

Spotting the Counterfeits

Jude 1:8-10

(preached Pine Grove 3/11/18; Sunday AM)

Introduction

In 2010, news media members in Philadelphia were invited by US Custom and Immigration officials to a salvage yard outside of the city.

When the media arrived, they noticed thousands of Rolex watches lying in the middle of the parking lot.

The Rolexes had been taken from the home of Bihn Cam Tran who had been manufacturing fake Rolexes in his home for years.

Once the news media arrived, Customs officials gave the signal and a large steam roller began to roll toward and eventually over those 7000 watches crushing them under its weight.

The staged destruction was meant to get the attention of anyone in the counterfeiting business, who may try to pass off fake watches, purses, sunglasses or all sort of other counterfeit goods..

Tran, the mastermind behind these fake Rolexes was sentenced to 6 years in federal prison and ordered to pay Rolex 2.2 million dollars in restitution..

Unfortunately, the heavy fine and the display of destroying all those fake watches had little effect on the counterfeiting industry..

In 2016, \$460 billion dollars worth of counterfeit goods were bought and sold last year....

Purses and handbags lead the way in the United States, followed by watches and jewelry, then electronics, clothing and shoes.

Though customs officials and local police try to track down counterfeits, it is simply too much to police...

A recent undercover investigation by a news crew revealed that fake purses can be bought with relative ease in New York City, even though counterfeit sales on the street have been reduced drastically...

Now, it needs to be said that some counterfeit customers willingly buy the fake stuff in order to fool others..

However, there are also people who desire the genuine product but are sold a counterfeited one instead...

And that creates a huge problem..

The book of Jude is concerned with counterfeit Christianity..

And it is mainly concerned with those who push counterfeit Christianity...

We can call these people false teachers or apostates, which refers to their falling away from the true faith...

Now I remind you that it is impossible for the truly saved to lose their salvation, and so apostate teachers are not those who were saved but walked away from the faith.

Instead, apostates are those who in the church, but never were saved...

They hung around the church..

They may have even professed love for the church and for Christ, but they leave without ever trusting in Christ...

We can understand these people by what we see in John 6, where verse 66 tells us that many of Jesus' disciples withdrew from him after some time...

These weren't true disciples.

They were people who were drawn to Christ because of his miracles or teaching or healing, but they were committed to Him...

They liked the side show, but they weren't to pay the price to get into the circus..

Apostates and false teachers are like this..

They show interest in the things of God, but they have not interest in submitting to the authority of God..

But their falling away and departure isn't the worst part..

The worst part is that they want to take people with them into their false religions...

Well, Jude was concerned about these false teaching apostates, so he wrote a letter to the church in 68-69 AD calling them to be on the lookout for these apostates and false teachers...

These counterfeit preachers and pastors and priests and clergy who aren't merely annoyances to the church but seek to destroy the true church with their error...

And for the past month or so, we have been in this book trying to educate ourselves in 2018 on what these counterfeits look like...

And Jude began giving us a description of them in verse 4...

4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand [d]marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

So far, we know that these counterfeit teachers are ungodly, take advantage of grace by living in sin, and resistant to the Lordship of Jesus Christ...

But once we got these 3 traits of the false teacher, Jude gave us 3 warnings of coming judgment to anyone who fakes their Christianity..

And the 3 warnings were clear...

If you refuse to believe in the Lord as Israel did in the OT and as false teachers do, you should only expect coming judgment..

If you refuse to stay with the Lord as some rebellious angels did and as false teachers do, you should expect only coming judgment.

If you refuse to repent of your sin as the people of Sodom and Gommorrah did and as false teachers do, you should expect only coming judgment...

And so we have 3 characteristics of the false teacher, and 3 warnings to the false teacher, and today in verses 8-10, we are going to get 3 practices of the false teacher...

In terms of our outline of the book of Jude so far, we could call these...

VI. The Actions of the Apostates (8-10)

So let's read verses 8-10...

8 Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile [i]angelic majesties. 9 But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" 10 But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are [j]destroyed.

As we get to to verse 8, Jude gets back to his description of these false teachers...

And we know that because Jude often calls false teachers and apostates, "these men"..

You see it here in verse 8, in verse 10, verse 12, verse 14, verse 16, verse 19...

False teachers and apostates are simply a category of themselves in the church...

And in verse 8 before we get to the 3 actions of the apostates, Jude makes an important note about how these counterfeits work...

Take note of the word ‘dreaming’ in verse 8...

This is a great clue into helping us solve the mystery of false teachers...

They are dreamers, but why does Jude call them that?

Well, let me give you a little insight into the mind of a false teacher...

Remember, they sneak in the church but their goal is to get an audience..

They aren’t content with just being in the background...

They want attention so that they can lead people astray...

Well if you are a false teacher, you have to do something to get attention to separate yourself from the ordinary everyday Christian teacher or preacher..

So what these people often do is claim a direct line to God...

They say things like, “God gave me a vision”..

God spoke to me in a dream.

God told me to tell you this..

And unassuming people in the church are duped into thinking that these people are super spiritual because of their direct connection to God...

Turn on the televangelist...

He doesn't want to teach you the Bible to lead you to Christ..

He wants to impress you with his super spiritual walk with God...

For him, reading and studying and explaining the Bible is too boring or lacks the wow factor that his ministry...

So he gets on TV and tells his listeners that God is peaking to him in dreams and visions and that is wanting to do something amazing through him...

And what do people do?

They flock to someone who God is speaking to..

They send money to someone that God is giving visions to..

They support ministries where God is giving truth through dreams and other mystical methods...

You see, most people prefer experiences over truth...

They want to hear personal stories instead of the teaching of the word of God...

They want to hear about dreams and feelings and visions and goosebumps...

You see, false teachers know that dreams and visions and words from God sell...

While the reading, studying and teaching of the word of God doesn't...

This is why churches that give you an experience of music or drama or low lights are packed on Sunday mornings, while churches that point you to read and study and obey the Word of God struggle for members..

In 2018, the average church goer wants to be entertained...

And guess what?

Dreams, visions, and experiences of God talking to people are entertainment...

And that is why false teachers are dreamers...

You see, they could read and study the Bible and teach the Word of God, but why would you do that if you believe the Word of God...

So, they dream up a God in their own head and fill that God with words that they also dream up..

And they sell that false god to the church and undiscerning church people eat it up...

I can't watch those men on TV, but if you can stomach it, turn them on for 10 minutes and it won't be long until you hear about some dream or vision or word that God spoke to them...

And the reason for that is simple...

It creates an audience and fools people into listening to such a spiritual person...

I will tell you right now to be aware of people who call themselves teachers who love their dreams, their visions, their special words from God...

Their dreams are at best their own imaginations or at worst, demonic dreams...

And in case you won't take my word about the danger of dreamers, let me take you to a couple passages in the OT....

The first stop is in Deuteronomy 13, verses 1-5...

1 “[a]If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,’ 3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 You shall follow the Lord your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. 5 But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has [b]counseled [c]rebellion against the Lord your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of [d]slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from among you.

False prophets and false dreamers were a problem in Israel...

And God is crystal clear here about what Israel should do in response to someone who claimed that God spoke to them in a dream..

Don't listen to them.

Instead stay with the words of the Lord..

Let me go to one more place in the OT...

Jeremiah 23:25-32...

This whole passage has to do with God's anger over false shepherds and prophets in Israel....

Verse 25...

25 "I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy falsely in My name, saying, 'I had a dream, I had a dream!' 26 How long? Is there anything in the hearts of the prophets who prophesy falsehood, even these prophets of the deception of their own heart, 27 who intend to make My people forget My name by their dreams which they relate to one another, just as their fathers forgot My name because of Baal? 28 The prophet who has a dream may relate his dream, but let him who has My word speak My word in truth. What does straw have in common with grain?" declares the Lord. 29 "Is not My word like fire?" declares the Lord, "and like a hammer which shatters a rock? 30 Therefore behold, I am against the prophets," declares the Lord, "who steal My words from each other. 31 Behold, I am against the prophets," declares the Lord, "who use their tongues and declare, 'The Lord declares.' 32 Behold, I am against those who have prophesied false dreams," declares the Lord, "and

related them and led My people astray by their falsehoods and reckless boasting; yet I did not send them or command them, nor do they furnish this people the slightest benefit,” declares the Lord.

In case you were wondering, God takes dreamers seriously...

He takes people who claim to speak his word for Him seriously as well...

I will simply say this...

Don't listen to dreamers and visions seers and God hearers, listen to those who point you to the Bible and then teach you the true words of God...

I could preach on and on about this...

There is so much of this going on today in the church, and it breaks my heart while making my blood pressure rise...

There are so many men and women who ignore the study and teaching and obedience to the word of God in favor of paying attention to dreamers who pose as these super spiritual messengers of God...

It sickens me.

My stomach literally hurts when I listen to this people..

And my heart aches when I see people following them...

I could preach on the dangers of dreams and visions for hours, but we must move on....

Simply know that false teachers love their dreams and visions and own words way more than they love the Word of God....

So be warned.

Now, the fact that they are dreamers is not even one the 3 actions that these men practice...

But their dreams are the foundation of the three actions that Jude is about to list in the second half of verse 8...

You see, since these false teachers dream up their own God and their own description of what he is like, they also dream up their own rules of conduct....

And we see some of that conduct in the last half of verse 8...

These men #1 - DEFILE THE FLESH..

The simple explanation for this is that false teachers are immoral in their conduct...

WE have talked about this before back in verse 4 as we identified false teachers as ungodly men...

Again, it is worth noting that these men don't defile the flesh in public...

They are too smart for that...

Instead, they commit immoral acts in private...

Now, they may be masters at coverup, but eventually the truth about their lives is revealed for all to see.

And often times, it is their immorality that leads them to lead others astray...

In other words, their immoral hearts lead them to search for more victims within the church...

Since we will see this action of morality again later in Jude's letter, let me simply say that 1 action of the apostate....

1 Fault of the False teacher is their immorality...

They defile their flesh...

A second action of the apostate is this...

#2 - THEY REJECT AUTHORITY.

This is also a repeat of something we saw in verse 4 as false teachers reject the Lordship of Jesus Christ ..

And the reasons they reject authority is that they have a desire to be their own boss...

To make their own rules..

To form their own God in their mind...

To dream their own dreams and have their own visions and hear what they want to hear directly from the Lord...

False teachers and apostates are filled with the same motivation of all unbelievers...

They want to be masters of the their own fate...

They want to determine their own way...

This is the great deception of our age as we tell children if they put their mind to anything, that they can do it...

It sounds good and it sounds nice and it sounds encouraging, but that advice comes from someone who doesn't have a correct view of the authority of God...

With God, all things are possible...

But without Him, nothing is possible even if you put your mind to it...

We all live under the authority and sovereignty of God, and when we reject God's authority, we reject God..

False teachers don't like the idea of Lordship, they don't like the idea of authority, and they definitely don't like being told what to do either by God or by man...

So keep your eye on people in the church who resist authority...

Who don't respond well to being taught...

Who like to make their own rules and resist being told what to do..

You may be dealing with a false teacher....

A third and final action of the false teacher is found at the end of verse 8, and explained better in verses 9-10...

False teachers defile the flesh, reject authority and revile angelic majesties..

Though this final action is the longest one, I only have a short time to help you understand it...

But let me begin with an example of this action we see today, and I think that will go a long way into helping you understand this practice of the false teacher...

If you ever watched many faith healers and prosperity teachers and health and wealth pastors, they use a phrase often in their “ministries”..

You will often hear them say things like....

I rebuke you Satan...

I bind you demons..

I cast you out of this place devil...

Let me give you a quote from a false teacher named Paula White who said this in 2017 after her divorce and inappropriate relationship with fellow false teacher Benny Hinn..

She was speaking at a conference by fellow false teacher TD Jakes in Orlando..

And the point of her message is that she was on the way back into ministry after a divorce, after an affair, after an addiction to prescription medication...

“I came to put every devil on notice ... I’m getting my dream back, I’m getting my prophesy back, I’m getting my vision back, I’m getting my anointing back, I’m getting my strength back.”

Paula White is not the only one to make such statements of rebuking the devil or putting him on notice...

There are other false teachers today who speak directly to Satan...

One famous one says all the time that we should tell the devil that He is not ruining our life...

Let me remind you and them...

Micheal is the head of at the angels...

Jude calls him the archangel, but Michael wouldn’t rebuke Satan even though he was a fallen angel...

Instead, Micheal left the rebuking to God...

But the problem with false teachers is that they rebuke and revile and blaspheme a spiritual world that they no nothing about...

Not only do they reject the authority, they ridicule other creations of God...

Now look, is Satan my enemy?

Absolutely.

Are the demons the enemies of God?

You bet.

Do I have a right to rebuke them?

Not a chance.

Satan, though fallen, was one of God's angels...

And Satan though evil is still under God's authority...

We see that in the book of Job and other places in the Scriptures where Satan can do no more than God allows..

In light of that, how dare I and anyone else to act as if we have authority over him...

If the head angel won't rebuke Satan, no one else should be arrogant enough to do it either..

Yet, the visible church...

The church that the world sees is full of people who revile angelic majesties...

And what is the motivation is doing this?

Same as the motivation for sharing dreams and visions...

To gain a following...

If someone can rebuke Satan, people assume they must be super spiritual and they gladly hop on board their false ministries...

So sad.

So aggravating and enraging to me...

Now, let me make a footnote here because many of you may be wondering...

What is this deal with Michael and Satan arguing over Moses' body?

And I glad you asked and the simple answer is "I don't know."

The Bible never speaks of this event..

We know from the book of Deuteronomy that no one knows where Moses was buried, but we aren't ever given an explanation of this confrontation between Michael and Satan...

Why were they arguing over Moses body?

It's likely that Satan wanted to make an idol of out the body of Moses to lead Israel to worship a man over God...

No one know the reason for the dispute...

The point here is that even in a dispute with Satan, Michael refused to rebuke Satan, even though false teachers do it with ease...

And then notice the end of verse 10...

10 But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are [j]destroyed.

The incredible irony of the false teacher is that he claims to have great insight into God...

Great understanding of the spiritual world...

Great power to hear directly from God and great power to rebuke the devil...

Yet despite all this spiritual power and understanding, they often are trapped by the simplest of sins..

The assumption is that someone who was so in touch with God and the spiritual would be the least likely to fall into common sins like adultery and greed and immorality...

But the reality is that false teachers are often destroyed by these sins...

And the reason for that is that they aren't controlled by the Spirit of God by rather by their animal instincts...

Let me give you a simple thought...

I grew up watching Mighty Mouse cartoons...

He was this great mouse with super strength and super power and super intelligence, but in one episode, he got caught trying to take the cheese from a simple everyday mouse trap...

And the moral of the cartoon is that mighty mouse wasn't mighty when it came to cheese...

Now that is silly but that is the truth about these supposed super spiritual false teachers...

They look like super Christians, but they act like the most lost unbelievers....

Conclusion

So church be on guard for folks who come along in the church and talk about their dreams and visions and special words from God...

Be on guard for folks who live immorally behind the scenes...

Be on guard for folks who reject authority in their life..

And be on guard for folks who are so ignorant that they ignore what the Bible says and rebuke angelic majesties...

Look, the war for the truth is real..

Your calling is to be a good soldier by being able to identify the enemy...

Your calling is also to be a good enough soldier that you aren't lead astray by the enemy..

But your calling also is to be a soldier for the Lord..

If not you stand as an enemy of God...

And if you are an enemy, you have but one possible outcome...

Defeat and judgment...

Today is the day to be a part of the winning side...

To replace the coming judgment with a coming reward..

To replace a lake of fire with a home in heaven..

There are but two sides in the war for God's truth...

What side do you stand on today, and how do you know?

Let us pray.