

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

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Series:	Special Messages		Pastor/Teacher
Text	Jude (Part 2)		Mason Depew
Date:	October 13, 2024		

LIKE UNREASONING ANIMALS

Introduction: Last time we saw from Jude that the largest underlying problem the Church constantly faces throughout her history, even from the days of Cain and Abel, is hypocrites in her members. Those who outwardly appear for all intents and purposes like the sons of God, but inwardly are anything but. Worst of all are the false teachers who rise up among God’s people and lead many astray, causing division and doubt even among those who remain with the true Church.

This time we will focus less on the simple fact that there are false teachers and hypocrites, and more on the particular sins Jude alleges against these enemies of the Gospel. The spirit that Jude has in his crosshairs consists of three main things: Following intuition over right reason, blasphemous arrogance, and sexual immorality. These three things may seem disconnected at first glance, but upon closer inspection they are intimately tied together as one great rebellion against God’s created authority.

1. Jude points out to us that their most basic problem is in their understanding. They follow “dreams” (verse 8) and “instinct” (verse 10), leading them astray from the truth.
 - a. Jude 18 speaks of the ungodly following their “passions” to destruction on judgment day. In a parallel passage, 2 Peter 2:10, Peter also uses the same word “passion” with the same meaning.¹ This word implies an important link between their way of approaching the world and their sexual immorality. Since they are in the habit of following their intuition without reason, they are naturally also liable to follow strong desires when their senses are stimulated.
 - b. Consider how similar this is to the young man in Proverbs 7. The adulterous woman seduces him by inflaming his lust through his senses, overwhelming his reason. Most significantly, just as Jude and Peter compare their opponents to unthinking animals, Proverbs says of the foolish young man, “All at once he follows her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a stag is caught fast till an arrow pierces its liver; as a bird rushes into a snare; he does not know that it will cost him his life” (Proverbs 7:22-23).
 - c. This opens up a wider theme of the difference between wisdom and folly throughout the Bible. One of the key differences between the wise man and the fool in the Wisdom books of the Bible is how they interpret their experiences.

¹ The parallels between Jude and 2 Peter, especially chapter 2, are so strong that scholars have long assumed one was based on or at least inspired by the other. I agree the similarities are too close to think it is just a coincidence, but I am not particularly concerned with which one came first. See D. A. Carson and Douglas Moo’s discussion on dating Jude on pages 691-692 of *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd Ed. (2005), for more information.

- i. For example, the wise man avoids drunkenness by keeping in mind both how temptation is intensified through his senses of sight and taste² *as well as* the great pain that will surely come on the morning after, if he lives through the night.³
 - ii. The fool, on the other hand, gives little to no thought beyond his immediate experience. If his flesh desires sleep, he gives in even if it means ruin and starvation in the future.⁴
 - iii. In the same way, Jude points out to us that the mark of these false converts is that they produce no true fruit, i.e. anything that *lasts*. They seek their own short-term gain and take advantage of others but are ultimately fleeting. In the light of eternity their time among the people of God is just a breath and then they are gone forever. The images he uses in verses 12 and 13 are particularly vivid: “These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.” Then in verse 16 he describes their vain fruitlessness again: “These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.”
- d. This helps us make more sense of Jude and Peter both comparing this worldly spirit to that of animals. Animals are not capable of abstract reasoning, and even the love of a loyal dog is not even close to the kind of fulsome fellowship that believers have with the Lord. Animals live and interact with the world by their senses and just seek to survive rather than build a civilization.
- i. Human beings were made to mediate God’s rule to the lower creation by understanding and submitting to his Law, not to lower themselves and act like the lower creation. But when we suppress and ignore our knowledge of the future

² “Do not look at wine when it is red,
when it sparkles in the cup
and goes down smoothly.” - Proverbs 23:31

³ “In the end it bites like a serpent
and stings like an adder.
Your eyes will see strange things,
and your heart utter perverse things.
You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea,
like one who lies on the top of a mast.” - Proverbs 23:32-34

⁴ “I passed by the field of a sluggard,
by the vineyard of a man lacking sense,
and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns;
the ground was covered with nettles,
and its stone wall was broken down.
Then I saw and considered it;
I looked and received instruction.
A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest,
and poverty will come upon you like a robber,
and want like an armed man.” - Proverbs 24:33-34

consequences to our actions in favor of sensual stimulation in the present, we are indeed lowering ourselves to act like beasts.⁵

ii. All of this also explains why the biblical prophets so frequently compare the governments of this world to predators.⁶ When sinners who have this spirit that Jude and Peter are describing acquire great power over others, they often show the bestial side of their human nature more than ever before. This is why there have been so many tyrants in history, consuming those beneath them for their own short-term gain rather than fostering a stable, just, and peaceful society for the future. That sin was always in their hearts, but once they had freedom to wield excessive power over others it showed its full extent for the first time.

e. To be clear, it is not that feelings and experiences are bad in and of themselves. Think of all the richly emotional language that the Apostle Paul uses throughout his letters to express the sublime joys of knowing and being known by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The point of warnings about sensuality is that we must *discern* whether our experiences are truly reflecting reality or misleading us and respond accordingly.⁷ Once you have identified the better and richer blessings that God offers, pursue those rather than the cheap counterfeits that the world offers.⁸

2. Now consider the link between following instinct over reason and pride. Many people are deluded into thinking that authentic faith is contrary to reason, but Jude makes it quite clear that this is not so. Even though God has used dreams to communicate to his people in the past,

⁵ Many scoffers online like to point out the perversity of Ezekiel 23:19-21 while completely missing the point. To decent people who haven't been immersed in pornography from their youth, that imagery is supposed to be horrifying and expose the insane foolishness of Israel's idolatry. By worshiping dead idols made of wood, stone, and precious metals the Israelites prioritized their sensual stimulation over the true and reasonable worship of the living God, lowering themselves to be like beasts in heat.

⁶ For example, Daniel 7:3-7 describes four beasts, each representing a different empire to come and dominate the world around Israel for a time: "And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another. The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and the mind of a man was given to it. And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear. It was raised up on one side. It had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told, 'Arise, devour much flesh.' After this I looked, and behold, another, like a leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back. And the beast had four heads, and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns."

⁷ This is why sexuality within marriage is not called sensuality in Scripture. There is a deeper, real *knowledge* and *understanding* between the husband and the wife in a healthy marriage, so their sexual relations are about much more than mere stimulation. The ideal is that they really know and are known by each other on every level, and are building life and a household together, so their relationship produces blessings for the future that will endure far longer than the fleeting rush of pleasure that adultery gives. Consider what the mother in Proverbs 31 wants her son to look for in an ideal wife: it's not sensual stimulation ("Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain"), but the rich and beautiful life that they will build together in the fear of the Lord.

⁸ Consider how Paul compares the blessings of knowing Christ with everything else: "Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead." - Philippians 3:8-11. That's what kept Paul going through all of his intense suffering and persecution. Also compare this with 1 John 2:12-17, where John is making much the same comparison.

we are not supposed to ordinarily rely on them, *or our instincts*, especially when it comes to the things of God.

- a. Jude makes numerous references to how pride drives so much of sin in the world, then as now. He implies in verse 6 that it was the desire for a higher station that led so many of God's angels to fall, like Satan. But just as sensuality lowers us to act like beasts, the angels were lowered beneath their station for seeking to rise above it.
 - i. This suggests a further parallel with the Fall of Adam and Eve. They were created in the image of God, to rule in his name on the earth, but the serpent stirred up arrogant discontent within their hearts, claiming they would actually *be like God* when they ate the forbidden fruit. Of course what actually happened is they lowered themselves, being cursed with frustration as they fulfill their created purpose to fill and subdue the earth (Genesis 3:16-18) and returning to the dust from which they were made (Genesis 3:19).
 - ii. The faithful angels, by contrast, know their place and are content to submit to the Lord. This is the purpose of Jude's reference to Michael contending for the body of Moses in verse 9.⁹ The idea is that, similar to Joshua the High Priest in Zechariah 3, Satan was accusing Moses for his sins and demanding to have him damned. Also like the angel of the Lord in that chapter, Michael apparently rebuked Satan to vindicate the saint in question. As he did so, he rebuked Satan in the name of the Lord, not his own. The point is to show that even in the midst of a heated moment, when you would expect passions to run hot, Michael was mindful of God.
 - iii. This is why R. C. Sproul often said that the first lesson of Theology 101 is, "God is God and you are not." That simple statement is so obvious and Michael clearly got it, but it is *constantly forgotten* by American Christians. I suspect this is because we are pragmatists at heart and, as a general rule, kick like mules at being asked to think beyond our everyday experience. Hence Americans are woefully unprepared to approach God, who is utterly outside our direct experience. We can only apprehend him by faith, which comes by hearing the Word of God, not sight, smell, taste, or touch.
- b. How many evangelicals today prioritize what will be entertaining and appealing to the spirit of this world, over what God has actually revealed and given us to meditate on?
 - i. Intuitively, of course it makes pragmatic sense that you want to get as many people in your building as possible and give them what they want. But over the long term, what does that produce? Shallow roots, spiritually malnourished sheep, and worst

⁹ This verse is famously controversial because some early church fathers have identified this story as coming from an apocryphal Jewish text called *The Assumption of Moses*. This has understandably raised questions about whether Jude considered this book (and 1 Enoch, later on in verse 14) canonical. Note that he does not use the usual formula for citing Old Testament Scripture, "It is written," however, and merely citing its content as true does not imply that Jude thinks it is inerrant. We believe many traditional texts are true and authoritative (as lesser authorities under Scripture) but not infallible. For example, we recite the Nicene Creed each week because we believe it is a thoroughly true statement of the faith without error, but we recognize that it was not inspired by God in the way that the Scriptures were. This is basically how I understand Jude's citations of *The Assumption of Moses* and 1 Enoch. The parts that he is referencing are true, likely from an ancient oral tradition passed down for many generations, but that does not mean everything contained in those works is true and inspired of God. Likewise, I am sure there were other true stories about Jesus's ministry that his followers passed around outside of the Gospels, but the canonical Four are the only *inspired, infallible* accounts (see John 21:24-25).

- of all, people who are used to doing what feels good in the presence of God. They strut into the presence of God like they own the place.
- ii. There is no respect for the warnings of Ecclesiastes 5:1-2 to “Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil. Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth.” American Christians frequently act like nothing at all could offend God in worship; the only question is what the people want because the customer is always right.
 - iii. Likewise, how many people react to biblical doctrines with a knee-jerk rejection simply because they cannot intuitively grasp them? For example, it is astonishing that so many Christians will say something like, “I could never believe in a God who predestines people.” Most people do not say this because they have really thought the issue through carefully. They haven’t meditated seriously on this book of Jude, which so clearly teaches some have been set aside for judgment from long ago (verses 4, 6, and 13). They most likely could not explain what secondary causes or God’s antecedent and revealed will are. They instinctively think of God as if he were a man like us, and controlled people with the means we have, so they imagine predestination must mean God manipulates people like puppets or uses some kind of sci-fi mind control to make people sin.
 - iv. This is arrogant foolishness that refuses to consider God as he has revealed himself: infinite, eternal, sovereign over every atom of his creation, and the shaper of your very soul! Have some humility and patience to consider that if he really is who he claims to be, you should reasonably *expect* God to do things that are beyond your imagination’s ability to grasp.¹⁰ Otherwise he would not be transcendent in any meaningful sense. He would not be God at all.
3. All true Christians, of course, still have some of this nature remaining in them. It is a constant uphill battle to mortify these desires, take the long view, and trust God’s promises for the future against what our experience and intuition is telling us. This is why it is so important for Christians to read and hear the Word of God, and to pray regularly, so that God’s revelation will inform their reason by the grace of the Spirit and do battle against our natural inclinations. But as you progress in the Christian life, it truly is a beautiful thing to see how the Spirit lifts you by degrees out of the muck and filth of this world into a better way of life, in harmony with God and his created order.
- a. Sanctification is often not in the direction we want it, or in the timeframe we were hoping for, but it is no less real because it is on the Holy Spirit’s schedule. This is what Jude was alluding to in verse 1 when he said he was writing to “those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ.” We are called by the Father, beloved of the Father because of the Son, and kept for the Son by the Spirit. Jude comes back to this theme and expands on it even more movingly in his famous doxology at the end, “Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”

¹⁰ As C. S. Lewis said in chapter 2 of *Mere Christianity*, “Reality, in fact, is usually something you could not have guessed. That is one of the reasons I believe Christianity. It is a religion you could not have guessed. If it offered us just the kind of universe we had always expected, I should feel we were making it up.”

- b. True believers recognize it does not dishonor or burden us to submit to this God. Right reason tells us that we have limits that God does not. We ought not seek any station above what our Creator has given us, because we trust his great good design for all things, even though it is beyond our ability to comprehend.
- c. The Gospel tells us that God *lowered himself* into his creation to save us, that we might be exalted with him.¹¹ When our Lord's human senses were screaming pain at him from every direction, within and without, he remained steadfastly focused on the goal. We must persevere in turn, and run the race of our lives with endurance, "looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).

¹¹ Here I am thinking of Philippians 2:4-11, of course: "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."