SEE, THE LORD IS COMING

Jude 1:5-16

Key Verse: 1:14

“Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: ‘See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy one.”

In the last lesson, we thought about the significance of contending for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. Apostasy was serious in Jude’s day and is more serious in our time. In verse 4, Jude pointed out certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago and who were godless, changing the grace of God into a licence for immorality and denied Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. Today’s passage, 5-16, is the main body of this letter as the extension of verse 4. In this passage ,Jude vividly describes the lives of “certain” or “these men”, the apostates of Jude’s day, their ungodly lives, and Enoch’s prophecy of the Lord’s coming to judge everyone and to convict all the ungodly. In light of this may we continually learn how to contend for the faith.

**First, the lives of these men (5-13).** Through verses 5-7, we could gain some insight into the condemnation upon certain men by looking at three past judgments that God has made on apostates, unbelieving Jews, the angels who did not keep their positions, and immoral and perverted Gentiles. We were warned about our unbelief, pride and compromise with sexual immorality and perversion, which are so prevalent in our time.

Then verse 8 says, “In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings.” In this verse Jude says, “these dreamers.” The normal word for dream is in Greek *onar*. Here the word “dreamers” is related to the Greek word, *enupnion*. It’s a word in the New Testament associated with visions and prophesies.

At Pentecost, Apostle Peter prophesied in Acts 2:17, “old men will dream dreams” in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, quoting the words of Joel 2:28. That would be good hopeful dreams. We remember Joseph’s dream through which God revealed that he would be a ruler of the world. Then what kind of dreamers are these dreamers? Deuteronomy 13:1-5 say, “If a prophet, or one who foretells by dream, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, ‘Let us follow other gods’ (gods you have not known) ‘and let us worship them,’ you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him. That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, because he preached rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery…” It shows that one’s dream should not be diverted from loving God and obeying his commands. And according to Jeremiah 23:25-26 there were prophets who say, “I had a dream! I had a dream!” and then prophesy the delusions of their own minds.

In verse 8, we have three characteristics of apostate nature or disposition: “In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings.” Firstly, these dreamers pollute their own bodies/defile the flesh. They live according to their flesh, since they do not have the Spirit/they are devoid of the Spirit. They live immoral lives confined in the flesh. And they reject authority, as they refuse the sovereign lordship of Christ. They do not recognize the authority of God’s word. And they slander celestial beings. In other translations, it says they blaspheme the glorious ones/angelic majesties. They blaspheme not only God, Christ and the Holy Spirit, but also the holy angels as well as the one the angels serve. When we read Acts 7:38 and Galatians 3:19, angels played a very particular role in the giving and ordaining of the law of God (Dt 33:2; Ps 68:17). They have been given a special guardianship of the law. In short, these dreamers are immoral, insubordinate and irreverent.

Verse 9 further explains their slandering celestial beings: “But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you.’” The name Michael means “Who is like God?” Of course, the answer is no one; his very name is a reminder that no one is like God. As an archangel, Michael is a chief leader among the angelic spirits. The angel Michael appears in Daniel, Jude and Revelation. In Daniel 10:13, Michael was introduced as one of the chief princes and came to help Daniel when the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted him for 21 days. Michael was also written about as the great prince. Daniel 12:1 says, “At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered.” Michael was God’s particularly powerful angel for the purpose of protecting Israel and defeating Satan’s purposes against Israel, against the people of God. That’s why he’s called “Michael the great prince,” the prince of Israel, the protector of Israel. Then we read in Revelation 12:7-8, “And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven.” Michael and his angels defeat Satan and his angels and throw them out of heaven and throw them down to earth. How powerful the heavenly, holy archangel Michael is!

Deuteronomy 34:5-6 says, “And Moses a servant of the LORD died there in Moab, as the LORD had said. He buried him in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is.” Here, in Jude, we see that Michael disputed with the devil about the body of Moses. Probably while God was burying Moses through Michael, the devil tried to take the body of Moses and bury him in a certain place for Israelites’ idol worship of Moses. Here, the point is that at that time, even the powerful archangel Michael did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation/to pronounce a blasphemous judgment against the devil, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” Such an angel like Michael knows that he is not omniscient and omnipotent, so he is under divine authority.

Then verse 10 says, “Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals—these are the very things that destroy them.” There are things we cannot understanding, since God’s thoughts and ways are higher than ours as the heavens are higher than the earth. That is the time for us to come to God for understanding. A proud mind cannot do that, but a humble mind. In their pride, these men speak abusively/blaspheme against whatever they do not understand. And here ‘unreasoning” is in Greek *alogos*. True reasoning comes from God and his word. When Abraham thought of God, he could reason that God could raise the dead. Understanding from true reasoning or godly understanding is different from understanding by instinct. While godly understanding builds up, instinctive understanding destroys.

Now verse 11 says, “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.” Here we have three comparisons of apostate influence: Cain, Balaam, and Korah. There is an escalation from one’s choice to the destruction. It starts with Cain. In the New Testament, Cain is mentioned three times. One time in Hebrews the author brought Cain as an indirect reference to explain about Abel’s offering, saying, “By faith Abel offered a better sacrifice than Caid did” (11:4). Cain is directly referred to in 1 John 3:12, “Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother” and here in Jude in verse 11, “They have taken the way of Cain.” According to Genesis 4, there are two ways in life, the way of Cain and the way of Abel. The way of Cain is the way of unrighteousness, while the way of Abel, the way of righteousness. When Cain disobeyed God’s word, rejecting the sovereignty of God and following his own way in self-will and self-styled worship, he became a restless wanderer throughout his life with the fear of being killed. The way of Cain is the way of death whereas the way of Abel is the way of life.

And they have rushed for profit into Balaam’s error. Balaam was stated three times in the New Testament: 2 Peter 2, here in Jude and Revelation 2. Apostle Peter said in 2 Peter 2:15, “They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness.” Jesus said to the church in Pergamum in Revelation 2:14, “Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.” We see that Balaam appeared a true prophet, but he was not. He was a false one because of his love for the profit, the wages of wickedness, money, and because of his attractive teaching of sexual immorality and idol worship. In fact Balaam opposed God’s word. While taking the way of Cain was a personal matter, rushing into Balaam’s error was a bad deadly influence to so many people. (A plague struck the LORD’s people numbering 24,000 (Num 25:9).

And they have been destroyed in Korah’s rebellion. Korah was a descendant of Levi, the tribe that the LORD separated to do the work at the LORD’s tabernacle and to stand before the community and minister to them. But Korah, and 250 leaders who followed him, challenged the leadership of Moses, God’s chosen servant, even trying to get the priesthood too, which God allowed only Aaron’s descendants to have. What he and his followers did was rebellion against God. The LORD’s anger burned at their rebellion and the ground under them split apart and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them with their households and all Korah’s men and all their possessions. An additional 14,700 people died from a plague (Num 16:32, 49). In the New Testament, only Jude mentioned this event of Korah’s rebellion, but it was also an undeniable serious event written in the Scriptures to be remembered and warned about. God is the living God and it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb 10:31).

It is good to know that “rebellion” in verse 11 is in Greek *antilogia*, which means “against the word”. Cain disobeyed God’s Word. Balaam opposed God’s Word. Korah leads an open rebellion. Apostates or false prophets are the spiritual children of Cain and Balaam and Korah, setting themselves against God’s word, being immoral, insubordinate and irreverent.

And then Jude wrote in verses 12 and 13, “These men are blemishes at your love feast, 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. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.” What a graphic description about who they are! Jude had written about them from the historical viewpoint in the Scriptures, and now from his own understanding about them surely by the Spirit. They joineds the love feast of the holy community of God’s people without shame or fear, despite their polluted and corrupted flesh life. They are blemishes at the love feast. In other translations, they are hidden reefs or like dangerous reefs that can shipwreck those at the love feasts; shepherds who fed only themselves, very selfish. They are clouds without rain. When people see clouds, they expect rain that can satisfy the dry land. These men are unsatisfactory people with no prospect. Autumn trees are supposed to be flourishing and fruitful. But how pitiful it is, autumn trees without fruit and uprooted, twice dead! They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame. Isaiah 57:20 says, “But the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud.” They have no rest like the troubled sea, casting up mire and mud, scum. In Genesis chapter 1, God made the stars on the fourth day and set them in the expanse of the sky. The starts are not supposed to wander. Here are wandering aimless stars, coming from and going nowhere, perhaps finally ready to be sucked into a black hole forever. All these vivid expressions are a warning against false prophets and apostates! All these descriptions can be the expanded description of their godlessness with no connection to God, being cut off from him. These are the result of their prolonged godless or ungodly life, ignoring the word of God.

Certainly, contending for the faith includes a godly life. At this point we are reminded of what Apostle Paul said to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:7-8, “…train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.” Godly life promises true blessing from God in the present world and in the world to come. Training to be godly is forming a good spiritual habit through meditating on and obeying the word of God and consistent prayer.

**Second, Enoch’s prophecy (14-16).** Now Jude says in verse 14-15, “Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: ‘See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” What a sudden interruption through Enoch’s prophesy in the flow of the passage! Cain’s son was Enoch. This Enoch was a different one, the seventh from Adam (Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah in Genesis 5). In Genesis, he is described as one who walked with God 300 years in a terribly ungodly time and God took him away (Ge 5:21-24). The author of Hebrews says in 11:5, “By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.” We can imagine that when Enoch walked with God 300 years and pleased him with faith, God must have shown him many great visions including this prophetic vision of the Lord’s coming. Such an amazing vision cannot come to these dreamers but only to godly men like Enoch. Amos 3:7 says, “Surely, the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.” It is also written in Revelation 10:6-7, “There will be no more delay! But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.”

Enoch prophesied, “See, the Lord is coming.” This is the first prophecy through men written in the Bible. It is notable that this prophecy of the Lord’s coming is before the Flood at Noah’s time, three generations before Noah. Then we see in Revelation written by John the last prophecy, which is Jesus’ word, “Yes, I am coming soon” with the response of John, “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus” (Rev 22:20). The first and the last prophecy are the same. During the time of more than 3000 years, the time between the first prophecy and the last prophecy, the prophecy has not been changed, but consistent. Truly God is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End (Rev 21:6). The prophecy of the Lord’s coming in Jude is like a prelude of the prophecy of the Lord’s coming in Revelation. We read in the very first chapter of Revelation, “Look, he is coming with the clouds” (1:7), in chapter 3, “I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have” (3:11), in chapter 16, “Behold I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake” (16:15), and in the last chapter, the Lord Jesus’ own voice, “Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of this prophecy in this book” (22:7), “Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me” (22:12) and “Yes, I am coming soon.” (22:20).

Here in Jude, the purpose of the Lord’s coming is written very clearly: “See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” We read in Mark 13:26, “At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory”, in Luke 21:27, “At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory”, and in Matthew 24:30, “At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.” It will be a world-shaking universal event. His first coming was so quiet and only a few people could see his coming as a baby. But his second coming will be totally different. Why do all the nations of the world mourn? We see clearly in Jude, because he is coming to judge everyone.

It is important to know that God is the God of salvation and the God of judgment. While on earth, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ had more to say about hell than he did about heaven, and he had more to say about hell than any other personality in the Bible. Much of His teaching on hell is found in the Sermon on the Mount, which traditionally, has been thought of as a sort of an ethical sermon. But the fact of the matter is that the Sermon on the Mount has many references to hell. Jesus did not at all hesitate to refer to hell. For God is the God of judgment as well as the God of salvation. Here Jude mentioned “judgment on the great Day” and “the punishment of eternal life” (verse 7). Fear of eternal judgment is a very essential component in heart preparation for salvation. The Lord Jesus is coming to judge everyone.

We really need to pay attention to the description, “See, the Lord is coming…to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” Apostle Peter also said in 2 Peter 3:7, “By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.” All the ungodly and ungodly sinners have no escape from his convicting. Here we can infer a clear distinguishing mark of the ungodly and the godly, who the ungodly and who the godly are. The ungodly are those who do not believe the Lord’s coning, and the godly are those who believe very personally that the Lord is coming and prepare for the greatest event in human history. As the time of the Lord’s coming is closer and closer, the distinction between the godly and the ungodly becomes clearer and clearer. We can say that the culmination of ungodliness is not believing the Lord’s coming, and the culmination of godliness is truly believing and waiting for the Lord’s coming. Hebrews 9:28 says, “Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.”

When Jesus gave a long discourse about his coming on the Mount of Olives, he said, “Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. Therefore keep watch…you also must be ready…Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.” (Mt 24:40-45). Then in chapter 25 Jesus told the parable of the ten virgins, five wise virgins who prepared extra oil for the bridegroom’s coming and five foolish virgins with no extra oil. Jesus finally said, “Therefore keep watch.” We cannot keep watch on the very moment. We are to keep watch each day. Then we can keep watch on the very day.

Again we hear Enoch’s prophecy, “See, he is coming.” Covid-19 has come. Another one is coming and another. These pandemics are a prelude for the Lord’s coming. In this passage, we see further how to contend for the faith. May we really believe that the Lord is coning and prepare ourselves, watching and being all the more to be goldy and faithful to serve God’s flock of sheep so be contenders for the faith in our time.