

POWER HOUR

3/2/2025

Lesson Text:
Jude 1:1-13

Background Scripture:
2 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Devotional Reading:
2 Timothy 3:1-9; 2 Peter 2:1-22

“BEWARE OF FALSE TEACHERS”

NLT TRANSLATION

Golden Text: *But now I find that I must write about something else, urging you to defend the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people.*
Jude 1:3b NLT

Time: A.D. 70

Place: Unknown

Jude 1:1-13, NLT

1 This letter is from Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ and a brother of James. I am writing to all who have been called by God the Father, who loves you and keeps you safe in the care of Jesus Christ. **2** May God give you more and more mercy, peace, and love. **3** Dear friends, I had been eagerly planning to write to you about the salvation we all share. But now I find that I must write about something else, urging you to defend the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people. **4** I say this because some ungodly people have wormed their way into your churches, saying that God’s marvelous grace allows us to live immoral lives. The condemnation of such people was recorded long ago, for they have denied our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. **5** So I want to remind you, though you already know these things, that Jesus first rescued the nation of Israel from Egypt, but later he destroyed those who did not remain faithful. **6** And I remind you of the angels who did not stay within the limits of authority God gave them but left the place where they belonged. God has kept them securely chained in prisons of darkness, waiting for the great day of judgment. **7** And don’t forget Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring towns, which were filled with immorality and every kind of sexual perversion. Those cities were destroyed by fire and serve as a warning of the eternal fire of God’s judgment. **8** In the same way, these people—who claim authority from their dreams—live immoral lives, defy authority, and scoff at supernatural beings. **9** But even Michael, one of the mightiest of the angels, did not

dare accuse the devil of blasphemy, but simply said, "The Lord rebuke you!" (This took place when Michael was arguing with the devil about Moses' body.) 10 But these people scoff at things they do not understand. Like unthinking animals, they do whatever their instincts tell them, and so they bring about their own destruction. 11 What sorrow awaits them! For they follow in the footsteps of Cain, who killed his brother. Like Balaam, they deceive people for money. And like Korah, they perish in their rebellion. 12 When these people eat with you in your fellowship meals commemorating the Lord's love, they are like dangerous reefs that can shipwreck you. They are like shameless shepherds who care only for themselves. They are like clouds blowing over the land without giving any rain. They are like trees in autumn that are doubly dead, for they bear no fruit and have been pulled up by the roots. 13 They are like wild waves of the sea, churning up the foam of their shameful deeds. They are like wandering stars, doomed forever to blackest darkness.

INTRODUCTION

All kinds of teachings are creeping into the church. People are looking for emotional experiences to validate their faith and their relationship with God. Not everything we hear in church is necessarily scriptural. We must be careful that we do not fall prey to false teaching.

Where there is the true, there will be the false. Where there is the genuine, there will be the counterfeit.

But it is not always easy to spot counterfeits. The goal of counterfeiting, after all, is to look enough like the real thing to fool people. Someone not familiar with a hundred dollar bill's marks of authenticity can easily be fooled by a good counterfeiter. The same is true in religion. At times, false prophets are difficult to spot, particularly when they claim to believe in the same God, serve the same Savior, and read the same Bible as we do. That was the situation Jude and other Christians faced in the first century. As the church grew exponentially, false teaching increased.

To encourage fidelity to the true gospel, as well as to identify false teachers and their motives and methods, Jude penned this brief epistle.

1. Jude, servant of Jesus (Jude 1:1-2).

As the half brother of Christ, Jude could have relied upon his special relationship to Jesus as a source of uncontested authority. Yet he chose instead to identify as

the servant of Christ. Emphasize to your students that true leadership in the church is not dependent upon special relationships. Instead, faithful church leaders are marked by their submission and service to Christ and the Word of God.

2. Beware of false teachers in the church (Jude 1:3-4).

We sometimes assume preachers could never teach something incorrect. Jude, however warns us that false teaching can infiltrate even God's church. In our eagerness to learn more as believers, we must also be wary of teachers who subvert the grace of God by changing the message of the gospel.

The truth of the gospel is unchanging. We are therefore called to defend that good news. This is especially needful because false teachers can gradually find their way into the church and take people's minds captive one at a time. This often catches us off guard because we do not expect it to happen within the church. Jude warns us, however, that it does.

3. False teachers described (Jude 1:5-13).

The temptation to follow false teaching was not a new phenomenon in Jude's day. Jude reminded his readers what happened to the Israelites after God delivered them from Egypt. Despite the miraculous deliverance they witnessed, an entire generation of them was barred from entering the Promised Land because they believed the bad report of the ten spies instead of the promise of God (cf. Num. 14:1-38). Satan has been trying to deceive God's people for thousands of years, and he has not stopped. How can we identify false teachers in the church? Jude provides us with some answers in verses 8-13. They imagine themselves to be above others and thus not subject to the same laws as others. They stand in judgment of other people, even those who hold positions of authority in the church. Ultimately, they defy God and reject His Word.

False teachers often live immoral lives and defy authority. Immorality erodes the credibility of the church and its message. Consider those in 3 John 1:9-10, who wanted prominence in the church and rejected the authority that was already established. Other false teachers "speak evil of dignities" (Jude 1:8). It is not clear who these "dignities" are, but they may be angels. False teachers also ridicule and mock the things they do not understand, and they do not take the time to understand spiritual things. They live by their animal-like instincts and destroy

themselves because they live without restraint. We see a lot of that in our society today because we have forgotten God. False teachers can be extremely dangerous when they creep into the church. Often we do not recognize their presence until it is too late and they have made their impact on those who are young in the faith. Jude used several images to describe the false teachers. Dangerous reefs, or "spots" (Jude 1:12), can shipwreck a boat, and in Jude's time, they could not be detected under the water until it was too late. A second image is that of clouds that blow over dry land, promising rain but not producing any. The false teachers make false promises that are not fulfilled. They are also like trees that do not produce fruit at harvesttime. They are already dead and pulled up by their roots, so their condition is obvious to the world. They are like white, wild waves of the sea that produce nothing but foam. They are also like wandering stars that are headed for destruction. These images are not pretty, but they tell us what false teachers in the church can be like. They are dangerous because they can lead people to destruction. Jude went on to describe them as complainers and grumblers who are never content with anything. They follow the desires of their evil hearts without any concern for the outcome. They are proud, boastful, and deceptive. They win others by flattery in order to get what they want. We are to be on guard for such people in the church.

POINTS TO PONDER

The Christian life involves a constant struggle we should prepare ourselves for (Jude 1:3; cf. John 16:33; II Tim. 3:12).

The local church must pay attention to doctrine (Jude 1:4).

One way we can be prepared to contend for the faith is by regularly recalling God's past acts of salvation and judgment (vs. 5).

God's visible judgments on sin are meant in part to warn us where the deceptive patterns of this world inevitably lead (vss. 5-7).

An absence of the Spirit will eventually show itself in deed and word (Jude 1:8-10; cf. Matt. 7:15-20).

Be suspicious of teachers who care too much about their own benefit (Jude 1:11).

The outward appearance can often misrepresent the inward reality and should not be trusted (Jude 1:12-13; cf. I Sam. 16:7; Matt. 23:27-28).

CONCLUSION

False teachers secretly worm their way in among God's people, promoting their false doctrines and unholy lifestyles. The fact that these false teachers "were before of old ordained to this condemnation" emphasizes the certainty of God's judgment on such people. {One charge Jude leveled against these heretics was that they were "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness."} {The word translated "lasciviousness" designates someone who is indecent, licentious, wanton, and without restraint.} Apparently, these teachers were saying that God's grace permitted them to live however they chose, even if that meant living in sin. {The ungodly men who had crept in among believers were denying the Lord not only by the heretical teaching they propagated but also by their lifestyles.}

QUESTION(S)

1. Who was Jude?
2. What was Jude's original reason for writing this letter? What topic did he address instead?
3. What does it mean to "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 1:3)?
4. What precautions should we take in light of verse 4 when people today claim to receive revelations from God?
5. What were the false teachers doing to the grace of God?
6. What does "lasciviousness" mean (vs. 4)?
7. In addition to their heretical teaching, how else did the false teachers oppose God?
8. Why might the false teachers have been called dreamers (vs. 8)?
9. What kind of knowledge did the false teachers have, and what did it lead to?
10. What were the "feasts of charity" (vs. 12)?

ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON

Next week's lesson is *"Build Up Your Faith"*

Lesson Text: **Jude 1:17-25**

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