

# The Letter of Jude

## Jude 4-7: A Subtle Opposition and A Sure Judgment

Sunday, September 22, 2019

### Introduction

As Jude writes this letter to Christians his main purpose is this: to encourage them to 'contend for the faith.' He's writing to warn them that the truth is being opposed and that those who believe must guard the faith that has been handed down and entrusted to them.

As we consider the most dangerous and pressing threats to our faith we may be quick to think of the open and blatant opposition from those outside the church; those who clearly desire to silence Christians. But as Jude writes he is warning against a much more subtle threat: a threat from the inside. In this part of the letter it becomes apparent that Jude is concerned about those who outwardly profess faith but who don't truly hold to the Gospel. Their ways of life are inconsistent with the ways of Jesus and they are distorting and misusing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

These 'internal threats' that Jude is warning against are dangerous and we see these same kind of threats today. More and more we see how churches name the name of Christ but allow sin and ways of life that are inconsistent with the Gospel to remain. It's with these kinds of threats in view that we must 'contend for the Gospel.'

### Understanding the Opposition - The Subtlety of the Threat (Jude 4)

- **The threat is not from outside, but from inside** – In verse 4 Jude identifies the 'opposition to faith' as coming from those who have 'crept in.' It is clear that those Jude sees as a threat to the faith aren't outside, but inside the gathering of believers.
- **The threat isn't overt, it has been concealed or disguised** – At times false teachers are outspoken and bold, but what Jude is warning against are 'false teachers' who have in many ways blended in. Their denial of the truth wasn't immediately obvious and went 'unnoticed.' This is why Jude is writing to warn and encourage the church.
- **The threat is revealed through a way of life that denies the truth** – False beliefs aren't always expressed in words, but they can almost always be identified through the way we live. It seems that Jude was concerned about those who may have said the right things, but whose lives revealed that they did not understand or believe the Gospel.
  - **They are ungodly** - This word speaks of those who are without awe or reverence for God. They don't regard Him rightly and as a result they live in a way that denies Him.

- **They used grace as a license for sin** – Through grace those who believe are fully forgiven, but there are some who use the grace of God as a license for sin. The Scriptures are clear that those who truly believe will not presume on the grace of God. Jude is warning against those who profess Christ and yet continue sinning 'that grace may abound' (Romans 5:20-21; 6:1-14).
- **They deny the call to follow Jesus as Master and Lord** – Because the threat seemed to be subtle it's likely that this 'denial' isn't an outright rejection. Instead Jude is describing a people who profess Jesus with their mouths but who reject His Lordship; they don't submit to His complete rule over their lives (Matthew 15:7-8; Titus 1:16; Matthew 7:15-16; Acts 20:28-31).
- **The opposition has an appointed end** – Jude explains that from time past God knew that these kinds of people would come in and distort the truth. Those who deny Jesus as Lord will receive the judgment of God. The fact that God is just and will judge those who don't believe is made clear in verses 5-7.

### Understanding the Seriousness of Unbelief – The Surety of Judgment (Jude 5-7)

- After stating that God will judge those who live in opposition to Him Jude goes on to provide three examples of how God has shown His commitment to justice and judgment.
- **Three Examples of God's (past) Judgment**
  - **Israel was judged for unbelief** – After all that God had done in rescuing His people from Egypt and providing for them in the wilderness, many continued to live in doubt and unbelief. Because of their disobedience and lack of faith God brought judgment and didn't allow that generation to enter the Promised Land (Numbers 14). Israel's unbelief is a constant reminder to us to guard our hearts and fight sin and unbelief (1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 9-12; Hebrews 3:12-19).
  - **Angels were judged for rebellion** – While the origin of this illustration is debated, the point is clear: these angels rebelled and disobeyed and as a result were sent to a place of judgment.
  - **Sodom and Gomorrah were judged for disobedience** - These two cities are known for their wickedness and immorality. They are known for their sin and they are the go-to example in the Bible of God's judgment against wickedness. The nature of God's judgment against these cities (eternal fire) is a reminder of the judgment that awaits all those who don't repent and believe.