

Scripture: Jude 5-23.

Theme: Destroyed by Sin.

Text: Jude 10b -- "by those things that they know by instinct as irrational animals do, they are destroyed."

Proposition: To indulge in non-christian attitudes and practices is to destroy the human and eternal in one.

Date written: April 4, 1957.

No. of Cards in these notes: 14.

Dates and Places preached:

April 7, 1957 - Cheyenne, Wyo.
Grace Church - 8:15 - 11:00
115 1/2 W. 1st St., N. 6 - 10 a.m.
Aug. 23, 64 - 8:30 a.m., Montross, Colo.

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Introduction: The Scripture introduces the topic:

1. The writer of Jude. The writer of this short letter, or Epistle, describes himself in the opening words as "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James." Several men bearing the name of Jude are mentioned in the New Testament. Among the apostles there were two, Judas Iscariot, the traitor, and Judas who is described as the brother of James, who was the brother of Jesus. While during his earthly life the brothers of Jesus did not believe in Him, they are found among his disciples in the beginning of Acts (1: 14), and James became a foremost leader of the church in Jerusalem. This short letter of Jude, preserved in the New Testament, has been regarded widely as a genuine writing of the less-well-known brother, Jude. Even some who do not regard Jude, the brother of Jesus, as the author of this Book, assign it to the end of the first century. If the author is not Jude the brother of Jesus nothing is known about him except his name.

2. Reason for writing: The letter was written because of a situation which had shown itself within the Church. Men who professed to be Christians were indulging in open immorality. Along with this, they showed low moral stan-

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dards in other directions. In theory and in practice they were perverting the Christian gospel.

3. To whom written: Though the letter has no particular address, it seems to have been written to some special community of Christians, probably a Gentile Church known to the writer, among whom a false view of the Christian religion was being spread. The author sends this vigorous letter to counteract the bad influences that press upon his readers, rallying them to a true Christian stand.

4. The Book was divided into only 25 verses, just one chapter that is not numbered, by the King ~~James~~ James translation committee in 1611, who originally imposed the chapter and verse divisions upon the Bible. Of Jude's 25 verses the heart, or meat, of the message is in the section that we read as our Scripture, verses 5-23. Within this section part of verse 10 expresses the attitude of the writer toward the sins into which many of the Christians were falling. He wrote, "by those things that they know by instinct as irrational animals do, they are destroyed." Our whole Scriptural selection, and particularly these words from the 10th. verse, express some things about which we may well think today.

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I. There is a difference between the instinctive and irrational actions of the animal and the considered actions of the human.

1. When we turn the pages of history and search them for a record of man's attitude over the centuries toward animals, we find some very interesting facts. The thought forms of prehistoric man were so different from ours that it is difficult to understand the reasons for his attitudes toward the animals. Certainly he felt himself more akin to them than does modern man. Yet they had qualities that set them apart. Some were dangerous, some had great strength, some were mysterious, some cunning, some were available for food. The efforts of early man to make alliance with some animal forms and to protect himself from others may account for much of what is called animal worship. The need for food coupled with an early apprehension regarding blood and killing gave rise to some cults. The desire to protect the food supply accounts for others. When grain became a staple food various animals were identified with the fertility of the earth. The snake, associated with underground waters, was revered as the source of fertilization, fertility in field and home, wealth and healing. Some cults arose from the belief that the souls of the dead reappeared in

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animal form, and present-day Hinduism is simply one of these cults in an elaborate form. Sometimes a tribe or an individual thought itself allied with an animal species, for various reasons, and totemism resulted in which specific animals represented specific tribes or persons, with the tribes or persons supposedly having the better characteristics of the animals concerned. (Material in above paragraph primarily from p.23 of An Encyclopedia of Religion, ed. by Vergilius Ferm, The Philosophical Library, N.Y., 1945).

2. This brief summary of early men's attitude toward animals demonstrates one thing clearly: that there is a difference between each of the various animal species and mankind. Because of these differences man has sometimes stood in awe of ~~the~~ animal, sometimes imitated the animal in one or another characteristic, sometimes used the animal for a beast of burden or for food. As the higher religions developed, such as Judaism out of the hodge-podge of primitive religions of the Middle East, the devotees of these more developed, or more-thought-out religions came to consider the animal as God-given for man to use and control. The writer of Psalm 8 in verses 6-8 is indicative of this attitude of superiority, by God-given right, of man over animals. He

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used these words (RSV), with man addressing God:

"Thou has given him dominion over the works of thy hands;

thou has put all things under his feet,

all sheep and oxen,

and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,

whatever passes along the paths of the sea."

3. The Illustrated Home Library Encyclopedia, Vol.12, p.2776, Book

Guild, Inc.1955, defines and illustrates the word "instinct" about as understandably as can well be done. "An instinct is a way of acting that does not have to be learned. Small animals may have many instincts, but large animals have fewer. Birds do **not** have to be taught to fly. Ducks do not have to be **taught** to swim. Fish do not have to learn to swim. Instinct tells birds how to build their nests and how to take care of their young."

"Not all animals act because of instinct. Mother cats have to teach kittens to catch mice. Some dogs teach puppies to chase cats.

"Human beings have some instincts, but experts disagree on what they are. Because human beings learn so much from their parents, it is hard to know what

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they do because they learned how and what they do because it is natural to them."

Another idea of instinct is gained when one the noun "instinct" into the adjective "instinctive," which is a word usually equivalent to 'impulsive,' 'spontaneous,' or 'automatic.' (American Peoples Encyclopedia, F. J. Meine, ed., Spencer Press, Chicago, 1951, p. 11-1712).

4. As best can be determined from numerous studies, the chief difference between mankind and animals is the ability to consider, to think. This ability enables man to control the ~~instinct~~ instincts he has, so that when he acts from what he knows, by instinct, or from what he can do naturally, he can be sure nevertheless that he ~~wants~~ wants to do the thing and can be convinced that it is for his best welfare. There are real and great differences between humans and animals, and there is indeed a difference between the instinctive and irrational actions of the animal and the considered actions of the human. For instance

II. The instinctive and irrational actions in which humans indulge, in Biblical and theological terms are called "sin", and lead to destruction of distinctive human characteristics, and often to destruction of life itself.

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1. In some animals a self-destructive instinct seems irresistably present. The Lemmings, small rodents of Europe's Scandinavian peninsula, for instance, at regular intervals every few years march to the sea in long columns, for no apparent reason, and swim out to sea until they drown. The only thing that keeps the species alive is that not all of them have this urge at the same time.

2. Mankind, too, seems to have the self-destructive urge, or instinct, at times. How else can be explained suicide or warfare? But to mankind at least is given the ability to consider what he does and to combat this self-destructive tendency.

3. Other instincts, or urges to do things that don't have to be learned, as do irrational animals, may lead to incest, particularly in isolated communities. But the world of animal husbandry demonstrates that this type thing usually produces inferior individuals, because recessive bad traits common to both individuals of the same family tend to become dominant in their offspring. The same thing is generally true in humans, and for us now seems thus to say that to follow animal instinct in such matters is to ask for trouble, perhaps to the point of destruction.

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4. The selfish urge that causes a dog to hold a bone he doesn't want or need -- the storied dog in the manger -- or to grab the biggest piece of meat and run with it, is similar to the selfishness which causes people to try to get the most they can for themselves, whatever the cost to others. Think of the insistence by those who stand to profit thereby on overgrazing of range lands, on overplowing and overplanting grain lands, on cutting timber recklessly, on selling alcoholic beverages. Land erosion, both by wind and water, insufficient timber for needed building and pulp, deaths and ruined lives because of inhibitions loosened by alcohol, are the results of such selfishness; and often hit close home, the loved ones of the selfish frequently being affected. A growing population is already beginning to reap punishment and see the seeds of destruction from selfish policies of some of the people.

5. Yet, mankind's rational facilities, his mind, point out to him his error in selfishness, in giving in to physical urges where wrong, in practicing self-destruction. He can see that the more he yields to such instincts the less human he becomes and the more like an irrational animal he is. Pride in his humanity should lead him to seek the best way to be less like the beasts.

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III. The best standards for living a human life are those of Christianity, and without them we tend to sink to the animal level which destroys.

1. Christianity looks for its standards to the person of Jesus Christ as revealed in the pages of the four gospels of the Bible's New Testament. In this Jesus they see a baby born into a humble home. In that home he was trained in the ordinary things of life, such as current manners and customs. He received there instruction in the religious teachings of his people, as we must believe from the occasion of him being taken to the temple as an infant, and later at the age of 12 we see him accompanying his parents on the traditional visit to the ~~temple~~ Jerusalem temple. We know that in his youth he learned the carpenter trade, and was sometimes known as the carpenter. At about the age of 30 he was baptised, and received there an assurance that he was indeed the Son of God. After a period of temptation and meditation in the desert, he began the life of a wandering Jewish teacher, and often was called Rabbi, the traditional Jewish teacher's name. He gathered about Him a close, small group, 12 in number, known like the followers of other Rabbis as disciples. These men, drawn from jobs such

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fishing and tax collecting, went with Him in his travels from community to community in the small Palestinian countryside. Soon people began talking about Him, and He was said to be performing healing miracles. In the records that we have He is shown to have helped whoever came to Him for help, if that person or those speaking for him had faith that He could help. He loved children, was compassionate to the grieving and weary, and on at least two occasions (with Lazarus and with the Centurion's daughter) was believed to have restored the dead to life. People soon came to hope He was the Messiah, the long-hoped-for savior from God to restore the Jewish God-centered kingdom and drive out the hated Roman oppressor. Because of this popular belief about Him, which He never encouraged, the ruling Roman government became aware and suspicious of Him. The religious leaders of the Jews determined to get rid of Him because His teachings of simple faith in God were hurting their business of sacrifice-selling, as well as pointing up by contrast their own shortcomings and irregularities. They contrived to put Him to death on the traditional criminal's cross; and so the world's best man was destroyed by sin. The Roman soldiers made sure he was dead. But death

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did not hold Him, and after 3 days began a 40-day period in which many people testified to seeing Him alive, and told true-to-his-character things about Him which He had told them during this 40 day period. Characteristic of these sayings was the promise that those who believed in Him should also conquer death and know a happy and glorious hereafter.

2. In the life of this Jesus we see a pattern for our life at its best. Not all of us can be roving teachers of religious truth. Not all will come into conflict with the existing church or government. Nor will we all be carpenters. But we can all respect other people and seek to serve them. We can love children and give them the very best guidance possible. We can be of a forgiving spirit. We can make true lifetime friends and impart to them the best that we know. We can meet death bravely, no matter how it comes, not becoming bitter in the last hours but putting our welfare trustfully in the hands of God, with a strong faith in the fact of a wonderful eternity. We can learn from the teachings of this Jesus, as well as from His example, finding forgiveness, service, neighborliness, unselfishness, humility, self-denial, and many other characteristics taught, as well as demonstrated, by Him.

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13
3. Here, then, in the Christ are the standards of Christianity. With his ability to remember, reflect, consider, think, with his capacity to use this mental and spiritual gift of mind to control even the strong instincts of his animal-like body, man can become even further removed from ~~and~~ an animal-like life, and draw closer to being a human, as distinct from an animal. That which distinguishes a human is that he is made in the image of God. This means that you and I can be images, or imitators, of God, never like Him, but coming recognizably closer to Him. The likeness is in use of the mind, that capacity for choice within us. When we use mind to choose the standards of Christianity we grow increasingly into the image of God, becoming ever increasingly a human being at his distinctive best. When we fail to follow Christian standards, doing instead the natural, instinctive animal things, we tend to sink to reap the destruction of such action. It is Christ and His way which saves.

Conclusion:

1. Sin, of the type that is doing the thing which is similar to that done instinctively, naturally, and thoughtlessly by animals, is a way to destruction for man, for you and me.

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2. As Jude wrote, "by those things that they (men) know by instinct as irrational animals do, they are destroyed"

3. To indulge in non-Christian attitudes and practices is to destroy the human and eternal in us. To adopt Christian standards is to find life at its happiest and eternal best.

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