’m on solid ground with that interpretation because it mirrors what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:14-3:1, when he broke the world (Egypt is a type of the world) into 3 categories:

- *The natural man*
- *The spiritual man*
- *The carnal man*

The **natural man** is a term that speaks of someone born into this world physically through the *natural* process—but not born-again *spiritually* through the Holy Spirit. (John 3)

1 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him;

The word **“natural”** in verse 14 is *psuchikos*, and speaks of the ‘soulish’ man, a person who lives to satisfy the body’s appetites—just like an animal (hunger, thirst, sex etc.)—a two-dimensional creature..

The natural man is contrasted by Paul with the **“spiritual man”** (*pneumatikos*) in 1 Corinthians 2:15.

The **spiritual man** is someone who is born of the Spirit—someone who is *spiritually minded*, whose mind is dominated with the Word of God, the will of God and the work of God. This is what Paul calls having the—*“mind of Christ”* in 1 Corinthians 2:16.

This person lives on an entirely different level of existence than does the natural man. Then in 1 Corinthians 3:1 Paul talks about the **“carnal man”** which refers to a ‘*carnal Christian*’.

Many believe that so-called **“carnal Christians”** are really not Christians at all—but Paul addresses them as “brethren” and calls them “babies in Christ”.

The word “carnal” is the Greek word *sarkikos* and means, *“to be dominated by the inclinations of the old fallen nature”*—saved but not walking in the Spirit.

So we read in Exodus that God delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt by putting the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and lintel of their houses which caused the angel of death to ‘*pass over*’ that house so that the firstborn wasn’t killed.

This effectively, as the Tenth Plague, broke the hardness of Pharaoh whose firstborn son died (seen as a god and next in line for Pharaoh of Egypt) and he allowed the Jews to leave Egypt. But after a while, Pharaoh changed his mind and sent his armies to chase the Jews to bring them back which allowed God to do the greatest miracle recorded in the Old Testament—the parting of the Red Sea. (Finish)

After the LORD led them to Mt. Sinai, where He proposed a covenant with them...

He then gave them the blueprints for making the Tabernacle (the ‘tent of meeting’), the institution of the sacrificial system and the priesthood, which included the making of the priestly robes and vestments (including the breastplate and ephod).

After that, the LORD (through the Shekinah Glory) led them to the border of the Promised Land—a place called ‘Kadesh Barnea’. It was there that He instructed Moses to send in 12 men to spy out the land of Canaan in preparation for the invasion that would begin the conquest of the Promised Land.

Ten of the spies brought back an ‘evil report’—whereas Joshua and Caleb encouraged the people to enter in and take possession of this good land promised to them by God—*“Who is strong enough to give us victory over the giants!”*

However, the people wavered at the promise of God through unbelief, sided with the ten evil spies and wanted to return to Egypt—

Numbers 14:26-38 (NKJV)

²⁶ And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ²⁷ "How long *shall I bear with* this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. ²⁸ Say to them,

'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: 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. ³¹ But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. ³² But *as for* you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. ³³ And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. ³⁴ According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, *namely* forty years, and you shall know My rejection. ³⁵ I the LORD have spoken this; I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.' " ³⁶ Now the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land, ³⁷ those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the LORD. ³⁸ But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive, of the men who went to spy out the land.

This represents how carnal Christians never reach the 'promised land' God has for them (unless they repent and start walking by faith). They never enter into the 'life of the Spirit' and possess all of the '*great and precious promises*' God has given to them.

Instead they wander aimlessly through their Christian life and die in a spiritual wilderness (murmuring, complaining, unbelief) without ever enjoying the power, blessing and fruitfulness of the life of the Spirit.) So that's, in part, what Jude is referring to, how unbelief in the life of a **carnal Christian** will cause them to be chastened by God and come short of all He has for them in the way of spiritual blessings.

But then there is the judgment upon **unbelievers** as well that he has in view (maybe primarily in view). As the children of Israel wandered through the wilderness toward the Promised Land—they became discouraged and impatient and began to complain against the Lord (Numbers 21:4-9).

So, the Lord judged them by sending "*fiery serpents*" into the camp of Israel to bite the people—and many of them died. When the survivors cried out to the Lord in repentance pleading for mercy—the Lord told Moses to make a serpent of bronze and put it on a pole and lift it up in the center of camp.

The idea was that anyone who had been bitten by one of these snakes if they looked upon the brass serpent on the pole by faith—they would be miraculously healed.

Jesus quoted this Old Testament incident to illustrate how the new birth takes place—

John 3:14-15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

Mankind has been bitten by the serpent of sin and as such is now dying from the 'venom' that has been injected into the human race by the sin of Adam. Anyone not healed in this life will be condemned to *eternal death* in the life to come—(i. e. '*eternal separation from God in hell*').

The 'cure' is as easy as "looking unto Jesus."

You see, the serpent of bronze was a type or picture of Jesus, who became sin for us—the pole speaks of the cross of Calvary upon which the Lord Jesus was lifted up.

I believe it was at this point that the ‘mixed multitude’ (“religious unbelievers”) were purged from the true people of God in preparation for them entering into the Promised Land.

They were the ones who refused to exercise faith by looking to the serpent on the pole in the center of camp (just like many unbelievers who attend liberal churches refuse to ‘look to Jesus on the cross’ to save them—they think they’re saved and heaven-bound because of their ‘good’ works).

The writer to the Hebrews mentions this—

Hebrews 3:7-15 (NKJV)

⁷ Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: *"Today, if you will hear His voice,"* ⁸ *Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness,* ⁹ *Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years.* ¹⁰ *Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.'* ¹¹ *So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'* ¹² Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; ¹³ but exhort one another daily, while it is called *"Today,"* lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, ¹⁵ while it is said: *"Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."* [Explain]

Author John Phillips said—

"This mixed multitude joined the ranks of Israel after the overthrow of Pharaoh. They were unbelievers who knew nothing about redemption by the blood of the Passover Lamb. The truth of God was all around them, but they were blind to it. God's faithful dealings with His own was a part of everyday life, but they did not recognize it as such. They were worldly, carnal, rebellious, and self-willed. Worse still, they infected the true people of God, until, at last, at Kadesh-barnea, God's patience was utterly exhausted, and He pronounced the death sentence. When they heard about the giants of Canaan, they cried, "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!" (Num. 14:1–2). Instantly, God answered their prayer. "Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness," He said (Num. 14:28–29). Because they were so infected by the unbelieving attitude of these apostates, the sentence fell on all who were twenty years of age and upward. Only Joshua and Caleb escaped to enter Canaan.

There are two classes of people and two kinds of death. The apostates perished eternally; the backsliders (those who were genuinely saved by the blood of the lamb) perished physically.

For the apostate in all ages, the solemn lesson is one of sure and certain judgment to come. At any moment, the unseen line might be crossed and the dread sentence be pronounced, although its actual date of execution be delayed. For the backsliders, the solemn lesson is that it is possible to have a saved soul but a lost life."

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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