

Jude 8 - 11

(Readings: Genesis 4:1-16; Jude 1-11)

Caught Out!

Now the lesson comes home! Now Jude applies history to bring out what those “certain men” are really like. Now they cannot get away with it. They are caught out!

We see this right at the beginning of verse 8 with the expression, “In the same way.” These words tell us of the surprise that despite the lessons of history these men have gone and done the same thing. But these words also show how they are being exposed for what they truly are.

Perhaps you’ve come across a situation where you couldn’t quite work out someone. You knew there was something there that didn’t quite gel. But on the outside they seem to be just like any other Christian you’ve met. In fact, in some ways they were more Christian than other Christians you knew.

That was until a particular moment – a moment when they said something, or they did something. And your mind clicked. It fitted into place. Then what you had learned in the past showed up who they really were.

That very nice and modestly dressed young woman didn’t mean a local church around the corner when she talked about being from the local church – she belongs to The Local Church, a terribly destructive cult who prey on Christians and churches.

And that clean-cut young man who said he belonged to the Church of Christ wasn’t from the denomination you commonly think of but is part of the sectarian Boston Church of Christ which has branches all over the world!

What Jude has been writing to these early New Testament believers would have meant a number of ‘aha’ moments for them. Perhaps some of them had an idea these people weren’t being completely honest with them, maybe they even realised something was seriously wrong with them, but now Jude turns on the spotlight for them!

This is why it is so important to know the Word of God. Knowing the Bible will help you to understand church history. And because you understand church history you realise exactly what’s going on in your world today!

The light that Jude shone on those false brethren would have been a great help to the Lord’s people in his time. But it is just as much a help for us today. As the preacher says in Ecclesiastes 1 verse 9, there is nothing new under the sun. What is happening now has happened before. And when we know what’s happened before we will know how to deal with it now also.

They Have Gone Their Own Way

Let’s find that out now! And so the first aspect we learn from the verses before us is this: **THEY HAVE GONE THEIR OWN WAY.**

The verses 8 and 9 describe to us the way we can see they have gone against God’s way. And it also describes to us one who did do things God’s way and so shows them up as those going their own way.

The word “dreamers” tells us that these are those so wrapped up in themselves that what makes up their fantasies is what they have no hesitation declaring. We have seen such throughout church history. And even today these people are found in Christian churches. They are those people who support their ideas, which are obviously against God’s law, by saying they have their own direct line to God. You only need to think back to the so-called ‘Toronto Blessing’. Anyone who can remember that alleged spiritual revival from the mid 1990’s won’t forget in a hurry its clear breaking of God’s Word.

And how many Christians didn't go and get that 'anointing'? They would even travel half-way around the world to get the 'touch' so they could bring it back and use it locally. Yet it was nothing less than the most crass paganism. Its origins were in eastern mysticism. And yet it began when a Pentecostal leader had a series of dreams. Dreams which outlined exactly what he wanted to happen. Dreams which had nothing to do with God's Word. Dreams which only showed how much they were polluting their own bodies. And so it was with the dreamers of Jude's time. They too claimed to have to have a direct line to the divine.

You can also see what they're truly like in the way they reject authority. Just like those promoting the 'Toronto Blessing' openly disparaged orthodox Christianity, so too those men then were doing. They were so arrogant. Full of themselves!

The apostle Peter says the same thing Jude is saying here in his second letter. There in verse 10 of chapter 2 he writes, "Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings."

There is some debate whether these are good or bad angels referred to in verse 8. Were these heretics attacking God's messengers or just having a go at everyone? For that matter could it be they were denigrating the idea of any supernatural beings at all?

Well, the word "celestial beings" comes from the root word "glories". It's a word which accurately describes those around God's throne, and definitely not Satan and his henchmen. Only God's faithful angels reflect His glory.

So in this way they are attacking the way God brought his Word. As Galatians 3:19 says, "The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator."

Thus, these men refused to accept the authority of anyone connected with the law. They were truly antinomian, truly against the law as they did everything they could to push their own revelations.

How evil they are clearly shows when they are compared with one of the Lord's. This is what verse 9 does. Jude uses the story about the dispute between Michael and Satan to show that not even this mighty archangel dared to rebuke the devil. Though Michael ranked high above Satan and from our point of view had every right to tell him off, he avoids it. He demonstrates that God is the judge. So, by saying, "The Lord rebuke you," Michael hands it over to God. In this way Jude shows that if the mightiest archangel Michael refuses to rebuke Satan, how much more shouldn't sinful man hold back from scornfully criticising!

They Show Their Own Utter Depravity

Then Jude takes up his analysis of these men a further notch. In verse 10 we see that **THEY SHOW THEIR OWN UTTER DEPRAVITY**.

There could not be a more telling comment than how verse 10 begins. After having shown how one of the Lord's refuses to judge even the devil, Jude tells us that this is the opposite to what those false teachers are doing.

Of course those men cannot understand because they haven't been changed within. But in this world not being converted doesn't hold any of them back. In fact it's the converted who are openly derided.

Don't we see that in our own time and place? It seems you can believe anything and anyone you like but as soon as you openly express Christian views they shut you up! Then you soon find how bigoted and narrow-minded they are!

You see, they think they know it all. They believe they're the enlightened ones. And regardless of what common knowledge or common-sense tells you, they're determined to pursue their utterly depraved way. Is it any surprise that a Psychiatric organization in

America is moving to decriminalise paedophilia? Already there are moves in Canada to recognise polygamy in the law courts!

I mean, it feels so right! And who's going to dare trample on someone's feelings? It's all about what people want. And believe me that's an ever-changing and increasingly depraved thing!

'Loud and proud' is their motto. Just like it was for those Jude is writing of - they who in the first century were speaking abusively against what they didn't understand.

And then Jude goes to the heart of it. Because there is no heart in them! All they are driven by are fundamental animalistic instincts. Those people completely lack any divine wisdom. They can't understand spiritual truth. And there's no way they're going to admit they've got it wrong!

This is what Paul pointed out about them in his first letter to the Corinthians, because there were more than a few of them in that licentious city. And so he wrote in verse 14 of chapter 2, "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."

As they have no spiritual side, their lives are totally driven by the physical. They have lowered themselves to the level of animals and so in their sexual pursuits are driven by instinct.

Given the predominance of evolutionary thought nowadays, isn't this just as true now? If we are continuously told we are just animals why should it be a surprise if we act just like them? In fact, with some acts humans do now the animals would be ashamed of us if they could express their feelings!

There can be only one result out of such a process, a result we have seen quite devastatingly take place at such previous times of human iniquity. From Sodom and Gomorrah, Israel in the time of Judges chapters 19 till 21, the fall of the Greek and Roman empires, and various other times, it's clear they have destroyed themselves!

The first chapter of Romans goes into more detail about what happens at such a time. Verse 24, for example, says there, "Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another."

Much as we may be genuinely and prayerfully concerned as to what is happening in society around us, be assured of this: They will destroy themselves! Unless the Lord graciously convicts their hearts of His saving Word they will perish. And it will be a terrible end.

A book which some of us may have read as a set text for English in our high school days, pictures what happens in such a situation. The book is by William Golding, and it's called 'Lord of the Flies.' There he wrote of a group of school boys who ended up on a deserted island, after their aeroplane came down. Over time, anarchy set in. It was survival of the fittest – or, more accurately, the most ruthless.

This book has an added symbolism because the title 'Lord of the Flies' is actually the literal meaning of Beelzebub, one of the names for Satan. It is a description of how hell can come to earth. And how much doesn't Jude describe exactly such a time – a time almost like the one we live in now!

Paul, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, describes them down to a tee further on in Romans 1. As he writes in the verses 29 till 32, "They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them."

They Definitely Have Not Learned

This brings matters to a head. This brings them into God's clear judgment focus. And so it is that we come to the third aspect for the text this morning. Now we note, **THEY DEFINITELY HAVE NOT LEARNED.**

This is what verse 11 outlines for us. Using his beloved three-fold pattern, Jude turn again to the Old Testament to bring out what's happening here.

The opening phrase, "Woe to them!" makes obvious the way this is going. Using a phrase used repeatedly by the Old Testament prophets, and by his half-brother, the Lord Jesus, this is a condemnation. This is the strongest possible language spoken against those heretics!

Then Jude begins with the example of Cain. Not a good example – so he is the ideal prototype of the false teachers Jude was condemning!

Cain in particular is known as the first murderer. Cain did not care one single iota for his brother, Abel. Rather he was jealous of him because he was good while he was bad. And so he proved this with murder.

But Cain was also the first wilful unbeliever. Hebrews 11:4 represents him as the very opposite of the man of faith. So he stands for the cynical, materialistic character who defies God and despises man. He has no faith and certainly no love. So how much doesn't he picture those men Jude's contending with?

Then there is Balaam. Now Balaam we know about because of how God changed his prophetic curses into blessings upon Israel. Who can forget how it was his own donkey who told him off?

But let's not think just of that. Balaam still got paid for what he did. And he did a lot more because he advised the Midianites to entice the Israelites into sexual immorality and idol worship.

You can read all about it in Numbers 22 till 25. It seems he told the Israelites, whom he had been unable to curse three times, that they were so special with God that nothing could affect their standing with Him. This led into the error of immorality and denying the Lord's sovereignty through bowing to other gods.

Like Balaam, the false teachers were greedy for money. They were looking after their own interests. But, like Balaam, they would be destroyed by the Lord's avenging forces. Numbers 31:8 records how Balaam was killed, along with the five kings of Midian, when the Israelites executed the Lord's vengeance upon them.

And making up the trio is Korah. He's as equally well-known to Jude's hearers and readers. From Numbers 16 we know of the rebellion he tried to lead against the divinely appointed leaders of Israel. The leaders who were none other than Moses and Aaron!

Like Korah, and those with him, those false teachers had defied the duly constituted leadership of the Church. They refused to accept the authority of such men as Jude and the other apostles. They set themselves up in active opposition to them.

Sadly this was a rebellion not unknown in the early Church. There was that group calling themselves the super-apostles who opposed Paul in Corinth. There was the revolt of Diotrephes that John exposes in his third letter. And others are mentioned in other New Testament letters also (Titus 1:10f, 3:10f, 1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 3:1ff).

From these three examples we get an insight into the character of those threatening the early Church Jude writes to. They lacked love, were greedy for money, and were insubordinate to the Lord's leaders over the Church.

This was exactly the character that so predominated in second-century Gnosticism. And isn't evident in so much of what passes for Christianity today? **THEY DEFINITELY HAVE NOT LEARNED.**

In fact, it's quite the opposite – they are the ones who are so full of what they say and what they do that there's no way they can learn. That's why Jude condemns them the way he does. While those men cannot be redeemed let the true believer be very aware of what they're like – and also be very wary of what they do.

We must show the love those people didn't show. We also must live selflessly, which is definitely what they didn't do. And we have to respect those God has placed over us, which they certainly did not do.

That's why we must put on Jesus Christ. We must look to Him. And let's keep looking up to Him!