

VBS tonight @ 5
6:30 M-W

Sunday Morning Message

August 8, 2021

Earnestly Contending for the Faith - Messages from Jude

Jude 1:5 – 16 – The Enemies Among Us – Characters from the Past - Part Four – Cain (A Works-Based Religion Rather than a Faith-Based Righteousness)

Text – Jude 1:11

Congregational Reading – Jude 1:5 – 7 and verse 11

Introduction

We have been examining this little Epistle of Jude, which was written not to a specific church or person, but was intended to be circulated and used to instruct all Christians in all local churches in Jude's day. Of course, the Holy Spirit superintended over this writing and included it in the canon of Scripture where it would be used for millennia to help churches fight off error. The great emphasis of this letter is the encouragement for us to "earnestly contend for the faith:"

"3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort [you] that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 1:3)

The reason for our defending the faith is given in verse 4:

"4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness (ἀσελγειαν from ἀσελγεια – aselgeia – NASF – unbridled lust; excess), and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." (Jude 1:4)

I. Characters from the Past (vs. 5 – 7; 11)

In the past three sermons from this letter, we looked at the examples that Jude cites from the Old Testament that would serve as warnings for the people of Jude's day in the first century and for us today.

A. The Rebels Who Opposed God in the Wilderness (v. 5)

In verse five, Jude talks about the Israelites who were delivered miraculously out from the bondage of slavery out of the land of Egypt in the days of Moses, only to later rebel against the God who saved them by refusing to trust Him to bring them into the Promised Land in Canaan. They didn't think their God was big enough, wise enough, or

powerful enough to overcome all of the obstacles and giants that awaited them on the other side of the Jordan River:

"5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not." (Jude 1:5)

B. Fallen Angels (v. 6)

Then in verse six, Jude reminds us of fallen angels that committed sins that were so heinous that God bound them in a spiritual prison until the great day of judgment:

"6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." (Jude 1:6)

Though we cannot be absolutely sure, we believe that these particular angels were the “sons of God” mentioned in Genesis six who cohabited with human women and produced offspring that were described in the Bible as “giants in the earth” and “men of renown” (Genesis 6:4) This period of time was just prior to Noah’s flood when the “wickedness of man was great in the earth” (Genesis 6:5).

C. Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7; Genesis 19)

In the last message, we examined from verse seven the wickedness of sexual impurity in general, and homosexuality in particular through the Old Testament example of Sodom and Gomorrah:

"7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." (Jude 1:7)

In verses eight through ten, Jude will make the connection to the problems and people that we may face today in our New Testament churches:

"8 Likewise also these [filthy] dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. 9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. 10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what

they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves." (Jude 1:8-10)

Notice the reference to Michael the Archangel contending with a devil over the body of Moses. We have no account in the Old Testament that discusses this event, though we know that it did happen because God included it here in the New Testament. The point that Jude seems to be making is that the angel Michael did not take this devil on in his own power or authority, but deferred to the power and authority of God. We will examine these three verses (8 – 10) when we get to the next section of our study (Characteristics that are Present).

Transition

Three more Old Testament illustrations are given on verse 11:

"11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core." (Jude 1:11)

Today, we will just examine the first part of this verse and consider Cain, the first of the three characters mentioned here.

D. Cain – A Works-Based Religion Rather than a Faith-Based Righteousness (v. 11a; Genesis 4)

1. Cain's Self-Righteous Religion (Genesis 4:1 – 7)

"4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." (Hebrews 11:4)

Cain's offering represented the works of his own hands, whereas Abel's offering was a foreshadow and picture of the blood that would be shed on the Cross by the Lord Jesus Christ:

"22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." (Hebrews 9:22)

Note John Phillips take on this passage:

Cain was invited by God to come the right way, Abel's way, to bring the only kind of sin offering God can accept—Christ! The difference between Cain and Abel, between the believer and the religious person, lies not in the person himself but in

the object of his trust. The one provides for himself, the other accepts what God has provided. God will accept us only in Christ. Like so many religious people today, Cain, the founder of the world's false religion, was infuriated at what he heard.¹

He was essentially a religious man, that is, he recognized some basic need in his life for God. However, he was unteachable. He refused to approach God on God's terms, that is, by shedding the blood of a lamb. Instead, he invented a system of religion based on his own ideas and furthered by his own efforts. When God rejected his "way" out of hand, instead of repenting, he turned in fury on his brother, Abel, whose lamb God had accepted. Cain, the father of all false religion, soon demonstrated what his false religion was like—too "refined" to slay a lamb but quite willing to slay his brother.

This is the essence and the universal hallmark of all apostate religion: spiritual distortion. Its attack is always focused on the salvation of God. It denies God's revealed Word on the subject of salvation and expresses its revulsion at the truth that "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). False religion emphasizes human reasoning and man's own good works. Good works, as a means of salvation, is the unifying factor in all false religion. It is the very essence of liberalism in Protestant churches. It is the basic idea in all of the cults.²

2. Cain's Refusal to Repent (vs. 8 – 16)

God's prophecy regarding sin being ready to pounce soon came to pass as Cain yielded to his flesh and killed his own brother in a jealous rage:

"12 Not as Cain, [who] was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." (1 John 3:12)

A saved person still has a flesh to contend with, but he also has the Holy Spirit of God leading him and to some degree, controlling him; but the lost man has nothing but flesh, and the flesh is capable of every kind of wickedness imaginable:

"19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are [these]; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath,

¹ John Phillips, *Exploring Genesis: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), Ge 4:5–7.

² John Phillips, *Exploring the Epistle of Jude: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), Jud 11a.

strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told [you] in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21)

The only thing that can hold a lost man in check are the external boundaries placed on him by society's and laws.

Conclusion

Cain represents one more major problem that we need to earnestly contend against – A Works-Based Religion. We must hold fast to Bible Salvation, which is a Faith-Based Relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Salvation cannot come through good works, but only through faith in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"23 For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

"8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:8-10)

I believe in good works, but only those good works that flow out of a heart that is already saved.

The doctrine of salvation by grace through faith is the very foundation of Christian theology. Any attempt by "Christian religion" to take away from grace and move toward works is outright heresy.

How can we earnestly contend for the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith:

1. Emphasize the Person of Christ

"14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, [even] the forgiveness of sins: 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether [they be] thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that

in all [things] he might have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased [the Father] that in him should all fulness dwell; 20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, [I say], whether [they be] things in earth, or things in heaven. 21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in [your] mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:" (Colossians 1:14-22)

2. Emphasize the Practice of Preaching the Gospel

"1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

3. Eradicate the Pride of Personal Accomplishments

Cain's problem was the same as Satan who wanted "be like the most high." It was the same as Eve who wanted "to be like God." Cain wanted to do it on his own. He wanted acceptance with God based upon his own accomplishment. That is pride, and pride always precedes destruction:

"18 Pride [goeth] before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18)

"16 These six [things] doth the LORD hate: yea, seven [are] an abomination unto him: 17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, 19 A false witness [that] speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." (Proverbs 6:16-19)

As we yield to the Holy Spirit of God in our lives and in this church, we will see God do some incredible things, but we must remember that it is God that is doing it, not us. We must be aware that our flesh is prone to want recognition, but we must deflect all of the honor and praise to the Lord, Who alone is worthy.

Christ is our Master

The Gospel is our Message

Total Humility is a Must

- I. Characteristics that are Present (vs. 8 - 10, 12 – 13; 16)
- II. Cautions from our Predecessors (vs. 14 – 15)