

# Tares Among The Wheat

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**Bible Text:** Jude 4-11  
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If you would, take your Bibles and look with me at Jude. There is only one chapter. Our study is taken from verses four down through verse eight and we could entitle this “Enemies within the Church,” or “Tares Among the Wheat.” Certainly as we read different portions of Scripture we know that, that where there is wheat there are going to be tares. And Jude, you remember in beginning this epistle spoke of his desire to write to them of the common salvation that he shared with them, the oneness in the gospel of Christ. And yet he said in verse three, “It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”<sup>1</sup>

As we saw last time, when you see the faith in this context it is talking about contending for that body of truth in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ and his death as it is revealed in the Scriptures, in the gospel. And here is why whatever his intent was, the Spirit of God moved him to go back and address the problem. All the while he rejoiced that there was in that body, of these that he was writing, those who were truly the Lord’s. Word had come that there was a eroding of the message much as even Paul faced after he went and preached to the region of Galatia and said, writing back in Galatians, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.”<sup>2</sup>

And then he quickly said, “Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.”<sup>3</sup>

And we find Jude writing these inspired words with the same concern, the same concern. He says in verse four:

For there are certain men [and notice] crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of

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<sup>1</sup> Jude 3.

<sup>2</sup> Galatians 1:6.

<sup>3</sup> Galatians 1:7.

Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.<sup>4</sup>

So here we have a very precise picture of these that were among the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, men that—as it says here—“crept in unawares.”

I am sure that if false prophets and false preachers wore a big shirt that said, “I am a false preacher,” then most people would run from them. I am not even sure that these men in the darkness of their minds knew that they were such. But here it is the Lord himself pinpointing them and describing them.

The Scriptures speak of those that are wolves in sheep’s clothing. That is an odd picture, but you can imagine someone who looks like a sheep and yet inside is a wolf. The book of Revelation speaks of one that appeared to be a lamb, but the voice was that of a dragon.

And so the call here is to beware and to know that there is no congregation that is safe. Even though that congregation maybe founded upon the truth of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, there are those in every congregation that can expect men to creep in unawares of whom it is said here “...were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men.”<sup>5</sup>

The only ones that God approves of as godly are those that he has chosen and that Christ has redeemed and the Spirit has called. All others are ungodly no matter how moral they appear, no matter how nice and kind they appear to men outwardly. If they are not Christ’s, they are ungodly.

And so we can see here a call to beware of compromise, to beware of that which would pervert the true gospel of redeeming grace as it has been purchased by the Lord Jesus Christ and revealed through the Spirit of God.

You know, anything, no matter how beautiful when you build it, if left unattended erodes. It degenerates. You can take a house that was beautifully built and we have seen houses around there that have been left unattended, unoccupied. And over time the building begins to fall apart. You can expect maybe some rodents that would go in and other things that would tend to cause the building to.... that was once beautiful to become corrupted.

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<sup>4</sup> Jude 4-8.

<sup>5</sup> Jude 4.

We have seen some of these buildings even around here where the homeless or people that are just looking for a place to do whatever activity they are doing. They will break in because it is unoccupied.

I believe all of this is a picture of what it is to live in a fallen world. Everything tends to degenerate unless it is kept up, unless it is maintained. And the same is true of any congregation. It begins in the pulpit. It begins with what is being preached from the pulpit and how the direction of that congregation is taken by those that are in positions of leadership.

And so we are called upon here to beware in these... In this situation with Jude clearly it had to do with preachers. You know, he is speaking of men who were known and yet they came in to the congregation and he speaks there of them "...turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and [or even] our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>6</sup>

How is that done? Through doctrine. And it is done through construction. And so the first thing we note here in this portion is the reality of there being enemies within the Church.

I have said to you before, I don't know of any situation where I have ever preached the gospel—whether here or in Africa—where I feel or have felt that everybody there is the Lord's. There is always going to be a mixed congregation. Even Christ with his disciples had a mixed congregation because he told them, "I have chosen you, but one of you is the son of perdition."

And I think that we let Hollywood kind of paint our view of how Judas must have looked, but I don't believe he had any kind of dark character. They trusted him with the money as they traveled. And as far as we know there was never a penny missing that alerted any of them that this was a son of perdition. When he went out and preached, he went out and preached with the disciples. And Christ sent him forth. He was purposed to be a tare among the wheat to the honor and glory of Christ.

Some men don't understand that, but that is the reality of it. So if it was so even among those that the Lord himself called to himself and raised up and sent forth, can we expect it to be any different in our day, the most treacherous and subtle enemy... See, we are often looking outside, but the most treacherous and subtle enemy is that which is within the Church.

If you look at 2 Peter—this is Jude speaking here—but look at 2 Peter chapter two. Can we read these warnings of Scripture and not take heed?

In 2 Peter chapter two and verse one Peter said, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”<sup>7</sup>

You notice even denying the Lord that bought them. There was a profession amongst these that, yes, Christ bought them. Like many today that say that. And yet they in their message and in their... as Peter describes it, pernicious ways, pervert the truth. And because of them the of the truth is evil spoken of.

So you can see the warning there, subtle.

In 1 Timothy chapter four we find another example, 1 Timothy chapter four and verses one through three.

There is many that we could look at, but I will just limit it to these here. Paul in writing to Timothy in chapter four and verse one he says, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith.”<sup>8</sup>

Now, again, it is not talking about somebody who once believed and then became lost. Departing from the faith, again, the faith is that body of truth in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ and his death and departing from it means to renounce it, means to deny it, means to turn from it.

And it says, “Giving heed to seducing spirits and [again] doctrines of devils.”<sup>9</sup>

It is interesting in Scripture that whenever doctrine is described with regard to the truth it is always singular. There is that singular exclusive doctrine or teaching concerning Christ, God’s Son called the doctrine of Christ, concerning his death. And to which those that are taught of the Spirit are attached. They are given to that doctrine. They know no other as opposed to those that give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.

How many times there has been a fight over the gospel when people begin to reason, but aren’t there other doctrines? And that is how they define it.

I quite honestly fear such language because when you begin to talk about other doctrines it is somebody trying to take you off of that exclusive doctrine of Christ and him crucified and talk about something that to them is vital. You know, we need by God’s grace to keep the doctrine of Christ, that which God has given a testimony to concerning his Son and his death. We are safe there. Therein is our safety. But doctrines, it becomes now another direction.

Paul in writing to Timothy is pretty plain. He calls it doctrines that are tied to seducing spirits. So Satan himself using even Scripture. Did not Satan tempt our Lord Jesus Christ quoting Scripture? You know, whatever is revealed in this book Satan knows. But his

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<sup>7</sup> 2 Peter 2:1.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Timothy 4:1.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

intent is always to take the attention of hearers off of the exclusive doctrine concerning Christ and him crucified and to lead men down another way.

“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”<sup>10</sup>

There becomes a mixture in the message of grace. And here in 1 Timothy four Paul says, “Speaking lies in hypocrisy.”<sup>11</sup>

You know, who can know a man’s heart? When he stands up to speak something, if his intent is to take somebody down another path, away from Christ, he is not going to declare that to you. So he speaks lies in hypocrisy. The hypocrisy is in that the heart is not really there to honor Christ. But he has an opportunity to speak and so he is going to take that opportunity to take a truth just like Satan did in the garden and turn it a little bit and twist it. And if he can get people to follow that, then we are going to twist it a little more. And before you know it, the frog is toast. It is like killing a frog.

You turn up the heat just gradually. And the frog keeps adapting and before you know it, we are way off track.

So this is what Paul is writing about, “Having their conscience seared with a hot iron.”<sup>12</sup>

And then you can see here, “Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats.”<sup>13</sup>

In other words, getting into things of dos and don’ts.

“Touch not; taste not; handle not.”<sup>14</sup>

Rather than fellowshiping around Christ and his work. And he says, “...which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.”<sup>15</sup>

So any time you get a congregation divided over dos and don’ts, what is and what isn’t, is in trouble, because the fellowship should be around the Lord Jesus Christ and around his person and his work.

So Satan sows his seeds among the wheat if I understand what these Scriptures are saying. And he does this while men sleep. That is why in Ephesians Paul wrote, “Awake thou that sleepest.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Galatians 5:9.

<sup>11</sup> 1 Timothy 4:2.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> 1 Timothy 4:3.

<sup>14</sup> Colossians 2:21.

<sup>15</sup> 2 Timothy 4:3.

<sup>16</sup> Ephesians 5:14.

Don't thieves break in and steal when everybody is at their lowest guard. You know, there is a slumber even within the Church to where men are so used to—and I would say men and women—so used to following somebody because he is the preacher. And if the preacher said it, it must be true. And if you come in and preach a message that points them to Christ, but that is not the message that they have been used to hearing, what do they do?

I am going to ask my preacher.

They take all of their advice from the preacher and preachers love to have it so because they want people to check their brains many times at the door and just you listen and you follow because I am the preacher. And that is how so many of these false doctrines come in.

And people can't believe it when you begin to tell them, well, you know what? What he is preaching is a false doctrine.

“Oh, no. He is a nice man. He is a moral man. He is an upright man. And I know how he has taken care of such and such a family. How can you call him a false preacher?”

Well, it is based upon the faith, the body of truth in connection with Christ and him crucified. If he is off there, he is off. He is off. But the point is they creep in unsuspected and under false profession.

I said I would limit my references, but look over in Matthew chapter seven and I myself when I look back upon my own pilgrimage in this matter of professions and false professions, I was misled. I sat in darkness. I followed men that would take a message and some truth in it, but it wasn't pointing me to Christ as a needy sinner. It was pointing me to dos and don'ts. It was pointing me to things that I needed to do to get God's approval basically. If you say these words and you say this prayer then God will be pleased with you. And once you have said it, now you do this next. You get in the water and you are baptized. And now after that, make sure you keep yourself. Keep your accounts close.

This is how I was raised. Every night, think back over the day about different sins you may have committed. And that is the way it was presented. It was assuming that I could live a life without sin if I would just try hard enough and believe hard enough, pray enough, read the Scriptures enough. It is a delusion. It is a delusion.

Here in Matthew chapter seven and verse 15 our Lord said, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”<sup>17</sup>

Now how does a person come in sheep's clothing? Well, they talk about grace. They talk about redemption. They talk about Christ. That is where a lot are misled.

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<sup>17</sup> Matthew 7:15.

“Well, our preacher preaches Christ.”

What does he say about him? You know, these crept in unsuspecting and under false profession. These are our Lord’s words. So we take heed.

2 Corinthians chapter 11, one more, 2 Corinthians chapter 11 and verses 13 through 15.

Paul says of these:

For such are false apostles, [notice] deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.<sup>18</sup>

It sounds almost like an oxymoron. But if they transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, their message is not the righteousness of Christ. It is another righteousness and therein many are deceived.

It says, “...whose end shall be according to their [what?] works.”<sup>19</sup>

You know, those who are truly called of God and sent forth of him to exhort and to feed the Lord’s sheep speak of one righteousness and that is of the Lord Jesus Christ and what he accomplished. And that is... that is where our fellowship lies.

So you can see the reality of enemies within the Church. But, secondly, coming back to Jude I would have you see God’s purpose in it. There is nothing that takes place but what God has ordained. And here Jude is clear to point that out because he says in verse four:

“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation.”<sup>20</sup>

You know, the Lord tries his Church and for many reasons. You know, if it causes those who are truly the Lord’s to seek him more fervently, blessed be the name of the Lord. If it causes the any of those that are the Lord’s in seeing the reality of enemies within the Church to cause them to look within themselves, examine themselves whether they be of the faith. That is a good thing. We should never ever get to a point where we become lethargic in this matter of Christ and his death and what he accomplished for sinners. Every time we come together for worship it is an opportunity for us to weigh our motives, weigh our hearts in light of this Word right here. We should never open this Word and have it be just a mechanical reading.

No. David said that, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my

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<sup>18</sup> 2 Corinthians 11:13-15.

<sup>19</sup> 2 Corinthians 11:15.

<sup>20</sup> Jude 4.

thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me,”<sup>21</sup> any way that would cause this heart to look anywhere but to the Lord Jesus Christ as a needy sinner and to never get to a point where we value anything above his blood and righteousness and certainly within ourselves, somehow to become cocky and imagine that we even as Uzziah did, because of some temporal blessings that the Lord has given us that we dare enter into his presence without the Mediator, without that blood shed. That is our only plea. We sing it. This is my only plea that when Christ died, he died for me.

But there are those that value not the blood because they have never seen it. Their eyes have never been opened. These are unconverted men that Jude is writing about that come among those that are the Lord’s and of whom the Scriptures say here were long ago ordained to this judgment. They infiltrate the Church, they corrupt the truth and it serves the purpose of God in marking them out, revealing them for what they are.

If you look over in Romans chapter nine and verse 17 again there is agreement between brother Paul and brother Jude in this matter. In Romans nine and verse 17 he speaks of Pharaoh. Now you think about Pharaoh. Think about what kind of man he was.

But it says, “For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.”<sup>22</sup>

And you read on in verse 18.

“Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.”<sup>23</sup>

Some people have a problem with that, but it is the clear message of Scripture that what is has been purposed of the Lord for his honor and his glory.

You know, it should not make us prideful if the Lord has been pleased to teach us of his Son and to so anchor our souls in him that nothing else is delightful to us but to hear of him and his glory and honor. If the Lord has so taught us that, that is a blessing. That is a grace, because he could have just as easily passed us by and left us to be one of these that creeps in unawares, unawares to the people, unawares to themselves in many cases that left to themselves they have been long ago ordained to this judgment.

If the Lord gives men over to their own reprobate minds, there is no deliverance. They can sit every day under the hearing of the message of the gospel and never believe. Their hearts being hardened, their conscience seared.

You know, my prayer is that I would not be left to myself and that you would not be. So we can see the reality of this. We can see God’s purpose in it. But we also see here the

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<sup>21</sup> Psalm 139:23-24.

<sup>22</sup> Romans 9:17.

<sup>23</sup> Romans 9:18.



characteristic of it. You know, this portion of Scripture is designed to warn and to awaken to realities to the leaven, to the tares. And the characteristic of these he describes as being ungodly men in verse four “who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness.”<sup>24</sup>

In other words, they abuse and pervert salvation by grace. You can understand this in, believe, two ways. But they turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. We all know those... I do personally know some men that have gone astray and awry and they have excused their sin even using examples of David and Bathsheba or of Samson and Delilah as saying in so many words that it is ok, because it is all under the blood. I know some men that have used that argument and still pretend to preach the grace of God.

That is not what the grace of God does. It does not lead us into sinful lives. What the grace of God does is makes us more aware of our sinfulness. It causes us to be broken before a holy God and to look, again, to the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and to think that, yes, I fell into that sin, but even that the Lord paid for. But it is not a prideful way of looking at it. It is a humbling. It causes us to, you know, as the Lord takes his hand off of us and we fall, it is a reminder of just how much we need the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not going about flaunting the sin. We are exalting the Savior.

But there were some of these in this day that said it doesn't matter. It really doesn't matter. It is all under the blood. And they turned “the grace of God into lasciviousness.”<sup>25</sup>

But the other way that this can be understood is that in the way that Paul wrote of it to the Galatians. If you look over in Galatians chapter one, Galatians chapter one you can see how he begins in verse three.

“Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us,”<sup>26</sup> not only from the curse of the sin, but deliver us from this present evil world, to separate us out “according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”<sup>27</sup>

And he says, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.”<sup>28</sup>

That is how some turned the grace of God into lasciviousness. They begin to preach a mixed message of works and grace which cannot be. It is either all of grace or it is all of works, but you can't have both.

“Which is not another,” he says, “but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Jude 4.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Galatians 1:3-4.

<sup>27</sup> Galatians 1:4-5.

<sup>28</sup> Galatians 1:6.

<sup>29</sup> Galatians 1:7.

So taking the very words that pertain to the gospel and giving them different meanings, in other words, preaching a conditional message like we hear so often.

Yes, Christ died for sinners, but you need to do this or you need to do that. They are turning the grace of God into lasciviousness. Any time that a person takes and puts a condition on man in order for God to be gracious they have turned the grace of God into lasciviousness.

And so we are warned not to heed such and to be wary of such because the grace of God gives Christ all the glory. To preach the grace of God is to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ alone in his work and what he has accomplished, that righteousness imputed upon completion of his death. It gives him all the glory.

“I am what I am,” Paul said, “by the grace of God.”

In fact, as he looked back even on his life of morality in his religion, he said it was nothing but dung, nothing but dung. Now when people hang on to what is back there and their profession and still try to marry it to the message of Christ and his grace, Christ said, “You cannot take new wine and put it into old wineskins. That old wineskin is going to pop. It is going to burst.”

And I know that is how the Lord dealt with me. I held on to a profession for years and as I began to learn the Scriptures concerning God and his sovereignty and his grace and mercy in Christ and the death that Christ accomplished, until the Spirit of God completely crushed this heart and brought me low at Christ’s feet, I tried to mix it. I tried to hold on to that old profession of false religion and at the same time bring in the new. And I will tell you. It is like holding your breath. How long can I hold it? Pretty soon the Lord is going to deal with your heart and show you that anything other than Christ is to be lost, to be condemned.

And only his work accomplished, only his work for sinners that he accomplished there at Calvary is our hope and stay before a holy God.

You can see the reality of this. God knows the hearts. I don’t pretend to know. I know my own. I think I do, but even then I don’t. But I just know how the Lord has taught me and, you know, it is a blessing when he has been pleased to open these otherwise blind eyes to Christ and him crucified.

We are going to stop there. Time is gone, but read on in this portion of Scripture. We can see, you know, in some of the verses that follow here in verses five through seven the warnings against those enemies that are in the Church and then verse eight, their actions, you know? How they behave themselves which, indeed, identifies them as actual enemies of the cross, enemies of Christ whom Paul said that there are many and he said, “Of whom I speak weeping that are enemies of Christ.”

And may the Lord continue to give us discernment.

All right. Let's sing hymn number 351.