

IT'S HOW YOU FINISH!  
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Jude 5-10  
S-1467

•SLIDE #1: Several years ago firemen went on strike all over England! After several weeks of wrangling over contracts with little success, the British army was assigned the responsibility of fighting fires and responding to emergency needs.

On January 14 they were called out by an elderly lady in South London to rescue her cat. They arrived to find the cat with its head stuck in a drainpipe up on the eave of the house. With impressive quickness, they proceeded to cleverly and carefully rescue her cat. They loaded their equipment and prepared to drive away.

But the lady was so grateful that she invited her squad of heroes in for tea. As they drove off later with fond farewells and warm wavings of arms, they ran over her cat and killed it.

A great start matters little when followed by a poor finish.

Turn in your Bibles to the next to the last book. Last week we began studying the little book of Jude. It is the story of people who commit apostasy or who fall away from Jesus Christ. This morning we will examine verses 5-10. These verses are about starting and finishing well.

•SLIDE #18: Jude 5: Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe.

•SLIDE #27: Jude 6: And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home-- these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.

•SLIDE #29: Jude 7: In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

•SLIDE #37: Jude 8: In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings.

•SLIDE #40: Jude 9: But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

•SLIDE #41: Jude 10: Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals-- these are the very things that destroy them.

I want to draw out three principles from these verses this morning:

•SLIDE #13: Principle #1. A great start matters little when followed by a poor finish (Jude 5-7).

Jude chooses three dreadful examples here to illustrate.

•SLIDE #14: 1. God destroyed the Israelites who had enough belief to leave Egypt but not enough to enter the Promised Land.

•SLIDE #18: Jude 5: Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe.

These people had a great beginning but a terrible ending.

The tremendous power of God was exhibited when he brought the people out of the land of Egypt – Plagues, Red Sea, etc. – Saw power and love of God here! Plenty of evidence to believe

that God could overcome all obstacles.

Yet, at very border of promised land, Kadesh-Barnea – 12 spies sent to spy out the land. 10 reported giants (they're like giants, we're like grasshoppers). Opinion that it was hopeless to go forward. No way they could win the promised land.

This is a clear instance of lack of faith in God. Consequence that God sentenced all people over 20 to die in the desert except Joshua and Caleb.

On the once bloody battlefield at Saratoga stands a towering 155 foot tall monument which commemorates one of the final decisive battles of the American Revolution. The overpowering monument gives mute testimony to those American heroes who lived and died for our freedom from England.

Around the base are four deep indentations and in each indentation is chiseled the name of one of the four American generals who led forces there. Above each name stands a giant bronze figure on horseback as emotionally stirring today as the day they shouted out commands on the battlefield. You can almost hear the voices of Horatio Gates, Philip Schuyler, and Daniel Morgan.

But there is no horse and rider in the fourth niche—only the name of the general chiseled in marble. He was a brigadier general who once commanded at West Point, who distinguished himself at battles along Lake Champlain, the Mohawk Valley, Quebec, and Saratoga. He was the man who sold out his soul and prostituted his manhood and forfeited his right to be honored when he committed treason and betrayed his nation. The name chiseled in the marble of the empty niche is Benedict Arnold.

Benedict Arnold was a great name in American history—but that was before the fall.

The failure of Israel enter the land captivated the attention of the person who wrote Hebrews.

•**SLIDE #23:** Hebrews 3:16-18: Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

•**SLIDE #24:** Hebrews 4:1-2: Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did;

•**SLIDE #25:** but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.

Pastoring in one place has its advantages. Watch children grow up. Marry and baptize. See many children strong and growing for Christ.

Cameron Athey at Metro: 25 years old. What a find young man. I come to church every week at 7:30. Like to come early, but also I want to give up my seat at 850 or 1010 to make more room for others. "You baptized me. I want to show you the picture."

But not all turn out like that. I used to do all the baptisms. How many children grow up here and never go to church, have no desire for the things of God.

What makes the difference?

•**BUILD SLIDE #47A:** Let me explain something the Greek writers did to make this clear: "Believe in" is normal construction.

•**BUILD SLIDE #47B:** But, whenever the writers talk about "Believing in Christ," they break the rules of Greek grammar to use the word, "eis."

•SLIDE #26: In Jude's second example, the scene changes from the world of men to angels.  
2. He chained in Hell the angels who left their proper place in Heaven.

•SLIDE #27: Jude 6: And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home-- these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.

Lucifer rebelled against God and fell and in the rebellion about 1/3 of the angels went with him in rebellion. Idea was that there was civil war in Heaven and when some of the angels rose against God, he threw them out of Heaven.

Jude is probably referring to Genesis 6 and sex relations between sons of God and daughters of men. Nephlim, obscure.

Punishment for these demons was described in In 2 Peter 2:4, these demons now imprisoned in "Tartarus" until Judgment Day. Different levels of hell.

God is no player of favorites. He didn't play favorites with the angels who praised him; He also won't play favorites with the people who fail to heed his message.

•SLIDE #28: 3. God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah for sexual deviations and sins.

•SLIDE #29: Jude 7: In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

Lot chose Sodom from Abraham because it was like a paradise, rich and fertile, watered everywhere (Genesis 13:10)—a great beginning. We think of all that areas as a great desert. But the earth's climate often changes dramatically over a short period of time. 3000 years ago the climate there was quite different.

Now it lies below a region of Dead Sea – stagnant, nothing grows there at all – parched, bloated land—a terrible ending.

The story of the wickedness and destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is told in Genesis 19. Tell the story. The great sin of Sodom was that of "whoring after other flesh." These people went after every stranger that came within their reach.

They demanded that Lot bring out the angels (men) so that they could know them. This word "know" is the word for sexual intercourse.

In 2 Timothy Paul teaches that one sign of an apostate society is that marriage will break down and sexual impurity will run wild.

Our bodies are designed to be holy things. God even takes up residence in them. An impure body decimates our ability to relate to a holy God.

Sexual immorality is always a sign of rejection of the spiritual things of God.

We are living in Sodom. Commercial with Bronwyn: Woman shaving legs in bathroom: "Well you've got to be careful when you share your bathroom with men."

"When would she share her bathroom with men?"

"Its how you do it today."

Many of you recall in the early days of tv a married couple had twin beds in the bedroom. We have come a long way from holiness and purity.

What went on in Sodom and Gomorrah is now on display on tv every day—it is touted as right and

normal and if any one dares to believe otherwise they are ridiculed and persecuted and laughed at.

We make laws in our legislature to approve the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Many of us think the sexual mores of our United States are normal and to call for a higher standard is to be old fashioned and out of date.

There is another perspective. The morals of today's society are sick and ungodly and parallel to what brought judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah.

Christ foretold that the last days would be as the days of Lot (Luke 17:28-30). 20<sup>th</sup> century has witnessed a renewed outbreak of ancient sins and perversions.

Even worldly, pagan leaders of the world stand aghast. Go to Ukraine and they are trying to keep American tv out. Go to Turkey and they don't want our tv. It will corrupt the morals of their country.

•SLIDE #30: Jude wrote, "remember Sodom".

•SLIDE #31: Christ said, "Remember Lot's wife". She is an example of turning back – and turning back is apostasy. How did she turn into a pillar of salt? Land was all mineral salt. When she turned back, she lagged behind Lot and was probably covered with a torrential downpour of burning, falling salt.

The ruin of Lot and his family occurred because Lot chose to live a borderline life – as close as possible to the wicked Canaanites from whom he should have remained separate. Lot's effort to live a righteous life was a matter of contempt to his companions (19:9) and he lost his testimony completely (19:14). His wife perished when she turned back to the doomed place to which he had introduced her; his daughters adopted the morals of the city in which they had grown up. Lot was saved, yet, by fire. The last mention of him in Genesis shows him dwelling in a dark cave in misery and sin (Genesis 19:30ff).

Sarah and Chester's 28 year marriage had been a good one. Their three grown children loved them dearly. They were blessed with enough financial security to dream about a retirement home, so they began looking for one. A widower named Sam was selling his place. They liked it a lot and returned home to make plans. Months passed.

That fall Sarah told Chester she wanted a divorce. He went numb. After all these years? Why? How could she be nursing such a scheme while they were looking for a retirement home? She hadn't been, not for long. She had recently found another man. Who? Clara admitted it was Sam, the widower who owned the house they were considering. She had inadvertently run into him several weeks later and they had a cup of coffee and later went out to dinner and one thing led to another and now they were in love. There was no turning back. Not even the children, who hated the idea could dissuade her.

On the day Sarah was to leave, Chester walked through the kitchen toward the garage. Realizing Sarah would be gone when he returned, he said, "Well, hon, I guess this is the last time . . ." and his voice trailed off as he broke into sobs.

She felt awkward, so she hurriedly got her things together, backed out the drive way and never looked back. She drove off to meet Sam. Less than two weeks after she moved in with her new lover, Sam had a massive heart attack, lingered a few hours and died the following morning.

•SLIDE #34: Principle #1. A great start matters little when followed by a poor finish (Jude 5-7).

•SLIDE #35: Principle #2. We are imagining things if we think that our behavior doesn't affect our finish (Jude 8).

•SLIDE #37: Jude 8: In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings.

Notice the poetry scheme in reverse: These men defile the flesh, like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. They ignore authority like the angels who were cast into Tartarus; they also blaspheme the "glories" (or glorious ones) as the people of Israel did against Moses and the Lord before they were condemned to wander for 40 years in the wilderness.

\*\*\**Greek word*\*\*\* (dreaming). probably manner, showing the manner in which they do these verbs. They are like dreamers in all that they do. They are dreaming when they claim that defiling the flesh and ignoring authority and blaspheming the glories (of Christ and Heaven) are true ways to react to Christianity in one's life.

Love the anti-smoking bill board at Kino and I-10: Two cowboys on horses. One says to the other: "Well, Bob, I've got enphysema."

•BUILD SLIDE #36A: Report from Journal of American Medicine:

•BUILD SLIDE #36B: 71% of smokers believe they have no added risk of a heart attack from smoking.

•BUILD SLIDE #36C: 60% of smokers believe they have no added risk of cancer from smoking. They are dreaming.

Story of Bill Weber.

•SLIDE #38: Principle #2. We are imagining things if we think that our behavior doesn't affect our finish (Jude 8).

•SLIDE #39: Principle #3. A great finished is accomplished by careful attention to godly things (Jude 9-10).

•SLIDE #40: Jude 9: But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

In contrast to these apostates who cared little for godly things, Jude now presents the case of Michael the archangel, who cared desperately about godly things.

Deuteronomy 34 tells us that Moses' body was personally buried by the hand of God.

Why would the devil be so interested in the body of Moses?

(1) Transfiguration.

(2) Counterfeits. He's fooled the world into venerating saints, boxes, wood, rotten clothing, etc.

Satan was probably seeking to deceive Israel by causing the veneration of the body of Moses.

This story of the burial of Moses comes from the apocryphal "Assumption of Moses".

Michael is commissioned to bury Moses.

Satan opposes his burial on 2 grounds (a) Satan is lord over matter (hence the body belongs to him) - to this Michael exclaims, The Lord rebuke you, God's spirit created the world and all

mankind. (b) He charges Moses with murder (there is no answer in the manuscript, yet probably means that Moses was unworthy of honorable burial). The story of Moses' burial is also found in Zech. 3:1-3 and Deut. 34:6.

Michael had seen Lucifer treat holy things with such contempt. He was not about to make that same mistake. He will not presume to make a mistake with holy things. He defers to the Lord to handle this.

One characteristic of apostates is their cynical irreverence toward things that are sacred and holy. One characteristic of true Christians is their steadfast reverence toward things that are sacred and holy.

•SLIDE #41: Jude 10: Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals-- these are the very things that destroy them.

Let me explain this. What is it apostates do not understand? Spiritual things. They have no place for spiritual things in their lives; Therefore they regard all spiritual things with scorn and contempt.

What do they understand? Their basic animal instincts. So that is what they live by.

Living by animal instincts, is what withers, disfigures, and destroys their character.

We are all are born with a sense of spiritual things, but it is possible for that sense to cease to exist.

Stop practicing piano or trumpet and lose the skill.

Stop reading and speaking a foreign language and we lose it.

If we consistently refuse to listen to the voice of God, if we shuts our ears and eyes to spiritual values, if we make our instincts the sole standard of our desires and conduct, eventually, we will reach a point where we cannot hear the voice of God. Spiritual values are lost and we are mastered by our basest desires.

It is possible to reach a point where we reject the need for self-control, where we cannot see the beauty of chastity, when purity has lost its attraction, and when the only thing that matters is the satisfaction of the impulses, instincts, and desires which come from our baser nature.

Listening to the wrong voices: Israel to the wrong spies; Angels to the wrong Lucifer; People of Sodom and Gomorrah to animal instincts.

Hey, which voices are you listening to? The clamorings of the media, the tv, the movies, the magazines, the music groups and videos, the cds, the peers?

Or the Holy Spirit who lives within and has given a Bible for guidance?

•SLIDE #48: Galatians 5:16-18: So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature.

One day Brother Baker told my dad and me about doing a funeral for a man who'd died that week. As a young man, he was a tremendous servant of the Lord. Raised his family in Christ. Worked faithfully in church. Then during midlife, he fell away and turned his back totally on Christ. He claimed that there was no God at all. He was totally out of fellowship with God at his

death.

- SLIDE #2: Baker said, “If I were going to live half my life for God and half my life against God, I’d rather live the first half in rebellion and the second half right and growing as a Christian. I sure wouldn’t want to do it the other way around and die out of fellowship. I would hate to face God and have to explain why I turned away and then try to remind Him how good I was during the first half.”

Speak to some of you who have not started yet.

Speak to some of you who aren’t certain you will finish well.

It is your choice. That is the whole point of this passage.

- SLIDE #46: We want to finish strong like Lance Armstrong the recent American cyclist who won the Tour de France.

Three years ago stricken with testicular cancer. Never ride again. Will die. 12 golf ball sized tumors in his lungs. Cancer in the brain. Dedicated last year’s Tour de Tucson to him.

- SLIDE #45: Beats cancer and wins. What a great finish!

- SLIDE #10: 1. A great start matters little when followed by a poor finish (Jude 5-7).

- SLIDE #11: 2. We are imagining things if we think that our behavior doesn’t affect our finish (Jude 8).

- SLIDE #12: 3. A great finished is accomplished by careful attention to godly things (Jude 9-10).