

*<sup>8</sup> In the very same way, on the strength of their dreams these ungodly people pollute their own bodies, reject authority and heap abuse on celestial beings. <sup>9</sup> But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!' <sup>10</sup> Yet these people slander whatever they do not understand, and the very things they do understand by instinct – as irrational animals do – will destroy them. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> These people 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. <sup>13</sup> They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved for ever. <sup>14</sup> Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them: 'See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones <sup>15</sup> to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness, and of all the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against him'. <sup>16</sup> These people are grumblers and fault-finders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.*

Last week we saw Jude (or Judas) warning that certain ungodly people had slipped in unnoticed into the church and their licentious behaviour was affecting the fellowship and making a mockery of the grace of Jesus by expecting forgiveness regardless of bad lifestyle choices and sinful behaviour. In past times God dealt with these kinds of people ruthlessly by exterminating them in the flood, and with fire and brimstone in the plain of Sodom and Gomorrah. Jude carries on with instances where God intervenes to deal with sin.

Two books that are not in the Bible are alluded to here... the Testament of Moses and the Book of Enoch.

Let's look at verse 8 first.

*<sup>8</sup> In the very same way, on the strength of their dreams these ungodly people pollute their own bodies, reject authority and heap abuse on celestial beings.*

People who have the ability to communicate with the spirit world are often dreamers as well. Being able to receive direct verbal communication from Jesus in the way that, for example, Paul was spoken to, is one of the spiritual gifts - the discerning or distinguishing spirits. A dream can be a communication from God and also from evil spirits. These ungodly men were unaware of the difference between a God inspired dream and a devil inspired dream. Dreaming about lustful encounters, dreaming about having power over others, dreaming about being better than the church leaders, dreaming about being superior to angels, dreaming about denigrating and speaking evil of others - all this filth comes from outside of God. Today we have people who claim to know better what God is saying to the church. An egregious example is Steve Chalke, the BBC's go to Christian for comment who does not believe in penal substitution, biblical Inerrancy and supports same sex marriage. His heresy, supported by other liberal Christian leaders resulted in many people refusing to go to Spring Harvest anymore... which used to be an uplifting festival ruined by leaders who no longer stood on the Word of God.

Other false teachers today do not deny the doctrines of the church, but their behaviour is contrary to what Christians are expected to do. So many leaders in quite big growing churches have been caught in sexual sin, been caught enriching themselves, been caught cursing and denigrating other people both in and outside their church. In addition, some have made prophecies that haven't happened out of being deceived or out of pride, and some have expected personal obedience by creating a personality cult of leader that has exploited people and led them astray. John 14:15 simply says "if you love Me, you will keep my commandments". Believing the Word but not acting on the Word is what Jude warns the readers of his letter. Going on to the next verse.

*<sup>9</sup> But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!'*

The Testament (or Assumption) of Moses is a partially lost work, found in the Vatican in a Latin 6<sup>th</sup> century translation, that misses out the bit where Michael says, "The Lord rebuke you". Origen (185-254 AD) mentions this work saying it contains an account of the devil contesting the body of Moses. We see this reference in Zechariah 3:1-2 *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. <sup>2</sup> The Lord said to Satan, 'The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?'* The point Jude is making is that no one, even angels, should dispute

with the devil but leave it to God. Dealing with demonic forces who accuse the brethren day and night (Revelation 12:10 *Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down*) is not something to be attempted by rebuking evil spirits personally. Only Jesus who is God has the power to deal with them. Ephesians 6:10-13 *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.* We are to stand, we are not to attack. That is the job of God not man. Remember the battle belongs to the Lord.

What the devil wanted the body of Moses for is subject to some debate – some said it was because he wanted it as an object of idolatry, others because it was the body of a murderer (Moses killed an Egyptian) and others to prevent God using it later (Jesus was with Moses and Elijah at the Transfiguration).

<sup>10</sup> *Yet these people slander whatever they do not understand, and the very things they do understand by instinct – as irrational animals do – will destroy them.*

Unlike the archangel Michael who dared not speak evil of the devil, these men speak evil against those in authority and they speak of knowledge that they don't understand. True disciples of Jesus are seen by them as threats to themselves. These men were just using their wits, their basic instincts while pretending to be spiritual. Today Christians are openly mocked in some church assemblies by other Christians for being "fundamentalists", "lacking in compassion", "failing to be inclusive", "discriminating against marginalised communities" because they stand on the inerrant Word of God and refuse to accept that bits can be ignored as no longer relevant. There was booing in the Church of England General Synod when someone spoke out against same sex marriage. That is slandering what is not understood, or refusing to understand, what Scripture says. Instead, they want people to believe that what the world says is fine is also fine so far as God is concerned. That will result in their destruction. Whenever people ignore what God knows is best for mankind, things get worse, and we have seen society's morals go from bad to worse while those ignoring this are claiming things are getting better! If we believe that Jesus was present at the creation and has always existed, then the God breathed Old Testament moral commandments were communicated to Moses by God, Jesus and Holy Spirit. Consequently, when he says obey the commandments, he means those commandments. Only later Jesus revealed to Peter that the dietary laws no longer need be applied and his Spirit revealed in Hebrews 10 that the sacrifices need no longer be made as he was the final sacrifice. Hebr 10:15-18 <sup>15</sup> *The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First, he says: <sup>16</sup> 'This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.'* (Jer 31:33) <sup>17</sup> *Then he adds: 'Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.'* (Jer 31:34) <sup>18</sup> *And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.* Jude goes on to look at Old Testament examples of disobedience.

<sup>11</sup> *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.*

Cain's way is summarised in 1 John 3:12 *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.* Cain lacked faith and that gave rise to jealousy, anger and murder. While we may be concerned about the lack of faith among non-believers, so far as the church is concerned those who lack faith in the church are of greater concern if they seek to mislead people. 2 Timothy 3:1-7 *But mark this: there will be terrible times in the last days. <sup>2</sup> People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, <sup>4</sup> treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – <sup>5</sup> having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people. <sup>6</sup> They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, <sup>7</sup> always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.* Pretty much what is happening today!

Balaam was in touch with God's Holy Spirit and took the money from King Balak of Moab to curse Israel, but he couldn't curse the Israelites. Instead he advised King Balak to send Moabite women into the Israelite camp to seduce the Israelites and lead them astray into worshipping other gods and indulge in fornication. 24,000 were killed in a

plague by God. (Numbers 22-25). Balaam's sin was to lead people into sin and that he did it for money. The love of money being the root of evil. Korah resented the authority Moses had over the people and accused him of exalting himself above the people. (Numbers 16). Korah wanted power himself. Moses challenged the people to divide into two groups – were they with him or with Korah? Those with Korah were swallowed up in the ground, followed by fire from heaven burning up his supporters.

<sup>12</sup> *These people 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.* <sup>13</sup> *They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved for ever.* Some further explanation of what these people who have crept in unnoticed are like – which is pretty much self-explanatory. Freeloaders in churches have always existed – people who come to all the social events where food is involved, come to network for their businesses as they see the church as a place where they get profitable work. These people really have very little faith and see the church as place where they can get to be noticed and usually be a loud somebody, seeking to put their worldly opinions over as if these views were what everyone (that is non-Christians) believes and people should adjust their beliefs to enable non-believers to feel welcome. Christians want to welcome everybody and can be very tolerant of people with wrong opinions as they often do not want to be confrontational and turn away people. However allowing these people to be part of the church has its danger because these infiltrators have no fruit, no shame, no understanding of what being a disciple submitted or surrendered to Jesus and they will end up in darkness. Some have called this cultural appeasement and it is rife in today's churches. We now come to Enoch at last:

<sup>14</sup> *Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them: 'See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones* <sup>15</sup> *to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness, and of all the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against him'.* This is a quote from the book of Enoch chapter 1 verse 9 which contains this prophecy about what will happen. Tertullian (155-220 AD) tells us that the Book of Enoch's prophecies was preserved by Noah in the ark, and that they continued to be read until the times of the apostles. But because they contained many famous testimonies concerning Jesus Christ, the Jews out of malice suppressed and abolished the whole book in the first century AD. The Ethiopian Bible still has the book and it runs to 104 chapters (some very short) and 70 pages in my version. In essence it says God will judge mankind and there is no avoiding this. All the ungodly will be convicted and found guilty.

Lastly, we come to verse 16 <sup>16</sup> *These people are grumblers and fault-finders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.* Take note if these people are found in church. Have nothing to do with them says Paul to Timothy. How do we approach those – happily not in our congregation – whose views are plainly opposed to God? How do we call out people who are negative about their church leaders? How do we cope with boasters and flatterers? Christians can misunderstand kindness with tolerance of evil. There is a common misunderstanding about loving which includes thinking it means saying nothing to correct those in error, possibly because also a misunderstanding of the verses about judging others. God disciplines those he loves (Hebrews 12). *Judge not lest ye be judged* (Matt 7:1) also cannot be taken out of context, because it goes on in verse 2 *For in the same way as you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.* Judge rightly and you too will be judged rightly, and verse 2 says "as you judge others" which implies that we will judge others and not be wholly non-judgmental. All who claim not to judge others still do so in their hearts and being silent when error needs correction is something that they will need to give account to God. Paul, like Jude and Jesus himself in the Revelation of John are very critical of churches that tolerate evil and heresy. Scripture tells us how to deal with this, which is to confront people, though as gently as possible, by telling them what the Word of God says and not what the world says. Somehow many in the church are more concerned with climate change, social inclusion, acceptance of today's progressive cultural norms than spreading the Gospel. Jesus says of these that they have departed from their first love, allowed Jezebel in, subscribe to the teaching of Balaam, and are lukewarm. Toleration of sin under the guise of being loving and non-confrontational in the church results in sin spreading and in today's church there are exactly the same issues that affected the early church. Praise God that we have ears to hear and eyes to see what is around us, and that we can pray for guidance from Holy Spirit on how to prevent anyone slipping in unnoticed to lead people astray.

Next week Bernard will be speaking to us on a more positive note from verses 17 to 21.