

The Apostates – Their Past Judgements

Jude 1:5-7

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Let's look at Jude, verse 3. We're going to get a running start. The purpose to the book of Jude is found in verse 3. Jude says, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation,," but then I determined, "it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should," here it is, "earnestly contend for the faith which was once," and for all, "delivered unto the saints."

The book of Jude is a call to contend. He's probably drawing from the Greek athletic games, maybe the wrestling match. They actually boxed in the Greek athletic games. Boxing goes all the way back to ancient Greece. He's telling us to put on the boxing gloves and to contend for the faith. If you don't get verse 3, you won't get the whole book of Jude. He is writing to warn them about false teachers known as apostates. I'll explain, again, as I did last week, what apostasy is. He's warning them to contend—to stand strong, to fight—and he uses the words "the faith." This is not your individual, personal, subjective faith in God, but the body of truth that Christians hold as orthodox Christianity.

We went over all of that last week in some depth, that the Bible is the inerrant, infallible, inspired Word of God; there's one God manifested in three Persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit; that God the Father sent God the Son into the world through the womb of the virgin Mary, and that He took on flesh, became Man while maintaining His full deity—real deity, real humanity without sinfulness—and lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary death on the cross, voluntarily, substitutionarily to pay for the sins of the world, was buried, and three days later rose from the dead—Up from the grave He arose, With a mighty triumph o'er His foes, amen? He arose a Victor from the dark domain, And He lives forever, With His saints to reign. Hallelujah! Christ arose! By the way, some of you don't know that I just quoted a hymn there. You thought, John's a poet, and you don't know it. I'm just quoting a hymn. What a glorious hymn that is! That's the gospel. That's what we contend for—the truth of God's Word which cannot be compromised.

The enemy is mentioned then, in verse 4. We covered this last week. We did not go into verse 4, we'll go into it a little bit tonight. Our text is verses 5-7. The reason why we must, "...earnestly contend," is given for us in verse 4. Look at it with me. He says, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." As I said, this is the reason why, verse 3, "that ye should earnestly contend," that is, he describes the apostates and who they are.

I want to look at that for just a moment before we actually even get to our text because we stopped short of it last week. I want you to know that Jude wastes no time identifying who the enemy is that we are contending with. I want you to note four things. First, they were deceitful. Look at the phrase in verse 4, they "...crept in unawares." Apostates don't announce, "I'm an

apostate.” They don’t say, “I don’t believe the Bible is the Word of God, I don’t believe in the Trinity, I don’t believe in miracles, I don’t believe in the virgin birth, but I’m your pastor, welcome to our church.” They don’t publicly just announce that. Jesus said they are wolves in sheep’s clothing. It’s kind of, “Grandma, what big teeth you have!” They come “in unawares,” they come in secretly. They come from some of our seminaries, from some of our mainline denominations, and they’re in the pulpits of our churches. They come in secretly. It’s “...unawares.”

The words “crept in unawares,” literally could be rendered have settled down alongside. They have permeated. I wish I could exhaust the subject, but we’re covering it over several weeks. I wish there was some way to convey what I’m just feeling deep in my heart and my spirit about the dangers and issues that are going on in Christendom or in the church today, the dangers of false teachers and apostates and the fact that a lot of times because Christians are undiscerning, that unaware to them, they’re following false teachers and false apostles and false prophets, so we need to be Bereans—we need to search the Scriptures to see whether these things be so.

Anytime you listen to a preacher preach, including me, you should always have your Bible open, always be reading beyond the text, up to the text, and pass by the text. You should also take notes and examine whether what he’s saying is orthodox Christianity and whether he’s taking a text out of context and it becomes a pretext. So often I hear sermons from a single text that are divorced from the text and they are no longer interpreting that text the way the author intended it to be interpreted. The goal of preaching is to find what’s called the authorial intent—what did Jude mean by what he said. First we look at what he said, then we look at what it means, then how it applies. You must take all Scripture into bear, put it in context.

One of the most important principles of Bible interpretation is context, context, context, context and understanding the historical background, the setting for why Jude wrote Jude, and who he was writing it to, who was he writing it about. Always take a text in context. But the sad thing is that these guys come in unannounced, they come in deceitfully. They are “...tares among the wheat.” In Acts 20, when Paul met with the elders from the city of Ephesus, meeting with a group of pastors, he said, “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you...Also of your own selves shall men arise,” so they come from the outside and they arise from the inside, “speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them,” so be on the alert, “Therefore watch,” be on the lookout. It so very, very important.

In 2 Peter 2:1, and remember the book of Hebrews warns as well against apostasy and falling away from God, Peter says, “...there shall be false teachers among you, who...shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction,” and we’re going to see more of that in just a moment. These apostates, I want to point out if you just glance real quickly, we’re going to be there in about three weeks, verse 19, “These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit,” they are not saved. The classic definition of an apostate is someone that says they believe in Christianity, that they are a follower of Christ, but they have never ever been born again. They are “...tares among the wheat,” they are really wolves in sheep’s clothing. They’re not true believers. Peter

describes them again as a dog that goes back to its vomit and the pig that has been washed goes back to its wallowing in the mire, but I wanted you to notice, verse 19, that these men have "...not the Spirit."

Secondly, notice that they were ungodly. The Scripture says there, "...ungodly men." This is an interesting statement. They profess to know God, they look like they believe in God, but they're ungodly. They're religious yet ungodly. When we think of the word "ungodly," we think of really wretched, vile, wicked, openly sinful individuals, but the word "ungodly" simply means that they live as though God does not exist, they live without a fear or a reverence or respect for God. The phrase actually means that they have no reverential fear or awe of God. Actually, the opposite of being ungodly is what we call "the fear of the LORD" which "is the beginning of wisdom." The "fear of the LORD" is the foundation for your life to love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind. What it means is that you're not fearful of what He might do to you, but you're fearful of what you might do to Him.

When you were maybe young growing up you had loving parents that cared about you. If you rebelled against them or did something wrong and maybe caused them pain, it hurt you maybe more than it hurt them. I remember breaking my mom's heart one time with some of my behavior. It really just pained my heart to think that I'd disappointed my mom, or disappointed my parents, and that's what it means to fear God. It means that you love God so much that you don't want to do anything to grieve Him or to cause Him pain; certainly, we shouldn't want to grieve the Holy Spirit of God which is inside of us. The "fear of the LORD," is absent from thee.

The Scripture talks about in the last days, "...having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," there's no reality there. I can't think of anything more frightening then to have an unregenerated man as a pastor of a church, but it happens—someone supposedly preaching the Word of God but does not have a relationship with God. There's no reality there. They have "a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

In Isaiah 66:2, and I'm going to give you a lot of cross-references you ought to write down and look up, it says, "...and trembleth at my word," they are not trembling at God's Word. They're not ...poor and of a contrite spirit," and do not tremble at God's Word. They have no fear of the Lord. They have no respect for God's Word. They have no respect for God's authority. They're not submitted to the authority of Scripture. They kind of play 'fast and loose' with the Scripture because they have no fear of God and no commitment to the authority of the Scriptures.

Here's the third mark of these apostates, verse 4, they were enemies of God's grace. Notice it says, "...turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness." Lasciviousness is unbridled, uncontrolled immorality. It involves sexual sin and other cultural moral sins. They just let themselves go. They lived in lasciviousness as the Scripture says here. They were "...ungodly men," living in lasciviousness. They deny "the grace of our God," and they live in lasciviousness.

One of the very common marks of apostasy is sexual immorality. Not every professing minister or minister for that matter, there are true ministers that have fallen into moral sin and, of course,

that's condemned in the Scriptures as well, but not everyone who gets into sexual sin is an apostate, but a high percentage, and I don't have a percentage for you, it's pretty hard to calc, but you can do your own study if you want. Doctrine leads to how we live. Once you believe, eventually it will filter down in how you behave. If you don't have a fear of God, you have no submission to the authority of His Word, there will be no restraints and you're going to end up living in sexual immorality. As we're going to see tonight, God's judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah is a reminder of God judging sinful sexual behavior, so they bring into the church sexual immorality.

Many of our mainline denominations and other independent churches have wholeheartedly endorsed the homosexual lifestyle. We have churches that kind of celebrate LGBTQ lifestyles, and they celebrate that kind of behavior as, "God loves us and God won't judge us." If you've ever heard that spiel, tonight's text is so very clear—God will judge sin, any shape or form. You can't sow to the flesh without reaping corruption. He's going to remind us in our text of how God judged past sin, even in the Old Testament, but they bring in sexual immorality.

Notice they deny the grace of our God, "...turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness." "God is love, God is mercy, God won't judge us, it's okay to live this way, God loves all." They often teach and preach the universal fatherhood of God. That is not taught in the Bible. Jesus actually said to religious individuals in His day, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do," so they wouldn't even allow Jesus to preach in their churches today because He would condemn sexual immorality. Because they turned "the grace of our God into lasciviousness," the word "lasciviousness" is tied in with the word license. License gives you the privilege to do something, so they believe that God's grace is a license to sin. They believe that God's grace is actually approval and the okay to go out and live sinfully, that God won't judge, that God does not frown upon it.

The theological term is also known in many circles today as antinomianism. What they mean is that they are so into grace that they oppose God's laws and God's standards. Now, we're not saved by the law, but we're saved to holiness. Let there be no mistake about it, God saves you by His grace. Salvation "...is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast," but you're saved unto a holy life. You've heard me say it ten thousand times—salvation, sanctification, and glorification. We've been justified, we're being sanctified, we will be glorified. He saves us, we've been declared righteous, and it starts a process from the moment of conversion until death, or we go home in the rapture, of God making us holy or more like Jesus Christ. It's not a license to go out and disregard God's law, God's Word, God's command, or to live however we want. They had very lax standards all because, "We're under the grace of God, isn't that wonderful," but it's not a license for us to sin.

When Jesus forgave the woman in John 8, who was caught in the very act of adultery, He ended up forgiving her. He said, "...neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." He didn't say, "Go, but be a little more careful. Don't get caught next time." He said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

When Zacchaeus was converted after his encounter with Jesus, he said, "I will give back half of what I've taken," and "I'll give my money back to the poor," so he was converted. When you have a Jewish tax collector giving money back, you know he's been saved. Salvation came to the heart and home of Zacchaeus. We're not free, license-wise, to rebel against God's law. You take note of it, it's all over the internet, go the YouTube and type in "homosexuality and Christianity" and the videos that come flying up all over it. We basically have churches at wholesale have bought into the cultural lie that "Everything is okay, God is love."

Last, but not least, verse 4, they deny God's truth that's found in Jesus. They have a faulty Christology. Their doctrine of Christ is off. One of the key characteristics of a cult is that they pervert God's grace, or they don't understand grace, they think you're saved by law, but they all have a faulty doctrine of Christ. They don't have the Bible doctrine of Christ. Notice what it says in our text, verse 4, "...denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Several things are said about Jesus there—He's the Sovereign Lord and that He is Lord Jesus or Jehovah the Savior. The name Jesus is Yeshua or Joshua. It literally means Jehovah saves, and then Christ is the fact that He is the Anointed One, He's the Messiah.

If there is any doctrine in the Bible you'd better get straight, it's the doctrine of Christ because if you reject Jesus or you have a faulty Jesus, you don't have God. If you don't have the Son, you don't have the Father. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." It's the only way to know God. He's the bridge to take us from our condemnation to salvation. If you want to get to Heaven, you can't go around the cross. You have to come, in repentance and faith, to Jesus Christ who is Lord and He is God. So marvelous are the truths that are laid out.

In this verse, as I said we didn't get to it last week, we see here the description of the apostates. Now, the apostates are those who have come into the church but they haven't really had a relationship with Christ. Many times Jesus described the apostates, but unknowingly, it's described in the parable of the sower and the seed. In the second seed that was sown, which represents the Word of God, and the soil, the heart of man, it says that the seed went into the soil and started to sprout but lacked depth. There was rock underneath the soil, so that when the sun began to beat down upon it, the plant withered and died and brought forth no fruit.

I believe that we clearly have a description there in that parable of the sower and the seed of a person who comes and hears the gospel, has an emotional shallow response—there's no depth, no root—and no regeneration takes place. They don't have the Spirit of the Lord in their hearts, they haven't been born again, and then when trials or hardships come, or maybe they come to church—and I've seen it happen before many times—everything's cool until the pastor gets to the book of Jude and says, "God judges sexual sin," and they get all upset and flee for the hills, or some other doctrine, teaching, or thing that's in the Word of God that people get upset about and go running away because their roots are not deep into God's Word. They say they believe in God, but that's not the God of the Bible. It's not the Word of God that they are submitted to. They haven't really had a real experience of being regenerated by the Holy Spirit, so He describes them.

Someone said the apostates did not regard themselves as the enemies of the church and of Christianity, they regarded themselves as advanced thinkers. That's so apropos today. As they do today, they are called progressives, they regard themselves as the leaders and not the corruptors of the church. They believe that God's truth is progressing, it's developing, and "That's old Bible days, and we gotta interpret the Bible through the lens of contemporary culture, philosophy, and the thoughts of the day," instead of taking today and going back to the time of the Bible and interpreting it in its historical context. You know, when a preacher preaches the Word, he's not supposed to bring the Bible up to today, he's supposed to take today back to the context of the Bible. People say, "Well, you know, people get bored with history and don't want the history," without that you can't understand your Bible. You've got to understand the historical context. The contemporaries, these progressives, which are modern-day liberals, started with Karl Barth and his neo-orthodoxy, deny the object truth and the reality of God's infallible, inspired, inerrant Word. It's only God's Word as it speaks to your own heart subjectively, and you kind of make up your own rules as you go along rather than submitting to its authority as the true Word of God.

Tonight in our text, and we're just now getting into our text, Jude makes it clear that there is nothing new about apostasy, it's as old as history of the human race. Peek at verse 11, for just a moment. Notice that Cain, Balaam, and Korah were listed there as apostates and that God has in the past and will now in the future judge those who reject His truth. To do this, Jude gives us three examples of the Old Testament. I want you to see that in our text, verse 5, the people of Israel; and verse 6, the angels that sinned or fell, "...kept not their first estate;" and verse 7, we see the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. There are three examples of the apostate in the Old Testament or God's judgment on those who did not believe His Word, those who rebelled against His authority, or those who lived in sexual immorality.

The point Jude is making in verses 5-7 is that God judges the apostates, those who do not believe His Word, Israel; those who rebel against His authority, angels; and those who practice sexual immorality, Sodom and Gomorrah. These verses are a call to remember. Look at verse 5, "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this." He wants them to remember. So many times we have a short memory. It is good for us to go back. Sometimes when I look at modern man and modern culture I think, How short is our memory. We forget what God has done in the past, how God has judged these sins before, and how it didn't bring what men were looking for. He wants us to remember the past. It's so very important.

These verses, as a call to remembrance, parallel 2 Peter 2:1-9 (I mentioned that last week when we introduced the book of Jude), where Peter in 2 Peter 2:4 mentions angels that sinned and were judged by God. In 2 Peter 2:5, he mentions the flood of Noah, which is not in our text but it's an Old Testament story where God judged the world. Did you ever think about that? We decorate children's bedrooms with Noah and the Ark and the animals on the boat, the rainbow, and all that stuff. It's a story about God's judgment. You tuck your kids into bed, "Sweet dreams, little Johnny. Don't forget, God destroyed the whole world. But look at the rainbow, it won't happen again, but it will burn by fire next time." It's true. It's a cute little story, but it's a true story, a historical story. By the way, in all these stories, it's confirming the historicity of the

Bible—Jude believed it, Jesus believed it, and we should believe it.

One of the marks of these progressive Christians, these liberals today, these apostates, is they say the Bible is all fictitious or fairy tales. “It’s all myths. There really wasn’t an Adam and Eve. There really wasn’t a Jonah being swallowed by a big whale. There wasn’t a serpent in the Garden of Eden,” and they deny the historicity of the Bible. But we see that Jude believed that there were these instances. Peter speaks of Sodom and Gomorrah in 2 Peter 2:6. Check that out. It’s a marvelous passage. He says, “Remember.”

The first story is in verse 5. It’s real simple—three stories, three verses—that is, remember Israel’s unbelief. Look at verse 5. “I will therefore put you in remembrance...how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt,” they came out in the Exodus, they were saved from Egypt, “afterward destroyed,” notice that word, “them that believed not.” Their sin was unbelief, and they were destroyed. They experienced deliverance, and they were redeemed. This is a corporate story. As a matter of fact, all of these stories are groups of individuals. We first have Israel, then angels, and thirdly, unsaved Gentiles in the plains of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The first story is that of Israel. Now, both Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, and the author of Hebrews 3 and 4, use the experiences of Israel to illustrate important spiritual truths. I want you to note these three things in verse 5. First of all, the Lord saved the people out of the land of Egypt. I don’t want to spend time on this, but there are those who might feel that you can use this as a proof text to say it’s possible to be saved and then to be lost. It uses the word “saved” and it says they destroyed them, but you need to remember that in the Old Testament that this is a reference to them physically being saved out of Egypt. Yes, it has a picture of redemption, they were redeemed, but when they died, they died physically.

It doesn’t mean that they didn’t go to Heaven. If it meant they didn’t go to Heaven, then Moses didn’t go to Heaven because he didn’t get to cross over either—Moses died the other side of the Jordan River. What it means is that it was temporal, physical punishment—they died in the wilderness, 40-year death march, carcasses all over the ground, everyone 20 years old and older died in the wilderness. Only Joshua and Caleb were able to go into the Promised Land. But the deliverance was a physical deliverance, so the judgment was a physical judgment brought upon them. It’s kind of stretching it to say, “This is a Christian that’s been born again and regenerated and has the Holy Spirit, and then they don’t believe, thus they’re judged and punished by God,” but they were delivered out of Egypt.

Notice, “...afterward,” verse 5, “destroyed them,” and I just mentioned that it was taken from Numbers 13 and 14. They didn’t believe God; they didn’t trust God. They didn’t believe that they could go in and take the land. They listened to the spies that said, “There’s giants in the land. We can’t go.” They wouldn’t listen to the word of faith, the message of faith, Joshua and Caleb, and so were destroyed in the wilderness. They “...believed not,” and that’s what the verse tells us. It says, “...having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not,” that whole story of the unbelief in Kadesh Barnea. The spies went in,

and I don't think they should've even sent spies in, I think they should've just went in. God promised them the land, God delivered them from Egypt, God told them it was theirs, they should've said, "Here we go," and stepped out in faith and claimed the Promised Land. Instead, they sent spies in, "Go check it out." The spies came back and said, "There's big giants in the land and we're like little grasshoppers in their sight. They're going to squash us under their feet!" They all started to cry, wail, weep and say, "Let's go back to Egypt. Oh would to God that we would've died in the wilderness!"

Joshua and Caleb ripped their clothes and said, "No! God has brought us here. They're ours! They're food for us! We can go in. Trust the Lord," but in unbelief...unbelief is the thief of the worst sort. It robs you from the blessings God has. Again, that's a characteristic of the apostate, they don't believe God's Word. They don't take God at His Word, and they aren't submitted to God's Word and its authority. They're filled with unbelief. It's the sin of unbelief—they rejected God's Word, they let fear come in, not faith, and after all they saw and experienced, after all the blessings, they were destroyed in the wilderness. Alongside this, write down Hebrews 3:7-19, where the writer of Hebrews uses the same story to warn these Jews not to go back to Judaism, not to turn from Christ, not to turn and go back, "Don't go back. Don't follow the false teachers. Believe God and take Him at His Word."

The second example is that of angels. Jude now goes way back in time when the angels fell. I do believe that this is alluding to the fall of the angels with Lucifer, whom we know as the devil or Satan. Notice verse 6. He says, "And the angels," first Israel and then the angels, notice the statement, "which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains," strong word, "under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

Where do angels come from? Just a quick little survey of angels. Angels were created by God, Colossians 1:16. When were they created? Before time, Job 38:6-7. Angels were created by God, and they were created before Genesis 1:1. How far back, we don't know, but way back there somewhere in eternity past; and God created them so they're created beings which means that Satan, which started as an angel and fell, was actually created by God. He's a creature. He's not omnipotent or all-powerful or on par with God by any stretch of the imagination.

Thirdly, we see this in Jude 6, they were created holy, their first estate; they were created, fourthly, with intellect, 1 Peter 1:12; with emotion, Luke 2:13; with will, Jude 6; they rebelled against God's authority. Fifthly, we know that angels were created spirit beings, Hebrews 1:14. Sixthly, they do not die, Luke 20:36. They are eternal spirit beings. Seventhly, they have great power, 2 Peter 2:11. Again, Satan is a fallen angel and indeed has great power.

Notice in verse 6 of our text, the angels who did not keep their position of authority. The King James Bible has, "And the angels which kept not their first estate," but abandoned their proper dwelling. I believe that this took place when Satan rebelled against God, which is the source of sin and evil in the world. It started in the heart of Satan, and in Isaiah 14:12-17, he was lifted up with pride, wanted to exalt himself above God, we have the five "I will's" of Satan, and he

was kicked out of Heaven. The angels who fell with him are known as fallen angels, referenced in Revelation 12:14, which actually is the source of who we know as demons today.

In the spirit realm, there are two categories of angels: good angels and bad angels. Among the bad angels, there are some that are bound, waiting for judgment, and some that are free, flying around, so Satan has little helpers. If we're oppressed by the devil, it's most likely demonic forces that are oppressing or attacking us, but remember, "...greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." Amen? That's just a quick little study of angels, but they, "...kept not their first estate," they fell.

Here's the point. Why did they fall? Pride and rebellion, so in Israel's case, unbelief. That's the dominant lesson. The dominant lesson here is pride and rebellion—fallen angels, as demons, rebelled against God. In 2 Peter 2:4, it talks about those that are kept in chains.

Notice verse 6 of our text, "...he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." We can't be sure about what "great day" that is, but we know, at least when the Lord returns, that He will judge even these angels. So, it was unbelief and then pride. Those, again, are earmarks, characteristics, of the apostate—they don't believe God's Word, they are proud, and they rebel against God's authority, they want to throw the restraints off and live however they want.

If a being of higher order than man could fall and be judged by God, so then why would He not judge us in our pride and rebellion as well. The angels had great knowledge and privilege. They knew and turned away from Him who is truth. God's attitude has not changed, He still hates and judges sin and apostasy. This is what the progressive people don't like. They say, "God is love." Sure He is, but He's also holy, righteous, and actually hates and judges sin. Look at the Cross if you don't believe God hates and judges sin. They get this idea that everyone is going to go to Heaven, everyone's okay, God loves everybody, it doesn't matter how you live, God loves you, everything is fine. They are basically in rebellion against God's authority in their lives.

We learn from Jude 6 that in the future there's coming a day of judgment, not for the believer, his sins were taken care of at the Cross and there's no condemnation to those who are in Christ. But God has no respect of persons. Those who rebel against Him and do not submit to His authority will be judged, even as the angels were judged.

One more Old Testament illustration, and we'll just peek at it, maybe go back over it again next week, is a picture of Sodom and Gomorrah. To me it's kind of an indication...as we were worshiping tonight, I was in the back of the sanctuary thinking, Man, I gotta talk about Sodom and Gomorrah. If we had a marquee in front of the church and put a sign on it, "Sermon about Sodom and Gomorrah," do you think people are going to come flooding in here? It's in your Bible, right? We're going to read the verse. I'm not making this up, yet they seem to want to take these verses out of the Bible, the progressives. All the verses about God judging, they don't want to touch. All the verses about Sodom and Gomorrah, "Let's pass over them," or they

want to change the way you interpret and apply it. It's not a very delightful subject, but it's something that we need to face. It's so prevalent in our culture today.

Let's read verse 7. "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha," now there's a continuation from the end of verse 6, that they are "...reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day," so he just mentions "judgment," and then, without skipping a beat, "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner," notice what they did, "giving themselves over to fornication," this is the Greek word *porneia*. It means sexual immorality. "...and going after strange flesh," this is a reference to homosexuality, "are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

Just real quick before I forget, in verse 5, Israel had physical death in their judgment. In verse 6, the angels are going to experience everlasting chains and judgment. In verse 7, these people in Sodom and Gomorrah are going to have eternal fire in this future judgment, "...the vengeance of eternal fire." The judgment that came upon Sodom and Gomorrah, write it down, Genesis 18 and 19, is the historical story about God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Archaeologists have found where Sodom and Gomorrah was at the southern end of the Dead Sea. There's archaeological evidence for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah at the south end of the Dead Sea, and it's a historical truth, a historical story.

Those who promote the gay lifestyle, the homosexual lifestyle, in the church today, claiming to be Christians and evangelicals, one of the many ways they try to explain this away is that God was judging Sodom and Gomorrah, believe it or not, this is a legitimate way they interpret that, because of a lack of hospitality. They weren't being hospitable. Remember when the angels went to Lot's house and the men beat upon the door? "...bring them out unto us, that we may know them," they wanted to rape these men. Men wanted to rape these men, that's how bad Sodom was.

You know, our streets today in America aren't too far off. That's why Billy Graham said, "If God doesn't judge America, He owes Sodom and Gomorrah an apology." But to say, "Oh, it was just a lack of hospitality," you know, "and God judged them," or "Maybe God judged them," another view, "is because it was going to be rape and it wasn't marriage. It wasn't law that...you know, love is love. If you love each other, it's okay," as though your definition of love justifies your rebellion to God's Word and God's standards, that it makes it okay. Not so. God's Word doesn't change. It doesn't change with the culture and the times, and God wants what's best for us.

Notice it says, "...giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh," which is the word I said, *porneia*, which is where we get our word "pornographic" from. *Porneia* is the general term for sexual immorality. Basically, it means anything outside the covenant relationship of marriage, which is ordained of God, is sexual immorality, *porneia*. It's pretty simple. You don't have to describe all the sexual immoral acts that people do today. Outside of the heterosexual covenant relationship of marriage, which is a man and a woman—one man, one woman—is sexual immorality, *porneia*, and God will judge.

In Hebrews 13:4, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." In 1 Thessalonians 4:3, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication," sexual immorality, so homosexuality comes under this heading. The problem is that even in the church today, people have bought the lie in our culture that they're born this way, they can't help the way they're born, that they cannot be blamed for the way they live, and we legalize same-sex marriage, which was the beginning of the end for America.

You destroy marriage...marriage is God's idea, it's God-ordained institution. It reflects the idea of Christ and the church, and so goes marriage, so goes the family, so goes the nation. You can't have sexual immorality and have a healthy nation. Even just a breakdown in marriage, the breakdown in the family, leads to juvenile delinquency. It also leads to sexually transmitted diseases, "the thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy," and we have disregarded God's Word, which is for our good and for His glory, and we're reaping what we have sown.

The idea is that they gave themselves over to strange flesh. It was an out-and-out surrender to extravagant sexual lust. It's literally going outside God's moral law, and they reaped the judgment of God. God rained down fire and brimstone and destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and those in the surrounding plains.

In the same time of the eruption of A.D. 79, before the overthrow, archaeologists found the two words "Sodom and Gomorrah" scraped on the wall in Pompeii, so it became proverbial for that sinful kind of immoral lifestyle. The New Living Translations have, "...filled with immorality and every kind of sexual perversion."

Israel, unbelief; angels, pride and rebellion; and Sodom and Gomorrah, sexual perversion. What is sexual perversion? Anything outside the covenant relationship of marriage. Notice that they turned the grace of God, we saw in verse 4, "...into lasciviousness," so they promote same-sex marriage, homosexuality, and other kinds of sexual immorality, "...are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." They were sexually immoral.

How do we wrap this up tonight? First of all, when you go back to the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, before Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed, remember Abraham talking to the angels and how Abraham began to intercede for Sodom and Gomorrah? Abraham said, "Lord, if there's 50 righteous people in Sodom and Gomorrah," and the angels are going to go check it out, "would You spare the city?" And the Lord said, "Sure, I'll spare the city." Then, Abraham said, "How bout 45? Would you spare the city for 45, Lord?" "Yes, I'll spare the city for 45." "How bout 40, Lord? Forty sounds like a good number." And then, "How bout 30?" He went down to 20 and then all the way down to 10. There weren't even 10 people that were righteous in the plains of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham stood in the gap and prayed.

I think about that and about America, how we need to pray for America, that God would have mercy upon America for the righteous that are here. I believe the rapture is gong to happen

before the tribulation, but it's going to get very dark, as it is right now, before the rapture even happens as well. The Bible says, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." The Bible says there'll come a falling away first before the day of the Lord comes, so we need to pray and intercede on behalf of our nation, that God would have mercy, save souls, and that people would turn back to Him. James 5:16, "...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Did you know that Jesus actually mentioned Lot and the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah? In Luke 17:28-30, Jesus says these words, "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; 29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. 30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Jesus believed in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah and the judgment that came upon them. As it was in the days of Lot, and Sodom and Gomorrah, so it will be before He comes back in His Second Coming to judge the world.

Unbelief, rebellious pride, and sexual immorality were judged by God in the past, what makes us think that God will not judge them in the present and even on into the future. God will. But we always need to remember the Cross of Christ. Amen? Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." We have the gospel to preach to a sick, dying, lost world, so go out with boldness, go out with the truth, go out with the light, and preach the gospel, speak the truth in love, stand for truth and righteousness. Don't be deceived by the false teachers. Stand for God's truth. Don't listen to the culture around you, think biblically. Don't let the world press you into its mold, but be "...transformed by the renewing of your mind." Let's pray.