

## THE SECURITY OF CERTAINTY VERSUS THE INSECURITY OF UNCERTAINTY

### Jude 8-10

(NASB): "Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties.<sup>9</sup> But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!'<sup>10</sup> But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed."

### INTRODUCTION

England's John Ward, a former librarian and engineer, creates fantastic, delightfully humorous contraptions from objects others have thrown away. He never expects them to be mass produced for common use. But if price is not a concern, he'll invent something to help with most any need. For people denied hospital admission due to a shortage of beds, Ward created a bed with an electric engine. It allows patients to drive themselves to the hospital in a ready-made hospital bed. If told to see a psychiatrist, Ward offers you an alternative therapy: a tunnel with a light at the end of it that shines onto a field of soft grass. He built a miniature car wash around a chair, complete with furry pink mittens. It shampoos your hair while you sit and relax. All his inventions have been featured on television or demonstrated to a live audience. Here's my favorite: Ward's Ultimate Television has a screen washer to get rid of dust and flies, a built-in gas ring on top to boil tea, and an attachment can be added to rotate a rack of toast over the gas ring's open flame.

Would your life be greatly improved by any of John Ward's inventions? Probably not. But if they do not truly help us they probably won't harm us either. The same cannot be said about attempts to invent better ways to gain God's forgiveness, a new heart, and a clean start in life. Can we truly improve upon what God Himself has done by sending His Son to die in our place and rise from the grave to become our living Lord and faithful Savior? Can God's magnificent promises to us in **John 3:16-18** be surpassed? [Recite together]: (NIV) "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.<sup>17</sup> For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.<sup>18</sup> Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." Today's sermon title is The Security of Certainty Versus the Insecurity of Uncertainty.

### I. THE INSECURITY OF UNCERTAINTY

**Jude 8-10** describes people who claim to be devoted **Jesus** as their "Master and Lord" (**vs. 4**), yet they also claim they have been inspired by God's Spirit (either directly or in dreams) to revise God's commands. The 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment, for example, found in **Exodus 20:16** (NASB), "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor," includes gossip. **Proverbs 20:19** sheds more light upon this sin: "The one who reveals secrets is a constant gossip; avoid someone with a big mouth." Yet, whether we struggle with gossip or any other action God condemns, we prefer to call it human frailty, or bad tendencies, a weakness or a hereditary fault, or caused by a bad environment, instead of what it is: "sin."

**Jude** warns of people with "the rules don't apply to them" attitude. Some claim they can commit acts immoral for most Christians (they "defile the flesh"; "pollute their own bodies"—NIV), and may insist they can engage in such sins with God's blessing. Some are misguidedly "dreaming" of a special rapport with God that entitles them to exercise God's authority over others despite believing they are in many ways excused from following God's will themselves (they "reject authority"). Some even exalt themselves over fallen angels (they "revile angelic majesties") as if they shared God's judgment seat with Him!

According to **Jude 9** and Jewish tradition, Satan tried to keep Moses from an honorable burial because Moses murdered an Egyptian. "Michael" is the only angel Scripture identifies as an "archangel." But even

Michael did not presume to denounce Satan based upon his assumed superiority to the Devil as the holiest angel compared to the unholy angel. Michael knew the LORD God alone is qualified to judge others, even one as despicable as the Devil. Yet, Christians sometimes substitute their "instinct, like unreasoning animals" to make judgments upon the rightness or wrongness of others' actions, instead of strictly following what God's Word teaches. Due to their prideful, foolish grasp of godlike authority, "by these things they are destroyed" ("they bring about their own destruction," NLT). People who allow themselves to be driven by instinct to revise what God has set down clearly for us to do to be part of His eternal family usually seek to take as many others with them down this same road. They try to convince us to trade the certainty of God's forgiveness and the security of God's promises to experience the happiest, most blessed life possible by obedience to God's Word for a manner of life supposedly as good as what God offers us in the Bible.

Albert Einstein (1879-1955) was born in Germany to a family of non-practicing Jews. Religion was discouraged in his home. Young Albert never received any instruction in the Jewish faith by his immediate family. He did not become a Bar Mitzvah ("a son of [God's] commandment"). He never mastered Hebrew. When he attended a Bavarian public school, he received a Catholic education. At the same time, a distant relative taught him essential beliefs of his Jewish heritage. When he was eleven, he entered a very intense religious phase and became quite committed to keeping the Jewish precepts he had learned. He also composed several songs in honor of God that he sang enthusiastically on the way to school. Einstein continued to read the Bible throughout his life, but as he grew into manhood his entire concept of God dramatically changed. He lost faith in Biblical miracles and no longer believed in a personal God who aids and judges us. Yet, he claimed the driving impulse of his thirst for science was his quest to comprehend, even if only remotely, the thought processes of God's infinite Reason. He once confided to a group of young physics students, "I want to know how God created this world. . . . I want to know His thoughts."

Einstein described himself as "a deeply religious man." In 1951, he warned the Ethical Cultural Society that our modern preoccupation with what was "practical and factual" had impaired our "ethical values" and caused "a killing frost" in human relationships. He often stated that the moral principles promoted by the Old Testament "Prophets" and "Jesus Christ," when freed from what others, especially "priests," later added to these principles, provide us "with a teaching which is capable of curing all the social ills of humanity."

But Albert Einstein did not practice even the little religion he preached. A collection of his letters have now been made public that his daughter donated to Hebrew University in 1986 and ordered sealed for 20 years. They are filled with trashy remarks about his fellow scientists; revealing him to be highly jealous and critical. They also contain numerous references to being showered with affection and gifts by his many mistresses. Einstein engaged in numerous adulterous affairs with little loyalty to either of his two wives. He married his first wife in 1903, by whom he fathered three children; the first prior to their marriage. In 1912, he became involved with a cousin while still married to his first wife. He divorced his wife in 1919 to marry his cousin, but only after his cousin's daughter rejected his advances. His pattern of adultery then resumed unchecked. No wonder Albert Einstein convinced himself when he died he would simply be dead and would not need to be concerned about answering to His Creator for how he'd lived. In 1930, he wrote an article for the *New York Times Magazine* in which he pridefully included himself among the few people of "exceptional endowments" who had been able "to rise above" primitive beliefs in a God who judges us and takes a personal interest in us and the morals we live by! I learned about Einstein's moral failings on a hunch. I've found many who claim superiority to revise Christ's teachings concerning salvation and eternal life have objected to God's sexual standards. They claim they are inspired to live by "instinct" in ways that excuse them from following God's set standards of selfless love and loyalty and reinvent God's standards to excuse their moral failings. They remind me of the lawyer of nearly 100 years ago who keenly understood the underlying criminal bent of human nature. He would explain his fee scale to potential clients in this way: "I charge five dollars for advising you as to just what the law permits you to do. For giving you advice as to the way you can safely do what the law forbids, my minimum fee is one hundred dollars."

Nearly 600 years after **Jesus'** death and resurrection, Muhammad, at age 40, claimed the angel Gabriel began revealing to him the contents of the Qur'an, Islam's holy book. Islam replaces the certainty of being right with God with uncertainty. Islam excuses actions the Bible condemns as long as one does more good deeds than bad ones; as if we ever know how "bad" or "good" we are in the eyes of a holy God. **Isaiah 64: 6** (NLT) declares, "We are all infected and impure with sin. When we proudly display our righteous deeds, we find they are but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall. And our sins, like the wind, sweep us away." The Qur'an (as narrated by Muhammad) refers to Muhammad's life as "a beautiful pattern of conduct for anyone whose hope is in Allah" (33:21), and "an exalted standard of character" (68:4). The Qur'an (4:3) limits the number of wives a man may have to four. But Muhammad was married to 11 women at the same time. A six-year-old girl was pledged to him and he consummated his marriage to her when she was nine. Muhammad once coveted a woman already married to another man, caused his death, and claimed her for himself. People trained today to be Islam's religious leaders are often confused by Muhammad's hypocrisy but are warned never to question the truth of Islam. Muhammad brazenly authorized Muslims to "smite" "the Unbelievers" "above their necks and all their finger tips off them," including Christians and Jews and former Muslims, if they refuse to believe he is God's final prophet and holiest servant (8:12). "But these people mock and curse the things they do not understand. Like animals, they do whatever their instincts tell them, and they bring about their own destruction" (**Jude 1:10**, NLT).

## II. THE CERTAINTY OF SECURITY

God's wheel of salvation does not need to be reinvented. As **Jesus** announced in **Luke 8:15**, all those "who have heard the word," the truth about Him being our only and our best hope to get right with God, "in an honest and good heart," will embrace Him faithfully as Savior and Lord.

Alexander Chiu, of Taiwan, recalls his parents used a hand-held tally counter while chanting mantras (religious phrases) in their home. Their counter might reach 1,000 clicks, or 2 hours of meditation, in one day. They chanted to clear their minds and purify themselves, seeking perfect enlightenment in the way of the Buddha. Each morning, he would wake up to the smell of incense burning. Oranges and pineapple cake were offered in front of Buddha statues in a room designated for meditation. His home was like a temple. On each wall hung a Buddha portrait, totaling more than 30 deities throughout the house. A statue of the Grand Master, revered as a living Buddha, stood at the center of their home. His parents spoke often about discipline, wisdom, and training the mind according to Buddhism's Four Noble Truths: 1) Suffering exists; 2) Suffering arises from attachment to desires; 3) Suffering ceases when attachment to desires ceases; 4) Freedom from suffering is possible by practicing the Eightfold Path of right view, right thoughts, right speech, right actions, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right contemplation.

The Chius did not live in Thailand or China, however, but Lawrence, Kansas, where his father was a science professor and his mother a homemaker raising him and two sisters. A Guggenheim Award-winning dad and a so-called "tiger mom" kept the pressure on him for straight As. Academics, achievement, and ambition were nonnegotiable to retain his parents' approval. His Taiwanese family lineage includes generations of Buddhists. Despite many churches and Christians in his neighborhood, he states, "Somehow I managed to go through 18 years of life without ever hearing the Good News of Jesus."

But in the mid-1990s, he arrived at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), drawn by its engineering program, racial diversity, and closeness to home. Fervent Christians, many with Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF), filled his dorm. They shared a close bond and radiated love. Some were the first Asian American Christians he'd ever met. They cared about things important to him, like living with purpose and having compassion for a cause beyond themselves. He gradually came to realize the Buddhism of his upbringing had not captured his heart. Curious about Christianity, he attended an Inter-Varsity gathering in his sophomore year with a friend. For the first time he heard God's promises declared in worship songs and saw men and women praising Him. He soon joined a GIG (Groups Investigating

God) and began studying his first Bible starting with the Gospel of John. He declares, "The authority with which Jesus spoke amazed me; it's as if his words jumped off the pages, addressing me directly."

But before he could place faith in Jesus, he needed to know there was a rational basis for Christianity's foundational truths. Early that summer, he attended Chapter Focus Week (a retreat sponsored by IVCF) and took an apologetics track (the branch of theology concerned with the defense or proof of Christianity). He heard well-founded explanations of the Bible's inspiration, the problem of evil, and the uniqueness of the Gospel message of complete forgiveness and salvation from sin through the grace of God's Son suffering and dying in our behalf. After these doctrines were satisfactorily defended, his GIG leader recommended that he focus on the person of **Jesus**, so as not to let his endless philosophical questions distract him from the core truths of Christianity. He testifies, "Jesus' display of justice and compassion from the cross made perfect sense, and my reservations dissipated. I found that, contrary to the media's portrayal of it as narrow, crazy, and judgmental, Christianity was the most intellectually stimulating worldview I had ever encountered." Alexander Chiu became the first-ever Christian in his family's history!

Wouldn't it be foolish to exchange the Certainty of our Security of God's unconditional love, our complete forgiveness through **Jesus Christ**, and our confidence of enjoying eternity with the Lord God of Heaven and earth, for the Insecurity of Uncertainty of every other religious view about why we exist, how to please our Creator, and gain victory over sin? God's promises more to us in **John 3:16-18** alone than the guarantees of how to have peace with God found in all the religious reinventions of the world combined! "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. <sup>18</sup> Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."