



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Jude 5-7

“Christendom in the Light of the Epistle of Jude (2)”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are turning to the Epistle to Jude for our Scripture reading and reading verse 5, verse 6, verse 7. It would really be wonderful if you were familiar in detail with Genesis 6:1 through 9, Genesis 19:1-11, and Numbers 13:26 through 28, but we will refer to these passages because they are the passages to which Jude refers in verse 5 through 7 of his epistle. So if you have your New Testaments, turn with me now to the Epistle of Jude, the brother of our Lord, and listen as we read verse 5 through verse 7. “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.”

There is a little bit of a debate over just who is meant by “the Lord.” It could be the Father, and it could be the Son. There is some reason for thinking that it might be the Son. We have in the New Testament, this term applied to our Lord very clearly in passages like John chapter 12, and some other places as 1 Corinthians chapter 10, and we need to remember that in the Trinitarian theology which Believers Chapel has espoused as orthodox Christianity that the term “Lord,” is a term that applies to all three persons of the Trinity, just as the term “God” is. And in fact we should not speak of God and then the Son and then the Spirit because even the use of an expression like that is confusing as if deity belongs only to the first person, but the other names belong to the

second and the third. It’s much sounder theologically to say, God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit. In this case it is in my opinion likely that he does mean the Lord Jesus Christ when he says, “The Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt.” And I would suggest that you turn to passages like 1 Corinthians 10:4 and John chapter 12 and compare what is said there with what is said here. But it’s not a big problem, and so we go on to read verse 6:

“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.”

There are some interesting things in that text. We’ll comment on some of them, but in the limited time for exposition, we cannot comment on all of the things that are there. I would like for you to notice just a couple of things, that when he says, “just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these,” the “these” of verse 7 is a reference to the angels. We know that from the grammar of the original text, you might not catch it in the English text, but it’s plain in the original Greek text. “Since they in the same way as these,” that is these angels engaged or “indulged in gross immorality and went after,” now notice the term “strange flesh.” The Greek, again, is not the ordinary term that might be used for strange, but the word that means different, another in the sense of different, different flesh. And so the reference is to the angels who took to themselves human bodies and sought to cohabit with women, described in Genesis chapter 6, “Different flesh,” and are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

We’re not going to have time to talk about the punishment of eternal fire, but that has become a big issue in evangelicalism today in the light of the fact that some well-known evangelicals have begun to espouse the doctrine of either annihilation or conditional immortality. They’re not precisely the same but both do involve annihilation as an ultimate judgment of unbelief. Our text as

we have it in the version that I have read to you is a text that supports the idea of eternal punishment, conscious eternal punishment as the ultimate judgment for the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now we don't have time to deal with that. One of these mornings I'd like to take our time to talk about it because it has become a big issue in evangelicalism with some well-known individuals attempting to espouse something that evangelical and orthodox have never espoused down through the centuries. Although the doctrine has been known for centuries, the orthodox Christian church has never espoused that and in all the creedal statements, the different creedal statements of the Lutherans, the Calvinists, and others, in not a single one of them is there any denial of the doctrine of eternal punishment.

May the Lord bless this reading of his word. Let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are thankful to Thee for the privilege that is ours to open the Scriptures and to ponder there meaning. We thank Thee for the gift of the Holy Spirit who is the infallible interpreter of the word that he has inspired, and we pray that we may be subject to him as we read the word of God. Guide us, Lord, into the truth as Thou hast promised in the upper room discourse to the apostles. We thank Thee for the day in which Thou hast placed us and help us, Lord, to truly represent Thee in a way that will bring honor and glory to Thy name.

We pray for the whole church of Jesus Christ and not simply Believers Chapel, but may the whole church of Jesus Christ receive Thy blessing. Bless those who teach and those who listen. Bless the outreach of the true church of Christ, and may those whom Thou hast determined to be in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, may they through the Holy Spirit be brought to know him whom to know is life eternal.

We pray, Lord, for those who've requested our prayers, for those who are sick, for those who have very difficult circumstances in which they find themselves, for some who are suffering pain, we pray for each one of them. O God, minister to them out of the greatness of the consolation and sympathy and goodness and lovingkindness which characterizes our great God.

We pray for this country. We pray for Thy blessing upon its leadership. Give wisdom and guidance and direction. May there continue to be the opportunity to proclaim the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For these, Lord, in the audience, we pray for each one, for their families. Many of us have loved ones who do not know the saving grace of God and Jesus Christ, and O God, if it should please Thee bring them to know our Lord as the one who has died for sinners and to know themselves as redeemed by Christ and to know him as their own personal savior.

Bless as we sing together, as we listen to the Scriptures. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today is the same as last Sunday in that we are following along in the same theme through our study of this one chapter epistle, the Epistle of Jude, “Christendom in the Light of Jude,” and this is the second of our messages on that point. This one has to do as you can tell with judgment. In fact, it’s a kind of call of Jude to recognize the fact that God does judge. He’s been talking particularly about those who have abused the grace of God, turning the grace of God into licentiousness and speaking of the fact that in this fact they do deny our only master and Lord, Jesus Christ. And I think in Jude’s way of speaking, what he suggests is very strongly that we may deny the Lord, not simply in the fact that we hold false doctrine, but we may deny him holding true doctrine but not living in accordance with it. And in this case, that latter seems to be the stress of the brother of our Lord.

Origen said, with reference to Jude, “Jude wrote an Epistle of few lines, yet filled with vigorous words of heavenly grace.” Well I think we sense the vigor, at least, in the three verses that we have read. The church in Jude’s day was a church filled with creepers. And these creepers who have crept into the church preached a new morality, a new morality for that day adorned with crypto biblical clothing and seductively presented with sensibility and intelligence. Paul would have called them individuals who practice cunning craftiness, as he says in Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 14. The teaching was simply this; we may live in liberty because we are justified by the grace of God.

Now it's not surprising that we have Jude speaking of just such a possibility because I think anyone who knows anything about the history of the Christian church will know that what is represented Jude is a tendency that may be discerned in the history of the Christian church. It unfortunately is a false tendency, but nevertheless it's found, even in the early church, so that the apostles and others spoke against it. For example, the Apostle Paul in Galatians chapter 5 and verse 13 says, “For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”

The Apostle Peter in his 1st epistle speaking along the same lines says these words in chapter 2 and verse 16 of his 1st epistle, “Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bond slaves of God.” It's not surprising because it's so easy for us who still possess the sin principle in our members, in our body, to excuse our failure by appealing to the fact that we have freedom.

The Apostle Paul also in Romans chapter 6 and verse 1 speaks directly with reference to it when he says, “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may abound?” So should we as Christians who affirm that we are saved by the grace of God in Christ apart from our works not be concerned that our lives reflect the holiness and righteousness characteristic of our savior, and of the apostles and others who have in the past lived according to Christianity.

Incidentally, the Apostle Paul again in one other place makes a very interesting statement in connection with it in his Epistle to Titus. In chapter 2 and verse 11 he says, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age.” So the grace of God is that which instructs us so Paul says to live holy lives. So if we truly understand the grace of God then it will teach us that having come to be saved through grace, through faith alone we are to live a holy life. There is no excuse whatsoever for not applying ourselves with the aid of the Holy Spirit and the word of God in a path of life that is characterized by growing likeness to Jesus Christ.

Now in Jude’s day he was faced with the fact that in the church there had come people, he calls them, “Those who have crept in unnoticed,” who he says, “Were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation,” that is I think a reference to the Old Testament spoke of just such individuals, “ungodly persons who are turning the grace of our God into licentiousness.”

About twenty-five years ago there rose in the Christian church in this country a great concern over the relationship of Christian truth to morality, and in fact when many well-known individuals of different denominational backgrounds began to talk about this, what they talked about came to be known as the New Morality. Some like to say it’s the Old Immorality, but it was called the New Morality. And it was a morality that was architected by some very well-known individuals. One an Anglican bishop, one or two from the churches in the United States, even one from a Lutheran church, one from a Baptist church, one from a Presbyterian church became prominent in what was known as the New Morality.

Joseph Fletcher particularly was associated with it because he wrote a book on situation ethics trying to point out that there are occasions in which it’s impossible for us to follow the biblical teaching and therefore it was just in such circumstances to violate the specific teachings of the word of God because of the greater good that would be accomplished by doing what appeared to be ethical in the circumstances. Mr. Fletcher and others imaginatively constructed a lot of situations such as, for example, let us suppose during the last war, World War II, a woman had a husband with some children and her husband fell into the hands of, say, the Nazis and the wife fell into the hands of the Nazis and then her captors sought to have intercourse with her, commit adultery with her, and told her if she did not submit then they would harm her husband. And, of course they have different ways in which this might be conjectured. I’ve forgotten the exact illustration, but it’s a similar thing like that. And so, under those circumstances it was the view of the New Moralists that it would be in such circumstances permissible to violate the word of God in order to save life, in other words, a greater good by violating the word of God.

All of that I think came under the judgment of Helmut Thielicke who was also himself a German and who preached and taught at the time. He said, “All of this kind of thinking was something that was contrary to the word of God and I,” this is what Mr. Thielicke said, “I have to trust in the thousand of ways in which God has at his disposal to accomplish his will.” What he in effect was saying that God is able in any kind of circumstance to accomplish his will, and so we should obey God under all circumstances. It became very popular. We associated it in the world with Hugh Hefner’s Playboy enterprises. In the United States there were many organizations that became taken up with this, but essentially it was filled with error. It was antinomian. It defined Christian love in its own unique way, omitting the redemption and cross of Jesus Christ. It was Pelagian in the sense that it had Pelagian ideas of man’s ability to justify himself by his own actions, and its ethics was surely sub-Christian.

And so consequently, situation ethics and the New Morality became truly the old immorality shortly thereafter, after about 5 years of playing with it, it faded into the background, but now here we are in 1991 and we have the same thing in our Christian churches today. And the striking thing about it to me is that what we have today is different to this extent, while the New Morality of twenty-five years ago was morality that was fashioned by men who were in academic circles and some in the church, today what we see is the immorality, the New Morality, is a New Morality which is largely being fostered by men who stand behind the pulpit, such as I’m doing, men in pastoral gowns and men who are in a sense within the fort of professing Christianity which is remarkable. And in fact even within the fort of professing evangelical Christianity we have teaching emanating from the pulpits that is surprisingly anti-Christian.

We have mentioned recently in some of the messages, particularly in connection with the messages on David and in the association with David and his failings in so many ways, what has happened in, for example, the Anglican church; what has happened in the Episcopalian church in this country; what has happened among the Methodists who cannot seem to make up their mind with regard to what they do believe; and what has happened in the Presbyterian church. Surprisingly,

we have had the illustration relatively recently of the general assembly appointing a special committee on human sexuality and then over a year later, they're bringing of their report to the next general assembly, and among the things that were pronounced in their report, thankfully it was turned down by the majority, but you must remember that if these men were appointed by the leadership and if they managed to survive, there's a great number of people within it who were in support of these things.

For example, these are some of the things that were believed: that all persons whether heterosexual or homosexual, whether single or partnered, have a moral right to experience justice love in their lives and to be sexual persons; that gays and lesbians be received as full participant members and for ordination regardless of their sexual orientation; and that sexual celibacy not be a requirement for ordination; that worship resources be designed to celebrate same sex relationships; that the problem before the church is not sexual sin, but the prevailing social, cultural, and ecclesial arrangements and conformity to the unjust norm of compulsory heterosexuality; and that a reformed Christian ethic, to use the term reformed with this to my mind is almost in itself a major sin, that a reformed Christian ethic of sexuality will not condemn out of hand any sexual relations in which there is genuine equality and mutual respect. So, within the fort of Christianity, among the Christian soldiers who are marching forth to war, there is the fifth column of immorality. It's not new, obviously. Jude writes about it so it was present in his day.

There is something for us to remember, and it's this. Because there are individuals who abuse grace, and attempt to do it with the Bible, we are not to abandon the grace of God. We're not to fall over into legalism or even a legalistic kind of approach to the preaching of the gospel of Christ. We are to appropriate what the Bible has to say about the grace of God and proclaim it in a sensible, responsible, isn't that word responsible is a late 20th century favorite with all kinds of people, but I'm going to use it again because you may understand and responsible way.

Thomas Manton, one of the puritans, said, “The children must not be kept from bread because the dogs catch at it.” And so, let us remember that the grace of God is the teaching of the

word of God, and we will proclaim it, and if individuals abuse it we will not depart from the grace of God, the grace of God in salvation and the grace of God in Christian living. So we will proclaim that.

Now Jude has the creepers to deal with. He’s very concerned about them. He says they’ve turned the grace of our God into licentiousness, and thereby deny our only master and Lord Jesus Christ, and so he wants them to remember a few things. I think that’s so interesting. It’s like a preacher, like I’m doing. I want you to remember some things though you know these things. In fact, he says, “I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all.” You’ve been properly instructed in this. You know about our common salvation, and you know these things, but there is a time when we do need reminding. All of us know that. You could give a testimony to that yourself. We need to be reminded constantly because there is within us the tendency to depart from the word of God. So he says, “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.”

Now it would be nice if we could devote an entire message at least to each one of these three illustrations of judgment. We cannot do that. I’m going to trust that most of you in this audience know the stories, and know the incidents to which Jude refers. And if you don’t, I suggest that you go back and you look at the passages that I’ll make reference to because it will make it a whole lot clearer to you. But nevertheless he talks now about the judgment of Israel, the judgment of the angels, and the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, and devotes a verse to each one of them.

And the first is of the judgment of Israel. The story is very well known in the word of God. Jude’s first example proves that even insiders, even professors, even those who company with the people of God are individuals that may founder. What that means as far as Believers Chapel is concerned is that there may be people in this particular audience who are regular attenders of Believers Chapel that may not really have the essence of Christianity in your heart. So, just as the

children of Israel were brought out of the land of Egypt, it was still possible for them as a people of God to turn away from him.

The story is the story that is found in Numbers chapter 13 and chapter 14, and I want to turn to it. You need not turn to it, but if you want to turn to it, turn to Numbers chapter 13 and verse 14, and I want to just say a few words about it because we don't have a whole lot of time to deal with these incidents but the story is as you know the story of the children of Israel who have come out of Egypt, out of the bondage of Egypt. They've come into the land and now they've reached a critical point. It was the July of the 2nd year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, and they have now come to Kadesh-barnea, and they are on the doorsteps of the land that had been promised to them.

So Moses calls for spies to enter into the land and spy it out. And one from each of the tribes is chosen and included among them were Caleb of the tribe of Judah and Joshua the son of Nun, who Moses, he says, called “Hoshea, the son of Nun,” or Joshua. And he told the spies to go into the land, God speaking through Moses, go in the land and go over the land and look at the land, look at the hill country, look at the plain, and find out what the land is all about and about the people within the land. And so they did. They went into the land and they came out of the land greatly impressed with the goodness of the land. In fact when they came to the Valley of Eshcol, they cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes, and they had to carry it on a pole between two men with some of the pomegranates and figs. It was so marvelous, the fruit of the land that it was necessary for that to take place. And so, having investigated the land, Moses now listens to the report of the spies. And I'm going to divide it up into what may be called a majority report and a minority report.

And the majority report is this. Verse 26 of chapter 13 of Numbers:

“They proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the

congregation and showed them the fruit of the land. Thus they told him, and said, (these are the words of the spies) ‘We went into the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.’”

And they pointed to the grapes of Eshcol and you would think at this point since the Lord had promised he would be with them, they would immediately say, “Let’s don’t waste any time. Let’s go in.” But characteristic of unbelief is the very next word.

“Nevertheless, (they said) the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there. Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan.”

That’s their report. In other words, it’s a great land. It certainly does flow with milk and honey as God said, but nevertheless, let’s don’t go in.

Now the minority report is led by Caleb,

“Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, ‘We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it.’ But the men who had gone up with him said, ‘We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us.’ So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, ‘The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size. There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.’”

Now, isn't it striking? The report of the majority and the report of the minority are precisely the same report. The land is a land flowing with milk and honey, the same report. Both the unbelieving and the believing, the land is exactly as the Lord has said it is. One, however, the vast majority said, “Nevertheless,” and the other said, “We’re able to go in,” same report but a difference in the individuals who’ve caused it. Let me put it very simply. We don't have time to do anything more than this. The ten put difficulty between themselves and God. The two, specifically Caleb speaking here we’ve said, put God between themselves and the difficulty. That’s really the whole point of the incident. It illustrates so effectively that even though the reports are the same, the problem is with them.

Spurgeon somewhere talks about old Mr. Timorous. He said, “Mr. Timorous,” from Bunyan’s allegory, “was a friend of mine: did you ever hear what he said to Christian, when he met him on his journey? I will tell you the same. ‘The lions; the lions! the lions!’ He never says the lions are chained, he just says the lions; ‘the lions! the lions!’ ‘The giants! the giants! the giants!’ he never says, ‘He carrieth his lambs in his bosom, and gently leadeth those that are with young.’” So here are some who are disobedient to the word of God. So Jude says, “Now I desire to remind you, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, that the Lord subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.”

In other words, the problem is belief. The sin of the creepers is flagrant immorality, but fundamentally the sin of immorality is the result of unbelief, and unbelief is that which provokes God. That’s what the write of the Epistle of the Hebrews points out using this same incident. In other words, the fundamental failure of all of us is not immorality. It’s not rebellion. It’s unbelief. Unbelief, issues in rebellion, which in turn issues in immorality. The sin of Adam and Eve took place before they ever took the fruit. The very fact that they did not believe the word of God led them to take the fruit and partake of it. The unbelief led to rebellion and in the very next chapter of the book of Genesis, we have murder.

So in all of human activity, it is unbelief that is the essence of sin, and so here, the same thing. And the writer of the Epistle of the Hebrews points out so plainly, drawing from the 95th Psalm, “Unbelief is that which provokes God.” Why not? Why should it not provoke God? Because it’s an attack on his character, it says, in effect, Lord, you’re not truthful. You’re not really telling the truth.” And so it’s more serious than one might think. It’s an attack on the character of God not to believe his word. Just as if I were to say something to you and you were to say to me I don’t believe that. Well it would be an attack upon my veracity. Now you can get away with me because I do fail. But with the Lord God, the infinite, eternal Lord God, think what we are doing when we don’t believe.

Now the second judgment is the judgment of the angels, verse 6, “And angels (not only Israel but ‘and the 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.” Even the angels with heavenly privileges despise them and fell by arrogance and lust because they did not keep their place they are now kept for judgment. Jude playing upon the verb that means “to keep.” The story is Genesis chapter 6 verse 1 through verse 9 and the story of the sons of God who evidently took to themselves, had the power to take to themselves a human body, came to earth, and had sexual intercourse with the women of the day, just before the flood, partially evidently the flood came because of the wickedness and immorality of that.

Now that’s a very strange story, and it’s a story that usually provokes a storm of radical skepticism. And not surprisingly because we do not know of anything like that and consequently it’s difficult for us to grasp, but you must remember that this is an incident that is recorded in the word of God that occurred before the flood, so what we know about that is very little. And incidentally, in this instance Jude manifests that he’s well acquainted with some pseudepigraphal literature, that is false literature. These were Jewish apocalyptic volumes. 1 Enoch is one of them and it’s evident that Jude was a student of 1 Enoch because that same incident is recorded in some detail in Enoch, and he quotes from Enoch later on in this book and makes reference also to the Assumption of Moses,

another pseudepigraphal book, not the apocryphal, but the pseudepigraphal books, the literature.

This man was familiar with that literature, and so finding the incident in the word of God and also knowing of its accounting in the book of Enoch he writes what he writes.

Now you can see from this that Satan and the demons are free, the demons, evidently, angelic beings who fell with Satan. We have some instances in the gospels that suggest something like this, but only a suggestion on which one could not make any doctrinal pronouncement. But you may remember that the Lord Jesus spoke about a man who was indwelt by a demon who was very much desirous of having nudity as his covering. And in Luke chapter 8 reference is made to it that he had not worn any clothes for a lengthy period of time, indwelt by a demon, strange incident. And again I cannot tell you anything more about that other than that statement in Luke chapter 8 and verse 27. But let me just briefly recount the story of the Bible with reference to these angels. They kept not their first estate that is, their own principality, that is, the proper place for which God created them. Leaving the dignity of their angelic position, they fell among those who had fallen with Satan; these individuals fell further and actually took to themselves human bodies and sought to have intercourse, and did, with women on the earth. They left their own habitation the word of God says. They abandon their proper home. They burned their bridges in apostasy and came to the earth. And as a result of that, God has reserved them, since they didn't keep their own domain; he now keeps them in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.

Incidentally the Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, the Apostle Paul writes and says that we are to judge angels. Isn't that amazing that I should judge an angel. I certainly don't feel qualified to do that. I would first of all start out by saying, “Are us a Calvinist?” [Laughter] But I don't think that that would go. So I'll pass that by. I'd rather not have to do that in my present state, but Paul says that we are to judge angels. And I have to take his word for it. We shall. Perhaps some of these individuals are involved.

But then in the 7th verse he says, “Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these.” Now, “these” is a reference to the angels, and so you can see

its unnatural sexual relations. I know there are people who say to me, “Well according to our Lord’s statement, the angels in heaven do not marry, or do not give in marriage.” Yes, the angels in heaven don’t, but these are not angels who are now in heaven. These are angels who left heaven and fell from heaven, apostatized further in unbelief. The text in Matthew chapter 22, verse 30 does not apply.

Now, the third judgment is one that is very striking too and very appropriate for our day for he says, “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 different flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.” The Israelites had the blessing of God’s redemption in the Passover incident. The angels of God’s highest creation, Sodom of God’s choice earthly spot, you’ll remember that when Lot was choosing Sodom as his place of abode it was described as, “Like the garden of the Lord.” Go to it today, and you will see a living picture of divine judgment, and there the Dead Sea, a living picture of the lake of fire as well. And it has stood down through the centuries as an illustration of the ultimate judgment of God. It’s the most graphic example of judgment in the Bible with overtones throughout the word of God, all through the Old Testament, all through the New Testament; numerous times the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah is referred to. And here is Jude referring to it again. As someone has written, “The glare of Sodom and Gomorrah is flung down the whole length of Scripture history.” It was a repulsive incident.

Remember the details in chapter 18, the Lord God with two angels had come to Abraham and Sarah to announce that Sarah was to be the mother of the seed of Abraham, magnificent promise. And then at the conclusion of the chapter, well during the chapter God had said he was going down to Sodom to take a look at Sodom because the cry of the people had come up to him in heaven, their wickedness. And so God disappears, it’s really a case of an appearance of God, a theophany because the Lord Jesus Christ is evidently the one referred to in Genesis 18, but the two angels go on down to the city of Sodom. They are described as two men, and so they come into the city and the Sodomites, that is the citizens of Sodom desire to have them, come to Lot’s door where

they were staying, ask that Lot give them up to them that they might know them, that is that they might have sexual relationships with them. These men were bent on unnatural sexual intercourse going after different flesh, homosexual intercourse or sodomy as we have called it today.

The Greek words suggest the intensity of it. The judgment is a landmark in the word of God. Referred to in Isaiah several times, referred to in the New Testament, often in the Old Testament and what happened in Sodom and Gomorrah and three other cities of the plains down there was what might be called surgery, not butchery for either extermination or contamination, but God acting in order to deliver the people from the sin of the Sodomites. And they remain an example of punishment of eternal fire.

The Bible has a great deal to say about homosexuality. Way back in the Old Testament it is said, in Exodus around chapter 18 or so, and verse 13, Moses tells the children of Israel that for a man to lie with another man is an abomination. And so consequently in the Bible all the way through, the homosexuality is referred to as an abomination, a violation of the natural order of things. The French call homosexuality, the English vice. Well they could call it the American vice as well today, but it's pervasive and particularly so in our society today.

The Apostle Paul has something very significant to say about this in the 1st chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. You'll remember that in verse 18 he says, “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,” and then in verse 26 and verse 27 of chapter 1 he says,

“For this cause God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.”

You know we often read this chapter somewhat like this. Paul simply sets forth the way in which the human race has fallen into sin. And all kinds of sins are set forth by the Apostle Paul. And that is all true, but sometimes it's accompanied with a word such as this. If we don't watch out in our society, we're going to be judged. I have no doubt that that is true, but that's a misunderstanding of what Paul is talking about. He's not saying these things are bad and you better stop doing them or you're going to be judged. What Paul says, and let me say it very plainly, what Paul says is these things that are happening are evidence that God has already begun to judge us. He says God has given them over, three times, “God has given them over. God has given them over. God has given them over.”

In other words, the incidents of the sins that are mentioned there and let's not mention only homosexuality, the sins that are mentioned there are evidence that we already stand under the judgment of God. We're in a society that stands under the judgment of God today. That's our society. We're not a society heading for judgment. We're a society under judgment heading for a final judgment. What Jude calls here in verse 6, “The judgment of the great day,” and in verse 7, “The punishment of eternal fire.”

And now strikingly, not only have we missed that point I just mentioned, but we even have evangelicals who are suggesting that there really isn't such a thing as eternal torment. And that we have the option of believing in Jesus Christ or ultimate annihilation. And such outstanding men as Dr. Philip Hughes, John Stott, John Wyndham and still others among evangelicals, long years of evangelical preaching, acknowledging they have questions about eternal punishment. And when the words are examined that they have been uttering, they ultimately come down to this. I just cannot bring myself to believe that God would punish an individual with eternal punishment forever.

Look it isn't a question of what we can believe or not, it's a question of what the word of God says. We're talking about the sufficiency of holy Scripture versus the reasoning's of sinful men. We're talking about the noetic effects of sin in the minds of some of us so that we do not really see

things as God’s holy word sets them forth. I wish it were possible to talk further about this, but we cannot do it for time’s sake.

I want to notice a distinction in these judgments upon the saved and the unsaved, or the professingly saved in case of Israel, there was physical death, and there was undoubtedly in the case of many of those within the children of Israel failure to really believe the promises of God that have to do with ultimate eternal salvation. In other words, Jude believed that it was proper to warn these individuals about the experiences of the children of Israel, God’s elect people. And that they in their own history illustrate that it’s possible to suffer the judgment of the great day or the punishment of eternal fire if they’re not believers. The angels, they are reserved for the future judgment. There is such. And Sodom, it lies exposed as an example of eternal fire suffering the eternal punishment now and on into the future, as I mentioned the locale has become a Dead Sea, a notable sign of the lake of fire.

A lasting warning Jude gives them to new moralists of whatever age of the certainty of divine judgment. No special relation such as a supposed covenantal relationship in which unbelief exists provides any hope for us. No special dignity such as the angels possessed as one of the high creations of Lord God, or no special beauty, such as the prosperity and natural beauty of Sodom avails. Judgment is universal and attaches its possibility to all of us who do not believe in Holy Scripture.

Anne of Austria once said to Richlieu, “God does not pay at the end of every day, but at the end he pays.” And it’s so important for us as professing Christians to remember that we are dealing when we open the Bible, talk about divine things, we are talking about eternal things.

If you’re here today and you’ve never believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, I remind you that association with association with Christians does not mean that you have the security of eternal life. Association with a family of believers does not mean that. Many young people in this audience associating with your parents who are true believers does not mean that you will ultimately be in the family of God. That is settled only when you as an individual, young or old, turn in faith to the Lord

God in heaven and receive Jesus Christ as your own Savior, acknowledging your sin, acknowledging him as a Savior for sin, and trusting him. May God in his grace enable you to do it, both young and old.

May we stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father we turn with thanksgiving to Thee for the revelation of the way of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. O God, where would we be, did we not have him? We thank Thee for these warnings, these reminders which we need. Lord, deliver us from the sin of abusing the grace of God, turning it into licentiousness, and not, by the help of the Holy Spirit, giving every effort that he provides to live in a way that honors Thee in the holiness and righteousness of the truth of God. Deliver us from our sins as the days go by, O God.