

Message #5**Jude 1:8-16**

Years ago, there was a TV program that was called the “The Lone Ranger.” The Lone Ranger was a Texas Ranger who wore a mask to conceal his identity. Every now and then someone would say that they were going to remove the mask and he would say, “I wouldn’t do that if I were you.” The Lone Ranger never wanted his mask removed. Even in later years when Clayton Moore would go out in public, he would often wear the mask.

False religious teachers do not want their masks removed, but in this section God removes the masks and gives everyone a clear look at what they really are, how they operate, and traits to be able to spot them. Jude wanted to expose these guys for what they were. He un.masks them and presents the traits that mark them. The point is this:

GOD WANTS HIS PEOPLE TO CONTEND FOR THE FAITH AGAINST FALSE RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND HE WANTS HIS PEOPLE, IN CHURCH, TO BE ABLE TO SPOT THEM BY LOOKING FOR SPECIFIC CHARACTER TRAITS.

Now it is very evident that when Jude wrote this epistle, he was writing it so that God’s people would fight for truth and contend for the faith. The reason he wanted God’s people to do this was because there were a group of religious leaders and teachers who were distorting the true Gospel of the grace of God. Part of contending for the faith is contending against religious frauds and their teaching.

There are 24 specific traits that God and Jude spell out for us.

TRAIT #1 – They are dreamers . **1:8a**

I understand this to mean at least three things. **First**, they claim they get new revelatory messages from God to do and say things which are not true. As one writer said, they are “phony visionaries.” **Second**, they dream up their theology and spirituality because it isn’t real. **Third**, they base their belief system on themselves and their own dreams and goals and not on the inspired Word of God. In other words, they are not interested in what does the Bible actually say; they go by their own feelings, experiences, dreams and delusions. They are their own authority, not the Word of God. God’s people need to be on the lookout for religious leaders who stress feelings and who say God told them to say this. These people are religious dreamers.

TRAIT #2 – They are flesh defilers. **1:8b**

These men do not just struggle with their flesh nature; they purposely defile it and fulfill the flesh desires even if those desires are against God and His Word. This word specifically has to do with participating in things that are sexually immoral. False religious leaders are not faithful to their wives; they are immoral people who pursue immoral things. Behind the scenes of a life of a false religious leader is a flesh body that is in a defiling pursuit of sexual immorality. These men are immoral, religious, sexual predators.

TRAIT #3 – They reject authority. **1:8c**

The word “reject” (αθετουσιν) means that they continuously and unceasingly set aside or reject or disregard the authority of God. They continually disregard any lordship. Certainly they are not about to allow Jesus Christ to be Lord of their lives. They will not submit to the authority of God’s written Word or God’s true leaders. False religious leaders are their own authority. They are not interested in truth and they will not submit to it. Jesus called them “white sepulchers.”

This is not just a little struggle with things at times; this is the habitual pattern of their lives. They continually disregard the Word of God and truth of God for their own religious agenda. They insist on doing things their way even if the authority of God forbids it.

It has been well observed that there are two basic authoritative denials that will lead to lawlessness: **Denial #1** - There is a denial of the God of the Bible. **Denial #2** - There is a denial of the Bible of God.

TRAIT #4 – They revile glorious authority. **1:8d-10**

The Greek literally reads “they blaspheme the glorious ones.” The present participles “revile” (βλασφημουσιν) means that these people continually speak profanely or lightly about sacred things and glorious things of God. These guys would speak lightly about anything that reflected God’s glory, including angels. It is possible that they literally thought they were more glorious than God’s own angels. They will not listen to any authority.

Now in **verse 9**, Jude uses an example of Michael, the archangel, who got into a dispute with the Devil about the body of Moses when he is buried. Michael is a key angel connected to Israel and much is developed about him in the book of Daniel. It is interesting that this does suggest that there is an angelic presence at the burial of a body.

In the unseen world some argument broke out between Michael and the Devil. We are not certain what that argument was about. There is a secular Jewish writing called “The Assumption From Moses” that presents about three different scenarios as to what happened; but the truth is we don’t know because God’s Word does not say. It is possible that since Moses was dead, Satan wanted God to break off His covenantal program with Israel. If this is true, then one thing you may look for in a false teacher is a minimizing and demeaning of Israel.

What we learn here, though, is that Michael recognized that Satan had been created a higher ranked angel than he was and he realized that he was not in a position to pronounce a judgment on the Devil, so he said, “the Lord rebuke you.”

In other words, Michael’s job was not to pronounce the judgment on the Devil; that was God’s business. As high a ranked angel as Michael was, he still recognized the authority structure of God and submitted himself to it, even when dealing with the Devil.

But as **verse 10** points out, it is not so with these phony religious leaders. These men speak profanely and arrogantly about things they know nothing about when it comes to God. The things they know are by their own instincts, not by the Holy Spirit and not by the Scriptures. They are like unreasoning animals and they will be destroyed.

Now the fact that they act instinctively like animals certainly implies they do not have the Spirit of God. These men operate by their own instincts and not by the authority of God's Word. As Lewis Donelson points out, their instincts are to pursue sexual immorality (*Jude*, p. 186).

Now carefully notice **verse 11**—"woe to them." This is a woe judgment pronounced on them by God.

TRAIT #5 – They have gone the way of Cain . **1:11a**

The way of Cain is that he wanted a works salvation and ended up murdering the brother who was really right with God by the proper sacrifice. Cain wanted to be right with God based on his own works and God said to be right with Me, one must come via a blood sacrifice (Genesis 4:1-16). Abel offered the proper sacrifice to God and was in a right relationship with God through it and, as a result, Cain was jealous and murdered him.

David Helm brings out an interesting point about Cain in that before Cain became a murderer, God gave him a message. God taught him and preached to him about acceptable behavior but he rejected it and went his own way (*Jude*, p. 316).

Phony religious leaders are exposed to truth but reject it. They go their own way, not God's way. Then they go on a vendetta against those who know truth and communicate truth.

The false religious leaders are leaders who verbally butcher and murder those who are actually right with God based on the Word of God and on true faith in Jesus Christ. They are jealous of them and hate them. They lash out against truth and those who present it.

TRAIT #6 – They pursue idolatrous and immoral things for pay like Balaam . **1:11b**

They rush to the way of Balaam. That story is found in Numbers 22-23 and 31. Balaam was a teacher of God's people and he turned against Israel and cursed them because a foreign king promised to pay him big money. He actually advised God's people to engage in sex orgies and sensuality with the women of Midian. He was not interested in the Word of God or will of God but he was interested in making big money.

Jude uses this as an example to promote the fact that false religious leaders will do anything for a good pay check. They will say and do anything to get people's money. They will tell them their sin is okay if it means they get paid. They will even promote godless immoral things.

TRAIT #7 – They will perish for their rebellion like Korah. **1:11c**

Korah, the cousin of Moses, rejected the authority of God, which was Moses, and, as a result, perished. The story is told in Numbers 16:1-4. Korah, Dathan and Abiram were jealous of the position that God had given Moses and Aaron. Korah was mad he wasn't the priest. They rounded up 250 followers to challenge Moses and his God-given authority. As a result, Korah, Dathan and Abiram and their families were destroyed by God (Num. 16:32-35).

False teachers hate true authority. They hate those who have been chosen by God to be His real leaders. They oppose them and their teachings. In the end, God will destroy them because they have gone the way of Korah.

TRAIT #8 – They are hidden reefs in the life of the church. **1:12a**

Hidden reefs are dangerous because you can't see them and they can destroy a ship and rip it to shreds. These phonies went to church, partook of the Lord's Supper, went to fellowship dinners and secretly desired to destroy God's work. By classifying them as blemishes, Jude is saying they need to be spotted and removed. These guys are dangerous to have in church because they pose a major threat to the people of God. They do not initially look like a danger to the church, but they are.

TRAIT #9 – They have no fear or reverence for God. **1:12b**

False religious leaders have no fear of God, no fear of God's Word and no fear of future judgment. They live their lives focused on themselves for the here and now.

TRAIT #10 – They only care about themselves. **1:12c**

The word "care" is the word shepherd. These guys who pretend to be leaders are only interested in shepherding themselves, not others in the true ways of God. Look at what this says: these guys in the religious arena only care about themselves. They do not care about truth or righteousness. They only care about themselves.

TRAIT #11 – They are clouds without water. **1:12d**

There is no real substance to them. One writer said, "clouds without water" are useless.

TRAIT #12 – They drift along by the wind. **1:12e**

One who drifts along with the wind is unstable and unreliable. They have no stability. They will drift this way and that way in religious doctrine. They are not anchored into sound doctrine and they will drift any direction and fall for any religious fad. If it is new and interesting they buy into it. One writer said these men are "unfit for leadership."

TRAIT #13 – They do not produce any real fruit. **1:12f**

Jesus clearly taught that producing fruit is directly connected to Him being in the life and controlling the life. These phonies do not have Christ controlling their lives and they do not produce fruit. You will never see people come to true faith in Jesus Christ and fall in love with the written Scriptures, with righteousness and truth.

TRAIT #14 – They are spiritually dead with no roots. **1:12g**

These men are doubly dead. They are dead spiritually in that they produce no fruit as religious leaders and they are dead in that they have no life relationship with God. The only thing they are good for is uprooting and burning at harvest time.

TRAIT #15 – They are wild uncontrollable waves. **1:13a**

The wild foaming waves cannot be tamed by anyone. They are uncontrollable.

TRAIT #16 – They continually do shameful things. **1:13b**

The only things these leaders accomplish are shameful things. When people right with God fail, they are ashamed of themselves. They are totally and completely ashamed. These guys are not ashamed of anything they have done or are doing.

TRAIT #17 – They are wandering stars. **1:13c**

Most stars are in their places and reflect the glory of God. But not wandering stars. Wandering stars rebel against the normal order of stars. That is the way of these religious leaders. They go their own way, they follow their own pattern and evil schemes. They wander off any true Biblical course.

TRAIT #18 – They are heading to hell where they will be forever. **1:13d**

So understand this serious warning—any minister who does not submit to the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God and who tells people what they want to hear for money and who promotes immoral things, is a minister who is destined for hell forever.

David Helm said this: “Beloved the church is filled with men and women who are speaking and preaching their way toward a black hole of judgment from which there will be no return. Up! On your feet! Contend for the faith lest you follow them, or worse yet, become one of them” (*Jude*, p. 319).

TRAIT #19 – They are heading to the judgment of Jesus Christ. **1:14-15**

Enoch was a biblical character, but the quotation here is not from a Biblical text. It comes from a Jewish writing known as I Enoch. The reason why Jude uses this book is to say the Bible is not the only book that describes these evil men; your own religious writings describe them. Their own writings spoke of ungodly men who promote ungodly things.

Now Enoch lived in ungodly times, but he was a godly man and ultimately he was delivered by Rapture. So by using this, Jude is saying we need to be Enochs who walk with God until the Rapture and then, ultimately, we will return with Jesus Christ to pour out God's wrath on the ungodly.

TRAIT #20 – They are grumblers. **1:16a**

Now the specific grumbling they do is pertaining to the Word of God and the authority of God.

TRAIT #21 – They are fault finders. **1:16b**

They are always at odds with the truth of God's Word and will. They find fault with it.

TRAIT #22 – They follow their own lusts. **1:16c**

They never are interested in following the Word of God or the leading of the Spirit of God. The driving forces are their own lusts.

TRAIT #23 – They speak arrogantly. **1:16d**

They boast about themselves as high and mighty. They pompously puff themselves up. They speak of their credentials and use a great religious vocabulary that makes them look high and mighty. They see themselves as self made success stories. They put themselves on their own pedestals.

TRAIT #24 – They flatter people to gain an advantage over people. **1:16e**

False religious leaders are not interested in telling people the truth of God so they can be right with God; they are interested in telling them what they want to hear so the people will support them.

Jude wanted to make sure that the church spotted these false religious leaders. He wanted them unmasked so we could see them for what they really were.