Destined for Destruction

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Preacher: Tom Holland

[0:00] I think we all know that the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is in a fight.

! And we are locked in a battle for truth.
And we are arrayed against forces that are both visible and invisible. The fight we are in for truth is a part of a larger battle, which we refer to as spiritual warfare.
That's really what we're talking about. But this fight has been going on for millennia. Now, from God's perspective, this fight actually originated in the hallowed halls of heaven when an exalted angel by the name of Lucifer declared that he was going to be like the Most High God or even more powerful than God Himself.
From the human perspective, this war began in the Garden of Eden when the same Lucifer, who became known as Satan, appeared to our original parents and planted a seed within their minds that God's Word, which we refer to as truth.
[2:07] I always love to read Dr. Schaeffer, Francis Schaeffer, the late Dr. Schaeffer, because he called it true truth. But Satan came to our original parents and said, this can't be trusted.

You have no reason to trust what you're being told. I believe that all lies flowed from that encounter in the Garden.
And we know the story. Our parents, Adam and Eve, chose disobedience and sin and rebellion in the Garden that day.
They polluted the entire human race with a sin nature that affects everything we do, everything we think, even down to the subconscious level.
And this attack on truth has taken an unfathomable toll on the human race.
[3:28] Billions have perished without the knowledge of the true God. billions more have a twisted and false view of him.

But the most devastating attacks, it would seem, have come from within the church. The various churches, some of which hold to truth and others that don't.
But there we have people who claim to know God and love God and believe in God. And that's why it's so difficult to defend against error.
It often occurs by perhaps even a person that you're seated next to in church. We don't know. So today, we're going to come, although this book has 25 verses, we're going to come to the very heart of the book of Jude.
Jude, it is Jude verse 4. Let me read that to you. For certain persons have crept in unnoticed.
[4:59] Those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Now we have been commanded to guard the truth that God has delivered to us from the apostles and quite frankly, many and probably most churches don't do a very good job of that in our day.
And Jude tells us the problem right up front. And it's the reason that today the greatest danger is facing the church because of this problem.
And the problem is in verse 4. certain persons have crept in unnoticed. They've crept in. We don't know what they believe.
We don't know what they hold to. So who are the certain persons who have crept in unnoticed?
Well, one thing we know for certain, they don't wear a name tag that says, you know, I'm creeping in here.
[6:34] They present themselves to an unsuspecting congregation. We've gotten better over the years, I have to say. I've been here since 1980, Mike even before.

I mean, there was a time a guy could walk in, join the church, and two weeks later we had him driving the bus ministry, picking up little kids. We didn't know who he was.

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We didn't do backgrounds. It's gotten a little bit better. These guys might even appear to be angels of light. Paul talked about that.
They may appear to be angels of light, but they're on a mission of destruction. They want to destroy the church.
When we get to the 12th verse of Jude, we will know who they are. So let's go ahead and read that verse tonight, knowing that we will return to that passage a few weeks from now.
[7:41] The first part of Jude, verse 12 says this, talking about the certain persons. These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves.

What an indictment. You sense the danger spoken of there? They crept in unnoticed, and they're like hidden reefs.
Hidden reefs can destroy large and powerful ships. And these destroyers are within the church. They have control of boards, of committees, and of entire denominations. There was a time in Southern Baptist life they wrote the lesson plans for everything we were studying.
They refer to themselves as Christians, but they have neither salvation nor the Spirit of God living in them. The statement that they've crept in unnoticed is quite instructive.
[9:17] In the original language of Greek, it carries with it the idea that they were able to sneak in without being detected.

It means to sneak in secretly, but with evil intent. Now, it is one thing for an enemy of Christianity to rail against our faith from the outside.
We grow accustomed to that. But these evil people do it from the safety of the church membership role. Note also, Jude refers to them as certain persons.
That's a rather vague description. That's just a certain person. We may not know who they are specifically, but we know they operate inside churches.
And the Bible has a name for them. The Bible calls them apostates. I wish I'd added a paragraph here and I forgot to.
[10:39] So I'm going to include it. An apostate is someone who's been exposed to truth, who seems to embrace that truth and then for whatever reason backs away.

But once he held, at least in part, to truth. That's what an apostate is. The theologian Thomas Manton said they're like a worm inside a body bent on destroying the very body that houses him. That's the amazing thing about cancer. Cancer kills itself by killing the person that is infected. Jesus viewed them, and you'll recall that in the Gospels, as wolves in sheep's clothing.
And they are so dangerous that Jesus and Peter and Paul and John warned us about them and now so does Jude.
And they come in many forms. And they have many names, but they're all bent on destroying the Lord's work.
[12:05] over the decades and centuries, their views have been called Gnosticism, Nicolantinism, Modernism, Cultism, Liberalism, and Antinomianism.

And I'm sure we could come up with other names as well. So the first thing we must be on guard against is the apostate because they do their work by infiltration.
They creep in unnoticed. So they infiltrate. And the Lord, of course, knows them and has already marked them out for condemnation.
Their end has already been established. That's in concrete. From the opening days of redemptive history, God has promised that He will judge apostates.
And there's no doubt they will be judged with the greatest of severity. In fact, the Greek construction there indicates that their destruction was ordained ages ago.
[13:32] God knew back yonder who they were. Jude refers to this destruction later in his letter with these words.

I'm actually reading Jude 14 and 15. But Enoch in the seventh generation from Adam who prophesied about these men.
So they've been around a long time. He prophesied saying, Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones to execute judgment upon all and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly manner and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.

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all the way back to the beginning of mankind all the way back into the Old Testament the prophets predicted the destruction of the apostates and this is in keeping with what the Apostle Peter said in their greed they will exploit you with false words.
their judgment from long ago is not idle and their destruction is not asleep for if God did not spare angels who sinned and He didn't Lucifer and a third of them were tossed out of heaven but He cast them out and into the pit and delivered them to chains of darkness where at this very moment they're still there being kept for judgment and did not spare the ancient world but preserve Noah a preacher of righteousness with seven others Mrs. Noah and her three sons and their three wives and He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter the final judgment of the apostate is certain and unalterable so how does God picture these apostates in the book of Jude
[16:40] He says this about them Jude 4 the third part of Jude 4 they are ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ so the leading trait of an apostate or false teacher in any day was their ungodly character they claim to belong to God they claim to speak for God you can hear them on TV all the time but Scripture repeatedly says they are far from him Jude tells us in light of God's description we can conclude that their character conduct and creed are always corrupt they're always going to come down on the side of corruption so what are the specific traits of apostates this is important because as members of the Lord's church we must be able to identify the apostates in our midst and not fall under their sway we've got to protect the flock so what are the specific traits of the apostates well first of all their character they're ungodly persons the leading trait of an apostate or false teacher in any day was their ungodly character that was the leading trait they claimed to belong to God and to speak for

God but scripture repeatedly says they are far from him Jude tells us in light of God's description we can conclude that their character conduct and creed are always corrupt and it's impossible for an ungodly person such as false teachers to worship properly such a person first of all does not have a high view of God guys you can't give better high view than God give the highest possible view they hold him in reverence we hold him in reverence the early church fathers wrote about such men describing them as those who play at religion while having no fear of
God or love for him and they pretend to be spiritual leaders but they are the enemy sent within our borders to wreak havoc on the church they claim to know God they claim to speak for God but their sinful character undermines them well the next thing Jude warns us about is their conduct and all this is from verse four who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and your translation may say or sensuality please mark this thought down in your mind write it in your bible false spirituality cannot restrain the flesh if you're false you leak everywhere and you can't restrain the flesh apostates have no ammunition with which to deal with fleshly fallen desires false teachers consistently indulge the flesh in manners that are sinful and one need only examine the fallen high profile teachers television preachers in our day who have succumbed to sin and they're legendary I mean they're everywhere no true minister of God would ever think about using God's grace as a license to sin yet we've seen this repeated over and over among high profile ministers they're in it for what they can get out of it be it huge mansions a fleet of aircraft an airport on your own property that pulls you up to the front door fast cars and faster women and never forget the admonition that Paul gave us in Galatians great book of the Bible this is what the spirit of God says Galatians 3 3 are you so foolish that was a strong word in that day are you so foolish have begun by the spirit are you now being perfected by the flesh the answer to that is no you cannot begin in the spirit and have any hope of finishing in the flesh the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the lure of sin are far too strong and we live in unredeemed flesh don't we and we will battle sin our entire lives on this planet
I heard Paul Worsher yesterday a little devotion he gave it might have been this morning he said if I were to ask you if you could fulfill any command of the Lord what would it be and many of you would say well I want to fulfill the greatest commandment love God with all your heart soul mind and strength and he said let me tell you something brothers no one in my hearing including Tom Holland in Oklahoma he didn't say that but might as well have been has ever fulfilled a tenth of that verse for one second the only person ever fulfilled that was the Lord Jesus Christ he fulfilled it you cannot begin in the spirit and then abandon the spirit and have any hope of finishing in the flesh and then

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we have this we have their creed they deny our only master and Lord
[25:07] Jesus Christ they deny him apostate false teachers believe they answer to no one they're their own masters remember that poem years ago masters of our own fate it's not true you will never find an apostate preacher or teacher preaching about the sovereignty of God they won't do it why it knocks them off the throne that's a spot reserved for them you will never hear them preach about the lordship of Christ why not knocks them off the throne they want to be on that throne and this passage that I just read says they will not submit to him as master and lord master denotes sovereign ruler lord is king and owner false teachers never give to

Christ the honor that is due him they can't goes against everything thing in him and they deny his rightful position in the Godhead Christ is both God and Messiah but the apostate teachers will not acknowledge that and that's really confirmation that they are counterfeit teachers counterfeit preachers and they have been seeded into many churches by the enemy and Paul had this to say and it's worlds apart from Jude but it's Titus 1 16 they profess to know God but by their works they deny him being detestable and disobedient and unfit for any good work and there's a final point today that I want to make we're a strong church doctrinally we are doesn't mean we know all truth no one does except for the Trinity but we guard the truth we want to know the truth we want to live the truth and in that regard we accumulate for ourselves preachers and teachers who hold to strong doctrine very important for a church to do that but these facts can also mean that we may be at the greatest risk!
look Satan has little to do with churches that are already in his clutches he's got them he wants those who oppose him and who get up on a Sunday morning and preach the word of God so he must be strong and vigilant as we live out our lives in this really many respects the opening years of the 21st century now in our next lesson next Monday we're going to take a brief look at least at the perishing of the apostates maybe not as brief as I should it may not be brief and we're going to cover amazingly
Jude verses 5 6 and 7 just unbelievable but we're going to do it let me read to you a passage that will cover just to whet your appetites Jude 5 to 7 now I want to remind you though you know all things that Jesus having once saved a people out of the land of Egypt subsequently destroyed those who did not believe and angels who did not keep their own domain but he abandoned them to their proper abode he has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day just like
Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around remember there were five cities that were destroyed having indulged in the same way as those in gross sexual immorality and having gone after strange flesh are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire you know I used to like to watch certain channels I don't do that much anymore but I saw a special on Sodom and Gomorrah and I knew better than to watch it because when they got to the end it said we don't know what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah it was destroyed but clearly it was not destroyed because of homosexuality because God loves them and he made them homosexuals that's how they ended it well he didn't do that that's not truth let's go to the Lord gracious
[31:51] Father Lord we can only be humbled when we read your word even in a little book like Jude hidden in the shadow of the book of Revelation but packed with true truth inspired truth Lord be with us this week bring us back safely be with our families and Lord may we be protective of our wives our children loved ones with the knowledge that the time is short we're closer today than we ever have been to the return of Christ may not happen for 5,000 years but I have a feeling we're closer than that so Lord be with us use us may we share the gospel and be the man that you've called us to be we pray in Jesus name amen

Thank you.

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