

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN
JUDE 11-13
DR. ROGER BARRIER
S-1468

- SLIDE #1: When I was in high school a young high school player named David Clyde was making headlines in central Texas.

Tell STORY of what might have been. Not Lefty Grove, or Sandy Kolfax, or Henry Aaron, or Babe Ruth, or Sammy Sosa, or Mark Maguire. He never made it.

This reminds me of the teenager who had decided to quit school because it was boring and he was fed up with it all. His father was trying to convince him to stay with it.

“Son, you just can’t quit. All the famous people in history did not quit. Abe Lincoln did not quit. Thomas Edison did not quit. Douglas MacArthur didn’t quit. Elmo Cringle didn’t quit. . . .”

His son broke in, “Who’s Elmo Cringle?!”

“See,” his father replied, “you don’t know who he is because he quit.”

Jude is a book about people who quit on Christianity. It is about people who never made it—who started out as godly, dedicated Christians, but who crashed and burned along the way.

- SLIDE #2: Jude is all about the David Clydes of Christianity. Some make it and some don’t. Some fulfill their promise and some don’t.

- SLIDE #3: Jude is about apostasy. “Apostasy” means “falling away”. Jude is the story of people who once stood firmly beside Jesus Christ and who—for one reason or another—fell away.

As we think of them we pause to ponder, what might have been.

Several weeks ago Glenn and I began teaching through the book of Jude. I want to read beginning at verse one and up to our text to put it all in context.

- SLIDE #4: Jude 1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ:

Jude was brother of Jesus—never mentioned that. He saw himself as a servant.

- SLIDE #5: Jude 2 Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

- SLIDE #6: Jude 3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

Wanted to write about salvation. Church under threat. Crisis forced him to change his mind and write about apostasy.

- SLIDE #7: Jude 4 For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

- SLIDE #8: We discussed how Nations can be Christian--and fall away

- SLIDE #9: Churches can be Christian--and fall away

- SLIDE #10: Individuals can be Christian--and fall away

Jude describes of three groups that started well but who lost it all and were destroyed.

Israel in desert, angels, and Sodom and Gomorrah

Then last week Glenn taught verse 11.

- SLIDE #17: Jude 11: 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.

- SLIDE #18: Glenn talked about the progression of these three men into evil. Get the tape.

Cain, Balaam, and Korah all had such a great beginning. They could have done great things for God.

- SLIDE #22: But in the end, all three crashed and burned. Reasons vary, but in the end it did not matter. They are stark testimonies to what might have been. They did not make it.

We all know people who are no longer among us. Turned back on Christ for whatever reason. Jude is talking about the Christian people who don't make it.

Now we come to our verses of warning and teaching for today.

- SLIDE #23: Jude 12: These men are blemishes at your love feasts, ----- 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.

“Love feasts” is a term which describes the observance of the Lord's supper which was preceded by a common supper for the members of the church. (Finish the verse above)

- SLIDE #24: Jude 13: They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.

- SLIDE #25: Let's look at the phrase, “blemishes at your love feasts.”

“Blemishes” is a common word in classical Greek which is used to describe hidden rocks or half-submerged rocks upon which a ship could easily be lost. These men were hidden rocks in the love feasts; they were undermining it and bringing about its destruction.

Many at Lord's supper won't make it. Sit there as if all is well. It is not. Just because we take communion or get baptized is no assurance.

- BUILD SLIDE #26A: How can you tell a real Christian?
- BUILD SLIDE #26B: 1. Profession of faith in Christ
- BUILD SLIDE #26C: 2. Personal behavior: Fruits of Righteousness

- BUILD SLIDE #27A: How can you tell an apostate?
- BUILD SLIDE #27B: 1. Denial or mixed up gospel
- BUILD SLIDE #27C: 2. Empty, negative behavior finally reveals them

True Christians are designed to be different from the person who makes no such claim. True Christians live supernatural, spirit-filled lives which brand them as distinct. That is how you know some one is a Christian.

Look what has happened in America: American Christian lifestyle behavior is indistinguishable from non Christians. George Barna research:

- | | Xns | nonXns |
|--|-----|--------|
|--|-----|--------|

• <u>BUILD SLIDE</u> #28D: Subscribe to cable television	70%	70%
• <u>BUILD SLIDE</u> #29A: Had a session with a professional counselor in past year	15%	15%
• <u>BUILD SLIDE</u> #29B: Filed a lawsuit against some one in past year	3%	4%
• <u>BUILD SLIDE</u> #29C: Took drugs or medication for depression in past year	7%	8%
• <u>BUILD SLIDE</u> #29D: Sent a letter to a company protesting their ethics	9%	10%
• <u>BUILD SLIDE</u> #29E: Have been divorced	27%	23%

If we use the test I just described above about the necessary change in behavior, the American church is apostate. Our Christian people behave no differently from the rest of society. I wonder what has happened to us?

•SLIDE #57: (blank) JULIE AND THE AMERICAN PIE: “The incredible lie of the American pie.”

1. I caught it, I am cured (cheap grace)
2. I am as good as the next guy (relativism, not holiness)
3. I'm happy, God's happy (narcissism)
4. I want it all now (hedonism, not faith)
5. I can't, it's just too hard (apathy and isolationism)

•SLIDE #40: “We have demystified God, befriended Jesus, abandoned the Holy Spirit, and forgiven and even warmed up to Satan.”

Faith used to revolve around God and His ordinances and principles; the faith that arrests our attention these days is that which revolves around us.

Although we are too clever to voice it, we live by the notion that true power is accessed not by looking upward but by turning inward. The focus of our faith has shifted from the transcendent to the mundane.

•SLIDE #30: Let's look at the next phrase: “Shepherds who feed only themselves.”

Ezekiel 34 deals with these false shepherds. They are selfish, they think of themselves before their people. But that is only part of the problem.

Ezekiel says it like this: These apostate shepherds cry:

•SLIDE #31: “Peace, peace when there is no peace”

The Message is messed up: They lead us away, not toward the true things of God. Let's see what that might look like.

Illustrate with America's values

•BUILD SLIDE #33A: American view: It doesn't matter what religious faith you follow because they all teach the same lessons.

•BUILD SLIDE #33B: Biblical view: Jesus alone is the savior of human kind (Rev. 1:8; 15:4)

•BUILD SLIDE #34A: American view: All people will experience the same outcome after death, regardless of their religious beliefs.

•BUILD SLIDE #34B: Biblical view: Only those who believe in Christ will be saved (Romans 3:21-26).

- BUILD SLIDE #36A: American view: All people pray to the same god or spirit, no matter what name they use for that spiritual being.
- BUILD SLIDE #36B: Biblical view: There is no other name under heaven whereby men may be saved.
- BUILD SLIDE #37A: American view: If a person is generally good or does enough good things for others during their lives, they will earn a place in heaven (55%).
- BUILD SLIDE #37B: Biblical view: No one is righteous in God's eyes; salvation is by grace alone (Rom. 3:10, Matthew 19:16-30; Acts 4:12).

We have messed up the message.

Now, in rapid fire succession, Jude gives four descriptions of apostates. Beware of who you listen to. These people will influence you and you can't trust them.

Like the man who backed out of his parking spot and sideswiped a Porsche. He got out and examined the damage and looked around to see who was looking. Sure enough, a group of folks, not far off, were watching to see if he would leave a note for the owner of what he had done.

So, he took out a piece of paper and wrote a note to put on the damaged Porsche: "A number of people around me think I am leaving you a note that includes my name and address—but, I'm not.

These people can't be trusted. They will lead you astray.

- SLIDE #42: "Clouds without rain, blown along by the wind;"

They are men who promise much but give little—they leave you empty and thirsty.

- SLIDE #43: "Autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted-- twice dead."

Once dead in sins but made alive in Christ (Ephesians 2:1); but by rebelling against Christ they have slipped back into state of spiritual death referred to in Hebrews 6:4-6.

Or, he is referring to the NT eschatological term of the second death (Rev 2:11; 20:6). They will die physical death and will also die spiritually for eternity.

- SLIDE #46: "Wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame"

Been walking on beach when tide goes out and leaves behind empty foam and dead plants and seaweed. This is what false teachers leave in their wake.

- SLIDE #47: "Wandering stars"

"Word for "planet." Called "wanderers because all the stars remain in constant relation to each other" Orion, Pleiades, Gemini, Big Dipper.

Without the truth of the gospel to guide them, they wander all over the "broad way which leads to destruction

All four descriptions leave us to wonder what might have been.

Jesus demonstrated this in Matthew 13 and Mark 4 in His parable about four types of soils.

- SLIDE #48: Farmer scattered seed and some fell by a hard pathway and the birds ate it up. Seed is the gospel and the soil describes the hearts of the hearers. This gospel seed never got into the heart. Birds picture of Satan who snatches the gospel away before it can get into the heart.
 - SLIDE #49: Seed does get into the rocky, shallow soil and the plant sprouts and begins to grow, but the hot sun causes the plant to wither and die
 - SLIDE #50: The seed also sprouts in the third type of soil, but the weeds and thorns grow up and choke out the life of the plant. It dies before it can produce any fruit.
 - SLIDE #51: The good soil is different from the first three soils. The seed sprouts and grows well in the good soil and the plant grows matures to produce good fruit.
- Jesus then said, "By their fruit you shall know them."

- BUILD SLIDE #52A: Which of the four are true Christians?
- BUILD SLIDE #52B: No doubt about the seed by the hard pathway. The gospel never got into the heart. These people never even professed to be Christian.
- BUILD SLIDE #52C: No doubt about the seed that fell on the good soil. It produced good fruit. These people are Christians.

What about the middle two. The seed took root and sprouted. Are they Christians?

- BUILD SLIDE #52D: No. The seed sprouted in the shallow soil, they claimed to be Christians, but they withered under the hot sun and produced no fruit.
- BUILD SLIDE #52E: Neither does the plant survive in the weed infested soil. The seed sprouted and the people claimed to be Christians, but they produced no fruit. They went to Hell.

- SLIDE #2: So David Clyde did not make it! Overweight farmer. Who cares?! So they did not fulfill their promise. So what difference! Who cares!

So these apostates don't fulfill their promise. Who cares? God does. God says, "This is serious business. Destroy them.

- SLIDE #53: Here is the final phrase for today: "for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever."

He is talking here about Hell. Several times Jude mentions that Hell is the final destiny apostates.

This is serious business to God. Sin is serious business to God.

Punishment for our sins is Hell. Sin is abhorrent to the creator God. The clear gospel is that Jesus died on the cross to take the punishment of our sin.

God considers apostasy, turning away from the loving gift of Christ on the cross, to be almost unforgivable betrayal.

- SLIDE #44: Hebrews 6:4-5: It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age,

- SLIDE #45: Hebrews 6:6: if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

Some of you are wondering if you are apostate. There is a difference between “backsliding” and “apostasy.” Backsliders always return to Christ. Apostates never do. That is one way to distinguish them. But that discussion will wait for verse 24 three sermons from now.

Hell is a horrible place.

- SLIDE #54: How does “darkness forever” square with assertion that they will be “destroyed” and with idea of “eternal fire” of Sodom and Gomorrah?

Different levels? Metaphors?

We it cannot be as bad as fire.

It is noticeable that in the parable of the wheat and tare, the word “fire” is the only word which Jesus didn’t interpret (Matt. 13:36-43).

How long will it last? Annihilation or eternal?

Answer best seen in Matthew 25:41 where eternal fire is parallel to eternal life in Matthew 25:46. The wicked will experience conscious and eternal punishment in hell.

Hell is not just separation from God. It is a place where punishment is inflicted.

Many Xns today ignore the idea of Hell or at least soft-pedal it because it seems to be extreme or narrow and insensitive.

Yet to be faithful to Bible, need to balance view of loving God and holy God to proclaim both doctrine of Heaven and of Hell.

We should not avoid preaching the negative side of the picture.

We need to preach of Hell, but we need to do it with tears in our eyes.

- SLIDE #41: God is like electric wire, downed power line.

- SLIDE #57: Close with gospel. Jesus died for the sins of the world. He purchased our salvation.

Story from Germany. Boy makes wooden sail boat. Paints it red. Tries it out in Elbe River and current and wind sweep it away. He is broken hearted. Wept to his parents.

Several months later he is passing toy store and spots his toy boat in the window. Could it be? Examines it closely. It is his! Overjoyed he tells the store owner the story and asked for it back.

“I’m sorry, but it is my boat now. If you want it, you’ll have to pay the price for it.”

The boy left brokenhearted. But, he was determined to get that boat. He worked and saved until he had enough money to pay for it.

Finally the day came when he took his savings and spread his hard-earned savings on the toy store counter top: “I have come to buy back my boat.” Reaching into the showcase, the owner took out the little red boat and handed it to the eager boy.

His face lit up in satisfaction as he held the little boat in his arms. “You’re mine,” he said, “twice mine. Mine because I made you, and now mine because I bought you.”

This is what God is saying to you.