

Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church

Pastor: Elder Will Martin

www.macedoniapbc.org

July, 2009

“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 5

In this verse of scripture from the epistle of Jude, the Lord is bringing to memory an Old Testament story concerning the destruction of a multitude of Israelites. The Lord wanted those who were sanctified by God, preserved, and called (see Jude 1) to remember why these Israelites were destroyed. I am of the opinion that if the Lord wanted the Christians who lived during the time Jude penned this epistle to remember this story; He also wants His people in the 21st Century to remember this story.

The acts that led to the destruction of this multitude of Israelites are recorded in the 13th and 14th chapters of the book of Numbers. In summary, the Israelites were a little more than two years removed from Egyptian bondage and on the brink of entering into the land that the Lord had promised them. This land was described as a land flowing with milk and honey. God’s word records that on several occasions leading up to the time of Numbers chapter 13, the Lord had promised them this land (See Exodus 3:8, 3:17, 13:5, 33:1-3 and Lev 20:24). Therefore, these Israelites were well aware of the blessings of the land and that the Lord had promised it to them. Please keep in mind as we move forward that our Lord is not one who falls short of delivering something that He has promised.

Moses was commanded by God to form a group, made up of a representative from each tribe of Israel, to go forward and spy out this land. Upon their return from spying, the group brought back fruit from the land and news that caused discomfort among the Israelites.

“But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.” Numbers 13:31-33

The multitude of Israelites were discouraged with this “evil report” and rebelled against the Lord. They wished to return to Egypt (Num 14:4). They spitefully proposed to stone Joshua and Caleb (Num 14:10), the only two spies who were encouraging the Israelites to go forward and claim the land that the Lord had promised them. The Israelites believed the report of man and not in the promises of God. As punishment to the ones who did not believe God, the Lord refused them entry into the promise land, save Joshua, Caleb (Numbers 14:38) and all of the others who were under the age of 20. Those who believed not were destroyed in the wilderness as the Israelites spent 40 years making an 11 day journey (see Deut 1:2).

How does this story apply to the sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, and called- of the 21st century? Modern day theology would propose that Joshua and Caleb, as the only two who believed God, were the only two children of God amongst this whole multitude and that all of the Israelites who were denied entry into the promise land suffered a punishment of everlasting torment in eternal hell for their unbelief. I reject that proposal. By looking at the ones to whom Jude addressed this epistle, we should be lead away from such an interpretation. Again, in the 1st verse of this epistle, Jude addresses those who have been sanctified (set apart) by God

the Father in the new birth, preserved in Christ Jesus, and called by the holy calling of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, those who Jude addresses have eternal life.

- Sanctified by God the Father- *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one.” John 10:27-30*
- Preserved in Jesus Christ- *“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.” I Thes 5:23-24*
- Called with Holy Calling- *“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our own works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,” II Timothy 1:9*

Our eternal life is secure in Jesus Christ. If the ones who are being addressed by the epistle already have eternal life and that life is preserved in Jesus Christ (therefore man can’t touch it), it would be unnecessary to warn them of the punishment of losing something that they cannot lose. Therefore, Jude is not telling them to recall an Old Testament story to warn them (or us) to beware of losing our eternal life through unbelief.

Along those same lines, are we to believe that only 2 of 1.5 million people were children of God amongst this multitude? If we use the information provided to us in the first three chapters of Numbers and apply some very conservative assumptions (e.g. that the men of war were married, an additional 10% of population were older and would not be counted as warriors and add a few for the tribe of Levi), we derive that there were approximately 1.5 million people above the age of 20 amongst this multitude. If Joshua and Caleb were the only two children of God present in this multitude, then we have to believe that only 0.00013% of the Israelites who were delivered from Egyptian bondage belonged to the Lord. Because scripture refers to the Lord’s children as many (see Matthew 20:28 and John 17:2), I can’t agree with the idea of so few of this multitude being the only children of God. Also keep in mind that Moses himself was not one of the two who was granted entry. If we believe that the ones who were blessed to enter the land are the only children of God, we have to believe that the man who delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage, with the Lord’s help, and penned the first five books of the Bible is now burning in eternal hell. Again, I am not comfortable with such an interpretation of this Old Testament Story.

I hope by this point that we agree on the fact that these Israelites were punished for unbelief and that the punishment was not a type and shadow of eternal hell for those who believed not.

If we use the language and the setting of the book of Jude, we can clearly see that the Lord is reminding them of this Old Testament Story because Satan, who was present with the Israelites in Numbers 13 and amongst the saints when this book was penned and is ever present now, is constantly trying to rob God’s children of the blessings of the land flowing with milk and honey. The devil does not want us to experience the blessings of God. The devil, as depicted by the Apostle Peter, is walking about “...seeking whom he may devour:” (I Peter 5:8). He convinced a large multitude of people who had seen God part a sea that God was not able to deliver giants into their hand. Jude was encouraging the saints to continue in belief and not fall into unbelief and be punished. Jude said that it was needful for him to write unto them and encourage them to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Again, let me stress, he is not encouraging them to contend for eternal life. The Lord had and has already contended for that (see Hebrews 9:12) and obtained it for His children. The land flowing with milk and honey is entered into when a child of God comes to the understanding that the Lord has fought

that battle and won. The comfort and continued blessings received through this understanding brings joy that can only be trumped by being in the presence of our Saviour in eternal heaven itself.

Jude repeats the same charge that Paul and Barnabas made to the saints at Antioch and the region of Galatia (see Acts 11:23 and 14:22) and we should be making today. As the saints of God in the 21st Century, we should be encouraging all those who are willing to lend us an ear to believe what God has promised in His word. As written in the referenced verses from John 10 above, the Lord gives, not offers, eternal life to His children. He bought and paid for them with His own blood on the cross at Calvary according to the aforementioned verse of scripture from Hebrews 9. This is God's word. It is true. Do you believe it? If so, continue in it. Enter into the land flowing with milk and honey-the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ and forever eat from the bountiful table of joy and blessings.

In His Love,



Elder Will Martin

Macedonia Church Announcements:

1. Friday, July 10th and Saturday, July 11th: Macedonia will host her bi-annual meeting. Our scheduled speakers are Elder Lonnie Mazingo Jr. and Elder Hugh Sanders. There will be services on Friday night at 7:00, Saturday morning at 10:30 and Saturday afternoon at 2:00. Lunch will be served between services on Saturday. Please come and be with us if you can and call (678) 410-0109 if you have any questions concerning the meeting. Because Brother Lonnie was in a car accident on June 25th, we are not sure if he will be able to attend the meeting. He suffered a broken vertebra, injured his knee and broke a bone in his hand. We pray he continues to improve.
2. Beginning with the 3rd Sunday in July, the 19th, we will reconvene after lunch for singing on 3rd Sundays. We hope during this short song service to learn some of the hymns in the hymnal that we don't sing that often. Lord Willing, some song leaders from our sister churches will join us during this time. Please stay if you can.
3. On Sunday, August 16th, Elder Philip Conley from Macedonia Church in Ackerman Mississippi will be with us for our Sunday morning services.

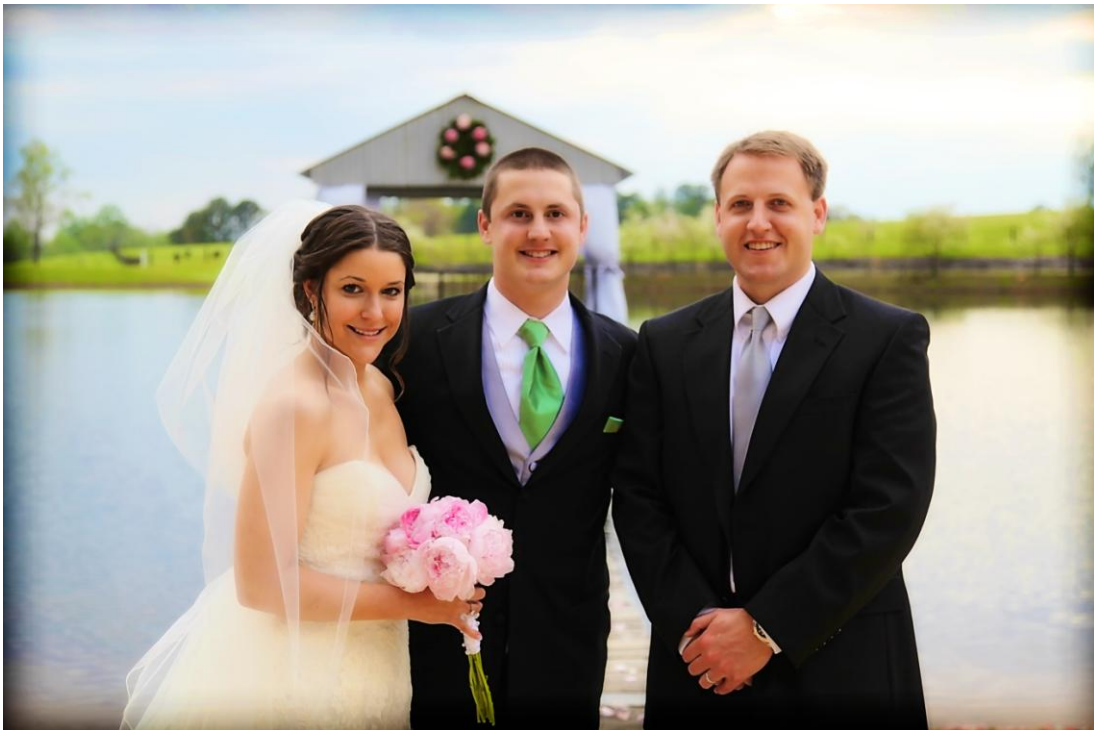
Announcements from Sister Churches:

1. Harmony Church in Calhoun is now meeting on 1st Sunday nights and every Thursday night. The arrangements for the evening services are supper and fellowship at 6:00 with singing starting at 7:00. Elder Bob Mitchell and Brother Kelly Smith invite all who can to come and worship with them.
2. Shoal Creek Primitive Baptist Church in Canton, GA will be hosting the Little River Association Meeting this year. Services will begin on Thursday evening, August 13th and continue all day Friday and conclude on Saturday afternoon. Please contact Elder Randall Cagle at (770) 630-7150 if you have any questions concerning the meeting arrangements.

Church Photos:



Daniel and Courtney Taylor



Scott and Claire Taylor

Macedonia Church rejoices with both of these couples who were recently married.