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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 6: Believers warned of the apostasy from the beginning

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him," Jude 1:14-15.

Enoch would have preached while Adam was still alive. Therefore he was a man who preached to the earliest generations of men. It is clear that the end-time apostasy occupied the thoughts of the earliest believers. That in itself should cause Christians today to place a higher emphasis upon the study of what the Bible has to say about the end-times and the development of the lawlessness which the Bible consistently testifies will manifest itself just before the Saviour's return.

Perhaps a little word about Jude's source for this quotation from Enoch. It is likely, I believe, that Jude took this quotation not from a book called the "Apocalypse of Enoch", which is spurious, but from Jewish tradition; this prophecy being handed down from age to age; and was in full credit with the Jews, and therefore the apostle very appropriately produces it; or rather he had it by divine inspiration.

Believing as we do in the inspiration of Holy Scripture, we see that Jude, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, in quoting these words of Enoch, clearly indicates to us that these words had the endorsement of God upon them. By no means was all that was contained in Jewish aural tradition accurate or true, but we do have a divine confirmation of the accuracy of this quotation of the preaching of Enoch, some 3000 plus years earlier.

Coming to these words of antiquity:

IF WE WOULD FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE PATRIARCHS HERE IS A TOPIC WITH WHICH WE SHOULD FAMILIARISE OURSELVES.

1. Surely there must have been something very important, very significant about the apostasy of the last days, if God's people back in the dawn of time were being instructed about it? Is that not an elementary observation? The one quotation of the ministry of Enoch, a man who is extolled as a truly great and holy man (Hebrews 11:5), which has been preserved for our instruction centres upon the apostasy and the return of the Saviour.

Should not this cause us to stop and consider the clear implications of this fact?

The subject of the return of Christ and the apostasy which would immediately precede it has been the topic of all of the prophets of God. I cannot over-emphasise this truth! It ought to make every preacher seriously consider just how closely his ministry, in the preaching of the truths of prophecy, matches that of the prophets and apostles.

"But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God



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hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began," Acts 3:18-21.

In these words of Peter we are told that two subjects occupied ALL the prophets.

a. "That Christ should suffer."

b. "Jesus Christ . . . whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things."

Two matters were dealt with by all the prophets - Christ's first coming in humiliation and then Christ's second coming at the 'times of the restitution of all things.'

That being on the agenda of all the prophets, preachers must take note of this fact and "give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip," Hebrews 2:1.

2. Apostasy is always a time of danger for believers, but none more so than the final apostasy.

That is why a constant warning of it has been sounded throughout the ages. It will be the time when the world will witness the power and wickedness of the devil as never before. His craft, his cunning, experienced before by men but always under the constraint of God, will be unleashed without Heaven's restraint in the last days. "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time," Revelation 12:12. This is an event that takes place just prior to the end of the devil's regime, just before the return of Christ in power and glory.

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh. And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season," Revelation 19:19-20:3.

These events all take place subsequent to Christ's return in glory. It is because the devil "knoweth that he hath but a short time" he will be spurred on to furious energy against all that is holy, just prior to Christ's return.

God's people need to know this. That is why God started sounding the warnings nearly 6000 years ago.

3. The recording of these warnings may be found in many places.

"And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days," Genesis 49:1.

"And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end," Daniel 12:8-9.

"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," 1 Timothy 4:1.

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come," 2 Timothy 3:1.

These are but a few examples of God's ongoing instruction of His people regarding matters in the time of the end. Men such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, Matthew and Paul all supply great details of the subject in their writings.



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This quotation from Enoch surely indicates that such a subject deserves our deepest and most solemn attention.

But would it not be correct to say that such a topic is greatly neglected today? How contrary to the spirit of Enoch's ministry such negligence must be!

II. WHEN HE COMES IN GLORY, THE LORD JESUS IS GOING TO CHALLENGE THOSE THAT HAVE OPPOSED HIM THROUGH THE AGES.

"To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him," verse 15.

1. It is to confront His gainsayers that He comes!

This does not refer to 'ALL' the wicked in the world when the Saviour returns. We must understand the meaning of the word 'all' in the light of other Scriptures. The parameters of the word are defined by other references to Christ's coming. Consider what Revelation 20:4-5 has to say on this matter. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."

There is not a universal judging of the wicked when Christ returns. That must await the judgment of the Great White Throne at the end of the 1000-year reign of Christ, Revelation 20:7-15.

Conversions

Furthermore, we are told that during the 1000-year reign of Christ, there will take place the conversion of myriads of people of the earth, even from the nations whose kings are joined in Antichrist's rebellion! "And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague. And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles," Zechariah 14:12-16.

Israel

It has to be borne in mind that when the Saviour returns the nation of Israel will still be in darkness. So again we see the limit that surrounds the word "all". Israel, being yet in her sin, will not be destroyed by the judgment of the Lord when He returns but rather, in His great mercy, He will turn them from their sin and rebellion and wonderfully save them. This is one of the first events following the return of Christ.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their



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wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land," Zechariah 12:9-13:2.

Here is the judgment of the forces of Antichrist as they seek to destroy Jerusalem and wipe out the Jewish population there and that judgment is coupled with God's revealing Himself in mercy to His ancient people.

Paul wrote of this glorious day.

"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins," Romans 11:1, 25-27.

Here then is further evidence that "all" the unconverted will not be judged when Christ returns, but the "all" refers to the supporters and worshippers of Antichrist.

In the run-up to the return of Christ, the territory of Antichrist will be subjected to horrific judgments which will specifically fall on his followers and thus we see that, at His return, the Saviour will finalise that which He had begun just prior to His coming again. "And the first (angel) went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image," Revelation 16:2.

We have identified for us the targets for the judgments of God which will be culminated at the appearing of Christ.

So then, at His coming again, the Lord Jesus will confront those who have been engaged in a campaign of vilification, defiance and outright rejection of His person, position and power. The Antichrist and his supporters will mount a campaign of resistance and hostility in the forty-two months of the final manifestation of lawlessness just before the return of Christ.

This is the period also referred to as 'The Great Tribulation', Matthew 24:21.

This latter-day defiance, though in keeping with the spirit of opposition to God that all men have engaged in since the fall of Adam, will reach a peak just prior to the Saviour's return and indeed, it is this fulness of rebellion and lawlessness which will initiate His coming again.

Another worldwide flood

At the end of this age, there is to be a flood of wickedness as man, spurred by the devil from whom God has lifted restraints, as was the case in the day of Job (Job 1:12, 2:6). That upsurge of sin and insurrection will trigger the return of Christ to judge those engaged in it, just as it was in the days prior to the flood of Noah's day. "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them," Genesis 6:5-7. The intensifying of wickedness upon the earth back then precipitated the world-wide judgment of the flood. "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted



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his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth," Genesis 6:11-13.

It is not difficult to see the growing parallel with today's society, not just in our nation but worldwide.

That which is referred to in Psalm 2 is developing all around us. "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.

Worldwide, men are casting away the morality of God's law and seeking to establish their own wicked ways, legalising their own dreadful lusts. From the devilish cruelty of the Islamic terrorists to the overthrowing of God's institution of marriage in the Republic of Ireland and the USA and the universal agitation in favour of sodomy, we see this tide of lawlessness mounting and the ground being prepared for the rising of the Antichrist to lead this final assault upon God's throne, as defined by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-5. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?"

It is that campaign of wicked slander and defiance of Himself that Christ will "execute judgment" against at His return.

III. CHRIST IS GOING TO CHALLENGE EVERY WORD SPOKEN AGAINST HIM.

1. God keeps a record of men's evil utterances. Men should know that "that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment," Matthew 12:36. The foul-mouthed supporters of Antichrist will be cast down to hell at Christ's return, but from hell they shall be taken, along with all whose mouths engaged in rebellion against the Lord throughout the ages, to give a full account of their wickedness at the Great White Throne of Judgment. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire," Revelation 20:12-15.

Words long forgotten by those who spoke them, but noted by the Lord Who heard them, will be accounted for.

Not just the words of men, but their most secret thoughts shall thus be brought forth to the light. "In the day when God shall judge the secrets (hidden inward things) of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel," Romans 2:16.

The self-important and conceited Stephen Hawking and Richard Dawkins of this world will one day give an account of their blind and foolish rejection of that which was written large in the creation around them as well as fully declared in the word of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard," Psalms 19:1-3.

2. Men will be 'convinced' by the Lord of their sin. What debates and wrangles over the gospel have taken place since the beginning of time. The Word of God, despite its authenticity having been repeatedly proven, is rejected by men as the basis of faith. That will change when He Who is the 'Living Word' will call men before Him and 'convince' them of their error and sin. They will be forced then to acknowledge that they were in the wrong!



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3. Those deemed foolish by the Christ-deniers will on that day be gloriously vindicated. "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." Who is there then who will dare deny that the 'poor foolish' believer of God's Word was right all along?

Dear Christian, mediate upon these sweet words:

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him," 1 Thessalonians 4:14.

"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish," Ephesians 5:27.

There is an old hymn which states the matter well.

1. Ofttimes the day seems long, our trials hard to bear,
We're tempted to complain, to murmur and despair;
But Christ will soon appear to take His Bride away,
All tears forever over in God's eternal day.

*It will be worth it all when we see Jesus,
Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ;
One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase,
So bravely run the race till we see Christ.*

2. Sometimes the sky looks dark with not a ray of light,
We're tossed and driven on, no human help in sight;
But there is one in heav'n who knows our deepest care,
Let Jesus solve your problem, just go to Him in pray'r.

3. Life's day will soon be o'er, all storms forever past,
We'll cross the great divide to glory, safe at last;
We'll share the joys of heav'n - a harp, a home, a crown,
The tempter will be banished, we'll lay our burden down.

The Lord bless you.

Ivan Foster.

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