

The Angels

Did Not Keep Their Positions of Authority

Jude 6 and Second Peter 2:4

DIG: How does this example from history relate to the problems of unbelief, immorality, violence and rebellion? How does this example convey the certainty, severity and rightness of the Lord's judgment?

REFLECT: The pride which thinks it knows better than God and the desire for forbidden things are the way to ruin in time and eternity. When has pride or lust affected your life? Has it been recently, or maybe in the distant past? How long did it take you to learn from that mistake? Did you hurt others? Have you sought forgiveness? How can you help others avoid the same trap?

And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority, but abandoned their own home - these [ADONAI] has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for the great Day of judgment (Jude 6).

For God did not spare the angels who sinned; on the contrary, He put them in gloomy pits of darkness lower than sh'ol to be held for judgment (2 Peter 2:4 CJB).

By means of **the fourth triad**, Jude next reminds believers of three lessons from history. For **the second lesson**, Jude takes us from the apostasy of Israel to the sin of fallen angels the *nefilim* in **Genesis 6:4**. The early Church understood that **Jude 6** referred to **Genesis 6**. In fact, it was not until the latter part of the fourth century that any other view was suggested. Most of the early Church fathers held the same view.⁴⁰ The ones that were the most prominent among them were Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* (Book IV, 36:4), and Justin Martyr, *Second Apology*, Chapter Five.⁴¹

And the angels who did not keep their *arche*, or original positions of authority (Jude 6a). The first meaning of the Greek word *arche* means *beginning*. In other words, they left their original positions as angels in the beginning, to violate the natural laws of God that kept them separate from the human race. Angels are created beings and do not reproduce themselves. There is the same number of angels today as when they were created. But humans reproduce themselves. From Adam and Eve, down through the ages, the race has grown to the proportion it is today.

The second meaning of *arche* comes from the first: *authority, sovereignty, dominion, the beginning* or first place of **authority**. Therefore, this meaning of *arche* teaches that those **angels did not keep their** original, dignified high **positions**. The verb **keep** is *tereo* and actually means *to guard*. The verb expresses the act of watchful care. That is, those **angels did not fulfill their** obligation to carefully *guard* and maintain **their beginning positions of authority** for which **they** were created, but **abandoned** those limits to invade territory that was foreign to **them**, namely, the human race.⁴²

But abandoned their own home (Jude 6b). With Lucifer they rebelled against **their** created role and place. The verb **abandoned** is in the aorist tense and refers to a once-for-all act. **They** were done with heaven forever. This was apostasy with a vengeance. **They** had, so to speak, burnt **their** bridges behind **them**, and descended into a new sphere, the earth, and into a foreign relationship, that with the human race, foreign, because humans are **created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27)** and **angels** are not.

Pride got **them** kicked out of heaven, and when **they** got to earth **they** had a lust for human women. When ADONAI expelled **them** from heaven for that rebellion (see my commentary on [Isaiah Dp - How You Have Fallen From Heaven, O Morning Star](#)), **they** continued on **their** downward spiral to the point of taking masculine form and having sex with human women to produce a generation of little demons who could not be saved and eventually infecting the whole human race (see my commentary on [Genesis Ca - The Sons of God Married the Daughters of Men](#)), thus perverting the LORD's plan of salvation ([John 3:16](#)).

For God did not spare the angels who sinned (Second Peter 2:4a). There is no article before the word **angels** in the Greek. They are looked upon as a class, not individually, and the fact that they are created beings is important to **Jude**. The reasoning was that if **God did not spare the angels, He** would surely **not spare** human beings.

On the contrary, these He has kept in gloomy dungeons lower than sh'ol (Second Peter 2:4b CJB). The King James Version interprets this: **cast them down to hell**. This is a single word in Greek, occurring only here in the Bible, meaning *Tartarus*. The Complete Jewish Bible translates this phrase **lower than sh'ol** because it is underneath **hell**. It is the prison of **the fallen angels, their gloomy pits of darkness**. *Tartarus* is not the same as the Abyss where fallen **angels** other than those found in **Genesis 6** are temporarily confined. *Tartarus*, in Greek mythology, was the place of punishment for departed spirits of the very wicked, particularly rebellious god like Tantalus. But just as Paul could quote an apt verse of the pagan poet Aratus ([Acts 17:28](#)), so could **Peter** make use of this imagery from Homer. Josephus does the same, and talks of heathen gods chained in *Tartarus*. **The evil angels** were in **their** place of torment, although **they** must wait until **their** final judgment.⁴³

Were the false teachers arrogant and prideful? Let them remember that pride had ruined **the angels**. Were they consumed with lust? This, too, caused the downfall of **the angels**. Privileged position had not saved **the angels** and it would not save them! **Jude** reinforces **his** lesson with a touch of savage irony. **The** arrogant **angels** had been too prideful to **keep their original positions** - so **ADONAI** has **kept** them in **gloomy dungeons lower than sh'ol**. The way **Jude** referred to **the angels** gives reason to believe that this truth was widely accepted by his readers, and thus needed no further explanation.

Bound with everlasting chains (Jude 6c). **Chains** is *seiros* and gives us the idea of the loss of freedom in a place of confinement, a fate the demons feared (**Matthew 8:29** and **Luke 8:31**). **Bound** is in the perfect tense, meaning they are in a state of complete and careful guard continually. **Darkness** is *zophos*, the blackness of the densest **darkness** imaginable, originally used of the gloom of the underworld. **Darkness** was a common way of describing divine punishment in the ancient world; the *Greeks* used the same word that **Jude** uses here to describe the place of departed spirits.⁴⁴

Unlike the people of Isra'el, who were saved from Egypt, and then so many fell into unbelief, became apostate, were destroyed in the wilderness, but still had a future in **the far eschatological future** plan of **ADONAI**; these **angels** from the instant of **their** creation, had **their own** place, **their own** domain, **their own** glorious home with **God**. But because of pride **they** apostatized, and there is no return to the dignity and glory **they** once had. **They** are doomed for all eternity.⁴⁵

They are to be held until the **great day of judgment** (**Second Peter 2:4b CJB** and **Jude 6d**; also see my commentary on **Revelation Fo - The Great White Throne Judgment**), where they will be sent to eternal misery in **the lake of fire** (**Revelation 20:14**). Of course, **Peter's** primary purpose here was not to get lost in the details of this account about the fallen **angels**, especially since **his** readers were apparently already familiar with it. Instead, **he** used this illustration to emphasize the main point of **his** argument - namely, that **ADONAI** severely judges all those who oppose **Him** and **His** truth. Like those **angels**, the rebellious apostates who were guilty of the same pride and lust (**Jude 4**) will face divine wrath.⁴⁶