

Truth -vs- Heresy

Text : Jude 1-20 (1st)

INTRODUCTION :

A. The New Testament book of Jude :

1. One of the short books of the N.T. but communicates an important message.
2. Jude paints a portrait of truth and contrasts it with error.
 - a. In pointing out truth, one also points out error.
 - b. If truth is true, everything else must be error.
3. Jude uses many Old Testament references to illustrate truth.
 - a. In only 25 verses there are at least **8** O.T. references.
 - b. Some of the references are common, others obscure.
4. He pointed to examples that we may not immediately relate to, but the problems that Jude is addressing are familiar to us even in this day.

B. Who is Jude ? (Same name as Judas)

1. The Apostle of Betrayal is the first Judas that pops into mind, but that's not it.
2. There was another Apostle named Jude. (Judas son of James) **Acts 1:13**
3. Most believe the book to be written by Jude the brother of Jesus.
 - a. Jesus had 4 brothers and a number of sisters. (**Mk 6:3- James, Joseph, Simon, Jude**)
 - b. Most conservative scholars agree the author of this epistle was the Lord's brother.
4. The brothers of Jesus were not believers while Jesus walked the earth.
 - a. **John 7: 3-5**
 - b. A prophet is not without honor except in His own home. **Mark 6: 4**
(**His brothers played together with him while growing up.**)
 - c. After the resurrection they were believers. (**Rom. 1: 4**)
 - d. James became the leader of the Jerusalem congregation.

C. Notice how Jude begins his message. (It is a short but meaty book.)

1. He identifies himself as Jude :
 - a. A bond servant of Jesus Christ (**I would have identified myself as His brother.**)
 - b. Brother of James (**James is more well known in the church than Jude.**)
2. He uses a common warm greeting : Grace, mercy and peace in abundance (very)
3. **I wanted to write about salvation, but there's a need for a different message.**

D. What was the urgent message ? “I urge you to contend earnestly for the faith.”

1. The word “contend” does not necessitate combat. (“**compete**” might be more accurate)
 - a. It literally means “*to struggle strongly.*” (to antagonize over)
 - b. From the root word “*agon.*” = contest (from which we get the English word agony)
 - c. Compounded with “*ipi*” = upon or about, intensive
 - d. It is used to describe the effort of the participants of the games to defeat opponents.
2. The same root (“*agon*”) word is used in : (*fight in a foot race .. i.e, to compete*)
 - a. **I Tim. 6: 12** - Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, ...
 - b. **II Tim. 4: 7** - I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; (I’ve competed well in the struggle for the faith.)
 - c. Thus, “contend” is to strive for, to seek after, to exert one’s self for ... the faith.
3. “**The faith**”
 - a. Singular ... not “a” faith
 - b. One clearly identifiable faith which is distinguished from all others.
4. “**Once for all delivered**”
 - a. The one clearly identifiable faith was complete and inalterable.
 - b. It was the only faith to be given ... permanent ... one time for all time. (**complete**)
 - c. It was like the sacrifice of Jesus :
I Pet. 3: 18- For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust,
5. To whom was the faith entrusted ? “**To the saints**” (“**saints**” are Christians)
 - a. **II Tim. 1: 14**- Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you (us)
 - b. **II Cor. 4: 7**- But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;
 - c. If the world is going to get this treasure, from where must they obtain it ?
From the ones to whom it was entrusted ... the saints / the Christians.

TRANSITION :

Why did Jude feel it so urgent that he write admonishing Christians to struggle for, i.e., to compete for the faith which was delivered to them? There was a threat. (Vs. 4) “Certain men” had come into their midst covertly for the purpose of spreading heresy, of perverting their faith. These pagans in Christian’s clothing were teaching four major errors :
(Grace to license, Disrespect of angels, Grumbling, Deny the sovereignty of Christ)

I. They were trying to turn grace into license. (probably the Gnostic heresy)

A. Some have come into your midst with evil intent.

1. They pose a real threat ... they're beginning to have success in perverting your faith.
2. This heresy of theirs is not new, it was written about by others.
 - a. Satan has never let good go unopposed. (Judaizers, Gnostics, Pagans, Government)
 - b. Both the Apostle Paul and the Apostle John wrote about the Gnostic heresy.
3. The world is continually creeping into the church, like wolves into the flock.
 - a. **Acts 20** .. The Apostle Paul warned the Ephesian elders that “wolves” would come in.
 - b. **I Tim. 1** .. When Paul left Timothy at Ephesus, some were trying to teach different.
 - c. **I Pet. 5: 8** .. Warned us the Satan is continually on the prowl to destroy us.

B. Our “politically correct” culture doesn’t like anything (anyone) to be condemned.

1. If there is such a thing as right, there’s also such a thing as wrong.
 - a. If one must do what is right to be approved by God, his wrong should be corrected.
 - b. It is sin to knowingly allow someone to be lost, to be condemned / rejected by God.
2. The act of coming in covertly (“crept in”) is an indication of malicious intent.
 - a. *“Any time you have to sneak to do something, you know you’re doing wrong.”*
 - b. They knowingly wanted to lead people astray.
3. There’s a difference between those who are in error and those who deliberately pervert.

C. We understand what grace is. (They were perverting grace into license.)

1. **There is a “grace period” on loan payments.** (period between due date and late fee)
2. **Police give allowance between speed limit and when they actually issue a ticket.**
 - a. When we see speed “limit” we think “average.”
 - b. The police usually allow 7 miles an hour before they ticket.
 - c. If the policeman is behind us we watch the speedometer, but if he’s not ...
3. **Vs 4b** God extends grace because He does not want anyone to be separated from Him.
 - a. **II Pet. 3: 9-** **The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.**
 - b. **I Tim. 2: 3-** **This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4- who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

D. There is of necessity a limit to God's grace. (the policeman must ticket at 15 mph over)

1. Grace is an awesome concept. **complete forgiveness** (**but it can be dangerous.**)
 - a. It is possible only because of the sacrifice of God's son, because of the gospel.
 - b. Grace is the righteousness of Jesus (of God) given to man as a gift.
 - c. With it comes the indwelt by God's own Holy Spirit.
 - 1) Recipient's earthen vessel is clean enough to receive the presence of God within.
 - 2) The H.S. is a seal .. identifies as belonging to God .. mark visible in spiritual realm.
 - 3) The indwelling of the Spirit is only a down payment (an earnest) crown to come.
2. Grace is only given to those who humble themselves before God. To those :
 - a. who are brokenhearted because of their sins.
 - b. who cry out to God for salvation from those sins. (*realizing their helplessness*)
 - c. who surrender themselves to God (to Christ) in humble obedience.
3. Grace is why we respond to Christ.

E. Grace is dangerous because as one begins to understand it he's tempted to abuse it.

1. This was one of the problems in the church at Rome. ... **Rom. 6: 1-2**(ff)
2. This is also one of the problems Jude addresses in his short message to the saints.
 - a. False teachers were leading brethren to commit this error. (**Don't worry, grace will..**)
 - b. They wanted to be accepted by God **IN** their sins.
(**They wanted to have their worldly pleasure and their salvation as well.**)
 - c. God commands a surrendering to His rule of the lives of His followers, **to be Lord.**
3. This same problem exists today. People say things like :
 - a. "God is love, surely He won't punish people for ..."
 - b. "If you've ever once professed faith, you are saved no matter what you do."

II. Those who attempt abuse or manipulate grace reject the Lordship of Christ.**A. Jesus the Christ is the ONLY ruler in the universe.**

1. Jesus has been given "**all authority in Heaven and on earth.**"
 - a. **Matt. 28: 18** (**Those who do not "go" reject the rule of Christ in their lives.**)
 - b. **Read ... Eph. 1: 18-23**
 - c. cf.- **I Pet. 3:22**
2. No one who does not obey Jesus can claim relationship with Him.
 - a. **Luke 6: 46**
 - b. **John 14: 15 , 15: 14**
 - c. **Matt. 7: 21-23**

B. Jude gives Old Testament examples of those who rejected the rule of God.

1. Those whom God saved from Egypt, were later destroyed when they refused to obey.
 - a. Saved people can return to being lost if they reject their Savior.
 - b. Israel's becoming lost wasn't an accident; they made a conscious decision to trust themselves rather than God. (**God gave them what they wanted.**)
2. Angels who did not keep their place were expelled from God's presence. (**judged**)
 - a. No matter how important one becomes, God still rules. (**Nebuchadnezzar**)
 - b. Even the angels of Heaven must obey God and be humble before Him. (**us too**)
 - c. If God disciplines angels, how much more will he discipline mere men ?
3. Sodom, Gomorrah and the cities of the plain were utterly destroyed.
 - a. They practiced evil so long they thought they would not be punished. (**denial**)
 - b. Evil was their culture. (**Everyone accepted their evil and participated.**)
 - c. God's judgment was sudden, unexpected and horrible.

*** God is merciful and gracious, but He must be God, the sovereign over ALL.**

He must enforce His laws.

When God's patience ends, woes follow.

C. There is no king who has no law, who has no rules that must be obeyed.

1. Society depends upon the government to enforce order.
 - a. There can be no order apart from laws.
 - b. There can be no law without enforcement.
2. God disciplines to enforce His rule, His reign, His sovereignty.
3. Today, increasing numbers of people are rejecting the reign of God on the earth.
 - a. "God won't judge people for that; He's too loving to punish."
 - b. "It's not a problem, you're two consenting adults."
 - c. GRACE DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY.
 - * **Grace is only for those whose hearts are surrendered to the rule of God.**

III. These false teachers had no respect for authority, even for angelic beings.

- A. If the false teachers will not accept the authority of Jesus Christ, why would they respect any other angelic being -or- spiritual power ?**
- B. Jude illustrates with the highest authority under Jesus Christ Himself.**
1. Michael is the “Archangel.” (#1) (**Relate the story.**)
 2. If the head angel speaks respectfully to Satan, should men not do likewise to powers ?
 3. Michael did not respect Satan because he was good or because he was more powerful.
 - a. Satan is an angelic (a spiritual) being. (**Satan ruled this world. Jn 12:31, 14:30**)
 - b. Satan is every powerful. (**He dared to openly compete against God.**)
- C. How do we do this today ?**
1. People make jokes about God, about Satan, about religion.
 2. The atheists disrespect God (deny, reject) and all authority above themselves.
 3. People ignore and / or reject the scriptures. (**don't even want to know God's laws**)
- If Satan is worthy of respect, how much more the creator and ruler of the universe.**
- D. The problem is that mankind does not like to subject itself to authority.**
1. God gave us dominion over the earth (**Gen. 1: 26**) so we've become proud.
 2. Cain talked with God and then went off to kill his brother.
 - a. He was upset because God rejected his sacrifice, but did not repent.
 - b. Cain wanted God to repent, for God to accept him on his terms.
 3. Balaam the prophet of God perverted the message of God for personal gain.
 - a. He prophesied against Israel for money.
 - b. Taught the popular gospel.
 - 1) **II Tim. 4: 3-4** ... Some seek out preachers who tell them what they want to hear.
 - 2) They want preachers to pervert the truth to please them. (**refuse to conform**)
 4. When Korah rebelled against God's prophet (Moses) he was killed. (**Judged**)
- iii. – In 1912 the winter had been mild. Large chunks of the Northern Atlantic icecap had broken off in the early Spring. The titanic was warned six (6) times about the ice, the last warning coming at 9:30 p.m. Yet, just 2 hours later they had sunk to the bottom of the sea. They did not want to submit their schedule to a detour.**

CONCLUSION :

A. Bro. Jude wanted to talk about the great and positive aspects of the gospel, but felt compelled to warn of us the danger that lies before us.

1. We must never stop struggling against the forces that draw us away from the faith.
2. There has never been a time when there was not pressure to lead us astray.
3. It is more pleasant to talk about God's love, His mercy, His grace, etc., and we need the encouragement we get from hearing about them, but we must never neglect to remind our selves to stay vigilant and to resist Satan's pressure.

B. Jude urges us to be on our guard against those who would :

1. turn grace into license.
2. slander authority and the doctrine of God.
3. act proud and grumble.
4. Deny Jesus as the ONLY sovereign and Lord.

C. I urge each of us to remain aware of the forces pulling us away from the faith.

1. Content ... Agonize ... Assert great effort to maintain
2. Demonstrate our faith each day.
3. Present our faith (God's grace) in a way that will draw people to God.

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