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## "ALL CHRISTIANS TO ACTION STATIONS!!"

An outline study of Jude - an important little book for today.

By Rev Ivan Foster.

### **Part 3: Remembering the lessons of former manifestations of apostasy.**

"I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire," Jude 1:5-7.

It cannot be emphasised enough that "the thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun," Ecclesiastes 1:9.

The instigator of rebellion and apostasy, the devil, cannot change. He cannot change his tactics, his objectives or his methods.

Therefore, it is very easy to discover both his activities of former times repeated and, to a very large degree, anticipate the form and fashion of his next attack.

It is for this reason that the Saviour tells us, "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed," Luke 17:26-30. The ways of the heart and mind under the control of sin will not alter.

Thus, when the devil is released from the pit after a thousand years what does he do? "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea," Revelation 20:7-8. He has learned nothing for he cannot learn anything other than respond to the depravity of his nature and rebel against God!

#### **1. LESSONS FROM HISTORY OF THE ATTEMPTS TO CORRUPT THE TRUTH**

Jude brings forth from history events which illustrate the character and the objectives of the "creepers" about whom he warns (verse 4). It adds weight to his warning if he can show that such deviants arose to harass the people of God in former times.

It should be noted that ministers ought to be acquainted with the history of God's people and the deliverances they have enjoyed at the hand of God.

Furthermore, the minister should ever keep this history before his people, even when there is a demand that we 'forget the past,' which is a common cry heard in many places today. It is a cry encouraged by every agency of the devil here in Ulster and that serves to indicate how wrong it is!

#### **Repeated Lessons**

It is to be further noted that Jude says, "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew



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this." The most familiar lessons need to be repeated amongst us, so prone are we to forget and being so constantly harassed by the enemy to forget.

Paul tells us what a good minister is. "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained," 1 Timothy 4:6. The "things" that a minister must put the brethren in remembrance of are, of course, the manifestations of apostasy that he refers to in the opening verses of 1 Timothy 4. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer," 1 Timothy 4:1-5.

Warnings of this nature must ever be on the preacher's agenda!

### Departure

Please note that the departure from God's truth that Jude refers to is not at all unusual even amongst those who have been privileged to witness much of God's power at work amongst them.

Jude starts with the departure in the days subsequent to the Exodus. "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not," Jude 1:5.

Doubtless, he started with this incident because it would have been very familiar to the Jews among the Christians to whom he was writing. It would also have been one of the first historical lessons a Gentile convert to the gospel would have learned when studying the Scriptures.

Following the Exodus there was a rebellion amongst a most privileged people indeed. Who can recite the miracles and wonders that were seen by those referred to here? The plagues of Egypt, the parting of the Red sea, the repeated provision of water and manna, the scenes around Sinai at the giving of the law, the wonderful manifestations of God's Shechinah glory in full view of Israel, the defeating of Amalek and many other instances of the power of God amongst them. And yet, they "believed not."

Again and again they murmured against God because of unbelief. It seems that hardly had the sun set upon a wonderful miracle of God's mercy and kindness than they arose to complain and accuse God of evil.

### From singing to murmuring

In Exodus 15, we have Israel singing of the goodness and glory of God. "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea," Exodus 15:1. However, within days we are told: "So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?" Exodus 15:22-24.

That murmuring continued unabated throughout their journey to the border of Canaan and culminated in their rebellion against God's command to enter the promised land, which in turn, brought down His wrath upon them, resulting in the doom of their perishing in the wilderness.

### Relevance

The relevance of that incident will be seen when it is remembered that Jude was writing just some 35 years after the ascension of Christ to glory. He was writing to the first generation of the apostolic church, the witnesses of miracles and the most marvellous demonstrations of God's saving grace and power amongst



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heathen nations, and already the departure from God was underway!

How the lessons of the Bible ought to make us anticipate our own tendencies to wander and rebel and warn us of the consequences we can expect to follow! Do we really think we are better than those who have gone before? Do we really think that we cannot sin as did they?

Look around today and the evidence of the unthankful and wicked defiance of God, seen in the wilderness, is everywhere abounding amongst the ranks of professing Christendom!

### 2. THE LESSONS FROM HISTORY ARE UNIVERSALLY KNOWN

The events from which Jude illustrates the truth he wishes to press upon believers are of such a kind that the whole world knows of them. The Exodus, the Fall of the Angels, Sodom and Gomorrhah - these are events of such a nature that the sacred record of them has reached to the ends of the earth!

I recall that while on my only visit to the Grand Canyon I saw, in a little Information Centre, a record of the native Indian's account of how the Canyon was formed. It was a highly embellished account of that given in the Bible and recorded by Moses under divine inspiration. The parallels were very obvious - a universal flood, deliverance of a few in a boat and the drying of the floodwaters leaving the great canyon.

I remember thinking how that the aural accounts of the early events of history, though naturally distorted by the centuries of time, nevertheless bear witness of the truth recorded in the Bible and of the apostasy of mankind and the judgment of God that follows.

#### Judgment follows

The three historic examples of rebellion that Jude mentions here were all followed by severe judgment.

- "The Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not."
- "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."
- "Even as Sodom and Gomorrhah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." (verses 5-7).

It is the dreadful consequences of following rebellion that Jude would press upon his fellow believers, who are in danger of being seduced from the truth of God by these "certain men crept in unawares."

It should be noticed that the rebellion of the creature always follows what they believe is an "upward" path! It is commonly believed that a forsaking of God's way leads to a much better way!

#### The devil

The angels sought to rise above their allotted station. How defiant were the actions of those who thus sought to rise above the rank bestowed on them by the Creator? How contrary to their hoped ends were the terrible consequences of their rebellion! "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day," Jude 6.

May not these words in Isaiah be applied to the devil? "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High," Isaiah 14:12-14.



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The words of the Saviour in Matthew 25:41 can most certainly be applied to the devil. "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Here is the end of evil ambition! So end all such rebellions by devils and men.

### Unbelieving Israel

The unbelieving Israelites thought that defying God and seeking to return to Egypt would be an improvement on life under God's rule. "But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight. And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt," Numbers 13:31-14:4.

God is here declared to be a deceiver and liar and anything, even Egypt's bondage, was better than life under His rulership!

### Sodom and Gomorrha

See what the Holy Ghost says of the rebellion of those evil cities. "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh." "In like manner" - there was a likeness, a resemblance in the actions of the 'creepers' of Jude verse 4, the Israelites, verse 5, the angels, verse 6 and now the sodomites of verse 7. These activities, though separated in time by many centuries, were all of the same ilk, born of the same wickedness.

There was a "giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh." There is no mention here of being "born" a deviant. Rather, there was a "giving over" and a "going after" the perversion which has since borne the name of this infamous city.

Paul likewise indicates that the wickedness has its origins in the rebelliousness of wicked man. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient," Romans 1:22-28.

It was a case of "vile affections" departing from that which was "natural" to that which was "against nature" and "unseemly" or shameful. The "natural" was abandoned for the "unnatural" and "natural" left for the "unseemly"!

### Misery

God's laws are always considered restraints and hindrances to "pleasure" by those who yield themselves



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up to such "unseemliness"! Breaking free of the holy commandments of God will, they believe, liberate and bring them into a realm of great freedom and enjoyment.

As one media report indicated, "**Suicide rates among gay men eight times higher**". The higher rate of suicide attempts amongst sodomites cannot be explained by the opposition they encounter from society generally but must also be seen as a result of misery brought upon themselves by their unnatural lifestyle. That is what Paul refers to in Romans 1:27. ". . . and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet." One commentator says of these words: "The meaning of this doubtless is, that the effect of such base and unnatural passions was to enfeeble the body, to produce premature old age, disease, decay, and an early death. That this is the effect of the indulgence of licentious passions, is amply proved by the history of man."

The sodomite claims today that Bible morality is constrictive. The cry of the moral and theological deviants of today is "liberty, freedom!"

### Court case

There is a court case running currently in Belfast in which the defendants, who refused to bake a cake with a pro-sodomite wedding slogan, are accused of discriminating against the complainant, a sodomite agitator. The adherence of the bakers, who are Christians, to the teaching of the Word of God, is deemed detrimental to the rights and liberties of the plaintiff.

Such is the perverted logic of corrupt mankind!

### Psalm 2

This is all summed up for us in that well-known passage in Psalm 2. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us," verses 1-3.

This spirit of rebellion against the Lord and His Anointed, Jesus Christ, has often shown itself and will lie at the heart of the end-time apostasy of the Antichrist and the ten nations that will submit to him.

That was what was at work in the Jude's day and it was of this he sought to warn the church. The same spirit is at work today amongst us and we must be on our guard against every attempt to turn us from our first allegiances and loyalties.

Let us beware of those who complain of the "old paths" and claim that the newfangled methodology, the new approach must supersede the stand, the attitudes of the last generation because we live in a new day!

This is no "new day" rather, such agitation is but the words of latter-day "creepers" who would turn us from the truth of God, the time-honoured testimony of Heaven, seeking to turn "the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ," Jude 4.

O Christian Beware!!