

Out Of Touch With Reality Jude 8-10

Introduction:

1) The Church has always struggled in its attempt to properly balance grace and freedom, liberty and responsibility. How can I enjoy my freedom from works as the way of salvation without crossing the line into works of the flesh? Having been set free from rules, regulations and rituals as the means of redemption, do I now cast off and throw away all rules, every regulation, any ritual observances?

2) I believe there is a revival of antinomianism in the Church in America at the dawn of the 21st Century.

- Our language parrots the language of the world.
- Our dress apes the dress of the world.
- Our morals copycat the morals of the world.

3) Determined to fit in with the culture and to be relevant, we have lost and neglected God's call to be a holy (1 Peter 1:16) and special people (1 Peter 2:9).

4) We claim to be spiritual but we are not godly. We are slack in church attendance and cheap in our giving. We are frequent participants in alcohol, tobacco and profanity. We dress in a sloppy (guys) or seductive (gals) fashion. We surf the internet for pornography, drop in on a local bar every now and then, and mutilate or desecrate our body which we claim is the temple of the Holy Spirit. All the while we say, its no big deal.

5) We claim to be missional without doing missions. We claim to be engaging the culture without doing evangelism. We claim to be salt and light while actually being dirt and darkness.

6) Theology is left behind, expository preaching is lampooned and moral integrity is laughed out of court as an old fashion and outdated legalism.

7) Advocates of this "new liberty" counterpunch asking questions like, "why don't you address the real issues like pride, anger, lust, hatefulness, materialism, bigotry, gluttony, bitterness, selfishness, envy, etc;? Let me respond by saying these issues do need to be addressed. In fact I would add they must be addressed, because I am convinced they are intimately intertwined with the issues I mentioned just a moment ago. They are all sins of a common core that reveal a Church that is "out of touch with reality." Sins of the heart and sins of the flesh are part and particle of the same depraved nature. Both need the redeeming blood of Christ, both need the cleansing power of the Spirit, both need the renewing work of the Word.

Transition: Allowing the Word to go to work in Jude 8-10, the half-brother of Jesus again confronts head on the false followers of Christ who as verse 4 says, "turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ."

Building on this verse and making connection with his reminder in vs. 5-7, Jude places 3 challenges before those of us who want to stay spiritually "in touch."

I. Avoid being spiritually immoral. v. 8

- 1 Corinthians 6:19 reminds us, "do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?"

- False teachers will either deny or at least de-emphasize our ownership by God, that he purchased us out of the slave market of sin by the precious blood of His Son.
- Rather than accept God's spiritual authority over their life, they assert the personal autonomy of their own life, living as a law unto themselves. This is a mindset and a lifestyle Jude condemns and warns us to avoid, and he does so in his typical style with a triad of examples.

1) **Don't become defiled.**

- "Likewise" connects v. 8 with v. 7 and the sexual immorality of Sodom and Gomorrah.
- Jude calls these false teachers "dreamers." Rejecting the Bible as their authority, they appeal to dreams and their own imaginations as a source of revelation and justification for their immoral lifestyle.
- This is the "God told me," "I prayed about it" defense for what Jude calls "defiling the flesh." Claiming to have "a word from the Lord" does not legitimate what one says. False prophets in the Old Testament made such claims (Deut. 13:1-5; Jeremiah 23:25-32), and they were now making the same type of claims in Jude's day. Claiming an extra-biblical source of authority, they attempt to justify their immoral lifestyle. The context would point to sexual sin as the primary though not the exclusive idea. This new found freedom to indulge and feed the flesh was credited to God.
- If you choose to live loosely and immorally, lewdly and out there on the moral edge, don't look to God to justify your foolishness and immaturity. Be honest enough to point your finger at the real enabler: Yourself.

2) **Don't become defiant.**

- An immoral, unchecked lifestyle is rooted in a rebellious and unbridled spirit. Jude says false followers of Christ "reject authorities" (lit. "lordship despise"). Though this could be a reference to human or even angelic authorities, I believe Jude has in mind the authority and lordship of Jesus Christ, again connecting up with v. 4. This is not so much a theological rejection or nullifying as it is a moral and personal setting aside.
- The Christ who saves is denied His daily and practical sovereignty in your life. An inappropriate and inexcusable separation is made between Jesus as Savior and Jesus as Lord. In the daily living of life I am my own authority and lord. I decide for me, I live for me. Rebellion, pride and an arrogance that is a stench in the nostrils of God emanates from your life.
- "No one is going to tell me what to do or how to live. Not even God!" I become a believer with an attitude!

3) **Don't become disrespectful.**

- False followers of Christ "blaspheme glories" (lit. reading). Interestingly, some form of the word "blaspheme" occurs in vs. 8, 9 & 10. These false teachers "speak evil of dignitaries" (*NKJV*), "slander celestial beings" (*NIV*), "blaspheme glorious beings" (*HCSB*).

- Though Schreiner (pgs. 456-58) and Moo (pgs. 245-46) make a good case that fallen angels or demons are in view, I believe it is better to see the text as referring to good angels. These heavenly beings who sang at God's good creation (Job 38:7) and, more importantly in our context, are the guardians and givers of God's perfect moral law (Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2) are spoken of in evil tones by these lawless and rebellious reprobates. Casting off God's rightful authority over their lives, they blaspheme and slander these great beings who as Heb. 1:14 says, "are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation. If I don't need God's Word meddling in my moral life I certainly don't need his angels sticking their nose in it either. No authority of God, no advice from angels, and eventually no accountability to my brothers and sisters in the fellowship of believers. Self-centered and self-focused, my will, my way, my wants become preeminent above all other things.
- Here is the lifestyle of the immoral. Here is the lifestyle of the fool. Proverbs says it well, "when people do not accept divine guidance, they run wild. But whoever obeys the law is happy (Prov. 29:18, *NLT*).

II. Avoid being spiritually intoxicated. v. 9

- This is one of the most mysterious and difficult verses in the Bible as to its interpretation. Its application is easier to grasp, but the exact meaning Jude intended is elusive and even troubling to some.
- The actors in this spiritual drama are pretty clear.
 - 1) Michael is the archangel, the chief angel in terms of position and authority. The term archangel only occurs one other time in Scripture in 1 Thessalonians 4:16. No name is associated there with the title, though most believe Michael is in view. In Daniel 10:13, 21, he is called "one of the chief princes" who came to help Daniel, and in Daniel 12:1 he is called "the great prince" who watches over Israel. In Revelation 12:7 it is Michael who fights against the dragon (Satan) and defeats him, driving him out of heaven.
 - 2) The devil is Satan, Lucifer, the greatest of all God's creatures, who fell from heaven due to his pride and carried 1/3 of the angelic host with him (Rev. 12:4). These are the demons who do his bidding.
 - 3) Moses is the great leader of Israel. The record of his death is found in Deuteronomy 34. We are told the Lord buried him and that no one knows where his grave is (v. 6).
- This verse then describes an event not recorded in biblical revelation. Scholars believe the story may have been found in a non-canonical book called *The Assumption of Moses* or *The Testament of Moses*, though the account has not been preserved in any writing in our possession today. Our best guess is that he wanted the body of Moses as a potential relic for idolatry, and/or he challenged Moses' right to be buried by God because he had murdered an Egyptian.
- Now before we move to apply the text, let me raise an important question for our thoughtful consideration:

How Should We Respond When Biblical Authors Cite Non-Biblical Sources?

- 1) Recognize that this actually occurs:
 Jude 9 – *The Assumption of Moses*
 Jude 14 – *The Book of Enoch*
 Acts 17:28 - Paul citing pagan poets and philosophers
 - 2) Recognize that all truth is God’s truth, wherever it is found.
 - 3) Recognize that the 66 books of the Bible, though true, do not contain **all** the truth (for example $2+2=4$ is true but not in the Bible).
 - 4) The Holy Spirit may and did direct the biblical writers to a variety of sources in the writing of their books (cf. Luke 1:1-4).
 - 5) To cite or quote a part of a non-biblical source does not require that one believe that all of it is correct, or that it is inspired by God.
 - 6) With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the early church came to recognize and compile the books of the Bible which truly belong. This means books not recognized as inspired were excluded.
 - 7) The 66 books of the Bible belong not because the early church said they belonged, but rather they belong (are inspired) and the early church **recognized** this to be the case.
 - Having dealt with the technical details, what did Jude want us to learn from this fascinating account?
- 1) **Know your place in God’s economy**
 - Michael is an archangel, a warrior angel, the greatest angel. But, he is still just an angel. He is a:
 Creature not the Creator
 Servant not the Sovereign Lord
 Minister not the Master
 - As great as he is, he knows his proper place in God’s plan, something false teachers do not. He is not his own authority, master or lord. He does not set policy and make up the rules as he wishes. There is no arrogance, haughtiness rebellion or pride running thru his angelic being.
 - If this is how Michael sees himself, who do you think, who do we think, we are?!
 - 2) **Know your power is in God’s authority**
 - Michael, as you would expect, is an excellent student of the Word of God. Knowing the word, he is ready for war. He engages the devil in battle, and following the model of Jesus discovered in Matt. 4 / Luke 4 when he was tempted by Satan, he quotes the Word of God.
 - “The Lord rebuke you” comes from Zechariah 3:2, another occasion when Satan made accusation against one of God’s servants, a man by the name of Joshua who was at that time the high priest. Just as the Lord rebuked Satan and vindicated Joshua, he also rebuked Satan and vindicated Moses and gave victory to Michael.
 - Our authority for spiritual warfare is in God not ourselves. In our own strength the devil will whip our tails every time! Perhaps Michael could have taken on the devil given who he is. But he did not because he knew the true source of his authority. In our case, to take on Satan is sheer

stupidity and folly. You want to have victory over the evil one? Know your power is in God's authority. Know you can overcome him as Rev. 12:11 says, "by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of your testimony," a testimony that says my confidence is in Christ not me, my authority is in God. Anything other than this is a clear sign you are full of yourself, spiritually intoxicated with who you think you are. To think like this is a certain formula for disaster. Like Satan, you are setting yourself up for a great fall.

III. Avoid being mentally ignorant. v.10

- At the heart of false teaching is wrong thinking. Human depravity does not prevent us from using our minds, but it does prevent us from using it correctly. Animals think, but they think like animals. False followers of Christ think, but they too think like animals and eventually live like animals. In what they say and what they do, they plummet to the level of "brute beast" of "unreasoning animals" (NIV).

Transition: If we would avoid the seductive and enticing traps that would enslave us to a life or the level of an animal, what must we do in terms of a godly and truly spiritual strategy?

1) Guard your mouth

- Jude addresses first the fruit rather than the root of wrong thinking and living on the level of an animal.
- They "speak evil" (Lit. "blaspheme") of whatever they do not know. Arrogant and ignorant, they slander what they do not even know or understand, a reference in the context to the angels of v. 8. Talking without thinking, talking without all the facts, talking from emotion, pride, and selfish desires, they make themselves look like fools even as they talk like fools.

Application:

- Just because you think it does not mean it is smart to say it.
- If you don't say it, you won't have to apologize for it.
- Never forget, the tongue is an organ of the body that is vitally connected to another organ of the body: the heart. As Proverbs 23:7 so importantly reminds us, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he."

Translation: Therefore not only do we guard our mouth, we must guard what controls the mouth.

2) Guard you mind

- False followers of Christ do not think biblically, they think naturally. (cf 1 Cor 2:14 ff) They do not think in moral categories, but live by their emotional impulses, just like an animal.
- Whatever naturally, like an unreasoning (*aloga*) animal they understand, they corrupt and destroy themselves. Jude's irony is striking.
 - Claiming a higher spiritual understanding, their knowledge does not rise even above that of the animals.
 - Claiming liberty and freedom they are slaves and prisoners of their own lust and basic instincts.

- Claiming to be right, they could not be more wrong.
- Claiming to live for God, they live for themselves.
- Claiming to rise higher, they actually sink lower.
- Saying we are free in Christ, they become chained and shackled by their own selfish desires, wants and passions.
- Professing to exalt Christ, by their lives they embarrass Him and bring shame to His Name.
- “I’m expressing myself.” “I’m being me.”
 God’s Son did not die for you to express yourself.
 God’s Son did not die for you to be you.
 God’s Son died that you would exalt Him.
 God’s Son died that you would be like Him.
 God’s Son died for you to live for Him (Phil. 1:21).

Conclusion: 1) Do you want to get in touch with reality, with true, genuine, spiritual reality? Then let’s get fanatical, fanatical about grace and fanatical about holiness. Let’s be zealous and passionate for high moral standards, personal purity and biblical holiness. Let’s run from the works of the flesh which Paul says “are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, lewdness, idolatry (idols of the heart), sorcery, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, heresies, envy, drunkenness, orgies (of any sort) and the like...” (Gal. 5:19-21).

2) Yes let’s run from these, but let’s then run after love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, humility, and Spirit-control (Gal. 5:22-26).

3) Yes, let us say with the great apostle, “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” (Gal. 6:14).