

The Judgment of False Teachers – Part 1

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – Jude applies the apocalyptic judgments of the past to the false teachers of the present
2. aim – to cause us to seek the purity of the gospel of grace and warn those who attempt to pervert it
3. passage – Jude 5-16

b. outline

1. The Judgments Upon Rebels (Jude 5-7)
2. The Judgments Upon Blasphemers (Jude 8-13)
3. The Judgments Upon Malcontents (Jude 14-16)

c. opening

1. the **season** and this text
 - a. **most years:** I break from the normal *systematic* preaching of a biblical book to preach a sermon (or series) related to Advent or Christmas (**i.e.** series from various aspects of the *incarnation*)
 - b. **this year:** I have found the *next text* in the systematic series (of Jude) to apply perfectly fine to the Christmas season – what Jude relates in **v. 5** has a *profound* incarnational reality within it
 1. so, I intend to preach on from Jude *this week* – we’ll see what next week brings!
2. the **content** of this pericope
 - a. **vv. 5-16** is an **apocalyptic** passage and the **main argument** supporting the thesis of the letter
 1. (**see before**) Jude *warning* the false teachers who come to “pervert the grace of our God”
 2. Jude *relating* the various judgments that God has brought forth in the past against those who rebel against what he has “delivered” (to the saints)
 3. Jude *implying* that these judgments *will also* be applied to the false teachers of the gospel
 - b. **vv. 5-16** are also **imprecatory** = calling down the judgments of God upon evildoers (**e.g. Psalm 69:24**: “Pour out your indignation upon them, and let your burning anger overtake them”; **+19x**)

I. The Judgments Upon Rebels (Jude 5-7)

Content

a. the judgments upon Israel (v. 5)

1. the subject of the judgment upon Israel (**v. 5a**)
 - a. **question** (reading **v. 5** up to the “*this*”): what *exactly* is Jude trying to remind his audience of – what is the implied “*remind you [of something]*” and “*you knew it*” to which he refers?
 - b. **possibility #1** (in English): that which follows the “*that*” becomes (logically) the thing that is being brought up by way of reminder (**i.e.** an *historical* incident that the audience should be aware of)
 1. **remember:** this letter was *likely* written in the mid-60’s (the Age of the Epistles) when the *majority* of the church was being populated by *non-Jewish believers*
 2. James certainly could make this statement as a *historically memorable event* to *his* audience, but *Jude’s* is very different, given it comes later in the history of the early church
 3. **IOW:** the typical Greek-speaking, non-Jewish Christian *could* be familiar with the history of judgment falling upon Israel once they had been rescued from Egypt, but it is strange for Jude to *assume* that they were *and to build his premise upon their knowing it*
 - c. **possibility #2** (in Greek): that which *precedes* the statement (in *historical terms*) becomes the thing that is being pointed out *again* (**i.e.** a reminder of the point)
 1. **see before:** there are certain people “*designated for this condemnation*” (**v. 4**) – the “*this*” in **v. 5** *parallels* the one in **v. 4**
 2. **IOW:** Jude is making his point that a condemnation is reserved for people who pervert the gospel, and he is now *telling his audience what it is* (**i.e.** what you *need to be reminded of* is “*this*” the condemnation that befalls those who do these things)
 - d. **possibility #3** (theologically): that there is something *every Christian ought to know* because it is at the *heart* of the Christian religion
 1. **see before:** Jude “*found it necessary*” to instruct believers to “*contend*” for a faith that had been delivered to them by God, a set of *revealed* truths re: the plans of God in the work of Christ
 2. **IOW:** what Jude is *about to relate* is something that *every Christian ought to know*, but often “*gets lost*” in the **imbalance** of human existence

- a. **e.g.** the *imbalance* of Cain – instead of listening to God and seeking his brother’s help, he becomes horribly imbalanced and kills him (**i.e.** the natural imbalance of sin began early)
 - b. **e.g.** the *imbalance* of theological positions re: God himself – seeing God *myopically* in only a single dimension (**i.e.** focusing *solely* on the love of God while failing to take into account the justice of God in his nature as holy and pure)
 - c. Jude *certainly* understands the “*mercy, peace, and love*” of God (**v. 2**), but he is about to relate something that requires us to contemplate the **totality of God** – something that is at the *heart* of the “*faith once delivered to the saints*”
2. the nature of the judgment upon Israel (**v. 5b**)
- a. **note:** I am going to *start* with the “lesser” detail in this verse – you’ll see why in a moment ...
 - b. “*saved ... destroyed ...*” – to what *historical event* is Jude referring?
 - 1. the reference to “*out of ... Egypt*” clearly refers us to the **Exodus** and its resulting history
 - 2. **i.e.** the only time that God *ever* saved “*a people*” out of the Egypt was when he used Moses as the *means* to free the Israelites from slavery and bring them to the Promised Land
 - a. the “*destroyed those ...*” also becomes *obvious* from within Israelite post-Exodus history:
 - b. **e.g.** 3,000 dead at the Golden Calf incident (**Exodus 32**); an entire generation that fell in the wilderness after failing to enter the land (**Numbers 14**); the permanent exile of the entire N kingdom for failing to worship God properly (**2 Kings 17**); various defeats in war, etc.
 - 3. **theologically:** it is *utterly myopic* to see God only as one who loves “unconditionally” and makes all mankind his “friend” – **it is God who has set the terms of relationship with him and those terms are far greater / complex than a simplistic view of God as “loving”**
 - a. the relationship that Adam had with God could be called “utterly good”
 - 1. God “*walked in the garden*” (**Genesis 3:8**) regularly with Adam; Adam knew God, talked with him, learned from him, etc. (how long is anyone’s guess!!)
 - 2. but, Adam’s *relationship* with God was *conditional* upon his obedience – it was “utterly good” in that was fulfilling and complete, but still had the “shadow” of obedience over it
 - b. after the Fall, the relationship that *humanity* had with God became “utterly difficult”
 - 1. **i.e.** the readings from Leviticus demonstrate what it takes to come into the presence of God – the Israelites were *welcome to come*, but that relationship became very difficult
 - 2. **IOW:** God’s relationship with human beings is *now* built upon his **utter detestation** of *everything we are by nature* as fallen creatures – so it is now *utterly difficult* to know him
 - c. fortunately, God *himself* entered into his own creation to overcome those obstacles – the **Incarnation of the Son of God** was for him to “bridge” those obstacles so that all who the Spirit *draws to himself* can be in relationship with God (**i.e.** as Father)
 - 1. **i.e.** he fully satisfies the *justice* of God so that the *love* of God can be extended to us – he makes God both “*just and the justifier*” (**Romans 3:26**)
 - 2. **note:** we need to “contend” for this meaning of **Christmas** – the entry of God himself into his world so that **he** fulfills the requirements of what it takes to know God
 - d. thus, in the kingdom of heaven, the elect will have an “utterly perfect” relationship with God – the God-man will relate to his people *as one of them for all eternity*, **mono e mono**
 - 1. Adam (and O.T. saints) only knew God via *theophany* – the elect will know him *physically*
 - c. “... *those who did not believe*” = those who God *rescued*, and **knew his requirements** for a continuing relationship, *but did not put their understanding (their belief) into practice via obedience*
 - 1. “*believe*” = a variant of the word for faith (*pistis*) – faith in action; **faith as transformative**
 - 2. **i.e.** “Christians” who *claim* to have faith, but show no evidence of it in life (or show *direct resistance* to what has been revealed; **see also James**)
 - d. **Jude reminds his audience of what every true believer ought to know: that the same God who loves a people and draws them to himself also destroys “pretenders” to that loving call who willfully act against it**
3. the instigator of the judgment upon Israel
- a. **note:** now the “greater” detail in this verse – you thought I missed it, didn’t you ...?
 - b. the ESV stands alone from most modern English Bibles by translating the *person* in the verse as “*Jesus*” rather than the more-common “*the Lord*” – why?
 - 1. **Jude 5** contains a significant *textual variant* – a difference in wording found amongst the various manuscripts of the letter that we possess (**i.e.** most often produced by copyist error)
 - 2. many *newer* manuscripts use the term *kyrios* (Lord), but *older* manuscripts use *Iesous* (Jesus)
 - 3. the **Nestle-Aland Critical Text** (**i.e.** N.T. developed by a scholarly committee based on a thorough study of all of the available manuscripts) up to the **27th Edition** ascertained that the “correct” word here was *kyrios* (KJV uses the *Textus Receptus*; others use the *Critical Text*)

4. but, why? – because the term “Jesus” here seems **anachronistic**: something “out of time”
 - a. **e.g.** President Donald Trump was born June 14, 1946 – he was *not* president when he was born, so describing him *at his birth* with that term is anachronistic
 - b. **i.e.** here, Jesus *the man* was not born until c. 4BC, thus it seems anachronistic to speak of him as having been involved in the Exodus and the Golden Calf event
 - c. so, it was decided that “despite the weighty attestation supporting *Iesous*, a majority of the Committee was of the opinion that the reading was difficult to the point of impossibility”
5. however, in the 28th Edition, the committee reversed its opinion – the *anachronism* was allowed to stand, and the ESV was *updated* to support the revision
 - a. **IMO**: this is correct – because, it seems likely that “revisions” to the text by scribes would *most likely* go from the more *specific Iesous* to the more general *kyrios*, not the other way
- c. so ... why does Jude use “Jesus” here – why specifically use the name of *the man* Jesus?
 1. it *clarifies* what Jude thought of his older brother – he now sees the boy that he grew up with in the house of Joseph and Mary as fully possessing the nature of Yahweh
 - a. **IOW**: Jude recognizes that Jesus is the only human that **preexisted** his own conception
 - b. Jesus is the **Incarnation** of the fullness of divinity in a man, whose *divine nature* was present at the Exodus – “Jesus” the Son of God was there and acted in time and space
 2. it *connects* these events of the past to events of the future – **the judge of the future is also the judge of the past**
 - a. Jesus has been granted the authority to judge all men – **his obedience to his Father’s will on earth makes him the judge of all men on the day that he returns to the earth**
 - b. **IOW**: Jude contends that those who come into the church perverting the gospel will face the same judge as those who built the Golden Calf – “Jesus” the Son of God will judge them
 1. **i.e.** all of the apocalyptic judgments of this passage come from **Jesus himself**
 - c. **principle: although Jesus is a Savior bringing love, forgiveness, mercy, and compassion (i.e. an example of kindness), we must never forget that he is also the Judge bringing the wrath, condemnation, and judgment of a holy God upon evildoers**
- d. Jude warns his audience of what every true believer ought to know: the Christian faith demands a proper balance in our understanding of *Jesus himself* – we must never “take for granted” that he loves us without also being sure that we are fully surrendered to what he has revealed to be the gospel and the purpose of the church