

AS WICKED MEN INCREASE

July 26, 2015

Jude 1:1-25

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Jude 1:3

Apostasy is the departure of an individual or a group of individuals from the body of truth they once professed to believe. Apostasy from the truth that God revealed through the prophets, apostles and Christ was well underway shortly after Christ’s ascension into heaven. Writers of the New Testament addressed this matter (I Timothy 2; II Peter 2; Jude, Galatians 1:8).

Such apostasy is the subject of Jude’s epistle. Whereas his intention was to write of the salvation that he and his readers shared in common (v. 3), that purpose was preempted by the presence of apostasy, so that he wrote instead regarding apostates and the response God’s people must make to them.

Jude describes the apostates. First, they turn God’s grace into lasciviousness, or license for immorality. And, they deny our Sovereign and Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

For the encouragement of God’s remnant, Jude offered three illustrations from history. This showed that apostasy is nothing new, that God knows how to deal with apostates, and that He is not remiss to do so.

First, God dealt with the people of Israel whom He delivered from Egypt, but who departed from His word. Whereas Israel had been delivered from Egyptian slavery by mighty and conspicuous acts of God, culminating in the death of Egypt’s firstborn and the dividing of the Red Sea, yet the people did not believe. Rather than obediently entering Canaan, the land God promised to give them, they revolted and were consigned to wander in the wilderness for 40 years, where all those above age 20 at the time of revolt would die. (Numbers 13:25-14:45; Psalm 78)

Second, He dealt with a host of angels whom He had created sinless, but who “kept not their first estate.” These magnificent creatures once enjoyed the radiant presence of God, and absolute purity. But they joined in rebellion against God, and were cast out of heaven into everlasting captivity and, ultimately, damnation. (see Isaiah 14:4-19; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Luke 10:18; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:9; II Peter 2:4)

Third, He dealt with the occupants of Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, whose lascivious lifestyle exhibited the debauchery of apostate humanity. Their profligate immorality finally wrought God’s judgment in fire and brimstone, so that the cities were destroyed, “suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” (Genesis 18, 19)

These three examples are instructive. They demonstrate that we must “earnestly contend for the faith.” They exhibit the natural, depraved tendencies of fallen humanity. They encourage God’s

people with the certainty that God can and will judge the wicked. They show that God will vindicate His truth. And, they warn every soul to resist apostasy, and to believe on the one who both delivers those who receive Him, and judges those who depart from Him.