

FBC POWELL, 1-14-18 AM NOTES
"Beware of Apostates"
Jude 1:5-7
2 in Series, "Contending for the Faith"

"The faith that falters before the finish was faulty from the first."

1 John 2:19 (NASB) "They went out from us, but they were not *really* of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but *they went out*, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us."

I. The Picture of Israel in the Wilderness (v. 5)

Jude 1:5 (NIV) "Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe."

Numbers 14:26-32 (NASB) " ²⁶ The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ²⁷ 'How long *shall I bear* with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me. ²⁸ Say to them, 'As I live,' says the Lord, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you; ²⁹ your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me. ³⁰ Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. ³¹ Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey—I will bring them in, and they will know the land which you have rejected. ³² But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness.'"

Hebrews 3:11 (NASB) "As I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'"

II. The Picture of the Angels Who Fell (v. 6)

Jude 1:6 (NIV) "And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day."

Jude 1:6 (CSB) "And He has kept, with eternal chains in darkness for the judgment of the great day, the angels who did not keep their own position but deserted their proper dwelling."

Over the centuries there have been three main views of what Jude 1:6 means:

1. This is referring to an unknown rebellion and fall of angels that is not recorded in Scripture. The problem with that explanation is that Jude is reminding his readers about something that they know (v. 5).
2. This is speaking of the original fall of Satan revealed in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. The problem with this one is that the angels referred to in Jude are already incarcerated.
3. This verse is referring to Genesis 6 where fallen angels took on human bodies and had sexual relations with human women that resulted in an evil race of men that brought God's judgment on the world through a world-wide flood that killed all human beings except Noah and his family (his wife, his three sons and their wives).

Genesis 6:2 (NASB) "That the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose."

Matthew 22:30 (NASB) “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.”

2 Peter 2:4 (NASB) “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment...”

Tartaros—“The place where certain angels are confined reserved unto judgment.”

—*Zodhiates Complete Word Study New Testament*

“Jude warns his readers to remember these angels who were created with a dignity worthy of their high position, but who turned from their Creator and went their own way into gross immorality. They knew God and had experienced heaven, yet they turned away. And God did not take lightly their sin and wickedness, but brought on them a terrible judgment...”

—John MacArthur

III. The Picture of Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7)

Genesis 11:11 (NASB) “And Shem lived five hundred years after he became the father of Arpachshad, and he had *other* sons and daughters.”

Romans 1:20 (NASB) “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”

Romans 2:14-16 (NASB) “For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.”

Sermon 2: Beware of Apostates

Jude 1:5-7

Every New Testament book except for Philemon has warnings about false teaching, but the small book written by Jude (the half-brother of Jesus) focuses almost completely on equipping believers to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.” The phrase “contend earnestly” is from the Greek word that we get “agonize” from. The purpose of this series is to equip you to contend earnestly for the faith. This objective faith is given to us in the Bible and it is worth contending for! Our enemy sees attacking the faith that was once for all handed down to the saints as his top priority. That is why the title of this series is “Contending for the Faith”

At age seventeen he wrote these words, “Our heart, reason, history and the work of Christ convince us that without Him we cannot achieve our goal, that without Him we are doomed by

God, and only Christ can save us.” He was baptized into the Lutheran church in 1824 at age six and was confirmed at age sixteen. To graduate from high school, he was required to write an essay on a religious subject. He chose this subject; “The Union of Believers with Christ According to Saint John’s Gospel 15:1-14; an Exposition on Its Basic Essence, Its Absolute Necessity, and Its Consequences.” Who am I speaking of? Karl Marx. In 1844, he abandoned all the vestiges of Christianity and became an outspoken atheist and pioneer of what became Communism. Karl Marx would be an example of an apostate. The English word “apostate” is from the Greek word, *apostasia*. It is sometimes translated “falling away.” Apostates are those who fall away from the true faith, abandoning what they formerly *said* they believed. An apostate is not someone who may be in error on a non-fundamental doctrine of the faith; an apostate denies even the fundamental truths of biblical Christianity. Let me say up front that apostates are not people who once were true Christians and then turned from the faith. The “faith” of the apostate was phony from the beginning. Someone put it this way, “The faith that falters before the finish was faulty from the first.” That doesn’t mean that a person will never struggle with what they believe – even the fundamentals of the faith; it means that the Spirit of Christ who lives in them will never let them go. If they make a final turning from the faith, they never had true biblical faith. 1 John 2:19: “They went out from us, but they were not *really* of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but *they went out*, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.”

Let’s take a moment to review. In the last message, we saw how Jude described these apostates, these false teachers in Jude 1:4: “persons [who] have crept in unnoticed...” They were not up front about the fact that they had denied and abandoned what Jude called in verse 3, “the faith that was once for all handed down to the saints.” The specific apostates that Jude was referring to were seeking to lead those in the church away from holiness. They were teaching what theologians call “antinomianism” – against law. They taught that believing in Christ meant that Christians have a license to sin and have no consequences. They are described in Jude 1:4 as “...ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” That word “licentiousness” is translated “sensuality” in the ESV. The Christian Standard Bible translates it “a license for immorality.” These false teachers, these apostates that crept into the church were saying that since grace covers all our sin, believers should just follow the desires of their flesh, give in to every temptation, satisfy every evil appetite and God is fine with that because grace has already taken care of it. This is just one of a multitude of manifestations of apostasy.

Allow me to give you just one more example of apostasy. One false teaching that is growing rapidly – especially among younger adults is that you can be “spiritual”, believe in “god” as you conceive him to be, but not be affiliated with any particular religious group or church. It is a sort of “pick and choose” spirituality. Ligon Duncan calls it “salad bar Christianity” which is not Christianity at all. It is the belief that one can be “spiritual” (whatever that means) without commitment. These mostly young adults don’t want to be bound by rules or doctrines. They want spirituality without commitment. That is simply a modern version of what Jude is dealing with in this small book of twenty-five verses.

Though there are many varieties, apostates are those who have turned away from “...the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (verse 3) – the Scriptures. The apostates that are the most dangerous are not those on the outside, but those who creep into the church unaware. A major task of elders is to equip you to recognize apostates outside and sadly at times inside the church. In this message, I want us to look at three pictures of apostates and see what happened to them. God does not *overlook* apostasy.

I. The Picture of Israel in the Wilderness (v. 5)

Perhaps the NIV is a little easier to understand here. Jude 1:5 (NIV): “Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe.” Jude is here reminding his readers of some things that most of them already knew. Jude begins by reminding them of the Jews who had been miraculously delivered from Egypt in the Exodus. All that God desired from these people who had experienced so many demonstrations of God’s power and love in setting them free from the slavery of Egypt was their love, gratitude, and obedience. When they got to the border of the promised land, they refused to believe that the God who brought them out of Egypt could bring them in to the promised land. When Moses sent twelve spies into the land, ten of them came back with doubting fearful hearts and spread their fear among the people. Only Joshua and Caleb believed God and His promises and pleaded with the people to trust God. Two Israelite spies said “go” but ten said “no” in their unbelief. Remember that these people had seen the plagues in Egypt brought on by the power of God, they had experienced the Passover when a lamb was slain, the blood placed on the doorpost, and the Israelites were spared while the first born in every Egyptian home was killed – including Pharaoh’s oldest son. They saw the Red Sea part while they walked through on dry land and then close on the Egyptians and drown them. Yet, all the Israelites did was murmur, complain, and refuse to believe God. It is ironic that the Canaanites were fearful because they believed that the Israelites would defeat them but the Israelites themselves wouldn’t believe God.

It is sad to see the consequences of turning their backs on God. Numbers 14:26-32:

The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, “How long *shall I bear* with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me. Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says the Lord, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you; your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me. Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey—I will bring them in, and they will know the land which you have rejected. But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness.’”

Jude’s point is simple. He is reminding those professing Christ that God deals sternly with apostates who turn their backs on Him and refuse to believe Him. Though the Israelites had every reason to believe God and no reason to doubt Him they chose unbelief. The writer of the Hebrews points to these Israelites who refused to believe and obey God as examples of God’s judgment on those who reject what they know to be true. Those to whom Jude was writing this letter were evidently wavering and were wavering in making a full commitment to Christ. To those wavering the writer of Hebrews says, “Don’t do what the Israelites did in the wilderness. In apostasy, they turned away from God and his promises and were doomed to die in the wilderness.” Hebrews 3:11 God said, “As I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’”

Jude wanted his readers to be reminded that God deals sternly with those who in a final way turn their backs on Him. There will come a final turning away as they become apostates with no hope of salvation – ever! Don’t turn your back on Him; remember Israel in the wilderness who refused to believe God and were doomed to die in the wilderness.

II. The Picture of the Angels Who Fell (v. 6)

The second example or picture of apostasy is the angels who left their God ordained purpose in rebellion against God. Perhaps we could be helped by reading some other translations on verse 6. Jude 1:6 (NIV): “And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.” Jude 1:6 (CSB): “and He has kept, with eternal chains in darkness for the judgment of the great day, the angels who did not keep their own position but deserted their proper dwelling.” There are some good Bible scholars that disagree on how this difficult verse is to be translated. My interpretation is in line with most conservative scholars (not to imply that I am a scholar). Danny Aiken, one our seminary presidents, says this about this verse: “One of the most difficult verses in the Bible to interpret is right here.” Over the centuries there have been three main views of what this is speaking of.

1. This is referring to an unknown rebellion and fall of angels that is not recorded in Scripture. The problem with that explanation is that Jude is reminding his readers about something that they know (v. 5).
2. This is speaking of the original fall of Satan revealed in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. The problem with this one is that the angels referred to in Jude are already incarcerated.
3. This verse is referring to Genesis 6 where fallen angels took on human bodies and had sexual relations with human women that resulted in an evil race of men that brought God’s judgment on the world through a worldwide flood that killed all human beings except Noah and his family (his wife, his three sons and their wives).

I am completely convinced that number three is the correct interpretation. Allow me to give you a few reasons. [Several of these came from a sermon by Danny Aiken at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary].

1. This is the overwhelming view of Jewish tradition.
2. In Genesis 6:2 we are told “that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.” Often in the Old Testament “sons of God” refers to angelic beings (example Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7).
3. When angels appear in human form in the Scriptures, they always appear as males.
4. We read in Matthew 22:30: “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven.” But that is referring to the angels that did not follow Lucifer in his rebellion; it is speaking of *angels in heaven*, not *fallen angels* (demons).
5. Both in our text and in 2 Peter 2:4, 9 there are some demonic spirits (fallen angels) who are bound and in a special place. Verse 6 says they are “kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.” 2 Peter 2:4: “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment...” The word translated “hell” is a different Greek word from the words that are translated “hell” in other passages. This word is *tartaros* which one lexicon I have says it refers to “the place where certain angels are confined, reserved unto judgment.” [Zodhiates Complete Word Study New Testament, page 960]

Don't get caught up in unknown details about these angels and letting your imagination run wild and then miss the whole point that Jude is making. John MacArthur summarizes it well: "Jude warns his readers to remember these angels who were created with a dignity worthy of their high position, but who turned from their Creator and went their own way into gross immorality. They knew God and had experienced heaven, yet they turned away. And God did not take lightly their sin and wickedness but brought on them a terrible judgment..." [John MacArthur, *Beware the Pretenders*, page 47]

III. The Picture of Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7)

How could the Lord use Sodom and Gomorrah as an example of apostates if they had never heard the truth? The evidence is that they likely did hear the truth and turned away from it. The destruction of these cities is dated by some to be only about 450 years after the flood. That would mean that at least one of Noah's sons would have been living. Genesis 11:11: "and Shem lived five hundred years after he became the father of Arpachshad, and he had *other* sons and daughters." Remember that none of Noah's sons had children before the flood. Noah himself had only been dead about 100 years before the destruction of these cities. Besides these evidences that they knew the truth, the book of Romans tells us that every person has the witness of creation and conscience and are thus without excuse (Romans 1:20; 2:14-16). The point that Jude is making is that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are put forth of as an example that God will certainly punish apostates who have turned finally away from Him.

What was the gross immorality of Sodom? You can read about it in Genesis 19. Two obedient angels had come to Sodom having taken on human form to speak with Abraham's nephew Lot about God's judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah. While speaking with Lot, homosexual residents of Sodom surrounded Lot's house and demanded that he send out his guests for the perverted sexual appetites of these residents of the city. The angels struck them blind and announced to Lot that the city was going to be destroyed because God could tolerate its evil no longer. These wicked residents of these cities had rejected God's truth and now there was only coming judgment as the cities were destroyed and all their residents except for Lot and his 2 daughters.

Conclusion

God has not changed since these Old Testament illustrations given by Jude. They serve as an example to us that God always deals decisively with those who turn in a final way from His truth. Here is my great burden. I fear that there are many professing believers who in the "Bible belt" culture have been deceived into thinking they are right with God, but they are not. Maybe you "prayed that prayer" or "asked Jesus into your heart" but it was not real; it was just an empty ritual. In this rapidly changing culture, where it is no longer cool and advantageous in one's job and social circles to claim Christ, those who are deceived will fall away because they never had real conversion, never became a new creation. If there is a desire in your heart for a genuine encounter with Christ that will completely transform your life, this can be the greatest day of your life.

Members of FBC, "business as usual" is not going an option for us. We have been called to go into this rapidly changing culture with the powerful, life changing Gospel and make disciples. Don't sit this one out on the sidelines. You need to be "all in."