

64. Jesus in Jude

June 7, 2018

Someone has tagged this little letter with an appropriate title, "The Acts of Apostates". While the Book of Acts is titled as "The Acts of Apostles", that title is quite a comparison.

What are the apostates? The people with acts of departing from one's faith; abandonment of belief in the basic doctrine of Christianity and the renunciation of the standards of the faith. A lot of fancy words, to make it in a simple way, it means major backsliders.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

The apostates at the time when this letter was written were the Gnostics – those who embraced this developing philosophy that distinguished between matter as being permanently evil and spirit as being good. Such heresy produced and cultivated the idea that the flesh could do anything it wanted to do, because no one is under moral obligation.

In that day, Gnosticism was called "antinomianism"; in our day it is often referred to as "hedonism." No matter what it is called, it leads to rebellion against authority, irreverence, presumptuous speech, and a lifestyle marked by unbridled license. Does that sound familiar? When I drive around in Tucson, I see a lot of different bumper stickers which tell about the person who drives the vehicle. Some say, "My kid can beat up your honor student kid," or "Challenge the authority." Very rebellious, obnoxious, and resistant without reasons! Living however they feel like without thinking about the consequences or the harms to others, extremely selfish and immature childish attitude! That sums up Gnosticism.

A. OBSERVATION

We should start with Observation first:

- Who: Jude (v1)
- When: About 60-65 A.D.
- Where: Most likely from Jerusalem
- What: Contend for the faith (v3)
- Why: To defend the genuine faith against false teachings
- How: Jude is putting a sermon in a letter, and he is preaching against dangerous practices and doctrines that imperil the Gospel of Christ. It is a sermon that is rugged, bold, picturesque, energetic, and glowing with the fires of passion and conviction.

Backsliders hate the Book of Jude due to its stern warnings and uncompromising stance against false teachings and doctrines. There are a lot of similarities between Jude and 2 Peter. Both books mentioned about extra biblical facts that we don't find anywhere else in the Bible.

B. THE AUTHOR

Jude 1 Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ:

Though he is a blood relative of Jesus, notice how he identifies himself: a servant of Jesus Christ. Few things tell more about a man than the way in which he speaks of

himself; few things are more revealing than the titles by which he wishes to be known. Jude could have said, "Here I am, the half-brother of the Savior Jesus, listen to me!" But he was fully content to be known simply as Jesus' servant.

This is a letter to all Christians – it is not really an evangelistic tract.

Here are ways Jude identifies his readers as Christians:

- They are called: We are Christians because God has called us to be. The important thing is to answer the call when it comes, just as we answer the phone when it is ringing.
- They are sanctified by God the Father: Set apart
- They are preserved in Jesus: Christ is our Guardian and Protector
- Each of these workings will be in the life of a true believer. None can really exist without the other.

Called by the Spirit, loved by God the Father, and kept safe by Christ. We could fill in our names here, because Jude's words of warning are not addressed to one specific church or person but apply to Christians in every generation.

This reminds me of the infamous verses in Romans regarding "Predestination":

Romans 8:29-30 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

D. THE NECESSITY OF CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION

Knowing the foundation of Christianity is the most important lesson we can have as Christians.

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

Many of the Mormon people were former Southern Baptists. Why? There are two reasons: First, they are the biggest denomination and there are a lot of them. Second, not just the Southern Baptists, but the average Christians do not have good working knowledge of the foundation of Christianity. If they knew, they wouldn't be swayed by cults of any kinds.

Jude 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.

Jude had wanted to extol the wonders of the salvation he shared in common with his readers, but there was a more clear and present danger that made him switch subjects.

The word "Contend" is a mouthful in Greek, "*epagonizomai*." It means: "to struggle for, to contend for, to exercise great effort and exertion for something." The word was used of athletic contests and the struggle and effort for the athletes in their games. If you look at the word carefully, you'll see the root from which it is taken, "*agonizomai*." We get our English word "agonize" from it.

The picture of two formidable wrestlers grappling in an ancient dirt-floored gymnasium. The air is thick and humid with the smell of sweat. Their muscles strain to the

point of bursting as they “agonize” against each other for the prize of victory. That is the idea of “contend.” It is not la-la-land concept of whatever-you-believe-is-OK.

E. THE APOSTATES – THE TRAITORS OF CHRISTIANITY

Jude 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.

Who are these certain men? They are wolves in sheep’s clothing. Unlike the apostles, these apostates slipped in without being noticed. They are like water from leaky pipes behind the wall. They are like termites in the house. We don’t realize what is happening from the outside. Everything seems normal as usual. Pretty soon we have to overhaul the wall because of leaking water or we have the structural damage in our houses.

These people didn’t just drift away from God. They deliberately defected from Him. With defiance in their hearts, they purposefully opposed the foundation teaching of the Christian faith and planted seeds of division and dissension in the believing community. They are lethal, poisoning the core of Christian truth in at least two ways:

1) They changed the grace of our God into a license for immorality

They transposed grace from freedom to obey Christ to freedom to sin.

2) They try to deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign God.

As I have said this before, there is one common denominator in all the cults and occults. They all deny the deity of Jesus Christ and the only way of salvation.

F. THE ANGELS WERE NO EXCEPTION

Jude 6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;

Jude speaks of angels who sinned, and who are now imprisoned in the abyss, awaiting a future day of judgment. By not keeping their proper place, they are now kept in chains – their sinful pursuit of freedom has put them in bondage. Those who insist on the freedom to do whatever they want are like these angels – so free that they are bound with everlasting chains! True freedom comes from obedience to God.

Their sin has separated them from the presence of God; so will our sin! And, if the mighty fallen angels could not break the chains sin has brought upon them, what make us think we can? We need Christ to set us free!

The demons were once angels who enjoyed the marvelous intimacy in God’s immediate presence, are now banished from Him. Their high spiritual status wasn’t enough. There will be many in hell with “high spiritual status.” All of that will be of no help on judgment day.

G. A STORY FROM THE BOOK OF ASSUMPTION OF MOSES

Jude 9 Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”

The Jewish Apocrypha consists of books and writings included in the Latin Vulgate and accepted in the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox canon, but they were never recognized as part of the canon of Scripture, because they are not part of the Hebrew Scriptures. However, they served a devotional purpose for many believers of ancient times, including some of the authors of the NT. Jude cites two books of the

Apocrypha in his letter. Jude 9 apparently comes from "The Assumption of Moses" and verse 14 comes from "the Book of Enoch."

Jude illustrates the magnitude of their blasphemies through a story from "the Assumption of Moses", an apocryphal book which only small portions survive. According to its account, the archangel Michael was sent to bury Moses' body, but Lucifer the devil intercepted him, claiming the body was his. Instead of showing disrespect or fight against Lucifer, Michael left the matter with the Judge of all creatures, saying, "The Lord rebuke you."

By the way, why was Michael disputing about the body of Moses with the devil? Deuteronomy 34:5-6 says this about the death of Moses:

Deuteronomy 34:5-6 So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. 6 And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day.

I believe that the devil wanted to use Moses' body as an object of worship to lead Israel astray into idolatry. But the main point isn't why Michael was disputing, but how he was disputing with satan. Notice that Michael is battling in God's authority, not his own. And if he does this, how much more should we! Some Christians get drunk on the doctrine of "the believer's authority" and start thinking that they can order the devil around like a lap dog or speak of him in comical and mocking terms. We need to heed Michael's example.

H. THE MOCKERS AT WORK

Jude 17-19 But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be (1) mockers in the last time who would (2) walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are (3) sensual persons, who (4) cause divisions, (5) not having the Spirit.

Since the apostles told and warned us about these apostates, we should not be surprised by their subtle and sleek approaches.

Let's see how they operate. If we know how they operate, the battle is half over:

1) Mockers – With cynical jabs, these people ridicule the doctrines of the Christian faith and scoff at the authority of Scripture and they challenge against the Throne of God.

2) Walk according to their own ungodly lusts – corrupt theology almost always decays into corrupt morals. Once apostates cut loose the anchor of Scripture, they freely follow the winds of their own lusts without remorse. Did you notice that many cults promise physical and sexual freedom to do whatever our carnal desires want as baits? Mormon's doctrine is the prime example of this.

3) Sensual persons – The Gnostics boast in their separateness by exception and superior spirituality. They claim that they are not "Bound to the restrictions and inhibitions of ordinary Christians." In actuality, Jude says, their mindset is entirely worldly. They are ruled by their worldly desires which in the end destroy them.

4) Cause divisions – With an elite mentality, even though they are not, these apostates put themselves above the leaders of the church and sow seeds of discord and doubt – critical and untruthful words about the pastor, a skeptical remark about Christ. They never sign their own names in the letter when they send it to somebody.

They want to remain behind the shadow like demons. They put words in someone else's ears, so that those people who have shallow knowledge in the Word may speak and complain to others. This eventually ends up in church division.

5) Not having the Spirit – There is an obvious reason for their worldly mindedness. They are fake Christians.

We cannot solely put the blame on those false teachers about the problems we are facing in these last days. In the business world, we call it "Supply and Demand". These false teachers could not maintain their positions unless there are demands for their teachings. Instead of listening to the sound doctrines of God's Word, people rather want to hear whatever pleases them.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.