

Jude 5-7

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Date: 11 September 2022

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[0 : 00] Last week we saw that Jude, or Judas if you recall, his name in Greek, that he is the half-brother of Jesus and the brother of James. He wanted to write this letter to the church about the gospel and the beauties therein.

But in his own words, he was constrained, or he found it necessary to write to them instead that they ought to contend for the faith in verse 3.

He felt constrained because the occasion demanded it. The occasion is many false teachers are perverting the grace of God so as to allow sensuality.

We see that in verse 4. And if you recall, I mentioned that these false teachers are antinomians of some kind. They are anti-law. They do not submit to Christ.

Rather, they deny his lordship by their lifestyle. They do what they want, when they want, and how they want, with no regard for God. And Jude's charge to us in this scenario, to his audience at the time, is to contend for the faith.

[1 : 09] This is the main exhortation that runs throughout this entire letter. And again, Jude does not explicitly explain how to contend for the faith until verses 17 through 23, which we will cover in a couple weeks.

But rather, Jude goes on to explain the threat that these false teachers pose in verse 4. They threaten to destroy the very gospel which we proclaim by distorting it.

A watered-down gospel being no gospel at all. That is the threat that false teachers pose that we saw last week.

So we saw that threat, but now we are primarily going to see Jude describe the future and what it holds for these false teachers, for these apostates. And so picking back up in verse 5, Jude writes, Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that the Lord who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority but left their proper dwelling, He has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day.

[2 : 32] Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, just as they serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

So I have two applications today which will serve as our outline. Number one, know your Old Testament well. And number two, consider the fool's end.

So application number one, know your Old Testament well. This section of Jude's letter flows out of his desire to remind.

He wants to remind his true Christian audience of truths concerning the Old Testament. Namely, he wants them to understand a pattern, a pattern of false teachers.

And in typical Jewish fashion, he does so in rapid typological examples. He mentions the Exodus generation, the rebellious angels, and Sodom and Gomorrah.

[3 : 35] These three serve as templates to help us understand what the end holds for false teachers. And these three examples will also hint at a description of the false teachers, which Jude will describe them more fully next week in our text.

But even now, he's beginning to show us what they are really like, what they really do, who they really are. And so again, verse 5, Jude assumes much of his audience.

Again, last week, he assumed his audience was familiar with the doctrines of divine election and reprobation. This week, he assumes his audience is familiar with the Old Testament.

And frankly, the word familiar is a severe understatement. He says in verse 5, I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that's how your ESV translate it.

The Greek word for once is the same word used in verse 3 to describe the faith once for all delivered to the saints. So my translation reads this way, you who once for all know this.

[4 : 42] So there seems to be this comprehensive knowledge, this very detailed, deep, intimate knowledge of the Old Testament that Jude is assuming the church knows.

And not just the stories, but the theological significance of those stories. They know their Old Testament well. And Jude assumes this.

So we should ensure these things are very well known to us. Not just the details of the story, but what it means, the significance, the theological significance.

But just in case all these stories are maybe blurry in your mind, or you can't quite recall what's going on in these references, we'll run through those quickly. So in verse 5, the second half of verse 5, we see that the Lord saved the people out of the land of Egypt, and afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

So Jude here is not quoting a particular text, but is summarizing a large number of texts that talk about the Exodus event. Biblical texts like the Pentateuch, and even the prophets who think back on the Exodus.

[5 : 54] And this great historical act of the Exodus, when God saved Israel out of slavery in Egypt, has always served biblically as a picture of salvation and judgment.

God judged Pharaoh along with Egypt while saving and calling Israel to himself. You have the Egyptians who are outside of God's people, who are cut off, versus the Israelites who are God's people.

They are inside the faith. But I don't think Jude is referring to the Egyptians. Remember, Jude is addressing people who claim to be of the faith, who claim to be Christians, who are apostates. So I think Jude has in mind apostates from the Exodus account, and of which, frankly, there are an abundance. You can take your pick. There were those who, while Moses is up on the mount receiving the law, who rose up to play, is the expression, and they worshipped the golden calf. They were guilty of idolatry as they worshipped this golden calf, and rose up to play being a euphemistic phrase, meaning they were committing mass adultery.

[7 : 09] And the interesting thing here is you will often hear Exodus 32 preached as if these people reverted back to paganism by worshipping the golden calf, as if they just decided to abandon God altogether, you know, that they rejected him.

But listen to Exodus 32, verses 4 through 6 carefully. Moses writes, And Aaron received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf.

And the crowd said, listen to this, These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. And in verse 5, Aaron refers to this golden calf as Yahweh.

He uses the covenant name for the Israel God to refer to this image. So Aaron is saying to the people, The golden calf is Yahweh.

So they thought they were worshipping the one true God who led them out of Egypt, when in fact they were doing anything but. So they did revert to paganism in one sense, their pagan practices, their pagan ideas, but they tried to blend it in with worshipping the one true God, which never goes well.

[8 : 27] In their claim of worshipping Yahweh, they dishonor Him by practicing lawlessness, sexual immorality, and idolatry. False teaching leads to these things.

And this sounds like Jude 4 from last week. Jude accuses the false teachers in his letter of being those who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality. So going back to Exodus, as a result, God commanded the men who repented.

We see this in Exodus 32, 27-28. He commands them and he says to them, To put on their sword and go to and fro, gate to gate, throughout the camp.

Each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor. And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about 3,000 men fell.

Divine judgment on the apostate. There are also those in Numbers 14, which is still referring to the Exodus wilderness wanderings.

[9 : 30] These people, who again are claiming to be in the faith, claiming to be the people of God, these people doubted God. And after Israel had sent spies to check out the promised land in Numbers 13, the Israelites become fearful of fighting the giant inhabitants.

And as a result, we see in Numbers 14, verse 2, that they grumbled and demanded that they elect new leaders to lead them back to Egypt, back to slavery, back to oppression, back to wickedness, all because they doubted God.

So these people were so set on this rebellion to the point that they wanted to murder, to stone the faithful, Joshua and Moses, in Numbers 14, verse 10.

And in verse 11, the Lord responds, he says to Moses, how long will these people, the Israelites, how long will these people despise me?

And how long will they not believe in me in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? So Jude very well could have been thinking of this text specifically because he refers to those who did not believe and God accuses these doubters of disbelief.

[10:48] It's hard to be too dogmatic about exactly what he has in mind here in the Exodus account. But nonetheless, the point remains that here we have the people from the Exodus generation who did not believe.

And as a result, their entire generation was not allowed to enter the promised land with, of course, a few exceptions. They were judged by God and perished in the wilderness.

So the Exodus generation is the first example. The second example is very interesting. Jude references a suetopigraphal work, just meaning false writings.

So look at verse 6. He says, and the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day.

So this is not a story you will find anywhere in the Bible. It's a reference, actually, to 1 Enoch, specifically the Book of the Watchers, which is a part of 1 Enoch.

[11:56] 1 Enoch was a very well-known book in the Greco-Roman world, specifically to Jews. It's written roughly 2nd century B.C. So it's written between the Old and New Testaments.

And to be clear, Enoch from the Bible, from the book of Genesis, is not the true author, hence why it's called a suetopigrapha, false writing. He didn't actually write it.

But it's alluded to in our text today in verse 6, and it's quoted specifically in Jude 14 through 15, which we'll see in a few weeks. And just without rattling them, it's alluded to throughout the New Testament all over.

So it's a very popular work, a very well-known work, that interacts with the Bible to a great extent. Now, to be clear, it's not canonical scripture. That's really important.

It's not the Word of God. It is not authoritative. But it's really helpful because it helps us understand Jewish thought, Jewish interpretation. It helps us see what they thought about the Bible at that time.

[13:01] And it is referenced in the Bible, so it's good to know what they're referencing. So in the Book of the Watchers, Jude is interacting with a section in which Enoch, supposedly Enoch, is retelling Genesis 6, 1 through 4.

So the biblical, the canonical Genesis 6, 1 through 4, so this, the Word of God, says this, when man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive and they took as their wives any they chose.

Then the Lord said, My spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh. His days shall be a hundred and twenty years. The Nephilim were on the earth in those days and also afterward the sons of God came into the daughters of man and they bore children to them.

These were the mighty men of old, the men of renown. There's two cups. Okay. Now the author of Enoch expands this text in Genesis with additional details.

So much debate has been stirred around the identity of these sons of God. The most popular, the most consistent interpretation throughout history has been that the sons of God refer to angels.

[14:25] who impregnated these women. Angels who left heaven, came down, slept with women, and bore offspring. And in 1 Enoch we see this interpretation play out.

His writing spells it out. These are not men in the Enochic version, but rather angels. And Jude seems to agree with that interpretation under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Jude 6 says, right, and the angels. So Jude seems to be telling us through the Spirit that that in fact is the correct interpretation of Genesis 6, that they were in fact angels.

And some will say, well, that can't be. Did not Jesus say that we will be like the angels and thus not given in marriage? Right? He says this in Matthew 22 verses 29 to 30 implying that angels can't reproduce.

Angels don't do that kind of thing. But notice Jesus is saying the angels in heaven are not given in marriage. These angels stay in their lane and do as they are told.

[15 : 29] Whereas the angels that Jude refers to have, as Jude says, left their proper dwelling. They no longer abide in heaven. They no longer obey God, but they sought out the attractive daughters of man.

So Enoch put it this way in his rewriting. He says, And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters.

And the angels, the children of heaven, saw and lusted after them and said to one another, Come, let us choose us wives from among the children of men and beget us children.

So these angels who fall, these angels who rebel, these demons, you might say, they leave heaven to pursue their lusts and in leaving heaven their proper dwelling, they fall into sin.

So what happened to them after that? Well, according to both Enoch and Jude, God imprisons them. Your ESV will say that these angels did not stay within their own position of authority, whereas the Greek literally reads the angels who did not keep to their domain.

[16 : 40] So here Jude creates a play on words. These angels who did not obey God, who did not keep to their proper place, God has found a fitting punishment.

He says in verse 6, God has kept them in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day. These rebellious angels are not running around the world today causing havoc.

Jude is clear. These rebellious angels are being held in captivity for the day of judgment. Though, of course, there are other demons who are running around as we can read about in the Gospels.

And now this phrase, gloomy darkness in Jude 6, this phrase is used extensively in Greco-Roman literature and it always refers to the underworld, a type of hell.

And the great day that Jude talks about, of course, speaks to when Christ will return to judge his elect graciously and to judge the wicked justly.

[17 : 45] So by now, you should be noticing the theme in these examples. Both the Exodus generation of Israel and the rebellious angels turned away from God to worship something else.

and in both cases it resulted in unbelief and sexual perversion. Jude drives the point home with one other similar example.

He writes in verse 7, just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire.

The angels pursued unnatural desires by seeking sexual relationships with mankind just as the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah saw unnatural relationships, namely homosexuality.

So again, let's remind ourselves of this story briefly. In Genesis chapter 18, verse 20, Moses writes, Then the Lord said, Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and their sin is very grave.

[18 : 58] I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me, and if not, I will know. So after God declares this to Abraham, Abraham intercedes on behalf of his nephew Lot, who lives in Sodom.

And you all know the deal. God says he will spare Sodom if there are but ten righteous persons in that city. But the story continues in Genesis chapter 19, verses 1 through 8.

And go ahead and turn there with me, because I want you to see this for yourselves. It hits a little differently as you read it. So Genesis chapter 19, verses 1 through 8.

So the outcry is great against Sodom and Gomorrah.

Abraham is attempting to intercede to save his nephew Lot. And so God sends some angels to Sodom. And so Genesis chapter 19, verse 1, we see the two angels came to Sodom in the evening.

[20 : 15] And Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth and said, My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet.

Then you may rise up early and go on your way. They said, No, we will spend the night in the town square. But Lot pressed them strongly. So they turned aside to him and entered his house.

And he made them a feast and baked them unleavened bread and they ate. But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house.

And they called to Lot, Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them. And Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him and said, I

beg you brothers, do not act so wickedly.

Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.

[21 : 29] So notice the similarities for why Jude is using this passage. These men of Sodom were seeking what they thought would be two men, so they're guilty of homosexual desires.

But we saw in verse 1 that these two men are actually angels. So the story of Sodom and Gomorrah is very similar to the one Jude referenced about the rebellious angels.

Unnatural relations, sexual perversions, and uncontrolled licentiousness describe all these stories. And this story in Genesis in particular is gut-wrenching because as the reader we can already see what is coming from a mile away.

The angels came intending to stay downtown, but Lot begs them to do otherwise because he knows what happens downtown. He knows how wicked his city is.

And even though Lot successfully gets them to stay at his home, it doesn't spare them this confrontation, Moses makes it plain, every single male without exception comes to surround Lot's home.

[22 : 42] Now think about what that implies. I mean, these men of Sodom must have seen the angels enter at the gates, and they must have talked up a big perverted hub-hub to all the other men in the city, something to arouse all of them that they would all get together and head to this house.

What kind of city is that? And what's perhaps the most astonishing, the most disheartening, is the fact that Lot acts in wickedness himself to protect these angels.

He offers up his virgin daughters as a sort of compensation. I mean, how sick and perverted is that? And so you know how the famous story ends.

Genesis chapter 19 verses 24 through 25 says, Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven, and he overthrew those cities and all the valley and all the inhabitants of the cities, even what grew on the ground.

Nothing could be left, no stone unturned. This level of wickedness, apart from any kind of repentance, demanded swift and immediate judgment from God who judged them justly.

[24 : 04] And here's the thing, too, it wasn't merely this one incident of isolated homosexual behavior. It was a lifestyle of rebellion. This sin did not just happen, but it was celebrated, it was practiced, and it was normal for these cities.

And the prophet Ezekiel makes it clear that there were a number of issues just beyond this perversion. He says in chapter 16, verse 49 through 50, Behold, this was the sin of your sister Sodom.

She and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and the needy. They were haughty and did an abomination before me, so I removed them when I saw it.

So everything about these cities was backward. Everything they did demonstrates that they denied God as Lord over their life, much like the apostate teachers whom Jude confronts.

So again, Jude assumed his readers knew their Old Testament very well. Hence, he's able to rapidly fire off these examples with very little explanation.

[25 : 20] He knows his audience understands the significance of these references to the detail. And if there's anyone here today who had no idea what Jude was referencing in the Old Testament, then that should serve as a bit of a wake-up call.

It's time to get serious about studying God's Word and not just the New Testament, but the Old, which our Bible is predominantly made up of. It's 75% of our Bible.

It's not a portion of the Bible that we should unhitch from our Christian living. It's not a portion of the Bible that, as some would say, is just so irrelevant, which is an erroneous claim.

But the Old Testament is extremely relevant for today. Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 3.16, he said, all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.

In Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17.17, he says, sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth. And the crazy thing we often forget about both those New Testament passages is that they are primarily talking about the Old Testament.

[26 : 36] That's primarily what they had. In Jesus' case, that's all he had. So he's saying, sanctify them in the Old Testament. Your Old Testament is truth.

So you'll never understand your New Testament apart from a deep, intimate knowledge of the Old Testament. And more importantly, you will not have a deep and intimate knowledge and understanding of God because you're ignoring 75% of what he has to tell you.

So I would pray just spend time, study how to study the Old Testament if that's what it takes, but spend time in the Old Testament. There is life, goodness, beauty, treasures there to behold.

And so you might be wondering, okay, I get it, the Old Testament is supposed to matter, but what are all these examples from Jude meant for? What is Jude trying to accomplish?

How is all this talk about apostates sanctifying me today? Well, the second half of verse 7 in Jude, go back there with me, the second half of Jude in verse 7, he says of all three examples, he says they serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

[27 : 59] So these apostates, these three examples from the Old Testament, they serve as an example to the church by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

So not an example to be followed, but as a warning. The emphasis in Jude 5 through 7, which you've probably seen by now, is that in all three cases, not only was there false teaching, not only was there perversion of the faith, but in all three cases they were judged, judged with condemnation by our righteous God.

So this leads us to our second application. Application number two, consider the fool's end. I'm going to blur our first application into this one.

If you know your Old Testament well, or your New Testament for that matter, then you're not surprised to hear me call these apostates fools. In the New Testament, Jesus ends his entire Sermon on the Mount by contrasting the wise man who builds his house on the rock, referring to believers, with the fool who builds his house on the sand, referring to the one who does not repent, the one who does not believe.

And we see in Matthew 7 verse 24 to 27 that the fool who builds his house on the sand is destroyed when God comes to judge the world. He's destroyed by the winds, the floods, and the rains.

[29 : 27] So Jesus, being the absolute most knowledgeable person of the Old Testament, makes a very typical Old Testament argument, compares, he contrasts the way of the wise, the way of the fool.

Psalms chapter 1 verses 1 through 2, it's pretty well known here. Right away the psalmist creates this contrast. He writes, blessed is the man, so this man's blessed, he's the wise man, the believer, right?

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

Do you see that contrast? The blessed man opposed to the wicked man? And that psalm ends with a reflection on the way of the wicked or the fool, as opposed to the way of the blessed.

Psalms chapter 1 verses 4 through 6 says, the wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. That's judgment language.

[30 : 34] Therefore, the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

So there's this contrast, there's this reflection on where the righteous will end and where the wicked will end. In Proverbs chapter 1 verses 8 through 19, I'll summarize, but Solomon warns his son not to join the works of the wicked, who desire to steal and murder.

And Solomon concludes by considering the end of both. He says in verses 17 through 19, but these men, referring to the wicked, but these men lie in wait for their own blood.

They set an ambush for their own lives. Such are the ways of everyone who is greedy for unjust gain. It takes away the life of its possessor.

Simply put, Solomon is saying, my son, do not go this way because you will die eternally. So this kind of contrast, this kind of example or warning is laden throughout the entire Bible.

[31 : 45] and we have to be careful. This kind of rhetoric does not mean we go around town like a Pharisee and point out every kind of sinner and publicly thank God we are not like them, whether they're a tax collector, adulterer, murderer, liar, whoever.

That's not what this means. If there is one reaction we should have to the sinner, knowing their end, knowing their doom if they don't repent and believe, it should be compassion, it should be merciful, loving, and kind, it should especially be hopeful.

So if you paid a close attention to the examples that Jude shares, you probably noticed that God showed as much grace in those historical moments as he did judgment.

In the Exodus, remember, he saved the people out of Egypt. He spared those who repented. In the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot, who acted wickedly, was spared.

So the implication for us that even the likes of false teachers, there is always hope if they repent and believe in Christ upon hearing the gospel.

[32 : 56] I think of the Apostle Paul who wrote most of our New Testament. He denied Christ and attacked Christians. But upon being confronted with Christ, being confronted with the gospel, Paul repented and became one of the greatest Christians in history.

So we should not bash these people or treat them poorly or think ourselves better, but we should love these people, pray for these people, witness to these people with the gospel.

So that should be our battle cry to any would-be intruders, any would-be persecutors from within. And then lastly, there is just one closing application.

I know there are only two, but a closing application application. I'll just tell you this text weighed heavily this week for me because it's a lot of doom and gloom. It's a lot of judgment language. And that's a true reality that we need to be sober and thinking about and praying through and confronted with. This scripture is profitable for us to consider. It should cause us to evangelize, cause us to be broken for the lost.

[34 : 05] But I think it's significant that Jude says to the church who knew the Old Testament so well that he still decides to remind them if they know it so well why do they need a reminder? Because they're people.

They're like you and me. They forget. They're dumb. They seek witness left and right. And more importantly, they forget who God really is.

And so I think it's important that we remind each other not only of the hard truths about judgment and the fact that God is going to punish the wicked, that that is inevitable and that is a real eternal reality.

But we should also remind ourselves that this is just, that this is good, and that God is gracious and kind to save, though we don't deserve it. To remind ourselves this is not the full picture, but that God is desiring to save people if they would only repent and believe.

And so that's why I say we have great hope even for the likes of false teachers, even for those who know the gospel, have seemingly rejected it, even they are not beyond this grace if they place faith in Christ.

[35 : 12] So to that end, let's pray.