

Jude 1:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. Jude begins a series of historical examples demonstrating God's judgment on apostasy. "Put you in remembrance" (Greek *hypomnēsai hymas*, ὑπομνησαι ὑμᾶς) means to remind, recall to mind—Jude isn't introducing new information but refreshing known truths. The phrase "ye once knew this" (Greek *eidotas hapax panta*, εἰδóτας ἅπαξ πάντα) emphasizes they learned these things previously, likely in initial Christian instruction.

The first example is Israel's exodus and wilderness rebellion. God "saved the people out of the land of Egypt"—delivered them from slavery through mighty acts (Exodus 12-14). Yet "afterward destroyed them that believed not" (Greek *deuteron tous mē pisteusantas apōlesen*, τὸ δεύτερον τοὺς μὴ πιστεύσαντας ἀπώλεσεν)—subsequently destroyed the unbelieving. This refers to Numbers 14, where Israel's unbelief at Kadesh-barnea resulted in that generation dying in the wilderness without entering Canaan.

The theological point is profound: initial deliverance doesn't guarantee final salvation if followed by persistent unbelief. Physical exodus from Egypt didn't save those who refused to trust God for entering Canaan. Similarly, professing Christianity, baptism, or church membership doesn't guarantee salvation apart

from genuine faith persevering to the end. The Greek participle "believed not" (mē pisteusantas) indicates ongoing, settled unbelief, not momentary doubt.

Historical Context

This example would have resonated powerfully with Jewish Christian readers familiar with Israel's history. The exodus represented God's greatest Old Testament redemptive act, forming Israel as His covenant people. Yet Paul reminds believers that "with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness" (1 Corinthians 10:5). Hebrews 3-4 extensively applies this warning to Christian perseverance.

The wilderness generation received extraordinary privileges: miraculous deliverance from Egypt, divine guidance through cloud and fire, supernatural provision of manna and water, God's presence at Sinai. Despite these blessings, their hearts turned away in unbelief. Their rebellion manifested in complaining (Numbers 11), idolatry (Exodus 32), sexual immorality (Numbers 25), and ultimately refusing to trust God's promise to give them the land (Numbers 13-14).

Early Christians recognized themselves as the new exodus people—delivered from slavery to sin, traveling toward the promised heavenly inheritance. Just as Israel faced testing in the wilderness, Christians face trials requiring persevering faith. The warning was clear: privilege and initial profession don't ensure final salvation; only faith persevering through testing inherits God's promises.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Israel's wilderness example warn against presuming on God's grace while persisting in unbelief?

2. What's the difference between struggling with doubt (common to believers) and the settled unbelief Jude describes?
3. How should churches balance assurance of salvation with warnings against apostasy?

Interlinear Text

Ἐπομνήσαι	δὲ	ὕμᾱς	βούλομαι	εἰδότας	ὕμᾱς		
in remembrance	therefore	though ye	I will	knew	though ye		
G5279	G1161	G5209	G1014	G1492	G5209		
ἅπαξ	τοῦτο,	ὅτι	ὁ	Κύριος,	λαὸν	ἐκ	γῆς
once	this	how that	G3588	the Lord	the people	out of	the land
G530	G5124	G3754		G2962	G2992	G1537	G1093
Αἰγύπτου	σώσας	τὸ	δεύτερον	τοὺς	μὴ	πιστεύσαντας	
of Egypt	having saved	G3588	afterward	G3588	not	them that believed	
G125	G4982		G1208		G3361	G4100	
ἠπώλεσεν							
destroyed							
G622							

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 106:26 (Parallel theme): Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness: