Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Apostates, Be Warned, Part 2
Scripture: Jude 6-7
Code: 65-6

We return in our study of the Word of God tonight to the little epistle of Jude. And I do regret that we have had this series which intended to be quite brief interrupted. It seemed like we went right through 1 John, 2 John and 3 John and the interruptions in our study of Jude begin to show up and the attendance begins to drop a little bit as people kind of lose touch with the flow of this book. And I trust that we'll get back on track and sort of re-energize our whole church's interest in this very, very important epistle. As I said at the very beginning of our study, this is a book that is small book and it's hidden in the shadow of the book of Revelation, often overlooked. But it deals with a very important matter which is particularly highlighted at the end of verse 3. It is an appeal for us to contend earnestly for the faith, the Christian faith, the revelation from God that constitutes our faith once for all delivered to the saints. And the reason we are called to arms in regard to protecting the faith and fighting for the truth is because certain persons have crept in, verse 4, unnoticed and they intend because of their ungodliness to turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ.

And we learn here that the great battle for the truth is waged within the framework of the visible church, that our enemy is within, the enemy has infiltrated the church. The tares have been sown amidst the wheat. Satan has disguised himself as an angel of light. His ministers are also disguised as angels of light. They have infiltrated successfully into the church always and no different today and they sow damning lies at the very heart of the Christian church. The visible church and the invisible church are two different entities. The visible church is that which bears the name of Christianity in the name of Christ. The invisible church is Christ's true and redeemed people. And so we have to be discerning and we have to battle for the truth inside the very realm called Christendom. So we've been calling our study the long war on the truth, the truth war. And we have noted that this is one form of apostasy and one very, very dangerous deadly, penetrating subtle deception and effective form of apostasy. That apostasy which occurs inside the church and remains there to pollute the church and to diminish people's confidence in the true gospel.

So we've been talking about this matter of defectors from the faith, those who apostatize from the faith. Some leave the church, others remain. And all of us, I think, who have been Christians for any length of time have experienced this matter of defection, this matter of rebellion, this matter of people exposed to the truth, even confessing or professing the truth who abandon the truth and turn away from Christ. We have all known people who have professed to be Christians and profess to believe in Jesus Christ, who have appeared to love the Lord and love the church and to respond to His truth,

who had at some point in their lives have utterly and completely abandoned that. And now are living as none of the Scripture were true and as if the gospel was a lie and Christ was not the Savior and hell is either a fabrication or a more desirable place than heaven. Those people fall into the category of apostates, defectors from the faith. You have to know it to defect from it, to reject it.

And as I said, however, not all apostates leave the church. Some remain in it. Some remain in it for a time and eventually leave. But many remain in the church to propagate their corrupting heresies to destroy the church and its message and its impact. This is precisely what Satan desires to do. I think this is his priority operation. That's why Satan himself is disguised as an angel of light. And as I said earlier, from 2 Corinthians 11, his ministers also are disguised as angels of light. And when you mention Christianity today, just the word conjures up everything that is true and everything that is not true all in the same breath.

For us who know Christ, for us who know the gospel, for us who know our Redeemer, for us who have experienced the goodness of God, His transforming grace, it is always difficult for us to understand how people who are to any degree familiar with the gospel can reject it. I find that almost impossible to believe. Apart from understanding the human heart, the gospel is so appealing, the gospel is so wonderful that it seems something that we should grasp and hold to as tightly as we can, given its immense and eternal promises. But Scripture clearly tells us that there will always be defectors.

And as you look in the gospels, for example, in the New Testament, you're going to see some of the reasons why. Ignorance is one reason why people defect from the gospel. There's never really any penetrating of the truth, that's the hard ground. It just sort of bounces off them. They don't comprehend it. Persecution is another reason...people who are exposed to the gospel but do not want to pay the price of naming the name of Christ and bearing the reproach of Christ. The worries of this life, Jesus said, are another reason why the seed has a very short life and produces no fruit. And Jesus also said the deceitfulness of riches, people love wealth and materialism and prosperity in this life more than heavenly promises.

It is also true that there is another reason why people defect and that is because the teaching of Jesus is hard. John 6:60, "Many therefore of His disciples when they heard this said, 'This is a hard statement, who can listen to it?'" A few verses later as a result of this, "Many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore." The demands of Jesus were hard, that's really what I was driving at in the book *Hard to Believe*, which reflects the teaching we did, particularly on Luke 9, "If any man come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me." The message is hard, hard teaching. It was too hard for the rich young ruler. It was too hard for Judas Iscariot. When you come to the epistles in the New Testament, you're going to find some more reasons why people defect. One is Satan's devices. Paul says he's very concerned that people will be led away from the simplicity of devotion to Christ, Satan will come in and confuse people as to the priority and the

person of Christ. There are some people who defect from the gospel because they don't want to be alienated from the people around them. They love the world too much. And John said, "If you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you." Demas is an illustration of a defector. Second Timothy 4:10, "Who loved this present world." It doesn't mean that he loved...he wasn't an environmentalist in particular, but he loved the whole society that made up his sinful world. There are others who defect from the faith, according to 1 Timothy 6, because they love riches. The desire for riches has corrupted and destroyed many.

But most notably in the New Testament, the book of Hebrews features the longest list of why people defect from the faith. And we could spend literally weeks going through this, I'm not going to do that, I'm going to just spend minutes going through it. But you might want to just listen carefully. Some people defect from the faith because, I'm not being self-serving here, but they just don't pay careful enough attention to the teaching of Scripture. Their approach to the Word of God is superficial and that's why in Hebrews 2:1 it says, "For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it." It is a very dangerous thing to pay only a superficial amount of attention to the profound realities of divine truth. And there are some people who defect from the faith according to the book of Hebrews because it somehow slips their mind, slips their grasp. Actually in Hebrews 3:6 it says, "Christ was faithful as a son over his house whose house we are if we hold fast our assurance." How could you ever let something so wonderful as the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ slip down your priority list, or slip out of your conscious memory? And, of course, there are people who defect from the faith because of an unbelieving heart, no matter how they might listen, no matter how they might remember, Hebrews 3:12 says, "Take care, brethren, lest there be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart in falling away from the living God." And really, all of these things sort of go together. It's sort of a packaged deal, I think.

Also there in the third chapter of Hebrews, we are warned, "Do not harden your heart as when they provoked me as in the day of trial in the wilderness." This is another thing that caused people to defect from the faith, to rebel from the gospel that they have heard, and it is because they have a hardened heart and perhaps an increasingly hardened heart. Hebrews 4:7, "Today," David after so long a time, "Just as has been said before said again, 'Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart.'" Later in that same third chapter of Hebrews, rebellion is added to the list. That's another problem, people who are just flatly, openly, overtly rebellious, like those Israelites we looked at last time. And there are some people, according to Hebrews 4:2, who do not combine faith with the hearing of the Word. They train themselves and this is really another way to say the same thing, they train themselves to hear the Word without ever really making a commitment to it. Hebrews 4:2 says, "They heard it but it didn't profit them because it was never mixed with faith in those who heard it. Very dangerous to keep on hearing the Word and not believing it.

And then there are some people, according to Hebrews 4:6, who are just flatly disobedient. And then there are some people, according to chapter 6, who are just lazy. And then there are some, according

to Hebrews chapter 10, who are just not interested in coming to the church and therefore they just distance themselves from it and they forsake the assembling of themselves together. There are some who are deliberately flagrantly anti-Christ, we see that in chapter 10 as well. They trample under foot the blood of the Covenant. There are some, we find, in chapter 10 at the end of the chapter, verses 38 and 39, who get close but shrink back, some because of bitterness, some because of sexual immorality, some because of disrespect of leaders and it just goes on and on all the way through this epistle to the Hebrews.

There's just so much potential for apostasy, that's what I'm trying to tell you. Is it any wonder that many get on the broad road and few find the narrow way? Is it any wonder that many, many say, "Lord, Lord," but really don't know the truth and few really find the door? There are just so many potential ways to apostatize and it's so normal and so natural to the human heart. I would go so far as to say that it is not a surprise to me that the majority of people exposed to the gospel turn away from it. Is that not obvious? The majority of people exposed to the gospel turn away from it. And it seems to me that clearly there are far more people in the visible church than in the invisible church, many, many more. But some of these people that defect and some of these people that turn away remain in the church as the instruments of Satan to teach their demon doctrines and to build the visible church with its corrupt theology.

Now all of this takes us back to Jude, we can go back there now. And people who have been drawn into this apostasy, this departing from the faith, *apostasia*, defection, revolt. Used in the New Testament always of religious apostasy. A variation of the word means divorce. And here in Jude, Jude is concerned with those who remain in the church to corrupt it with their false teaching and try to do so unrecognized, try to do so in clerical garb calling themselves preachers and pastors and reverends and fathers and priests and whatever else. So we are warned then in verses 3 and 4 to contend for this faith inside. And as I said when we began this series, this is not a popular thing to do because the church is so undiscerning today. It is so witless, if I may be so frank as to say that. It is so inclusive. It is so tolerant that if you try to draw hard lines and expose those who are propagating lies in the church, you're viewed as the enemy of the church rather than the friend of the church. Well you are the enemy of the visible church in one sense, in its broadest sense. But you are truly the friend of the invisible, the spiritual church, the real people of God.

Now Jude is going to have a lot to say about fighting this battle, but he starts out when he gets into the heart of the letter in verses 5 through 7, with a warning to these apostates. This is fair. He gives them warning. It's sort of like saying, "We know you're there and I want you to know what awaits you." He already said it in verse 4 that they were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation. They are already doomed to judgment, that was decided long ago. But Jude here warns them in verses 5 through 7. He does it by way of a reminder. "Now I desire to remind you though you know all things once for all, that the Lord after saving a people out of the land of Egypt subsequently destroyed those who did not believe and angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper

abode He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these mingled, or indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire." That warning ends with a note that is definitely frightening, eternal fire. Those people, those persons who apostatize, who rebel and defect from the faith, end up in eternal fire. The theme in those three verses is the destruction of apostates. And this is the destruction of apostates, not only those in the church but even those who are outside the church. The severest judgment of all is for apostates, as we saw in our last study, those who know the truth and reject it.

I might remind you as a footnote that there are people who have rejected the truth, abandoned the church and are living as if the gospel was not true and the Bible was not God's Word and they didn't care about salvation or heaven. There are people living like that but we can't necessarily know that they are already fixed in that apostasy and unable to repent and so as long as they live like that, we continue to call them to repentance and pray for them for we don't know when they have passed the point of grace. But when they do, they are doomed to eternal judgment. And Jude uses three past judgments of God on spiritual rebellion to act as severe warnings to anybody who would think for a moment about defecting from the Christian faith. Three incidents, one involving Jews, another involving angels, and the third involving Gentiles. And as I told you last time, very similar to what Peter does in 2 Peter where he refers to three groups that defected from the truth; angels, the pre-flood generation that were drowned in Noah's time, and also Sodom and Gomorrah.

Now because the stories are so well known, very well known to the Jewish community and the church community, of course, Jude doesn't spend a lot of time developing the story. He simply makes a brief reference to it and the trigger that helps you understand his approach, verse 5, "Now I desire to remind you..." He's not bringing new information so he doesn't have to go into all of the details. I'm just reminding you what happens to apostates. And this is not only to warn apostates, but it's to remind us of how God views them, how seriously He views them.

Now the first illustration that he gave in verse 5 is involving Israel. "Though you know all things once for all, you have had this information, I'm just reminding you that the Lord after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe." They all knew the Old Testament teaching and they had had this reiterated to them by the Apostles. This is a reminder of very familiar matters. And it's just a very simple concept. Israel was saved out of Egypt, the story is in Exodus 6 to 14, and the same people saved out of Egypt were all destroyed in the wilderness because of their sin, as noted in the fourteenth chapter of Numbers. And it happened because of unbelief. And Jude is describing Israel, the experience, the power of God and the plagues. The experience, the deliverance of God in the sacrifice of the Passover lamb and how the angel of death passed by where that blood was sprinkled on the door. And they saw how the Lord opened the Red Sea and how He killed the whole Egyptian army, drowning them. He had left it open for the children of Israel to pass through, and how He had given His Law and how He fed them with manna and all

these things they had experienced, all the goodness of God. They knew the truth about God and they defected, they rebelled, they became very rebellious and complaining and murmuring and griping against God. And because of their unbelief, they failed to believe in the purposes and the plans and the goodness and the promises of God, God told them they would all die in the wilderness. And they did, a whole generation, certainly over a million corpses were left in the 40-year wandering in the wilderness.

The analogy is sobering, very sobering. Visible Israel was not the same as invisible Israel. Believing Israel was a small group, two men, Joshua and Caleb. Even Moses couldn't go in because of his act of pride. Aaron couldn't go it. He died in the wilderness because of his sin. There was this great people who never ever saw the promised land. Everybody 20 and up died. Visible Israel was apostate and so is the visible church in many, many cases. And many will go to hell from a pew. This illustration, as I said, and we noted it last time, is used in Hebrews 3 and 4 to warn those sitting in the visible church against spiritual defection. And I said this last time and I repeat it again, the greater your exposure to the truth, the severer your judgment for rejecting it.

You know, as I was thinking about this, this week, it concerns me that we'd do anything to sort of contribute to this defection. And one of the things that I believe contributes to people defecting from the gospel is an utterly inadequate presentation of the gospel. I think it's part of the ignorance factor where the seed sort of bounces off of hard ground because nothing has ever been told to somebody to prepare the soil. Weak, self-centered, trivial, superficial, shallow gospel presentations do not bring people to a true knowledge of the gospel, do not bring them to true salvation, but they make some kind of response to that superficiality and when there is no real transformation in their lives, they depart thinking that they're inadequate understanding was an adequate understanding and the gospel proved to be impotent.

In the most popular Christian book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, you will look long and hard in this book on the purpose driven life to find the gospel. Now I don't know how you could ever live a purpose driven life if you didn't know how to get into the Kingdom of God, or how to be saved. And as I went through the book, this is the gospel presentation, the only one that I found. "First believe, believe God loves you and made you for His purposes. Believe God has chosen you to have a relationship with Jesus who died on the cross for you. Believe that no matter what you've done, God wants to forgive you. Second, receive Jesus into your life as your Lord and Savior. Receive His forgiveness for your sins." Is there anything missing there? What might be missing there? Repentance. "So I invite you to bow your head and quietly whisper the prayer that will change your eternity. Jesus, I believe in You and I receive You." What Jesus? Who did what? Where's the resurrection? It goes on. "If you sincerely meant that prayer, congratulations, welcome to the family of God." How does he know who's in the family of God? No repentance, no judgment, no hell, no heaven, no self-denial, no discussion of sin, no laying down of the Law of God against which the sinner is broken, no sense of guilt, no sense of condemnation, no fear of eternal torment. That is an inadequate gospel. That is a

gospel that I will tell you will contribute to apostasy. It will contribute to defection because people are going to come to that which they think is the saving message and when it doesn't do anything, they're gone. A shallow gospel presentation that doesn't present the reality of eternal judgment, the reality of the Law of God, the reality of condemnation, eternal hell, does not warn of God's wrath, that does not crush the sinner under the weight of his violation of the Law of God, that does not make him stand before God guilty.

The gospel presentation that doesn't do that isn't a faithful gospel presentation. And then to tell somebody, "Welcome to the family," as if you knew. This is fantasy. The stronger the gospel message, listen, the harder the gospel message, the more demanding...the more law is incorporated into it, the more guilt is produced by it. The more the sinner trembles, the more conviction, the more fear, the greater the understanding of hell and judgment, the less likely it is to generate a false response. The Jews knew enough about God and they walked away. We want to make sure that when people, if they will walk away, they're walking away from the knowledge of the truth, not some superficial non-saving message that doesn't even mention the resurrection without which you couldn't be saved, because you can't be saved if you don't confess Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God...what?...raised Him from the dead.

Well, let's go to the second point. That was last week's message, or a couple of weeks ago. This is serious and this is so important for us. There's a second one here, it's just one verse but, boy, does it ever open up a huge area of discussion. A second and more startling thing here and that has to do with the angels. This is another group of apostates. This is another group of defectors. "And angels who did not keep their own domain but abandoned their proper abode He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day."

Wow, you have apostate Jews in the illustration of Israel in the wilderness. Now you have apostate angels. And again, in one sense you could wish that he said more about this, but he doesn't say more about it because it's all by way of reminder, knowing that they already knew about this. He's assuming that these people already knew about the angels that apostatized, the angels that rebelled, the angels that defected. They had heard it before. Whatever this special extraordinary and terrible event was, they knew about it.

Well what happened? What is he talking about here? What angels? When? Where?

Well, there are basically three views of this. One, that this is referring to one unique and special thing we don't know anything about. Well, that doesn't fit the context because he's reminding them of what they already knew. So it can't be very obscure. We have to assume then that it's very likely something that is in the Scripture and the Old Testament would be that Scripture. And since the story of the defection of Israel in verse 5 and the story of the terrible defection of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them in verse 7 is in the Scripture, we can assume that this one in the middle is in the

Scripture as well and that's why it was common knowledge to them. So whatever we're dealing with here, we're dealing with something that's in the Old Testament.

The second option is that we're dealing with the original fall of Satan. Well, that's a possibility but the problem with dealing with it that way is that it says that He has kept in eternal bonds these angels, in eternal chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day. And certainly Satan is not kept in chains. Revelation 20 says there will come a day in the Millennial Kingdom when he will be chained, remember that? For a thousand years. But currently the Bible says he goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. And we know that demons move about through the earth because Jesus kept confronting them everywhere He went. They were anything but bound. So it can't be that. It then has to be a very special defection and rebellion among the angels that is recorded in the Old Testament, something beyond just the original Fall, something that was so severe and serious that God took the angels that did it and put them in chains to keep them there, lest they do some perverted thing like this again and again.

The sin in particular is described in four ways. Let's look back at verse 6, it's described in four ways. "They did not keep their own domain." That's the first thing. "They did not keep their own domain." That is to say their own rule, or their own, I suppose you could say, position of authority. They moved out of their realm. Instead of staying in that place of authority, that position of rule, that place of domain, instead of keeping that principality which God had given to them, that dignity which God had given to them, they moved out of that.

"They," further describing it, secondly, "abandoned their proper abode." They didn't stay where God had placed them in the lofty and exalted position as holy angels around His throne, like Satan himself who is called the anointed cherub who was the worship leader of heaven, whose majesty and beauty is described in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. They didn't keep that. They abandoned their proper abode. They had their own place. They had their own dwelling in the spirit world around the throne of God, a place in harmony with their nature. But they made a definite move away from that. They deliberately became apostate, an aorist verb. They made a direct move out of their appropriate place.

Now if you go down to verse 7 with me, "Just as...and here's Sodom and Gomorrah appear almost as an illustration of what the angels did...just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way, in the same way as the angels, indulged in gross immorality."

So these angels did not stay in their own realm, did not maintain their own lofty dignity. They did not stay in their own place, that place, that dwelling which was in harmony with their nature, that spirit world. They came down and indulged in gross immorality, *ekporneuo*, compound fornication, specially gross and *ek,*out of may indicate that their fornication was out of sync with their nature. It was something like what went on in Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around because it says, "The

angels in the same way as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah indulged in gross immorality." And we know what the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were engaged in, what was it? Homosexuality, getting outside the course of nature, a kind of*ekporneuo*, pornography, fornication, out of the normal course of nature.

So their sin is compared to that kind of bizarre sin of Sodom and Gomorrah called homosexuality. Angels then who left their own lofty position, who left a domain in some sense of their spirit world, the place where they were designed to be, came all the way down and indulged in sexual immorality in a perverse fashion. These angels went a whoring, as it were in one sense.

And the final of the four that describes their sin is also in verse 7, "In the same way as Sodom and Gomorrah they indulged in gross immorality, and went after strange flesh." Went after *heteros*, went after different flesh. They went after creatures outside their realm. It's an interesting twist. The men of Sodom lusted after the angels. The angels lusted after men. The men of Sodom wanted to commit sexual sin with angels that appeared in male form. And the angels committed horrendous acts of lust with human flesh.

So the case seems clear. Whatever these angels did, they fell from their lofty position and that could certainly refer to the original fall. They moved out of their normal spiritual domain. They came all the way down to engage in sexual immorality with beings of a different nature.

What is this referring to? There's really only one Old Testament possibility and that is in Genesis 6. You can turn to Genesis 6 if you will. Now I want you to understand that when they did this, they brought themselves under judgment. Can I just remind you of what Jude says in verse 6. "The angels that did this, God has kept...perfect tense, *tereo*, past act with continuing result...God has kept in eternal bonds, no escape, escape-proof chains, under darkness, literally under blackness. God has them locked up in the darkest place in His universe. God has them locked up in a black place, a horrific place. It says in 2 Peter 2:4, "God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness reserved for judgment."

And so, Jude says they...they are in chains in the dark pit, waiting the judgment of the great day. What is that? That is the judgment of the day of the Lord. When the Lord comes back and establishes His Kingdom, bind Satan for a thousand years, along with the rest of the demons, at the end of which they are forever cast into the Lake of Fire which was prepared, said our Lord, for the devil and his angels. And so these are bound angelic beings.

Now let's go back to Genesis 6 and I don't want to take too much time to expand on this because I've done it in other settings. I just finished writing my commentary on 1 Peter and there's a, of course, a great amount of discussion in 1 Peter, as well as 2 Peter, of this same amazing story. But let me just give you, if I can, the short version.

Chapter 6 of Genesis. "It came about," and by the way, if you want the details, get the series I did on Genesis and the tapes where I covered this. "It came about when men began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful and they took wives for themselves whomever they chose. Then the Lord said, 'My Spirit shall not strive with man forever because he also is flesh, nevertheless his days shall be a hundred and twenty years. The Nephilim were on the earth in those days and also afterward when the sons of God came into the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown." And it's inextricably connected to verse 5, "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

You say, "I don't see the word 'angel.'" Well look at the phrase "sons of God." Sons of God is used in Job 1:6 and Job 2:1 and Job 38:7 to designate angels. The Septuagint actually translates these as angels. Nowhere in the Old Testament is this phrase "sons of God" used to refer to God's people, except once in Hosea 1:10 in an obvious usage. Sons of God means that they basically were created by God. They were brought into existence by the creative act of God. Men are not sons of God until they are redeemed by God.

In the ancient Hebrew sources that I've read, even including as late as Josephus, the common Jewish view was that sons of God here refers to angels. The early church seems to have held this view until about the fourth century, at least, when other views came along. It can't refer to men because all the sons of God are male. And if he's referring here to God's spiritual children, that would mean that no women were converted. These are...these are male. And the daughters of men must include more than Cain's daughters so sons of God must be different from the human race.

Let me tell you what happened. Fallen angels possessed the bodies of wicked men. The angels in that time came all the way down, of course, to do their terrible work after they had been thrown out of heaven and left their proper abode. They came down to earth in a perverse and wicked enterprise. They possessed the body of wicked men who impregnated women whom the men married, men and women communing with demons.

It's not really a stretch, is it? Do you know anything about the New Age Movement? Do you know anything about the wretched evil of Satan worship, demon worship? Then you know that people invoke the spirits in their wedding ceremonies and open themselves to demons and endeavor...and all kinds of religions in the world have done this, to commune with the gods. Men and women believe that by communing with spirit beings, and they still do, this is part of sort of the heritage of ancient religion, men and women believe that by communing with the spirits they could conquer death and they could gain immortality. It was like Satan's lie in the Garden. Satan says to eve, "You know,

you're not going to die, you're not going to die. In fact, if you eat what God told you not to eat, you'll be like God and He doesn't like the competition. God...God just wants you not to be like Him. If you eat, you will not die." Satan has always promised immortality. There has always been this bizarre kind of fertility cults, all this is sort of bound up in this. And I think the only way to understand this is that the demons come down, they decide to take over the lives of these men. They move in to the wickedness, the wicked lives that literally welcomed them. They come in in some perverse and bizarre way, they dominate a marriage, they dominate a family that is under the influence of the wretched demonic evil, and probably all under the guise that they could achieve immortality and they could somehow even achieve godhood, like the Mormons say.

The corruption was so bad at this point that God drowned the whole human race. These demons did something that God didn't want them to do again. And so, God made sure they wouldn't do it again. He chained them permanently until the day of judgment.

You ask me, "Why did God do that? Why did He choose to do that? Have other demons ever done anything like this?" I don't know why He did what He did and I don't know whether or not other demons have done this, certainly these kinds of bizarre demonic activities, demonic sex and marriage and cohabitation go on all the time in aboriginal kind of environments and primitive environments as well as sophisticated sort of mystical satanic kind of cults. But God did what He did because the level of evil at that point was so great that He literally destroyed the whole human race.

The whole point here is not to get you lost in all of that, that's for the study of Genesis 6, but to just say this, angels which were in heaven around the throne of God end up in the pits of darkness and suffer the judgment of that great day in eternal torment in the Lake of Fire because they defected from their opportunity. I don't know...I don't know how that happened. I can't tell you the story of how holy angels can become so wretched, but that's what the Bible says. And it wasn't a small group in the original fall, it was a third of the angels, according to Revelation 12, and this would have been some among those. The demons that were not engaged in this have been running loose through the world and occasionally from time to time our Lord will send more down to the pits of darkness. That's why, you remember, the demons in the maniac of Gadara, they said, "Don't send us to the pit. Don't send us to the pit." They want their freedom.

I mean, if you think the fall of Israel was something from the privilege that they experienced to dying in the wilderness, think about this fall. It's incredible.

There's one other illustration, back in Jude verse 7, and we've already indicated it. It's the Gentiles. We've seen the Jews, the angels and the Gentiles and in particular, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them. "Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality went after strange flesh are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire." Jude really ties the two

together, doesn't he?

In describing what the angels did, he uses the Sodom and Gomorrah population as the analogy or the illustration and in so doing brings them up. It says in that little phrase, "Since they in the same way as these." Sodom and Gomorrah people did essentially the same thing the angels did. They left their normal place. They indulged in gross immorality. They went after strange flesh. And their the pattern is the same as it was with the angels, perversion of their intended design, going after strange flesh. And the story, of course, is told in Genesis 18 and 19. It's just a terrible, terrible story, horrific story. The testimony of Abraham had been known. The information about the true and living God was available. Certainly Lot had given testimony to the true God. The people of Sodom wanted nothing to do with the true God, nothing whatsoever. People of Sodom were so perverse.

Chapter 19 of Genesis. "Two angels came to Sodom in the evening." They were two angels who had just come from visiting Abraham. "And Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, bowed down with his face to the ground. He said, 'Now behold, my lords, please turn aside into your servant's house.'" These are holy angels and from time to time God allows them to appear in physical form, visible, bodily form. So Lot says, "Come to my house, spend the night, wash your feet that you may rise early and go on your way. They said, however, 'No, we shall spend the night in the square.' He urged them strongly as they turned aside to him and entered his house and he prepared a feast for them and baked unleavened bread for them and they ate." Again indicating that they had taken on a physical body.

"Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house both young and old, all the people from every quarter." The whole place. "And they called to Lot and said to him, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them.'" Boy, this is really sick. All the men of the whole place. And, of course, these are two beautiful creatures. "Lot went out to them at the doorway and shut the door behind him and said, 'Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly.'" He didn't have to explain to them what sin was. Surely they knew that. The Law of God written in their hearts would indicate that and whatever testimony they had heard from Lot. And he says, and this is bizarre, "I have two daughters who have not had relations with men, please let me bring them out to you and you do to them whatever you like." Oh, thanks a lot, Dad. What in the world kind of an act is that? How about trusting God? "Only just don't do anything to these men insomuch as they've come under the shelter of my roof."

"They said, 'Stand aside.' Furthermore, they said, 'This one came in as an alien and already he is acting like a judge.'" They knew Lot, they knew he didn't believe the way he did and they thought he was sitting in judgment on their homosexuality and their perversion. "So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door." This is just an amazing attitude among those who are caught up in the sin of homosexuality. It is out of control. "But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door." The angels saved Lot from getting crushed.

And this is interesting. "They struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great." God gave those angels power to make all of them blind, the important ones and the non-important ones. And then this is so amazing, the end of verse 11, "So that they wearied themselves trying to find the doorway." You would think it would have said, "So that they wearied themselves trying to find their way home." But their passions were so completely out of control that even though they had just been struck blind, they were still having a hard time finding the door they were trying to get through to attack these angels.

There...In don't think there's an incident in the history of the Old Testament that made a stronger impression on the Jewish people than that of Sodom and Gomorrah because as you study the Old Testament, it is brought up again and again and again in Deuteronomy, in Amos, in Isaiah, in Jeremiah, in Zephaniah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, it's brought up again in Matthew and in Luke and in Romans and in Peter and in Revelation...of course in Jude. Two angelic visitors come to visit Lot. The men surround the house. They want to rape these men. And you know what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah, what happened? God incinerated them. The other cities in that same area, according to Genesis 19, were also consumed. Some archeologists have said there is evidence of a great rupture in the earth's strata in that place. Terrific explosion in some subterranean pool of oil near the south shore of the Dead Sea where these cities were located. The gas becomes ignited and the resulting blast lifted a whole section of the valley floor into the air and dropped it down burying them all so that these cities were literally buried immediately in burning oil and sulphur. In one hour they were all gone.

And back in Jude, we know where they were going. They were undergoing the punishment of eternal fire...the punishment of eternal fire. This is hell. This is God's final, everlasting judgment on sinners, and in particular those who defect from the truth. Revelation 19 and verse 20 describes it as a Lake of Fire which burns with brimstone, very much like that which fell on them that day. Revelation 20 verse 10 it says, "The devil who deceived them was thrown into the Lake of Fire and brimstone where the Beast and the false prophet are also and they'll be tormented night and day forever." And Revelation 21:8 says, "The cowardly, the unbelieving, the abominable murderers, immoral persons, sorcerers, idolaters, all liars, their part will be in the Lake that burns with fire and brimstone." That's where it all ends.

So God has given us in this little epistle of Jude three dramatic, unforgetable, historical illustrations of apostasy and how it ends. It is a warning. It is a warning to any who are on the edge of turning away from the gospel. But it is a reminder to us of how important it is to fight for the faith, to contend for the truth because God will punish with everlasting fire those who defect from His truth and stay in His church to corrupt it. He destroyed the very people He took out of Egypt. He destroyed the very angels who once were around His throne. He destroyed the people in Sodom and Gomorrah who were exposed to Him and perverted themselves.

This is a very, very sobering and a very serious message and one that we must understand. And it raises the stakes in this battle for the truth. Hebrews 10:29, "How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God and regarded as unclean the blood of the Covenant by which He was sanctified and has insulted the Spirit of grace." And then it goes on to say, "We know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, In will repay.' The Lord will judge His people and it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

If you're on the edge of rejecting the faith, it is a terrifying thing for you to fall into God's hands. You are headed for an eternal Lake of Fire and brimstone. And God is no respecter of the people who reject. He didn't respect the Israelites who rejected. He didn't respect the angels who once sang His praises. And He didn't respect the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah who knew the truth and turned from it. And He will not respect, nor will He forgive anyone who rejects His gospel. There will be the punishment of eternal fire and there will be no one in hell who doesn't deserve to be there. Let's join in prayer.

Father, it is so fearful and frightening to consider these things. And particularly when we think about people we care about, people we love, people who have been to church who have professed Christ who have drifted away. Lord, we just pray that their...their moving away might be just a season and that You'll awaken them, that they will not become fixed, hardened in their hearts. May they hear the warnings of the book of Hebrews today...today...today while it is day, harden not your heart. But remember, God's Spirit will not always strive with man. And, Lord, for those who might be with us tonight who have up to this point rejected the gospel because of reasons we listed at the beginning, all intertwined and interwoven, would You free them from those things that they may come to embrace forgiveness of sin through faith in the Savior Jesus Christ? We pray in His name. Amen.

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