

Jude v5–7

Examples That Warn Against Backsliding

Thursday, October 3, 2024 • Read Jude v5–7

Questions from the Scripture text: What is Jude doing to them in v5? What used to be their condition? What had the Lord done to whom? But what did He do later to whom? And who did not do what (v6)? What did they do instead? And what has the Lord done to them? Until what? And what two cities make up a third example (v7)? And what other cities in like manner? To what did they all give themselves over? By going after what? As what are they set forth? What are they suffering?

How does God remind us of the urgency of obeying Jesus as our Lord? Jude v5–7 looks forward to the second serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these three verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **those who do not obey Jesus as their Lord will suffer under His wrath forever.**

The need of reminder (v5a). Jude's readers are not suffering amnesia. What is lacking is the experiential knowledge of the necessity for perseverance in righteousness. Even genuine believers, like those to whom he is writing (cf. v1b), can go through periods of complacency and backsliding. But now that these men are creeping into the churches, encouraging professing Christians to use "grace" as an occasion for sin (v4), it is all the more urgent that Christ's prophet remind his readers of what comes of those who had blessing from God but threw off His authority.

The destruction of church members (v5b–c). The Lord saved a people out of the land of Egypt (v5). They experienced wonders and spiritual privileges (cf. 1Co 10:1–4). These were members of the church in the wilderness (cf. Ac 7:38), but many of them grumbled and rebelled, and the Lord killed that generation before they entered the promised land (v5c; cf. Ac 7:39–51, 1Co 10:5–11). But these were examples for us (cf. 1Co 10:5), so that we who think we stand would keep taking heed, lest we fall (cf. 1Co 10:12). Have you enjoyed great spiritual experiences, and great spiritual privileges, including membership in Christ's church and participation in His sacraments? Then bless God for His goodness to you! But also look to Him for grace to maintain you, lest it be discovered that all of your hearing and seeing has not been mixed with faith (cf. Heb 4:2 in Heb 3:6–4:13).

The destruction of authorities (v6). So, we have seen how even church members can fall. Now we see *how far* one may fall. Whatever heights of obedience or ability we have attained, we will not in this life reach those of the angels. But there were angels who did not keep their own authority, but fell from even there. And how great was their fall! From spiritual power to chains of darkness. And the judgment day that is coming will not remove those chains, but add to them the lake of fire (cf. Mt 25:41; Rev 19:21, 20:10, 20:15). Let us never become complacent, as if we have achieved holiness in this life (cf. Heb 12:4). And let us never think that we will be protected by any office that we hold or esteem that we have in the church. No, we must continue to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered. We must continue to be zealous for Jesus, our Lord.

Everlasting destruction (v7). In order to understand well what v7 is adding to these illustrations, we must note the word "eternal." For, the smoke of Sodom and Gomorrah was not still rising on the earth at the time that Jude wrote the letter. Rather, v7 tells us that these two cities (and the cities around them, that were like them) were destroyed in a manner that is an "example." By sinning against God's design for man and marriage ("strange flesh" was their specific sexual immorality), they provoked the wrath of God, in Whose image they were made.

Just as church members may provoke God by their unbelief, and those who are in exalted place may fall even from there to the very pit, so also all humanity has sinned against God's glory and are subject to the fire of God's fury (cf. Rom 1:18–26). What happened to Sodom and Gomorrah in a moment of history is a microscopic picture of what will happen to unsaved humanity forever—including, and especially, church members and church officers whose words and lives denied the Lordship of Christ. Do not underestimate the greatness of Hell. The Lord has given examples that urge you not to do so!

How can you use wrongly the good gift of being a church member? What sorts of things are you tempted to think are making you safe, other than belonging to the Lord Jesus? Why is being untroubled by sin incompatible with belonging to the Lord Jesus? How much, and how long, can you expect to suffer, if you come to the last day outside of Jesus Christ?

Sample prayer: Lord, please forgive us and help us. We have sometimes felt that we were safe from judgment because we are members of Your church and have received the sign of baptism or eaten the spiritual food of the supper. Many of us have felt safe before You, because You have given us places of esteem and authority. But You have reminded us of the church that was judged in the wilderness, and of the angels who fell from their authority. Forgive us for sliding into sin as a consequence of our false security. Grant that we would not take our sanctification or perseverance for granted. And make us to remember how great Your wrath is against our sin, so that we would dread to indulge it or mess with it at all. For indeed, the fire of Sodom and Gomorrah was but a token of the eternal fire of Your justice! So, give us to see sin as You see it, and to find safety from Your wrath in Jesus Christ, who has suffered the fullness of Your wrath for us who believe in Him, we ask in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP32AB "What Blessedness" or TPH389 "Great God, What Do I See and Hear!"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Jude 1:5-7. These are God's words. But I want to remind you, though, you once knew this. That the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt afterward destroyed. Those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own Abode, he has reserved an everlasting chains, under Darkness for the Judgment of the great day.

As Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them in a similar manner to these Having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh. Are set forth as an example, suffering, the Vengeance of Eternal fire. So for the reading of gods inspired and and Aaron tort And so Jude.

Has already written that he wanted to go on and Enrich them more right. Writing to them concerning their common salvation, but it is necessary for him. To exhort them. To contend earnestly for the faith, which was once for all delivered to the Saints, and the reason, He has to exhort them to do this is because they have been forgetful.

Not that they are suffering theological Amnesia but they have fallen out of the Habit of contending for this faith in their own selves and in their own lives. This is the first great place that each of us must contend for the faith. It will not do for someone to Develop a Hobby or interest in apologetics, if they are not.

Contending for the faith first in their own heart and their own mind day by day in their own life. Living from the Life of Christ and fellowship with him in the means of his grace offering. What they do all day long every day. Offering what you do all day long?

Every day a service unto your master, your Redeemer. The Lord Jesus. Do not think that there is a contending for the faith. That you can do if you're not contending for the faith in that way those to whom Jude is writing, quote, unquote. Once knew this So he says, but I want to remind you though, you once knew this, in other words, they are backsliding.

It is possible for those who are professing Christians for those even who are converted. Verse 1, they are called Sanctified by God, the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ to backslide to become complacent in their Christian walk. And when you become complacent, you are neglecting warnings that God has put in his word.

That tell us that. Not everyone who professes to be saved, has actually been saved. That there are those who are church members and those are even those who have

high office and are esteemed by many and seem to have great spiritual attainments. Who fall and then he warns us about the greatness of the destruction.

into Such. And so he gives three examples. One in verse five one and verse six one and verse seven. The first is, That the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt afterward destroyed. Those who did not believe. church membership is wonderful because the church is the Lord's Church.

The Lord is the one who has gathered it from among the Nations. The Lord is the one who has set it apart, the Lord is the one who gives her his word and his worship. And yet it is possible to be a member in this church. That is That you have this wonderful church membership, but you don't have the Lord himself.

And so it is not so wonderful for you. So the Lord saved the people out of the land of Egypt but afterward it was the Lord who destroyed, those who did not believe. And so we should not say, I have the Lord, if we are not trusting in him, if we do not belong to him by faith.

You, you cannot say I have the Lord. Just because you're a church member and you're baptized. Now, we know people, anyone who Trends Anglican or Lutheran or even what we would call Federal visionist Presbyterian. But nobody actually takes responsibility for being a federal visionist. They all deny the name and Hermandhaw and explain their way out of it.

But anyone who says I'm okay, I'm safe because I'm a church member or I'm safe because I'm baptized Is making this great mistake. Like the Apostle Paul says in First Corinthians 10, All the people pass through the Red Sea, all the people were baptized into Moses. As the water.

were sprinkled walking on the dry land. All the people ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink. And yet, God was not pleased with them. And he the that entire generation fell in the wilderness. The end of Hebrews 3 and into the beginning of Hebrews 4.

Makes the same point. And now Jude is making this point. You could be a church member but and be destroyed and it'll be the Lord himself. Who destroys you? If you don't believe, if you don't believe in the Jesus, who is for the second example, that backsliding or complacent, Christians are neglecting, is that of the Angels Dangers were holy.

The Angels were powerful. The Angels had authority. And yet, they did not stick to their own authority, their own place their own Holiness. A third of the Angels, Sinned against God didn't we're not content with the place that God had given them but tried to take their own place.

These two then were in their own way, throwing the Lord off as Master. Which is what everyone does. Who uses the gospel uses the grace of God as an excuse for sin, What a rotten and corrupt thing to do to take the truth, the reality of God's free Grace in Christ.

And twist it into the grounds upon which you stop trying to keep his Commandments. You don't care about Holiness.

And he reminds us that even Angels fell and how far did they fall? So even church members fall verse 5. But even the Angels Fountain. Look at how far they fell from their place of authority, their own authority.

Our English version here has translated proper domain but its own authority. And now they are reserved in Everlasting chains under Darkness. They are bound to their sin. They are unable ever. To climb back up to attain. To the place where they were. Hebrews reminds us that God does not give help to the angels.

Who fell? Gives help to the children of Abraham by faith. Those who believe in Christ like Abraham believed in Christ. But the angels, who fell they're done. All the way from the great position they have. They are now in Chains. Everlasting chains. Under darkness. And when the great day comes, the chains will not be released.

But they will then be cast into the Lake of Fire. And so, how great is the fall? Of those who throw off the lordship of Christ. So, who can fall even church members? How far you can fall even from? An angel. And let none of us think. This applies primarily to me at this point, that none of us think, because of the office that we have, Or because we have been esteemed by others.

Perhaps, you are esteemed by others that applies. to you to some extent. That you Not in this danger, that it is okay for you to become complacent. No, we must by perseverance Zeal diligence all given by grace. It's not by the Merit or Force. Of our persistence. Our zero, or our diligence.

But this is the fruit part of the fruit of the work of the spirit in. The fruit of the spirit is self-control. And so that's what real salvation looks like. It looks like being right with God only through who Christ is and only through what Christ has done. But it also looks like being Sanctified by this same Christ and rejoicing to be his bond slave.

Throughout our life and increasingly. So, As his Spirit, grows Us in Grace.

So who can fall verse 5? How far you can fall? even from a place of high esteem and Authority and office for And then into Those who do not have Christ as Lord fall. And here, the example is Sodom and Gomorrah. So verse 7 as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them in a similar manner to these Okay, so the cities of the plane.

remember I think one of them was, Zoan. Or There are a couple others. But the the cities of the plane. Similarly to Sodom and Gomorrah. Gave themselves over to sexual immorality and went after strange flesh. That's not where the sin starts. Okay. That is the end stage of the cancer of being under the wrath of God, remember Romans 1.

The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, it starts with denying God as Creator denying his glory as Creator, denying his lordship over us as Creator for although they knew God they neither glorified him nor gave him. Thanks. Exchange, the glory of God for the service of Idols images.

Creatures. And it was as a consequence of that, that God gives men over even to the sorts of sexual immorality, that Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plane fell into. And so they're not just an example that if you fall into the alphabet super perversions that are celebrated in our culture, you will burn forever and ever.

They're examples of how denying God as Creator. And denying the Lord, as the Lord. Ends in burning forever. And so yes when the antinomian comes and says the grace of God means you don't have to work so hard. In fact, some of them say it's wrong to try so hard.

To obey his Commandments to be h. They are giving you the logic by which someone ends up in the same fate. As Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain. Note the end of verse 7 when he says are set forth as an example, suffering the Vengeance or the just penalty.

the word there is. Taken from the root for righteousness or Justice suffering. The just penalty of Eternal. Fire. Well, if they were to At the time of Jude writing go and look, they wouldn't Still find Sodom and Gomorrah smoking. What he's saying is that the way that God destroyed, those cities was an example in time in a moment of History.

Of what will be Everlasting. For all of those who do not have Jesus Christ as Lord. He is King of Kings, and Lord of lords. And every knee will bow. And every tongue will confess and those who do not belong to him, As master and who do not serve him as master, they will have no place in heaven or Earth.

In the new heavens and the new Earth. Because in the new heavens and the new Earth righteousness dwells. Those Holy Angels who never fell will dwell. Those holy people who have been redeemed in Christ, And Sanctified Justified and glorified. They will be. But the devil and all his angels and all those whose names are not found in the Book of Life will be cast into the like of burning fire.

Which Jesus tells us in Matthew 25 is prepared for the devil and his angels. But we see all of those. Who oppose the Lord cast there in Revelation. And we see all those whose names are not written in the Book of Life. The Cowardly and and so on the that whole list of folks, They have their place in the burning fire and so it tells us these this warning of into what we are destroyed or fall.

If we are not redeemed. Into subjection to Christ. And so, We might feel like because that's the subtlety that's the deceptiveness of our remaining sin that Backsliding or becoming complacent. lazy in our Christian Life or with our spiritual life or with the service of Christ, whether lazy in attending upon the means of Grace, In our own personal life or in our family life or our worship life, our congregation life or whether lazy in terms of not living Moment by moment throughout the day.

As someone who belongs to him. Becoming complacent or slacking in those things is ignoring the example of the people who came out of Egypt, That even church members can fall. It's ignoring the example of the Angels. That even those of such high position and esteem. may fall and great as their fall.

And it's ignoring the example of Sodom and Gomorrah. And into what great Eternal fire into what great sin. We may fall by denying Christ, as Lord. They turn the grace of God into lewdness. They turn the grace of God into lewdness. He says, in verse 4. So into what?

Great sin, we may fall and ultimately into what Everlasting and great punishment. We may justly fall. By our sin, we would justly fall by our sin apart from being saved. And so may the Lord help us to remember these examples. Like Jude says I want to remind you though, you once knew this So right now you're in family worship, you're hearing it, read God, helping you, I hope you are thinking about it and meditating upon it right now is a moment in which you knew this.

But God, helping you May the Holy Spirit. Keep us mindful. Keep us. Remembering the examples. Keep us thinking of Jesus as Lord and relating to him as Lord. So that we won't come to a place in our life where The word has to come in a Bible, reading or a sermon.

And say, I want to remind you though, you once knew this. May he give us to live in the knowledge of it. And if we do backslide, if you do become slack, May God mercifully remind you. Let's pray.

Father, please. Give us by your spirit to not be slack. Knowing your Jesus, as our Lord, our King, our master, How we thank you that this. One of the mediatorial offices you have given him for us and Grant that we would not have Seared consciences or quench your spirit, but keep our consciences tender.

And That your spirit would not leave us alone. But would always be calling us back to yourself if we And stumble. Into such complacency, don't let us. end up. Be those self-deceived who discover that we were never saved at all. And that our fall has been into everlasting Flames.

Please Lord, don't let that happen. To me or anyone of our dear family grant that we would enter Glory together. By your spirit's use of this portion of your work and of the rest of your word to conform us to Christ in whose name, we ask it. Amen.