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"ALL CHRISTIANS TO ACTION STATIONS!!"

An outline study of Jude - an important little book for today.

By Rev Ivan Foster.

Part 4 : Further illustrations of former manifestations of apostasy.

"Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core," Jude 8-11.

Examples of the spirit of apostasy at work throughout the ages, recorded within Holy Scripture, are myriad. We may conclude from that fact that the Lord is most desirous of us learning of the dangers of apostasy, the waywardness into which the 'creepers' which Jude warns of would have us go. The danger is thus highlighted for us to heed.

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God," Hebrews 3:12.

The Bible's records indicate that apostasy may spring up most unexpectedly and that amongst those in whom there is not the least indication of rebellion and discontentment.

Was not the Garden of Eden the most unlikely place for rebellion to spring up and flourish?

Were not Adam and Eve, our sinless first parents, unlikely and indeed the most implausible candidates for insurrection?

Going back before those infamous incidents, what of the rebellion in heaven amongst the angels. How incongruous was that affair!

And yet it was so.

I. JUDE GIVES US SOME MORE EXAMPLES AS A MEANS OF INFORMING US OF THE WICKED NATURE OF THE "CREEPERS" WHO SEEK TO INFILTRATE THE VISIBLE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN EVERY AGE.

1. It is to be noted that dreams are the source of their 'filth'.

Jude calls them: "filthy dreamers."

Jeremiah had encountered such in his day for he records the words of the Lord regarding them. "I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed," Jeremiah 23:25.

"Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD," Jeremiah 23:32.

The source of their doctrine is their own dark minds and imaginations and the character of that which they proclaim is "filthy"!

Dreams born of the Holy Spirit are very different indeed. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith



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God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams," Acts 2:17. This refers to a conveying to the mind of the godly that which is endorsed by and corresponds to the Spirit-inspired Word of God. The night-time vision granted to Paul at Troas was of this character. "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us," Acts 16:9.

There is a further example of such night-time holy communication in Acts 27:23-24. "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

The night-time 'dreams' of the 'creepers' are of an entirely different nature. They are 'filthy' in source, character and influence! They 'defile', verse 8. That word literally means 'to dye with another colour.' Earlier Jude had said of these men that they were guilty of "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ," verse 4. They would dye the bright doctrines of the gospel with the blackness of hell!

2. This filthy dreaming accompanies a despising of the authority of God.

Here, of course, is the purpose of the dreamers. They would overthrow God's rule! This they seek to do by speaking disparagingly of God's providential governing of His creatures.

So spoke the devil in Eden's garden. "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil," Genesis 3:1-5.

This same despising may be noted in that forerunner of the Antichrist, Absalom. He promoted his rebellion by despising the dominion of his father, David. "And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel," 2 Samuel 15:2-6.

Stealing away the hearts of men from their rightful allegiance to Christ their King was the evil purpose of the 'creepers' at work in Jude's day and at work still in our day!

There is a spirit at work today, and it is plainly seen within the ranks of professing Christians, whereby the dominion or 'Lordship' of Christ is despised or 'set aside and disregarded' as the word means. There is a declining regard and respect given, even by professing Christians, to the commandments of God. It is a time in which man's own opinion takes precedence over what God says. It is as it was in the days of the Judges. "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes," Judges 17:6.

The present system of government in Northern Ireland - a power-sharing coalition involving those guilty of engaging in and supporting murder - was embraced upon the basis that it was deemed the right thing today, irrespective of what the Bible has to say.

Likewise, the cause of sodomite 'marriage' is promoted in defiance of God's Word, simply because benighted



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sinners think it the 'right' thing to do.

The abandoning of the marriage union between a man and a woman, fornication, Sabbath-breaking, the tolerance of idolatry and other heathen practices are all born of this despising of God's dominion by men.

The mark of the work of the 'creepers' is everywhere to be seen today.

3. Their 'despising of dominion' is a further manifestation of this spirit.

Peter also speaks of this matter. "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities," 2 Peter 2:10. The words of Peter regarding these 'creepers' parallel those of Jude. Jude says that they 'speak evil of dignities' while Peter claims 'they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.' They are not at all reticent about blaspheming God and reproaching His throne or of deriding and abusing those appointed by Him to administer and rule His Kingdom.

Is it not true that today there is little or no regard for doing things 'decently and in order' within God's house and the family unit? Submission to elders and deacons, to parents and those in authority within society is considered anachronistic, out of date and no longer relevant!!

This is the spirit of the 'creeper'!

II. THE ATTITUDE AND ACTIONS OF THESE 'CREEPERS' STANDS IN CONTRAST TO THOSE OF THE HIGHEST ANGELIC BEINGS.

"Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee," Jude 1:9.

1. Here is a statement given us by the Holy Ghost.

The source of this account of the dispute between Michael the archangel, or chief angel, is not known. Some believe it was one of the Jewish traditions. If it was, then we have here an endorsement of the accuracy of the record, given it by the Holy Ghost.

The lesson taught is that the attitude of the 'creepers' toward the Lord, His Law and His servants and ministers differs very greatly with that shown by Michael toward the devil. The devil, in truth, is due no respect given his wickedness but nevertheless, doubtless because of his standing within the created order of God, he is spoken to without malice or insolence.

Is not the archangel's attitude a reflection of that shown by Christ when confronted by the devil in the wilderness and again in the garden of Gethsemane by the devil's agent, Judas? There is much wisdom in what John Gill says about this verse. "If Christ, the Prince of angels, did not choose to give a railing word to the devil, who is so much inferior to him, and when there was so much reason and occasion for it; then how great is the insolence of these men, that speak evil of civil and ecclesiastical rulers, without any just cause at all?"

2. Dark ignorance and brutishness lies behind this attitude of the 'creepers'.

"But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves," Jude 1:10. Peter states this truth so: "But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption," 2 Peter 2:12.

What wickedness ignorance can breed! "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools," Romans 1:21-22.



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This is the dark path down which ignorance will lead men.

Isaiah bears testimony to the foolishness of ignorant men. "He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god. They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand," Isaiah 44:14-18.

The exact same folly may be heard in the words of the Evolutionist as he sets forth his ludicrous speculations and theories as to the origins of that which in truth came forth from the hand of God.

Ignorance is a cruel, blinding, mocking master!

3. The outcome is corruption.

" . . . in those things they corrupt themselves." They live only for sensual indulgence, and sink deeper and deeper in sensual gratifications.

John Calvin comments on this passage. "He means that they had no taste for anything but what was gross, and as it were beastly, and therefore did not perceive what was worthy of honour; and that yet they added audacity to madness, so that they feared not to condemn things above their comprehension; and that they also laboured under another evil – for when like beasts they were carried away to those things which gratified the senses of the body, they observed no moderation, but gorged themselves excessively like the swine which roll themselves in stinking mud. The adverb 'naturally' is set in opposition to reason and judgment for the instinct of nature alone rules in brute animals; but reason ought to govern men and to bridle their appetites."

This is where sin and rejection of God's Word takes men and it is into such degradation the devil would plunge the people of God by the deceptions of the 'creepers' he sends amongst us.

Heed the words of Peter as he endorses the warnings of Jude.

"But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time," 2 Peter 2:12-13.

III. THE WOE OF GOD IS PRONOUNCED AGAINST THESE EVIL MEN.

"Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core," verse 11.

Here is a record of the path they tread and the destination to which they are headed.

1. They have Cain as their patron.

" . . . they have gone in the way of Cain." Cain's way was one of rejecting the way of God, envying and hating the brother who walked with God and resorting to murder and then denial of his crime.

ALL men, who reject the Saviour, bear a likeness, to some degree at least, to Cain their elder brother and spiritual progenitor. His vices manifest themselves, to differing degrees, in all men.

Men reject the gospel message and insist on pressing on their own path to heaven which, in truth, will lead



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to hell. They are angry with and hate those who have found 'peace in believing' through Christ. They will readily do believers ill and have, as history records, all too often slain the righteous. All this, of course, they will deny even to God's face.

2. Greed moves and motivates them on the path they have chosen.

They "ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward." Peter puts it thus: "Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness," 2 Peter 2:15.

Balaam's greed rejected time and again the warnings and plain directions of God. Truly, "the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows," 1 Timothy 6:10. It very evidently played a part in the downfall of Judas Iscariot. "This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein," John 12:6. Hence, thirty pieces of silver meant more to him than the 'pearl of great price,' Matthew 13:46.

The word 'reward' means 'the wages of an hireling'. If only men realised the 'wages of unrighteousness' which they will receive one day. The 'creepers' are but 'gang masters' recruiting poor sinners into slavery which will end one day with the dreadful wage of eternal damnation being doled out.

Greed for this world's 'treasures' blinds men to the true and eternal riches of Christ. Many today in Ulster, and indeed I fear, Ulster itself, are casting aside the Lord Jesus for 'a mess of pottage' and all at the behest of the 'creepers' who are at work under the guise of being servants of God.

3. A terrible destruction awaits such.

" and perished in the gainsaying of Core." This is a reference to Korah, the cousin of Aaron and his rebellion against Moses, God's appointed ruler of Israel. Heed the record of God's Word on this man and his rebellion. "Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?" Numbers 16:1, 3.

What a dreadful end they met because of their sin!

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD," Numbers 16:23-30.

So will perish all who imitate Cain, Balaam and Korah. Indeed, we pray that it will be so!

"So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD: but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might," Judges 5:31.

"For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scat-



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tered," Psalm 92:9.

Amen and amen!