“Angels In Prison”

February 28, 2016

Hebrews 1:1-10

Please open your Bible today to the NT Book of Jude. Angels, as you know, were created by God. And there are a lot of angels; millions of them, according to the Book of Revelation. Revelation 5:11 says this. *“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was* ***ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;…****”*

And in the OT we read this. Daniel 7:9 *“I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.*

*(10) A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and* ***ten thousand times ten thousand*** *stood before him:…”*

And in Hebrews we find that the number in incalculable. Hebrews 12:22 *“But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to* ***an innumerable company of angels,****…”*

Now, why there are so many; we’re not told. But, if God created that many angels, He definitely had a good reason to do so.

Now, do angels sin? And is it possible that there are angels that are in prison?

Today, we are going to read from the Book of Jude. And here’s what we read about angels. Look with me at Jude 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.”*

I’ve titled today’s sermon “Angels In Prison.” Shall we pray? *“LORD, I pray that your word might be life and truth to my heart today and that I might know you better and live more obediently. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”*

Jude is a teacher. He’s, I’m sure, somewhat like Jesus. And, because he and Jesus were half-brothers, he may have even looked like the LORD.

And more than a teacher, Jude is a writer. He, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote this little twenty-five verse epistle. And Jude is a reader; a well-informed reader. Besides that, Jude is man who is very knowledgeable when it came to the Bible; especially Bible history. And let me add one more attribute to Jude. He’s a preacher with a huge heart and a man who is very direct when he delivers his sermon. Read through the entire Book of Jude today and you will see just that.

Today’s topic is angels; God’s heavenly messengers. But, let me remind you as we begin that there are some passages in the Bible that are easy to understand and believe. But there are also passages that are easy to understand, but they are not so well received. That’s the case with Jude 6. Look again with me at Jude 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.”*

Can you imagine enjoying Heaven and then losing Heaven? Can you imagine standing with God and now standing against Him? Here we find some people; actually angels (and angels, by the way, are persons. They have a mind, emotions, and a will). Here in Jude 6, we read about some of God’s angels who left Heaven. And they lost Heaven never to return.

And as we consider Jude’s angelic message, let’s let the Bible say what it says. Let’s believe it. And let’s live in light of it.

First, are angels capable of sinning sin? We are all confident in the fact that human beings are prone to sin. You, yourself, are a sinner by birth and by choice. It’s your nature to sin.

Now, contrast that with the angels of Heaven. Angels don’t have a sin nature such as you and I do. Yet, they have a will. And Jude reminds us of a time when some of them; not all of them; some of them lost their place in Heaven. These angels sinned.

And what does Jude say? He says these angels “kept not their first estate…” “Estate” is an Old English word meaning “position, or condition.” So Jude is only speaking here of some specific angels that were removed from their God-given position. These angels, once in a high position, and no longer in that place.

“What was it like for these angels in Heaven? What was their condition? It was a “…holy, honourable, and happy condition, in which they were created; for they were created in perfect holiness and righteousness, stood in the relation of sons to God, and were, for the lustre of their nature, com-parable to the morning stars; they were among the thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; were a superior rank of creatures to men, and who beheld the face, and enjoyed the presence of God;…” [Bible Commentator John Gill on Jude 6].

And Jude teaches us that they “kept not their first estate.” Angels, remember, are persons. You see, like us, they have the ability to choose. And the choice they made is to leave Heaven. Jude 6. *“And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation,…”*

So, yes, angels can sin. They didn’t keep their first position and they left their own homes. Your habitation is your home.

First, angels can sin.

Second, angels can be judged.

Now, as you read God’s word, it’s always best to keep yourself aware of the context, which, in this case, is God’s severity in His judgment.

Folks, judgment is never a pleasant topic. But did you ever wonder where judgment begins? I Peter 4:17 says this. *“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?”*

There were those who has become part of the Churches of Asia who had turned God’s grace into filth. Here’s Jude 4 *“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Lasciviousness usually has an immoral sense. But it’s really a description of someone who knows no moral boundaries. It does include pornography. But it also includes homosexuality. All moral limits are pushed to the extreme. Anything with a moral limit to it is not for them.

And these, as you can see from the words of Jude 4, had at one time been part of the Church; but are now denying the LORD Jesus.

That’s the context. And so, what is Jude doing? He’s teaching the history of the Bible not to fill our heads with information; but that we, the Church of Christ, are warned against leaving God’s ways and turning to the ways of the world. This, as you can see, is one of the many passages in the Bible that are easy to understand, but hard to receive.

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

Let’s start with the “Everlasting chains.” “Everlasting chains” means these angels are bound; bound for eternity. And then “darkness.” Darkness means they cannot see each other or their surroundings. This is the judgment these angels received for going their own way.

And it’s reserved. Reserved is “kept; never to leave.” God has reserved these angels for the “judgment of the great day.” Some day in the future these angels will experience a greater judgment than they are right now enduring. Right now they are bound. Right now they are in complete darkness. And there is no escape. There is a judgment to come. But today they are in Hell.

Here’s another word from another NT writer. II Peter 2:4 *“…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;…”*

First, angels can sin.

Second, angels can be judged.

Third, angels can, for lack of a better term, go rogue. “Rogue,” in this sense, means “to act in a different way than normal and cause serious damage.” By the way, that’s the definition of rogue found in the “Oxford Learners Dictionary.”

Now, something large must have happened. What would have caused these heaven-dwellers to leave their first position and condition and became darkness-dwellers. What possible reason or reasons could have put these angels in this predicament? Why did some angels go rogue?

Well, the answer is found in this history in your Bible. Jude, as you know, from reading this little epistle, is writing with a warning tone in his voice. And Jude, as you also know, is teaching truth. And he’s teaching history.

Now, where would Jude get this idea? Where does Jude go to discover truth? Why use angels and their judgment as a word of warning?

Let’s see if we can figure out what they did and why they are in everlasting chains and darkness right now.

Please turn with me to the first Book of the Bible; to Genesis chapter six. Folks, when it comes to the truth; there’s nothing as practical as the truth of the Scripture; in this case, the truth of history.

Now, before we read Genesis five, let me remind you of this. History, the past, has been recorded to teach us how to live in the present. History is one of your best teachers. We learn history in order to not repeat what caused so much trouble in the past.

Here’s the story. Genesis 6:1 *“And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, (2) That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.*

*(3) And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. (4) There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.”*

When you read the epistle of Jude, you need to refresh your mind as to the history behind his words. There had to be a huge reason for these angels to leave their first estate, their first position; and to then be cast into utter darkness, and now spend every hour of their dark nights bound with everlasting chains.

Here’s their sin. They, like many angels, took on human form. But, in this case, they chose to intermarry with the human race. Here we see angels leaving their heavenly domain, becoming human, and indulging in perversion. They left their normal roles and chose a behavior that God never intended for them.

Now, look with me at the phrase here that says “the sons of God.” This is not a reference to godly men. It’s not even a reference to human beings. Rather, it is the OT way of describing angels. And how do we know that?

Job 1:6 says this. “Now there was a day when **the sons of God** came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.”

And here’s Job 2:1 “Again there was a day when **the sons of God** came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord.”

And here’s Job 38:7 “When the morning stars sang together, and all **the sons of God** shouted for joy?”

Although at first it may be difficult to comprehend, here’s what we find. “The sons of God” is a phrase that describes the angelic realm. And when the sons of God left their heavenly habitation and chose to inter-marry with human women, three things happened.

One, giants were born. Look again at verse four. *(4) “There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.”*

These people were giant in size; mighty in strength; and famous; “men of renown.”

The second thing that resulted was the severe judgment of God upon these angels. They today are bound with eternal chains and in the darkness of Hell.

The third thing that resulted was the worldwide flood in which the LORD destroyed everything that lived on the earth; except in His mercy, He saved Noah and his family alive to re-populate the earth.

Now, that’s the story. That’s the history. And what is there to learn? Why does Jude reference Genesis six in his epistle?

One reason; a word of warning.

Here’s Jude again. Jude 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.”*

First, Hell is real and the judgment is coming. Hell is dark. And Hell is reserved for those who refuse and reject God’s way.

Second, like the angels, we too are tempted to refuse to submit our hearts to the LORD and to go rogue. And God must judge our sins. Folks, if the angels had the potential to willfully sin against the LORD and refuse His authority over them, so we human beings have often done the very same thing. We want our ways over His.

First, Hell is real and the judgment is coming.

Second, like the angels, we too are tempted to refuse to submit our hearts to the LORD and to go rogue.

Third, God’s wrath against your sins has been satisfied.

Sin is the main reason for death and Hell. Your sins and my sins are things that must be judged. But fortunately God is a Good Judge. He must judge every sin and every wrong. And, as God, He must judge every evil act of men and angels. And yet, He made a way for us to find our way back to Him.

Sometimes you’ll hear people say that God is not a God of wrath; period. But, you and I are called to walk in the truth. And the truth is Scripture. Here’s Romans 2:5 *“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;…”*

The LORD’s wrath is simply His justice at work. And there is no God if there is no Just God. His wrath is merely His necessary reaction and response to anything and everything evil or wrong. As you’ve heard me say so many times, “Let God be God.” When you do that, you are living in the light of the truth.

Someone has attempted to illustrate it this way. “Let’s say you are driving home this weekend and you are cruising. You’re going say, 105 mph. You’re just flying. And the posted Speed Limit it 55 mpg. You get stopped. The policeman has you on radar and you’re done. They impound your car, and bring you straight to the courthouse to face the judge. Well the good news is that the county you got busted in just happens to be the county in which your dad is the judge. So you’re tempted to think that you’re golden. He loves you, he’ll let you off, and everything will be fine.

But just as you are entering the courthouse, you know exactly who the judge is. He’s your dad. And He’s a really good judge. He never punishes the innocent. He always punishes the guilty. He is good and he is just. After all, he’s a judge. Now you’re a little nervous. In this case, which will win out; his love or his justice? He’s your dad and he loves you. So he’ll want to do good to you. But he’s a good and just judge and therefore he’ll follow the law and render a just verdict.

You stand before your dad the judge and he says to you, “Son, this officer says you were going 50 mph over the speed limit. How do you plead?” So he looks at you and says, “That will be $500 or a week in jail. Guilty as charged.” And he bangs down his gavel.

Well, you don’t have any money. So the bailiff comes to take you to your jail cell where you can begin serving your time. But your dad, the judge, stands up and says, “Wait a minute, bring him back here.” Then he takes off his robe and walks down from behind the bench. He reaches into his coat pocket, takes out his checkbook and writes the court a check for $500, the exact amount of your fine. Then he offers it to you. The justice of a good judge has been served.

What’s going on here is this; he is just, so he declares you guilty, since you are. And he demands that a penalty be paid. But he loves you, and so he has determined to pay that penalty himself, on your behalf.

Is this not what the God of glory has done for you? Are you not guilty of your sins? Is there not a penalty for your sins? Isn’t the wage for sin death? And what did God do on your behalf? He sent His Son into the world and His Son Jesus Christ became sin for you. God’s wrath was satisfied while His love was poured out.

Now as he stands there offering you the check, what do you need to do? The Bible says that He declared us guilty, because we are, and demanded that a penalty be paid. Jesus Christ left heaven, came to earth, became a man, and died to pay your penalty. See, you didn’t owe a $500 penalty, so He didn’t just write a check. The Bible says that sin earns us a death penalty, so He died to pay that penalty.

Now, He comes to us to offer His life on our behalf. Just like your dad with the check the Perfect Judge stands before you and says, *“I’ll take the blame for every rotten thing you’ve ever done, and give you credit, for my perfect life. All you need to do is receive it.”*

We call that a “substitutionary payment.”

God’s wrath is satisfied and His love wins your heart – all because Jesus took the wrath you deserved.

So, what will you do with the history that Jude brings to your attention? Have you, like the rogue angels from Genesis six, refused God’s ways and chosen your own? Your sins are what separates you from the LORD.

Through the story of Jude 6, God brings conviction in your heart. Yet, He’s taken all your sins upon Himself and received the punishment you deserve. And He’s calling you to Himself. He’s calling you to receive His free gift of forgiveness for all your sins; both the ones no one knows about and the outward ones. Will you let the LORD bring His conviction to your heart and turn you into a right direction? Will you submit to His ways? Will you surrender your right to be right?

Jesus shed His blood for your sins. That’s history. And that’s the truth. And that blood is the only ground that brings you into a right relationship with God.

Yet, we all sin. So, what is there to be done if you as a Christian are guilty of unbelief and murmuring and being fearful and worrying? Repent. Change your mind.

Come to Him in humility and the awareness that your sins are the only thing that keeps you from enjoying a close walk with Him. Come in confession. Say the same thing about your sins that He says about them.

See them for what they are; an extreme offense to Him. Then in confession, accept the power of the blood of Jesus to cleanse them and restore you to a place of close fellowship with your Creator and Savior.

History, as you’ve heard before, should move you to action. So, what will it be today? Will you submit to Him? Will you surrender to Him? Will you come to Him? It’s your choice. Let God have His way today? Will you pray “I will obey you, LORD, I surrender my thoughts to your thoughts?” What will it be?

Will you surrender yourself to His strength and control? Here’s the Sinner’s Prayer. *“LORD, I admit I am a sinner. I believe that Jesus died in my place on the cross. I repent of my sins. I want to be completely forgiven today. I am trusting you right now to save me. Thank you. Amen.”*

Shall we pray?

Sing Hymn # 63 “All Creatures of our God and King”