

Jude 1:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

Analysis

Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. After three historical examples, Jude applies them to the false teachers: "likewise also these" (Greek *homoiōs mentoi kai houtoi, ómoίως μέντοι καὶ οὗτοι*)—similarly, these present false teachers. "Filthy dreamers" (Greek *enypniazomenoi, ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι*) literally means "dreaming" or "visionaries," possibly claiming special revelations or living in moral delusion. Their "dreams" produce defilement rather than truth.

They commit three sins paralleling the examples:

1. "Defile the flesh" (Greek *sarka mēn miainousin, σάρκα μὲν μιαίνουσιν*)—corrupt the body through sexual immorality, like Sodom.
2. "Despise dominion" (Greek *kyriotēta de athētousin, κυριότητα δὲ ἀθετοῦσιν*)—reject lordship/authority, like rebellious Israel and fallen angels. The term *kyriotēs* refers to divine lordship; they refuse submission to Christ.
3. "Speak evil of dignities" (Greek *doxas de blasphēmousin, δόξας δὲ βλασφημοῦσιν*)—slander glorious ones, possibly angelic beings or church authorities.

The present tense verbs indicate ongoing, habitual behavior—this is their pattern of life, not occasional failures.

The triple indictment echoes the three examples: moral corruption (Sodom), rejection of authority (Israel), and spiritual arrogance exceeding proper bounds (angels). These false teachers combine all three forms of rebellion.

Historical Context

Gnostic and proto-Gnostic teachers in the first century often claimed special visions or revelations giving them superior knowledge (*gnōsis*). They taught that spiritual enlightenment transcended moral law—since matter was evil but spirit was pure, bodily actions didn't affect spiritual status. This led to antinomianism: license for sexual immorality and rejection of behavioral restrictions.

The phrase "speak evil of dignities" likely refers to mocking angelic authorities or despising church leaders who maintained moral standards. Some Gnostics viewed the Old Testament God (creator of material world) as inferior to the true spiritual God, leading them to reject Old Testament moral law and authorities. Others claimed such spiritual superiority that they needed no human teachers or accountability.

Early church fathers (Irenaeus, Tertullian) extensively refuted Gnosticism's false claims to special revelation. The church insisted on apostolic succession—teaching transmitted from the apostles, not secret knowledge from private visions. Jude's condemnation of these "dreamers" established that authentic Christian teaching comes through apostolic tradition, not mystical experiences or claimed revelations contradicting Scripture.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What contemporary claims to special revelation or spiritual experience contradict biblical truth?
2. How does rejecting Christ's lordship manifest in modern teaching about grace, freedom, or Christian living?
3. What's the balance between respecting spiritual authorities and refusing to follow leaders into error?

Interlinear Text

Όμοίως μέντοι καὶ οὗτοι ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι σάρκα μὲν
Likewise G3305 also these filthy dreamers G4561 the flesh G3303
G3668 G2532 G3778 G1797 G3303

μιαίνουσιν κυριότητα δὲ ἀθετοῦσιν δόξας δὲ
defile dominion G1161 despise of dignities G1161
G3392 G2963 G114 G1391 G1161

βλασφημοῦσιν
speak evil
G987

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 13:17 (Parallel theme): Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

1 Timothy 1:10 (Parallel theme): For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

1 Peter 2:17 (Parallel theme): Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

Acts 23:5 (Evil): Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

Ecclesiastes 10:20 (Parallel theme): Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.

Exodus 22:28 (Evil): Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people.

1 Corinthians 3:17 (Parallel theme): If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

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