

Jude 3

- Jude wants to stir up his readers
 - The fight was on
 - Men had arrived, false teachers
 - Men teaching heresy, promoting licentiousness
 - But the church hadn't heeded earlier warnings to watch for these coming wolves
 - And now they were prowling within the congregation, wearing sheep's attire
 - So they were even harder to spot
 - Consequently Jude felt compelled to write to awaken the sleeping believers, calling them to arms
- Last week we studied vs.4-8 as Jude presented his third and fourth triads
 - In the third triad Jude described the enemy
 - They were men called out for condemnation in earlier days
 - Unbelievers who twist grace into an excuse to sin
 - Men who deny Jesus as Lord
 - In his fourth triad, Jude gave three examples from Israel's history to remind the church how God responds to such men
 - The rebels in Israel were destroyed over their lusts, despite having been joined to the chosen people for a time
 - And angels who witnessed God's majesty still rebelled against Heaven to pursue forbidden things in the days of Noah
 - And they experienced judgment in the end
 - And the sexual perversions of Sodom and Gomorrah warranted fire from the sky to remind us of the coming judgment for such sin

- History taught the church God knows these men; He sees their hearts and He will judge him
 - And the Lord will do the same for all false teachers and any who come to destroy the work of God among His people
 - But Jude's history lesson was also a reminder to the church itself
 - An incentive for them to steer clear from these men and their influence
 - Once the false teachers have been identified, it's our responsibility to remove them from the church
 - But at the very least, we are obliged to shield ourselves from their negative influence
 - Paul told Timothy in 1 Tim 6:11 to flee from the practices and influence of ungodly men seeking earthly gain rather than righteousness
 - This is the Bible's command to the church
 - It's fight or flight
 - Jude is asking this church to fight these men and their ungodly influence
 - And to flee their immorality and ignore their example, knowing the judgment that awaits
 - There is nothing more disheartening - especially for a teacher - to expose a false teacher to his audience, only to find the audience shrugging off the news and returning for more of the same
 - Perhaps it's pride and an unwillingness to admit they've been seduced by the wrong leader
 - Perhaps it's inertia; they can't get up the energy to change their circumstances and seek a new teacher
 - Usually it's an ignorance for why the problem is so serious
 - They underestimate the impact on their walk
 - I've known some to dismiss concerns over their choice to remain under bad teaching claiming all is well

- Even as their marriage crumbles, the kids rebel, and their spiritual walk comes to a dead stop
- And they never consider that one may be connected to the other
- There is a reason we're told to seek for the pure milk of the word
 - It's the source for life and godliness God has provided so we will mature
 - Sitting under great teaching doesn't guarantee our marriages won't have difficulty
 - Or that our kids will turn out perfect
 - Or that we won't suffer even as Job did
 - But it does assure us we will have the maturity and understanding to face it in a godly way, as Job did
- But when we go after false substitutes, when we ignore our spiritual development
 - We will see consequences in our life eventually
 - So we shouldn't play with fire...we flee
- Revisiting v.8, Jude transitions from his history lesson to describing the deeds of these men

Jude 8 Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties.

- What were these men doing? Jude uses his fifth triad to give us a character sketch of who they were - and who they always are to a degree
 - First, we hear how they came to their false views: by dreaming
 - Dreaming refers to prophetic dreams
 - These men used the time honored practice of claiming wisdom from a heavenly source through a special revelation
 - Notice Jude says these teachers came in the same way
 - Also by dreaming

- The starting point for these false teachers is always a special revelation which they claim as their authority
- This is such a classic and insidious trick of Satan, it's worth a few minutes to consider
 - The enemy's favorite trick according to scripture, is to dress up his lies as revelation from Heaven
 - The Bible says in 2 Cor 11:14 that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light
- It's no coincidence that many false religions begin with a similar story
 - A man who was visited by an angel of light
 - The angel then delivered new information, new revelation
 - This new information supersedes anything provided before
- The story of many false religions start this way
 - The beginning of the Mormon religion involves an angel of light delivering new revelation to supersede orthodox Christianity
 - The story of the beginning of the Islamic religion involves an angel of light delivering new revelation to supersede all other Biblical revelation
 - There are plenty of others
- We can know these new revelations are always wrong because Scripture itself tells us so
 - Jude earlier told us that the faith was once delivered and has been handed down
 - It was all delivered by Christ and the Apostles
 - It was handed down...nothing has been lost
 - Then Hebrews tells us

[Heb. 1:1](#) God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,
[Heb. 1:2](#) in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

- God has saved the best revelation for last, that is the revelation provided through His Son
- We already have the best God has for us, revealed in the life and words of Jesus Christ
 - No lesser angel is going to come along after Jesus' appearing and gives us something better than He gave us
- Finally, the word of God ends with this warning:

[Rev. 22:18](#) I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; [Rev. 22:19](#) and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

- Jesus' words are not only about the book of Revelation
- God is the author of all scripture
 - He knew Revelation would be the last book of the canon
 - And so He knew these words would appear at the very end of the canon
- And therefore, He wasn't merely speaking about Revelation, He was summing up all scripture
 - He was saying in effect that if anyone tries to add to scripture they are showing themselves accursed and a disciple of the devil
 - So we are to turn our backs on anyone who tries to tell us of their special revelations
- Because of their dreaming, these false teachers were inspired to commit three kinds of sin
 - First, they defiled the flesh
 - This is a reference to their licentiousness and sexual immorality
 - Just like the angels of Noah's day and the men in Sodom, these men used their teaching as a cover for their lusts
 - Immorality is always the calling card of the ungodly

- Paul makes the connection between those who hold to false teaching and a lifestyle of depravity in one form or another

1Tim. 6:3 If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, **1Tim. 6:4** he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, **1Tim. 6:5** and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

- Notice the list of things Paul says go hand-in-hand with advocating teaching that conflicts with Christ's instructions
 - They create disputes, they provoke envy and strife
 - They use abusive language and encourage evil suspicions
 - And there is constant friction among themselves
- We don't need to look too hard today to find false teachers who fit these descriptions
 - Watch religious TV or attend some of the more prominent mega churches and you'll see showmen and women performing in front of tens of thousands
 - They preach false messages on prosperity, provoking envy among the faithful
 - Or they preach messages of inclusion or acceptance on controversial social questions, instead of preaching the Gospel
 - Or they work to pander to the unbelieving world, even resorting to foul language from the pulpit
 - These men are constantly competing with one another for a chance to fleece the biggest audiences, seeing godliness as a means to personal gain
- Secondly, these men reject legitimate church authority
 - In Jude's day, the false teachers arrived with heretical, unorthodox teachings

- Naturally, they immediately found themselves at odds with legitimate church leaders trying to protect their flocks
- But they rejected that authority
- This is what Paul meant when he said such men create disputes over various questions or words
- They create a smoke screen by twisting scripture and contending with church leaders over proper interpretation
- If the church respected and listened to its elders, it can be protected from the influence of such men
 - But too often the pastors and others leaders are the youngest and most impressionable within the church
 - They are spiritually immature, or at least inexperienced and ill equipped to recognize and contend with false teachers
 - We need to follow mature and knowledgeable leaders who stand by God's word and lead the church away from such nonsense
 - And then we need congregations trained to follow their godly leaders when they issue warnings about the latest unbiblical fads, no matter how popular
- Finally, these leaders revile angelic majesties
 - When we looked at this verse briefly last week, we noted that the word translated angelic majesties is the Greek word *doxa*
 - The word means glories, and in Heavenly glories
 - And the word revile means to slander, to profane sacred things, to blaspheme
 - These men think nothing of slandering God, His word, His Son and the Spirit
 - They are shameless and show no fear of God
 - I'm sure if we've watched even a few minutes of the worst false teachers of our day, you've probably witnessed them saying something that caused you to gasp
 - You may have wondered how they could be so impetuous, so fearless of God

- Let me give you an example of everything Jude describes, evident in a false teacher today
- I won't name the teacher, because his name doesn't matter
 - False teachers come and go, names change, but it's the pattern we need to learn well
- This false teacher is a prosperity preacher featured frequently on national TV, flies the world in his private jet and has a huge following
 - First, here's his story of how an angel gave him his ministry

"Suddenly I felt a suction as if I was being pulled up out of the room. . .I heard a sound, Whoosh! And I was pulled up out of the room. . .I didn't know I had left the room and I was zooming along at a phenomenal rate of speed. . .in something like a cable car. . .Then I looked up. There stood another being. I realized that it was the blond-headed angel who had visited me. . . I had an appointment with the Lord God Jehovah. "Then I saw other people who didn't have on robes; they were wearing gowns. They started walking toward the city, but they seemed to get weak. I saw them walk over to the trees, pick what looked like fruit and eat it. Then they took some leaves off those trees, put the leaves up to their faces and breathed in, smelling them. I asked the angel, "What's happening?" He said, "Some of them have not lived the life they should. They believe in God and love Jesus, but they didn't live to their fullest potential. . . Yes God is merciful to them," he said. "But they have to be prepared to stand in the presence of the Almighty. Some people don't live close to God the way they should. They know Jesus as their Savior, but they could do so much better. In heaven they will eventually be able to go to God's Throne, but it takes more time for them."

- And here are three quotes the man made during preaching

The very first thing on Jesus' agenda was to get rid of poverty! Would you like to know why some people, including ministries, never get out of poverty? Its not because they aren't smart. Its not because they don't have windows of opportunity. Its because they're not anointed. If you're not anointed, poverty will follow you all the days of your life. His first objective was to get rid of poverty.

Naturally, the devil tried to shut down this living, breathing Church. He wanted dry bones. He began to take the freshness of God and put Ecclesiastical dogma on it. He used theological understanding(doctrine/the study of God's word) to water down the fire

Not long ago I was in prayer in my own study, and I know the Lord just like you know the Lord. And man I went in there and started off my day with the lord and said 'Lord Lord how you doing today. It's going to be a great day. And I noticed the lord wasn't acting right, ... cause I know God, you know when your child is not felling good, right. You know when something, you may not know what it is but he wasn't acting right for lack of a better term. I know God I know him and I know the fulness of his presence , and I know him. And I said something' wrong...I said Lord you had a bad day? And he said "Yea my children have been disobeying me." I said somebody hurt you today, I said lord I don't ever want to hurt you anymore so lord I'm going to cancel all my appointments and all this stuff that we call ministry and I'm gonna sit here and I don't know how to say this God for a lack of better term, till you fell better. Cause so many people hurt him that day... Lord I said I'm just going to bless you I'm gonna praise you I'm gonna just call your name. And it dawned on me and the Lord went "Thank you."

- You can see all that Jude taught is exhibited in this man
 - His authority comes from dreaming and angels of light
 - He is lustful and uses God's grace to cover his sin of greed
 - He rejects church doctrine and teaching when they criticize his teaching
 - And he clearly reviles glories of Heaven, mocking God and Jesus
- Peter warned the church of such men
 - And now Jude backs that up with a clear description of their methods
 - So now we can't say we didn't know
- On that final point of reviling God's glory, Jude has more to say

Jude 9 But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

- Jude uses an example taken from an apocryphal book called *The Assumption of Moses*
 - This book is not scripture
 - Therefore, the content of the book rests entirely on the wisdom and integrity of the man who wrote it

- But that doesn't mean that everything in the book is automatically false
- When we say something is scripture, we mean the author was writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit
 - As a result, every word is perfectly placed, entirely accurate and without a single error
 - It is true in fact, accurate in perspective, timeless in application and not subject to a man's interpretation
 - It is also intended by God to serve a certain purpose in His plan of redemption
 - It supports His plan to bring glory to Christ
 - And it serves to lead men to Him
- So the difference between scripture and any other writing is its degree of accuracy and the purpose in its existence
 - But other kinds of writing can hold truth and have merit too
 - For example, I can pick up a book written on the history of the Vietnam War and find some truth
 - The book is not inspired scripture, and so it may be filled with false information, misconceptions, and biased perspectives
 - But it's also likely to hold some true information
 - Facts about the war and the events of those days
 - Names and places that are accurate
 - So it falls short of scripture because it's not written by the Spirit, it lacks perfect accuracy, and it exists to serve a different purpose
 - Nevertheless it still has some value
- In this case, Jude found a fact in *The Assumption of Moses* that had value
 - Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Jude includes this detail in his letter, thereby making it a part of scripture
 - So we can say that the Lord has endorsed this one fact

- But that doesn't mean the entire work from which it was taken is accurate
- Knowing this, let's consider this strange account
 - Jude reports that the archangel Michael disputed with Satan concerning the body of Moses
 - Jude doesn't give us the back story on this moment, because he knew his Jewish readers knew what he was talking about
 - The Jewish apocryphal literature was widely read in Jewish society
 - And everyone knew this account like we know the story that George Washington chopped down a cherry tree
 - Is it true...maybe so, maybe not, but everyone knows the story
 - This story is one of those fables in Jewish literature
 - Only in this case, it's a true story
 - But we have to look elsewhere to understand what Jude's readers already knew
 - Interestingly, there is only one surviving copy of *The Assumption of Moses*
 - And that copy is missing over a third of the original content
 - And the part that does survive doesn't include the reference to this moment
 - So you might wonder how do we know it was ever in the book?
 - Because other ancient writers and historians remark that this event was recorded in *The Assumption of Moses*
 - And so we can consult these other ancient records to learn what *The Assumption of Moses* originally said
- What we learn is a story that makes the false teachers' gall at mocking God's glory all the more shocking
 - Moses died in the desert on the East side of the Jordan river
 - We can read about it at the end of Deuteronomy

[Deut. 34:1](#) Now Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan,

[Deut. 34:2](#) and all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah as far as the western sea,

[Deut. 34:3](#) and the Negev and the plain in the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar.

[Deut. 34:4](#) Then the LORD said to him, "This is the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants'; I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there."

[Deut. 34:5](#) So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.

[Deut. 34:6](#) And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor; but no man knows his burial place to this day.

- Moses died before the nation entered into the Promised Land
 - He was barred from entering because he disobeyed the Lord's instructions
 - He struck the rock of water more than once, which displeased the Lord
 - We studied why this was so offensive in our study of Exodus
- When Moses died in the wilderness, no man was given the privilege of knowing where he was buried
 - The Lord Himself buries Moses' body, we're told
 - The purpose in the odd arrangement was in keeping with what we learned in our Exodus study
 - Moses represents the Law
 - And the Promised Land represents Heaven and eternal life
 - God wanted to make clear that we do not enter the Promised Land by means of the Law
 - Instead, God asked Joshua to lead the people into the Land
 - Joshua is the same name as Jesus
 - We enter by following Jesus, not by following the Law

- Furthermore, God buried the body Himself so that no man could dig it up later or make it into an idol
 - Once Joshua was appointed to lead the nation, no one was to follow Moses again
 - Likewise, once Jesus comes and fulfills the Law, no man is to resurrect Moses, so to speak
 - We don't try to bring back the Law
- Now we learn that when Deuteronomy says God buried Moses, it means that the actual process of burial was carried out by angels, specifically by the archangel Michael
 - Michael was appointed by God to bury Moses body
 - Other ancient Jewish texts refer to Michael as the burier of the dead
 - Probably because he performed this task for the Lord
 - But as Michael was burying Moses, the enemy demanded the body of Moses from Michael
 - *The Assumption of Moses* says that Satan argued that Moses belonged to him because Moses was a murderer
 - Moses killed the Egyptian taskmaster
 - So for that reason, Moses was Satan's follower
 - Satan was lying as usual
 - Moses wasn't a murderer
 - He killed the taskmaster to protect the life of another, which is a form of self-defense
 - Furthermore, Moses was saved by faith according to Hebrews 11, so his sin was forgiven
 - So why did Satan want the body?
 - We can imagine a simple reason
 - The enemy knew that Moses was a powerful symbol to the Jewish people

- If Satan had been able to use Moses body, perhaps to resurrect it by indwelling it, he could have perpetrated a great fraud
 - He could have shown Moses resurrected by the enemy's power, and drawn Israel away from God to worship Moses and Satan
 - And in that way, Satan corrupts the people destined to bring the Messiah
- Clearly, the Lord wasn't going to allow this to happen, and Michael knew he couldn't give the body to Satan, but Michael fought Satan with a degree of respect
 - Jude says Michael didn't dare to rail against Satan
 - Remember that railing means to slander or blaspheme or speak in an abusive way to someone
 - Even though Satan is the great enemy and a fallen creature, nevertheless Michael treated him with respect...why?
 - Michael is the archangel, but Satan was a cherub, according to Ezekiel 28
 - Cherubs are the highest form of angelic being
 - Angels are a lessor form
 - Michael is the chief angel
 - But he's still a lower creature than a cherub
 - So despite Satan's fallen place, Michael defers to Satan's position of honor without daring to revile his position
 - So how did Michael contend with Satan and prevent Moses' body from falling into the wrong hands?
 - Jude says Michael appealed to the Lord
 - In the story, Michael turns to the Lord for his support in the battle, and the Lord turns Satan away
 - In that sense, Michael tells Satan that the Lord rebuked him
 - But Michael didn't make the rebuke himself
- Contrast that with these false teachers

- They are mere men, not archangels
 - They revile the majesties of Heaven, even the Father and Son, not Satan
 - If Michael knew enough not to challenge an angelic majesty, what does it say about the ignorance of these men?
- Michael must have had real fear for the consequences of such an action
 - He must have had good reason to think twice before challenging Satan
 - He knew something about God's wrath and justice and judgment that these men lack
- We'll look at Jude's application next time, but for now think about how this lesson changes your perspective of those who teach us to rebuke the devil
 - False teachers dramatically teach us to rebuke the devil
 - Cast him out, and he will leave
 - They will even quote James 4:7 were we're told to resist the devil and he will flee
 - But the key is how we resist
 - We don't resist by reviling angelic majesties
 - We don't resist in our own power
 - We appeal to the Lord and ask Him to protect us, and the Lord will rebuke Satan according to His desires
 - We know Satan has real power, but we know the Lord has greater power
 - So we turn to Him, while giving proper respect to the angelic majesties