Brief Review of vv.1-4

Jude’s original intent was to write the believers about their basic salvation but something happened which made him change the purpose in writing the letter to one of encouraging his readers to contend earnestly for the faith. In other words, they are to work strenuously as in an athletic competition to hold on to the truth that has been passed down to them from Jesus Christ through the teachings of the apostles.

The reason why Jude writes with such speed ('diligence, urgency') is because certain false teachers have slipped into the church using stealth. They come in a 'round about' manner, from the side door so they are harder to spot. Jude tells us that these men have three characteristics which condemn them:

First, they are Godless. This means they are irreverent and have no fear or respect for God.

Second, they “change the grace of God into a license for immorality.” This is antinomianism, the belief that Christians are not bound by the moral law (condemned in Rom. 6:1-2 and Gal. 5:13).

Third, the false teachers “deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.” Literally, the Greek says, “They deny both the only Sovereign and also our Lord.”

In vv.5-7 Jude gives three powerful and graphic reminders of unbelief and ungodliness that were judged by God in the past: (1) the experience of Israel, (2) the experience of rebellious angels and (3) the experience of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Verses 5 ➢ THE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR UNBELIEF

[5 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. (NKJ)]

Jude begins in v.5 by recalling an extremely memorable example from Israel’s history: their miraculous deliverance from the powerful Egyptian nation. He is basically saying, “Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt.” This is of course a reminder of the demonstration of God’s awesome power in saving Israel through the parting of the Red Sea and the destruction of Pharaoh’s pursuing army via that same body of water. Refer to Ex. 14:26-31.

However, despite God’s miraculous deliverance, God “later destroyed those who did not believe.”

The children of Israel were on the verge of entering the Promised Land, yet they did not believe that God was able to conquer the land ahead of them (Num. 13:26-33). Consequently, they murmured and complained (see especially Num. 14:1-4) causing God to become extremely upset (Num. 14:11.). Because of their unbelief, the entire generation of Israel except for the faithful Joshua and Caleb are condemned and never get to enjoy the Promised Land (Num. 14:34-38).

The message from this historic incident is clear: God’s continual blessing depends on continual faithfulness. Applying this to the false teachers to which Jude refers makes it clear that their willful abandonment of God will be judged severely

Yet, despite this miraculous deliverance, God “later destroyed those who did not believe.” In other words, it is impossible to escape the consequences of turning one’s back on God. The children of Israel were on the verge of entering the Promised Land, yet they did not believe that God was able to conquer the land ahead of them [Num. 13:26-33]:

**Jude 1:5-7**
Now they departed and came back to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. Then they told him, and said: "We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. "Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan." Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it." But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. "There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

As a result of the fear of the Israelites, they refused to believe God and therefore they murmured and complained (see especially Num. 14:1-4):

So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! "Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."

This greatly upsets God (Num. 14:11).

Then the LORD said to Moses: "How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them? I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."

As a consequence of their unbelief, the entire generation of Israel except for the faithful Joshua and Caleb are condemned and never get to enjoy the land of milk and honey that had been promised to them (Num. 14:34-38):

"According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. I the LORD have spoken this; I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die." And the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land, those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the LORD. But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive, of the men who went to spy out the land.

The writer of Hebrews also uses this tragic episode in the history of Israel to warn Christians from making the same mistake of unbelief in Heb. 3:7-19.

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.' "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." For
who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now
with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in
the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those
who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Jude’s example of the judgment of Israel makes it clear that the false teachers who have slipped
into the congregation are apostate individuals who have willfully strayed from the truth. Their
distinctive characteristics and ‘modus operandi’ are described in vv.10, 16-19.

The message is clear: GOD’S CONTINUAL BLESSING DEPENDS ON CONTINUAL OBEDIENCE AND
CONTINUAL TRUST IN GOD.

QUESTIONS

1. What is apostasy? Does apostasy mean that a genuine Christian can lose his/her
   salvation?

2. Do you believe that a person calling themselves ‘Christian’ is necessarily a Christian?
   Why or why not?

3. How serious is the sin of unbelief? Do you think this is the only sin that God cannot

Verses 6 ➢ SOME ESPECIALLY REBELLIOUS ANGELS ARE RESTRAINED & RESERVED FOR
JUDGMENT

[6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has
reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day….. (NKJ)]

Like the Israelites, the angels too were a privileged class. They had a high position of authority,
yet sin and pride enticed many of them to rebel against God (Isa. 14:12-15). Certain angels were
expelled from heaven and sentenced to eternal damnation (Isa. 24:21-22; also Matt. 25:41 and

Jude’s reference in v.6 is actually a quotation from the Apocryphal Book of Enoch found in the
Ethiopian Orthodox Bible. 1 Enoch 12:4 speaks of angels that “have deserted the lofty sky and
their holy everlasting station.” These rebellious angels are to be chained until judgment day {1
Enoch 10:15-16}; probably because they are especially wicked and God is merciful to mankind.

But why were these angelic beings not satisfied with their ‘proper domain’ and ‘leave their own
abode’? The references in 1 Enoch elaborate on Gen. 6:1-4, stating that another cause of the fall
of some of these certain angels [Enoch calls them “Watchers of heaven”] was lust.

Verses 6

1 Derived from the Greek which means “those having been hidden away”. The general term is usually
   applied to the books that the Protestant Christian Church considered useful but not divinely inspired.
   (Note that Gnostic writings are not generally considered apocryphal but heretical). Apocryphal books
   are considered ‘non-canonical’ (i.e., non-verified, non-authoritative) whose texts are of uncertain authenticity
   or writings where the work is seriously questioned. Given that different denominations have different
   beliefs about what constitutes canonical scripture, there are several versions of the Apocrypha. For
   example, the Catholic Bible is the same as the Protestant except it includes the apocryphal books of
   Tobit, 1,2 Maccabees, Susanna, Song of the Three Children, Bel and the Dragon and 1,2 Esdras.

2 Daniel refers to them in Dan. 4:17; “This decision is by the decree of the watchers and the sentence by
   the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of
   men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men”. Apparently, ‘Watchers’ were a
   special division of angels.
Jude here is not necessarily giving tacit endorsement of the Book of Enoch, but he does combine the two ideas in verse 6 and it becomes clear that the angelic beings left their prescribed abode because of rebelliousness and lust. Rev. 12:3-4 may be a reference to what happened with the angels [“stars of heaven”] as part of Satan’s rebellion described in Isa. 14:12-14:

And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.....

The angelic beings, although a different creation of God, had desired sexual relations with mortal women3 {Gen. 6:1-4; ref. Job 1:6, 2:1}. The reference in Job to the sons of God implies angelic creatures and Genesis appears to be telling us that this illicit intercourse led to ‘giants (Heb.; ‘Ha-Napiliym’) in the land’. So something of a reproductive nature was going on.

And yet we are left to understand all this in light of what Jesus said about those who die and go to Heaven in Matt. 22:30:

"For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.”

QUESTIONS

4. Do Jude’s quotations from the Apocryphal Book of Enoch bother you? Why or why not?

5. How do Jude’s comments on the nature of rebellious angels (i.e., Watchers of heaven), the statements made in Gen. 6:1-4 and the description given in Job 1:6; 2:1 square with Jesus’ statement in Matt. 22:30?

Verses 7 ➤ SODOM & GOMORRAH EXAMPLES OF GOD’S VENGEANCE FOR SEXUAL IMMORALITY & PERVERSION

[7 …..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. (NKJ)]

Jude’s third warning reminds his readers of the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. Like some of the angels, the inhabitants of Sodom, Gomorrah and surrounding towns gave themselves over to sexual perversion. The Greek says literally, “going off after ‘strange/different/another4 kind of flesh”.

The angelic beings, although a different creation of God, had desired sexual relations with mortal women {Gen. 6:1-4; ref. Job 1:6, 2:1}. The converse was also true. The mortal men of Sodom and Gomorrah had desired to have sexual relations with angelic beings {Gen. 19:1, 5}. The men of Sodom and Gomorrah did not know that the visitors were angels, but their intended homosexuality Jude refers to as perversion. Perversion ultimately results from a rejection of God’s standards, that is, rebellion and unbelief—the only sin which God will not forgive!

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3 Although there is much controversy and interpretation surrounding this issue, it is clear from Job 1:6; 2:1 that the term "sons of God" [ben-Ha Elohiym] is referring to angelic creatures. Unless this term has multiple meanings, this understanding leads one to conclude that its usage in Gen. 19:1, 5 then refers to angelic intrusion into the sexual affairs of men and is self-consistent with Jude’s statement on this subject.

4 Gk. heteros = ‘another of the same kind’ (“strange,” KJV, NAS; “unnatural,” RSV.)
Thus, this then is the primary meaning of Jude (contrary to contemporary acceptance and promotion)—the sexual perversion of *homosexuality*. Paul describes explicitly what ‘strange flesh’ is in Rom. 1:18-32; esp. vv.24, 27.

The ungodly teachers to which Jude refers have become arrogant and totally perverted. They need to heed the warning of history. God will totally destroy wickedness and perversion. Jude clearly writes that the case of Sodom and Gomorrah serves/sets forth an example of those whom God will judge and will suffer the justice of the punishment of eternal fire.”

In Sodom & Gomorrah’s case it was swift and immediate fire and brimstone falling from the sky upon the cities—wiping them out. Ultimately however, this alludes to the *final justice* at the Great White Throne when God will eternally judge the unsaved and they will be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire, burning with brimstone described in Matt. 25:41, 46; Rev. 14:11; 20:10-15; 21:8.

**JUDE’S REFERENCES REMIND US THAT PRIVILEGE OR STATUS DOES NOT GUARANTEE SALVATION:**

- The people of Israel were God’s chosen people.
- Angels are a heavenly creation of God and have a special calling from God.
- Sodom and Gomorrah were cities located in the Promised Land.

Yet, all were judged because of their disobedience and unbelief.

The message is loud & clear; God will eventually judge false teachers and they will not escape God’s divine justice and they will eventually be severely punished.

**QUESTIONS**

6. Is Jude’s warning against false teachers compelling? Why or why not?

7. Based on Jude’s reminders, how serious do you consider God is about judging sin, immorality and rebellion?