



Ministry of the Word

*Sunday 01<sup>st</sup> October 2017*

by Vincent Gannon

**Scripture:** Jude 5

**Subject:** The People out of the Land of Egypt

*“But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.”*

To refresh our minds, this letter is for believers only and the reason for it, is to make them aware of the spiritual deterioration resulting from the unnoticed false teachers and their teachings, apostates, and the deniers of truth, that crept into the church. These overlooked individuals snuck in with an agenda full of destruction, some just sowing seeds while others distract the believers away from the true Gospel and even away from worshipping God in truth; all in preparation for the times of Jacob’s Trouble.

As modern believers, we can look on these letters and somewhat criticise the early church for their naivety, or their seemingly forgetfulness. We often criticise those also in the old testament for not learning their lessons and how they could be so foolish or slow in light of their experiences with God. Yet we, like them, tend to criticise others instead of taking responsibility for our own walk with God and even the impact that we have on others. We know from our own experience, how easy it is to start sinking or even be lead in the wrong direction once we take our eyes of the Word.

This part of Jude's letter recalls three examples from the Old Testament or the Tora, for a very particular purpose which is to teach us that God justly punishes those who rebel against His will. Paul reminds us in Romans 15:4

*"For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."*

This morning we will exam the first example given in verse 5.

### **Verse 5 - The Apostate People of Israel.**

*"I want to remind you, though you were fully informed once for all: that though the Lord(at one time) delivered a people out of the land of Egypt. He subsequently destroyed those (of them) who did not believe (who refused to adhere to, trust in, and rely upon Him)." Amplified Version.*

The Book of Exodus, Deuteronomy and Numbers hold the accounts of the people who were delivered out of Egypt. There are also numerous New Testament references to these events that saw the birth of Israel. After Joseph and his brothers settled in Egypt, Exodus tell us that his people grew in number and Pharaoh at that time, who didn't know anything about Joseph, enslaved the people. They were enslaved for 430 years and their circumstances did not get any better. God heard their cries and raised up Moses to deliver the people from Egypt because God promised that he would deliver them. Moses first had to convince the people before he could approach Pharaoh. On his way to Pharaoh, God told Moses that he would hardened Pharaoh's heart. God wanted to show His strength and His power, not just to Egypt but also to His people and to the world throughout the ages.

It's interesting to note that when we look at this account we are able to see many typologies. A typology means the study and interpretation of types and symbols, originally in the Bible. Egypt is a type of world, Pharaoh represents the Prince of the World, Satan, Moses was a deliver, a type of Christ, The Red Sea is a type of Baptism, The Pillar of Fire & of Cloud was a type of Holy Spirit, The Mana was a type of The word. There are many types throughout Israel's history.

God is able and willing to save, we know this from personal experience, Amen! The Lord reached into Egypt to deliver His people. They were His people. We can find this in Exodus 3:7 and 5:1 along with Deuteronomy 32:29. Exodus 12 is very clear that the pass over is were

God lay claim on these people as His, yet, even as His people we told that they messed up many times. This is why this example is very important because many ask, where they really saved? Yes! Paul confirms this for us in 1 Corinthians 10, that those, who were delivered at that time were in fact His people. That does not mean that all Jews today are His as we see from many passages in the New Testament for example John 1:11-13

*“He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.*”

The reason Jude brings this account before us is not only that God delivered the people from Egypt in a most astonishingly, truly miraculous, incredible and divine way, and who could doubt the hand of God in all of the events, but Jude draws our attention back to what the people did after their deliverance in spite of their privilege position with the true and living God. Israel began to fall away, apostasy was on the rise and destruction followed. In this account, we see that God who is a mighty deliverer and who is Holy, reserves the right to destroy those who are guilty of transgression and unbelief. 1 Corinthians 10:5

*“But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.”*

Sobering isn’t it. Does unbelief affect your life? What I mean by that, you trust Jesus as your Saviour but do you trust Him as Lord of your life? Do you trust Him with every detail in spite of what the circumstances look like? I’m sure the wilderness seemed void of promise but God wanted them to go through it, in faith. We can all identify with this I’m sure. The nation of Israel went from slavery to God given freedom, from having nothing to leaving with their hands full, a bright new beginning with promise yet to be fulfilled. They then went from optimism, after a while in the wilderness, then their attitudes changed to complaining, forgetting, doubting and then out right rebellion against God. Doubt, if left unchecked, is a dangerous path to go down and can lead to rebellion which can lead us into anything.

There are many questions that this account presents, why did a 11 day journey take 38 years? It’s the same reason as before and why Jude brings this before us in his letter. Another question that’s interesting is out of at least one million people who left Egypt over 20 years of age, how many made it into the promised land? 2, Why?

To answer these questions we need to really turn to Numbers 14:1 *“So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.”*

If you read the previous chapters you will see how the people had their ups and downs to this point but this is where things turned... like sour milk! They were on the out-shirts of the promised land and Moses sent in 12 spies to see what was the lay of the land. 12 came back with evidence that God is true to his word, it surely was a land of milk and honey. 12 came back, 10 focused on the problems from a human perspective, they seen how big the people of Canaan were and only 2 saw the possibilities and promises, they saw how big their God really is!

So what did they people do, what did the leaders do with both sides of the argument? The people wanted the leaders ousted from their position, they wanted new ones to bring them back to Egypt. They couldn't understand why these guys were leading them into impossible territories, forgetting it was God who was leading and it was God who promised to give them the land. God didn't tell them his plan of how he was going to do it, but he did promise it. Sound familiar... the panic.... Not knowing the details of the plan....

So Moses and Arron, knowing what was on the line went before God pleading on their behalf. The people then went from raising their voices against the leaders to raising their voices against God. This is how an 11 day journey became nearly 40 years. It was their unbelief and rebellion against God. Have we had a similar experiences? If only we would take God at His word first time round, I'm sure we could avoid a lot of heart ache. Canaan represents victory not heaven as many imply today. 1 Corinthians 10, Paul explains how they allowed their own lusts to get in the way of their victory. Many try to make the point, that they were under law and we are under Grace, but take verse 6 –

*“Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.”*

And Verses 11&12 from the same chapter –

*“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”*

Paul makes the case in this chapter that we are much richer people, if you like, than the Israelites were. We are spiritually very privileged people on account that we have seen not only the types in Scripture but also the reality coming to pass in Christ and His death, resurrection and ascension, as well as His promise that He will return.

We have the same fallen nature as these people who were delivered. As a result we have an inbuilt propensity to do that which is contra to God. However, unlike the Old Testament saints we, as believers, have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit which surely makes our case for failure more serious. Let me be clear, this is not a salvation issue, but, it is a sanctification one, the practical side. We were not delivered from a country like these people, think back to the typologies and we can identify with them in so much as we were delivered from the world and from the clutches of the ruler of this world. God did an amazing miraculous work in each one of our lives by giving us the gift of salvation. Regardless of God's divine work, we also have the same serious problems. Now we have to ask, why? For the same reason the people of Israel had, they allowed fear and doubt to over-ride God's promise and began listening to others and ignored what God said, we do it so often too. Human reason made more sense, they had the answers! They wanted what they seen as 'problems' addressed by basic human reason, and they wanted the solution immediately. But was God less wise? Can He not see further than we? Once the peoples' attention was diverted, the rest was easy for these 'mummers' to lead them away from the Lord. We need to distinguish our area of responsibility, which is to obey God, and God's area, is to lead and guide us.

When the people went back into the wilderness after not embracing their possible victory in Canaan, they set up idols once again. They turned from what God had purposed for their lives to fill it with their **old ways, self-reliance**, much to their destruction. Remember, they had already seen how God dealt with idols when they had made the golden calf not too long after they were delivered from Egypt. Did the people of God learn from this? Let's have a look in Numbers and we will start off at Chapter 21 verses 4-9.

*“Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses: “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul*

*loathes this worthless bread.” So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.*

*Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.” So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.”*

In verse 5, we can see that the people murmured, again, against God and Moses. We also see discouragement and ingratitude, they loathed the bread from heaven (think back at the typology that the mana represents.. the living word of God, just in case you forgot. John 6:30-40 is a discussion around the same events, expect at that time they wanted the physical bread but not the spiritual type Jesus was offering). The People of Israel in the wilderness referenced the exodus in a very negative way as if God had done something against their will and for their demise. They rejected their God given leader, Moses. How their sin and unbelief distorted their minds. At this point, note, God did not enter into a discussion with them but sent judgement straight away into their mist by way of fiery serpents. The people went to Moses in repentance and Moses interceded for his people. Moses prayed and God not only showed mercy, he gave them a solution for anyone who was bitten by the snakes. It was too late for those who had already died! What was the solution? To put a bronze snake on a pole and who so ever was bitten just had to look to the pole. John 3:14 and 15 gives further explanation of this for us, which is applicable for the modern who-so-evers.

*“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”*

Bronze was always considered to do with judgement just as the serpent was considered to do with sin. Jesus was literally made sin for us.

Idolatry is anything that puts a gap between you and God. 1 John 5:21 tells us –

*“Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen”*

Idols in your life are not just necessarily little statues in front of you but it can be anything which is created and established in your heart and mind, be it a hobby, career, works, people, self, material, non-material, different bits of different religions, anything that gets in the way

of your relationship with God. While we do have liberty in Christ, this liberty is not to be abused. We are called to be singly hearted and minded. Galatians 5:13 –

*“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”*

Do you think after this that the Israelites learnt their lesson? NO! You know they even made that bronze serpent pole an idol later on, burning incense to it and Hezekiah, in 2 Kings 18 actually had to break it into pieces because of their rebellious behaviour.

Now, back to the Israelites in the wilderness, did they learn their lesson? No, In the account in Numbers 25 God had to deal with Israel, verses 1&2,

*“Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods.”*

Now look at verse 4 & 5

*“Then the Lord said to Moses, “Take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the Lord, out in the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel.” So Moses said to the judges of Israel, “Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor.”*

Note, they mixed with the women of Moab and they worshiped the Moabite God’s, Baal of Peor, the Devil.

Side note here - Remember the Moabites were one of Lot’s daughter’s children. This will be very important when we come to verse 7 in Jude.

Not only were the people of Israel in totally unbelief and rebellion against God, but so were their leaders. Instead of being leaders, and doing what they should have rightfully done, lead, they themselves were being lead. Surely this slavery was worse than the first. God punished His people with plagues, to the point where 24 thousand of them were wiped out. Paul points out in 1 Corinthians 10 that 23 thousand were wiped out on the first day. In that chapter, Paul clearly explains that these people lusted after evil things, they were idolaters, they were sexually immoral, and they were complainers. Paul also advises us believers to flee from these things. How seriously do we really examine ourselves before God? It is vital that we do this because it’s so easy for us to fall into ritual, it’s so easy to say ‘sorry’ without actually having a spirit of true repentance. If we fall into this category, are we any better than the Israelites?

You know it's actually in verses 15 and 16 Paul encourages to really examine ourselves, us, not anyone else, the ungodly or who we think is a bit on the line, no, it is us, ourselves! Let's read those verses

*"I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"*

These verses are talking about our one to one with Christ, our fellowship with the Lord and the impact it has on the body. He picks up on this in the next chapter, chapter 11, the consequences of not examining ourselves especially before the table of the Lord.

Let's read it:

*"Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.*

*Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come."*

Does that make anyone here re-think of how they approach the table of the Lord? It's not what happens here in this room, but what happens to the room we have for the Lord in our hearts. Have we become religious? Has the living word become not as papal as it was once to us? Who or what is truly our God? These are solemn thoughts but they are not to make you feel bad, but to get you to a place of honesty.

1 John 5:21 - *"Little children, keep yourselves from idols (false gods)—[from anything and everything that would occupy the place in your heart due to God, from any sort of substitute for Him that would take first place in your life]. Amen (so let it be)."*

You know there are many dangerous teachings out there today because believers want immediate answers as well as experiences without having to completely rely on God, because that would take an awful lot of faith and maybe even time. It may even mean that they would

have to change and be part of the solution. Believers these days, who do not ground themselves in the word of God can be lead very easily to their own destruction. God does deal with his people, still today.

Some of these most dangerous teachings which are on the increase, creeping along and getting bigger are: Replacement theology, which is all about God being finished with Israel and the Jewish people and we the church are it! Kingdom Now theology, which is teaching that we are in the millennium reign, we the church have arrive to rule over all, so Christians are encouraged into politics and well just look at the history of Northern Ireland to see how damaging that can be. While Christians can get involved, and even influence we should not be there to dominate, remember our citizenship is in Heaven. Winning souls is more important than winning votes! Another one, that it creeping in, in various forms which is why we should be so careful, is believers are being taught that ultimately they are little gods, are they not destined to reign with Christ. You know the church in Sardis in Revelation 3, thought that they had it all, but Christ clearly points out that they were dead. They had a name, but no evidence of life. Is that not how Israel ended up also?

The early church had its struggles with the same issues as the Israelites in the wilderness and as we do today. Look for example in Galatians 5:16-21.

*“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

Remember Paul begins his epistle to the Galatians with an admonition, they had departed from the Gospel to another. They had willingly sacrificed their freedom in Christ and had gone back. You know as a student of the Bible the reasons. But here in Galatians 5, in the verses I just read, not only comes the plea to return, and thank God there is a way back. Paul encourages them in a different tone, to walk in the Spirit, that is to display the fruits of the

Holy Spirit in their lives. Why? There is so much at stake, for the believer on a personal level as we have been called to be lights in the darkness.

The works of the flesh has not, and never will, bring freedom. They might bring pleasure, but only for a short while. Eternity, we measure with time in mind because that is all we know. Yet, we also know that a million years is not eternity. The point is, we have the choice of where we will spend it, heaven or hell. Be encouraged and be wise, take God's advice.

Last question – How many make it back to Egypt? 0 – Surely that is an encouragement!

Jude 5 is for the believer a warning not to be caught up with apostates, with deceivers or anyone or anything that will lead you down the road, away from Christ because there is a price to be paid. There are consequences to be paid, either in this life, the next life or both. But before we find ourselves in a dark place as we leave we must have some hope! Turn to John 10 and to verse 27 please, these are the words of Jesus.

*“the sheep that are My own hear My voice and listen to Me; I know them, and they follow Me.”*

And John 4:14.

*But whoever drinks the water that I give him will never be thirsty again. But the water that I give him will become in him a spring of water [satisfying his thirst for God] welling up [continually flowing, bubbling within him] to eternal life.*

These are very comforting and assuring verses for every believer, no matter who they are, how far they have gone, if they are in Christ, God has a hold on them, they might not have a firm grip on Him but he does on them and that's what is important. That is salvation but Jude has been compelled to write about contending for the faith, that is about our practices. In other words don't mistake our salvation security, God's part, with our ability to destroy our relationship with Him and ourselves, our part. Remember the Christian's bar of soap is 1 John 1:9

*“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

*Amen.*