

Jude 1:8-10
“Characteristics of apostasy”

- I. Intro**
- II. Vs. 8 Four general characteristics of false teachers**
- III. Vs. 9 Michael contending against the devil**
- IV. Vs. 10 Brute beasts**

I. Intro

When we were last in the little letter of Jude we were examining verse 7 and the example of the *Residents of Sodom and Gomorrah*. Remember that all of the teaching in this section is in the main body of teaching and focuses in on “three truths about truth” in these illustrations. Jude pulled from three different groups or “corporate departures” from truth. Each of them is different from the others and all illustrate why the reader of this letter need to be very diligent to contend for the faith:

- A. Vs. 5 *Israelites* “Truth Cuts both ways”: The example is taken from the history with regards to Israel who all were under the blood of the Passover yet after they were saved by obedience to God’s word at the Passover but afterward many of them in the wilderness were destroyed because they refused to obey.
- B. Vs. 6 *Fallen angelic* Knowing truth doesn’t guarantee obedience to it: The fallen are the second example in a difficult passage that Jude uses to illustrate that these fallen angels were in the constant proximity to ALL TRUTH didn’t that proximity didn’t guarantee obedience to it.
- C. Vs. 7 *Residents of Sodom and Gomorrah* Ignorance of the truth is no excuses: “Sodom and Gomorrah...given themselves over...gone after strange flesh..” The final illustration is that of two worldly cities that were ignorant of truth so much so that Lot

was sent there to try to bring truth into these wicked cities and there were not 10 righteous and it appears that wickedness had a greater impact upon righteousness than righteousness had upon wickedness.

We now move on to Jude's "*common practices of false teachers*" as we examine verse 8-10.

II. Vs. 8 Four general characteristics of false teachers

Vs. 8 Three times Jude took his readers to familiar examples of apostasy and each time God's judgment was exercised upon the perpetrators of the lies. They set forth specific corporate characteristics of apostasy. The inevitable end of the road to false teachers is that they will do three things:

1. They will defile the flesh in "like manner" with those he wrote of in Sodom and Gomorrah verse 7.
2. They will NOT keep their proper dominion as the fallen angels who "reject authority" of God's word verse 6.
3. They will speak evil of the TRUTH like those who murmured against Moses, verse 5.

The sentence starts out with the word "likewise" and is a connective word and in the Greek it is meant to cause the reader to realize that these false teachers were fully aware of the above three "*corporate departures*" from truth they nonetheless persisted in their present sin of false teaching! Jude identifies *their general characteristics as being four things*:

- a. *Dreamers*: Jude uses a demonstrative pronoun in a metaphorical way as he suggests that they are preoccupied with sensual images that directs their course of conduct.
- b. *Defile the flesh*: The Greek words here mean to pollute the flesh as one would in

contaminating the soil making it infertile and useless for anything other than garbage.

These first two characteristics suggest immorality as a chief characteristic in what guides them.

- c. **Reject authority**: Here the Greek words describe a characteristic that lays aside that which is truthful and established. It carries the idea of thwarting or nullifying truth making it void. The word for authority here is a word that we get our word for Lord from and is used of ultimate truth and that is what they were making void.
- d. **Speak evil of dignitaries**: Here is how they attempt to do so as the Greek word means to blaspheme or to speak reproachfully, revile or demean. The word for dignitaries speaks of splendor, brightness and is used to speak of God's glory.

These marks of full apostasy aren't apparent in every false teacher immediately but over time, at the end of their road they will arrive at the same destination as those three examples above.

When a person has publicly denied our Lord and only Master in Jesus they have set aside God's authority for their own and in so doing have rejected His authority and spoken evil of the Only one who has never been evil! The decline in morality is merely the inevitable symptom of their departure from truth. Those who have denied the only One who bought them will not be able to hide from their departure as they will again be practicing the former works of the flesh.

Furthermore, it is the nature of apostasy to despise God's sovereign rule and authority and why it is always the chief aim of false doctrine to oppose God's WORD! This is what Paul had warned Timothy in 1 Tim. 4:1 that in the last days they would be marked by a time when the church would be easily seduced by "doctrines of demons". The denial of the necessity of the Lordship of Jesus over us and His authority over all the creation is what satan has always pushed. Satan well knows the truth of Philip. 2:10-11 "***That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those***

in heaven, and those on the earth, and those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Without a doubt the setting aside of the authority and dependence upon ONLY the word of God is the clearest example of false teachers. The illustration of this will be brought out in verse 9- 10 where we note first the historical example of apostasy before Jude will clarify the chief characteristics of their apostasy in verse 10 before he issues a biblical warning towards them in verse 11.

III. Vs. 9 Michael contending against the devil

Vs. 9 It is interesting to note that this verse is one of the greatest texts in the Bible addressing hyper authoritative spiritual leaders by revealing the contrast of Michael the archangel, yet it does so by utilizing a story that has very little in the Bible! There is no record in the Bible to tell us when the incident of Jude 9 took place, where it took place or why it happened and there doesn't need to be in the way in which Jude uses it. Even though outstanding marks of apostasy had already been illustrated as noted above in verse 8, the Holy Spirit prompted Jude for another and chose the one before us even though it appears nowhere else in the Bible. This verse fits into one of the challenging passages of Jude's illustrations as the story narrated by Jude is taken from the apocryphal "*Assumption of Moses*". The book in which we only have fragments deals with Moses' funeral. In this story Michael the archangel is commissioned to bury Moses. Satan opposes his burial on two grounds:

- a. Satan claimed authority of the body because he said that he is the god over the earth and thus the body should belong to him. To this Michael rebukes satan in the Lord's name as it was God who created the world and mankind.
- b. Satan second claim for Moses body was based upon Moses' homicide which was based upon his killing of the Egyptian. To answer this claim Michael takes him to

Deut 34:6 where the law stated that a murder was to have been buried outside the people in an unmarked grave.

Jude uses this illustration which was an oral tradition not from the position of the dispute over Moses' burial but instead from the position of how Michael the arch angel handled the dispute! The facts of this story are that at one time two mighty angels representing two opposing sides, (Michael the side of God and truth and satan the side of lies and falsehood), disputed over the body of a creature lower in order than they were. A significant fact is that Michael was God's chief agent for defeating satan's purposes. And in this roll he who was faithful to truth and his creator said nothing on his own authority to defend truth even though he was doing the work of God in obedience to God's command. Whereas the devil was opposed to the truth, was acting in disobedience, and was seeking to thwart God's purposes. It is one of three battles that Michael and the devil will have as Daniel 12:1 and Rev. 12:7-9 we will be the others. Jude shows that the difference in false teachers and true teachers as false teachers like satan seek to defeat truth by deception. It is also interesting to see that God's instruments defeat this deception by resting only upon God's authority and His Word. It isn't just in being right in what they say, it's in behaving right because of their dependance upon the truth they believe. The rebuke from Jude is in the contrast in the Michael when compared to the devil in how they dealt with authority even when we are right! False teachers stand upon is their own authority and true teachers stand-alone upon God's authority!

IV. Vs. 10 Brute beasts

Vs. 10 Jude here gives the specifics of the illustration: They speak reproachfully by reviling against what they know nothing about intellectually as they are not known by the natural mind. It is for this reason that they possess no understanding and have become like the animals that are

ruled only by instinct. Jude is showing that these false teachers have become “unreasoning animals” and it is this very aspect about them that will be their own destruction. The teacher of God’s word won’t be arrogant and prideful even when they are being obedient to God’s plan and His word but instead will rest only the authority of God’s word.