

13. Jude 8-25 of a Verse by Verse Study of the Letters of John and Jude

In Jude 1-4, Jude establishes the need to contend for the faith *once for all entrusted to the saints*. This phrase states without a doubt that God's revelation was complete and final. The key to this verse is the phrase *once for all*. It is certain that this is a complete faith delivered *once for all time*. The scriptures answer this question by using the exact wording in reference to the finality and certainty of Christ's death—*once for all* in Heb 9:26-28:

But now he has appeared **once for all** at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 Just as man is destined to die **once**, and after that to face judgment, 28 so Christ was sacrificed **once** to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. [Emphasis added].

Just as Christ appeared once for all, the faith was delivered (entrusted) *once for all*. Nothing remains to be revealed.

Verse 7 seized on three examples to illustrate the certainty of God's punishment with eternal fire. God destroyed the first group—the children of Israel—for unbelief; he punished the second—the angels who did not keep their positions of authority—for daring to challenge God; the third—Sodom and Gomorrah—for sexual immorality and perversion.

Now Jude turns to the horrible nature and certain fate of these dreamers, and the security of those who follow the holy faith and have the Holy Spirit.

The Nature of Dreamers and Their Sin

Jude 8-25

8 In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings. 9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" 10 Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals – these are the very things that destroy them.

These dreamers, as Jude calls them, fulfilled their sinful dreams by polluting their own bodies, rejecting authority—the faith—and slandering celestial beings. When archangel Michael was disputing over the body of Moses, he did not dare bring a slanderous accusation against the devil. However it is important to see that Christ could rebuke the devil in Mark 8:33, "33 But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. 'Get behind me, Satan!' he said. 'You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.'" The Lord also rebuked Satan in Zech 3:1-2, "3 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. 2 The Lord said to Satan, 'The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you!'"

These dreamers were men who spoke abusively about what they **did not** understand and about what they **did** understand. These very things destroyed them. It has always been the same; for no matter how wonderful we think our imaginings to be, if they are not from the faith revealed *once for all*, they destroy us.

The archangel Michael in all his might knew no exception to the rule that all must follow the revelation of God's will. An angel appearing to Daniel called the revelation of God the Book of Truth in Dan 10:20-11:1:

20 So he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; 21 but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince. 11:1 And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and protect him.)"

Michael has the power to protect God's people to the very end. Dan 12:1-3 teaches

12 "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people – everyone whose name is found written in the book – will be delivered. 2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

The power of Michael is great enough to overpower Satan. Rev 12:7-9 records:

7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. 9 The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

Jude 11

11 Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.

Jude illustrates the woe upon these dreamers with three examples: Cain, Balaam's error, and Korah's rebellion. Each illustration teaches a way by which man exceeds his authority and defies the revelation of God's will. By murdering Abel, Cain illustrates that denial of the faith in worship (he offered a sacrifice that was not commanded by God) leads to the gross sin of immorality – murder. The Lord explained the situation to Cain in Gen 4:6-7:

6 Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

The Lord concluded in Gen 4:10, "10 The Lord said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground." John also explained Cain's situation in 1 John 3:12-13: "12 Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous."

Jude brings the lesson – sins in worship lead to immorality.

The lesson of Balaam illustrates the blind and downward path of wickedness. 2 Peter 2:15-16, explains:

15 They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness. 16 But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey – a beast without speech – who spoke with a man's voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

Balak promised Balaam a reward to come and to curse the Israelites. The Lord was displeased. The continual efforts of the Lord to point out the righteous path – even the denouncement by a donkey and the appearance of the angel of God – had no effect on Balaam's persistence. The end of

Balaam's sin was the enticement of Israel to worship Baal and practice his immorality as recorded in Num 25:1-3:

25 While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, 2 who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods. The people ate and bowed down before these gods. 3 So Israel joined in worshiping the Baal of Peor. And the Lord's anger burned against them.

The Lord warns the church in Rev 2:14, " Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality."

Jude brings the lesson: sins of greed lead to great immorality.

Korah's rebellion illustrates that God not only will punish those who challenge his authority, but also he will extend his wrath to their followers. Num 16:1-3 describes Korah's rebellion:

16 Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and certain Reubenites – Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth – became insolent 2 and rose up against Moses. With them were 250 Israelite men, well-known community leaders who had been appointed members of the council. 3 They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the Lord's assembly?"

Num 16:31-35 describes their punishment and the extension of that punishment to the 250 Levites:

31 As soon as he finished saying all this, the ground under them split apart 32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, with their households and all Korah's men and all their possessions. 33 They went down alive into the grave, with everything they owned; the earth closed over them, and they perished and were gone from the community. 34 At their cries, all the Israelites around them fled, shouting, "The earth is going to swallow us too!"

35 And fire came out from the Lord and consumed the 250 men who were offering the incense.

Jude brings the lessons: punishment of the wicked extends to their followers.

The Nature of the Dreamer's Punishment

Jude 12-13

12 These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm – shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted – twice dead. 13 They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.

The wicked men and their followers know the worst of fates. *Blemishes at your love feasts* where they eat without the slightest qualm and shepherds who feed only themselves describe the depravity of their human condition. Even when compared to nature, their situation is extremely dire—clouds without rain and trees without fruit. Their shame foams up like wild waves. Like wandering stars they are reserved for the blackest darkness forever.

Jude 14-16

14 Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones 15 to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him." 16 These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.

This quotation from Enoch, which is the judgment of God pronounced on all false teachers, appears only here in the Bible. This quotation and Michael's *Book of Truth* show that God's mystery was complete before the foundation of the world and the fate of the ungodly was certain even then. This scripture from Enoch, just seven generations from Adam, is almost word for word that given by Paul in the New Testament in 2 Thess 1:7-9:

. . . when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with **His mighty angels in flaming fire**, 8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power . . . [Emphasis added].

In Gen 5:23-24, we learn that Enoch walked with God and that God took him away. Heb 11:5-6 further explains:

5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. 6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Jude concludes his description of these dreamers with the most unflattering words in verse 16, "These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage."

Christians to Remain Firm in the Most Holy Faith

Jude 17-20

17 But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. 18 They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." 19 These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.

20 But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. 21 Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

The situation with these dreamers and false teachers was nothing new. The New Testament is full of such warnings as this one of which 2 Peter 2 and 1 Tim 4:1-5 serve as good examples. The point in verse 17 is that these men do not have the Spirit and follow their ungodly desires and natural instincts. This is in contrast to Christians who have the holy faith—once for all delivered—and the Holy Spirit. If we remain firm in the faith and the Spirit, our Lord Jesus Christ will bring us eternal life.

Final Admonitions and Praise to the Lord

Jude 22-25

22 Be merciful to those who doubt; 23 snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear-hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

24 To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— 25 to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

Jude 22 is a most elegant and straight forward statement of the Christian's responsibility to the lost. For those who are weak in faith or have no faith, be merciful. For those who are entrapped in the heat of trials and temptations, snatch them from the fire. To all the rest, show mercy, mixed with fear. Hating even the clothing stained by flesh is a negative parallel to Christians' white garments of the Revelation. Finally Jude closes with words of praise offered to God.