

The LORD Delivered His People Out of Egypt, But Later Destroyed Those Who Did Not Believe

Jude 5 and First Corinthians 10:5-11

DIG: How does this example from history relate to the problems of lack of trust, immorality, violence and rebellion? What four areas of sin will the false teachers of the end times be judged? How does this example convey the certainty, severity and rightness of the LORD's judgment?

REFLECT: The parallel to believers today is obvious, since we too have experienced God's favor but are liable to His judgment if we stray from Him. Are you having, or have you had, any problems with any of the four areas of sin mentioned by First Corinthians 10:5-11? How do you get out from under it (see First John 1:8-10)?

Though you already know this, I want to remind you that ADONAI delivered His people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe (Jude 5).

God was not pleased with them; their bodies were scattered over the desert. Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry." We should not test the Lord, as some of them did - and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did - and were killed by the destroying Angel of the LORD. These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings to us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come (First Corinthians 10:5-11a).

Jude's preference for triads emerges again. By means of **the fourth triad**, he next reminds believers of three lessons from history. The order is not chronological. For the apostate Jews, **Isra'el** would be last. Probably **Jude** began with **Isra'el** because **they** were **God's people**, the objects of **His** favor and redemption, and yet **they** experienced **His** judgment when **they** sinned.³¹ For **the first lesson**, **Jude** uses the example of the wilderness wanderings, but **he** writes of **Isra'el's** sin and punishment only as it relates to the central subject of **his** letter: apostasy.

Though you already know all this, I want to remind you (Jude 5a). Jude issues a warning to the evil apostates who were perverting the belief and conduct of the messianic synagogues. He tells them that he is, in fact, doing nothing more than reminding them of things that they were already perfectly well aware of. In a sense, it is true that all teaching in the local messianic synagogues and churches is not so much bringing new truth, as it is confronting people with the truth they already know but have forgotten or disregarded.

To understand the first two examples that Jude gives from history (Isra'el and the angels), we must understand one thing. The false teachers who were corrupting the messianic synagogues did not regard themselves as enemies of the congregations of God. They regarded themselves as advanced thinkers, a cut above the ordinary, and spiritually elite (see Ac - [The Book of Jude from a Jewish Perspective: Purpose](#)). Jude chooses his examples to make clear that even if believers have received the greatest privileges from ADONAI, they may still fall away to disaster. They cannot consider themselves safe, but must be on constant watch against mistaken beliefs and error.³²

What Jude reminds his readers is that ADONAI delivered His people out of Egypt (Jude 5b). This is the record of Exodus 6-14, the event that defined and brought into being the people of Isra'el. Through the plagues He brought on Egypt through Moses and Aaron, God forced Pharaoh to "let His people go" and the LORD destroyed the Egyptian armies in the Sea of Reeds when they tried to follow the escaping Israelites.

However, as Jude's readers and most believers know, the people whom God delivered never got to experience the joy of the Promise Land. Intimidated by the physical strength of the people already in the land of Canaan, they failed to trust ADONAI to give them the victory. The LORD, therefore, sentenced the entire generation of Israelites twenty years old or more (with the exception of Joshua and Caleb) to wander in the desert until they had all died off (Numbers 14:32-33, 26:4 and 32:10-13).³³

But later destroyed those who did not believe (Jude 5c). This picture seems to have haunted the mind of Paul when he wrote: God was not pleased with most of them (First Corinthians 10:5a). Most of them, is one of the great understatements in the Bible. Of the millions of Israelites who left Egypt (see my commentary on Exodus Ca - At the End of the 430 Years, to the Very Day) only two, Joshua and Caleb, were allowed to enter the Promised Land. Even Moses and Aaron were disqualified from entering because of the rock at Meribah that was struck with Moses' rod rather than spoken to as God had commanded (Numbers 20:8-12 and 24).

Because of disobedience **their bodies were scattered over the desert (First Corinthians 10:5b)**. The corpses of those whom ADONAI was not pleased with were strewn all over the wilderness. The LORD had graciously blessed Isra'el greatly, but when **their** obedience and service was tested - **they** failed. **They** misused and abused **their** freedom and **their** blessings. In self-centeredness and self-will **they** tried to live on the edge of **their** liberty, and **they** fell into temptation and then into sin. Overconfidence was **their** undoing.

All **the Israelites** who put the blood of the lamb on their doorposts on the night of the Passover did so by faith (see my commentary on **Exodus Bw - Christ and the Passover**). **They** were believers when **they** left **Egypt**. In the Dispensation of the Torah, the covering for sin was only temporary. Jews had to continually bring an acceptable sacrifice to the Tabernacle for their sins to be temporarily covered by the blood of the innocent. It was a lifelong process that never ended. But over time, there were those who brought **their** sacrifices, but **their** hearts were not in it. **They** just went through the motions and made a mockery of **God's** sacrificial system. The deeper **they** got into **their** sin the less serious **they** became. Paul would say to a future generation: **What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means (Romans 6:1-2a)**. There are natural consequences to our behavior. Consequently, **they** became unfit for **God's** service (**Second Timothy 2:19-22**) and were **scattered over the desert** like pieces of broken pottery that were no longer useful.³⁴

ADONAI disciplined **the Israelites** because of four major areas of sin: **idolatry (First Corinthians 10:7)**, **sexual immorality (First Corinthians 10:8)**, **testing God's patience (First Corinthians 10:9)**, and **grumbling (First Corinthians 10:10)**. Paul wrote this as a warning. The discipline experienced by **the** disobedient **Israelites** in the wilderness was an **example to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did (First Corinthians 10:6)**. Not only will the apostates of **the end times** be judged for abusing these four areas of sin, but they can also bring **the Lord's** discipline upon us today.

Idolatry: Do not be idolaters, as some of them were. The **Israelites** were barely out of **Egypt** before they fell into idolatry. There were no Egyptian priests or idols to lure **them**, but **they** managed to make **their** own idol. After **Moses** received the tablets of **God's** commandments on Mount Sinai, **the people** became impatient at **his** delay in returning. With little effort they persuaded **Aaron** to make them a **golden calf**.

Although the **calf** was probably intended to represent one or more of the visible forms of the Egyptian bull-god Apis, **the Israelites** planned to use it to worship **ADONAI**. They referred to **the golden calf** as the god who brought them up out of Egypt (**Exodus 32:4b**). And when **Aaron** built an altar to the idol he declared a festival to **YHVH**, the covenant name of **the God of Israel (Exodus 3:14-15)**. **Aaron** even offered the same sacrifices (the burnt and peace offerings) normally offered to **ADONAI**. Nevertheless, **the Israelites** thought they could use a **pagan idol** to worship the true **God**. They had been around **idols** so much in **Egypt**, it probably almost seemed natural to add **pagan** practice to true worship that **the LORD** demanded. Even **Aaron** went along with **their evil plan** (see my commentary on **Exodus Gr - Aaron Made an Idol in the Shape of a Calf**).

As it is written: The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry. The eating and drinking refer to excessive feasting that followed the sacrifices. **Pagan revelry** is a euphemism for sexual play and is the same word translated **caressing** in **Genesis 26:8**. Some three thousand of **the Israelites** who had started the idolatrous orgy at Sinai were put to death (**Exodus 32:28**).³⁵

When believers worship anyone or anything besides **ADONAI** it is idolatry. Worshiping the virgin Mary, saints, icons, or angels is idolatry. No matter how sincerely **they** are meant to venerate or honor **the LORD**, such practices are strictly forbidden (see my commentary on **Exodus Gr - You Shall Have No Other Gods Before Me**). There is only one **God**, and only **God** is to be worshiped. The command: **Worship God**, still holds true (**Revelation 22:9**). And **John's** advice: **My little children, guard yourselves from idols (First John 5:21)**, will be especially true in the last days as it was when **John** wrote it.

Of course, all **idols** are not physical. They do not have to be made of wood, stone or metal. Any concept of **ADONAI** that is not biblical is false, and if believed, venerated or worshiped, becomes an **idol**. Anyone who worships a man made god may claim they worship the **God** of the Bible, just as **the Israelites** claimed their **calf** worship was to **the LORD**. But no false god has anything to do with **YHVH**. Basically, anyone or anything that comes between you and **ADONAI** is an **idol**. But that won't stop the false teachers in the last days, **they** will worship idols with gusto.

Sexual Immorality: We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did - and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. The second major sin alluded to in the phrase **pagan revelry**, is treated separately here. The incident that Paul describes is recorded in the book of **Numbers**. While in the desert, **the men began to indulge in sexual**

immorality with Moabite women, who invited them to the sacrifices of their god. The people ate and bowed down before these gods (Numbers 25:1-2). Some have linked Paul's twenty-three thousand with the three thousand who died in Exodus 32:28. But when we look at First Corinthians 10:5-10, it reminds us that Paul drew all his illustrations for First Corinthians 10:8 from the book of Numbers. There in Numbers 25:9 it records how 24,000 had died in a plague as a result of God's judgment. This figure probably records the total that had died, including the leaders (apparently numbering one thousand) who were executed (Numbers 25:4). Paul's figure of twenty-three thousand refers to only those killed from those associated with Korah, and the plague (Numbers 16:49).³⁶

Idolatry and sexual immorality are closely related in every cult. This will be especially true with the apostates in the last days. They will be no more immune to immorality than idolatry. They will turn the grace of God into an excuse for blatant immorality (Jude 4). They will even engage in shameless unnatural sexual immorality and perversion, like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah (Jude 7). It will be brazen immorality. They will pollute their own bodies and will not consider it to be a sin (Jude 8). They will have no shame whatsoever. Nothing will be off-limits . . . nothing.

As a result, the debauchery of the apostates will lead countless men and women into the Great Tribulation. This environment will be very difficult for believers in the last days because temptation will be non-stop. These temptations will not be passive in any way, but very blatant and aggressive. No holds barred. Yeshua said it will be like the days before the Flood when there was sex between fallen demons and women (see Ak - The Angels Who Did Not Keep Their Positions of Authority) that resulted in the world being so wicked that ADONAI had to destroy it. Believers will need to put on all of their spiritual armor to survive (Ephesians 6:10-18).

Testing ADONAI's Patience: We should not test the LORD, as some of them did - and were killed by snakes. The third major sin that the apostates of the end times will be guilty of is testing the patience of God. Moses gives us the story behind this reference in Numbers 21:5. ADONAI had graciously provided manna and quail to eat and water to drink, but the people were not satisfied. They wanted a big buffet. They constantly complained, questioning the LORD's goodness and trying His patience. Like the apostates in the last days, they will have no concern for pleasing God, only for pleasing themselves. Be assured, however, that no one will go unpunished (see my commentary on Revelation Fo - The Great White Throne Judgment).

Believers sometimes push ADONAI to the limit by seeing how much they can get by with. **Ananias and Sapphira** tried that and it cost them **their lives (Acts 5:3-4, 9)**. They were trying **God's** patience and risking everything. Some believers today might be saying, "This is the age of **grace**. We are free and **the Lord** is forgiving. We can't lose our salvation, so why not live life in the fast lane?" Well, **the Israelites in the desert** found out the answer to that question: **Then ADONAI sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died (Numbers 21:6)**. Believers do live under **grace** today, but there are limits we cannot cross without the natural consequences of our actions coming back to bite us, so to speak. The natural consequence of the false teachers who try the patience of **God** in **the last days** will be faster than the twinkling of an eye as the Church is taken up to be with **the Lord** (see my commentary on **Revelation By - The Rapture of the Church**) and the apostates are left behind to enter the destruction of the Great Tribulation.

Grumbling: And do not grumble, as some of them did - and were killed by the **destroying Angel of the LORD**. The fourth major sin about which Paul warns is complaining. After **Korah, Dathan, and Abiram**, and their fellow rebels were destroyed by ADONAI (Numbers 16:32-35), the next day the whole Israelite community grumbled against **Moses and Aaron**. "You have killed the LORD's people," they said (Numbers 16:41). God was so enraged at their complaining about divine justice that He immediately sent a **plague** that killed **14,700 people**, in addition to those who had died because of **Korah (Numbers 16:49)**. The **destroying Angel of the LORD** was the same **Angel** who would, in response to the prayers of **Isaiah** and **Hezekiah**, destroy the entire Assyrian army that was surrounding Jerusalem (see my commentary on **Isaiah Gw - Then the Angel of the LORD Put To Death a Hundred and Eighty Five Thousand Men in the Assyrian Camp**). Multitudes of those apostates will **grumble** against any godly message in **the last days**. Any message or teaching about **the Lord** will be labeled "hate speech." It will be banned, with believers being hunted down and persecuted (opposed to what Covenant Theology teaches, the world will not be getting better and better before **the Lord** returns, it will be getting more and more **evil**).

Grumbling is dissatisfaction with **God's** sovereign will for our lives and the lives of others, and is a sin that He does not take lightly, even in view of His **grace**. When **the Lord's people** question or complain, they are challenging **His** wisdom, **His grace**, **His** goodness, **His** love, and **His** righteousness. Our need for contentment is not merely for our own well-being (which it is), but also for **God's** honor and glory. **Grumbling** dishonors ADONAI, while contentment glorifies Him. Paul wrote to us: **Be content whatever the circumstances (Philippians 4:11b)**, and advises us today to have this same contentment, lest we suffer **God's** discipline.³⁷

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings to us, on whom the fulfillment of the [last days] has come (First Corinthians 10:11). God's deliverance of His people seemed to be decisive and final after the exodus, yet He still destroyed them because of their lack of faith. Jude intended this to be a warning to his messianic readers: **Don't think, because Yeshua Messiah has decisively rescued you from your sins, that you can presume on His grace and mercy.**³⁸

These verses are proof that even those who have the greatest privilege can meet with disaster before **the end**, if they fall away from obedience and lapse from faith. Jude warns these false teachers in his day that as great as their privileges had been, they needed to change their ways or disaster would come upon them. It is also a warning that each of us would do well to heed today.³⁹