

## THE BOOK OF JUDE

### (Lesson Two)

*“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”*  
*Jude 1:4-7*

**INTRODUCTION:** In the introductory lesson, we saw that the writer of Jude was the brother of James, the overseer of the Jerusalem church, and that both brothers were the brothers of our Lord Jesus Christ, or more correctly, his half-brothers. The theme of the book is **“contending for the faith in the midst of apostasy.”** The word “apostasy” means “a falling away, a forsaking or defection from the truth of God.” It is such an occurrence that Jude was addressing in the short letter, as false teachers had entered the Christian community and were distorting the truthfulness of the faith. Today we look at three distinguishing features of an apostate (v. 4), and three examples of God’s condemning judgment in the Old Testament.

## II. JUDE’S ARGUMENT (Heretics Described) (verses 4-19)

### 1. Identifying the Enemy - v. 4 - *“certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation.”*

Here Jude explains the reason for his letter. He had learned of a serious threat to the church. There were *“certain men,”* probably itinerant traveling self-appointed prophets who had appeared on the scene. They had *“crept in unawares”* or slipped into the church in such an unnoticed manner that the danger they posed was undetected by the saints of God. A usage of the expression in Classical Greek is that of entering a place secretly from the side door. Jesus said in John 10:1,2, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that enters not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that enters in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.”* He went on to say in 10:7-10, *“Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief*

*cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*” Jesus is the door by which the sheep enter the church. But thieves or false professors enter through a side door and they need to be exposed so they can be kicked out the back door. If this is not done, they will only bring harm and destruction to the fellowship of the body.

This was not a new problem, wicked men creep into the best of churches. Jesus had a Judas among His followers even though He knew from the beginning who it was that was ordained or marked out to betray Him. God permits it for the hardening of the apostate and to try the patience and faith of the saints. Paul said concerning the divisions in the church at Corinth, *“For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.”* (I Corinthians 11:19). Jesus describes them as wolves in sheep’s clothing. In Matthew 7:15, He says, *“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”* Jude is going to take hold of the sheepskin for us, pull it off, and show us the true nature of a wolf or an apostate.

Jude asserts these men to be under the judgment or condemnation of God. The expression *“who were before ordained”* comes from the Greek word *“prographo”* meaning “to write before hand.” This may refer to God’s decree of reprobation wherein He writes down in the book of His eternal purpose the destiny or punishment of the wicked. We read in Revelation 13:8 of some *“whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”* Or it may refer to the apostolic writings of Peter, Paul and John as they predicted that such teachers would soon appear on the scene.

II Peter chapter 2 should be read in connection with the book of Jude as it is identical in many ways. I believe that Peter had written his letters a few years before Jude wrote his. What Peter had predicted would come to pass has now come to pass in Jude’s time. The enemy has arrived, the battle has begun. In II Peter 2:1 the enemy is yet to come for we read *“there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”* In Jude 4, these individuals have already *“crept in unawares.”* Jude makes this time element very clear in verses 17 and 18 where he says, *“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.”* What the apostles had predicted or written down before hand had now come to pass. Jude’s purpose in his warning is to show that these people are in a class which is under the wrath and judgment of God.

2. **Three Distinguishing Features - v. 4 - *“ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”***

Jude now gives three features or character traits which mark out or identify the apostates.

a. **First, they are ungodly.**

The word “ungodly” is used five times in this epistle and means “destitute or lacking in reverence for God.” It describes one who fails to treat God with the worship and reverence He deserves. The ungodly do not live like God would live if He lived in human form on the earth. God is perfect, moral, pure, just and loving. The ungodly are the opposite. The apostate may profess to be for God, but lacks the power force necessary to be like God. As Paul said, they have *“a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof.”* (II Timothy 3:5).

b. **Second, they are lawless.**

They change the purpose of the gospel of grace into a license to sin. The grace of God is the free favor of God which the Christian experiences through Jesus Christ, forgiving him and liberating him from the power of sin and the condemnation of the law. These false teachers understand the grace of God in Christ to grant a deliverance from all external moral constraint, so that the person who possesses the Spirit of God becomes the only judge of his own actions, subject to no other authority. Their slogan is *“all things are lawful for me.”* They confuse the Spirit with their sensual desires and follow the lusts of the flesh. Jude describes this confusion in verse 19. *“These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.”* Thus they *“walk after their own ungodly lusts.”* (v. 18) while thinking they are being led by the Spirit. They live their lives governed by their internal subjective feelings rather than God’s external objective commands. This, combined with their visionary dreams or revelations they claim to receive, makes them unaccountable to anyone or anything. Their beliefs and actions could be associated with those today who are always saying “the Lord told me this” or “the Lord spoke to me.” Their direct revelations they think they are receiving are nothing more than the sensual urges to satisfy selfish desires. Thus they give way to “lasciviousness” which is unrestrained selfish desires or shameless sin.” It usually manifests itself in sexual lewdness and immorality.

This lawless attitude is known as antinomianism. “Nomos” means law and “anti” being against. This is the identity of the apostate sin in Jude. It is basically a moral error as opposed to an intellectual error. This is the reason why I do not agree with a large number of commentators that the sin Jude is fighting is a beginning of what is called Gnosticism.

The Gnostic, among other things, believed that the angels or aneons were emanations proceeding from one Supreme Being. They were generally held in high regard in the Gnostic scheme of knowledge. But Jude says that the certain men who he was opposing “speak evil of dignities” (v. 8); dignities being angels.

So the apostasy was rooted in immoral conduct which was striking at the heart of the Gospel. Jesus came to save us from sinning, not to free us up to sin even more.

**c. Third: they are deniers of God.**

While the false teachers were not atheists in theory, in practice they were practical atheists who denied the Lordship of Christ. How did they do this? Paul explains in Titus 1:16, *“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.”* Their actions spoke louder than their words. Although they claim to be followers of Jesus Christ, by disregarding His moral demands, they were, in fact, disowning Him as their Master and repudiating His authority as Lord. Their behavior revealed they were serving other masters rather than the only Master of Christians, who is Jesus Christ.

**3. Three Examples of God’s Judgment on Apostates - vs. 5-7.**

What does God think of apostasy? It is the crowning sin of all sins. Jude now lists three Old Testament examples of God’s judgment on the sin of apostasy. Each of these examples warns us of the danger of departing from the faith. The three examples are the Hebrews in the desert, the angels who fell, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The sins of apostasy were manifested as unbelief in the Hebrews, rebellion among the angels, and sexual immorality within the cities. In the parallel passage in II Peter, Peter also refers to three examples of apostasy. His examples are the angels that fell (2:4), the flood of Noah (2:5), and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (2:6).

Before looking at Jude’s examples, he presents to us two duties to obey;

**a. Two duties to obey:**

**(1) A teacher’s duty to instruct - *“I will therefore put you in remembrance.”***

Jude reminds his readers of things which they are to recall to memory. A Bible teacher’s duty is not to be always imparting new information, but to rehearse previous information so that it may be applied with understanding.

**(2) A student’s duty to learn - *“though ye once knew this.”***

Christians are to be students of the Bible, seeking to understand its

teachings - they must familiarize themselves with its contents if they are to understand their teachers.

In order to contend for the faith, we must know the Word of God. I believe every local church ought to be a Bible institute, and every Christian ought to be a Bible student. Today, we have made the Seminary the teaching center, and the local church the entertainment center. Truth must be taught and remembered, and excessive amusement destroys the learning environment.

- b. The Hebrews in the desert - v. 5 - *“the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.”* - cf. Numbers 13 and 14.**

The first example is that of the Hebrews in the desert. In addition to Jude, this example is used by Paul in I Corinthians 10:1-12 and Hebrews 3:7 - 4:11. The nation was delivered by the power of God, taken through the Sea, and brought up to the border of the Promised Land. But the people became afraid of the size of the enemy and refused to take the land. Moses, Joshua, and Caleb tried to encourage the people but to no avail. In fact, the tribal leaders wanted to reorganize the leadership and go back to Egypt, the place of slavery! This was unbelief and rebellion against the Word of God.

This so angered God that He announced that everybody in the camp twenty years old or older would die at some time within the next forty years and never inherit the land of promise. Their unbelief led to their extermination. According to Numbers 1:45, 46 all the men who were twenty years old or older numbered 603,550. If we add an equal number of women, those who died in the desert on the way to Canaan totaled 1,207,100 people. If we divide that total by the number of days of the 38 year journey to Canaan after God pronounced the death penalty, we arrive at a staggering total of nearly 90 deaths per day. (Cf. Deuteronomy 2:14, 15).

So what does the example show us? It reveals God’s wrath upon apostates! John Gill says of this incident,

that it is the people of Israel, who were the chosen people of God, a special people, above all others, and had peculiar privileges; these the Lord brought out of the land of Egypt, . . . and yet, though they were a special people, and notwithstanding this wonderful deliverance, and great salvation, he afterward destroyed them that believed not, their carcasses fell in the wilderness by one judgment or another upon them. . . it may be observed that God may do great things for persons, and yet after all destroy them: great riches and honor may be conferred on some, great natural gifts on others, some may seem as if they had the grace of God and were brought out of spiritual Egypt, and enjoy great mercies and

favors, and have many deliverances wrought for them, and yet at last perish. (Gill, *Commentary on Jude*, Vol. 6, p. 922).

- c. **The angels that fell - v. 6 - “*And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.*”** cf. Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Genesis 3:1-15; Genesis 6:1-4.

The second example of God’s judgment upon apostasy is seen in the angels that fell into sin. The exact Old Testament source for this verse is debated. There are two major views which time will not allow to fully explain, but only to state.

**(1) To the original fall of Satan and his angels.**

The time of this event is either prior to the fall of man or, as I believe, at the same time as the fall of man in the Garden. cf. Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:11-19; and Genesis 3:1-15.

**(2) To the invasion of the human race** wherein they supposedly had sexual relations with women in the days preceding the flood of Noah. Their offspring produced a species of half-demon and half-human monstrosities which was the reason for God destroying the race of mankind in the flood. cf. Genesis 6:1-4. This idea is set forth in the extra-biblical book of Enoch and was popular among the Jewish writers of Christ’s day. Since Jude refers to the Biblical character Enoch in verse 14 and his words in verse 6 are very close to those found in the book of Enoch, it is believed that Jude is referring to the incident in Genesis chapter 6. If this be true Jude is not referring to their original fall but to a post-fall invasion of humanity.

Since it would take a minimum of one or two messages to cover the subject, and Jude himself does not tell us when they sinned, then neither am I. We may do so in an appendix at the end of this series.

Jude’s purpose is clearly given to show us that a group of angels sinned by refusing to abide in or keep their original position of authority assigned to them by God. Instead they rebelled against God’s authority and deserted their natural order given them in creation. The result being; God judged them by assigning them to a temporal state of darkness awaiting a day of eternal misery to be assigned to them. They who had great light and truth are now in great darkness and error. We should not understand their punishment to be such that they are imprisoned so as to be immobile for they now make up the demons which torment and deceive men today.

The point is that they were holy, just and good and loved by God, for He loves His creatures who are holy, just and good. These chose to leave such a place as called Heaven and now are judged to be unholy, unjust, and evil. The lesson is God does not hesitate to judge apostate sinners. If the angels can fall from heaven, and Adam can fall from paradise, and the Hebrews can fall from the border of the Promised Land, ***“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.”*** (I Corinthians 10:12).

Pride appears to be the foundational sin of the fallen angels, and how difficult it is to be given high privileges, gifts, authority and responsibilities, without becoming highminded.

- d. **Sodom and Gomorrah - v. 7 - *“Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”*** cf. Genesis 19:1-29

Jude’s third example of God’s attitude toward apostasy comes from the account of Sodom and Gomorrah and the three smaller towns in the vicinity: Admah, Zeboim and Zoar. Zoar was preserved at Lot’s request (Genesis 19:1-25; Deuteronomy 29:23).

The cities were located on the plains near the Jordan River. Its beauty and prosperity were so magnificent that Genesis 13:10 describes it as “the garden of the Lord” or the Garden of Eden. But Genesis 13:12 goes on to say that ***“the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly;”*** meaning they were unrestrained in their sinning. God often gives the most fertile living places to the greatest sinners. Economic and social prosperity often becomes an opportunity for idleness which leads to greater wickedness. Ezekiel 16:49 describes the sins which led up to the perverted sin for which the cities are known. It says, ***“Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.”*** Notice the sins: pride, economic prosperity (fulness of bread), excessive leisure time (abundance of idleness), and ignoring the needs of the poor. This environment set the scene for boredom with the natural created order and experimentation with the unnatural. The expression which is translated “giving themselves over to fornication” is one Greek verb meaning “to indulge in excessive immorality.” They did not occasionally indulge in unnatural sexual sins, this was their way of life. They pursued it like a thirsty person pursues water. Thus God goes on to say in Ezekiel 16:50, ***“And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.”***

Homosexuality is condemned as an abominable sin in God's sight and can only occur when God lifts His restraint from a person's natural desires. cf. Romans chapter one. God's hatred for the sin was displayed by burning up the entire region with fire which is a type of the fires of hell where the wicked will spend eternity.

It may be asked how the sin of homosexuality is a sin of apostasy? It is because it is turning away from the natural order of human sexuality and embracing the perverted or unnatural. Paul says in Romans 1:21-32 that men who commit such acts know better. In Romans 1:26, 27, he says, ***“For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.”*** Notice this can only occur when God withdraws His restraint from them and gives them over to a reprobate mind. But the origin of it starts back in 1:21 with a denial of God's Lordship over them. We read, ***“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”*** Natural revelation reveals His existence to all men of His power and Godhead (authority). When men turn away from that truth they are apostatizing from God's truth and they know better and seek all kinds of lies to hide behind so as to suppress the truth in their consciences.

The punishment which God poured out on these cities was to make them an example of eternal wrath. It is an evidence of modern apostasy in the churches when church leaders will deny that God is a God of wrath. They do so by ignoring the Old Testament and selectively reading the New Testament. They come up with a God who is so loving He is unable to be just and punish anybody. But the God of the Old Testament is the same God in the New Testament. Hebrews 12:28, 29 says that Christians should ***“serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire.”*** Not that He was, but that He still is!

So Jude has given us three sins which will manifest themselves in apostate religious people. (1) unbelief of God's Word; (2) Rebellion against constituted authority; (3) Perversion of human sexuality.

God dealt seriously with the Hebrews that sinned, the angels that sinned, and with Sodom and Gomorrah that sinned. But now God is dealing with apostasy more seriously than ever because it is a departure from the revelation given in the gospel of His Son Jesus Christ. God is no respecter of persons. He did not respect His chosen people, Israel, when



they sinned. He destroyed them. He did not respect His own angels who sinned. He kicked them out of Heaven. He did not respect Sodom and Gomorrah who sinned. He wiped them out by burning them up. And He will not respect anyone who refuses the truth of Jesus Christ and His teachings. He says through the Apostle Paul at the close of I Corinthians 16:22, ***“If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.”*** Or “let him be cursed at the coming of Christ.” I close with the words of David in Psalm 4:4, ***“Stand in awe, and sin not, commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.”***