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## "THE EPISTLE OF JUDE"

### Reminders Of God's Righteous Condemnation (5-7)

#### INTRODUCTION

1. Exhorting his readers to "contend earnestly for the faith", in **verse 4** Jude introduces the reason for them to take such a stand...
  - a. "Certain men" have crept in unnoticed
  - b. They were "ungodly men", guilty of:
    - 1) Turning the grace of God into lewdness
    - 2) Denying the Lord God and the Lord Jesus Christ
2. Jude also writes of these men that they were **"long ago marked out for this condemnation"**
  - a. Some might infer that Jude meant that these men were predestined to act this way
  - b. However, as Warren Wiersbe in The Bible Exposition Commentary correctly states:  
**"Jude did not write that these men were ordained to become apostates, as though God were responsible for their sin. They became apostates because they willfully turned away from the truth. But God did ordain that such people would be judged and condemned. The Old Testament prophets denounced the false prophets of their day, and both Jesus Christ and His Apostles pronounced judgment on them."**
  - c. Yes, what is ordained is their punishment, that those who turn from God will not escape His righteous condemnation!
3. To reinforce his point, Jude reminds his readers of three examples in which the ungodly did not escape God's righteous condemnation - **Ju 5-7**
  - a. Israel in the wilderness
  - b. The angels who sinned
  - c. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah
4. That we might be reminded as well, in this study we shall briefly review what is known about these three "case histories" of divine judgment, and draw some points that can be gleaned from them
  - a. If you feel a sense of "deja vu", it may be because Jude follows a pattern set by Peter in his second epistle - **2 Pe 2:4-6**
  - b. Jude's action is understandable, as he is warning against the very presence of those Peter had warned would one day come

[There is a difference, however. Whereas Peter used as one of his examples the people destroyed in the flood, Jude selects the example of...]

#### I. ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS (5)

##### **A. THE PARTICULARS OF THIS EXAMPLE...**

1. A well known event in Israel's history, God "saved" the nation by bringing them out of the land of Egypt
2. Yet despite their being recipients of His wonderful grace, God "destroyed" those who did not believe
  - a. Their lack of faith required that they wander for 40 years in the wilderness
  - b. So that those over the age of 20 when they left Egypt, none but two (Joshua and Caleb) entered the Promised Land
3. The final "tally": 603,550 men were "saved", but then 603,548 were "destroyed"

**B. THE POINT TO BE MADE FROM THIS EXAMPLE...**

1. God may destroy those He has saved!
  - a. Paul made this point in writing to the Corinthians - **1 Co 10:1-12**
  - b. The writer to the Hebrews made the same point - **He 3:12-4:2,11**
2. The reason? Lack of obedient faith!
  - a. "God destroyed those who did not believe" - **Ju 5**
  - b. "they could not enter in because of unbelief" - **He 3:18-19**
3. While the Bible teaches "the security of the believer" (cf. **1 Pe 1:5**)...
  - a. It warns against the believer developing a heart of unbelief
  - b. It teaches "the insecurity of the unbeliever"
4. Therefore the Biblical admonition: "...let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." - **1 Co 10:12**
5. A recurring theme throughout the New Testament is this:

**"Remember what happened to Israel!"**

[Having reminded his readers that the example of Israel shows the possibility of "once saved, but destroyed", he then provides an example that shows God has a place reserved for the wicked...]

**II. THE ANGELS WHO SINNED (6)****A. THE PARTICULARS OF THIS EXAMPLE...**

1. Very little is known from the Scriptures themselves
  - a. As described by Jude, there were angels who:
    - 1) "did not keep their proper domain"
    - 2) "left their own habitation"
  - b. Peter simply writes that the angels "sinned" - **2 Pe 2:4**
  - c. A very old interpretation is that Jude refers to what is described in **Gen 6:1-4**
    - 1) Where "sons of God" is understood to refer to angels (as used in **Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7**) who cohabited with the "daughters of men"
    - 2) This interpretation of **Gen 6:1-4** is common in Jewish literature (**Enoch 7; 9:8; 10:11; 12:4**), and Jude appears to quote from such literature later in **verse 14**
    - 3) It is also found in intertestamental literature and the early church fathers (e.g., Justin in his Apology 2:5)
    - 4) It fits in with the connection Jude later makes with the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah, that they had "gone after strange flesh" - **Ju 7**
2. What is clearer about these angels is their condemnation
  - a. God has them "in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day"
  - b. As worded by Peter in **2 Pe 2:4**, God...
    - 1) "cast them down to hell"
      - a) The word for "hell" is tartaroo {tar-tar-o'-o}
      - b) "Tartarus, thought of by the Greeks as a subterranean place lower than Hades where divine punishment was meted out, was so regarded in Jewish apocalyptic as well." (BAG, p. 813)
    - 2) "delivered them to chains of darkness" (The NIV renders it "gloomy dungeons")
    - 3) "to be reserved for judgment"
      - a) As Jude puts it, "for the judgment of the great day"
      - b) Similar to the scene described in **Lk 16:19-31**, where the wicked rich man was in torment awaiting the judgment at the Last Day

**B. THE POINT TO BE MADE FROM THIS EXAMPLE...**

1. God is prepared to render everlasting punishment to the

wicked!

- a. He has the angels in "everlasting chains under darkness" - **Ju 6**
  - b. For the "ungodly men" described later, He has "reserved the blackness of darkness forever" - **Ju 13**
2. Just as He had a place prepared for the angels who sinned, so He has a place prepared for the wicked and unbelievers! - cf. **Re 21:8**

[So God has demonstrated that He is prepared to punish the wicked. That He will do so is emphasized with one more example: The judgment that came upon...]

### **III. THE CITIES OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH (7)**

#### **A. THE PARTICULARS OF THIS EXAMPLE...**

1. The judgment against these cities is vividly described in **Gen 19:24-28**
2. Why this terrible judgment?
  - a. The LORD said it was "because their sin is very grievous" - **Gen 18:20**
  - b. Jude says that "in a similar manner to these" (the angels who sinned), they had:
    - 1) "given themselves over to sexual immorality"
    - 2) "gone after strange flesh"
  - c. We see a sample of this in **Gen 19:4-11**

#### **B. THE POINT TO BE MADE FROM THIS EXAMPLE...**

1. Both Peter and Jude make the point that Sodom and Gomorrah are an "example"
  - a. Peter, an example "to those who afterward would live ungodly" - **2 Pe 2:6**
  - b. Jude, an example of those "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" - **Ju 7**
2. I.e., God has given us an example of the eternal fire awaiting the subjects of His righteous vengeance!

### **CONCLUSION**

1. We may be like the original recipients of Jude's letter, well acquainted with these events...
  - a. But Jude wanted to "remind" them - **Ju 5**
  - b. And we need to be reminded often as well!
2. And what is it that we need to remember?
  - a. Remember Israel, as an example of those once saved who were destroyed for lack of faith!
  - b. Remember the angels who sinned, as an example of those whose incarceration tells us God has a place prepared for the wicked!
  - c. Remember Sodom and Gomorrah, as an example that God will not withhold the vengeance of eternal fire when the time is right!
3. It is only when we keep such events in mind that we will...
  - a. Take serious the warnings about those who would lead us astray!
  - b. Take serious the admonitions designed to keep us preserved in Jesus Christ!

Are you letting these examples serve their intended purpose? Will you let them motivate you to make whatever changes need to be made in your life? The "**judgment of the great day**" draws nearer...

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