# THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

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# GRASPING GOD'S WORD

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- 1. Grasp the Text in Their Town.
- 2. Measure the Width of the River to Cross.
- 3. Cross the Principlizing Bridge.
- 4. Consulting the Biblical Map.
- 5. Grasping the Text in Our Town.





## REVIEW

#### 1. Who is the Author?

- Jude, brother of James (Bishop of Jerusalem), and our Lord Jesus, who came to believe in Jesus as Messiah sometime between the resurrection and Pentecost. He serves as an itinerant preacher among the churches in Galilee.
- 2. Who was Jude's intended audience?
  - First-generation Jewish Christians living in Galilee, among the churches that had been planted by the Apostles themselves.



#### 3. What is the genre of Jude?

- Jewish-Apocalyptic style, popular in first century Palestinian Judaism, before 70 AD. Steeped in Greek speech rhetoric and Jewish Midrash and Pesher hermeneutics.
- 4. When was Jude written?
  - Approximately 48 58 AD
- 5. What was Jude's purpose for writing?
  - Jude indicates his longstanding intention to communicate with them, which has been made more urgent by a crisis in the churches. He wishes to urge his audience to contend for \*the\* faith, once for all handed down.



- 6. What does Jude tell us about his opponents?
  - "Long ago designated for... condemnation" Jude seems to believe that they were the subjects of prophetic condemnation in I Enoch.
    - "Ungodly people" As contrasted with the "righteous," Jude is emphasizing their antinomianism.
    - "Pervert grace into sensuality" Most certainly using grace as a license to engage in illicit sexual practices.
  - "Deny Jesus Christ" Rather than submitting to Jesus' authority, they are a law unto themselves.





- 7. What does Jude tell us about God's past Judgment? (Three examples)
- I. The unbelieving after the Exodus (Num.13-14)
- There is a discrepancy between what God has said and the message of the returned spies. The people knew what God had commanded, and they knew him to be mighty to save. They were influenced by those who would challenge the character and instruction of God, and ultimately rebelled. God curses the people; <u>everyone</u> over the age of 20 (except for Caleb and Joshua) will die in the wilderness over the next 40 years.

Crossing the Principlizing Bridge:

- <u>Faithlessness</u> (believing neither the power nor the command of God) provokes God's wrath and punishment.
- Similarly, Jude's opponents are challenging Jesus (δεσπότην καὶ κύριον), and Jude expects a similar judgment against them.





- 7. What does Jude tell us about God's past Judgment? (Three examples)
- II. The fallen Angels (Gen. 6, I En. 6-11)
  - The "Sons of God" (referenced in Genesis 6; Job1:6 & 2:1) are presented by Enoch as Angels. These Angels took human women as wives and bore children.
  - In addition to their illicit sexual deeds, these Angels are said to have taught humanity to perform charms and spells, astrology, warfare, and knowledge of sexual perversion.
  - Their children with the daughters of men were giants (the Nephilim), who oppressed humanity and drank the blood of all kinds of creatures.
  - This provoked the wrath of God, resulting in the apocalyptic flood (sparing only Noah and his family), and the eternal torment and imprisonment of hell.





#### Crossing the Principlizing Bridge:

• <u>Rebellion</u> against God by abandoning his creational purpose for us, and teaching or encouraging others to do the same, provokes God's wrath and punishment.

"The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed. Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers."



Blessed Lord, who caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and the comfort of your holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.** 





7. What does Jude tell us about God's past Judgment? (Three examples)

Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

III. Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18-19)



The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him." Then the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know."

So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake."

Abraham answered and said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." Again he spoke to him and said, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it." Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." He said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it."

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Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it." And the LORD went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth and said, "My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the town square." But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young

and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them." Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof." But they said, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came to sojourn, and he has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them." Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down. But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door. And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door.

Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place. For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it." So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, "Up! Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city." But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting.

As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city." But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. And as they brought them out, one said, "Escape for your life. Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away." And Lot said to them, "Oh, no," my lords. Behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life. But I cannot escape to the hills, lest the disaster overtake me and I die. Behold, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there—is it not a little one?—and my life will be saved!" He said to him, "Behold, I grant you this favor also, that I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken. Escape there quickly, for I can do nothing till you arrive there." Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar. Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt. And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD. And he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the valley, and he looked and, behold, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace.

So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had lived.



## SODOM & GOMORRAH

- The inhabitants of these cities were the descendants of Ham and Canaan, and were therefore subject to their curse (from Gen. 9).
- While that curse does impose servitude upon the Canaanites, it does not imply destruction.
- $\circ$  What was the sin of the Sodomites?
  - Idolatry?

"The indictment of Sodom lies entirely in the moral realm; there is no hint of cultic offence, <u>no whisper of idolatry</u>. As with the Flood story, the Sodom and Gomorrah narrative assumes the existence of a universal moral law that God expects all humankind to follow." - Nahum M. Sarna, The JPS Torah Commentary

• Social Injustice, Inhospitality, Rape



- "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may <u>know</u> them."
  - This is a euphemism. The intent of the men of Sodom — "both young and old, every one to the last man" was to commit homosexual rape.
  - "Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please."
  - Elsewhere in the Torah it is clear that this is regarded as one of the abhorrent inclinations of the Canaanites.
    - Lev. 18:3b, 22 "you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You shall not walk in their statutes... You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination."
    - Lev. 20:13, 23 "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination... you shall not walk in the customs of the nation that I am driving out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I detested them.





- The unbridled wickedness (sodomy) of the inhabitants of the city incited God's wrath.
- Lot is urged to flee, but he lingers. Eventually his guests seize him, his wife, and his daughters (out of God's mercy) and remove them from the city.
- Fire from heaven rained down on the city, destroying it and its inhabitants.
- Lot's wife turns back and becomes a casualty.

## Crossing the Principlizing Bridge:

• Sexual immorality and the pursuit of unnatural desire provokes God's wrath and punishment.

Now Lot went up out of Zoar and lived in the hills with his two daughters, for he was afraid to live in Zoar. So he lived in a cave with his two daughters. And the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the earth. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve offspring from our father." So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father. He did not know when she lay down or when she arose.

The next day, the firstborn said to the younger, "Behold, I lay last night with my father. Let us make him drink wine tonight also. Then you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve offspring from our father." So they made their father drink wine that night also. And the younger arose and lay with him, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. Thus both the

daughters of Lot became pregnant by

their father. The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab. He is the father of the Moabites to this day. The younger also bore a son and called his name Ben-ammi. He is the father of the Ammonites to this day.



 We know that Genesis was written by Moses, and his original audience were the post-Exodus Israelites, about to take possession of the land, occupied by the Canaanites (descendants of Ham), the Moabites, and the Ammonites (incestuous descendants of Lot).



### JUDE'S USE OF THESE STORIES

- In his eyes, the three pericopes are connected. It is a multi-generational view of wickedness, faithlessness, and how these multiply the wrath of God.
- The accounts of the "Sons of God" and Sodom and Gomorrah demonstrate how seriously God takes abominable sexual sin.
- The account of the Hebrews' unwillingness to take conquest of Canaan demonstrates how seriously God takes faithlessness and cowardice among his people, whom he calls to be his instruments.
- Both angles are in Jude's purview, as he seeks to embolden the faithful to "contend for the faith" and to address the wrath of God coming against his opponents.





## NEXT WEEK...

• Michael & the Devil fight over Moses' body.

