

THE SCRIPTURAL CASES OF APOSTASY: 5-7

The Arrogance of the Israelites

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Numbers 14:28-29



The Apostasy of the Angels

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

Isaiah 14:12



The Abominations of the Canaanites

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Genesis 19:24-25



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Numbers 14:28-29

28 Say unto them, *As truly as I live*, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you:
29 Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me,

The Apostasy of the Angels

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

Isaiah 14:12

12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

The Abominations of the Canaanites

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Genesis 19:24-25

24 Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;
25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

2b. The disclosure of examples of apostasy:

Jude warns his readers of the perils of apostasy by citing 3 examples of apostates from the past. After emphasizing their destruction, he writes of the punishment of the present apostates. (v. 8-15)

1c. The arrogance of the Israelites: 5

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.



The phrase "I will put you therefore in remembrance, though you once knew this" indicates that Jude's readers were intimately acquainted with the O.T. record of God's retributive judgment. Jude needs merely remind them.

1d. A reminder of their deliverance:

The reminder relates, first of all, to God's marvellous deliverance of His people from Egypt, as recorded in Ex. 12-15. The aorist participle sosas points back to that historic act.

God had seen their affliction (Ex. 3:7), had delivered them from death in the Passover (Ex. 12:6,29) and had brought safely the 600,000 men with their families and wealth of Egypt out of the land (Ex. 12:31-36). Saved from captivity, sheltered by the blood, delivered from Egyptian judgment, they arrived safely in the Sinai.

If they had marched 50 abreast, the line could have been seen for 40 miles. God's subsequent provisions were equally miraculous. It has been estimated that by today's standards "it would take 30 boxcars of food and 300 tankcars of water to meet their daily needs" (Levy, Israel My Glory, Aug.-Sept. 1987, p. 8).

2d. A reminder of their disbelief:

A second reminder was that God "destroyed them that believed not." "Through unbelief they forfeited physical life and eternal life. Some commentators suggest that these individuals were actually saved. Green writes that these Jews had known the release, the new life involved in becoming the people of God" (p. 164). Sadly, the commentary of the N.T. and the context of Jude indicate that the majority of the Jewish people were never saved. In Hebrews 13:12 the suggestion is that the Israelites died "of an evil heart of unbelief, apostatizing from the Living God." Jude uses these O.T. illustrations not primarily to warn believers of the fate which befalls them, should they apostatize (if that were possible) but to demonstrate the fate of those who crept in unawares, who never possessed the Holy Spirit (v. 19).

3d. A reminder of their destruction:

The Savior and Deliverer can also be the Destroyer. All those

twenty years old and over died during their forty years sojourn in the desert (Num. 14:29-34). The precise number of deaths per day is difficult to calculate but, based on a twelve-hour day, over a period of 38.5 years, there would have been approximately 85 funerals per day or seven per hour. (Levy, op. cit., p.8).

2c. The apostasy of the angels: 6

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.



1d. The divergent views:

Three main interpretations have been put forth to explain this passage. What was the angelic apostasy?

1e. The vacating of heaven:

Jude makes a reference to angels leaving their high position in heaven as assigned to them by God.

2e. The intermarriage with women:

Many commentators understand this verse as a reference to fallen angels in Gen. 6 who left their heavenly estate and committed sexual immorality with women.

While a popular interpretation, is it the proper one? It seems that the position that Gen. 6 speaks of the intermarriage between fallen angels and women raises more questions than it answers.

Several factors need to be considered in this discussion:



- (1) To prove that fallen angels could have sex relations with men, one must demonstrate that (a) they have a material body by nature, (b) they can reproduce without a material body or (c) they can assume or create a material body for themselves.
- (2) Good angels are called sons of God but never evil angels.
- (3) The judgment of Gen. 6 follows because of man's sin. God saw that the sin of man was great upon the earth. It repented Him that He had made man.
- (4) The term "sons of God," according to recent archeological discoveries, refers in Near-Eastern literature to a group of tyrants or noblemen who claimed divine origin for themselves and wanted to subjugate other tribes through indiscriminate intermarriage (as did Solomon centuries later).

3e. Their rebellion against God:

Another interpretation is that Jude refers to a third of the angels (Rev. 12:4) who rebelled with Lucifer against God in an effort to dethrone Him (Is. 14:12-17; Ez. 28:12-19). They are placed in everlasting chains (v. 6) in a place called Tartarus (2 Pet. 2:4).

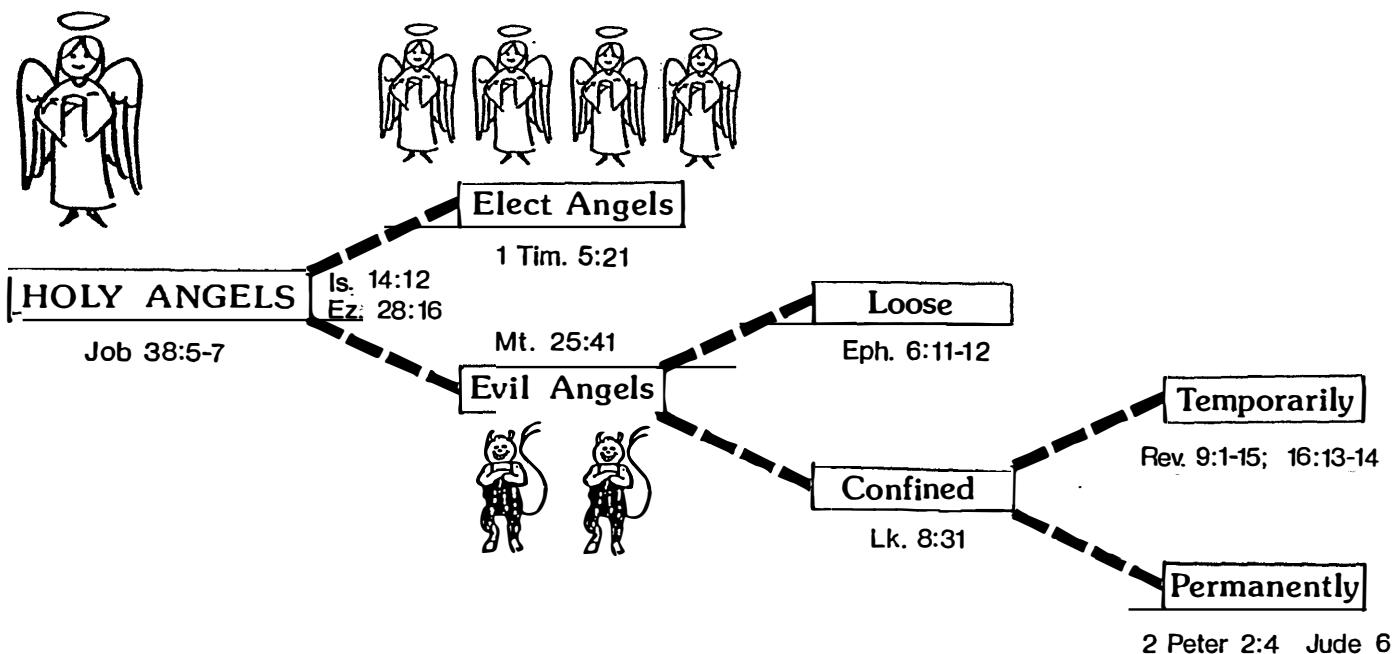
2d. The distinctive sin:

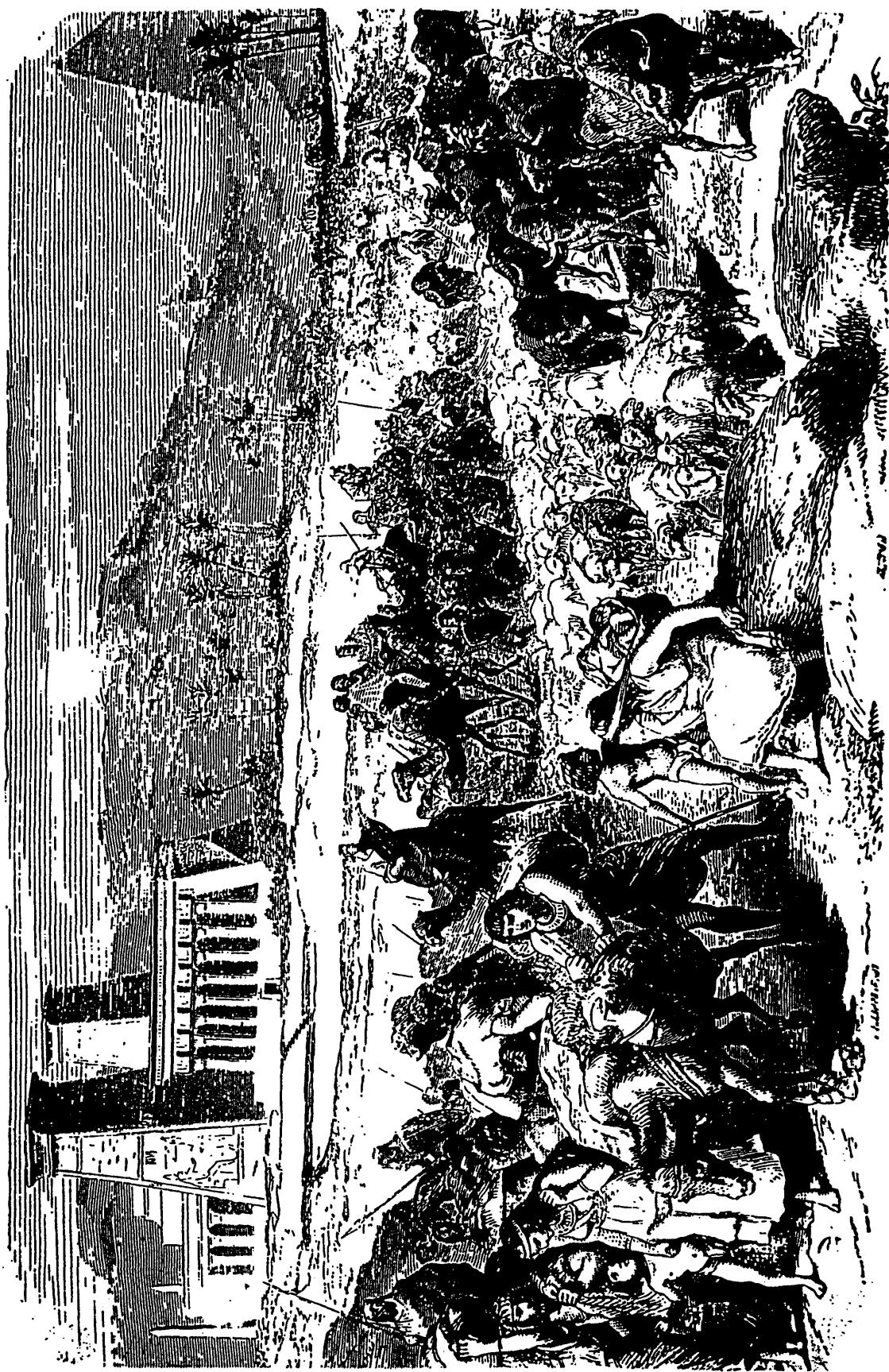
The sin of the angels was that they kept not their first estate. The word arche is the simple word for beginning. What is "their first estate" or "their own original estate"? It is unconfirmed creaturely holiness. An intermarriage with women in Gen. 6 (if that were feasible) would have involved leaving their second estate. Their departure from God would have been succeeded by a defilement of the human race. It is difficult to discern why some angels are already in chains while Satan, the ringleader of the rebellion is temporarily free. Wisdom writes concerning the angelic sin:

"The idea is that these angels did not keep their lordship, their place of honor and authority. There is, perhaps, an intended allusion in the statement to the false teachers: they were gifted and prominent people, who by their unwillingness to abide in God's will forfeited a place of honor and dignity for a place of degradation and judgment." ("An Alarm for Alertness," Biblical Viewpoint, April, 1984, p.39).

The angels are an illustration of apostasy in that they left their holy prominence and their heavenly position. Apostasy results in eternal judgment:

The Spirit World





DEPARTURE OF THE ISRAELITES FROM EGYPT.

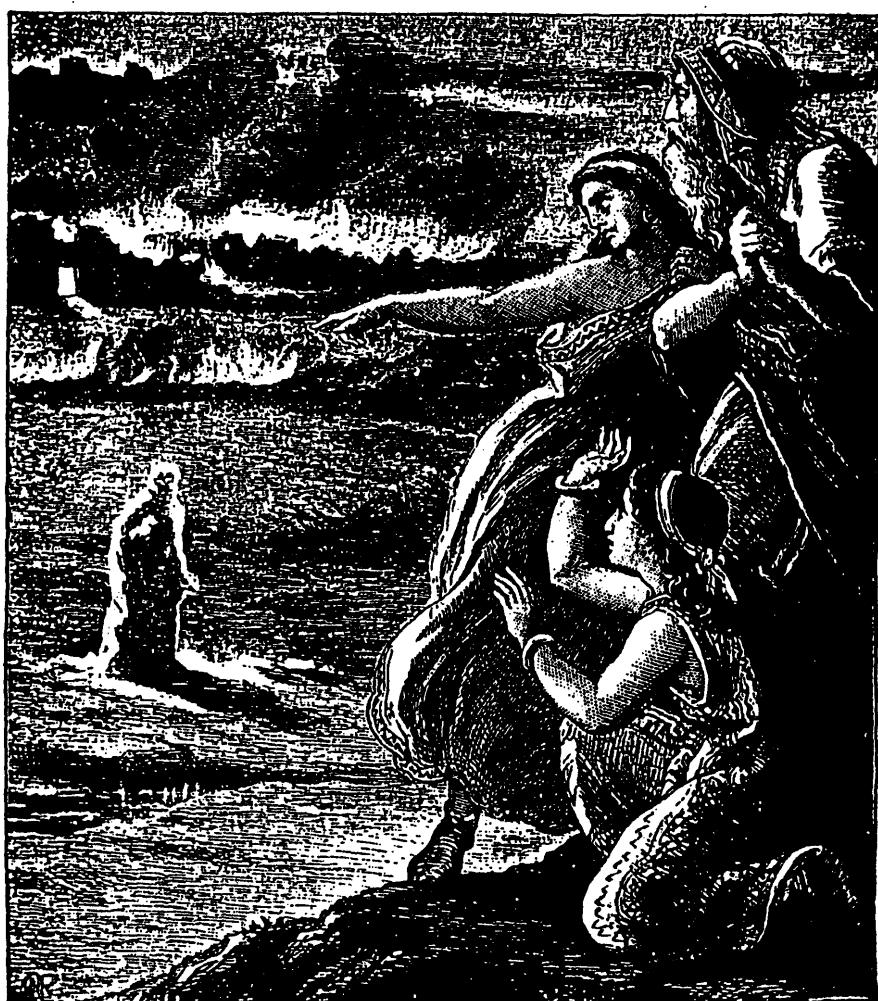
3c. The abomination of the Canaanites: 7

7 Even as Sôd'om and Gô-môr'rhâ, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

The terms "even as" and "in like manner" do not necessarily confirm the old Jewish belief that the angels committed the same sin as the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah. Wisdom's observation is worth noting:

"The point of comparison is the degeneration and degradation of the apostates. As the angels left their place of dignity and descended into a lowly sphere, so did the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. This interpretation is further supported by the emphasis in verses 5-7 on the departure of the apostates from one sphere to another. The reference to fornication and perversion in verse 7 accords with the nature of these false teachers as revealed in verse 4: they were libertines who "turned the grace of God into lasciviousness."

(Ibid., p. 40)



The fire which destroyed the cities of the plain is a symbol of God's eternal fire. The region at the southern end of the Dead Sea where those cities were once located bears vivid testimony even today of that awful conflagration. The scorched area and the stench of sulphur in the air attest to the fire which devoured the sinners then and anticipates the eternal fire punishing the apostates in the future.

The triad of judgments adduced from the Old Testament does not follow a chronological but a logical order. In 2 Pet. 2:4-7 the judgments upon the angels, world at the time of the flood and the cities are arranged in the sequence of chronology. In Jude the judgment on Israel, angels and cities follow the sequence of corruption:

- (1) Israel is judged for not believing--the sin of unbelief.
- (2) The angels are judged for forsaking their rightful habitation--the sin of presumption.
- (3) Sodom and Gomorrah are judged for fornication and going after strange flesh--the sin of immorality.

Precisely this was the course of the impious men of whom Jude writes.

- (1) Their denial of God and the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 4) revealed their unbelief.
- (2) Their blasphemy of lordship and glories (v. 8)--an unwarranted intrusion into the angelic sphere--revealed that (like the angels of old)--they had forsaken their proper place as men, evidencing their presumption.
- (3) Their immoralities (v. 4,8,10) revealed their likeness to the debauched and defiled people of Sodom and Gomorrah. They too had gone after that which was morally forbidden to them, committing gross immorality. (Hodges, p. 3).

II PETER 2

4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomor'rah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

SEQUENCE OF CHRONOLOGY:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

JUDE

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

7 Even as Sodom and Gomor'rah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

SEQUENCE OF CORRUPTION:

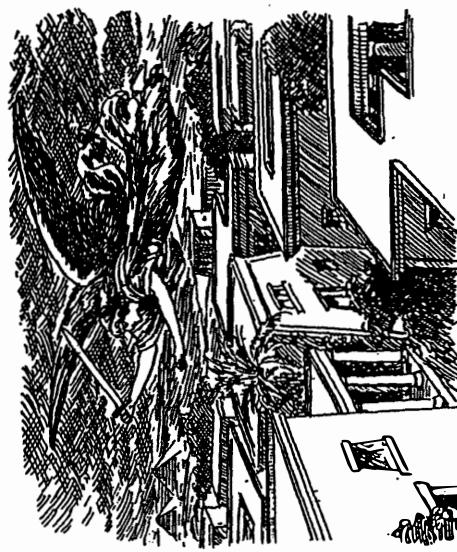
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



PASSAGE THROUGH THE RED SEA



PUNISHMENT IN THE DESERT



PROTECTION AT THE PASSOVER



PERVERSION OF WORSHIP

THE DELIVERER CAN BECOME THE DESTROYER