

## Jude 4

- In our last lesson, Jude was exposing the false teachers in the church as dreamers, revilers, and depraved sinners
  - He gave us the pattern for their behavior
    - They receive their insight from demonic revelations
    - They engage in immoral, depraved sexual practices and use their false teaching as a cover for their licentiousness
    - They reject church authorities, proclaiming themselves to be an authority unaccountable to anyone
    - And they blaspheme the majesty of God and His revealed plan
  - These men pose a great danger to the church, leading many astray and creating stumbling blocks for others
    - But what motivates these false teachers?
    - Jude has already told us that these men seek to cover their sin with false teaching concerning God's grace
    - But surely they could sin without entering the church, yet they've sought to affiliate with Christians
    - So they must have some other motive, some other benefit for reaching into the church to find their audience
- Now Jude begins to explain what drives these men in their evil pursuits

**Jude 10 But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed.**

- Ironically, while these false "teachers" claim to possess a new, better spiritual knowledge, they speak concerning matters they can't understand
  - They claim to have spiritual understanding, spiritual wisdom, spiritual knowledge
    - And they come offering that spiritual knowledge to the church
    - Thereby claiming to be teachers of the Word
  - But Jude labels them as ignorant of the very things they claim to know

- They are spiritually ignorant of the truth
- This is further evidence that we are talking about unbelievers who have joined themselves to the church culture thinking they understand the faith
  - But they have come short of the grace of God, as Hebrews says
  - They are no nothing more than what they have assumed in the flesh
  - To quote Peter in Acts 8 speaking to Simon the magician

[Acts 8:20](#) But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!

[Acts 8:21](#) "You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.

- But they do come with knowledge of a sort...things known only by human instinct
  - The Greek word for instinct means natural knowledge
    - Jude's point is that these men are limited to knowledge they come by naturally, or in their natural state
    - As opposed to a knowledge given to them supernaturally by the Spirit of God
  - Remember that the Bible uses the term "natural" to describe a sinful, fallen person prior to receiving faith and receiving the Spirit
    - Natural men cannot relate to the Lord or to spiritual truth
    - Natural men have selfish, evil intentions and motives

[1Cor. 2:12](#) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,

[1Cor. 2:13](#) which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

[1Cor. 2:14](#) But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

- And there is nothing more dangerous than a natural man pretending to have spiritual insight and preying on unsuspecting immature believers

- The danger is two-fold
  - First, the men deliver the opposite of what they claim to bring
    - They claim to bring truth concerning God and His desires
    - But because they have no insight to offer, they can only supply human wisdom and human understanding
  - It's natural, and Jude says it's like the instinct of an animal
    - It's knowledge that doesn't come from study or disciplined submission to the authority of God
    - On the contrary, it comes from instinct, gut understanding present at birth
    - And so the faithful hungry for spiritual truth are sucked in to receiving knowledge that can only feed the flesh
- And that's the second reason these men are so dangerous to the church
  - Their teaching appeals to the flesh
  - They speak with the only spirit they know: the spirit of the world
  - And those words seduce the flesh of those who listen
  - They promise spiritual enlightenment but stir up fleshly lust
- Jude says these men will also be destroyed by these things
  - Those who live in the flesh and seek to please the flesh will die by the flesh

[Rom. 8:5](#) For those who are according to the **flesh** set their minds on the things of the **flesh**, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

[Rom. 8:6](#) For the mind set on the **flesh** is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

[Rom. 8:7](#) because the mind set on the **flesh** is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so,

[Rom. 8:8](#) and those who are in the **flesh** cannot please God.

- Then in v.11, Jude pronounces woe upon these men

[Jude 11](#) Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

- To pronounce woe against someone means to declare coming judgment
  - The Lord pronounced woe against the Pharisees, scribes and lawyers for leading the people astray
  - And in Tribulation, the angel pronounces woe to the world because of the coming judgments
  - And now Jude pronounces woe upon these false teachers
    - And by extension, all false teachers
    - False teachers follow the lusts of their flesh into the grave, and into hell
- Which brings us to their motivation, and Jude's sixth triad
  - First, they have gone the way of Cain
    - Obviously, we need to revisit a little of Cain's story to understand how these men repeat the mistakes of that man
    - We know Cain is Adam's first son
    - He was a man who gets in trouble with the Lord and is sent away from the family
  - What was Cain's mistake?
    - In short Cain believed that his relationship with God was little more than a business transaction
    - Cain would hand over something of value to the Lord
    - And the Lord would respond with blessing and approval
- In Genesis 4 we read this:

**Gen. 4:4** Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering;

**Gen. 4:5** but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.

**Gen. 4:6** Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?"

[Gen. 4:7](#) "If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

- When Cain and Abel go to sacrifice to the Lord, both bring tithes from their respective labors: Cain from the harvest and Abel from the flocks
  - But Abel understood by faith that more than tithes were required
    - Abel knew that sacrifice was required to cover sin
    - So Abel brought both tithes and a sacrifice
    - While Cain only brought the tithe
  - So the Lord showed favor to Abel for his sacrifice and tithe, while the Lord didn't regard Cain's tithes
    - This upset Cain who was expecting their business transaction to be honored
    - The Lord was obligated to repay Cain for his gift, or so Cain thought
  - But the Lord explains to Cain that he has no reason to be angry, since he had the same opportunity to sacrifice and be accepted
    - The lamb of the sin offering is lying at the door
    - Cain need only offer the sacrifice and the Lord would be Cain's master as well
    - But Cain never submits to the Lord's authority
    - (Learn more in the Genesis study)
- How have these false teachers gone the way of Cain?
  - Like Cain, they don't understand that a true relationship with God comes only on the basis of a sacrifice for sin
    - Specifically, the sacrifice of Christ on the cross
    - And without that sacrifice, no relationship, no blessing is possible
  - Instead, these false teachers say that a relationship with God is entirely a business transaction

- Money changes hands
- God's blessing can be bought
- They believe this and teach others
- We give God something He wants, and then we get something we want
- This is the error of Cain and it reflects their lack of spiritual understanding
  - A natural man only understands what profits the flesh
  - The unbelieving world operates on the principles of self-centeredness and pay for play
  - The natural man cannot understand a God of grace
  - And a natural man sees true faith as foolishness
  - So these teachers tell themselves and their students that God requires payment for His love
- And conveniently, these false teachers are ready to collect your money on God's behalf
  - Now we see their true motive
    - Jude says because they want to be paid, these men rush headlong into the error of Balaam
    - The Greek word for rushed headlong is literally the word "poured" like a river rushing downhill
    - Once again, it's instinctive, natural and unthinking
    - Their motivation for false teaching is to gain money
  - Jude says this is repeating the error of Balaam
    - Balaam was a prophet of God
    - Like all prophets, he was supposed to serve God's people
    - But instead, Balaam peddled himself a foreign King, one who was determined to destroy Israel

- In the end, the Lord prevented the prophet from speaking against His people
- Peter tells us more about the error of Balaam

[2Pet. 2:14](#) having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children;  
[2Pet. 2:15](#) forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;  
[2Pet. 2:16](#) but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, for a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet.

- Peter says false teachers have eyes full of adultery
  - They never cease from sin
  - They entice unstable souls
  - And they have hearts trained in greed
- Then Peter says that false teachers follow the example of Balaam in loving the wages of unrighteousness
  - Balaam's true love wasn't the Lord or God's people
  - Balaam's true love was the money he could make from serving as a prophet
  - He turned religious service into a money-making enterprise
- So going the way of Balaam means having greedy hearts and corrupting religious service into an opportunity to fleece God's people
  - So when we take Cain's error and Balaam's error, we arrive at a powerful and destructive combination
    - Men teaching that God demands payment before He will respond in blessing, was followed by a demand for payment
    - The teacher becomes God's debt collector
    - And their greedy hearts drive them to devise increasingly clever ways to fleece the sheep
  - But the damage doesn't stop there because Balaam's error goes a step further

- As Peter reminds us, the prophet Balaam wasn't permitted to speak against Israel
- But he still desired to collect his fee, so he offered the evil king Balak an alternative to destroy Israel

**Rev. 2:14** 'But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality.

- Balaam taught the king ways to entice the men of Israel into idolatry and sexual sin, which eventually weakened the nation and gave Balak the victory he desired
  - Likewise, the false teachers today trip up God's people by enticing them into idolatry and lust for earthly wealth
  - They emphasize their own wealth and prosperity as a marketing ploy
  - And as PT Barnum famously said, there's a sucker born every minute
- Finally, in the last part of the sixth triad, Jude explains these men have unbridled ambition
  - He compares them to the rebellion of Korah, and they share his fate
    - Korah's story is told in Numbers 16:

**Num. 16:1** Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took action,  
**Num. 16:2** and they rose up before Moses, together with some of the sons of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, chosen in the assembly, men of renown.  
**Num. 16:3** They assembled together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You have gone far enough, for all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is in their midst; so why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?"  
**Num. 16:4** When Moses heard this, he fell on his face;

- Korah led a rebellion against Moses and Aaron in the desert
- They questioned whether these men represented God
- And they demanded to rule themselves

- Obviously, Moses wasn't pleased and he warned the people not to be associated with this rebellion
  - In fact, Moses instructed the people that they must separate themselves from these teachers entirely
  - They couldn't even be near their tents or touch their possessions
  - Otherwise, they would be caught up in the same judgment
- Then the Lord appeared and the time for judgment came

**Num. 16:28** Moses said, "By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these deeds; for this is not my doing.

**Num. 16:29** "If these men die the death of all men or if they suffer the fate of all men, then the LORD has not sent me.

**Num. 16:30** "But if the LORD brings about an entirely new thing and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that is theirs, and they descend alive into Sheol, then you will understand that these men have spurned the LORD."

**Num. 16:31** As he finished speaking all these words, the ground that was under them split open;

**Num. 16:32** and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah with their possessions.

**Num. 16:33** So they and all that belonged to them went down alive to Sheol; and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly.

- The error of Korah was to rebel against the Lord and His appointed representatives and get away with it
  - But God will not be mocked
  - Sooner or later the rebel in the camp is judged
  - And we need to steer clear of them if we want to avoid becoming collateral damage
- So in Jude's three examples, we see the three motives of these teachers
  - They share Cain's motive
    - Thinking with the flesh, they want to gain God's favor through a business transaction
    - They pay God, He returns the favor they think
  - They follow Balaam's lead

- They see religious services as a means for personal financial gain
- So they see no problem with profiting at the expense of God's people
- Finally, they share the rebellion of Korah
  - They dispute any authority in the church
  - And they expect they can operate without fear or consequences
  - But they will share in Korah's fate as well
- Jude wants us to have an even better understanding of these men and how they operate
  - So he gives us six illustrations of false teachers using examples from nature
  - Here we find the seventh and eighth triads

**Jude 12** These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted;

**Jude 13** wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.

- The first four illustrations are found in v.12 and the last two are in v.13
  - Each illustration conveys an essential thought
    - So altogether we're looking at six additional points about false teachers
    - Because the more we learn about them, the less likely we are to be enticed by their smooth words
  - First, Jude says these men are like hidden reefs in the church's love feasts
    - In the early church, congregations had adopted a practice of honoring the requirement for communion in the form of a full meal
    - The entire congregation would enjoy a large meal or feast as the communion observance

- Since everyone attended these events, then the false teachers were there also
- But Jude says the presence of false teachers in the gathering are like rocky reefs that cause shipwreck
  - Reefs lying just below the water are impossible to see
  - So if a ship's captain wasn't aware of the existence, he might run his vessel up onto the reef unexpectedly
  - The shipwreck leaves the ship damaged and stalled on it's journey
- This is Jude's point of course
  - The presence of false teachers in the church is a dangerous peril for Christians in the body
  - Like ships on a journey, a Christian may come across one of these false teachers and become a man or woman of shipwrecked faith
  - We're damaged by their influence and our journey of sanctification and spiritual maturity stalls out
- Secondly, Jude says they care only for themselves
  - My English translation really ruins this comparison by the way it translated the Greek
    - Jude literally wrote shepherding only themselves, in Greek
    - The picture from nature is of a shepherd with a flock in the field
    - But the shepherd only cares for his own needs rather than ensuring the flocks are fed
  - Feeding sheep in a common metaphor in the New Testament for teaching God's people the spiritually nourishing word of God
    - This is the proper and expected role of every pastor
    - False teachers have a different agenda
      - They only care to feed themselves
      - Yet they portray themselves as pastors or shepherds of God's people

- Don't be fooled, Jude says; they only care about themselves
- Thirdly, they are clouds without water carried by the wind
  - A cloud brings a promise of something good, specifically of rain
    - Rain is another common metaphor in scripture
    - It's used as a picture of God's blessing, raining down upon us from heaven
    - And of course we know that rain comes from clouds that gather
  - These men, Jude says, are like those clouds
    - They blow in promising great blessings from God
    - But they have no blessing to offer
    - So instead, they only manage to cover up the sun and increase darkness
    - Instead of giving a blessing, they obscure the blessing of God's truth
- Fourth, Jude's next triad begins with a description of autumn trees without fruit - twice dead
  - Fruit trees, like most trees, lose their leaves in the winter
    - They look essentially dead during the winter
    - Then spring arrives and the arrival of leaves brings a promise of fruit in the autumn
    - Fruit is also a biblical metaphor, meaning healthy spiritual outcomes
  - But these false teachers are like autumn trees with no fruit
    - They never bring a crop, they never produce good fruit
    - They give no spiritual benefit
  - Furthermore, they are doubly or twice dead in the sense that they don't just look dead like a winter tree - they truly are dead
    - Spiritually speaking, they are unbelievers

- Therefore, they are spiritually dead
- It's no wonder they produce no fruit
- Jude says they will be plucked out by the roots, as farmers destroy trees that won't produce fruit
- Fifth, they're raging waves, foaming up their own shame
  - The ceaseless roaring of the waves beating against the shore evokes a sense of restlessness, futility, a lack of peace
    - Standing on a beach or boardwalk, we can watch the waves rolling in one after another
    - The movement and the sound never rests
    - It's energy and chaos in the breaking foam...never peaceful
  - That's the comparison Jude is making to false teachers
    - They are forever stirring up discontent within the congregation
    - They tell us we are missing something God has for us
    - And untrained minds begin to consider their words while forgetting scripture
  - The Bible teaches believers that we have everything we need in the reality of what we receive in Jesus Christ

[2Pet. 1:2](#) Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

[2Pet. 1:3](#) seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

- When we let our minds wander away from the word of God, we can fall for men who teach us we need something else
- They rob us of our peace and contentment in Christ
- But their false teaching will be a testimony of shame for them
- Finally, Jude ends the eighth triad with a comparison to wandering stars, for whom a darkness has been reserved

- The Bible often uses stars as a symbol for angels, and that's the intention here as well
  - Wandering stars speaks to the fall of a third of the angelic realm, in following after the sin of Satan
  - They wandered away from God and into judgment
- The Bible also says that the endless darkness of the Lake of Fire was created for Satan and the demons that followed him

**Matt. 25:41** "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

- The Lake of Fire will serve double duty in also serving as the place of judgment for all unbelieving men from all history
  - Hebrews says the Lord doesn't offer help to fallen angels, but praise the Lord He did make a way available for men to receive mercy
- These false teachers are like the fallen angels, wandering away from the opportunity for glory
    - Instead they are on a one-way trip to the Lake of Fire
    - As unbelievers, and men who teach others to sin, they are stumbling blocks who face a terrible fate in the future
    - Peter says this concerning false teachers:

**2Pet. 2:21** For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.

- False teachers who set themselves up inside the church have come to know the way, that is the Gospel message
  - They haven't believed in it so as to be saved
  - They know it in the sense that they have been exposed to it
    - Notice Peter says they have known the way of righteousness
    - But they don't know righteousness itself

- Since they are men working around and inside the church, they have heard the Gospel but they haven't believed
- They know how to get to Heaven but they aren't willing to make the trip
- And Peter says that in turning away from the commandment to believe, they will suffer a worse punishment in the end
- So let's sum up what we learned in this section of Jude's letter:
  - False teachers are unbelievers
    - We're not saying that a person who teaches something incorrectly, falsely, has instantly become a false teacher in the manner Jude describes
    - We can say there are False Teachers and teachers who teach falsely
      - False Teachers are a very specific class of evil men
      - These are the ones we've been studying throughout Jude's letter
  - But any believer can make an error in their teaching from time to time
    - In fact, every believer WILL teach errors eventually, inadvertently
    - No teacher, save Christ Himself, is perfect in his or her understanding of scripture
      - Paul says we all share that limitation

**1Cor. 13:12** For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

- Every Christian can teach incorrectly, but this isn't Jude's concern
  - His concern is that we know these certain unbelievers and understand the dangers and the response that's required
  - Jude recognizes their evil fruit
  - Don't become victim to their greedy desires
  - Don't trust their empty promises of blessing

- Don't let them rob you of your contentment
- And don't stand too close, because at any minute they might be swallowed up in judgment
- Next time we finish the letter, including another exploration of apocryphal literature in the Book of Enoch