



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

An Exercise in Remembering (Jude 5-16)

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BIBLE STUDY

JUDE

Location:

122 CAP

Time:

2ND TUESDAYS (MONTHLY) @ NOON

Jude 5-16

“An Exercise in Remembering”

Introduction

American philosopher George Santayana (1863-1952) famously stated, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it” (*The Life of Reason*, 5 vols. [New York: Scribner’s, 1905-06] 1:284). Knowing the past is an exercise in remembering as opposed to forgetting. The reason is that remembrance is fundamental to life itself. History is remembering the events, faith, and individuals, which are recognized as foundational to our lives.

... JUDE 5 BEGINS WITH AN EXHORTATION TO BELIEVERS THAT WE REMEMBER THE PAST.

Throughout the Old Testament, one can easily discern the priority given to remembering. For instance, the Jewish people observed Passover to remember their enslavement in Egypt, and how God delivered and redeemed them from their bondage by the Passover sacrifice (Lev 23; Deut 16). Of course, believers today also have a Passover lamb—the Lord Jesus Christ—and His sacrifice does not repeating (1 Cor 12:23-26; Heb 7:1-28). In the Old Testament, we can see that the vitality of the nation of Israel was not only related to their continual trust in God, but also remembering His actions on their behalf. Even the church has special days for remembering, such as the birth of the Messiah at Christmas and His resurrection at Easter.

Americans also celebrate many memorable days on our calendar. Last month, we celebrated Memorial Day with thankfulness for our fallen servicemen and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country, and to honor both the fallen and those still serving. The most

significant celebration of American independence and individual freedom will be remembered soon on the Fourth of July. The memory of our nation is also enshrined in concrete and granite, such as Mount Rushmore and the Washington Monument. Even our coins and currency are continual memories of America’s illustrious history. If we forget our history, we will be reshaped into whatever forms that new leaders desire. The consequence, however, will not be a “new” people, but a lost and dying population. For this very reason, Jude 5 begins with an exhortation to believers that we remember the past.

REMEMBER THE PAST

(vv. 5-7) Jude 3-4 gave the admonition to recognize those who threaten the Christian faith: (1) ungodly; (2) sensualists; and, (3) rebellious. Following this first exhortation, the next verses admonish us to remember the past: “Now I desire to remind you” (v. 5). It is assumed that those reading verses 5-7 know the historical events mentioned. Indeed, the point is that the readers know, yet they needed to remember God’s judgment in the past. God judged some of the people who were counted among the covenant nation of Israel, He also judged some who were counted among the elect (holy) angels, and He judged Sodom and Gomorrah “and the cities around them.”

We need to apply knowledge of the past to our current experience. There is a danger in knowing historical events in a merely academic manner, which means knowing something intellectually but not applying that knowledge in a manner that impacts our life. There is an ongoing relationship between what we confess to believe and what we actually do. If our confession and actions contradict one another entirely, then we are either lying hypocrites or quite confused (or even both). We must guard against viewing the Old Testament as an interesting record of merely historical events; we need to also examine how our lives are impacted based upon what those truly historical events teach us.

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God saved “a people out of the land of Egypt”; however, not every person was saved in a spiritual sense. After 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, God “subsequently destroyed those who did not believe” (v. 5). There are many who merely

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SECOND TUESDAYS OF THE MONTH @ NOON, 122 CAP (open to the entire Capitol community)

associate with others, but do not share the beliefs and convictions of the larger group. The same is true with regards to the church today. For example, Hebrews 6:7-8 refers to the world of nature to make a distinction between a true believer (Heb 6:7) and an apostate (6:8).

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AND ACTIVE LOVE FOR THE FAMILY OF GOD.

In being likened to land receiving invigorating rain, both the believer and the apostate experienced the same privileges (6:4-5). The crop of vegetation (6:7-8) indicates the ultimate response to the received privileges, which determines whether the land is blessed or cursed. The actions described in Hebrews 6:4-6, 8 indicate actions that do not accompany salvation. Two “things that accompany salvation” (6:9) are evident in the life of the believer: “work” and “love” (6:10). True faith manifests itself in a life of good works, and active love for the family of God. Hebrews 6 warns those who experience many blessings as a result of associating with God’s people, yet are not truly believers, which is what occurred in the Old Testament and was the experience of the early church, and also challenges believers in the present. The point of Jude 5 is that God will judge “those who do not believe,” which means knowing and heeding the inspired Word of God.

“And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, [God] has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6). The angels who sinned were dissatisfied with God. Their rebellious attitude was not mentioned to teach believers (since the assumption is that such truth is already known); rather verse 6 was given to cause believers to remember what occurred to the angels. There are two truths communicated in Jude 6: (1) “those who do not believe” and the sinning angels will experience God’s judgment; and, (2) believers are not to follow the example of those who are to be judged.

The last example to remember is Sodom and Gomorrah. The inhabitants of those cities were judged for unrepentant lifestyles. They are listed among Israel and angels “for there is no partiality with God” (Rom 2:11). There are apostates among all kinds of people and places, even among those who associate outwardly with believers.

REMEMBER THE PROPHECIES

(*m. 8-16*) “Certain persons” knew the facts of verses 5-7, “yet in the same way these [persons], also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties” (Jude

8). The reference here is to the adulterous behavior among the leadership who defiled themselves in conjunction with false prophecies and revelations that they claimed to receive “by dreaming,” and would thereby lead God’s people astray (cf. Jer 23). Always guard against those who make appeals to subjective experiences as opposed to the objective (propositional) truth of God’s Word.

The antiestablishment insult those to whom honor and respect are due (Jude 8-9). By their actions, they “revile the things which they do not understand” . . . “like unreasoning animals” (v. 10). Such behavior is entirely contrary to the example of Michael the archangel (v. 9), who even demonstrated respect toward the devil with regard to the body of Moses. As opposed to ignoring the boundaries established by God (similar to those of verses 5-7), Michael did not use his position or attendant powers as archangel, but relied upon the One who is truly judge to rebuke the devil (cf. Rev 12:7-9).

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(PROPOSITIONAL) TRUTH OF GOD’S WORD.

“Woe to them!” is an outcry in response to the ruin of those who insult the living God; their destiny is the same as Cain, Balaam, and Korah (v. 11). Jude 12-13 provides multitudinous imagery to enable us to identify those who may harm our faith. Having threatened the believer from times of antiquity (v. 14), God will “execute judgment upon all” ungodly (v. 15), who are known by their words and works (v. 16). Being driven by one’s own desires is never satisfying because the pleasure is not enduring. Always finding fault with God, His Word, and His people, the ungodly are experts in flattery (v. 16; Luke 6:26).

Only living in faith and obedience to God’s Word will result in enduring satisfaction. The “beloved” of God are exhorted “to remember the words” of the inspired Word of God to live in a manner wherein we continue to receive the blessings of God’s love as we await the Lord’s return. When God’s people are most satisfied in Him, then He is truly glorified the most in us. *If I may help you in living by God’s grace and for His glory, please let me know, as this is why the ministry of Capitol Commission exists.*

ABOUT CAPITOL COMMISSION

Capitol Commission state directors are pastors/missionaries who teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for legislators, lobbyists, and staff members. These Bible studies are hand-distributed to each legislative office, emailed, and made available throughout the Capitol community. The love and grace of God compels us to proclaim the truth of the Gospel with compassion for the Capitol community, to faithfully teach and apply the Word of God, and to build meaningful relationships that bear fruit for an eternity to come. With the Bible as our foundation and authority, the mission of Capitol Commission is obedience to the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) within the Capitol communities of the world. We are not a lobbying group attempting to garner votes or reform society. Our mandate is to see the hearts and lives of elected officials transformed with the Word of God. Capitol Commission is a ministry of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message, and to help believers mature through the verse-by-verse teaching of Scripture. In the Bible, we see God’s great love for the world, especially for those who have been placed in authority. This is the foundation for our ministry to you. The church is instructed to submit and to honor government leaders (Rom 13:1-7), and to pray for their eternal salvation (1 Tim 2:1-4). The desire of Capitol Commission is to witness God transform the hearts and lives of elected officials, lobbyists, and staff members. We apply this mandate to four major areas of making disciples: (1) *evangelize* those who have not experienced saving faith in Jesus Christ; (2) *establish* those who desire to grow in their faith and knowledge of Scripture; (3) *equip* those called to spiritual leadership; and, (4) *encourage* churches to participate with us in ministry.