

The Intention of Jude – Part 3

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – Jude greets his audience and indicates what his intention is in writing the letter
2. aim – to cause us to contend for the faith that was delivered to us by avoiding certain people
3. passage – Jude 1-4

b. outline

1. The Greeting of the Letter (Jude 1-2)
2. The Intention of the Letter (Jude 3)
3. The Warning of the Letter (Jude 4)

c. opening

1. the **irony** of this sermon
 - a. Jude states his *initial* intention of writing (in **v. 3a**) as to some aspect of our “*common salvation*”
 1. he wanted to write a **didactic** tome in which he would discuss (for the purpose of teaching) some element of the Christian religion that he had in common with his audience of believers
 - b. but, Jude “*found it necessary*” to write (instead) a **polemical** tome confronting a *specific* problem
 1. he insists that his audience “*contend*” for the “*faith*” (**i.e.** the whole of the Christian religion, specifically the *core elements* that cannot be altered
 2. he *commands* them to fight for that faith, both personally (**i.e.** to grasp the depth of it for themselves individually) and corporately (**i.e.** as the church; the *repository* of that truth)
 - c. **irony**: although I fully intended to complete my discussion of the intention of Jude last week, I “*found it necessary*” to stop short of completing that discussion, and will have to preach on a subject *today* I was not “*intending*” – I *expected* to be on to **v. 5** this morning, but not so ...
 1. **given**: reformed theology is based on the **theocentric** idea that nothing happens “*by chance*”
 - a. the Spirit used various circumstances to cause Jude to write a polemic, even though he intended to write something else – his letter (then) became an *inspired Scriptural* polemic
 - b. I (also) am forced to “*continue*” the subject of last week, so ... *this must be for a reason too*
 2. **question**: what would the Lord want me to “*add*” to what I had already purposed to preach?
 - a. **i.e.** is this for me to “*deepen*” the topic, first by way of *review*, and then by *extension*? (**yes!**)

III. The Warning of the Letter (Jude 4)

Content

a. Jude’s warning about “*certain*” people

1. **the thesis**: the church has been *infiltrated* by people who come to “*pervert the grace of our God*”
2. **the imperative**: you must “*contend*” with these to protect what you have received (**see above**)
3. they are “*unnoticed*” = they appear in the church *blending in as believers*
 - a. **e.g.** the Judaizers of Paul’s day (**and possibly the same group for Jude; Gal. 2:12**): a group of Jewish Christians that “*followed*” Paul into the churches insisting that *Gentile* Christians must adhere to the ceremonial rituals of Judaism (**i.e.** handwashing, feast days, circumcision, etc.)
 1. Paul had to “*contend*” with them (all the way to the Jerusalem Council) because they were trying to *change* the basic message of the gospel of justification by *faith alone*
 - b. they may truly *believe* they are followers of Christ, but they espouse ideas that run *contrary* to the revealed gospel – their “*faith*” is not in Christ (completely), but (rather) in their “*beliefs*”
 - c. **question**: are these people *saved*, yet deceived; or are they *masquerading* reprobates?
 1. there are **immature believers** who are ignorant (yet) of many aspects of the faith, and their confusion *appears* as deception, but they do not *purposely* attempt to deceive others
 2. so, we must look for “*clues*” in the **actions** of such people to determine if they are simply immature believers or are *actually deceived in themselves* and *desire* to deceive others
 - d. **answer (see next)**: Jude (here!) is clearly referring to individuals *who are still reprobate*, but *believe* they are saved (as they define that!) and have “*all the right answers*”
 1. they come *purposely* to “*change*” the content of the faith – they “*push*” for different “*interpretations*” or “*applications*” or “*approaches*” in the minds and hearts of believers

2. even Jesus warned of this; they are the “*ravenous wolves*” of **Matthew 7:15-20**
“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.”
 - a. **i.e.** their actions reveal who they are – **how they respond to correction** (see below)
 - c. **Jude warns that the greatest threat to the orthodoxy of the church comes not from outsiders, but from insiders who “appear” to be true, yet subtly act contrary to the faith**
4. they are “*designated for this condemnation*” = they are preordained to a specific condemnation
 - a. “*this*” = advance notice of the apocalyptic statements re: them in **vv. 5-16**
 - b. “*designated*” (*prographō*) = to write beforehand; to compose in the past; lit. to preordain
 1. individuals who, of their own volition, act against the church and receive a *preordained* condemnation (**i.e.** this is what God has *ordained for such acts*; **e.g.** Judas; **Matt. 26:24**)
 - c. **difficulty #1:** *how* is it possible for God to *preordain* the destiny of men, yet they still be free creatures to act without being “manipulated” by God to do evil?
 1. **answer:** in a **theocentric** theology, we begin with the *absolute* holiness of God in contrast to the *natural* rebellion of humanity – **i.e.** every human being “gets” what he deserves *by virtue of his own actions* – the “preordained” nature of punishment “follows” the choices of sinful men
 2. and ... the doctrine of *original guilt* also “pre-ordains” men to a destiny *established for all*
 - d. **difficulty #2:** *why* would God allow (purpose) opposition to appear *within the church* – why would he *actively allow* (ordain) men to attempt to pervert the gospel amongst his elect?
 1. **answer:** it *strengthens* the faith of those who must “contend” for it; it forces *genuine believers* to seek out what is *true*; it *grows* the depth of faith by forcing us to think it through carefully
 2. **faith grows best in the soil of opposition** – faith grows under pressure (**James**)
 - e. **Jude warns there is a specific kind of punishment reserved for “certain people” who do this in the church (see vv. 5ff), yet God has purposed it for our good (in the long run)**
5. they “*pervert the grace of our God*” = they attempt to make the gospel something other than *grace*
 - a. “*grace*” = the **radical choice of God** to bestow gifts of mercy, peace, and love (**see v. 2**) upon people *totally undeserving to receive them*, and *contrary to his own nature as God* (**i.e.** holy)
 1. **e.g.** to forgive, where forgiveness is (naturally) impossible (due to our *unforgivable nature*)
 2. **e.g.** to send the Son to take upon himself the *guilt* and *fear* of a people (in *propitiation*)
 - b. “*pervert ... into sensuality*” = to change the heart of the gospel from the *forgiveness of sin* to the advancement of *physical pleasure* (sensuality = licentiousness; indulging the senses)
 1. **e.g.** the “gospel” of liberalism: a change from a *vertical* focus on the relationship of men to God to a *horizontal* focus on the relationship of men to men – **i.e.** the “gospel” is about righting the wrongs of a sinful world through personal action, which results in “feeling good about yourself”
 2. **e.g.** CRT preaches the *continual guilt* of “systemic racism” – we are guilty before “oppressed” or “marginalized” people and must now (“woke” to our failures) act in a *continual* state of repentance, seeking *their* forgiveness through the process of “reparation” (**it never comes!**)
 - a. thus, the embrace of CRT by the “woke” church means the *reintroduction of guilt and fear* – the *perversion* of the grace of God (forgiveness) into a constant state of guilt and fear *again*
 - b. strangely, CRT insists that we indulge in a program of “**guilt-massage**” by working to overturn all forms of this “systemic racism” in the church – to “feel good about yourself”
 3. **LOW:** the forgiveness by God of *all* sin and guilt is replaced by a constant state of guilt in indulging one’s physical appetites – self-sacrifice is replaced with self-indulgence
 - a. **guilt is the underlying reality of the reprobate** – they know they are guilty, and their actions make them *more* guilty, thus they attempt to *assuage* guilt through *indulgence*, believing they can “suppress” their feelings of guilt through pleasure
 - c. **Jude warns that these “certain people” are trying to bring judgment back into the church, and put believers back under the slavery of guilt that the grace of God in Christ has freed**

6. they “*deny our only Master and Lord ...*” = they reject the *authority* of Christ as *Master*
 - a. “*Master*” (*despotēs*) = a despot is someone who rules unilaterally and unfairly, typically harshly
 1. obviously, Jesus rules fairly and justly, but ... he *does rule unilaterally* – Christ Jesus is the *loving despot* of the church, and it is *his* authority that stands over all things
 - b. “*deny*” = the false teachers attempt to establish *themselves* as the authority of the church
 1. **i.e.** they refuse to submit to the Christ-ordained authority in the church (**see v. 8**) – they *insist* that “they” are the “experts” (**e.g. telling the elders how to run the church**)
 2. the concern for the church into the future is not a “hard” totalitarianism imposed by the state, but by a “**soft**” **totalitarianism** rampant in the culture and brought into the church as subtle forms of “control” through the changing of language (**i.e. ala “1984”**)
 - a. **e.g.** gender being a “fluid” concept, and everyone must agree with this or be *anceled*
 - b. **e.g.** the use of *social media* to influence a “herd mentality” about issues
 - c. **Jude warns that the false teachers creeping into the church are bringing their anti-authoritarian ways with them, and teach that utter submission to Christ is “unnecessary”**
7. **the danger to the grace of God is *inside* the church – it is espoused by people who “appear” to be followers of Christ, but they preach a “form” of Christianity that is fundamentally inconsistent with *the fullness of the grace of God and submission to Christ as Lord***
 - a. Jude will now list the ways that God *judged* such people in the past (vv. 5-16)
 - b. his message is simple: *don’t let this condemnation be true of you!*