

Valley Bible Church - Sermon Transcript

Ungodliness Prophesied
Jude 14-19

As we turn to our verses today, I want to remind you that the book of Jude has one major theme, and that is apostasy. Verses 14-19 are the last verses in which Jude addresses this topic. An important distinction between apostasy and the loss of one's salvation needs to be addressed here. There is a delineation between the two terms that is often missed or confused by the world and even by Christians. Apostasy essentially means to turn away from the faith. An apostate is someone who has turned their back on faith in Jesus Christ. Is this the same as losing one's salvation? There is an obvious answer to this question in God's Word, and that answer is no. The Bible teaches that you cannot lose your salvation; however, the Bible, including the book of Jude, also teaches about the reality of apostasy. When God saves someone, they cannot be lost. Even among Christians in different denominations and different circles, there are those who believe the Bible teaches that salvation can be lost; but this is not what the Bible teaches. Remember the words of Jesus in John 10:27-28, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand." If someone is saved, they cannot be lost from Christ.

We also know that apostates are not people who once had the Holy Spirit and then lost the Holy Spirit. To say someone has lost their salvation is to say that this person had the Holy Spirit at one point in time but then lost the Holy Spirit. This is incorrect and not what the Bible teaches about God's work through the Holy Spirit. When God seals someone with His Spirit, their inheritance is guaranteed. Ephesians 1:13-14, tells us, "In Him you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory." Furthermore, 2 Corinthians 5:5 says, "Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge." The

word “pledge” has the same meaning as down payment. God has given the Holy Spirit to believers as a down payment, a guarantee of what is to come which is their inheritance, heaven, their eternal reward. When we are speaking of apostasy, we are not speaking of someone who once was saved and then was lost from Jesus or someone who once was sealed with the Holy Spirit and now is no longer sealed with the Holy Spirit. This is not what we are saying because it is not what the Bible teaches.

If apostates are not people who have lost their salvation, then who are they? In Hebrews 6, we learn that these are people who have once been enlightened, who have tasted of the heavenly gift, and who have tasted the good Word of God, but after a period of time they reject the gospel message. They have been exposed and inundated with the gospel, and with people living it, and with the Holy Spirit working it; and yet they decide to reject that message. 2 Peter 2:21-22 tells us, “For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb, ‘A dog returns to its own vomit,’ and, ‘A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire.’ ” What is intriguing and unique about the apostates that Jude warns about is that they have still remained connected to the body of Christ. They have heard the gospel and have rejected it, but they remain among the members of the body of Christ. Jude says in verse 4, “for certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our master and Lord Jesus Christ.” Jude tells the church to wake up because these people are going unnoticed among you; they are camouflaged and blending in. They are apostates, ungodly people, who have rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We do not know a lot about the background of the people Jude was writing to, but they knew Jude, and they knew the Old Testament. In verses 5-8, Jude, trying to help his audience understand the importance of his message, goes on to compare these apostates to well-known examples from the Old Testament. He compares them to the nation of Israel as they wandered and died in the wilderness for 40 years. He compares them to the fallen angels who are reserved

for judgment. He compares them to Sodom and Gomorrah. He uses these examples to get the church's attention, to get them to wake up and contend for the faith.

Jude then takes his warning another step further in verses 9-10 and says not only do apostates reject the gospel, and not only are they still among you, and not only are they as bad as those Old Testament examples, but what they have done is utter blasphemy. The way apostates live and talk is blasphemous to the name of Christ, and it is even blasphemous to the angels who instituted and brought God's law into effect in the Old Testament. Apostates rebel against God's Law. They say that there is an abundance of grace, and so they can sin as much as they want and use grace as a license to follow after their lusts. Jude tells his audience that these apostates are in your midst and they are committing blasphemy.

In verses 11-13, we see Jude expose these apostates for who they really are. He uses beautiful imagery with word pictures, describing these people as trees that are "doubly dead," not bearing any fruit, and as "clouds without water." They are all show but no substance, all talk but no action. It reminds us of the words of Jesus when he spoke to the Pharisees and the hypocrites of his day. Jesus was very bold toward them in Matthew 23:27, calling them out for who they really were, "white-washed tombs." Apostates might be fooling people of the church as they blend in unnoticed, but God knows who they are. This is where we left off last week.

Today's verses are 14-19, and we will see where Jude progresses as he wraps up this topic of apostasy. We will begin with Jude verse 14 and read through verse 19. "And about these [men] also Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, 'Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgement upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.' These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage. But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, 'In the last

time there shall be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.’ These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.”

We see two main sections in these verses, and each one is about a prophecy; there are two different prophecies. The first one is the prophecy of Enoch. Jude begins verse 14, as he continues on the subject of apostasy, by referencing a prophecy by a man named Enoch. What do we know about Enoch? From the verse itself we learn that he is the seventh generation from Adam. From Genesis 5 “the book of the generations of Adam,” we also learn that Enoch is the seventh from Adam. Genesis 5:24 is a unique verse; it says, “And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.” That is all we know about Enoch. Of all the prophets in the Old Testament, Enoch is not one that comes to mind. He “walked with God” and was swept up into heaven, but he is not generally thought of as a prophet. One would think that Jude would quote from one of the Major Prophets such as Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, or any of the Minor Prophets, but instead, he quoted from Enoch. We know that Enoch’s prophecy is not found in the Old Testament, so the question is where is it from? We have seen this before when Jude referenced a strange event that is not found in the Old Testament, such as Michael and Satan going back and forth over the body of Moses. Where is Jude getting this information? The answer is that Jude is getting it from the Holy Spirit. All the authors of scripture, as they write, are guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit. Jude has this advantage, and it is why he is writing these things. Some people have speculated that possibly Jude took this event from some other written source which was available at that time, a source his audience would know, and so he drew from it even though it might not have been true. The Holy Spirit would guide Jude to write only what is true, and the Holy Spirit guided Jude to write the true prophecy from Enoch.

So the next question is why choose Enoch’s prophecy? Why not choose a prophecy from Isaiah? Jude chose his prophecy because it shows God has known about apostasy all along. God called it before it came about and told people that it was going to happen. Which is more impressive, the prophecy that is a hundred years before its time or the prophecy that is a thousand years before its time? The further away in time, the more impressive a prophecy is, so this is what Jude does; he

goes all the way back to Enoch who is seventh from Adam. Jude takes a prophecy from thousands of years ago and shows his audience that God knew this was going to happen. God called it because this is who God is. Jude says that there are apostates among the church; God knew this was going to take place and He told you. God is completely sovereign. He is in absolute control, and He is not surprised by what is happening among you as a congregation.

What does Enoch prophesy? Enoch says, verse 14, “Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones [angels, or saints, or both] ...” The emphasis, the focus, is on the Lord. What is interesting about this is that the word “came” is past tense. How can someone talk about a future event using the past tense? Many prophets in the Old Testaments looked out ahead as God showed them a vision, an event, which was so certain to take place that after the prophets saw it, they wrote it down as having happened. It is so certain that it has already happened in God’s eyes. God is eternal. He is outside of time, and He sees it as already taken place.

What does the Lord do in verse 15? “[He came] to execute judgement on all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him” In the book of Revelation at the great white throne judgement, we find at this point that the Lamb’s Book of Life is open and what happens? All the ungodly, all the unsaved, are convicted of all the things they have done, and then they are judged. This is clearly the event that Enoch saw and prophesied about. God is in complete control. He knew this apostasy would take place, and it is already dealt with. He will judge them and convict them of their ungodliness. Notice the repetition of the word “ungodly” in verse 15. It is repeated over and over again, making the point very clear that there is ungodliness taking place, absolute rebellion against God, and it will be dealt with. Whether someone is performing ungodly deeds or speaking ungodly things against God, it will be dealt with; God will judge these deeds and these words. God is omniscient. He knows all things. Nothing surprises Him. What better example than to go way back to Enoch, way back before Isaiah, way back before Moses, and to make it clear that apostasy would come in and God called it before the church was even established. God will judge and He is just in His judgement. How often do we

see ungodliness taking place? How often in our lives do we see ungodly things done and not punished? How often do we see people getting away with terrible things? We see it, and it is disappointing. We live in a fallen world, but we have the constant comfort and hope that God is watching; He is not blind to these things. He is just, and He will do away with it all. This is the prophecy of Enoch.

What does this apostasy look like in the congregation that Jude is writing to? What is the proof of this evil? What does it look like even to the people in our day? If we go back through the book of Jude, we see that he has not given a lot of details about these apostates. He has talked about them theoretically and in principle, but he has not given the practical details of how ungodly these people are and of the ungodliness they are doing. In verse 16, Jude gives his specific explanation of the ungodliness that is taking place; “These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.” This is an unexpected list because there are things in it that we are all guilty of, and that we see day to day. The word “grumble” is the same word that was used to describe what the Israelites did when they were wandering in the wilderness, how they grumbled day after day and were not content with what God was doing for them. God provided bread from heaven, but the Israelites grumbled and complained. What happened to them? They all perished in their apostasy.

Jude compares the apostates of his time to the people of Israel in their grumbling and finding fault. It did not matter what was set before them, they would find something wrong with it. Why do they act like this? Verse 16 tells us that they are “following after their own lusts...” These apostates have decided to follow after their own agenda, their own passions, and their own desires. This is how they manifest their ungodliness. It is not just grumbling and finding fault, it is that they are speaking “arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.” They seek partiality. They have rejected the gospel, yet they stay. What do people normally do at this point? They leave. Apostates stay and use the people around them for the sake of gaining an advantage. They stay among people they do not agree with and people they are not sharing

fellowship with or communion in faith with, but they stay for their own fleshly desires. God hates this, and Jude is making it known that this is ungodly and it is rampant in his audience. This is happening and the church does not even notice it, but God has already judged it. Apostasy is judged, and they will receive their due punishment. God does not let the guilty go unpunished.

In verses 17 and 18, we see the prediction of the apostles as Jude changes emphasis. “But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, ‘In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.’ ” Notice the change here. Everything up to this point has been about these apostates, but now there is a shift to “But you,” Jude is speaking specifically of and to the congregation, “But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand...” This is a soft rebuke. Jude is saying, “But you, beloved” should have seen this coming. You ought to have known of this because the apostles have been making it known. They have been speaking about this for years beforehand. Paul said to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:29-30, “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.” Speaking to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:1-2, Paul says, “But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron...” The most parallel example of this comes from 2 Peter, and it is possible that Jude quoted Peter in verses 17-18. In 2 Peter 3:1-3, Paul writes, “This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles. Know this first of all, that in the last days, mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts...” Through Enoch’s prophecy, Jude tells his audience about God’s complete control and sovereignty, and then in a soft and loving manner, he rebukes them and tells them Paul has been telling us about this, and Peter told us this was coming, and now it is here. Wake up and recognize that it is right in front of you.

We need to remember God's Word. Surprises of all sorts are part of our lives. Surprises occur within our church, within our own body, at our work, and with our family and friends. Often they are surprises we do not like that occur by way of persecution, trial, or suffering. If we remember God's Word, then we are kept on track by the foundation we have which clearly teaches that persecution will come. Jesus said, "They hated me, and they will hate you." When we experience that and remember God's Word, we are not thrown off course. When suffering comes, we recognize that it is through suffering that we are refined. It is through suffering that our faith is made purified as gold. We recognize this and embrace the suffering because we know God's Word and we have remembered it. Jude is calling his audience to remember God's Word. He is telling them that they could have prevented this surprise if they had remembered what was already written through the apostles. These apostates are mocking God. We know the irony of it because we know God's Word. Galatians 6:7, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." God sees it all, and He will deal with it.

In Verse 19, Jude delivers the final word on these apostates and states clearly the underlying truth about them which is behind all that he has written. Verse 19, "These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly minded, devoid of the Spirit." What is the opposite of divisions and factions? It is coming together and being unified. Apostates do the opposite of coming together and being unified. What does unity require? In Philippians 2:2-4, Paul says, "...make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than yourself. Do not merely look out for your own personal interest, but also for the interest of others." Was this the case with these apostates? Do they care about others? Are they interested in what other people want or need? No, not at all. When someone is entirely set on fulfilling their own desires, will there be unity? Absolutely not. This is why Jude says that the divisions are coming from these people among you who do not care about the body of Christ and who are following after their own lusts. Paul warned about this in Romans 16:17. "Now I urge you brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them."

Then Jude gives us the final description that perfectly summarizes these apostates. He says they are "...worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit." Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:14, "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised." What is a "natural man?" A "natural man" is a person who does not have the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:9 tells us the significance of this, "However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him." Jude's final overarching description of the apostates is that they are unbelievers; they are not saved. Jude has to address this because the apostates have remained living among the congregation, mocking God and using people to gain advantages for themselves.

Time and time again, we will see ungodliness around us, but if we know the truths of Scripture, and if we know that God is sovereign, then we know that God is in complete control. God is sovereign and we need to trust God in His sovereignty. God is just in his judgment. Why has God not judged the ungodliness yet? 2 Peter 3:9 tells us why. "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." God has not judged the ungodliness we see every day because He is a patient God wanting those people to come to the knowledge of him in repentance.

On the other hand, do not be surprised when God's Word is fulfilled. Hopefully, we do not need a soft rebuke like Jude gave his audience. Hopefully, you remember the commands of the apostles. Hopefully, the Word of Christ is dwelling in you richly. Then, when things happen in your life, you have a lens to view them through, the Word of God; and if it dwells in you richly, you will be ready to view those things the way God wants you to view them. We all need to be careful and be on our guard. As Paul told the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 13:5, "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!" Not one of us can stand above others and think that we are not apostates, so we can separate ourselves from it and move on. If it were that easy, then there would not be so much written on it in the Bible. One of the warning passages from the book of Hebrews reminds us of the humility that we need to have. Hebrews 3:12-13,

“Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘Today,’ lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

Let us close in prayer. Heavenly father, we thank You so much for Your Word. We thank You for Your truths, Your promises. We thank You for the prophecy that You give us that reminds us that You know all things. You have declared the end from the beginning. You are in complete control. The guilty will by no means go unpunished. You will deal with those ungodly actions and words that are spoken and preformed day in and day out. We thank You for the trust and faith we can have in You that You are just and You will judge. We also thank you for the truths of Your Word that help us to remember what we ought to think, what we ought to do, and how we ought to live in light of the ungodliness that surrounds us. Please protect us as a congregation; protect us from ungodliness; protect us from apostasy. Help us to draw near to You, to embrace the gospel and to let it change our lives, so that we can truly say we are people who have taken up our cross and follow after You daily. May we die to ourselves, and may we live for Your glory. In Your name we pray. Amen.

