# Jude 6–9

*A Ministry in the Word*

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## Scripture Reading

> *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. 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. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.*

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## The Three-Fold Moral Court — Unbelief, Disorder, Passion

Verses 5, 6, and 7 together form a three-fold moral court — a cord not easily broken. They represent three great principles of defection from the faith once delivered, drawn from three historical examples. The fountain of all three is unbelief.

The people out of Egypt (verse 5): unbelief in the face of grace. God wrought a mighty deliverance, and they believed not. The angels of verse 6: departure from God's appointed order. They left the place God had given them. Sodom and Gomorrah (verse 7): the unleashing of passion in its most abandoned form, going after strange flesh, contrary to nature. These three together — unbelief, disorder, and corrupted passion — describe the downward course that the profession of Christianity takes when these principles are at work within it. Verse 8 draws the

application: *likewise also these dreamers.*

## Sodom and Gomorrah — Set Forth for an Example

Verse 7 speaks of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them, who in like manner committed fornication and went after strange flesh. The words *in like manner* connect verse 7 with verse 6 — there is a kinship between the leaving of the first estate in verse 6 and the going after strange flesh in verse 7. Both involve a departure from the created order, the nature that God has stamped upon His creatures. Nature here does not mean what is conventional or culturally normative — it means the order that God constituted when He brought things into being.

Sodom and Gomorrah are set forth as an example. Marriage had not been abandoned in those cities — Lot had sons-in-law there. But alongside the institution of marriage there was a characteristic sin that God names and that the Scripture does not shrink from naming, that stamps these cities with a character the world has carried forward in a word derived from the name of the city itself. They are set before us as an example of the vengeance of eternal fire — which, like the everlasting chains of verse 6, presses the eternal character of what follows departure from God's order.

## Likewise These Dreamers — The Application

Verse 8 applies all three principles to the men Jude is describing. A dreamer is led by the imaginations of his own mind, something springing up within himself rather than from God. What is sometimes called virtual reality in another context — a world shaped by human imaginations rather than by God's testimony — is what characterises these dreamers. They defile the flesh, despise lordship, and speak evil of dignities.

Despising lordship is not merely a theoretical attitude — it manifests in the claiming of authority over what belongs to God. History supplies a vivid example in the papal claim to place a foot on the neck of kings — to so humble lordship that a spiritual figure could exercise that kind of power over temporal rulers. When men are given a free hand without hindrance, the true nature of the spirit that drives them manifests itself. And to speak evil of dignities — of the angelic orders that God has set in place — is a bold intrusion into what belongs to God alone to judge.

## Michael the Archangel — The Lord Rebuke Thee

Verse 9 gives the great contrast. Michael the archangel, in the very highest of creaturely positions, contending with the devil over the body of Moses, did not bring a railing accusation against him. He did not issue a judgment from himself. He said: *The Lord rebuke thee.* Judgment is in the Lord's hands, not in the archangel's. The contrast with the men of verse 8 — who speak evil of what they do not know — could not be sharper. The highest creature exercises restraint; these low creatures exercise no restraint at all.

The archangel's voice appears again in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 at the coming of the Lord for His saints. The archangel who once disputed about a dead body will speak again at the moment when the dead in Christ rise. The same voice. The same character of godly restraint. And on that occasion, if any objection should be raised to the Lord taking His own home, the answer will be the same: *The Lord rebuke thee.*

Michael also stands up for Israel at the time of the great tribulation (Daniel 12:1), and in Revelation 12 he and his angels cast Satan down, ending his access to the presence of God. From that point it is down, down, down for Satan — cast down, cast into the abyss, and finally cast into the lake of fire. The word *down* is characteristic of evil's trajectory in Scripture.

*— Study ends —*