



**JUDE: “The Acts of the Apostates”**  
**Week 9: “Past Examples of Apostasy, Part 3”**  
**July 21, 2024**  
**Instructor: Steve Schmutzer**

**Review:**

- A. Today is our third lesson where we will be looking at past Biblical examples of apostasy.
  - 1. Remember: Jude’s overarching intention in this book is to emphasize to his readers that false teachers will not escape judgment.
- B. To accomplish this, Jude has provided some historical examples that are lifted from the Old Testament, and he reminds his readers in **vs. 5** that they “already know these things.”
- C. In **Jude 6**, we saw that Jude singled out a subset of fallen angels as one of these past examples. Jude called them out for two things:
  - 1. For not keeping their positions of authority
  - 2. For abandoning their own home or residence
- D. We learned that God has established divine boundaries, rules, and responsibilities based upon His perfect order and plan.
- E. The fallen angels knew this, and even in their fallen nature, they were expected to abide by certain protocols of their created nature.
- F. The Old Testament account of **Genesis 6:1-4** shows what went wrong:
  - 1. The fallen angels breached the laws of God’s creation and His design by blending their angelic nature with humanity’s nature.
  - 2. They had sexual relations with human women and birthed a hybrid entity known as the Nephilim, or the giants.
  - 3. They deliberately went against the intentions and the design of a Holy God.
  - 4. God punished them by imprisoning them – and they are still imprisoned and awaiting future judgment.
- I. **Jude 7** begins with a cryptic phrase, “*In a similar way.*” (NOTE: Today’s lesson will be the first of two on this verse, and, I need to confess up front, it is “rated PG-17”)
  - A. **Let’s read Jude 7: “In a similar way....”**  
**NOTE: We have several premises here that we need to put properly into place. There is a foundation we need to lay.**
    - 1. **First, vs. 7 here, and vs. 6 just before it, are clearly connected or related in some way**
      - a. Something in the story that is the backdrop of **Jude 7** is similar to something in the story that is the backdrop of **Jude 6**.
      - b. We are going to find, as we work our way further into The Book of **Jude**, that there are further relationships or connections between **vss. 5-7** and those verses beyond these. We’ll get to those in due time.

- c. Now, other translations say in the opening phrase of **vs. 7**: “*Just as,*” “*Even as,*” “*In the same way,*” “*Likewise,*” etc. These are all ways of connecting the events and the lessons of **vs. 6** with the events and lessons of **vs. 7**.
- d. We cannot read too much into the verse breaks, where the breaks occur, or what that might mean:
  - Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, put the chapter divisions of the Bible into place in A.D. 1227.
  - The Wycliffe English Bible of 1382 was the first Bible to use this chapter pattern.
  - Later, the Old Testament was divided into verses by Nathan, a Jewish rabbi, in A.D. 1448
  - Robert Estienne was the first to subsequently divide the New Testament into verses, in 1555.
  - **The larger point is the Scriptures were written as one constant flow.** Therefore, there is a direct relationship between the content of **vs. 6** and the content of **vs. 7**. That is underscored by the phrase, “*In a similar way.*”

**2. If the two verses are assumed to NOT BE related, then any proper interpretation would be challenging.**

- For anyone who is NOT convinced of the conclusions we arrived at in the story behind **Jude 6**, it will be very difficult to find anything ‘similar’ or ‘likewise’ between **Jude 6** and **Jude 7**.
- Remember, three proper rules of interpretation need to be maintained at all times. These rules cannot be overstated, and so I will state them once more:
  - **Passages MUST be understood in light of their original Biblical meaning**, i.e. language, eastern-centric approach, etc.
  - **Passages MUST be in harmony with other passages on the same subject.** The Bible does not contradict itself: one passage in one place confirms another passage in another place, etc.
  - **Passages MUST be in compliance with the development of the context.** No passage is ‘an island unto itself;’ it is subject to the greater portion of scripture and intentions around it.
- Proper interpretation of Scripture should accommodate all these guidelines at the same time. Said another way, no accurate interpretation violates any of them.
  - **Illustration:** Like the three legs of a stool, if one leg is compromised, you have an unreliable situation.
  - As one would not be wise to depend on a stool with one leg missing, so one is also unwise to accept any declared position that diminishes any of these three essential standards of interpretation.

3. **So here, Jude makes a natural assumption:** He assumes the reader has fully-accepted the premises and the facts of the story behind **vs. 6**:
- That those fallen angels in **vs. 6** left their proper post and position.
  - That those fallen angels disregarded divine boundaries and responsibilities.
  - That those fallen angels are an example of God's judgment against personal pride, against violating God's laws and boundaries, and against unnatural lust and sexual perversion.
  - NOTE: These same elements will rear their ugly heads again in the story that is the backdrop behind **Jude 7**.

NOTE: It's here that I need to read **Genesis 19:1-13** to give the Old Testament history behind what we are reading in **Jude 7**. Again, this is a difficult and delicate passage to get through.

**B. (That's the uncomfortable backdrop. This now brings us to the next part of vs. 7) "In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah."** NOTE: Here is where we need to keep in mind that lengthy **Genesis** passage I just read.

1. **There is no Sodom and Gomorrah today. Both are gone, though other ancient cities are still in one form or another in Israel today.**

- The names Sodom and Gomorrah have become descriptive bywords in our modern society.
  - An especially wicked place is sometimes described as a "Sodom and Gomorrah." This is true even of Jerusalem in the prophecy of **Revelation 11:8**.
  - Pastors are sometimes said to be preaching "fire and brimstone" (though not much anymore...)
  - And we gained the word 'sodomy' from this Old Testament story.
- Sodom and Gomorrah make an early appearance in the Bible (**Cf. Gen. 13:10-13**).
  - Abram, and his nephew Lot, had been traveling together, but their total group had gotten too big, "...so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together..." (**Cf. Genesis 13:6**).
  - They decided to separate into two different groups. Lot chose to settle near the town of Sodom. The region of Sodom used to be a lush and fertile area – today it is a barren wasteland.
  - This was probably in the region south of the Dead Sea (NOTE: Bible says Lot and his daughters lived in a cave in the mountains near Zoar (**Cf. Gen. 19:30**). This is an area on the SE shore of where the Dead Sea is today).

2. **Sodom, at this time, was noted already to be a place of great "wickedness."**

- The city was "...sinning greatly against the Lord." This is the description given to Sodom in **Genesis 13:13**.

- (NOTE: These were not just ordinary sinners. Somehow they had a 'greater' sin, or of 'greater dimension and consequence' than just simple everyday sins...).
- Here are some other insights concerning the nature of Sodom and Gomorrah's sin (I want you to think about the moral climate and conditions of the USA as we go through this list...)
  - Homosexuality was in widespread practice – involving most, if not all of the population (**Cf. Genesis 19:4-5**).
  - IMPORTANT: The Biblical account makes it clear this widespread practice of homosexuality was characterized by defiance, by social acceptance, and by a rage against moral standards and 'norms.'
  - There were violent attitudes towards anyone taking issue with their choices and wishes.
  - In other words, this sin of homosexuality was uniquely THEN as it is NOW: invasive, violent, intolerant, hateful, and demanding.
  - The Bible also says in **Ezekiel 16:49** that Sodom was guilty of sinful **pride and selfishness**. The people had an abundance of food and wealth, but they would not take care of the poor and needy.
  - According to **Isaiah 3:9**, the inhabitants of Sodom were arrogant about their sin, having no problems with being known by their practices, and their attitudes and postures reflected this callous posture.
  - They did not hide their sin (see same passage in **Isaiah**) and they had no shame about their condition.
  - NOTE: All of this suggests they knew what they were doing was wrong, however, they did not care about that, and they supported the same choices in each other (**Romans 1:32**)

*“Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.”*

**NOTE: No doubt, this sounds EXACTLY like the situation we have in our nation today. Here are some high-altitude lessons we can already extract from the story of Sodom and Gomorrah.**

**C. First, God WILL judge those who reject Him.**

1. Several time in the Bible the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are given as examples of God’s judgment on those who reject Him and rebel against His Lordship (**Cf. Luke 10:12, 17:29; 2 Peter 2:6; Jude 1:7**).
2. God allowed the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah to continue until it was clear TO ALL that they were a sinful people, who relished in sin, and who chose to persist in it.
3. God’s mercy is long-suffering, but there will be a day of judgment.

- D. **Second, Jesus told His disciples in *Matthew 10:15; 11:23-24* that the future Day of Judgment will be worse for the people who rejected His message than it was for Sodom and Gomorrah**
1. As bad as the sins of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were, the Bible says that those who know the full story of God's plan and provision for salvation – and yet reject it – will be held more accountable.
  2. We know that Jesus came and died on a cross for our sins. We know we can be forgiven and receive eternal life. Also, we know Jesus warned that the penalty for rejecting this grace will be severe.
- E. **Third, by every account, it appeared that Lot had allowed himself to be influenced by the inhabitants of Sodom more than he influenced them.**
1. As Christians, we must take care, as we attempt to influence our world for Christ, that we do not allow the temptations of the world to corrupt us instead.
  2. **1 Corinthians 15:33** says this quite simply: *“Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.”* (Or as I say, “You cannot run around with skunks without smelling like one”).
  3. This is a profound warning for churches who ‘want to be attractive to the lost.’ That is NOT the calling of the church. (NOTE: I drive by 3 churches on my way here every Sunday that have a rainbow emblem on their sign or a phrase like, “All means ALL!”)
  4. There is no basis in the Scripture for this unwise approach of compromising with the world. Being right with the world is being wrong with God.
  5. Churches and believers that adopt this strategy inevitably dull the effectiveness of what they're called to be.
- F. **Fourth, Lot had been slow to speak up for God, if he spoke up for Him at all. When he finally did speak up, no one took him seriously (Cf. *Genesis 19:9, 14.*)**
1. Here's the bottom line: when we publicly and routinely compromise our beliefs, it becomes much more difficult to be taken seriously when we do stand our ground later.
  2. If our walk does not match our talk, we are labeled hypocrites...and rightly so.
- G. **Fifth, Lot knew early on that Sodom was a sinful city, but he failed to heed the signs.**
1. The Bible tells us that, even though Lot was aware of their sin, he remained among them. (Cf. **2 Peter 2:8**): *“...for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard”*
  2. He did not heed his conscience, but rather he suppressed it.
  3. In fact, the Bible indicates that Lot was drawn ever closer to the city as time went on.

**NOTE:** I want to begin winding down this lesson with some personal applications for each of us:

II. **A VERY SOBERING TRUTH HERE: Great judgment comes on a population when the righteous who are within it are ineffective (consider Lot's example to us)**

NOTE: I want to illustrate a process here, an unfolding of developments in Lot's life that we would all be wise to pay special attention to!

A. **Lot knew Sodom was a depraved place.**

1. However, Lot's choices showed he was not sufficiently alert – or he did not care enough.
2. He was MORE influenced by the culture and depravity than he influenced IT.
3. He was drawn ever closer to the city as time went by, and in so doing, he became less of an example of righteousness. This was a gradual process.

B. **There are four clear steps towards this sort of ineffectiveness, and these things apply to you and I today, right here, and right now! These four things begin with the letter "I":**

1. **(1<sup>st</sup>) Influence** - First, Lot let himself be near a center of wickedness when he *"pitched his tent toward Sodom"* (**Cf. Genesis 13:12**) –
  - a. The first step towards personal ineffectiveness is influence. This is the result of a choice Lot made, and it's the result of choices we make.
  - b. This happens when we become comfortable with the proximity and impact of sin. This is when we tolerate it and make excuses for it.
  - c. 'Influence' of this sort becomes evident in our lives when the presence and exercise of sin no longer causes us to be concerned or to withdraw from it.
  - d. When we have become 'influenced' by sin, even if we are not direct practitioners of that particular sin, we have entered into the first stage of ineffectiveness.
2. **(2<sup>nd</sup>) Inclusion** - Even though Lot fully understood and comprehended Sodom's depraved condition, he permitted himself to be included with them.
  - a. We read he after that he was *"...living in Sodom"* (**Cf. Gen. 14:12**),
  - b. He went from being NEAR Sodom, to being IN Sodom.
  - c. Influence, the first step, gave way to the inclusion, the next step. This was a choice on his part.
  - d. Here's an important point to make: Sodom had not changed, but Lot had! Sodom stayed, but Lot moved.
  - e. Even though he was aware of their sin and distressed by it, he remained among them (**recall what 2 Peter 2:8 said**).
  - f. Lot was 'familiar' with them, and they were 'familiar' to him. This was a bad development.
  - g. The inhabitants of Sodom saw this transition of Lot for themselves (**remember what we read in Genesis 19:9**)

3. **(3<sup>rd</sup>) Identity.** Lot identified with their rules and their system (*Cf. Genesis 19:1* He participated in their regulatory processes and judicial system; he “sat in the gate”)
  - a. If we dabble with sin a little at a time, we are slowly boiled like a frog in rising hot water, not seeing what is happening to us in that process.
  - b. Lot eventually found himself prominent in the city, but he had no real influence.
  - c. That’s like many of us. We can become prominent by the world’s standards, but we can still be ineffective by God’s standards.
  - d. When we have gained this 3<sup>rd</sup> stage of ‘identity,’ we are fully involved with the world and its values, but we have lost the capacity to be ‘salt and light.’
  
4. **(4<sup>th</sup>) Ignored** – Lastly, Lot was not taken seriously. He was ignored.
  - a. When Lot finally spoke up, nobody listened to what he had to say (*Cf. Genesis 19:9* – this was not only true with the city’s inhabitants, but in *verse 14*, we read it was also true with his own family.
  - b. Lot had lost his ability to be a good example to those around him, and this tragedy was a gradual process.
  - c. Many churches and believers are in this same position today. They are largely ignored for the very same processes that characterized Lot’s life.
  - d. The safest way to avoid sin is to stay far from its tempting influence. When sin rears its head, we need to promptly remove ourselves from it.
  - e. Like Joseph who fled the adulterous intentions of Potiphar’s wife, we need to turn and flee from the temptations of sin.

## Conclusion

The Biblical record of Sodom and Gomorrah is one of the darkest stories in the Bible. It is a glaring example of sin’s power and pull. The story gives us a glimpse of how far sinful humanity will go when they reject God and indulge in evil rebellion against Him.

However, in this story we also see the mercy and grace of God in that He made a way of escape for those who trusted in the offer of salvation from the coming judgment. We will look at this issue two weeks from today as we conclude our study of *Jude verse 7*.