

II Peter 2:1-10 (tx. Jude 5-7)

REMEMBER THE PAST

- I. The example of Israel (vs.5)
- II. The example of angels (v.6)
- III. The example of Sodom (vs.7)

INTRODUCTION

“Remember the Alamo; Remember Pearl Harbor; Remember Watergate; Remember 9/11!”

- we say these things to remind us of past history.
 - we do it to challenge & warn us to be on guard that those events won’t ever happen again.
 - & to spur us on to greater courage & confidence.
- & we need such reminding, for it is so easy to forget these certain events to help us face life & death.

Well, you see, **Jude** has just given all us Christians Christ’s command to fight for the faith that was once for all entrusted to us.

- he does that because the Church & we Christians are always facing imminent dangers & destruction from the attacks of evil & error.
- & he has assured us we can defeat these enemies because we are God’s chosen, called, kept, & loved with His multiple mercy & peace.

But before he describes the false teachers & their coming condemnation & destruction, he continues in vs.5-7 with a rally cry to remember the past.

- he wants to jolt our memories about God’s attitude & actions against those who forsake the faith.
 - who rebel against Him, reject His Word & will with false beliefs & filthy living.
- Jude wants to warn us of the dangers & destruction that await us if we turn from Lord.
 - & he wants to assure us again of the victory in defending & fighting for the faith.
- & he underlines those who turn from it & try to cause others to follow God will sooner or later destroy.
 - just as surely as Israel, the angels, & Sodom were in the past.

Th’fore, today we continue to study **Jude**, & consider vs.5-7 & the command to **REMEMBER THE PAST**.

- **1st**, about Israel in the wilderness; **2nd**, about the fallen angels.
- & **3rd**, about Sodom & Gomorrah.

I. **THE EXAMPLE OF ISRAEL** (vs.5)

Now then, **Jude** begins in vs.5 that he desires to remind the Christians of his day, & us too, about the truths we already know so well.

- of how Lord deals with those who believe wrongly & live wickedly in rebellion against Him.
 - & who sneak in to the Church to get others to follow.
- he gives then, from past OT. history 3 example of divine judgment & punishment for such individuals.

And, you know, how good it is we are reminded of this.

- for, as Jude knows so well, how often don’t we forget & disregard God when our faith is severely challenged & attacked by Satan & sin.
 - & we are tempted to go along with those who indulge in evil & error, so that we easily forget Lord’s Word that says we will be destroyed.
 - especially as they come to us attractively packaged.

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So then, **Jude's** call to remember the past is **1st** of all a word of **WARNING**.

- that if we don't really & earnestly fight for the faith; constantly preserve & proclaim & pass it on,--
 - but are forsaking the faith & compromising Lord's truths,--
- then we are forgetting what happened in past history.
 - & we will surely receive the same divine punishment as Israel, the Angels, & Sodom did.

But too, he warns us to be careful we don't ever think, because we are such privileged people of God, we won't fall or be punished.

- for remember those coming into the Church didn't think they were enemies of Lord.
- those in Jude's day just thought they were advanced in their thinking & living.
 - they were better than ordinary Christians.
 - they were spiritually elite & more culturally advanced in their doctrine & deeds.

Th'fore, **Jude** chooses these examples from history to make it perfectly clear & to warn us, even if a person has received great privileges from the Lord,--

- we just can't sit back content & complacent.
- but we must always be on guard against unbelief & sinful behavior.
 - or else we too can fall away into destruction.

But notice too, in the **2nd** place, the call to remember the past is also a word of **COMFORT & ENCOURAGEMENT** in our fight for the faith.

- for, when we keep on remembering how in the past God punished faith-forsakers, that surely assures us He will do the same today.
- & so we are encouraged & empowered to continue to contend for the faith, & we don't have to fear no matter how severe the opposition & persecution.
 - for we know their doom is sure as we see with Israel, the angels, & Sodom.
 - & we know God's Word & kingdom will stand forever.
- Luther's mighty, reformation hymn says it so well: "Though this world with devils fill should threatened to undo us; we will not fear, for God has willed His truth to triumph through us."
 - "[So we have no fear for Satan's grim rage], for lo!, his doom is sure; 1 little word shall fell him.
 - "[We can contend for the faith], for God's truth abideth still, His kingdom is forever!"

Well then, the **1st** example **Jude** calls us to remember is **Israel**.

- those whom God, he says, "delivered out of Egypt, but later He destroyed those who did not believe."
- in other words, he is saying: "You know the story: how Israel was God's chosen, called people.
 - "In His marvelous, mighty mercy with many miracles brought them out of terrible slavery.
 - "And brought them safely across many miles through sea & sand to the Promise Land to make them into a great nation as His privilege people."

You see, no greater act of deliverance & demonstration of God's providential care & loving concern & keeping can be seen.

- & all Lord wanted in return for such a great salvation by grace alone was Israel's grateful, total trust.
- & their total obedience & love & loyalty.

But you know what happened according to **Scriptures**.

- in spite of all God had so graciously done for them, they forsook Him.
- barely out of Egypt & with their feet still muddy from walking through the Red Sea they began to grumble & complain about food & water & leadership.
- & with Moses up on Mt. Sinai receiving the law from Lord, they turned to idols.

Then finally, as Num.13&14 tells the story, perched on the border of the **Promise Land**, ready to go in to possess that special land Lord prepared & would fight to get it for them,--

- when they heard the depressing report of most of the spies about giants in the land, they shook in their sandals in fear.
- & they refused to go in so that they rejected Lord's land.

They turned from God with a clear act of disobedience & a complete lack of faith, for they didn't trust Him.

- they forsook Him who brought them marvelously so far, saved them from Egypt, parted the Red Sea, drowned Pharaoh & his army, fed them manna from heaven, & water from a rock.
- they ran out on Lord who could surely make them winners in the battle against any fortified city or huge giant, & give them the land.

And the irony of it all is that, as **Israel** backed away in lack of faith & in fear & disobedience, their enemies in **Canaan** trembled.

- their knees knocked because they believed God would defeat them!
- but Israel griped & wanted to high tail it back to Egypt or die in the desert!

Well, that was the last straw—Lord had had it with them!

- th'fore He came to Israel with His judgment & punishment for their unbelief & sin.
- & He told them they were to wander in the wilderness for 40 years until all the adult members had died.
 - none would enter the Promise Land.

And so **Jude** says: "Remember Israel."

- "Look what happens to all who forsake God: they will be punished & destroyed like them."
- Heb.3 says we must not be like those who were freed & at the borders of Palestine.
 - yet they died in the desert because they didn't listen to Lord.

But note too: **Jude** reminds us of this event as a warning to be careful we don't think just because we may be enjoying God's provisions doesn't mean we can't fall.

- for IICor.10 also says we must remember Israel was Lord's OT. Church in the wilderness.
- they were all enjoying His providential, loving favor & care as He led them to the Promise Land.

Yet despite it all, they were unfaithful to God & served idols & themselves.

- they lived in immorality & tested Lord.
- th'fore He wasn't pleased with them so He barred them from Canaan.

Now, **Paul** adds, like **Jude** does, remember these things for they were written to warn us.

- to be careful not to think we will stand just because of our privileged position with God.
 - or else we are going to fall.
- you see, we must never be so self-confident that just because we are members of a church, born into a Christian family, baptized, worship on Sunday, attend Bible studies, partake of the Lord's Supper, know Bible from cover to cover,--
 - that then we are automatically safe from ever falling into sin & from being punished by God.
 - to think that is pride of thinking we can of ourselves keep from sin & live right with Lord.

And so **Heb.3** also says: "See to it that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from God."

- yes, remember Israel! Live close to Christ in faith & trust & obedience!
- strive constantly to always love & live His Word & will to be saved & secure from sin!
 - lest divine punishment comes as it did to Israel.

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II. THE EXAMPLE OF ANGELS (vs.6)

Now the **2nd example Jude** calls us to remember to warn us of God's punishment for rebellion against Him is **THE FALL OF ANGELS.**

- he says in vs.6: "[Remember] the angels who didn't keep their position of authority, but abandoned [it]-- these [Lord keeps] in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day."

Well, this a difficult **passage** so there are many views that try to understand it.

- that's because **Bible** doesn't tell us very much about angels, especially the fall of some.
- **1 view** is **Jude** is referring to **Gen.6** that says: "The Sons of God (which this view claims are angels) had sexual relationships with the daughters of men & produced mighty giants—half human & half demons."

Now that could be true for it fits **Jude's** statement about angels forsaking their God-given place & position.

- & it would seem to be consistent with the opening phrases of vs. 7 that say in a similar way **Sodom & Gomorrah** sinned.
- th'fore like **Sodom & Gomorrah's** immoral, homosexual relationships, so too the angels sinned immorally with unnatural relationship with human beings.

But, **2nd**, there is a better **view** of what **Scriptures** mean here in **Jude.**

- that's because **Bible** says angels have no physical bodies.
 - they then can't reproduce, & Jesus also said they don't marry.
- so the fall of angels into sin was more likely due to pride, not lust.

You see, **II Peter & Jude** & elsewhere in **Scripture** we are taught God 1st created angels good.

- & He gave them different ranks & rules & titles with great authority & power.
- & **Isaiah 14** seems to say the highest ranked angel, 2nd only to God, was **Lucifer or the Angel of Light.**

But then, sometime after creation & before the fall of man, some angels sinned.

- there was war in heaven when a group of angels under Lucifer or Satan rebelled against Lord.
- & they were cast out.

In other words, Satan & some of the angels sinned in pride & selfishness.

- though he was 2nd only to God, he, along with those angels, didn't want the position God gave them.
 - they were dissatisfied being under Him.
- they wanted a higher & a more privileged place: they wanted to be equal to God Himself.
 - th'fore they staged a rebellion in heaven.

Now, no matter what view you want to take, the teaching is still the same & very clear.

- it is a warning again of what happens when you forsake Lord whether in pride or lust.
 - that, even though they were angels in heaven, they still sinned & were punished.
- God has now put them in the darkness of eternal chains until the judgment day.

And that means the fallen angels' situation & condition are irreversible & unchangeable.

- now they are living in the spiritual darkness of sin & death as eternal slaves of evil & error.
 - they are miserable separated from Lord's love & life & joy forever.
- & their doom is sealed, for they are eternally chained until the judgment so they will never escape.
 - they will never be saved.
 - & at the final judgment God will cast them into hell to be eternally punished.

So **Jude** says: "Remember the fallen angels!"

- because they turned from God’s Word & will in pride & lust, their eternal destination is sealed.
- th’fore, be warned: that to turn from Lord is a serious matter.
 - so serious even the angels with the highest, privileged position were punished for their turning away from Lord.

And if that is true, so that pride & lust brought them ruin, then surely anybody else who forsakes the faith,--

- even those in the Church who claim superior knowledge & a better way to live than what is revealed in Bible, will also be punished & destroyed.
- for pride (to know better than God) & lust (desiring forbidden things) are always a way to ruin.

Th’fore, **Christians**, remember the angels!

- don’t think for a moment having a high position & being privileged as the Church is an automatic safe guard against sin & divine punishment so we can live as we please.
 - be at ease & complacent & we don’t have to contend for the faith.
- if we think that, we will fall & be punished just like Israel & the fallen angels.

But to remember the angels also has a comfort for us because we are told here in **Jude** they are presently bound.

- that means, though the devil & demons are still a terrible foe that can severely hurt the Church & bring people to destruction,--
 - yet they are a defeated enemy because of Jesus’ death & resurrection so that they are under His control, unable to totally defeat & destroy the Church & those of us in Him.
- that’s our wonderful comfort & source of confidence & courage as Christ’s people, as we fight for Lord against these tremendous, powerful, physical, spiritual enemies.

III. THE EXAMPLE OF SODOM (vs.7)

Jude’s 3rd example to warn about the definite destruction of apostasy is to remember **Sodom & Gomorrah**.

- vs.7 says: “In a similar way Sodom & Gomorrah & surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality & perversion. They serve as examples of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.”

Now you will remember these 2 cities were located in the **Valley of Salt** at the end of the **Dead Sea**.

- Gen.15 says this valley was rich & fertile so that these towns had plenty & prospered.
- & Ex.16 says, as a result they became proud & selfish.

But too, **Bible** says they were very wicked with unnatural, perverted sexual relationships.

- it actually says: “They went after other flesh.”
- you see, that’s what happens when you forsake God & His Word, according to Rom.1.
 - it says there, when people reject Lord, they end up “exchang[ing] natural relationships for unnatural ones & men also abandoned natural relationships with women & were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men.”
- & the results are seen in that Sodom & Gomorrah were divinely punished & destroyed for their perversion.

And so today we are told the place of **Sodom & Gomorrah** is a burned out region of scorched, barren earth where underneath there still smolders the fires of destruction.

- it is also a region of salt water, oil, asphalt, & sulphur where nothing grows.
- we are also told sulphur & salt are scattered everywhere.
 - evidence of a tremendous explosion that caused burning sulphur & salt, oil & asphalt to shoot into the air & come down as fiery rain on the whole area.
 - & it destroyed everything.

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No doubt that was God's doing in dealing wicked **Sodom & Gomorrah**.

- as Gen.19 says, dense smoke rose from the land like smoke from a furnace.
 - & the cities were completely destroyed.
- it was Lord's awful & awesome punishment on those twin cities for their great wickedness.

Now **Jude** says this is a visible & vivid evidence that God doesn't tolerate the sins of unbelief & filthy living in any form whatsoever.

- like Sodom & Gomorrah, He will surely & severely punish those who live only according to their own passions as they please.
- & He will punish sin now, as well as forever with an eternal hell.
 - a hell that is as real & horrible as His purifying fire on those twin cities.
- as a matter of fact Jesus said those who hear & know God's truths,--
 - but turn away & trample Him & His saving blood, their punishment will be worst than Sodom's.

Th'fore we must remember these 2 cities who sinned so grossly that Lord punished them.

- for they serve as a warning sign of His eternal punishment for all evil & error.
- & they call us to be faithful to God in believing & obeying His Word & will only.

But to remember **Sodom & Gomorrah** also calls us to remember **Lot** & sin's punishment.

- for remember how he chose to live away from Abraham & God's people near Sodom because he saw it was a rich, enticing, pleasing land.
 - & so he pitched his tent next to that city & its sin.
- but finally Bible says he ended up living in that city as a well-known citizen.

You see, that's the way sin always works.

- 1st you just want to look, for surely it won't hurt to look, & it is rather nice & pleasing to do so, right?
- then you try to see how close you dare to get to sin without sinning.
- & finally, sooner or later, you end up in sin itself.

That's what happens when we don't want to stay close to God & His Word & His people.

- we just can't live the Christian faith & life by ourselves, close to sin—like Lot couldn't.
- he ended up in the city of sinners where His Christian faith & life were ineffective.
 - & he lost his wife; his daughters took on the immorality of the people, for later on, Bible says, they committed incest with their father.
 - & Lot ended up in a cave with nothing but sin & misery.
 - all because he turned & lived away from Lord.

But **Abraham** chose to stay close to God in faith & obedience.

- & he received abundant blessings or gifts from Lord.
- so we must remember Lot & keep away from sin, as far away as we possibly can.

Well, to remember **Sodom** means to also remember **Lot's wife** as a warning against turning our backs to God.

- you see, Lot's wife was delivered from divine destruction, but her heart still remained in Sodom.
- th'fore, she disobeyed God's Word & turned for 1 last, longing look to the city she really loved.
 - & she turned into a pillar of salt.

And God's punishment came suddenly & swiftly on her for not believing & obeying Him.

- for Heb.10 says, if we shrink back, Lord will not be pleased & He will destroy us.
- so remember Lot's wife & never turn from the faith, but remain loyal to Lord!

CONCLUSION

Well, Jude says: “Remember Israel, the Angels, & Sodom & Gomorrah—their sins & destruction!”

- for God’s attitude & actions against apostasy hasn’t change 1 iota.
- He is no more tolerant today than He was way back then in OT. history.
- He will surely & severely punish, in time & eternity, all who forsake the faith as He did in times past.

Th’fore be warned!

- remain faithful to Lord, & fight for the faith once given to us His people!
- keep close to God—in His Word & doing His will, associating with His people, walking His ways!

And, if we know the truth, but haven’t really committed ourselves totally & truly to it so that we aren’t really loving & living it,--

- then don’t delay or neglect so great a salvation!
- for Bible says it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God!

But too, remember the past so that we are assured that wickedness & wrong, sin & Satan can’t & won’t ever win!

- but we will, for be assured from Jude we are chosen, called & loved by God, & kept by Jesus Christ.
 - so we possess His mercy & peace & love in infinite abundance.
- so we can fight for the faith at all costs, & we will win now & forever.

AMEN