



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Jude 8-10

“Christendom in the Light of the Epistle of Jude (3)”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Well, it's nice to be back in Dallas after ten days to the east, and I was impressed by, as you might expect an old Alabamian to be impressed by, how beautiful Northern Alabama is at this time of the year with the hills and the low mountains of the Appalachians and the evidence of quite a bit of beautiful foliage. A few weeks ago they received their cold weather a bit before us. I went on to Charleston to visit my family in America's most historic city and then had two more days on the road coming back. We drove both over and drove back as well, and then was really so pleasantly surprised to find since I have gone that the trees in Dallas have become beautiful and one of those somewhat rare years in which we have this beautiful foliage that suggests we are further north than we really are. So, I have gotten the best of two worlds and am happy to be back. I passed through Louisiana, had nothing to do with the election one way or another yesterday, want to assure you. But I did notice also how nice Texas looks coming from Shreveport on the freeway, on the interstate number twenty into Dallas, remarkable how the state has kept it's good looks.

I'm going to do a little different kind of message this morning. We're going to continue the series in Jude, but there are so many things in the Epistle of Jude that have impressed me as being very directly applicable to the kind of life that is being lived in the United States of America, and particularly in the United States of America as a land filled with religion. So this morning the

message is going to concentrate on verses 8 and 9, and we’re going to make the series in Jude a little bit longer than I had anticipated. Five messages was what I was going to devote to it, but since there is so much that is applicable to us in our society and the church today, I’m going to extend it a little bit, and this morning I’d like to concentrate on verses 8 and 9, but we’ll read verse 8 through verse 13 for the Scripture reading now.

Jude, you may remember from a couple of weeks ago, Jude has said that there have come in among the believers, with whom he was acquainted, individuals who crept in unnoticed who were long before him marked out for condemnation, ungodly individuals who were turning the grace of God into lasciviousness and denying our only master and Lord Jesus Christ. So it was evident there was both doctrinal and moral apostasy, and Jude was very concerned about it. And he began by reminding them of three historic instances in which such departure from the truth of God had been judged by God: the children of Israel who came into the land, there were many among them who were destroyed who did not believe; the angels who did not keep their first estate, but abandoned their abode, he now has consigned to eternal judgment, and Sodom and Gomorrah, cities that we know of from the book of Genesis. They too indulged in gross immorality. Went after different flesh, and they are left as an example of eternal punishment.

Now having said that Jude continues in verse 8, “Yet in the same manner these men (that is, the men that have crept into the church unawares, these men), also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties.”

Now some of you have the Authorized Version and it translates the expression speak evil of dignities, rather than revile angelic majesties, but it is more likely true that revile angelic majesties is correct. Literally it is simply “revile glories,” but “glories” was a term that was used for the angelic beings who were regarded as rays from the grace of God. So we’ll take it as that and assume that one of the things that the false teachers did was to attack the angelic world. Probably because the angelic world was regarded as representative of the Lord God in heaven and their doctrine is opposed to the divine revelation to that extent and in that way. And in the 9th verse he continues:

“But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” But these men (again note the expression, ‘these men,’ these men) revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts (some of the versions have stains, hidden stains in your love feasts) when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted.”

These are marvelous, in one sense, marvelous expressions that Jude, the brother of our Lord has coined under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They are, one can spend a great deal of time just expounding these expressions and all that they suggest because they are so unusual and so fitting. Think of clouds without water for example, in a dry parched land that longed for water above everything else and to see a cloud arise and the hopes that it would bring the water and then find out it was a cloud without water. And such are the apostates, so Jude says. And finally in verse 13, “Wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.”

May the Lord bless this reading of his word. And let’s bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we approach Thee through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our only master and Lord, and we thank Thee for him and for all that he has accomplished for us. We thank Thee for the gift of the Scriptures and for the guidance that they give us concerning life. We recognize Thee as our creator, and therefore Thou hast planted within our physical bodies the laws and principles which we must pay careful attention to if we are to enjoy the life that Thou hast given us in the fullest way. We thank Thee for the spiritual instruction for we know we are spiritual beings

fundamentally. And we thank Thee for the word of God given in marvelous grace and lovingkindness to us to enable us to walk in a way that would be pleasing to Thee and good for us.

We thank Thee for the church of Jesus Christ, the body of believers that has been brought into being by the efficacious work of the Holy Spirit who has touched hearts, given new life in faith with repentance, turning us to the one who died for sinners such as we all are and giving us a position in Christ with the forgiveness of sins, with the gift of righteousness, for we could never earn it, the presence of the Holy Spirit, the personal presence of the third person of the eternal infinite Trinity, dwelling within our hearts to give us guidance direction, comfort and consolation and all of the things that we need in this life that Thou hast given to human being and especially to those of us in the body of Christ. We worship Thee Lord and praise Thee for the blessings of life that Thou hast freely and abundantly showered upon us.

We pray for the church. We pray for each individual member. We pray that we may reach as Thou hast promised in the word of God, that maturity of likeness to him who loved us and has loosed us from our sins in his own precious blood.

We pray for those who are sick, who have difficult trials facing them, some facing operations in the hospital, some still bereaving. We pray for each one of them Lord and we ask that Thou wilt minister to all who have such needs. For those who have asked us to pray for them, we pray particularly them and ask Lord that Thy hand may be upon them for their good.

We pray again for our president and for others associated in government throughout this land.

And Lord we pray now as we sing together, as we listen to the word of God, that Thou wilt guide us, through the Holy Spirit, into the truth that Thou wouldst have us to know. And this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] The study that we are undertaking has the general title of “Christendom in the Light of the Epistle of Jude.” And today we are looking at verses 8 and 9. When you read the epistle

to Jude you are impressed by at least one thing in the beginning, the brother of our Lord let's fly from his verbal bow such a volley of invectives against the false teachers that it raises the question of Christian judgment of others. Does not the Bible say something about, “Judge not lest ye be not judged?” And one must, as one reads Jude, naturally ask oneself the question, “Is Jude going beyond the bounds of biblical teaching in speaking as he does?” We don't have time, of course to deal with that question. It's not really a serious question if we're readers of the word of God because the word of God makes it very apparent that while we are to refuse the judgment of the motives of individuals because we cannot know the ultimate motives of individuals, the judgment of the facts of life or the things that we can be sure of, actions that are plainly and clearly contrary to the word of God, they must be judged. If we could not do that then there would be no reason to have elders in the body of Christ whose duties encompass divine discipline.

And so consequently in the Scriptures to put it altogether in just a few phrases that we don't have time to justify completely, we remember that the Lord Jesus did say, “Judge not that ye be not judged.” But the Lord Jesus also said in John chapter 7 and verse 24, “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” In 1 Corinthians chapter 5 the apostle talks about judgment and affirms that one of the reasons that the Corinthians are suffering and are out of the will of God at the moment as an assembly of believers is that they have not exercised the kind of judgment that they should have exercised.

If you look at the word of God and read through it with just this thought in mind, “Does the Scripture justify speaking disparagingly or in a judgmental way concerning apostates?” I think you would be astonished at how much in the Bible justifies the judgment of apostates. For example, in Deuteronomy chapter 13 in a lengthy passage, Moses speaks about apostates and the judgment of God upon them; in the book of Jeremiah chapter 23 in an even longer passage the Prophet Jeremiah speaks about the false teachers and apostates of his day; Ezekiel does the same in the 34th chapter of his prophesy; John the Baptist in Matthew chapter 3 and verse 7 speaks in similar ways for he says, “But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said, ‘You brood of

vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” And I wouldn't call that something that was a friendly greeting for them, “You brood of vipers.” One of the old Bible teachers that I know many years ago used to say if he were to say that in a meeting, he would certainly feel it when the offering was taken up [Laughter] if he called his congregation that.

The Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians chapter 11 speaks of the apostates of his day and calls them the ministers of Satan even though they are ministers of righteousness that is the outward forms of righteousness, but abandoning the truth of the Lord God. And Peter in his 2nd epistle in chapter 2 and verse 1 through verse 3 speaks similarly to Jude. He says,

“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there shall be also false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.”

What we have seen today recently in the Christian church and in some of the experiences of the various bodies that represent the total professing Christian church is the final working out of apostasy that began a generation or so ago. I have in my notes from messages that I gave on Jude over twenty years ago some literature that's rather interesting to me. In one of the churches that is well known, they were working upon a new statement of faith and a committee was appointed in order to do the work necessary to set forth a proposed declaration of faith as to what the church should say about God. And so the work was work that took about five or six years from the committee and finally when the announcement was made to the church and when their work was presented to the church as a whole, one of the individuals who was upon the committee, a president of a Christian institution, but retired since the final proposed declaration had been made, was evidently the leader of the minority report. And in the course of giving the report the person who

gave the majority report gave it in phrases like, “We agree with Dr. Liston here,” and “Dr. Liston agrees with us here,” and went all the way through it saying things like that.

And so Dr. Liston who was the President Emeritus of King College in Tennessee a denominational school, felt it necessary to write a response. And so, he wrote a response and it was entitled, “I Descent.” And then he went through the report that was given and made comments with reference to it to point out that he didn't agree with a lot of things that were said, and in fact, he didn't agree with some of the most fundamental things that were said and to present the report as “Dr. Liston agrees with this” and “This is in harmony with Dr. Liston” gave entirely the wrong impression, he thought. So he felt it necessary to reply, and in his reply he said he would like to, as he summed it up, in order that I may not be most grievously misunderstood, which he felt he had been, he felt it was necessary to say that he would not give up the idea of a personal God and had not done that. He did not believe in equivocating as to the doctrine of the Trinity. He did not think it was proper to neglect the New Testament phrase “Faith in Jesus Christ.” He did not think it was right to give up justification by faith. He did not think it was right to neglect or disown the Protestant Reformation. He did not think it was right to be silent as to life for our immortal souls immediately after death. And then he said for me to do this would mean, in my mind, to give up the Christian faith. I have not done that. I do not agree, I descent.

Now the interesting thing about this as I read this was that here we are a generation later and these are the things that the church, in many instances, has gone on record as now being their doctrine. It's startling you can see. One of the advantages of living a little while is to see the changes that have taken place in our religious world, our spiritual world.

Well turning to the book of Jude, the church age, as you know, began after the death of the Lord Jesus Christ with the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. And in the history of the Christian church what we can say I think to sum it up, is that the church age, the special age in which the body of believers now indwelt permanent by the Holy Spirit is carrying out God's determined ministry for it, that age began with the Acts of the Apostles. And we have an account by

Luke in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. Now, of course the apostles go on to say that the acts that they were performing and had performed were really the acts of the Lord Jesus.

And so, consequently the book of the Acts is really better titled, “The Acts of the Lord Jesus through the Apostles.” But the point is it began with the Acts of the Apostles, but as you read through the New Testament, the history of the Christian church suggests that the end of the Christian church will be characterized by the acts of the apostates. Read 2 Peter. Read Jude. Read 2 Timothy. Read the great 2nd epistles, and that’s characteristic of them. That is that apostasy, we are to expect as characteristic of the latter days of the Christian church. We never know, of course, when our Lord is coming. We can only look at various signs and tendencies and say perhaps, and that’s as far as we can go with any sense of reliability. But at least one of those things is characteristic of the final days of the church and that is apostasy. And that is what Jude writes about. He lays a great deal of stress on doctrinal apostasy, denying our master and Lord Jesus Christ. He lays a great deal of stress, perhaps even more stress through this section on moral apostasy and in fact the denial of our Lord and master Jesus Christ is expressed in the immorality that characterized the teaching of these apostates.

So Jude makes an extremely strong accusation against the libertines in verses 8 and 9, and we’re going to spend our time looking at that. In spite of the fearful punishments just referred to, Jude says the creepers defy God. Now when I say, in spite of the fearful punishments just referred to, we’re talking about verse 5, 6 and 7. Look again, what Jude has said is I want, “Remind you, though you know all things once for all that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.” He did a great work for Israel, but there were unbelievers and so, they were destroyed on the way to the land. That, Jude says, illustrates the fact that judgment is sure to come.

Now, not simply saying Israel sinned and God destroyed those who did not believe, but he turns to the angelic world, and he says the, “Angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the



great day.” So judgment has touched Israel. Judgment has touched the angels, and then that great example of divine judgment, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. And so, when he says in the 8th verse, “Yet in the same manner these men,” he means in spite of the fearful punishments just referred to, the creepers, though they know these things, they know about Israel’s disobedience and judgment. They know about the angels. They know about Sodom and Gomorrah. In spite of that these individuals are still defying the Lord God. They, he says in the 8th verse, “Yet in the same manner these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties.”

Now, I want to talk for a few moments about this. This is one of the things that has stirred me, and sometimes I think as an individual who has preached to many of you for a number of years that, as I look at the ministry and look at my own ministry, I know there are many ways in which I have failed and occasionally things are born in upon me, and I feel that it’s essential that I be sure to say some things that perhaps I have neglected saying. Now mind you, I do not know with absolute assurance that what I say to you is precisely in accordance with the word of God. I am a sinner just as you are, and so I tell you only what the Holy Spirit, I think I do not claim to have some special revelation, what I think the Holy Spirit has impressed me as being useful for us to pay attention to. For me first, and then perhaps for some of you, but Jude says, first of all, these individuals, “defile the flesh.” They are physically immoral.

Now one of the things I must confess that has caused me to reflect upon this a great deal over the ten days that I’ve been gone is what we have all seen in the papers. There probably is not a single person in this room who before this incident did not know about Magic Johnson. Truly, one of the greatest athletes of our day, maybe someone has said, I wouldn’t want to dispute it, one of the greatest if not the greatest of all time, no doubt about it, a great athlete. And those who know this man have spoken very highly of him as a person. They love and they appreciate him very much. And I must say also at the beginning that I consider the announcement that Magic Johnson made that he had become afflicted with the HIV virus, the Human Immune Deficiency Virus.

I admire the courage of the man to stand up and say, “I have this virus,” before others began to whisper and say, “He must have this but he’s saying nothing about it.” I must say I admire his courage. We know this virus is the first step toward full blown AIDS disease from which there is no cure. This great gifted athlete contracted this, not from homosexual activity, but from heterosexual activity, as he himself and as others have confirmed so far as they know that’s the way he contracted it. In other words, he contracted it not by the kind of sex which the Scriptures speak very definitely against, but contracted it by intercourse which the Scriptures speak about as being, under certain circumstances, the divine will.

His coach called him a hero. I would not call him a hero. His coach spoke of him as a model for making the announcement courageously, and that I would think there is some reason for thinking that that is so. This man I feel is a product of our society. That is, and I’m not going to blame us for all of the things that happened to Magic Johnson, but I think society bares blame as well. This man obviously has not been taught the things that God in the word of God sets forth. And if he was taught them, then of course he has turned away from them. I have no reason to know that he was taught. Most people today are not taught. If you read our news papers and listen to our public figures talk and listen to the media, then you will have no understanding at all of things that are set forth in the word of God regarding divine creation and divine redemption through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Mr. Johnson has said he will now devote his life to, “safe sex,” telling young people to go that way.

Now I don't want to, again I don't want you to think that I am attacking this man. He didn't originate the term “safe sex.” That existed long before he used the term, but I'd like to say that that is a terrible wrong message to give our society. Illicit sex is what Scripture calls heterosexual activity outside of marriage, fornication, the Bible calls it, adultery within marriage. Illicit sex is not safe. It's not safe with all of the precautions that are possible. Disease, unwanted pregnancy, and various psychological difficulties arise from this kind of activity. His advice and I say with proper—I don't know it may have been put in his mouth—his advice is still, and the term “safe sex,” is still sex

without marriage, or fornication, or adultery, providing one does what one can to protect oneself by the use of such things as condoms. Our schools have even now come to the place where many of them are supplying, or want to supply, our children with condoms in order to have “safe sex.” Such sex has its emotional, relational costs. Premarital sex has significantly increased the number of young people in our mental hospitals.

For example, a few years back, Dr. Francis Braceland, former President of the American Psychiatric Association and the editor of the *American Journal of Psychiatry* said, “Premarital sex relations growing out of the so called ‘new morality’ have significantly increased the number of young people in mental hospitals.” Intercourse between a man and a woman is the most intimate act of the total relationship that should exist between a man and a woman. It should be characterized by courtesy, by kindness, by affection, by love, by concern, by care, by protection and all of the things that go to make up the relationship set forth in the word of God between a man and a woman. Promiscuous sex is the opposite. It’s the ultimate in human degradation. Disappointment, delusion, it’s kind of a dehumanizing thing. And it leads precisely to that. AIDS is the peril, and it is an anti-human and deadly disease. Someone has called this type of activity lethal, virulent, exceedingly messy as a disease, speaking of AIDS.

Free love was proclaimed in the sixties as a great thing for our day. It’s not free. It’s costly, and so we are learning. And so, it follows with this young man, greatly admired by many people and for many reasons justly so, he follows in the way of some other tragedies. Some of us who are older remember Ed Murrow, perhaps the leading commentator of his day a generation or two ago, who smoked three packs of cigarettes a day, dying at the end of cancer.

Or we remember Rock Hudson, and I must confess I used to like to watch Rock Hudson’s movies, tall handsome man, played particular parts that were unusually good as far as a man is concerned. And then think of his last days wasted, sad result of departing from the fundamental principles of the word of God set forth by our creator in heaven who placed within our bodies certain laws and principles that govern our activity one toward another.

And then some of the basketball heroes, Len Bias, for example, whose heart was stopped by cocaine as he was getting ready, probably for a brilliant NBA career, all of this testimony to the fact that implanted within every one of us, everyone of us in this auditorium and every human being are certain laws that ultimately have their issue. We cannot avoid it. We cannot beat it. The Lord God who created us has created us in that way. The right message in my mind is biblical and simple. The only “safe sex” is that practiced within the marriage bond by those who have waited to give themselves only to their marriage partner in complete and loving commitment. Abstinence until marriage is the creator’s word. There is no freedom without that responsibility, and we can be sure of it.

I read a comment by one individual, and I’ve read a number of articles on this point because there have been a number written on it. But I read one that sort of spoke to some of the issues that touch this. He commented that the Puritans had been chastised by the liberated to love freely. The liberated to love freely was in quotes as prudens and proud and self-righteous, and there’s no doubt that within the Puritans there was a great deal of pride and probably a great deal of self-righteousness, in fact I’m not sure that that doesn’t characterize all of us. We are proud and self-righteous. And Christians such as we are tend to do just that, we fall into that particular sin as well, and it’s just as significant as other sins. But he went on to say that with their problems they did not have AIDS.

Romans 6:23, “The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord,” and Hebrews 9:27, “It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,” still hold true. So I must apologize to you in one sense. These things that have happened in recent days have made me feel perhaps I haven’t done my part to make plain to you as best I can what I at least see taught in the word of God. And it came to my mind when I read here in the Epistle of Jude, “Yet in the same manner these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh.” Incidentally when it says, “By dreaming,” probably is a reference to their claims that some of their revelation they got from dreams that they claim that the Lord gave them. In other words, they were

the kinds of dreams that were not dreams that the Lord really gave them, but they were ecstatic visionary experiences that were not true experiences but which they claimed to be true.

And I think of all the people today in the religious world who use such expressions, “The Lord told me,” “The Lord told me this,” “The Lord told me that,” “The Lord told me this,” and “The Lord told me that.” I must confess, I have difficulty believing that when an individual tells me constantly, “The Lord told me this,” and “The Lord told me that,” when it’s evidently from the life that is lived publicly evident, that the things that are suggested as being the Lord’s will have contributed to a life that is contrary to the fundamental principles of the word of God, please excuse me for my doubts that the Lord really spoke to them, surely not in an audible way, of course.

But when God speaks, he speaks according to his word. Everything that we say is the Lord’s will is something that should be found in harmony with the principles of the word of God. The things that are right are the things that are wedded to the words of Holy Scripture. “They defile the flesh,” physically immoral, not only that, but Jude says, “They despise dominion,” or “They reject authority.” They are intellectually arrogant.

Now when it says that, “They despise dominion,” or “reject authority,” obviously, it seems to me, the reference is to the statement in verse 4. “They turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” What we are talking about is the rejection of the authority of God. Now the authority of God is the authority of the divine Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Father who conceived the plan of redemption and the creation, the Son who carried it out, and the Holy Spirit who applies it in his work of bringing men to the knowledge of the Lord. So when the text of Scripture says that, “They reject authority,” they are rejecting the authority of the triune God. They’re rejecting the lordship of Christ. They’re rejecting the creating power of the Lord God in heaven with all of the principles placed within our physical bodies and our physical life. They’re rejecting the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing men to the knowledge of the Lord.

But especially this text applies to our church leaders. It applies to us. It applies to individuals who are elders and deacons and responsible for the leadership of the local church. It applies to people such as I who teach the word of God. To reject authority is what Jude is talking about. “They reject authority.” “They despise dominion.” I have been rather hard on the Presbyterians recently because they were such wonderful illustrations of some of the principles that are set forth in the word of God.

But now we have division in the Episcopal church, as you know, over the same type of thing. And when I was in Jackson on Friday and read the newspaper there, Jackson, Mississippi, I read the newspaper of a group of Episcopalian men and churches called the Episcopal Senate of America are seeking to band together to have a biblical believing Episcopal church, certainly something that I would be happy to see. But one of the statements at the meeting of this ESA, the Episcopal Senate of America, one of the leaders made this statement, “There are two religions in the Episcopal church. One accepts the gospel, the other the way of the world. Those who promote the religion of this world dominate the leadership and work ceaselessly to advance their religion.” If that is true, as these leaders say, what we have then is despising of dominion. “They are rejecting authority.”

And finally, “Revile angelic majesties,” that is speaking evil of dignities, spiritually disobedient. So what we have here in this remarkable statement of Jude is they are physically immoral. They’re intellectually arrogant. And they are spiritually disobedient. They revile even the angelic order. Theology as you may know is a subject which Christians have in common with the devils. The good angels don’t have need for theology. They stand in the presence of the Lord. They know him as holy, holy, holy. They don’t have to be taught theology for they are the elect angels who have not sinned. And so consequently theology is a subject which we Christians have in common with the demons, with Satan and his demons because Satan and his demons are concerned with theology. And we are too. So the good angels, we leave them out.

John Milton who said many interesting things, but Milton was not totally orthodox on the doctrine of the Trinity. Milton imagined that when the fallen angels began to try to make the best of their lot in hell they erected a theological academy, and there they erected this theological academy in hell in order to discuss predestination and other subtle problems. One of my friends, an outstanding thinker and a Christian leader, has said, “Whether or not there are such seminaries in hell, Milton was absolutely right in his insight that rebellion against God does not dampen speculation about him. One does well to remind oneself of this before, during and after the reading of any theologian, and especially the modish ones.” And this man is a systematic theologian in one of our evangelical institutions.

Well I must make reference to that 9th verse. There we read, “But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” Now if you want to find this incident in the word of God you can look until the end of your days because you won't find it. This incident is derived from one of the apocryphal books. As a matter of fact, there are references to it in more than one, but the book called the Assumption of Moses. Jude was evidently familiar with it, and his readers were familiar with it. And I'll just sum it up very simply because our time is just about up.

In the Assumption of Moses it is stated that God gave the archangel Michael a message, a command, to take the body of Moses and bury the body of Moses, but also in the book it is said that Satan disputed the right of Michael to do what he was going to do. He disputed it for two reasons. First of all he said, Moses was a human being and he had authority over material things himself. It was given him by God. As a matter of fact, in Hebrews chapter 2 it says that he had the authority of death. So he argued on that ground, but then he argued on a second ground. He said Moses was a murderer, and Moses was a person who had killed the Egyptian. You'll remember, it's set forth in the book of Exodus referred to, I think in the Epistle to the Hebrews chapter 11.

Now, what he did then was to challenge authority. He had challenged the authority of God. And so Jude writes, “But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment.” In other words, Michael because he was simply an archangel recognized that he did not have the authority to ultimately execute judgment and so he simply said, rather than pronouncing that the devil slander was worthy of judgment, he said, “The Lord rebuke you.” And in so doing, in effect, he said it’s the Lord’s fundamental right to execute disciplinary and eternal judgment. So, in the two verses then, the brother of our Lord has affirmed that if we are to enjoy life there must be moral integrity. There must be intellectual humility, and there must be spiritual sensitivity or spiritual obedience, remarkable statements, remarkable use of both the word of God and of some things outside the word of God which nevertheless evidently were regarded as being true to history.

If you’re here today and you have never believed in our Lord Jesus Christ then as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus I remind you of the fact that you as I and as all are under sin. “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is none righteous, no not one. There is none that seeketh after God, no not one.” There is no fear of God before our eyes naturally. The Lord Jesus Christ has come as the mediator to die for sinners who if he had not come would have no hope. All would be lost, but Christ has come. He has acted as mediator for the people of God. He has born their punishment. He has born their judgment. He has completed the finished work saying, “It is finished.” And now as a result of his ascension to the right hand of the throne of God and carrying out his unfinished work of prayer, he supervises the program of God by which men and women are brought to the knowledge of him whom to know if life eternal.

The gospel is offered to all. If you’re in this audience, you are a subject or an object for the gospel. May God in his grace help you to recognize your lost condition, enable you to flee to him through whom alone we have eternal life and the forgiveness of sins. Come to Christ. Believe in him. Trust in him. Follow his word for a happy and significant human existence. Let’s stand for the benediction.



“Christendom in the Light of the Epistle of Jude (3)” by S. Lewis Johnson  
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[Prayer] Father, we are indeed grateful to Thee for the word of God and for the light that it gives us. We acknowledge, Lord, that we all have sinned against Thee. The Scriptures make that so plain. And yet in spite of our rebellion, in spite of our rejection of authority, Thou hast wonderfully left us with hope. Thou hast given us a savior and Thou hast given us a word concerning him and the provisions of the Godhead that have been made for us through him...

**[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]**