

The Last Chapter of History, Before the Rapture



Focus on Jerusalem, in its continuing endeavor to make available interesting and doctrinally sound articles associated with Bible Prophecy is pleased to share this excellent and insightful article by Dr. Norbert Leith. Dr. Leith resides in Denmark and is a contributing author to the Midnight Call Ministry of Arno Frosoe. I have personally had the privilege to hear Dr. Leith in person, and have always been intrigued with his insights into Bible prophecy.

The Last Chapter of History, Before the Rapture

By: Norbert Leith

If our society has changed so much that the statements in the epistle of Jude can be applied to it, then we know what time it is. In focusing on the epistle of Jude, my main goal in considering this letter is not to judge others but to judge ourselves. Jude wrote, *“But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers*

in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit” (Jude 17-19).

It is certainly not coincidental that in most Bible translations the epistle of Jude is the last book before the Revelation. I believe the Holy Spirit also inspired the order of the books of the Bible. This letter could be God’s urgent call to us. It probably reflects the spiritual situation over the whole earth directly before the Rapture and the apocalypse that takes place thereafter. It is the last chapter of history before the Rapture.

We find six examples of apostates in the epistle of Jude, which are mentioned by name: the people of ***Israel, angels, Sodom and Gomorrah, Cain, Balaam and Korah***. The rapture of Enoch is a positive, seventh example. God enables us by means of this example to make a comparison: if our society has changed so much that the statements in Jude’s letter can be applied to it, then we know what hour has come.

Paul also wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:11, “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” A man named Siegfried Schleiter wrote in this connection, “Doubtless the proclaimed symptoms of apostasy from true faith have never before in the history of mankind been so world-embracing, nor escalated with such vehemence as at the beginning of our new millennium.”

The following six anti-Christian examples from the past point us to what will take place in the future:

1. The people of Israel

“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 believe not” (Jude 5).

Even at that time many Israelites wanted to hear nothing about God, although they were part of His chosen people, and they perished. In the same way, at the end of time there will be many who claimed to be Christians but were not spiritually born again. These nominal Christians will have nothing in common with Jesus Christ, and will cast aside all biblical and Christian values (compare 2 Thessalonians 2:3 and 1 Timothy 4:1). Notice 1 Corinthians 10:1-6 in this connection as well: Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of

them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

What Moses said of those who left Egypt but turned away from God in the wilderness is absolutely shocking, “He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he. They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation” (Deuteronomy 32:4-5). These “spots” are also mentioned in Jude 12, and they characterize the nominal Christians of the last times. Applied to the people of Israel, it meant that they were Israelites, but not children of God. They were a part of His people in name only, but not in their hearts. They were “as though” they were saved, but they were not really saved. “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Romans 2:28-29).

The word “godless” does not apply only to atheists, but to people in general (Christians) who have no fear of God and who deny Jesus. Certainly there are people (even theologians) who say they are Christians but they are not true believers in their hearts. It is possible to have a form of godliness with no content. The following are examples of this condition:

- The sons of Eli were priests, yet the Bible says, “they knew not the Lord” (1 Samuel 2:12). And, “Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord; for men abhorred the offering of the Lord” (1 Samuel 2:17). Those who deny the perfect offering of Jesus on the cross do not know the Lord and have no part in the kingdom of God.
- Jesus said to the church at Smyrna, “I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan” (Revelation 2:9).
- Jesus said in the parable of the sower, “They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have not root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away” (Luke 8:13).
- Following this parable the Lord said, “My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it” (Luke 8:21, compare also Matthew 7:21-23 and 25:1-13).
- The fact that there are “Christians” who do not have the Spirit of life (compare Jude 19) is made clear by the letter to the church at Sardis, “I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead” (Revelation 3:1). Our time is characterized by nominal Christianity, which does not want to know Christ.

2. The Angels (at the time of Noah)

“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 6).

We are concerned here with fallen angels who became demons. During Noah’s time they left their own habitation and took possession of men in order to have sexual relations with the women of that time. Angels are sexless. Fallen angels (demons), however, desire to enter into a body. They once entered into a herd of swine (compare Luke 8:32). Demonism, occultism and Satanism are always connected with perverse sexuality. “And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. 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” (Genesis 6:1-2, 4). The sins of these angels were so terrible that God bound them in chains, and since then they have been kept until the final judgment.

This is how it will be in the end-times. People will leave their “natural habitation,” that is, they will ignore the order of creation. Driven by demons, they will become morally corrupt. “Rosemary’s Baby” was a horror movie that was released in 1968, after East Jerusalem was repossessed, at the beginning of the “last stage of the end-times” (see Joel 3:1-2). This classic horror movie was the first of its kind in dealing with the sexual union of Satan and man. “The Exorcist,” an extremely popular movie in the 1970s, was then described as being the most shocking movie of all time. The film industry today is full of productions that deal with the union of the spirit world and the human world. According to a study by Harvard University, Hollywood is producing more sexual and violent scenes or films than ever before. And the productions are being released for even younger people.

In Noah’s time, the sins of the people brought the judgment of the Flood upon them, but Enoch was saved beforehand. In the same way, the situation of the end-times is demanding God’s judgment. The Church of Jesus Christ will be preserved from God’s judgment through the Rapture. Of the time of Noah, Jesus said, “But as the days of Noe [Noah] were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe [Noah] entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matthew 24:37- 39).

What did the people of Noah’s generation not see? The signs of the times. And they did not listen to God speak through Noah, “by which also he went and

preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water” (1 Peter 3:19-20).

There was no sign of impending judgment when Noah was building the ark. Yet the soaking rain came upon the people suddenly and unexpectedly. This is how it is today. People think things will go on like this indefinitely, but suddenly the Rapture will take place and disaster will come upon them (compare Revelation 1:1).

Let us consider Noah: “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Hebrews 11:7). A Bible commentary explains this verse as follows: “Noah received a revelation from God; his faith was proved genuine in that he accepted it without doubt or contradiction. Noah reckoned with the judgment of God. He obeyed God and erected through the building of the ark a sign of faith.”

How is it with us? Do we see the signs of the times? Are we telling people that Jesus is coming back? Or do we adapt to the doubters who say that is all speculation and disregard all biblical prophecy? Of course the question arises, does Christianity today even reckon with the fact of the appearing of Jesus as Judge of the world, which, according to the Bible, will be the most revolutionary and spectacular event in world history? Does Christianity take the Word of her Lord so seriously that it can be used in the world today as a warning and a hope?” Hardly

3. Sodom and Gomorrah

“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” (Jude 7).

The phrase, “in like manner” refers to verse 6. There the angels who corrupted mankind sexually are described. Homosexuality and sodomy, as it was practiced at the time of Sodom (Genesis 19), is thus demonic. As far as God is concerned, it is equivalent with the sins of the angels at the time of Noah in Genesis

6. Homosexuality is the departure from the natural habitation of man. It is unnatural and contradicts God’s creative order, which is why the battle over homosexuality is being fought so vehemently. *There would be no homosexual battle if it were a natural practice.* The Apostle Paul wrote of this in Romans 1:26-27: “For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another;

men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.”

This is not about judging homosexuals, but it is about the practice of homosexuality. How terrible it would be, however, if the state were not only to allow such behavior but also encourage it and condemn those who opposed it. What would we say of a person who kills another and says he did it because he felt the urge to do it?

“Giving themselves over to fornication....” Homosexuality practiced and accepted by society was the sin of the Sodomites at that time. They incurred the immediate judgment of God (compare Genesis 15:16, 18:20-21, Jonah 1:2). The judgment of God is at the door if these immoral sins continue characterizing our society today. These words are written in the book of Isaiah: “The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! For they have rewarded evil unto themselves” (Isaiah 3:9).

These verses concern our time in particular. Today these things are becoming public again and practiced shamelessly, just as they were in Lot’s time. This should make us stop and think. If a politician today expresses favor of homosexuality, or even outs himself as a homosexual, he is guaranteed favor and votes, and garners widespread media support. If he publicly declares himself against it, however, he is slandered and belittled. Unless we rediscover and defend our Christian values. Otherwise I see no good for the future.” The perverse people in Sodom almost forced their way into Lot’s house, and he hardly knew how to defend himself against them.

The homosexual movement had become a real “lobby.” “But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: and they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? Bring them out unto us, that we may know them. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, and said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly...And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door” (Genesis 19:4-7, 9). Three things took place here:

1. Lot’s protest was strongly rejected.
2. Lot himself became an accused person who did not belong in their society.
3. They attempted to enter his house with increased force (compare Judges 19:22ff).

Then they were struck with blindness (Genesis 19:11).

How is it today? The homosexual lobby is breaking down doors and forcing itself upon society. Those who protest against this practice become the accused themselves. What wonder is it that our society becomes more and more blinded? Not only is sexual education a part of the school curriculum, but “homosexual education” is being introduced and this from the lowest grades. The following are three further reports, which prove the progressive “homosexualization” of our time.

Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed as a result of the overwhelming homosexuality at the time of Lot (compare Genesis 19.24ff.) Jesus also mentioned this event, “But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all” (Luke 17:29). But Lot was led out of Sodom beforehand. This is another picture of the imminent Rapture of the Church of Jesus Christ from this world.

A warning interjection

Jude states after this first of three examples, “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 [compare Zechariah 3:2]. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves” (Jude 8-10). I believe these words warn us also of unbiblical emotionalism, and instruct us not to act upon dreams and visions. These things are not seldomly connected with “the casting out of demons.” Often in such assemblies the devil is addressed directly. I once heard that a Pentecostal preacher said the following in a service, “I dreamed that Satan came in here on crutches this morning.” This led him to perform a ceremony of casting out demons. Everyone laughed and applauded.

Moses died on Mount Nebo in the territory of Moab, “So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day” (Deuteronomy 34:5-6). The Lord Himself buried His servant Moses. Apparently Satan wanted to use Moses’ body for his own purposes. Did he perhaps want to set it up as an object of worship? (Think, for instance, of the Shroud of Turin, saints and other relics, which are worshipped today. Israelis often visit the tombs of famous rabbis in order to pray for a blessing.)

The Lord sent Michael the archangel, however, who watches over Israel in particular and fights for her, to prevent that (compare Daniel 10:13, 21, and 12:1,

Revelation 12:7ff). Michael fought with the devil at God's command over the body of Moses, which was probably then taken to heaven (compare Matthew 17:3). In this duel, Michael did not ignore the authority of Satan, which was given him by God and remains his until he is finally judged (compare Revelation 20:10). He is even able to enter into heaven (compare Revelation 12:10). Michael the archangel acknowledged the devil's status and did not slander him. This example represents the irrefutable creative order and the moral principles that God has ordained.

The end-times are characterized by the fact that all these orders are despised and rejected. The word "despite" in Jude 8 is shocking. In spite of all warnings, the Word of God is being thrown overboard. Divine principles have been replaced with human ones. People dream of living in their own ideal world and reject God. They ignore all authority, which has been appointed by God, and blaspheme about spiritual reality. And so they reap the judgment of not understanding and living like mindless beasts.

Nihilism, a philosophy that rejects all religious and moral principles became popular in the 1960s. In his novels, Dostoyevski thematized the connection between nihilism, atheism, crime and self-destruction. But as Christians, we are warned, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" in Colossians 2:8). Not everything that sounds intelligent or reasonable is necessarily so. The principles of the world are influenced by sin and often manipulated by the "God of this world." Only a life "after Christ" and His doctrine are true.

4. Cain

"Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain" (Jude 11). What was Cain's way? Genesis 4:16 answers: "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden" (compare also Hebrews 11:4). Nod means "the land of the homeless," "unstable," and "fugitive." This also applies to modern man. Cain despised the blood sacrifice and brought his own false sacrifice instead, and then he later murdered his brother (compare 1 John 3:12). He represented a humanity that forsakes its faith, falls away from Jesus and departs from the true God. Therewith they contribute to the fulfilment of prophecy (compare Jude 18-19, 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 1 Timothy 4:1, Luke 8:13 and Daniel 8:23). These people find themselves in bad company; they are described as those who "were before of old ordained to this condemnation" (Jude 4).

Cain brought a false, unspiritual sacrifice that did not bring him closer to God but drove him farther away. Cain is the first type in humanity, which despises Jesus and replaces Him with his own religious views. In this connection, we read, for

instance, “The football games of the Euro 2008 will be shown live in churches. Even yelling, drinking and cursing will not be forbidden. Just as Cain went away from God, so our society, family, state, politics and church, is moving farther and farther away from God. This is why in these circles society is becoming more and more “restless” and “fugitive.” Our fellow men are not given any support. People are walking away from the Bible. The churches are becoming emptier and emptier, and the buildings are being sold. Jesus is being put aside, and people are making their own god. But those who proclaim Jesus other than how the Bible describes Him, or teach that other ways apart from Him also lead to God, are bringing a false sacrifice (compare Galatians 1:8-9). Quite often, however, it is these very people who condemn sincere Christians or decry them as fundamentalists. This is the religion of Cain.

Today, in the end-times, we live in a society that resembles Cain, and is departing from God.

5. Balaam

“...and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward” (Jude 11).

Balaam was prepared to curse Israel for the sake of money (compare Joshua 24:9-10). Today, Israel is being betrayed for the sake of oil. On account of his greed, Balaam became a false prophet; he was responsible for Israel being deceived (compare Numbers 25:1-3, 31:16 and Revelation 2:14). Balaam was the first man to profit from his gift. But Balaam was not only a false prophet, he was also a soothsayer, a fortune-teller (compare Joshua 13:22).

How close together are false prophecy, deception and clairvoyance! Paul wrote, “For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ” (2 Corinthians 2:17). In some evangelical circles, false prophets promise blessing, healing, success and prosperity. A “Christian management” system has crept in to many local churches that is no different from that in the business world. It is only concerned with increasing finances, not the binding standards of God’s Word. Salvation has taken a back seat to profiteering.

6. Korah

“...and perished in the gainsaying of Core [Korah]” (Jude 11).

Korah wanted to introduce a different kind of worship. Erik Junker wrote on this subject, “Always then when a church began to practice a false worship, false prophecy and falsely understood ‘general priesthood,’ the church died. We need to beware of this.” Korah deceived 250 people and rebelled against Moses and Aaron

with the words, “And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?” (Numbers 16:3). As a prophet, Moses represented the Word of God, and as a priest, Aaron represented the valid sacrifice. We live at a time in which not only unbelievers but also people from within Christian circles are rebelling against the Word of God and degrading the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. And is it not these very people who accuse born-again Christians as being fundamentalists,” that they claim too much for themselves, for instance, that Jesus is the only way to God? Many claim that there are saints everywhere; all roads and religions somehow lead to God. We cannot reject Allah, Mohammed, Buddha, the Dalai Lama and the Pope, etc. This is just what Korah attempted, but it is a contradiction in itself, for instance, where John 14:6 is concerned, “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” The people of the last times will find themselves living in the contradiction that they regarded all religions as equal, although they are mutually exclusive.

Summary

It cannot be denied that these six negative examples are present in our generation to an unprecedented extent. From this we see in what stage of the end-times we are living. Children of God feel through the indwelling Holy Spirit, just like migratory birds, that our departure for heaven is imminent. The following characteristics reflect that we are living on the precipice of the Rapture.

- Our society is characterized by a nominal Christianity, which to a great extent rejects the Bible and knows nothing of consistent discipleship. The people of Israel in the wilderness reflected this attitude.
- Our world is being flooded by one demonic wave after another. People are reaching out for extra-terrestrial phenomena, but hardly for the One who came from heaven into the world to save us. The people from Noah’s generation are a good example of this tendency.
- The homosexual initiative has become a lobby that characterizes and dominates our society. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are a model of this evil practice.
- We live in an “away-from-God” Christianity as did Cain.
- A false “prophethood,” which is more like a business than it is biblical, is permeating the churches more and more. Balaam is an example of this deception.
- Other forms of worship, which are in contrast to the Word of God and the only valid

sacrifice of Jesus, that tolerate a mixture of spiritual things are gaining ground. Korah's actions are an example of this tolerance.

These examples collectively symbolize a chapter in human history that stands shortly before its judgment. For this reason Enoch, who was raptured by God shortly before the judgment of that time is the seventh example.

Enoch

“Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints” (Jude 14).

It is written that Enoch is “the seventh from Adam.” He is also seventh in the sequence of names in the epistle of Jude. The number 7 means “completion.” Revelation 2 and 3 contain seven letters to the churches, which portray the Church Age. According to 2 Corinthians 10:11, the Church is the “end,” the “completion” of the world ages. And blindness has come upon Israel until the “full number” of the Gentiles has been reached (compare Romans 11:25). There are approximately 7,000 Jews in Israel who believe in Jesus, which, in a way, proclaims the coming of the Messiah.

The epistle of Jude is the last letter before the Revelation, and it mentions Enoch as being a kind of completion. Could this completion be understood as a picture of the imminent Rapture of the Church and the following apocalypse? The Church will be removed from this earth when it is complete. And then the Lord will turn to Israel again (compare Romans 11:25-26). Perhaps this is why Michael the archangel, who fights in particular for the children of Israel (compare Daniel 12:1 and Revelation 12:7), is mentioned in Jude 9. Enoch was the first man to be raptured because he walked with God (compare Genesis 5:24), and this took place before the Flood. Doubtless this is a picture of the true Church, which follows the Lord and will be raptured. Noah, on the other hand, is a type of Israel, who is saved through the “flood” of the Great Tribulation.

The “ten thousand of his saints” are the raptured believers, who will return visibly with the Lord in glory. This is what is written in Colossians 3:4, “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Although we do not know the day or hour of Jesus' return, we can clearly see the last chapter in human history before the Rapture has begun. Only those who are “in Christ” will be kept. “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied” (Jude 1- 2). There is no other place where you can be preserved from the future judgment of God than in Jesus Christ alone. What a contrast these verses are to the six anti-Christian

examples! God is calling people to His Son today. Would you like to belong to the Lord Jesus Christ? Then put this desire into words in a prayer to Jesus. God will hear you and lead you to the salvation that His Son accomplished for you!