

Apostates Identified

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[0:00] We have been studying apostasy and apostates, and we're going to keep doing that.

! We've got several more lessons, probably take us up to Christmas right in that vicinity. We'll be off a few weeks Christmas, New Year's, and then back at it. An apostate is one who is exposed to truth, oftentimes at a high level, but ultimately rejects that truth and departs from the faith, or even worse, remains in the church and tries to influence others to reject the light that they have received. Now, apostasy has plagued the church from the very beginning of the church age. We saw apostasy breaking out, and you can read about it in Acts and other books, very early in the history of the church.

But apostasy really didn't start with the church. Sort of interesting. We'll get to that. But today we're going to look at a type of apostasy that was around before the Lord formed His church.

But our operative verses today are verses 5 to 7. I always have the tendency to say Jude 1, 5 to 7, but there is no Jude 2, so 5 to 7. 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.

[1:57] 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, indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh and exhibited an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

Tough words for a tough theme that runs through the Bible, the Old and New Testament. Contained in this passage is the inspired information of three of God's past judgments on other apostates.

And I said there were apostates before the church age. These three examples are apostate Israel, apostate angels, and apostate Gentile.

And this section of Jude closely parallels that of 2 Peter 2, verses 3 to 10.

And we're going to be reading a lot of Scripture tonight, and that comforts me because I know that's the one time I'm not wrong, is when I'm reading Scripture. In their greed they will exploit you with false words.

[3:34] Their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell, and committed them to pits of darkness reserved for judgment, and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly, and if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction, by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter, I hope the U.S. Supreme Court is getting a copy of this tape, and if he rescued righteous Lot oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men, for by what he saw and heard, that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority.

Well, the first thing that Jude mentions here, and Peter talks about apostate Israel. Jude says in verse 5, 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, that's Israel or Hebrews, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.

And that was everybody, I believe, over the age of 20. Out there in that desert for what, 40 years? And they wandered. You know, that's about an 11 day trip. If you walked from Egypt to Jerusalem, that's about 11 days.

40 years. By going all the way back to Israel, Jude is reminding his readers that those who defect from truth will always be subjected to divine judgment.

There is no exception. God saved the Hebrews from bondage in Egypt. God led them through the wilderness.

[6:06] Always remember the story of the Jews' rescue from bondage in Egypt is a very powerful example of redemption. He was saving them.

And we see in this story God's love and God's grace for his people. And a great example, probably the greatest example out of that whole experience of redeeming Israel and bringing them out of the world, Egypt always stands for the world, is the Passover.

When the blood was applied to the doorposts, the angel of death passed over. What you guys need to ask yourselves, has that blood been applied to the doorpost of my heart?

That the angel of death will pass over. It was a great physical example with a spiritual reality for the church centuries later, millennia later. Given the fact that there were millions of Hebrews living in bondage, we can almost be positive that there were some who ignored the command to apply the blood of an innocent lamb to their doorposts.

You know, there's always one guy somewhere, didn't get the word or ignored it. And if that is true, the death angel would not pass over.

[7:39] The death angel had to see the blood applied. And if he didn't, he would strike dead the firstborn of that household. Egypt that night suffered great death, even in Pharaoh's house.

But who knows about it? Maybe there were some Israelis as well. Hebrews. God rescued the Hebrews from Egyptian bondage. Many of those rescued were not believers and they were destroyed in the wilderness.

Let me read out of Numbers 14 beginning in verse 26. The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against me?

You remember how they always grumbled against Moses? They weren't grumbling against Moses. They were grumbling against God. When you read that, they're grumbling against God. I've heard the complaints of the sons of Israel which they are making against me.

Say to them, As I live, says the Lord, just as you have spoken in my hearing, so I will surely do to you. Your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward who have grumbled against me.

[9:03] Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you except Caleb and Joshua. Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey, I will bring them in and they will know the land which you have rejected.

But as for you, your corpses will fall in the wilderness. Your sons shall be shepherds for forty years in the wilderness and they will suffer for your unfaithfulness until your corpses lie in the wilderness. According to the number of days which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall bear your guilt a year, even forty years, and you will know my opposition.

I, the Lord, have spoken. Surely this is what, this I will do to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against me. In this wilderness, they shall be destroyed and they will die.

As for the men whom Moses sent to spite the land and who returned and made all the congregation grumble against him by bringing out a bad report concerning the land, even those men who brought out the very bad report of the land died by a plague before the Lord.

[10:15] Remember, the Lord, ten of them said, we can't go in. These guys are too big. But Joshua, the son of Nun, and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, I have no idea how to pronounce that, remained alive out of those men who went to spy out the land.

That's Numbers 14. Can you imagine, you know, you get this letter and you gather all the Hebrews and say, hey, we got another chapter from Moses. They didn't have chapters back then. We got this letter.

Let's all sit down around the campfire and read this if that's what you read. You're all going to die. Except for your kids that are less than, younger than 20. Every one of you are going to die in this wilderness.

Your bones are going to be bleached by the sun. So the readers of Jude, millennia later, are given a vivid picture of Israel's judgment on those who did not believe.

These Hebrews were exposed to truth at an unimaginable high level. And they'd seen the miracles that God performed through Moses.

[11:24] They'd seen the miracles. And I'm sure many of them ascribed them to Moses. I mean, they even did that down into Jesus' day when they said, and this is really the significance of feeding.

Remember when He fed the masses? Remember what they said to Him? You only fed us one day. Moses fed us for 40 years.

And Jesus said, Moses didn't give you any food. That was My Father in Heaven that fed you. It wasn't Moses.

But that's what they were saying to the Lord who fed them. They said, well, we're back for more food. You know, Moses did this 38 years. You've only done it one day. That was supper. Where's breakfast? That was the gist of that.

So we see apostate Israel, but also there are apostate angels. And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode.

[12:25] He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day. The second example then that Jude gives us is that of apostate angels.

Now, theologians have offered three views, maybe more, as to the identity of these angels. Some claim that Jude's reference concerns an event that was unknown to his readers.

Jude is using the passage to describe a heretofore unknown event. That is not a majority view, by the way. It's pretty well been discarded over the years.

If I'm probably the German higher critical guys bought into it, but no one else did. The second view asserts that Jude was writing about the original fall of Satan.

He was known as Lucifer. You remember, he fell from heaven. They claim it is an account of Satan's rebellion and his expulsion from heaven.

[13:35] But Jude mentions eternal bonds holding Satan and we know that's not true in our day. In fact, at this very time, Satan is a roaring lion prowling around the earth looking for victims to devour.

It is unlikely that Jude is referring to Satan's fall from heaven. Most likely, Jude is referring to a heinous crime committed by angels during the Old Testament period.

Now, we read this in Genesis chapter 6. Now, it came about when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, the daughters and daughters were born to them and the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful and they took wives from themselves whomever they chose. Then the Lord said, My spirit shall not strive with man forever because he also is flesh.

Nevertheless, his days will be 120 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.

[14:52] Now, there's two different views of that. One view is that you had people not Hebrews who were coming to Hebrew women and wanting to marry them, cohabit and pollute Israel.

And remember, God always protected the bloodline of Israel. Why? The Messiah was coming through the Hebrews. He had to protect the bloodline. Although there are Gentiles mentioned in the line of Jesus.

There's a prostitute mentioned in the line of Jesus. Rahab. There are four Gentile women mentioned in the line of Jesus. But some hold that this was an effort to pollute Israel.

In all candor, our pastor holds to that. There are others that believe this was angels, sons of God were angels, fallen angels, cohabiting with women.

And Don's position says that's impossible. But it talks about how they were different. They were huge. And it infuriated God.

[16:07] And it spawned a race of mighty men who were from old men of renown. I tend to hold to that. That this was a pollution by angels trying to cohabit with women, human women.

I don't know the answer. But you know, I do have one comment I want to make. I've always read about these were the mighty men of old, men of renown. And you remember how the Greeks came up with all the gods, the Zeus's and Hercules?

This is just my theory. I wonder if that were these guys. That's where they got these guys. These big guys. And of course, legends grew up around. They weren't flying around and all that. I put that out there.

This is a narrative of Scripture we can disagree and get along. Okay? This is one of the most severe sins, whatever it was, one of the most severe sins described in Scripture.

And the Lord dealt with it very harshly. He took these angels, put them in chains to await a judgment that in our day is still future.

[17 : 26] Those guys are still chained up. That's a long time. And they're still in chains. What were these fallen angels trying to do?

Well, I believe they were trying to cohabit with women. And you know what you would have had? a race that was neither human nor angel and therefore not redeemable.

God does not, Christ did not atone for angels. You either threw in with the Lord or you threw in with Lucifer and were cast out.

Christ atoned for humans. But here we would have this race of third kind. Maybe it's close encounters of the third kind. And for which Christ did not atone.

They're not fully angels and Christ didn't atone for them. So this infuriated God and today this very moment they are held in darkness and reserved for judgment.

[18 : 33] They're really there. I mean this is space time history. I wonder if they're sitting down there saying, man, how much longer is this darkness going to when's the sun going to come up? You know they've been there thousands of years.

6,000 years maybe. 5,000 years. So we've seen apostate Hebrews and apostate angels and now Jude is going to deal with apostate Gentiles.

Verse 7 Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

Here Jude reminds his audience about Sodom and Gomorrah. And remember there were cities around them five other places. It wasn't just two communities.

There was a gaggle of them. That's a bunch. Like the angels of Genesis 6, these humans engaged in horrific sins that were an abomination to God.

[19 : 57] And fellas, let me ask you a question. if these horrific sins were an abomination to God 4,000 years ago, are they still an abomination to God?

Does God ever change? He never changed. And their horrible debauchery is also detailed in Genesis.

Don't ever ignore the book of Genesis. Genesis. It is vital to Christianity. And for me, my favorite part of Genesis is pre-Abrahamic history.

And I would tell you, that's literal. That's literal. And I love to study the first 11 chapters. But all of it is vital to Christianity.

Now, what's this debauchery? Well, two angels came to Sodom. Who are they? Well, remember, Abraham is out in the desert and three heavenly beings come to him.

[21 : 08] Now, two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. By the way, that's a place of public service.

He was a public servant. He was like the mayor or the city manager. He had a position of authority sitting at the gate. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.

A little unusual, certainly in our culture, but there is a sense of humility in a lot of that world even today. There are a lot of things in that culture that they do that we would be uncomfortable with. I got a tour of a Christian school in Pakistan by the head master for two hours and he held my hand the whole time. That was creepy to me, but I didn't dare the humiliation if I had drawn back or something like that.

I wouldn't have done that. Now, we weren't going to kiss, I can tell you that, but holding hands, I was willing because I knew what the problem would be.

[22 : 22] So, he bows down and Lot says, now behold my lords, that's with a small L, please turn aside into your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet, then you may rise early and go on your way.

And they said, however, no, but we shall spend the night in the square. These are the two angels that visited Abraham, Lot's uncle.

And you remember that encounter, but there were three angels. One of those angels was the Lord Jesus Christ, the angel of the Lord, a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ.

And he has many appearances in the Old Testament. We call those theophanies or Christophanies. These two went forward. And you remember the discussion the Lord had with Abraham and they

had that big discussion about will you destroy him for 50 or 40 or 30, you know.

Well, these two angels show up. Lot says, come into my house. They said, no, we shall spend the night in the square.

[23 : 42] Well, who are they going to be with? Homosexuals. Homosexual men. You can't dance around this. You can't do it.

Never get your theology from the Discovery Channel or the History Channel. They had a special on Sodom and Gomorrah and at the end they said, Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed, but it certainly wasn't for the punishment of homosexuality because God created homosexuals and loves them.

Don't ever get your theology from the History Channel or Discovery Channel. So we're going to stay in the square. Yet he urged them strongly so they turned aside to him and entered his house and he prepared a feast for them and baked unleavened bread and they ate.

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 and they called a 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. But a lot went out to them at the doorway and shut the door behind them and said, please my brothers, do not act wickedly.

[25 : 05] Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with men. Please let me bring them out to you and do to them whatever you like, only do nothing to these men in as much as they have come under the shelter of my roof.

Let me say something about the Arab world. I've been all over the Arab world. And yeah, there are Islamic terrorists. We know that. Six, eight, ten percent. I don't know how many.

But let me tell you, when you're under a righteous Arab, I use that term loosely, he may be Muslim, and I've been with a lot of Muslim, Arabs, and Christians, but when you're under their roof, they will protect you with their life.

And so Lot begged them not to do that. He said, I'm even willing to give you my daughters. That's how far the debauchery had come. And they said, stand aside. Furthermore, they said, this one came in as an alien.

He wasn't from there. And he said they came in as an alien, and he is already acting like a judge. Now we will treat you worse than them.

[26 : 14] So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door, but the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door. They struck the men who were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves trying to find the doorway.

They couldn't find the doorknob. They're blind. Then the men said to Lot, whom else have you here, a son-in-law and your sons and your daughters, whomever you have in the city, bring them out of the place for we're about to destroy this place.

Because their outcry has become so great before the Lord that the Lord has sent us to destroy it. Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law who were to marry his daughters.

Remember how they used to do that? I mean, Joseph and Mary did that. He goes out and he tells them, you've got to get out of this place for the Lord will destroy the city.

And his sons-in-law thought he was joking. The scriptures say they thought he was just jesting.

When morning dawned the angels urged Lot, up, take your wife and your daughters who are here, for you will be swept away in the punishment of the city.

[27 : 33] but he hesitated. So the men seized his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his two daughters, for the compassion of the Lord was upon him, and they brought him out and put him outside the city.

When they brought them outside, one said, escape for your life. Do not look behind you and do not stay anywhere in the valley. Escape to the mountains or you will be swept away.

Lot was brazen enough to speak up and he said, oh no, my lords, behold, your servant has found favor in your sight and you have magnified your loving kindness which you have shown to me by saving my life, but I cannot escape to the mountains for the disaster will overtake me and I will die. Now behold, this town is near enough to flee to and it is small, please let me escape there. Is it not small that my life may be saved?

And one of the angels spoke to him and said, behold, I grant you this request also, not to overthrow the town of which you have spoken. So they're going to spare that town because Lot's going there. [28:46] Hurry, escape there, and there's been a lot of theology and sermons on this next phrase. Hurry and escape there, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there.

And we're not going to get into that tonight, but that's a significant verse, I think, of Scripture. I'm not going to destroy Sodom and Gorah if there's a believer in there.

So you've got to get out of here. Hurry. And once you're gone, then we'll take care of things.

Therefore, the name of the town was called Zoar. The sun had risen over the earth when Lot came to Zoar.

Then the Lord rained down on Sodom and Gorah, Brimstone, and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities and the valley and all the inhabitants of the cities and grew on the ground.

Everything wiped out. Everything wiped out. But his wife from behind him looked back. You could see that coming, couldn't you?

[29:52] He said don't look back. I mean, it's like telling your little boys, you know, there's a beehive out in that tree. Don't go near it. He'll be in about ten minutes and you have stings everywhere.

I know because I did that. Actually, I was married at the time. And still am, by the way. His wife, she's trailing, looked back and she became a pillar of salt.

Little tidbit of information, if you ever read Josephus, the great Jewish historian, he says we used to go out with a, take a picnic basket and go out and sit and look at her form.

Now, I tend to think she's a pillar of salt. She ain't going to last for it. First rainstorm, she's going to go away. But they saw something that they thought was Mrs. Lot. Now, Abraham arose early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before the Lord, and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah.

Now, this is Abraham. And toward all the land of the valley, and he saw and behold, the smoke of the land ascended like a smoke of a furnace. Thus it came about when God destroyed the cities of the valley, that God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities in which Lot lived.

[31:14] The Lord had promised him he would deliver those righteous Lot from that destruction. Now, fellows, there's no way to make this attractive.

There's no way to clean it up. The Lord is capable of saying what He means. the Lord is going to reveal even for 21st century man, His feelings on this topic.

The men mentioned in this passage were guilty of very gross homosexual conduct. They were lying with each other.

And, you know, why try to come up with some theory in the 21st century to clean that up. It brought the judgment of God. And I would suggest it has brought the judgment of God on this nation.

Coupled with the abortion ruling, I believe that is true. what does the scripture say about the unrepentant homosexual? Will he inherit the kingdom of God?

[32:28] And the answer is no. It's not going to happen. But let's balance this, okay? What about the unrepentant heterosexual sin?

No. Same thing. If they don't know Christ, they're not going to be saved. They're not going to be saved. Now, I want to say this, too, and I'm going to add this in for free.

I won't charge anything. I don't know who's going to be up here in five years. I'll probably be too old or, you know, on the other side of the lawn or whatever, but I'm telling you, five years from now, you might get arrested the way things are going for doing what we're doing tonight.

I can see this coming. Anyone who has been exposed to truth has a higher calling and a higher responsibility before God.

This is why God's judgment on apostates is so tough. It is really, really tough because they've had the truth.

[33:43] It's been preached to them. I've witnessed to a lot of people and regrettably some of them reject and regrettably some of them are my converts. Not the Lord's.

They're mine. That's equal to being lost. But I have to tell you that often I've ended that session when somebody just says I'm not interested.

I say, you know, I walked in here, your best friend, I'm leaving your worst enemy. Because you will stand before God and you will never be able to say, I never heard this before.

I never knew this. One of my dearest friends, I talked to him, gave him great books, good guys, MacArthur, Josh McDowell, more than a carpenter, great, great, led me to the Lord.

Great books. And he gave them all back a few days later. So I read parts of some of them. I totally reject that. And within a year he was dead of brain cancer.

[34 : 44] Good friend of mine. When you've been exposed to truth, we have a higher calling and a higher responsibility before God.

This is summarized frighteningly in the book of Hebrews whomever wrote it. How much severe punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified and has insulted the Spirit of grace.

Well, there's some gigantic things going on there. For we know him who said vengeance is mine I will repay.

And again, the Lord will judge his people. That's Hebrews chapter 10. If you want to read the whole thing, go to verse 20 to 31.

The whole deal. But then it ends with this. If this doesn't get our attention, nothing will. It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

[35 : 59] it's a terror. An eternal terror. And you know, I'm going to go to sleep. I go to bed early. And I'm going to go to sleep the night with friends who don't know the Lord.

With family members. Close family members who don't know the Lord. And we're probably all in that same box. And I just want to take them and say it's a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.