

The Judgment of False Teachers – Part 3

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – Jude applies the apocalyptic judgments of the past to the false teachers of the present
2. aim – to cause us to seek the purity of the gospel of grace and warn those who attempt to pervert it
3. passage – Jude 5-16

b. outline

1. The Judgments Upon Rebels (Jude 5-7)
2. The Judgments Upon Blasphemers (Jude 8-13)
3. The Judgments Upon Malcontents (Jude 14-16)

c. opening

1. the **content** of this pericope
 - a. **vv. 5-16** is an **apocalyptic** passage and the **main argument** supporting the thesis of the letter
 1. it is Jude *relating* the various judgments that God has brought forth in the past against those who rebel against what he has “*delivered*” (to the saints)
 2. it is Jude *implying* that these judgments *will also* be applied to false teachers of the gospel
 - b. **vv. 5-16** begins with the reality that these judgments *are from Jesus* – he is the one who brought the judgments of the past, *and it will be he that brings them again* (**i.e.** don’t presume upon Jesus)
 - c. **vv. 5-16** speaks *initially* of judgments brought by Jesus **against direct rebels to his authority**
 1. first, those who rebelled against him after the Exodus; second, those who rebelled against him in the spiritual realm; (**now**) those rebelled against him in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah
2. the **structure** of this verse (**v. 7**)
 - a. (**read without the “comma-delimited” phrase**) the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah *and the cities around them* serve as “*an example*”
 1. (**in context**) an example of the same kind of judgment that came upon the Israelites in **v. 5** and the rebel angels in **v. 6** – condemnation placed upon them by Jesus (the preincarnate Son)
 - b. (**read the “comma-delimited” phrase**) their judgment was due to:
 1. “*sexual immorality*” = fornication – improper sexual activity
 2. “*unnatural desire*” (ESV) = lit. different flesh; physical intimacy not designed by God at the very core of humanity in the *Imago Dei*)
 3. **IOW**: a *perversion* of **what God had endowed with a specific function**
 4. **aside**: God is an “equal opportunity” judge (no favorites) – he condemned some of his *elect people*, some of the *angelic host*, and a cadre of *the reprobate* (**i.e.** all of men and angels)
 - c. **thesis: the judgment that had come upon Sodom and Gomorrah was due to the perversion of what God had formed and purposed as good – this same judgment falls upon those in the church who pervert what Christ has formed and purposed in the gospel**

I. The Judgments Upon Rebels (Jude 5-7)

Content

c. the judgments upon Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7)

1. the **history** of Sodom and Gomorrah (**Genesis 10, 14, 18, 19**)
 - a. the first mention of the two cities is in Moses’ account of the descendants of Noah’s sons after the flood (**Genesis 10:19**) – specifically, the descendants of Ham’s son Canaan
 1. **i.e.** the various peoples occupying Canaan at the time that Abraham arrived (c. 2000BC)
 - b. Sodom and Gomorrah were located somewhere near the now-“Dead Sea” (**location unknown**)
 1. at the S end of the Jordan valley, in a lush area surrounding the lake fed by the Jordan
 2. the cities were part of a coalition of city-states in the Middle Bronze Age – individual cities established by people of a specific heritage or lineage, self-governed, and situated near a water source, surrounded by good agricultural land, and well-defensible (**i.e.** on hills)
 - c. Abram gave Lot (his nephew) first choice of where to settle in Canaan (as a gesture of goodwill)
 1. Lot chose the S Jordan Valley, near Sodom – a wise choice *agriculturally*, but a poor choice *morally* and *politically* (**Genesis 13:8-13**)

2. in **Genesis 14**, the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar *rebel* against Chedorlaomer and his forces – they are defeated, the cities are sacked, and *Lot is captured*
 - a. Sodom and Gomorrah had been paying **tribute** to Chedorlaomer for protection
 3. Abram rescues Lot, but Lot *returns* to Sodom and becomes a part of the city's *political* structure
 - a. **i.e.** he becomes a judge at the city gate (**Genesis 19:1**)
 - d. the prosperity of the cities had led them to become **decadent and perverse**
 1. decadent = a state of moral or cultural decline; self-indulgence (within prosperity) that leads to a sense of “entitlement” in throwing off previous cultural norms
 - a. **i.e.** the city of Sodom became so depraved that its name became *synonymous* with perverse sexual activity (**i.e.** various “**named**” laws on the books up until the mid-20th century)
 - b. as in **all nations** that become prosperous and comfortable (**e.g.** Egypt, Rome, America)
 2. so, God purposes to destroy it – he visits Abraham to announce the pregnancy of Sarah with Isaac, and then turns to visit the city to “warn” Lot to escape before he destroys it
 - a. its destruction was *necessary* to prevent the “spread” of its evil into the *eventual* people of Israel arriving there in about 600 years (**i.e.** and why the Israelites were to destroy others)
 - b. its destruction was an act of *faith-building* in Abraham of what was to come (**i.e.** in **Genesis 18:17**, God “discusses” the idea of *pre-warning* Abraham of what was coming)
 - c. its destruction was consistent with God exercising his holiness in the world, destroying evil that could (potentially) make even the human race go extinct (**i.e.** the gods of Canaan)
 3. the Lord rains down “*fire and brimstone*” KJV (**i.e.** sulfur, hot ash, burning rock, lava)
 - a. **note:** although **Genesis 19:23ff** says “*out of heaven*,” it is *probable* that God used the *means* of a volcanic or seismic eruption to blast this into the air to rain down on the cities
 - b. the area around the lake was made virtually uninhabitable, water sources were poisoned, and the Sea was killed by a massive infusion of chemical salts
 - c. the “*surrounding cities*” (**Jude 7**) included Admah and Zeboiim (**Deuteronomy 29:23**) – Zoar was spared because Lot took shelter there (**Genesis 19:22**)
 - d. **Jude 7** calls it a punishment “*of eternal fire*” – not *continuing* eternally, but the cities *permanently lost* (**i.e.** Sodom has never been found)
 - e. **IMO:** why this story is *undoubtedly true* (*historically*)
 1. it is not unheard of for cities to be destroyed by volcanic activity (**e.g.** Pompeii & Vesuvius)
 2. the area around the Dead Sea is still *ghastly* – something *cataclysmic* obviously happened
 3. Jesus (the omniscient One) speaks of the city in clearly historical terms (**see below**)
 4. Sodom and Gomorrah become something unique in biblical history (**see next**)
2. the **relevance** of Sodom and Gomorrah (throughout history)
 - a. there are more than 2 dozen references to Sodom and/or Gomorrah outside of **Genesis**
 - b. the cities become **exemplars** of the judgment of God upon those who flaunt his law
 1. exemplar = a typical example or excellent model – their reference in Scripture is typically associated with *warnings* of terrible judgment that is to come
 2. **e.g.** **Deuteronomy 29:16-28** – Moses warns the people that, if they fail to keep the law and chase after the gods of the Canaanites, their fate will be the same as these cities
 3. **e.g.** **Isaiah 13:19** – although Babylon will be used by God to bring down Israel to its exile, its fate will be the same as these cities, for it has done so out of its own evil desires
 4. **e.g.** **Jeremiah 49:17** – the Edomites, like so many of the nations surrounding Israel, will be destroyed as these cities were, for it failed to honor God’s people and made war against them
 5. **e.g.** **Matthew 11:23f** – the city of Capernaum will be judged with great harshness, for it failed to recognize the Christ by his works (**i.e.** Sodom would have repented had it seen them)
 6. **e.g.** **Luke 17:20-37** – the return of the Lord will be accompanied by great judgment upon those who are apathetic towards his impending kingdom, with judgment raining down on the guilty
 7. **e.g.** **Jude 7** – the destruction of these cities was due to a specific form of sin **that is being replicated by those who “have crept in unnoticed”** ...
 3. the **application** of Sodom and Gomorrah (**by Jude**)
 - a. **question:** if the history of Sodom and Gomorrah occurred c. 2000BC, yet the law given at Sinai did not come for another ~600 years, why are these cities destroyed for a sin *not yet codified*?
 1. **LOW:** how could they have *known* that what they were doing was *wrong*, given that God had not yet *declared* it wrong through the specific giving of a law?
 - b. **answer:** because the sin they were committing was a violation of *the very nature of humanity*, something *inherently understood to be wrong* by virtue of the *Imago Dei*
 1. **Romans 2:14f cf. 5:13f** – **the natural law** – certain immutable truths within us that govern the behavior of men, the evidence of which is death itself (**i.e.** murder, adultery, fornication, etc.)

The Judgment of False Teachers

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"For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them ... for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses ..."

- a. this law is *indelibly* written on the heart of *every man* made in the image of God
- b. such a law makes it *abundantly* clear that 1) there are two (2) and only two (2) sexes (genders); 2) that sexuality is reserved for marriage between a man and a woman, etc.
2. the people of Sodom and Gomorrah (like the **antediluvian people** of Noah's day) were **perverting** what was inherently true in the very nature of man himself
 - a. even without a *codified* law, they *knew* that homosexuality was inherently evil because it was *contrary* to the nature they possessed both *physically* and *spiritually*
 - b. **IOW:** they didn't need stone tablets to know that certain things were *wrong* (e.g. murder)
- c. so ... what does this have to do with false teachers in the church c. 60AD (or 2021AD)?
 1. **point: false teachers pervert the primary purpose of the gospel** – they *prey upon* the "prosperity" of the gospel in the hearts of believers (*i.e.* its lavish freedoms) to turn the church away from the *original purpose* of the gospel to *perversions* of it
 2. **question:** what is the *primary purpose* of the gospel of Jesus Christ?
 - a. **common:** to right injustice, to solve economic, racial, and social inequalities amongst men
 1. true (in one sense): the gospel *does* help solve these issues by addressing the *fundamental* reality necessary for any such changes to be effective (*i.e.* in regeneration)
 - b. **biblical: to restore the fundamental brokenness of man before God in his sin** – to *reestablish* a right relationship between the creature and the Creator borne out of *rebellion*
 1. *i.e.* the false teacher *perverts* this primary purpose in making the gospel *more* of an engine of *societal change* rather than an engine of *holiness before a holy God*
- d. **Jude contends that the false teacher (like the rebellious Israelite or the rebellious angel) attempts to "throw off" the true intentions of God in the world by "refocusing" the church on something other than the true gospel purpose**
 1. the false teachers *pervert* the gospel like the people of Sodom perverted sexuality
 2. and ... Jesus *himself* will rain down judgment upon them for perverting *his* purposes
 3. **note this metaphor (Genesis 19:11):** the angels who come to rescue Lot strike the men outside the door with blindness, *yet they still pursue the fulfillment of their perverted desires*
 - a. *i.e.* the false teachers are *blind* to their perversions of the gospel – they are *absolutely convinced* that their "interpretation" of the message of Christ is valid and *they cannot see their error* – God has sent upon them a **strong delusion (2 Thess. 2:8-12)**

"And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."