

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 6



Contend
for the faith
which was
once delivered
to the saints
Jude 1:3

SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Scripture Text: Jude 7

This lesson focuses on the grim reminder of the final outcome of apostasy—the account of the destruction of *Sodom and Gomorrah* (see **Genesis, Chapter 19**). It is used again and again in the Scriptures as the example of the sins of men and the judgment of God.

Following the teaching method of parallelism, **Jude 7** deals with the historical reference, and **verse 8** parallels that verse with reference to the time in which Jude was writing. As we consider this example, may God help us to realize that apostasy begins with intellectual doubts or a seemingly mild, spiritual deviance, but it is certain to end in physical degradation of some form.

MEMORY VERSE: *Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

—James 1:15

From Truth to Apostasy

Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner. These two *cities* are mentioned in connection with apostasy because they once had a knowledge of truth. *Ussher's Chronology* says that only 450 years had passed after the Flood when the destruction of these *cities* took place. Before that, God had let the king of Sodom be exposed to Abraham when he rescued Lot (see **Genesis 14:8-24**), who had been living in their midst as a “righteous man” (2 Peter 2:8). Shem, Noah’s son, died fifty-one years after the destruction of these *cities*. He would have been a vivid reminder of God’s character, His truth, and His judgment. The point is clear that before God brings judgment or vengeance, He first gives an opportunity for repentance. Great is God’s faithfulness! No one has ever truly apostatized without first having had truth.

Sodom and Gomorrah were not the only *cities* to be subjected to God’s outpouring of wrath. Jude said *the cities about them* suffered too. In all, four *cities* were destroyed (see **Deuteronomy 29:23**). This plainly shows that apostasy does not stay confined; it spreads just as a cancer does. What happened to those four *cities* shows us that this is how apostasy works.

The Sin of Sodom and Gomorrah

Giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh. In **Genesis 19:5**, the men of the city asked Lot, “Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out . . . that we may know them.” Lot understood what was meant by the phrase “that we may know them.” He said, “I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly” (**verse 7**). The word *know* is used other places in the Scriptures where its meaning is different, but here it means the same as in **Genesis 4:1**: “Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain.” Here, the words *know* and *knew* mean “in the most intimate fashion, in a sexual sense.”

Jude 7 mentions *fornication* (voluntary, intimate sexual behavior between ones not married) and *strange flesh*. What is *strange flesh*? **Romans 1:27** explains it: “And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly . . .” This verse is speaking of the sin of homosexuality. We may not think there could be any connection between this type of activity and apostasy, but religious organizations of today—some of these organizations once had light that was brought forth by great reformers—are embracing this sin and ordaining homosexuals to be ministers.

These “ministers” are raising up congregations and even performing same-sex marriages. This shows that when apostasy starts in the minds and hearts of people, there is no limit to how low they may go. But as vile,

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heinous, and repulsive as homosexuality is, was this the sin that really stirred God or was it merely the outgrowth of something worse? **Romans 1:18** tells us that God's wrath is stirred "against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." What was the "ungodliness and unrighteousness" that those men were committing? They were professing to have truth, but they had twisted it to sanction wrong. This always stirs God!

Romans 1:21-22 says that those men "knew God . . . but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." **Verse 25** says they "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." This is what was fatal! We must not let our humanity and our thinking cause us to start changing the truth, or we will end up with darkened hearts as they did.

A Supernatural Fire

Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. There are two great revelations in this phrase. One, the inhabitants of these cities are still *suffering*. They are in *eternal* agony. Their *suffering* merely went from the realm of the seen to the unseen (even though we cannot see them, the realities of hell are still there). Two, this *eternal fire* came directly from God, and it was a combination of "brimstone and fire" (**Genesis 19:24**).

This gives us an understanding of the kind of fire that shall be on the Judgment Day. **2 Peter 3:12** says, ". . . the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." The *fire* that fell on *Sodom and Gomorrah* was an example of the supernatural fire that will melt natural fire on the Judgment Day. (This supernatural fire is so potent that after God had used it on those cities, they became the site where the Dead Sea is today.)

The fact we should learn from all of this is that the end of apostasy is a terrible death with far reaching, eternal consequences. This lesson should serve as a warning. When you see ones moving from truth, think of how far they might go and of how severe the judgment that awaits them will be. Be true and do not allow your imagination to move you in this day.

JUST A THOUGHT

**No matter how spotted your past may be,
your future is unspotted.**