

Jude 5-19 Necessary Reminders

Introduction:

Longfellow translated the words of a German poet (Friedrich von Logau) like this:

"Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small; Though with patience stands He waiting, with exactness grinds He all."

The point is that God's judgment, though it may not come quickly by our standards, is certain and very exact. Jude's point in this passage is that there are false teachers who have secretly wiggled their way into positions of influence in Christian circles and they will ultimately face the judgment of God.

He will use examples of the past and the literature already known to his readers to make his points regarding these present teachers, their doctrine and their lives. In one sense, what Jude will show us, is that the issues that we face in our churches today have always been problems for God's people. Here's a take on it by Christopher Green:

"There are people in our churches who look and sound like the people of God, but who will not be saved on the last day, because they rebel against God's promises and rule. Like the Israelites in the desert, they do not believe, and in consequence they will face the Judge. That was the case in the wilderness, it was the case in Jude's day, and it will be the case in ours."

Jude 5-19 Outline:

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We can see what is prompting Jude to write by starting with **v.4.**

I. Three Examples of Past Judgment

5-7

- 5 The first example Jude gives takes us back to the Exodus. God saved the people from bondage in Egypt, but many who came out of Egypt did not believe and died in the wilderness. Seeing great miracles does not always result in saving faith. Their rebellion was judged.
- 6 The situation that Jude is focusing on has its roots in the book of Genesis:

Genesis 6:1-2 ¹Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, ²that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.

Jude is probably writing this in Israel – Roman Palestine – to a Jewish audience in their native land. Their literature at that time expanded on the sparse content of these two verses. In other words, people wrote things to explain what the passage did not. Some of it had to do with the sexual activity of these fallen angels and their present condition of being held in chains. One such book is known today as *I Enoch*. Jude is probably alluding to *I Enoch* here because he clearly uses it later. We shouldn't let it bother us that Jude goes outside of Scripture. William Barclay explained that

'Jude is simply doing what all the New Testament writers do, and which every writer must do in every age; he is speaking to men in a language which they recognized and understood'.

What we think about that story is less important than the fact that Jude's audience would have understood the references easily. The point Jude is making is this:

If angels are subject to God's judgment, despite their great power and their most determined efforts to rebel, what chance can human rebels possibly have to escape the justice of God Almighty?

- 7 **given themselves over to sexual immorality** There are revisionist views that have been running around for a many years now that say the sin of Sodom, Gomorrah and the neighboring cities was not sexual in nature, that it was gross inhospitality or something similar. A passage from Ezekiel is often cited for reference.

Ezekiel 16:49-50 ⁴⁹Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. ⁵⁰And they were haughty and **committed abomination** before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit.

The first thing we can see is that the passage from Ezekiel shows that the sin of Sodom was certainly more than sexual immorality. Still, we can't simply ignore the fact that the phrase "committed abomination" relates closely to the ways in which the Torah describes sexual sin.

So, to think that the sins of Sodom were exclusively sexual is to have an incomplete view of the problems there. To say that the sins of Sodom were not sexual is to mischaracterize the situation altogether. Jude focuses on the sexual sin as the key component.

Clearly Jude's opponents were practicing some kind of sexual immorality and trying to justify it. Perhaps they claimed that Jude and his kind were stodgy and legalistic. They might have criticized Jude's fanaticism while claiming that they had freedom in Christ. See **v.4**: "They turn the grace of God into lewdness."

II. Jude's Opponents Arrogantly Ignore God's Authority 8-11

- 8** Three characteristics of the false teachers are that they are immoral, rebellious and disrespectful.
- 9** The word **archangel** only appears twice in the Bible, here and in **1 Thess 4:16**. This is the only place where a name is given: *Michael*. The story's details probably come from another ancient Jewish source known as the *Testimony of Moses*. A later text called the *Assumption of Moses* also contains them, but that text seems to be later than Jude. Deuteronomy only tells us that he died and that the Lord buried him in an unknown location.
- 10** These false teachers speak and behave arrogantly, but in reality they are no better than **brute beasts**. The only thing they can understand is how to fulfill their lusts. Their passions are the controlling factor in their lives and keep them enslaved to sin.

"They are like animals capable of responding to physical urges but incapable of transcending them by thought or spiritual discipline. As a result, they confuse the indulgence of physical impulses with true freedom derived from a right relationship with God. In the end they are condemned by their vile natures and by their deep resistance to truth." – Steven Kraftchick

As far as **speaking evil of what they do not know**, John Stott, in *Evangelical Essentials*, has described Christians as those who have

"a submissive spirit, namely their a priori resolve to believe and obey whatever Scripture may be found to teach. They are committed to Scripture in advance, whatever it may later be found to say."

Possibly the rebels knew of the biblical explanations of the nature of sin and sanctification but didn't have the patience for them. In response, they simplified the message into a sound-bite such as "Christians are not under the law." They would further think, "Isn't that what Paul said? Why care what he actually meant? That's just your interpretation. Jude and people like him are just a bunch of judgmental legalists anyway."

The end result, and we see this all over the church today, is that the parts of the Bible we do not understand or do not *want* to understand, get thrown out. People indulge themselves as they please and don't let complex biblical explanations get in the way.

11 Woe to them! This is something Jesus said frequently when foretelling judgment. It's sort of the opposite of a beatitude. It's rare elsewhere in the NT until the book of Revelation.

Jude's first set of three Old Testament examples comprised groups (God's people, the angels, and Sodom and Gomorrah; in **vv. 5–7**) who came under God's judgment. This second set contains examples of individuals.

Cain is the original biblical example of hatred in Genesis 4. He is often used as a bad example. For instance,

***1 John 3:11-12(NKJV)** ¹¹For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, ¹²not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.*

Balaam, if we go back to the book of Numbers, is the prototype of the greedy salesman of religion. He takes the error of Cain to the next level. First, he rebels against God, then he encourages others to do so too. For a price, he led Israel into immorality and idolatry. In the same way, these false teachers were consumed by the love of money and were leading others astray.

Korah rebelled against the authority of Moses and Aaron. He shows up in ancient Jewish literature, e.g. Josephus, as an example of a person who is contentious and insubordinate. What started out as a sinful independence in Cain turned into an influential undermining of God's people in Balaam. In Korah we witness a full-scale mutiny which ends in God's swift judgment.

Korah came against Moses and Aaron because he coveted their authority. He defended his position by saying that since all the people of Israel are holy, therefore Moses and Aaron have no business taking on a position that stands out from other Israelites. The problem is God put Moses and Aaron in their position. If we recall the scene at the burning bush, Moses didn't even want the job.

D.A. Carson clarifies what's behind Korah's rebellion:

"The primal sin is the desire to be God (Gen. 3) – that is, to claim an authority that is not ours. The first responsibility of the creature is to recognize his or her creaturely status. Jude's point is that God is not mocked: sooner or later rebellion against God's authority will always be judged.

Steven Kraftchick agrees:

"Although God's punishment may not appear as quickly as it did in Korah's case, it is just as certain and just as severe." (Steven Kraftchick)

III. Their Character Is Completely Corrupt 12-13

12 **love feasts** are fellowship meals, during which churches often took communion.

Spots can also be translated as “hidden rocks.” In other words, these people blended into the congregations very well, but due to their beliefs and practices, they could cause people to shipwreck their faith. Jude now gives us four illustrations taken from nature:

Clouds without water. All show, but no substance.

Trees without fruit – and pulled up by the roots as well. Totally useless.

The phrase **twice dead** may point to the NT teaching that those condemned on judgment day are condemned to the “second death,” a permanent separation from God.

Raging waves of the sea – that stir up all kinds of debris and bring it to shore.

13 **raging waves of the sea** Perhaps a link to Isaiah 57:20-21?

Isaiah 57:20-21 ²⁰ *But the wicked are like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest, Whose waters cast up mire and dirt.* ²¹ *“There is no peace,” Says my God, “for the wicked.”*

Wandering stars If we think back to Jude’s time, Before compasses, radar, and so on, the stars helped to guide ships at sea. Certain constellations were fixed and followed very regular paths in the sky. The planets wandered along less predictable paths. The Greek word translated **wandering** is *planētēs*, from which we obviously get the word “planet.”

So a **wandering star** accurately describes deceptive leadership. The false teachers might promise security and a safe path to follow. In reality they led to insecurity and spiritual hazards. They don’t take you where you really want to go.

IV. They Will Someday Face Judgment Themselves 14-16

14 **Enoch** This text comes from that book known as *I Enoch*. Like the *Testament of Moses* or the *Assumption of Moses*, it doesn’t appear in the Bible, but would have been a part of Jewish literature at Jude’s time.

15 The emphasis here is on two words: **all** and **ungodly**. They are used 4x each. We are looking at a total moral and spiritual collapse.

Sinners are bad enough. If we can sin and then pretend fearlessly to be totally right with God, we’ve already gone over the cliff.

16 This verse is a summary of their character.

V. A Final Reminder for Jude's Friends

17-19

- 17 Again, Jude is probably writing in Palestine. The apostles' teaching would have been known to his audience, because they personally heard the apostles. Note, however, that as one of the Lord's brothers, he doesn't seem to include himself as one of the apostles.
- 18 **mockers** NKJV translates this word as "scoffers" in 2 Peter 3:3, the only other place in the NT that this exact word is used. In the OT, the scoffer is one who shows disdain for wisdom and morality. Jude is telling us that his opponents are not simply wrong, but that they arrogantly assert themselves over against received wisdom and truth.
- 19 **not having the Spirit** No doubt these false teachers considered themselves very spiritual – an elite group on a higher level than the rest of the church. Quite possibly, as people often do today, they teach things that are quite unbiblical and justify it by claiming it to be somehow "Spirit-led."

Jude puts them outside the church altogether with this phrase, **not having the Spirit**. Consider Paul's words.

Romans 8:9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

Conclusions:

Three Things We Need to Understand about Rebellion:

1. Rebellion comes naturally to us.
2. Rebellion is a choice.
3. Rebellion leads to judgment.

Being a Good Learner Takes Time and Patience.

Most of the biggest things in the Bible that we need to know are really pretty simple. Other things are not. If we don't get everything at once – and we won't, we can just file it off to the side and say that it is something we are still trying to understand. We don't give up, we just become patient learners. These false teachers mocked things they didn't understand – and drove off into error as a result.

We Need Discernment that can only come from a commitment to God's Word.

In closing, we must consider that the people Jude describes here are not always easy to recognize. If they were easy to spot, Jude would not have written this letter! The corruption is going on under our noses, but we may not recognize the smell. The people he is talking about probably appear nice, well-informed and attractive.