

Jude 14–17

A Ministry in the Word

Scripture Reading

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

Enoch — The Seventh from Adam

The designation *the seventh from Adam* is precise and intentional. There was more than one Enoch in Scripture — the qualification points unambiguously to the one in Genesis 5. And the sequence there is chronological, not merely genealogical: seven generations from Adam to Enoch, no gaps, no dynasties being compressed. Those who wish to stretch the date of Adam's creation by treating these genealogies as something other than a continuous chronology find no support here — the seventh from Adam is the seventh, and the numbering carries its plain sense.

Of this Enoch, Hebrews 11 says he was translated that he should not see death, and that before his translation he had the testimony that he pleased God. He

walked with God. There is weight to the words of such a man — not the weight of great swelling words, which are full of air, but the weight of a life in fellowship with God. And God, who heard every word Enoch uttered, gave those words to Jude by the Holy Spirit to be preserved here in Scripture. It may be that the whole world before the flood managed to ignore Enoch's prophecy — as a world full of people managed to ignore it and be swept away by the flood. The question now is whether another world will do the same.

Behold, the Lord Has Come — The Seer's Language

The force of the prophecy is not quite rendered by *behold the Lord cometh*. A seer beholds the thing in vision and states it as already accomplished — *the Lord has come* is the real force of it. The divine purpose is so certain that the prophet speaks of it as done even though it had not yet occurred when he spoke, and has not yet occurred now. It is impending. And what Enoch saw was the Lord coming amid His holy myriads — His ten thousands of saints — to execute judgment upon all. This corresponds to the rider on the white horse in Revelation 19, followed by the armies of heaven. These saints come with Him because they have been walking with Him — just as Enoch walked with God, these come with the Lord in the day of His appearing in glory.

Ungodly — Four Times

The word ungodly appears four times in verse 15, each time with a different connection. First, the persons: *all the ungodly* — ungodly persons. Second, their works: *all their works of ungodliness* — ungodly deeds. Third, the manner in which those works were done: *which they have ungodly committed* — ungodly method. Fourth, their words: *all the hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken*. Person, work, manner, word — the ungodliness is total and complete, reaching into every dimension of what these men are and do.

The tongue goes where the arm cannot reach. Man is a weak creature, yet his mouth can speak things that go far beyond what his hand could accomplish. The tongue can no man tame — James 3:8. And here the hard speeches of ungodly sinners spoken against the Lord are brought into judgment. The Holy Spirit through Jude is doing precisely what the Lord said the Spirit would do in John 16: convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. And Enoch's prophecy from before the flood is exactly suited to the character of what Jude is describing — the Spirit of God finding in that ancient word the precise expression of what meets the case.

Murmurers and Complainers — Great Swelling Words

Verse 16 characterises these men through what comes out of their mouths. Murmurers say what they want to say without the courage to say it openly or directly — just under the breath, not loud enough to be held accountable, but loud enough that the opposition gets out. Complainers are never really expecting the thing complained of to be fixed — the complaint is not a request for remedy but a statement of opinion about the person responsible. Both are characteristic of what Jude says corrupts the sphere of profession.

Their mouths also speak great swelling words. Swelling is the right image — something puffing up to impressive size with nothing substantial inside. Touch such words with the pen of truth and they collapse. The world has always been full of great swelling words in connection with its heroes and its claims. The Bible is not that kind of book. It speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom all praise and honor and glory truly belong — and that is not swelling but substance. Daniel 7 gives the solemn end of the horn with the mouth speaking great things: *the beast was slain, the body destroyed and given to the burning flame*. That is where great swelling words end.

Having men's persons in admiration because of advantage is equally ancient. It was before the flood, before government was put in man's hand at all. The principle of currying favour with the influential for personal gain is not a political corruption — it is something more fundamental to fallen man than any political system. Men of renown were already present in those days (Genesis 6:4), and there were already those who sought advantage through them.

Remember the Words of the Apostles

Verse 17 turns from the character of the ungodly to the resource of the beloved: *but, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.* We do not need a memory reaching back to Enoch — the apostolic words are in our New Testaments, available to be opened and read at any time. The contrast could not be sharper: on one side the great swelling words, the murmurings, the hard speeches; on the other, the sober and solemn apostolic word that brings man to his right place before God. What the apostles said about the last time and its mockers was not merely a prediction to be noted with interest — it was a preparation, given so that when the thing arrived it would not unsettle those who had received the word. They told you it would come. It has come. Remember what they said, and stand in it.

— Study ends —