

Unbelievers Destroyed by God

by Fred DeRuvo – Study-Grow-Know Ministries

“Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.” Jude 1:5-7

It is amazing to note just how much Jude packs into his short letter. As with any part of Scripture, the more times you read it, the more you gain *from* it. It is a gem because of how much it reveals in such a short amount of space.

After introducing the truth about apostates – men long before marked out for condemnation – Jude refers to several situations from the Old Testament to provide examples for his readers. Jude takes the time to paint pictures so that those in receipt of his letter will more easily see how apostates work.

Out of Egypt

The first such example references God leading the people out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses in order to become His chosen nation of Israel. Though commentators believe somewhere in the neighborhood of 600,000 individuals *left* Egypt with Moses, many were later judged to death by God for their continued unbelief. Though they joined Moses in the journey to the Promised Land, their unbelief kept them from being truly part of that nation.

The idea here is that the people whom God felt it necessary to destroy *never* believed. They were *not* believers one day and unbelievers the next. They *never* believed at all. This is true of many Jews today who live in Israel; they are there for social or political reasons, yet God will ultimately take for Himself a Jewish remnant (Romans 9-11) from that nation and will fully and eventually restore Israel to all of the as yet unfulfilled promises originally given to them.

So if these individuals who came out with Moses never believed, why did they leave with Moses in the first place? It is simply because they were tired of slaving for Pharaoh and living under the extremely difficult conditions Pharaoh created for them. They wanted out

of Egypt and so they thought hanging out with Moses was a great idea – until the going got rough. They thought that the Promised Land was right around the corner with easy sailing to get there. Unfortunately, they were wrong, and it was their unbelief that made them wrong.

All of these folks saw the many miracles that God performed through Moses, including the parting of the Red Sea. They saw the cloud by day and the pillar by night, which kept the hot sun off them during the heat of the day, and kept them from freezing at night as they traveled through the desert.

In spite of these and many other miracles that God performed for His nation, many *grumbled*. They wanted a life of ease. They simply wanted God to give them what they wanted and not have to worry about “payback.” They didn’t want to deal with the sacrificial system. They complained about all the laws. There were not simply ten of them, but 613! While many of these laws were laws that only the Levites (priests) were obligated to follow, there were plenty of laws left over that *all* were required to uphold.

God didn’t simply take a people out of Egypt, create a nation from them, and was then going to do *everything* for them like some genie in a bottle. God had a *plan*, and that plan was to create a nation as the foundation of His plan of redemption, through which the coming Messiah would be born into this world. Once born, He would do His job of upholding every aspect of the law, making Him worthy to offer Himself for the sinfulness of humanity after roughly three years of public ministry. I think it is interesting that Jesus was found *worthy*. Revelation 5:6-9 tells us how Jesus, the Lamb, was found to be worthy.

“And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”

In the above section of Scripture, we learn that the Lamb – *Jesus* – was able to take “the book” (the title deed to earth), and please notice that He gave it to the One who sits on the Throne. Notice also the reaction of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders. They fall down and sing that the Lamb was worthy to take the book and break its seals to open it. Breaking the first seal, by the way, begins the Tribulation period of seven years.

But what is the meaning of the word “worthy”? Jesus was found worthy enough to die for sinful humanity. Who among us would want that job? Yet “*for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God*” (Hebrews 12:2b).

Jesus became worthy because He upheld every aspect of the Law, never deviating from its requirements. In this, He pleased the Father every step of the way.

Moreover, when He came to the time in His life where the cross loomed large before Him, Jesus looked *past* the pain and torture of the cross (both physically *and* spiritually) and saw the joy it would bring to untold millions who would place their faith in Him for salvation. This would then be the catalyst for God to be greatly glorified.

This joy was what prompted Him to do what He did for *us*. This infinite love went on display not only in His life but supremely in His death and the shedding of His blood for all who wish to come to Him in faith and humility. Because of His perfection, death could not hold Him, and He rose, with prisoners in His train (cf. Psalm 68:18).

The people who came out of Egypt and who were ultimately killed by God had not one ounce of faith in them where God was concerned. They were along for the ride because they thought this would be far better than anything they experienced in Egypt. They were wrong, and their constant complaints and even their inordinate desire to go back to Egypt was telling. The journey was not only physically demanding but required strength of faith to rely on God’s promises *through* Moses. People who lacked the faith because they were not true believers acted just like apostates do today.

From speaking of those without faith from Egypt, Jude moves on to reference the angels who fell. Of course, there is great disagreement over what these angels *did* which caused them to fall to the extent that God felt it necessary to keep them chained in darkness. This reference does not obviously refer to all fallen angels, and these particular angels are then *not* the demons that roam free now.

Obviously, these angels did something tremendously horrific, something that if left unchecked would have had severe consequences on God’s plan of redemption.

We will certainly explore this topic more next time, so I hope you’ll join me then. Until we meet again, may the Lord open your eyes to show you how blessed you are in Him!