

Do Not Revile Dignitaries: Jude 8-10 (Part II)

07-05-15PM

Jude 8-10 reveals to us a commandment of God not to revile dignitaries. In our previous lesson, we discussed the manner in which we are to view Satan. We discussed the fact that many people have fabricated a history of Satan that is not from Scripture, and may be guilty then of speaking about something which they have no knowledge. We continue this lesson with a consideration of two other spiritual beings which we might be guilty of speaking in ignorance of: angels and demons.

DEMONS: Let us begin by stating that, like Satan, there is not a great deal of information about the identity of demons. They too are not identified as fallen angels, although they are identified as the Devil's "angels" in Matthew 25:41. Perhaps the most important interaction that demons have with the world is that they are behind the false gods of the world (revealed in Deuteronomy 32:17 and I Corinthians 10:20). We might even consider how in Acts 16:16 we meet a girl possessed by a demon which is called a "spirit of divination"; the Greek word used here is *Pythu*, a reference to a Greek god Python (related to Apollo)¹. Thus the girl was possessed by Apollo, a demon.

We are also told that false doctrines have a demonic origin. Consider the words of Paul to Timothy in I Timothy 4:1 and the "doctrines of demons". Precisely how demons influence doctrine is unclear; James said that false doctrines are both fleshly and demonic, suggesting that the influence of demons in doctrine is the appeal to the flesh. This might explain Paul's description of a "*messenger (angel) of Satan*" in II Corinthians 12:7 as being a thorn in the flesh.

Finally, we know that the coming of demons and their ability to possess and control people to a limited degree was exclusive to the first century. There are no demon possessions (demoniacs) found in the entire Old Testament, but instead they are only in the New Testament. It is clear that their presence was, like miracles, to testify to the power of Jesus. Consider the words of the people in Mark 1:27 when they say Jesus cast out demons; they noted that this power was directly related to the authority of the doctrine He presented: "*What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him*". Jesus later told us this in Matthew 12:25-28, noting that "*if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you*".

How can we revile or speak in ignorance of demons, and violate Jude 8-11? First, if we accuse demons of actions that we ourselves are in control of, then we have falsely accused them. We cannot accuse them of being responsible for our conduct in sin, as the Bible is clear we are responsible for our sins (James 1:13-15). Secondly, we are not to speak in ignorance of them by creating false stories about them and teaching these things as doctrine.

ANGELS: In the Bible, Angels are found in the Old Testament and New Testament far more often than any other spiritual being except God. The word angel literally means "messengers of God". In the Bible they are seen either as indescribable beings (Ezekiel 1, Revelation 4) or as men (Genesis 19:1, Acts 1:10). It is important to know that the most typical image people have of angels (a two winged person) is found nowhere in the Bible, but that image is instead found exclusively in pagan imagery. Their number is uncountable (Hebrews 12:22). Only two angels are named in the Bible (Michael and Gabriel). There is an unnamed specific "Angel of the Lord" in the Old Testament that may or may not be Jesus pre-incarnate.

¹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Python_\(mythology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Python_(mythology))

They are of a higher order than man (Psalm 8:5) and they are sometimes called *Cherubim* (and one time *Seraphim* (Isaiah 6:2,6), which may only be describing their appearance).

As to the purpose or work of Angels, we are told in Hebrews 1:14 that all Angels are ministering spirits. "Minister" may include "reporting" (as in Revelation 1-3, Daniel 7:10, Hebrews 12:22). This would suggest that their presence in the church is to bring to God a report of our conduct (as in Sodom in Genesis 19), and that when the angel is removed, the church is dead, as God is no longer watching it. Importantly, in the Old Testament, angels were bringers of the Old Law (Acts 7:53, Hebrews 2:2). It is clearly stated in Hebrews 1:1-2 and 2:3 that this is no longer the case (consider Paul's warning of angelic Gospels in Galatians 1:8).

There are three particular dangers that we face regarding angels from Jude 8-11. First, it may be that in ignorance we worship of Angels (Revelation 22:8). Second, we may by over-glorifying them or being overly obsessed with them commit an idolatry of angels (Colossians 2:18-19). Finally, there are many today who claim to have received divine messages from angels (consider Mohammed or Joseph Smith); this is a contradiction of the message of Hebrews 1:1-2.

CONCLUSION: Jude 8-11 warns us to neither speak in ignorance of spiritual beings nor to revile them with false accusations. Since we have limited information on spiritual beings, too many speak in ignorance of them, and break this command. Others revile them by accusing them of things that are not true. Finally, some have sinned by a worship of angels.

We need to remember this important verse: *Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, **so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written**, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.* I Corinthians 4:6