

Three Characteristics of a False Teacher

Jude 8-16, 19

As we continue our study of the book of Jude I want to recap what God has said to us thus far from Jude 1-7. In our first section in Jude 1-2 we saw that we are called to be fully grounded in our decision for Christ, not letting anything sway us or cause us to question our decision. In Jude 3-4 we saw that we are called to defend the faith with a sense of conviction or a sense of seriousness. And last week we saw that we must beware of sin, committing ourselves to God in all that we do.

This week we will continue with **Jude 8-16, 19**:

Yet these false teachers, who claim authority from their dreams, like immoral lives, defy authority, and scoff at the power of the glorious ones. But even Michael, one of the mightiest of the angels, did not dare accuse Satan of blasphemy, but simply said, "The Lord rebuke you." (This took place when Michael was arguing with Satan about Moses' body.) But these people mock and curse the things they do not understand. Like animals, they do whatever their instincts tell them, and they bring about their own destruction. How terrible it will be for them! For they follow the evil example of Cain, who killed his brother. Like Balaam, they will do anything for money. And like Korah, they will perish because of their rebellion. When these people join you in fellowship meals celebrating the love of the Lord, they are like dangerous reefs that can shipwreck you. They are shameless in the way they care only for themselves. They are like clouds blowing over dry land without giving rain, promising much but producing nothing. They are like trees without fruit at harvest time. They are not only dead but doubly dead, for they have been pulled out by the roots. They are like wild waves of the sea, churning up the dirty foam of their shameful deeds. They are wandering stars, heading for everlasting gloom and darkness. Now Enoch, who lived seven generations after Adam, prophesied about these people. He said, "Look, the Lord is coming with thousands of his holy ones. He will bring the people of the world to judgement. He will convict the ungodly of all the evil things they have done in rebellion and of all the insults that godless sinners have spoken against him." These people are grumblers and complainers, doing whatever evil they feel like. They are loudmouthed braggarts, and they flatter others to get favors in return.

Now they are here, and they are the ones who are creating divisions among you. They live by natural instinct because they do not have God's Spirit living in them.

We see that Jude is continuing in his warning against false teachers. In fact, he describes their character and gives us insight into the origin of false teaching. Peter did the same in **II Peter 2:10**:

He is especially hard on those who follow their own evil, lustful desires and who despise authority. These people are proud and arrogant, daring even to scoff at the glorious ones without so much as trembling.

One of the things that I would like to emphasize however is that there is false teaching within the church. Many godly men have embraced false teachings that have done nothing but confuse the church or even to distract from real biblical truth. The reason it is so important for us to be warned against false teaching is so that we don't find ourselves getting caught up in this battle.

A. The Three Characteristics of a False Teacher.

1. Claim authority from their dreams. (vs. 8)

The word dream here has the idea of spiritual, mental and motor (physical) inactivity. It is very similar to the unbiblical practice of meditation (one empties their mind). Authority is therefore derived from nothing. **II Peter 2:12** says:

These false teachers are like unthinking animals, creatures of instinct, who are born to be caught and killed. They laugh at the terrifying powers they know so little about, and they will be destroyed along with them.

These teachers just react to circumstance. In fact in **Jude 16** says:

These people are grumblers and complainers, doing whatever evil they feel like. They are loudmouthed braggarts, and they flatter others to get favors in return.

And in their impulsiveness they respond by grumbling and complaining. They show absolutely no concern for authority because in reality they believe that they are the authority. When the people of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in Numbers 14, **I Corinthians 10:10** says:

Don't grumble as some of them did, for that is why God sent his angel of death to destroy them.

God will humble the proud, especially when they think that they can live life without their need for him. Yet, in their lack of respect of authority for others, their selfish motive of self-promotion, or self-service is very evident. Paul tells us in **Romans 16:17-18**:

And now I make one more appeal, my dear brothers and sisters. Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people's faith by teaching things that are contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them. Such people are not serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their

own personal interests. By smooth talk and glowing words they deceive innocent people.

The human nature makes mankind look to satisfy his own needs. There is no room for others and God. The term, "if it feels right, then do it" eliminates any accountability. The rise of situational ethics, where a standard can change depending upon the situation, has now put man in control of his own life, allowing him to have authority over himself.

The view of the church today, by popular society, is that we are intolerant. Yet the reality is that they are intolerant of God, their maker.

2. They live immoral lives.

The KJV uses the word "defile" which from the Greek has the idea of contamination. They have committed themselves to sin thus resulting in sinful behavior. Their fruit on their tree is rotten.

Jude 12 tells us that their influence of immorality is a danger to the church.

When these people join you in fellowship meals celebrating the love of the Lord, they are like dangerous reefs that can shipwreck you.

False teachers can contaminate a church. **II Peter 2:13-14** says:

Their destruction is their reward for the harm they have done. They love to indulge in evil pleasures in broad daylight. They are a disgrace and a stain among you. They revel in deceitfulness while they feast with you. They commit adultery with their eyes, and their lust is never satisfied. They make a game of luring unstable people into sin. They train themselves to be greedy; they are doomed and cursed.

The term "unstable" in the Greek has the idea that they were uncommitted people, or weak Christians. A false teacher looks to lead those who are not strong in the Word, away to their own concept of self-deification.

Jude 12-13 then goes on to point out the shallowness of their lives.

- a. A cloud without water, carries about by the winds: *Making promises without results.*
- b. A tree without fruit at harvest time, twice dead, and pulled up by its roots: *When fruit is expected there is none because they are dead.*
- c. Waves of the sea: *Their sin is obvious and exposed through their words and behavior.*
- d. A wandering star: *shining for the moment, with no direction, yet facing extinction.*

3. They defy Authority

This means that they refused to have any God, Lord, or master over them and mock those who did. The Greek points to the idea of refusing any organization or structure given by authority. In simple words, "They don't want to be told what to do." And because of their lack of respect for authority they made fun of any type of structure and spoke against it. Jude continues in Jude 8 to give an example of this and states that they spoke evil against the glorious ones (or angelic beings who were given authority). Notice that Michael dare not bring up an accusation against Satan.

Jude tells us in verse 10 that they mock or curse the things they do not understand. We are then given three examples of the lack of respect for authority.

Jude states that they have gone in the way of Cain. **1 John 3:12** states

We must not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and killed his brother. And why did he kill him? Because Cain had been doing what was evil, and his brother had been doing what was right.

Cain was committed to doing what was wrong. In fact when we read **Hebrews 11:4** we find that Cain had no faith in God while his brother did.

It was by faith that Abel brought a more acceptable offering to God than Cain did. God accepted Abel's offering to show that he was a righteous man. And although Abel is long dead, he still speaks to us because of his faith.

Cain arrogantly rejects God's authority. In fact when God asks Cain where his brother is Cain responds, "am I suppose to keep track of him."

Jude continues and gives us an example of Balaam, a man who was paid to put a curse on Israel in Numbers 22:7. **Revelation 2:14** says:

"I have a few complaints against you. You tolerate some among you who are like Balaam, who showed Balak how to trip up the people of Israel. He taught them to worship idols by eating food offered to idols and by committing sexual sin.

Balaam was more interested in getting paid than he was to respect God.

And finally Jude gives us the example of Korah. **Numbers 16:1-3**

One day Korah son of Izhar, a descendant of Kohath son of Levi, conspired with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eltab, and On son of Peleth, from the tribe of Reuben. They incited a rebellion against Moses, involving 250 other prominent leaders, all member of the assembly. They

went to Moses and Aaron and said, "You have gone too far! Everyone in Israel has been set apart by the Lord, and he is with all of us. What right do you have to act as though you are greater than anyone else among all these people of the Lord?"

We later find in **Numbers 26:9** that Korah was actually rebelling against God. Korah opposed God's authority.

C. What is Their Fate? (vs. 14-15)

II Thessalonians 1:7-9 says:

And God will provide rest for you who are being persecuted and also for us when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven. He will come with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, bringing judgement on those who don't know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power.

God will punish them:

- a. With everlasting destruction
- b. Eternal separation from God

D. What do False Teachers Lack? (vs. 19)

Jude 19 tells us:

They live by natural instinct because they do not have God's Spirit living in them.

False teachers do not have the Spirit of God living in them. **Galatians 5:16-17**

So I advise you to live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just opposite from what the Holy Spirit wants. And the Spirit give us desire that are opposite from what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict.

Our submission to God's authority will result in a Spirit-led life. One that doesn't rebel against God, but who heed God's directions and follows.

Conclusion

First, We must first beware of false teachers always looking at people's lives and evaluating their fruit. Yet, when we come across a false teacher we must be willing to hold them accountable for the many lives than can and will be led astray.

Second, that we be on guard against things that influence us. Many believers have embraced false teachings because of their weakness, instability or immaturity in the faith. May we not loose our edge in our walk with God. May our relationship with God be connected.

Third, We must not allow rebellion to come and rule our lives. That we would not be given over to our need to fulfill our own pleasures no matter what the cost. That we would always consider God's authority in our lives more than we would our human pride.