

Jude 5-7, Supplement your Faith & Confirm your Calling

Last week we saw that Jude wanted to write to his audience about our “*common salvation*”. He wanted to write about the community that we are a part of by virtue of being Christians; by virtue of being believers in Jesus Christ. However, he had to write to them to “*contend for the faith*”, that distinct core of truths that we have been given by God, because false teachers had secretly slipped in among them. So, in our scripture lesson today we are going to see Jude use three examples from the Old Testament that show how God deals with “*ungodly men*” and unbelievers.

Our scripture lesson begins with “*Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it ...*”. In other words, they already knew these examples, but they needed to be reminded of them. Isn't that also true of us today? We need to be continually in the word of God, daily being reminded of His truths. So, Jude says, “*Now I want to remind you ... that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.*” What we see here is that the first example Jude is using is that of the nation of Israel, who had experienced the incredible display of God's grace in the Exodus. This story is recorded in Numbers 13 and 14. God has brought Israel up out of Egypt, given them his revelation at Mount Sinai, and cared for them while they were in the wilderness. He performed miracle after miracle for them. They have come right up to the “doorstep” of the promised land and they have sent spies into the land of Canaan to “check” it out.

What happened next? The spies came back and all of them, except Joshua and Caleb, gave a bad report. They said, “Yes, the land flows with milk and honey, but there are giants in the land and they are too strong for us. We will never defeat them.” And the whole congregation of Israel cried out and said to Moses “*why did you bring us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?*” They wanted to go back to Egypt. They sinned against God in unbelief and rebellion. And what was God's judgement on them? All those who rebelled and were of 20 years of age and older would not enter the promised land.

The second example is that of the fallen angels. The Jews had a very highly developed tradition of angels. The Jews believed in a fall of some of the angels and these traditions were written down in the Book of Enoch, which Jude will quote from later in his letter. Now the most likely reference here is to the account in Genesis 6, where they had the tradition that some of the angels were attracted to the beauty of women and left heaven to seduce them and so sinned. Jude writes, “*... the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling ...*”. The implication is that God had assigned angels specific responsibilities and a set place. But because of their pride and lust, they rebelled against God. So, God, in His judgement has kept them in chains and darkness awaiting final judgement.

The third example is that of Sodom and Gomorrah. Jude wrote, “*just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.*” Notice that it says, “*likewise*”. This refers back to what we read last week, where the ungodly men (the false teachers) are said to, “*pervert the grace of our God into blatant immorality ...*”. These ungodly men are just like Sodom and Gomorrah. We all know the story from Genesis 19, how God sent angels into the city and it was so corrupt that God saved Lot, but rained fire from heaven and totally destroyed these cities. What Jude is showing us and his readers is that just as Sodom and Gomorrah suffered punishment of eternal fire, so will these evil false teachers when they defy the moral law of God.

We have been given three powerful examples of God’s judgement on evil. But what ties them all together? Ultimately it comes down to rebellion, an unwillingness to obey what God has commanded. The nation of Israel through unbelief rebelled against God, the angels through pride and lust rebelled against God and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah through a rejection of God’s moral law, blatant immorality, rebelled against God. And they all suffered judgement because of it.

So, what is the take away for us today? It is that a good beginning does not guarantee a good ending. The nation of Israel started out great, but rebelled and everyone 20 years old and older never made it into the promised land. The angels started out great, but rebelled and are being held in chains and darkness. One of my commentaries said that historically Sodom and Gomorrah started out as beautiful prosperous cities that degenerated into evil and suffered the punishment of eternal fire.

This is why Jude told us that we must “contend for the faith”. That there is a set of beliefs and a way of life that we have to fight for. In our Call to Worship from 2 Peter the Apostle Peter wrote to: “*make every effort to supplement your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with godliness, godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.*”

We are called to be different from this world. Accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior requires us to live a way of life that is defined by God’s principles not our own human nature or what the world tells us. Peter goes onto write, “*Therefore, brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election, because if you do these things you will never stumble.*” What does this tell us? That this is a way of life that we called to live.

We don't have to fear that we will not enter the promised land or that we will suffer the punishment of eternal fire. We can take comfort in the fact that if we accept Jesus and live by the truths and the way that He has given to us, then as Peter wrote in our Call to Worship, "*For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you.*"