

Ok—we'll come back to Moses in a few minutes...
...but first we need to talk about something:

What happens if the Word of God ceases to become the source of authority in the church?
What's left?

If Scripture ceases to be our authority in both the church and the individual, then all that is left is some variation on the theme of self. In that void, *self* is only too happy to assert itself and usurp the place of God.

We'll see a very graphic and sobering picture today in Jude, as he describes the false teachers that were troubling the saints, twisting and distorting Scripture.

Here's the outline of Jude's short letter we're using:

v. 1-4—Jude's introduction and purpose: Contend for the faith

v. 5-16—Jude's sober warning and encouragement:
The ungodly will be judged

v. 17-25—Jude's exhortation and exaltation: Keep yourselves in the love of God—He will keep you

This is how I put the main theme of Jude's letter:

- Contend for the faith with confidence—God will judge those who are distorting it.
- And v. 3 is our key verse.

Ok—one quick slide to look back at last week ~

The judgment of those who distort the gospel – v. 5-7

Or, like Ps. 1, “the way of the wicked will perish.”

Here’s the point of the passage: Jude helps his readers contend for the faith by reminding them that those who are distorting the truth will undergo a terrible and complete judgment...similar to Psalm 1.

So, he gives them three reminders of judgment:

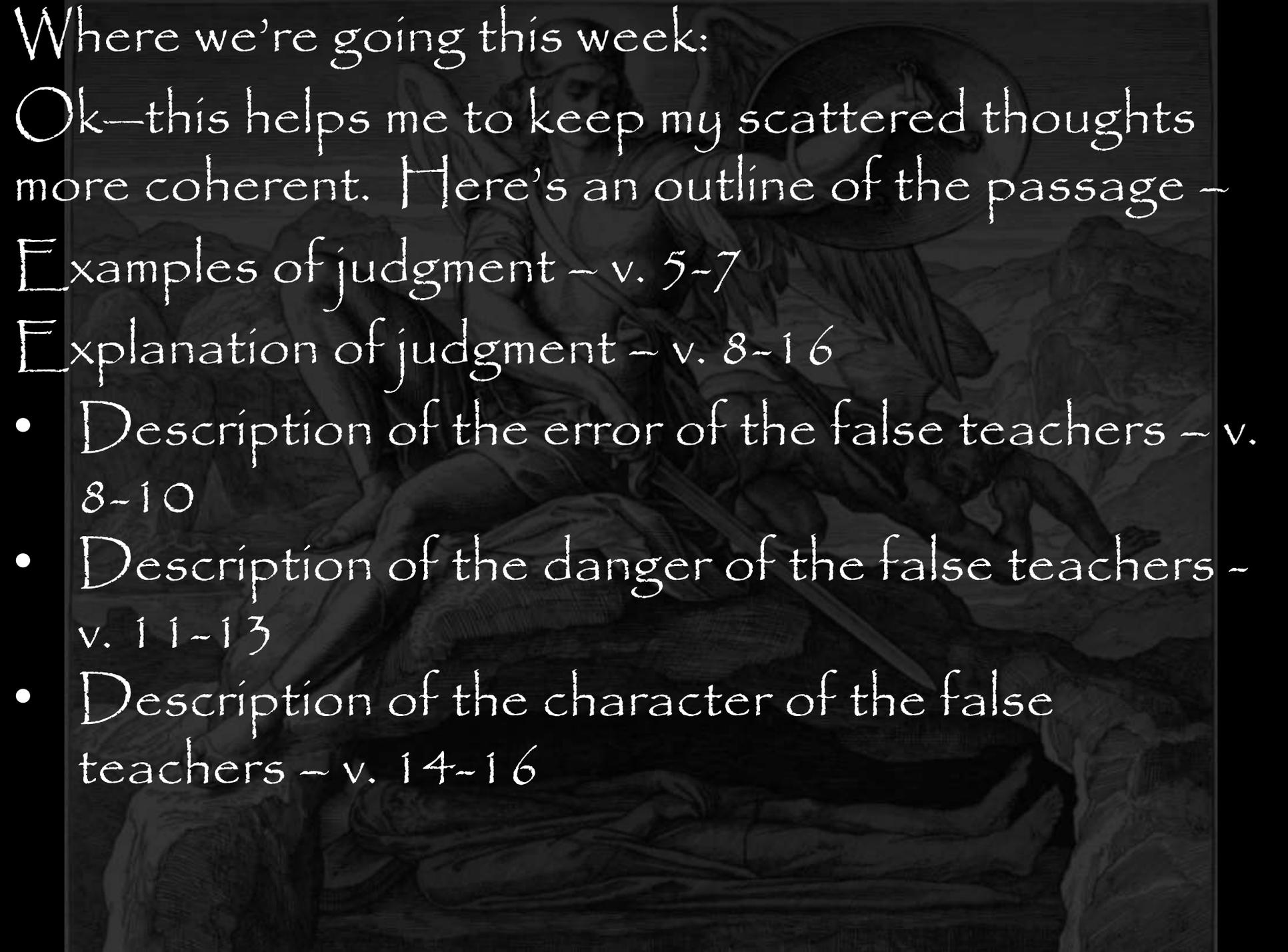
- Reminder #1 – The wilderness judgment of the unbelieving generation, v. 5.
- Reminder #2 – The eternal chains of the rebellious angels, v. 6
- Reminder #3 – The eternal fire of Sodom & Gomorrah, v. 7

Where we're going this week:

- We know the reason Jude wrote—that's v. 3.
- And we saw him last week give three examples of judgment as a kind of wake up call to his readers: don't follow these false teachers, don't join with them, this is where they are heading—that's v. 5-7.

In v. 8-16 Jude shifts from his three examples of judgment on unfaithful Israel, rebellious angels, and the ungodly cities of the plain to various descriptions of the false teachers. What strikes you about his descriptions?

- Jude, if nothing else, was blunt and to the point. A great danger to the church and to the gospel.



Where we're going this week:

Ok—this helps me to keep my scattered thoughts more coherent. Here's an outline of the passage ~

Examples of judgment ~ v. 5-7

Explanation of judgment ~ v. 8-16

- Description of the error of the false teachers ~ v. 8-10
- Description of the danger of the false teachers ~ v. 11-13
- Description of the character of the false teachers ~ v. 14-16

Where we're going this week:

And to take it one step further...

Description of the error of the false teachers – v. 8-10

- Its source: “relying on their dreams”
- Its results: “*defile* the flesh”
“*reject* authority”
“*blaspheme* the glorious ones”
- Its end: “they are destroyed”

So—how did Jude come to these conclusions? Isn't he being kind of judgmental?

- No—he is being a shepherd of the sheep. He knows Scripture, he has evaluated the teaching, and he knows it is unbiblical and dangerous.

The source of the error: “relying on their dreams”

Notice how Jude starts out: “Yet in like manner...”

Like what? What is he comparing to?

He is referring to “these people”—these false teachers...

- ...like the unbelieving Israelites, like the evil angels, like the corrupt people of Sodom and Gomorrah, these false teachers are displaying characteristics that show them to be in danger of judgment.
- ...and the first thing Jude does is to give his readers a glimpse into their heart. How did “these people” get to that point? Very simple: “relying on their dreams...”

The source of the error: “relying on their dreams”

Jude uses an interesting word here for “dreams,” not the more common one used often in the NT, but a word used only in Acts 2:17—it’s where Peter was preaching, and he quotes from the prophet Joel.

- The point Jude is making is that these false teachers were claiming that their dreams were like that: revelation from God that they could rely on, some kind of “truth” that hadn’t been revealed yet...really, just wishful thinking, lies, distortion.
- The only way they could have some “real” authority from God was to claim that it came from prophetic or revelatory dreams...because it sure didn’t come from the Bible.

The source of the error: “relying on their dreams”

And there’s the core issue. For them to rely on “dreams” for authority meant they had to...what?

- To reject the authority of the Word of God.
- Scripture certainly gave them no authority to “pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”
- BTW, there’s a reason Jude describes Jesus in v. 4 as “Master and Lord.” He—His word—is the sole authority for the church and the Christian.

Take a look at Deut. 13:1-5—and notice what the “dreamer” has to reject. Also see Col. 2:18-19, and notice what this person claims as his authority. Paul was dealing with the same issues.

The source of the error: “relying on their dreams”

Let's make a list of what we *can* trust as a valid source of moral truth and guidance for life:

1. The inerrant, infallible Word of God.

Let's make a list of what we *can't* trust as a valid source of moral truth and guidance for life :

1. Everything else.

The point? Be careful.

- Subjective voices, dreams, feelings, etc. are just that: subjective. We have one source of revealed, objective, timeless truth.
- Compare everything else with Scripture *rightly interpreted*.

The results of the error: “defile the flesh”

When “these people” decided that God was communicating with them through their dreams, guess what happened?

- God “told” them they could do whatever they want, with no consequences! No restraint!

The Gk word translated “defile” means to dye, stain, or corrupt. Paul uses it twice in Titus 1:15.

- So their subjective dreams, which they claimed were from God, gave them the freedom to disobey the clearly revealed commands of God.
- “Relying on their dreams,” they “defile the flesh,” and show that they are in danger of judgment.

The results of the error: “reject authority”

Question: what authority is it they are rejecting?

Answer: Take a look at 1 Thess. 4:1-7, and then notice what rejecting God’s will regarding sexual purity means in v. 8.

- And we’ve already seen in v. 4 that these people “*deny* our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”
- Also, see Matt. 23:27-28—notice what, according to v. 28, they were *inwardly*.

The source of their claimed authority was their dreams—something beyond God’s Word, something new, fresh, alive! A new word from God for today! But...God puts it like this: they “reject authority.”

The results of the error: “blaspheme the glorious ones”

Ok—what in the world is this talking about?

Let’s define the word first—what is *blaspheme*?

This is condensed from *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words* –

The Gk word means “to slander, blaspheme, insult,” especially with regard to speech.

- Scripture uses the word in various ways, almost all of which have a direct or indirect ref. to God.
- Blasphemy against God is a sin against His majesty and detracts from His holiness.
- The gospels indicate that Christians can slander Christ by doubting Him (Mk 15:29; Lk 22:64-65, 23:39).

The results of the error: “blaspheme the glorious ones”

Let's define the word first—what is *blaspheme*?

- Any act of disobedience is considered blasphemy because it resists God's will and damages the reputation of the faith (Rom. 2:24; 1 Tim. 6:1; Tit. 2:5; James 2:7).
- The Jews accused Jesus of blasphemy when He forgave sins and thus assumed messianic rights and authority that they regarded as belonging to God alone (Mk. 2:7).
- Blasphemy is a willful, deliberate, and conscious effort to slap God in the face. God regards this sin seriously.

The results of the error: “blaspheme the glorious ones”
Let’s also look at the parallel passage in 2 Pet.
2:10-11—using very similar language, Peter is clearly
referring to angels.

So apparently, the teachers Jude is warning his
people about, were saying some things about the
holy angels that in some way denigrated them—and
by extension, denigrated God, who sent them as
His messengers to do His bidding.

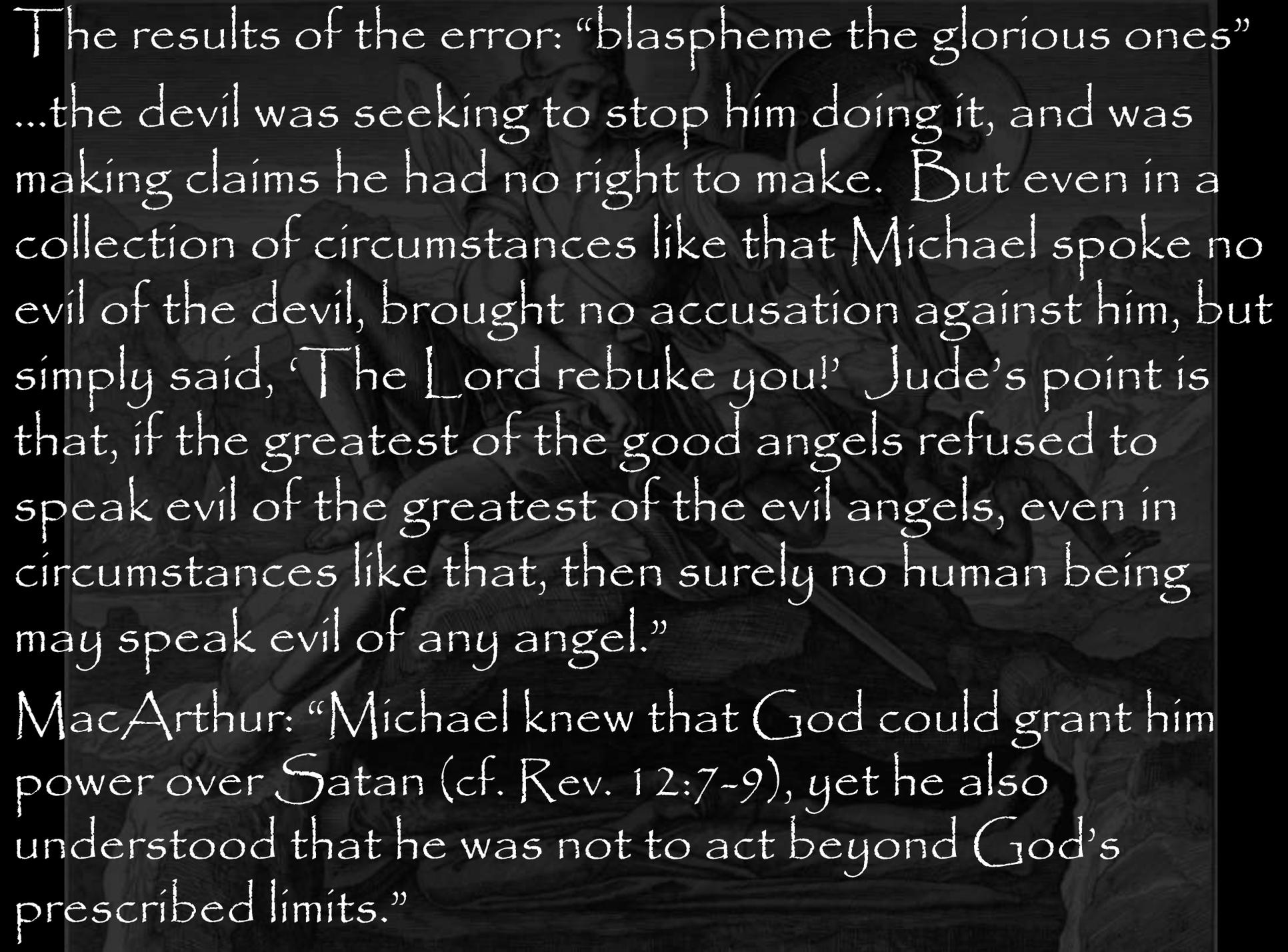
- That all sounds fine...but the problem is, Jude
goes on to support his point by quoting, in v. 9,
from an extra-biblical source. What’s going on
here? What is he saying?

The results of the error: “blaspheme the glorious ones”

A longish quote from William Barclay may help –

“One of the strange things about Jude is that he so often makes his quotations, not from Scripture, but from the apocryphal books. Such quotations seem very strange to us; but these books were very popular and very widely used at the time when Jude was writing, and to Jude’s readers the quotations would be very effective. The story in *The Assumption of Moses* runs as follows. The strange story of the death of Moses is told in Deut. 34: 1-6. *The Assumption of Moses* goes on to add to that story the further story that the task of burying the...

The results of the error: "blaspheme the glorious ones"
...body of Moses was given to the archangel
Michael. At this the devil disputed with Michael for
the possession of Moses. He based his claim on
two grounds. Moses' body was matter; matter is evil;
and, therefore, Moses' body belonged to him, for
matter was his domain. Second, Moses was a
murderer, for had not Moses slain the Egyptian
whom he saw smiting the Hebrew? And, if Moses
was a murderer, the devil had a claim on his body.
Now the point that Jude is making is this. Michael
was an archangel; the devil was the devil; Michael
was engaged on a task given him to do by God;...



The results of the error: “blaspheme the glorious ones”
...the devil was seeking to stop him doing it, and was making claims he had no right to make. But even in a collection of circumstances like that Michael spoke no evil of the devil, brought no accusation against him, but simply said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’ Jude’s point is that, if the greatest of the good angels refused to speak evil of the greatest of the evil angels, even in circumstances like that, then surely no human being may speak evil of any angel.”

MacArthur: “Michael knew that God could grant him power over Satan (cf. Rev. 12:7-9), yet he also understood that he was not to act beyond God’s prescribed limits.”

The end of the error: “they are destroyed” ~ v. 10

What is verse 10 saying?

Basically, this: what they don't understand, they mock. What they do (think they) understand—what they think is best for them—is destroying them.

What don't they understand that they blaspheme?

- The authority of Christ as Master and Lord.
- The need for forgiveness of sin.
- The danger of sin.
- The truth about angels.
- The danger of thinking dreams are authoritative.
- And especially notice what Jude says down in v. 19—they are “devoid of the Spirit.”

The end of the error: “they are destroyed” ~ v. 10

What is verse 10 saying?

Basically, this: what they don't understand, they mock. What they do (think they) understand—what they think is best for them—is destroying them.

What do they think they understand and rely on?

- Feelings, dreams, thoughts, impulses, impressions.
- Bodily instincts—if it feels good, do it. If it feels good, it must be right for me. If it feels good, God is ok with it.
- Jude characterizes them “like unreasoning animals,” that operate purely by instinct and not by reason, truth, or considering consequences.

The end of the error: “they are destroyed” ~ v. 10

Michael Green: “And those instincts, given free reign, are merciless. Lust, when indulged, becomes a killer.”

John Calvin: “...yet they added audacity to madness, so that they feared not to condemn things above their comprehension; and that they also laboured under another evil—for when like beasts they were carried away to those things which gratified the senses of the body, they observed no moderation, but gorged themselves excessively like the swine which roll themselves in stinking mud.”

Jude—like his brother James—was blunt and to the point: don’t follow people like these, and don’t let them teach in your church. There’s too much at stake.