

Some things are worth fighting against Jude 5-19



At the heart of Jude's 25 verse letter is a section in which he identifies trouble-makers who have infiltrated the local house churches in regions surrounding first century Israel. Jude has nothing good to say about these false teachers. **Jude's point: When ungodly leaders attempt to sway God's people; God's people must resist—or else they will become ungodly. If we do not fight against satanic efforts to turn us from Christ, we'll end up turning from Christ!** It's that simple. "Just

because the brilliant Commander in Chief promises victory on the beach doesn't mean the troops can throw their weapons overboard." (Piper)

Don't let your daughter marry this guy!

vv. 5-7—Jude describes the false teachers with a triplet of descriptors: (1) Those from Israel who left Egypt but were not faithful to God—Exodus 32 or Numbers 14—and were thus, destroyed.¹ (2) The rebellious angels in Genesis 6 who abandoned their proper position to selfishly pursue sexual relations with human wives. This ended disastrously as they who refused to keep their positions of angelic authority are now kept in eternal darkness. (3) The rebelliousness of Sodom and Gomorrah, whose sexual immorality and other sins (Ez. 16:49-50) led to its complete destruction. Jude's point is that these three separate incidents are examples of willfully abandoning the Lord. It's spiritual desertion, or apostasy.

vv. 8-10—another triplet emerges: pollute their own bodies, reject authority, slander celestial beings. Jude explains this point further by bringing to mind an illustration that his readers would have been very familiar with. Recalling the extra-biblical literature called *The Testament of Moses* (circa early 1st century), Jude talks about how Satan, as hateful accuser, indicted Moses of murder, which, if upheld, would have rendered Moses unworthy of honorable burial. As the legend goes, the archangel Michael, counts the charge as slander and pleads God's judgment to vindicate Moses. Satan, knowing the charge will not be upheld by God, leaves. Thus, Moses is allowed the honor of burial by God's archangel Michael.² Jude was using a familiar legend to make the point that these false teachers arrogantly presume to do that which the archangel Michael wouldn't do! V. 10 ironically concludes that these heretics claim to have "higher knowledge of spiritual matters" when in fact they possess lower, untamed animal-like instincts.

v. 11—Still another triplet: (1) the way of Cain (considered the first heretic; he defied God and despised his brother Abel to the point of murder. (2) Balaam's error—Numbers 22:5-7—was that he was a mercenary prophet who led God's people into sexual sin; (3) Korah's rebellion—in Numbers 16:1-3; 31-35, Korah led 250 leaders in a coup against Moses! Think

¹ The earliest copies of Jude's Letter state that "Jesus" delivered the Israelites. In other words, Jude is recognizing (as the apostles did) that Jesus as the eternal Son of God was active in the world before the beginning of creation, long before his incarnation. (John 8: 58; 1 Corinthians 10:4)

² Of course, Deuteronomy 34:6 states clearly that the Lord buried Moses, not Michael the archangel.

about it—Korah tried a hostile takeover against the very man who regularly spoke with God. Not smart!

v. 12—One more triplet! (hidden reefs, eating together without slightest qualm, shepherds who feed only themselves)

vv. 12b-13—Four nature images: (1) Clouds without rain plus (2) autumn trees who bear no fruit equate to “Tall Hat, No Cattle!” These false teachers are all about appearances and packaging, but they have no substance or content. They’re very well-wrapped empty boxes. (3) **Wild** waves of the sea **foaming up** their **shame**—a triplet describing how their foamy moral filth gets slathered on the church family. (4) Wandering stars—a metaphor describing their rebelliousness. Stars stay on a fixed course but these heretics do not!

The reason why Jude uses so many triplets is because in the Old Testament, one’s testimony had to be confirmed by two or three witnesses. So then, with each triplet, Jude (Jude, servant, brother) is asserting the corroborating truth about God’s people (called, loved, kept) and about these godless teachers!

vv. 14-15—Jude once again quotes from a Hebrew extra-biblical source, *1 Enoch* (circa 300 BC with some sections as late as the end of the 1st century BC). Jude’s audience would have been familiar with this book, whose author was unknown but so ascribed to Enoch, great-grandfather of Noah.³ The point is that when the Lord returns—and in Jude’s mind this is Christ’s Second Coming—the false teachers will be judged. They will not escape. N. T. Wright once said:

In a world of systematic ungodliness—ungodly sinners, ways, & deeds—the thought that there might come a day when the [ungodly] are firmly put in their place and the poor and weak are given their due is the best news there can be. Faced with a world in rebellion, exploitation, and wickedness, a good God must be a God of judgment.

Questions I need to be asking:

- Can I spot counterfeit Christianity when I see it? When I watch Christianity in media, do I have the ability to see through the packaging? Is there a trusted brother or sister who will help me?
- How can those who don’t have the Spirit of God fool those who do have the Spirit of God into thinking otherwise? Am I naïve? Can a brother/sister help me?
- Am I discerning enough to see the heretic within my own heart? The flesh in me who wants to hijack my life and do really crazy, stupid things? How adept am I at spotting a coup d’état within? Is there a trusted brother or sister who will help me?
- Also, is there something about sexual immorality that causes spiritual blindness in a way that other sins don’t? Delusions? Fantasies? Thoughts totally not based in reality? Is there a trusted brother or sister who will help me?

³ Remember, in Genesis 5:24, Enoch was one of two (Elijah) who did not experience death. Interestingly, the citation from *1 Enoch* probably had its origins in Deuteronomy 33:2. “*The LORD came from Sinai and dawned over them from Seir; he shone forth from Mount Paran. He came with myriads of holy ones from the south, from his mountain slopes.*” In other words, Jude cited from *1 Enoch*, who borrowed from Deuteronomy! When Jude uses these extra-biblical sources, he’s not inferring that they are on par with Scripture; but he is pointing to the truth behind the illustration. Just because a thing is not considered “Scripture” doesn’t mean it’s not true.