

Title: The Coming of the Lord
Text: Jude 14-16
Theme: The judgment of the Lord on heretics
Series: Jude
Prop Stmt: There is no hope for an unrepentant heretic

When we started this series in Jude, I mentioned that it is possible (probable) that most of you had never heard a sermon from Jude before. Perhaps because this book is full of warnings and people tend to tire of those, but it may also be because there are some tough passages like this one. Jude is using a prophesy from the book Enoch as proof of the judgment against these false teachers and he appeals to this prophecy, just like he appeals to the other arguments that he just made from the O.T. that Dave covered last week. But, there is no book of Enoch in the O.T. Hmmm.

What is the book of Enoch?

Where did it come from?

Is it a lost book of the Bible that should have been included in Scripture?

If so, are there other books that we don't know about?

If not, then why did Jude quote from it?

If Jude quoted from a book that should not be in the Bible in the same way he quoted other things that are in the Bible, then maybe Jude should not be in the Bible.

This all sounds a lot like those DaVinci code books and movies that came out about 18-20 years ago? I am going to explain this at the outset and then we will work our way through this text.

The book of Enoch was in circulation amongst the Jews in Jude's day. It was written in the time between the two testaments (inter-testamentall period) and was obviously not written by Enoch who was the great-grandfather of Noah. It was well known to the Jews, but it was never considered to be, nor accepted as being part of the Jewish Scriptures (O.T.). Jude quotes from the book of 1 Enoch (there are more than one) and he treats that statement as being authoritative since that statement accurately reflects God's truth. That does not mean that everything in the book(s) of Enoch are true, but that statement is. Like other books in the Apocrypha there are some things in them that are true, but many things that aren't. They can be interesting to read, but are not Scripture. There are several examples in Scripture when a source outside of Scripture is quoted. Paul quoted Aratus in Acts 17.28 and Epimenides in Titus 1.12 and he certainly did not consider everything those guys wrote as being true. But, didn't Jude refer to this as a prophecy? Yes, but so did Caiaphas (John 15.11) and Caiaphas was an unbeliever. The Enoch books and other books called the Apocrypha were considered to be valuable, but were never considered to be Scripture. Simply put, Jude quoted "from a part of the work that he considered to be true."¹ But, why did he use that quote here and what was his point?

1. **The Lord is Coming Back** (14-15)

¹ Taken from Tom Schreiner's The New American Commentary, vol.37, p.470.

The reputation of the gospel, the reputation of the church and the reputation of Christ are all bound up together. We know from the life of Christ, that he always had enemies. Herod wanted to kill him as a baby. The Sanhedrin wanted to kill him as an adult. But, what had to be one of the most perplexing and disturbing events for the disciples was the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot. There in the Garden of Gethsemane comes Judas, leading a band of soldiers. According to Mark 14, Judas gave them orders. *"The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard."* (v.44) For three years, Judas had been one of the 12, and now, on this night, he is not only one of the enemies of Christ, but he is leading the enemies of Christ. It had to be stunning to the rest of the disciples and the subject of countless conversations for the rest of their lives. We can understand why there are people who never understood Christ would hate Christ. He will not share his throne with anyone. But, when there is someone who looks like a follower of Christ and he uses that trust and relational capital for his own advantage and you discover that you were being played, it is really hard to handle.

I helped a guy from the church get a job with a friend of mine outside of the church because I believed what the guy told me. When a pastor says that there is a guy worth hiring, that should mean something. I found out, a little late, that the guy lied to me. This all came out after he stole from my friend's business. When someone, in the church, is deceitful and is in a position of leadership and is using that position to teach false doctrine and is misrepresenting the Lord we know the hurt and damage that is done and we are left with picking up what feels like body parts and emotional pieces. Some of you sleep with white noise. White noise is designed to drown out anything else. There are so many examples of celebrity Christians who have made false prophecies, who have failed morally, who have been terrible people to work with, all of whom act as if they are above accountability. After all, they are the personality that the organization depends on. Combine that with the scenes from the riot at Capitol Hill where people with crosses and Bibles are part of a mob that is beating police officers? All of this contributes to the white noise of hypocrisy that threatens to drown out the gospel and silence the truth church. Here is what Jude reminds us of.

The Lord is coming back and it is not just to judge the world. He will judge every false teacher and every person who uses and abuses the church. This judgment will be terrifying and sobering. Jesus plays for keeps. For every false teacher, this event will be catastrophic, for the Lord is jealous for his bride and will cause those who abuse her, to face the music. Angels announced his first coming, but the angelic host, the army of the Lord will accompany him on his return. When the Bible speaks of the Lord of hosts, it is referring to this aspect of the Lord's authority. The Lord Jesus is the commander in chief of the heavenly army that not only numbers in the tens of thousands times tens of thousands, but these angelic beings are indestructible. Wow, talk about being on the wrong side of the law, or the wrong side of history or on the wrong team. The Lord is coming back and part of it won't be pretty. The word, "behold" gives us the sense that the return of Christ will be sudden and stunning. No enemy of Christ will escape.

A. to execute judgment on all

This judgment is no slap on the wrist. This is divine wrath poured out on rebellious and arrogant people. There are plenty of examples of this in Scripture; the flood, the incinerating of Sodom and Gomorrah, the plagues in Egypt, the Red Sea destruction of Pharaoh's army, the fall of

Jericho, the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and the Romans. The judgment of God is real, it is terrifying and it is certain. Do you believe this? Does this help you understand what happened in the Garden of Gethsemane?

B. to prove his enemies wrong

the next phrase, “to convict all the ungodly” speaks of the undeniable evidence that Christ will display that will render every unbeliever completely defenseless. Whatever excuse one may think they have for rebellion will be undone. On that day, every enemy of Christ will be speechless. There will have no argument and no excuse. This is similar to what Paul said in Romans 3.19 when he says that every mouth will be stopped and the whole world will be held accountable to God.

C. to hold them accountable

Jude is describing what is going to happen to all the ungodly (a term that he uses several times which means – those without God). The ungodly are condemned for what they say and what they do. He states this because he is proving that the false teachers are not going to get away with what they are doing. There is no clearing the search history in God’s database for the ungodly. Every word, “*all of the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him*” will be used to prove their guilt and the justice of their condemnation. No one will claim innocence or claim to being unjustly accused. This world is full of people who at the highest levels of government and business as well as at the lowest levels of society live as if they can create or recreate God’s laws of sexuality, gender, marriage, and just plain honesty. When someone feels as if they can get away with it, they are believing a lie. They can’t, forever. And Jude uses this to point out that false teachers are going to face God’s judgment for the destruction they brought upon God’s church.

Why does God not bring swift judgment on false teachers? Why doesn’t God execute swift judgment on all ungodly words and actions? Isn’t that one of the biggest heartaches of God’s people and one of the themes of Peter and Paul? What are we supposed to do when false teachers appear to be getting away with murder? On this day, beloved, we need to consider that day.

Last week I met a brother from the Crimean region of Russia. He grew up in the communist era and like all young men, he had to serve in the Russian army. His name is Vasyli. Vasyli professed faith in Christ and was baptized before he was sent off to the army. All of documents said, “Christian” on them. As a Christian he was subjected to all sorts of abuse. His instructors had to break him of his Christianity. One night he was forcibly removed from the barracks around 2.30 am and was taken to a dark room where he could only see the faint outline of faces from the light from the cigarettes they were smoking. The questioning and threats began and got worse and worse. When he refused to renounce Christ, someone hit him across the mouth with a bat or club of sorts, breaking all of the teeth in the front of his mouth. This abuse reached its apex when he was taken into a room where the officer had a gun and simply told him that if he did not renounce Christ, he would shoot him, right there. Vasyli was engaged to be married. He had dreams of a life, like us. But in that moment, he simply said, “Which corner of the room do you

want me to stand in so you can shoot me?” Think about it. Would you rather be one of the interrogators, or Vasily? Back then, it looks as if all power is in the hands of men who can do whatever they want. But on this day, the real power is in the hands of God and on this day, who would you rather be? The false teachers act as if they are a law unto themselves. But, Christ is returning with his army and the false teachers will be held accountable.

2. Words matter (16)

False teachers are described by Jude as being grumblers and malcontents. Grumbling is the expression of heart that is discontent. Grumbling describes the words of a person who is expressing hatred at God or disbelief in the goodness of God or rebellion against the sovereignty of God. There is no point in sugar coating this. This is hard to hear and humbling to admit, but we need to. Facing this and dealing with it is going to be good for our souls. So, let's allow the Spirit of God to use the Word of God and expose this. Grumbling is so common and so expected, most of us do not realize how offensive this is to God. As a parent, a manager, a teacher in school, a co-worker and sometimes a spouse, you feel the cumulative weight and pull of being worn down and deflated by the relentless dribble of others who give themselves to complaining all the time. You hear people say, “I have to get myself away from all of this negativity.” But, as much as we hate being the recipients of grumbling, we are all very capable of singing in the choir of grumblers. Grumbling is assumed and expected, but not by God. God hates grumbling and he responds to it severely. It is that offensive.

Read Numbers 11.1, 4-5; 14.1-4

Now, let's look at Numbers in view of Jude 16 and see what we learn.

There is a difference between whining, lamenting the hardship you are facing and grumbling. Lamenting can be godly. We have a book on it. Working through grief and crying out to God for help is right. But grumbling is arrogance. Grumbling is unbelief in God's goodness or greatness. Grumbling, like murmur, is a word that sounds like what it sounds like. The children of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron, but Moses and Aaron were not their ultimate target. God was. Grumbling is a clear fruit of rebellion and unbelief. Grumbling is not godly, it is ungodly. Grumblers do not speak the truth, or the whole truth. You brought us out here in the desert to die! Grumblers make accusations without evidence, knowing that the power of the accusation is enough to create problems. It is like Absalom at the gate telling the citizens of Israel that if he were king he would listen to their problems, unlike his father David. But, why do grumblers have so much influence? Why are we so prone to give our hearts and ears to grumblers? How do false teachers get traction? Again, I think it goes back to Genesis 3. Adam and Eve had it all but having it all will never make you happy, if you think that you deserve to be God, which is the most absurd thing in the universe! This much is clear. Grumbling gets attention and people tend to crave attention. Grumbling gives the illusion that the grumbler is wiser, smarter and more gifted than the bumbling idiot who is in charge.

Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt!? What have you been smoking? Think about that. What kind of a leader would a crowd of grumblers choose? Grumblers are skilled at pointing out every fault, even the ones that do not exist, but they are abysmal at developing any legitimate

plans to address it. What is it that unifies the grumblers? They are unified by their dissatisfaction with Moses (God). How sticky is grumbling? I.e. what is the long-term prospect of holding a group together by common complaints? If the relationship is formed and held together by a common complain, then you always have to find something else or someone else to complain about in order to keep any semblance of unity. That is why grumblers end up being cannibals. When they run out of others to attack and now they have formed their own group, they always resort to attacking one another. After all, the problem is not out there, it is in here. So, if they chose a leader and a group of them headed back to Egypt (something Moses may have fantasized about), how long would it take for them to face conflicts and disagreements? 5-6 minutes? Is God going to give them water from a rock, manna every day and open the Red Sea to get across? Is Egypt going to welcome them back with open arms? They would never make it back. They would all be dead in the desert in less than 2 weeks. These grumblers are raving lunatics, but in the moment, all logic is thrown to the wind and they prey upon weaker people who are easily influenced and if left unaddressed will do serious damage to other people. Jude is warning us that these kind of people get into the church and they get an audience in the church and the result is devastating. They create ill will amongst the people, they tear down the leadership and the result is people have crusty hearts toward God.

We are prone to disbelieve God and prone to believe ourselves. Therefore, we are prone to disbelieve any authority and prone to believe anyone who makes much of us by tearing down the authority. There is nothing supernatural about grumbling. It takes no special gift or skill. Not only can anyone do it, basically everyone does it. At the same time, there is nothing about grumbling that looks like Jesus, smells like Jesus and reflects the gospel. People who are not characterized by grumbling do not look like this world. Therefore, when someone in the church is a grumbler, Jude is saying, "watch out, that person could be toxic." Tolerating grumbling in my own life opens the door for me to be influenced by and accepting of other grumblers as if this is okay. This is not to say that the leadership of a church is perfect – it isn't. But, the gospel is a gospel of grace and when we come to faith in Christ, we become a people whose lives become marked by grace. That doesn't mean that we tolerate sin, it means that we stop living with a chip on our shoulder, with a snarky criticism that constantly finds fault and therefore, no one is ever good enough. There is a mile-wide difference between speaking the truth in love in order to build up and help and grumbling and tearing down and seeking to destroy. When leadership is delusional and believes itself to be perfect then all disagreements or suggestions are crushed. When the leadership recognizes that only Jesus is perfect then the leadership is open to and welcoming of helpful suggestions and healthy disagreements. But you know people whose nose is out of joint, no matter what. They are loud-mouth boasters and they show favoritism to those who listen to them in order to gain an advantage.

When Jude warns about false teachers I think that some of you may initially feel a bit intimidated because you do not think that you have some of the nuanced theological training to be able to spot some of these errors. Don't sell yourself short. You know how to spot a grumbler.

What do we do:

- 1) Deal with our own tendency to grumble. Ask those who are the closest to you if you are prone to grumbling. That takes humility, but ask and if they say yes, don't grumble about

it. Identify it, confess it, and learn to pray. Grumblers do not pray. They grumble to others, but do not talk to God. If you struggle with grumbling, learn to pray.

- 2) Do not give grumblers oxygen. Do not listen to them. Kindly confront them and challenge them to be humble and pray.
- 3) Enjoy grace! Be thankful for Jesus, the gospel and your church.