

Jude 1:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. Jude's second example of judgment concerns fallen angels. "Kept not their first estate" (Greek *tous mē tērēsantas tēn heautōn archēn*, *τοὺς μὴ τηρήσαντας τὴν ἐαυτῶν ἀρχήν*) literally means "not keeping their own beginning/authority"—they didn't maintain their original position or authority. "Left their own habitation" (Greek *alla apolipantas to idion oikētērion, ἀλλὰ ἀπολιπόντας τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον*) indicates deliberate abandonment of their assigned dwelling/sphere.

God's response was immediate and severe: "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness" (Greek *desmois aidiois hypo zophon tetērēken, δεσμοῖς ἀιδίοις ὑπὸ ζόφον τετήρηκεν*). The perfect tense "has reserved" indicates completed action with ongoing effect—they remain imprisoned. "Everlasting chains" denotes permanent, unbreakable bondage. "Darkness" (Greek *zophos, ζόφος*) refers to deep gloom, the absence of God's glory. This imprisonment awaits "the judgment of the great day"—the final judgment when all rebellion will be condemned.

The specific sin of these angels is debated. Some connect this to Genesis 6:1-4 and the "sons of God" cohabiting with humans. Others see it as the original satanic rebellion. 2 Peter 2:4 provides a parallel account. Jewish literature (1 Enoch, which Jude quotes in v. 14-15) elaborates on angelic rebellion. Regardless of specifics,

the point is clear: even angels who abandoned their assigned position face eternal judgment.

Historical Context

Jewish apocalyptic literature, particularly 1 Enoch, extensively discussed fallen angels. While not Scripture, 1 Enoch was widely read in Jude's time and provided shared reference points for Jewish audiences. The Book of the Watchers (1 Enoch 1-36) describes angels who descended to earth, took human wives, and taught humanity forbidden knowledge, resulting in corruption requiring the flood.

Early Christians understood that spiritual rebellion occurs in both earthly and heavenly realms. Paul describes principalities and powers, spiritual wickedness in high places (Ephesians 6:12). Jesus spoke of seeing Satan fall like lightning (Luke 10:18). Revelation 12:7-9 describes war in heaven and Satan's expulsion. The rebellion of angels—beings of great power and privilege in God's presence—demonstrates that no creature is immune to temptation toward pride and rebellion.

This example would have particularly resonated given Jude's context. If angels who dwelt in God's presence could fall through abandoning their position, how much more should humans beware? The false teachers Jude addresses had abandoned their assigned place in the faith, much like these angels left their habitation. Both face certain judgment.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does angelic rebellion teach about the danger of pride and abandoning one's God-given position?

2. How does the permanence of angelic judgment highlight both God's justice and the preciousness of human redemption?
3. In what ways might Christians be tempted to 'abandon their habitation' or depart from their assigned calling?

Interlinear Text

ἀγγέλους	τε	τοὺς	μὴ	τετήρηκεν	τὴν	έσωτῶν	ἀρχὴν
the angels	And	G3588	not	he hath reserved	G3588	their	first estate
G32	G5037		G3361	G5083		G1438	G746
ἀλλὰ	ἀπολιπόντας	τὸ	ἴδιον	οἰκητήριον	εἰς	κρίσιν	
but	left	G3588	their own	habitation	unto	the judgment	
G235	G620		G2398	G3613	G1519	G2920	
μεγάλης	ἡμέρας	δεσμοῖς	ἀϊδίοις	ὑπὸ	ζόφον		
of the great	day	chains	in everlasting	under	darkness		
G3173	G2250	G1199	G126	G5259	G2217		
τετήρηκεν							
he hath reserved							
G5083							

Additional Cross-References

2 Peter 2:4 (Judgment): For if 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;

Ephesians 6:12 (Darkness): For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Matthew 8:29 (Parallel theme): And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

Matthew 25:41 (Eternal Life): Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

2 Peter 2:9 (Judgment): The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

Hebrews 10:27 (Judgment): But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

John 8:44 (Parallel theme): Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Revelation 20:10 (Parallel theme): And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org