

The dehumanising dogma of the 'progressives'

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Date: 08 October 2006

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[0 : 00] Well, if you'll turn with me to the letter of Jude, it'll be a great help if you can follow in your Bibles. And the message tonight really is all about the dehumanizing dogma of the so-called progressives in our church.

The question that we're asking in this series, or rather the question that Jude is asking his readers then and now, is will the church survive?

Will the churches in the West in particular survive the 21st century? And Jude's answer is pretty plain, even though it's very chilling. Not if the very foundations our faith is built on are taken away.

But that is what is happening in Jude's day as in our day. Jude says in verse 4 that the twin pillars of the faith are being eroded dangerously by influences within the church.

The grace of God, that is the gospel of God, and the lordship of Christ, the Son of God. That is, instead of the gospel of God's grace as a transforming power to rescue from sin and to change lives from holiness, it's becoming a transformed message that simply affirms sin and gives a license to live our lives exactly as we please.

[1 : 35] Instead of a unique sovereign lordship of Jesus Christ alone, he is effectively denied any lordship at all, any mastery over our lives and our behavior.

And this changed faith has no power in its message. It has no authority over our lives. It's a total erosion of the faith once for all delivered to the saints, the true gospel.

And yet, the extraordinary thing that Jude says to us in verse 4 is that it's crept in unnoticed to our churches. Like a bomb being smuggled onto an airliner.

It somehow got through the screening. Got to the place where it can cause immense damage and destruction. We know all about that these days, don't we?

It's crept in because it's been so well hidden under a veneer of respectability and attractiveness. We've seen already what a subtle tactic that is.

[2 : 42] A subtle shift in perspective on what the gospel is really all about. A shift from a focus on the future to the present. The future is where our great salvation is focused.

Jude tells us that in verse 21. It's focused on the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ that we wait for and the mercy that will then lead to eternal life.

That's the focus of the Christian faith. But it's been shifted so easily and so subtly by so many teachers to the present day, to this life, to the here and now, to our experience and our satisfaction now.

And once that shift has taken place, it's so easy for us to lose focus totally on what the Christian faith is really all about. Yet, it's easy for us to completely lose a sense of focus on the eternal dimension of the gospel.

Now, I had a perfect example of that this week at a presbytery service that some of us here were at. Those of you who were will recognize this. We were asked to repeat a declaration of faith, so-called, with a number of questions from the leader and responses.

[3 : 59] Listen to this. The leader said, It is not true, repeat, it is not true, that our dreams of liberation, of justice, of human dignity and of peace are not for this world and our present history.

We all had to answer, this is true. The hour is coming, indeed is now at hand, when worshippers will worship God in spirit and in truth. Well, of course, that second part is true, but it doesn't have anything to do with the first part, does it?

It's a classic use of scripture taken right out of context. Jesus, of course, is talking about a time coming when people would know God only through Jesus Christ. But this is somehow implying that all the promises of the kingdom of God, all the promises for eternity are for this world and can be expected in this present world.

But Jesus says, My kingdom is not of this world. Paul says to us clearly, We are saved in hope. You don't hope for something that you already see.

The whole creation, Paul says, is longing for that day, not just for the liberation of man, but for what that will mean for the whole world. All the dreams of the world are focused on the future, the coming of Jesus.

[5 : 20] Anything else is just fantasy. But you see, once that becomes the focus, it's easy to see why, for example, in our church, we get taken up with things like the long walk for peace to abolish Trident missiles.

But we have no interest, apparently, in the long walk for peace with God and for things that will bring about eternal destruction. And that's how error gets smuggled into the church, you see.

We foster a myopic vision. Our horizons of the world become so much less and so much smaller. And yet it can sound so respectable, can't it? So in this past week, when the presbytery through in Edinburgh were debating the issue of civil partnerships, there were many respected churchmen, ex-moderators, people no doubt meaning very, very well, but lining up to approve the blessing of same-sex unions.

How can we deny fulfilment to all in their sexual relationships? That's the question. Seems obvious. How could we deny such a thing? But you see, the attitude comes from a focus that is entirely on the present and not at all on eternity.

It also forgets all about the lordship of Jesus Christ, our only sovereign master, whose grace can transform people and does transform people, does transform all of us.

[6 : 54] And so you see, Jude says, however respectable this may seem, don't be taken in. We must recognise the enemies that we're up against. They're nothing new.

He's reminded us that in verse 4. As the NIV puts it, their condemnation was written about long ago. This is an old, old story. And you need to look back to the Old Testament history and see what God has said and see what God has done in the past and be reminded that God will do these things again in the present and ultimately when he comes in ultimate judgment.

Don't be mistaken. Look at the end of verse 6. There is a judgment of the great day to come, says Jude. Look at the end of verse 7.

There is a punishment of eternal fire to come. That's pretty strong stuff, isn't it? But you know, the medicine that we need very often does not taste very good, does it?

I remember when Julie had her, our youngest one, was little. Trying to get Brufen into her was a major exercise. Tasted bitter. She spat it out all over the place.

[8 : 09] We had to force it down her throat with a syringe. Look, there's no social workers here. It was for her own good. But sometimes it's true, isn't it?

We need to take that bitter pill. And Jude is saying, this is just what faces you today and you have to take the medicine. You've got to recognize it.

It can be very hard, can't it, to face up to a difficult diagnosis. Especially if the symptoms seem to us to be pretty superficial, not really a very big deal, nothing to get uptight about.

We don't want to make a mountain out of a molehill, do we? In Life and Work, the Church of Scotland magazine, this month, there was a lot of issues, a lot of articles about this issue, civil partnership, and all the voices of the establishment were just trying to play it down.

It's no big deal. Just a bit of readjustment. And it doesn't at all reflect a major shift in theology or practice or anything like that.

[9 : 12] That's what they say. But you see, the reality is, sometimes, in fact, quite often, things that appear very small things, very superficial signs, can actually betray a pathology that is very deep and very dangerous.

That's why a good doctor is observing you from the moment that you walk into the consulting room. You better be aware of that. Sometimes, before you've sat down, they've made a diagnosis just by looking at your face. They know that perhaps there's a risk of a brain tumour or a major thyroid problem or something wrong with your heart valve or all sorts of other things.

If they're any good, they can look at your face. And you see, Judah's saying, we've got to have our eyes open. We've got to be looking at the faces of these people in our churches.

We've got to be alert to the presence of real and dangerous pathology. Because if it's left unchallenged, it could mean the collapse of the whole body, the church of Jesus Christ.

So who are these people that he talks about? In verse 8. And again, all the way through the letter. What are the marks of these people who have infiltrated the churches in Jude's day?

[10 : 32] Who seem so innocent, so attractive, no doubt very popular. And yet in reality are actually eroding the very foundations of the faith. Putting the whole church in danger.

Who are these people? Well, in verses 8 to 16, we're given, if you like, the clinical signs to look out for. A list of things that we've got to reckon with.

But tonight, we're going to just look at two of these in verses 8 to 10. Jude alerts us here to two things that are always intimately related. These people's morality and these people's theology.

He tells us that they have a progressive morality, which in fact is a perverse morality. And he tells us that they have a sophisticated theology, which in fact is just a scornful, a sceptical theology.

Look at verse 8. They defile the flesh. Look at verse 10, the end. They're reduced, says Jude, to acting on instinct like animals.

[11 : 43] Just an expression of what he tells us at the beginning in verse 4. They pervert the grace of God into sensuality. And they do so backed up by a scornful theology.

Do you see the end of verse 8? They reject authority, that is the authority of the Lord, and they blaspheme or they slander the glorious ones. Again, in verse 10, they blaspheme, they slander all that they do not understand.

They are scornful. Again, just as verse 4 says, they deny our only Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. So, we're going to look at these two things that are intimately related together.

The first sign, Jude says, of these destructive influences in the churches is likely to feature prominently those who are arguing for and practicing what they see as a progressive morality.

That is, they push for and they promote morally permissive behavior in the churches. They argue against out-of-date and repressive and legalistic attitudes, as they call them, and they speak persuasively instead of inclusiveness and of freedom and of identity.

[12 : 59] They speak against bigotry and narrow-mindedness and discrimination. We need a progressive attitude to morality in our 21st century.

That's what they say. But Jude says it's not progressive. In fact, Jude says it's perverse and it's perverted.

They arrogantly scorn the natural order. That's what Jude is saying. And the evidence for that is that they embrace unnatural activity. Verse 8, they defile the flesh. They pollute their own bodies, as the NIV puts it.

In just the same way as the angels crossed natural God-given boundaries, in verse 6, in just the same way as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were sexually immoral and pursued unnatural desire, in verse 7, in like manner, he says in verse 8, these people, these popular, attractive leaders in the churches, they defile the flesh.

Here's what Dick Lucas says in his book about 2 Peter and Jude. We're looking forward to having Dick here with us next week. Listen to what he says on this. A major sign of the presence of these dreamers within our churches is the loosening of sexual morality and the acceptance of behavior that other generations of Christians would have found impossible to justify.

[14 : 30] Well, that puts it very well, doesn't it? And it makes it very plain just how real this issue is today. Because we're besieged increasingly, aren't we, by perverted morality in society.

And therefore, we're forfacing it again and again in the Christian church. It's not called that, of course. It's called progressiveness. That's much more pleasant, much more seductive.

But that is what it is, according to Jude. The pursuit of unnatural desires. And we are in the midst of this at the moment in our denomination in the Church of Scotland as are many others across the Western world in this whole debate about civil partnerships which really is a debate about recognizing sexually active gay relationships as normal, as natural.

people. And it is a very painful area. Let's not doubt that or minimize the genuine difficulty that there is for many people.

Especially those who struggle with this area of their sexuality. But that doesn't mean that we can just bury an issue like this. It doesn't mean that we can just pretend it doesn't matter.

[15 : 43] It does matter. We are faced, of course, with the accusation today, well, why are evangelicals so obsessed with sex? Well, it simply isn't true that we are obsessed with sex.

I, for one, would far rather not talk about these things at all. But what I think is true is that we as evangelicals who take the Bible seriously, we are realistic about sex.

sex is a very powerful urge in us human beings and we have to take it seriously. Sigmund Freud was absolutely right about that, although he was wrong about a lot of things.

And because sin permeates all of our faculties, then sin will, of course, find natural, powerful ways of expressing itself in the most powerful urges and drives of our personality, especially in the area of sex.

Isn't that true? I think you know that. There's great opportunity for rebellion, for provocation, for perversion, for that very reason.

[16 : 56] And our tendency to unnatural, to sinful behavior generally will find expression very easily, won't it, in unnatural sexual desire specifically.

Now we have to recognize that we face an immediate problem when we start speaking of some sexual behaviors unnatural.

The pro-gay lobby, for example, will say immediately, that's not right. Expression of homosexual love is something that's entirely natural to me.

It's the way I'm made, so it can't be wrong. But you see, as soon as you say, it's the way I'm made, it reminds us, doesn't it, that we are made, that we have a maker.

And what's natural is the way God made us to be. But we know that since the very first rebellion of man, sin has affected every single aspect of our being.

[17 : 59] every part of us is twisted and rebellious against God. Every part of us is in that sense tainted with what is unnatural. It's against God.

It's against God's desire for his image in us. It's at odds with what our nature really should be in every aspect of our lives. If that wasn't so, the Bible story would have been very short, wouldn't it?

We'd go straight from Genesis 3 to Revelation 22. But that's not the Bible story, is it? No, the Bible story is a long story of redemption.

So perverse, so empty nature is our human condition that nothing less than the promise of a coming Savior to reverse the fall, to restore our human nature, to recreate the whole world, and to bear the consequences consequences of our sin and perverse rebellion.

Nothing less than the blood of God himself shed by his Son, Jesus Christ, can restore the perversity that is a result of the fall.

[19 : 12] Nothing less. And so we need to be honest about things when we think about our sexual behavior, just as when we think about all of our behavior. All of us are twisted and unnatural before God.

That's what sin is. And all of us will find that we are especially distorted in our personalities in particular ways. And some of us have particular struggles in the area of sexuality.

In fact, I think most of us have particular struggles in that area, but for some it is especially in the area of same-sex attraction. sexual behavior is not just like skin color.

It's not just like left-handedness. It's not just something that we're born with or afflicted with, over which we have absolutely no influence, no control, no say.

To say that, to say that is to utterly dehumanize us. That's what Jude says is true of those who promote these things.

[20 : 21] You see verse 10? He says it reduces us to being like animals. People who live only by the level of instinct. Where's the liberation in that? There's no liberation at all, is there?

To say that it comes naturally to me to lust for perverted sex, whether it's homosexuality or group sex or pornography or whatever else it might be, that does not mean either that it's just natural in the sense that God must approve of it or that I have no choice but to act on that base instinct to satisfy whatever desires that I have, like a dog on heap, like a bull in a field full of cattle.

That's demeaning, that's dehumanizing. Yes, of course, sex is a powerful drive. We all know that. But it doesn't mean that there's no curb on our behavior, does it?

We certainly don't argue that constantly, do we? What about the rapists for whom it is natural to want to have sex with people by force? What about the pedophile for whom it is natural to want to have sex with little children?

No one wants to justify that, do they? But it's not just these extreme examples, is it? All of us need to control our desires. I certainly do.

[21 : 52] It comes naturally to me, I'm afraid to say, to have lustful desires about other women who are not my wife. Now, I'm very fortunate I'm married not only to the best looking woman you are ever going to meet, but the smartest one and the most patient one also.

But still, it comes naturally to me to be sexually wayward in my mind. Far too naturally in fact. Does that mean that I have to act on these natural impulses?

Of course it doesn't. Not only must I not act on them, I must act to suppress them, to fight against them, these thoughts in my mind. Otherwise, I will be entertaining sin in my heart.

Otherwise, if left unchecked, I will do worse. You know that as well, don't you? I can only really speak as a man, but every single man here knows that it comes naturally to men to be excited by pornography.

And we're very good at rationalizing to ourselves why it doesn't really matter. And in an internet age, it's very dangerous, isn't it? Because it's very easy. Very, very easy to just do what comes naturally, isn't it?

[23 : 08] But whether we're male or we're female, whether we're married or single, whatever our makeup is, whatever our proclivities, all sin is natural to us. You can do it without trying.

It's easy, isn't it? We have desires that come naturally to us all the time, but which are deeply, deeply wrong, which need to be repented of, which need to be resisted.

But, and this is the point, we have a gospel. We have a word of transforming power that rescues us from sin.

Not the grace of God perverted into anything goes sensuality. Not that at all. Listen to Titus 2, verse 11. The grace of God has appeared, says Titus, bringing salvation to all people, training us to renounce, to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearance of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Isn't that a great verse? You see, that's it. Living now, today, in the light of the coming glory, the coming fulfillment. Living now for that future, turning our backs on ungodliness, and facing the new, the restored human future that lies ahead.

[24 : 38] Saying no to worldly passions and yes to righteousness. That's repentance and faith, isn't it? Saying no and saying yes. Now, of course, we mustn't be censorious and pharisaical people.

Of course, we must have love and respect for all who struggle, because, by the way, that's all of us who struggle. And of course, we're to be realists.

People get into a terrible mess, don't they? We all do. And we often need help cleaning ourselves up from the mess that we get into. Of course, all of that is true, but we can't and we mustn't ignore the call of Christ to holiness.

We can't possibly reject that and just say, oh, do what comes naturally. To do that is to utterly dehumanize people, to treat people like beasts, like animals, unthinking, instinctive.

But God can transform people and God does transform people. That's the gospel. Remember 1 Corinthians 6, Paul gives a whole list of the degenerate lives that he says, will not inherit the kingdom of God.

[25 : 55] And he says, and such were some of you, that you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by his Holy Spirit.

And friends, it's just the same with us sitting here tonight. Some of us here, maybe many of us here, have been rescued. Some of us from lives of appalling degradation.

Some of us from twistedness of all awful kinds, including sexual twistedness and perversion. But it was a glorious act of God's saving grace that came down and lifted us and transformed us and is transforming us.

And of course, we'll struggle till the very end of our days. Of course, as long as we've got these bodies, it'll be a struggle to be pure and to be holy and to walk with God.

And that is why, that is why it is such an outrage, such a scandal. And it makes me burn with anger, it really does. To hear those who are called to be leaders, shepherds of the flock of God, tenders of his little ones in the struggles of the faith, to hear them say, no, there's no need to struggle.

[27 : 17] Just do what comes naturally and God bless you in it. That's treating Christ's little ones like worthless beasts, like dogs. Instinctive animals.

And Jude tells us it's putting them on the way of destruction. Jesus says, better a millstone run round your neck and be cast into the sea and cause one of these little ones who believes in me to sin.

We must never, ever accept such dreadful error in our churches. Never, ever. But we must look to ourselves pretty carefully as well, mustn't we?

Jesus also says, if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. Better to enter life maimed, he says. Deprived of some bodily experience of salvation, including that of sexual experience, rather than be lost.

We must keep ourselves pure. We must be an example, not just to ourselves, but to one another. Your behavior matters to other people. Did you know that? If you commit adultery as a member of this fellowship, it's going to affect all of us.

[28 : 35] You know that. If I commit adultery in this fellowship, it's certainly going to affect all of you, isn't it? And the Bible says we need to pray, we need to help one another to live holy lives.

That's what fellowship's about. It's holding one another accountable, not just having one another over for a coffee. We must all be alert, we must be awake to the influences in the church.

They're all around us, in books, in conferences, in ecclesiastical establishment, all many ways promoting a progressive morality, which is, in fact, nothing other than a perverted morality.

It all comes about from a perverted gospel. These two things always go together. That brings us to the second thing. You see, Jude says that these people will claim to have a sophisticated theology.

They're people who mock everything that they regard as simplistic, as old-fashioned, as traditional, conservative. They use ecclesiastical swear words like fundamentalist, or those who take the Bible literally, although it was the worst crime you could commit.

[29 : 50] They're scornful of those who, they say, haven't benefited from 200 years of good scholarship. They claim for themselves a sophisticated theology, but Jude says theirs is, in fact, a scornful, a skeptical, a slanderous theology.

It's marked by slander. That's the word that comes up three times. Blaspheming, our ESV version translates it. Not only do they arrogantly scorn the natural order in their perverted morality, they do so because they ignorantly scorn the supernatural order.

That's Jude's point. Verse 8, they reject the authority of the Lord. That's what that word authority means, really authority of the Lord. They blaspheme, they slander, the glorious ones, that's the angels of God.

Do you see the connection? They embrace unnatural activity because they reject supernatural authority. That's why they do these things.

They're scornful skeptics. They dismiss completely the whole realm of supernatural authority, but they do so, says verse 10, because they're ignorant, not because they're sophisticated as they think they are.

[31 : 05] They blaspheme, they scorn, says Jude, what they do not understand. And Jude's point is to show how staggeringly arrogant their ignorance is.

They scornfully dismiss the authority of a reality that they actually don't have any knowledge of, in total contrast, even to the highest archangels, who know and see everything in heaven and earth, and yet they humble themselves before God alone.

Because they know that God alone is the Lord and the judge. That's what verse 9 is about. It's a tricky verse. So we need to get the point really clear in our minds so as not to get distracted by the details.

These people, says Jude, with their sophisticated theology, they are scornful. They're dismissive of the supernatural. Of supernatural authority, the authority of the Lord, and of supernatural activity, the whole realm of the angelic.

Instead, he says to us, they rely on their own authority. Do you see that in verse 8? Relying on their dreams. That is, their own revelations about what they think God is saying to the churches today.

[32 : 19] That's what marks out these people, according to Jude. They consider their own revelation, their own fresh insights, as the real authority in the church. So whether it's the assured results of modern scholarship, and that's the liberal and the radical, that's their authority.

Or indeed, even those in the extremes of some parts of the charismatic movement, who claim fresh prophecy and words of revelation from God, so extreme that they go right against and away from scripture.

That's the same thing. The complete extreme of that, of course, is the cult, isn't it? Where ultimately all the real authority lies in the leader himself. Not surprisingly, the leader usually has revelations about God wanting you to give him all your cash, and usually a lot of sexual favors too.

That's the mark of the cult leader, isn't it? He wants your cash in his bank account, and probably your wife and your daughter in his bed. That's the mark of the cult. The authority lies with him. But you see, all of these, whatever the expression is, from the liberal radical on the one hand, to the extreme prophetic on the other hand, all of these come down to a clash about authority, doesn't it?

Does the authority come from above? From the once for all revelation of God delivered to the saints? The unchanging word, the law of life of God? Or does it come from man?

[33 : 45] From fresh revelations of whatever kind? Revelations that usually lead you to slander, to scorn God's true authority, and to scorn everything associated with that, including the supernatural guardians of the moral order that Jude talks about here, the angels.

And that's the issue, you see. The sophisticated theology and all such things, they scorn and slander the one true revelation of God's unchanging truth. But they are, in fact, ignorant, as well as arrogant.

Jude says they simply slander what they do not understand. And that's why this issue of the angels crops up here. We tend to, I suppose, ignore angels, don't we? We certainly downplay them.

But the New Testament does not do that. Angels, we're told, are always associated with the giving of God's law. Do you remember that? In Galatians 3, the law that came through angels on Sinai.

If you read Acts chapter 7 in Stephen's speech, you'll see that once again, the angels are prominent. The angels are associated with Moses, who receives the law. The angel, says Stephen, was with Moses when he received the law from God.

[35 : 00] And Stephen accuses his hearers, God's people, of rejecting God by refusing Jesus, just as they rejected and refused, quotes, the law as delivered by angels.

If you read Hebrews chapter 2, the end of Hebrews 1, we are warned about the seriousness of consequences of resisting the message given through the angels. So the angels, you see, serve the glory of God's law.

But there are also, in the Bible, the keepers, the upholders of God's law and his rule in the world. The angels watch from heaven and they act as emissaries to exert the rule of God. That's why in 1 Timothy 5, verse 21, for example, Paul says to Timothy, in the presence of God and Christ Jesus and of the elect angels, I charge you to keep these rules.

You see, the angels, they oversee with God's authority. It's the same in 1 Corinthians 11, verse 10, where Paul is insisting on rightly ordered relationships in the church, especially God's natural order of male and female, of male headship.

Why? Because of the angels. They're watching. And you see, the point is that these men, these with the super sophisticated theology, so-called, they utterly scorn and disdain not only the authority of God's law, they reject authority, but they also scorn the sanctions of God's law.

[36 : 35] They think it has no power to convict. They totally ignore and scorn things they don't understand. They don't understand the fact that God has armies of angels watching in the heavens, giving an account to God of everything that happens in the world of men.

angels who will act as God's emissaries to enforce His rule in the world, to enforce bringing this world to judgment.

Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 4 that on the last day there will be what? The trumpet shall sign and there will be the voice of an archangel calling all people to judgment.

But these people slander all that even though they don't understand it at all. It's total ignorance of Scripture as well as extraordinary arrogance.

They scorn the power of God. Remember what Jesus says when He's talking to some Sadducees in Matthew 22? You are wrong because you know neither the Scripture nor the power of God.

[37 : 41] Arrogance and ignorance. And you see verse 9 just heightens that point by way of contrast. We don't have to get into all the details of the story to see the point.

Jude's referring to a Jewish legend about the assumption of Moses. Moses, remember in Deuteronomy 34 was buried secretly by God. And the Jewish book goes on and elaborates that and speaks about Michael being sent by God to bury Moses.

and it seems that the devil is accusing Moses of sin and saying perhaps that he should never be allowed into heaven. But even Michael the archangel of God did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, a slanderous judgment.

That is, not even the mighty archangel of God dares to arrogate to himself the authority of making pronouncements about sin and guilt and righteousness and whether certain things could be forgiven or not.

No. He, the great archangel, nevertheless submitted only to God. The Lord rebuked you, Satan, he said. There's ambiguities in the text here.

[38 : 55] You can see in our version it's a bit difficult to see who he's refusing to pronounce judgment on. Is it Moses or is it the devil? But either way the point is clear, isn't it? Here's God's highest angel, Michael, whose name means like God and yet he is bowing to God's authority.

He will not take authority of his own. And yet these sophisticated theologians with their dreams, their own authority, their own novel views, their own modern scholarship, their own more 21st century way of doing things, they think that they can ignore and forget all about the authority of God.

They forget that above all he is the only sovereign Lord and Master. Jude says they scorn what they're ignorant of.

But where where does this path of progressiveness lead according to Jude? Does it lead to enlightenment and progress? To a higher more sophisticated human experience?

No, says Jude in verse 10. It leads only to destruction. Not rising up in progress upwards towards God, no, but descending, he says, to a level of unreason, of instinct, of bestiality.

[40 : 20] They are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. That's the destination, friends, when you step back from the once for all revelation of God's gospel from his law of life, his law of liberty and fulfillment.

God's way is the way of life. God's way is the way of wholeness. That's what holiness is. God's way is the way of true humanity. It's his way of re-humanizing us, unpervverting our natures, reorienting our whole personalities.

God has revealed to us in his gospel a gracious new covenant. It's the way of life. It's all we need. And it's not burdensome.

It's glorious. God's law is holy and just and good. It's sin that is lawlessness. Jesus says, come to me, all you who labor under the burdens of a twisted life of sin.

And I will give you rest. You need to trust him. Whatever your makeup, whatever your background, Jesus' way of holiness is the way of wholeness for you.

[41 : 44] It's the way of true humanness for you. The true fulfillment, the true identity that you need and that he wants you to have. These people, with their sophisticated theology, with their progressive morality, they reject God's law, they reject his authority, they reject his moral order.

But in doing so, they reject the very thing that humanizes us. They blaspheme, they scorn Moses. Never mind, it's just a few old obsolete texts, they say.

Not even Michael the archangel dares to do such a thing. But by seeking their sophistication, their progressiveness, by turning the grace of God into a license for sensuality, and by turning the transforming grace of God into an affirmation for sin, they dehumanize people.

That's what sin does. C.S. Lewis has that great phrase in one of his books where a character taken over by sin, he calls the unman, the unhumanizing of humanity.

That's what sin does to us, twisting, pervverting. And that path takes us down the path of reducing the precious, redeemed children of God, the temples of God's Holy Spirit, into beasts.

[43 : 11] People just answering to instinct, passions. And for that, says Jude, they are destroyed. Woe to them! They're undone by their arrogant scorn of the natural order, they defile the flesh, they pervert the grace of God into sensuality.

By their ignorant scorn of the supernatural, they reject the authority of God, they slander his glorious ones, and in doing so, they deny the Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

That's why it's so serious. You need to see, my friends, that the Lord Jesus Christ shed his own blood for those who are called, who are beloved of God the Father, who are kept for Jesus, to be presented blameless before the day of his coming.

You are his precious little ones. You are brands plucked from the burning. You are washed, you are sanctified, justified, by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus and in his name.

He will not have you dehumanized. He will not have you scorned and mocked in your struggle for holiness. He will not have it.

[44 : 38] And those who do so, if they won't repent, they will face his eternal wrath. For them, verse 13 says, the gloom of utter darkness is reserved forever.

So, Jude says, you must resist all such things, all such thoughts. He says to us, remember God's law. He says, remember the angels and help one another to submit to the lordship of the one and only sovereign Jesus Christ, not to the dehumanizing dogma of those who call themselves progressives.

That's Jude's message to us today. Let's pray. H kingdom save me.

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