



JUDE: “The Acts of the Apostates”
Week 2: Introduction to the book of Jude, Part 2
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Review:

- A. In our introduction so far, we have looked at: “Who?” and “When?”
- B. We learned “WHO?” is most likely Jude, the half-brother of Christ also the full brother of James.
- C. I feel the “WHEN?” part is most likely after James’ death in 62AD, and before Peter’s death in 67AD.

NOTE: We do not really know anything about the “WHERE?” Unlike some books of the New Testament in which we are given this information (i.e. Evidence suggests Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, were written by Paul when he was a prisoner in Rome), we do not have similar insight with Jude, we therefore don’t need to spend more time on WHERE?

This leads us to two remaining questions in this introduction: “WHAT?” and “WHY?” They bear some similar considerations, and they will have some overlap. We’ll unpack each as best as we are able.

- I. **WHAT? (In other words, WHAT was Jude assuming when he wrote the book?)** - - There are some clues in the opening verses. (*vss. 1-2*).
 - A. **First, the book is written to other believers**, more specifically, to the early church.
 1. Jude identifies himself as the servant of Jesus Christ, and the brother of James.
 2. The assumption is, his readers understand both angles. Jesus is Lord, and even great ministers of Christ are only human tools.

NOTE: More specifically, Jude writes to those ‘who are called’ or to ‘those who are sanctified.’ (Cf. vs. 1)

3. **NOTE:** The emphasis here is seen in the Greek word ‘agapao’ which here means ‘to preserve in love.’
4. True believers exist in a state of being carefully guarded or preserved in the love of Jesus Christ. Those who are truly called are the permanent objects of Christ’s affections.
5. This book concludes the same way: (*Cf. vs. 21*) – “*Keep yourselves in God’s love.*” Also in *vs. 24* – “*To Him who is able to keep you...*” (NOTE: there is an assurance given here to the true believer in the dark and murky days of apostasy).
- B. **Second, both he and James identify themselves as ‘servants’ of Jesus Christ (Cf. James 1:1).** Despite their half-brother relationship, they accepted Jesus Christ as their Messiah.

QUESTION: Are we generally inclined to claim (perhaps, “*want?*”) a casual relationship with Jesus Christ? We often refer to Jesus as our ‘friend’ in the modern church, when we would be wiser to exercise a conscious recognition of Him as our Lord. More specifically, our Master

- C. Calling himself a "servant" of Jesus Christ was not unique to Jude.
 - 1. Paul described himself this way as well: ***Cf. Romans 1:1; Philippians 1:1***
 - 2. So did Peter: ***Cf. 2 Peter 1:1***, and James – ***Cf. James 1:1***.
 - 3. It seems true greatness in ministry requires humility and a proper perspective of oneself I am reminded of John saying “*He must increase, but I must decrease...*” ***(Cf. John 3:30)***

- D. Another question): ***Why did they refer to themselves as "servants"?***
 - 1. The Greek term (DOULOS) literally means "a slave" or one that gives himself up for another’s will (that is not popular in today’s ‘me first’ environment.
 - 2. Why use such a term, and why should WE think of ourselves as "servants or slaves" of Jesus Christ?
 - 3. It’s a constant reminder that we:
 - a. Are owned by and totally possessed by our master.
 - b. Exist for our master and no other reason.
 - c. Have no personal rights as the world would define those things.
 - d. Are at our master’s disposal "24/7".
 - e. Should have no will of our own, however our will should be totally subservient to our master.

II. **RECOGNIZING YOURSELF AS A SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST IS "A GENUINE INDICATION OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY."**

- A. CONSIDER THAT AN IMMATURE PERSON IS USUALLY VERY SELFISH...IT IS ALL ABOUT THEM!
 - 1. (EX): Newborn babies are very egocentric; much the same with the ‘terrible twos’ and the ‘traumatic teens.’
 - a. This is also self-evident with those who demand reparations, forgiveness of college debts, and various other entitlements.
 - b. It’s all about THEM! They don’t see their proper place in the big picture. This is selfish and immature.

- B. As people grow older, they should begin to concern themselves with the needs of others....
 - 1. If they do, they show they are becoming mature.
 - 2. If they remain selfish, it is an indication of fundamental immaturity.
 - 3. It is precisely the same in our spiritual development as it is in our physical development.
 - 4. Bottom line: A person who sets aside their own desires and humbly serves the needs of others demonstrates spiritual maturity.

C. NOW, JUDE'S VIEW OF HIMSELF HERE FITS VERY WELL WITH THE "THEME" OF HIS BOOK...

1. Recall, **Jude** is about: CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH AGAINST THOSE WHO ARE NOT TRUE IN THEIR FAITH (**Cf. vs. 3**)
2. By calling himself a servant, some translations say 'slave' or 'bondservant,' Jude demonstrates his own spiritual maturity against those who are not the same, who are not genuine. He does not assert his blood relationship with Jesus (his unique credentials).

D. NOW, A WORTHY SERVANT HAS THREE IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR US TO WEIGH: I also will FRAME THEM EACH AS 'ABSOLUTES':

1. **FIRST, IT INDICATES "ABSOLUTE AND UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE: This is seen in the slave-master relationship of the sort that Jude is defining here...**
 - a. The slave acknowledges no law but that of his master's word. He is constantly subordinate and constantly serving.
 - b. He has no rights of his own as his rights are declared by his master.
 - c. He is the possession of his master as there is no sense or exercise of personal entitlement.
 - d. He is bound to give his master complete obedience as there is no opportunity for debate.
2. **(Reflect) Does this describe your relationship to Christ?**
 - a. It should, especially in light of the clear implications of **1 Cor. 6:19-20**. We are not our own, and we are bought with a price – slaves are bought!
 - b. **IMPORTANT:** We belong to Jesus on HIS terms, not our own. Our decisions should reflect that. (Consider the scary implications of **Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:21** showing those who have a false servant-hood and sense of belonging.)
3. **SECOND, IT INDICATES "ABSOLUTE AND UNADULTERATED HUMILITY: Without this posture, total and immediate obedience is not possible.**
 - a. When we have a humble opinion of ourselves, we are receptive to being completely obedient.
 - b. For example, consider the facets of Paul's self-estimation of 'servant-hood' – **Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:9-10** He states he is undeserving, his humility causes him to recognize the grace of God, and so he works very hard.
 - c. **Cf. Ephesians 3:8** Here Paul's humility recognizes he's not just least of apostles, but least of 'all people,' it gives him a purpose and calling.
 - d. **Cf. 1 Timothy 1:15** Paul's humility provides a proper recognition of the Gospel and of personal sin.
4. **BIG QUESTION: "Does this absolute and unadulterated humility describe your relationship to Christ and His will for your life?**

- a. Jesus said it should! – **Cf. Luke 17:7-10** – this describes what our posture should be in serving Jesus Christ
 - b. But if we instead murmur about what Jesus tells us to do, or if we complain about the challenges of a proper relationship with Christ, or if we grumble about our circumstances and the situations around us, then “Can we really be considered “servants”?”
5. **THIRD, IT INDICATES “ABSOLUTE AND UNDISTRACTED LOYALTY.”** Since we are supposed to be servants **FREELY** and **WILLINGLY**, it should be expected that we:
- a. Are to be loyal to Him without consideration of what others think of us – **Cf. Galatians 1:10**
 - b. Do not consider our own profit or gain, but that of the One we serve! – **Cf. Matthew 6:24** (focus!)
 - c. **VERY IMPORTANT: God, by His grace, has offered us salvation.** How dare we grumble that He then calls us to life of humility and service!

CONCLUSION: These are some of the implications of being called a “servant.” Jude knows this and it is **WHAT** he assumes. It is **WHAT** he wishes to emphasize when he chooses this definition. It is a title that is costly in terms of service, pride, and allegiance.

E. Review:

1. So far, we’ve been establishing a basis for understanding the Book of Jude.
2. To provide backdrop and common understanding, we’ve asked a series of basic questions:
 - a. WHO? Who wrote the book of Jude? (Jude, the half-brother of Christ)
 - b. WHEN? ... When was the book of Jude written? (Most likely between 62-67A.D.)
 - c. WHERE? Where was the book of Jude written? (We do not know).
 - d. WHAT? ... What were the assumptions of Jude as he wrote it? (He was writing to fellow believers who knew and understood his own role as a ‘servant / slave’ of Jesus Christ).
 - **This is why Jude appeals in vs. 2** for: the multiplication, the increase, the abundance of their mercy, peace, and love.
 - These are attributes, ‘signs,’ if you will, of one who’s heart is given over fully to the service and exercise of a right relationship with Jesus Christ.
 - Because Jude is writing to fellow believers, he expresses his desire that these attributes take root and mature in their service of their Lord.

III. Now let’s move into the question of “WHY?” “Why was Jude inspired to write this book?” (NOTE: This is a challenging portion of the lesson to teach, and it is just as difficult to hear – but God’s Word is seldom delivered without conviction.)

NOTE: So, let’s ask this question another way. The question might be “Why should we study the book of Jude?” or “How will a diligent study of the book of Jude impact us?” Both of these questions deal with Jude’s purpose as he authored it (which leads us to **vs. 3**).

- A. **(Again, we are asking ourselves WHY?). To answer this, we need to unpack vs. 3.**
- B. **“Dear friends...” (Stop! - - What can we conclude here?)**
1. Recall the “...*Mercy, peace, and love*” well-wishes from **vs. 2**
 - a. Jude wants nothing but the very best for his readers, and this motive ties into **vs. 3**. The conclusions are natural.
 - b. In his deep and genuine care for his fellow believers, Jude pivots. He confesses he had one motive, but he felt he needed to change that.
 - c. Jude’s stance shows gentleness and love.
 - d. His salutation also shows some personal vulnerabilities.
 2. **NOTE:** Let’s consider something here. Jude was a contemporary of the apostle Paul. They had likely met and talked. To our best knowledge, Paul was tortured and beheaded by Nero in Rome in 67 AD, about the same time as Peter’s death.
 3. Jude may have had Paul’s words in mind from ***Philippians 2:5-7*** (written about 63AD) as he carefully penned his introduction to Jude.
 4. Paul wrote, *“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave....”*
 5. It’s not unlikely that Jude had read Paul’s letter to the Philippians before he wrote his book.
 6. Again, we need to remind ourselves here of Jude’s personal choices as he addresses, *“Dear friends...”*
 - a. Jude shared a physical relationship with Christ, but instead chose to regard himself as a ‘slave’ of Christ.
 - b. Jude did not regard his relationship with his half-brother as any sort of personal credential to flaunt.
 - c. He divested himself of any self-interest in order to serve those to whom he was writing, and this is reflected in the evident love and care he feels for his readers and what he calls them.
- C. *“...although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to [other translations say ‘it was needful for me’]...”*
1. **IMPORTANT:** Jude gets vulnerable here:
 - a. Unlike many church leaders who constantly guard against being perceived a certain way, Jude’s transparency is refreshing, (and it should be an example to us).
 - b. Remember (and I’m getting ahead of myself here...), Jude is going to expose false teachers and false teaching, so he chooses to be forthright and vulnerable in light of the issue of apostasy he will address.
 2. “Apostasy” is not a word we use much in today’s overly tolerant Christian culture, but increasingly, I feel we should.
 - a. **DEFINITION:** “Apostasy” is: a defection or moving away from a previously-held religious belief.
 - b. According to a Bible context, apostasy is a willful abandonment of God’s truth.
 - c. The key here is ‘willful.’ This can be direct or indirect.
 - d. One can disagree with the Bible or its doctrines and positions (direct).

- e. Or one can choose to mishandle or misinterpret the Bible (indirect)). They have the same end. It's all 'apostasy.'
- f. In the modern church, this apostasy can be evident any number of ways:
 - The suppression of clear doctrine. *This avoids the truth.*
 - The elevation of prescriptive and shallow 'worship,' – *this distracts from the truth*
 - The substitution of sound teaching with politically-correct clichés which *sugarcoats and dilutes the truth.*
 - (In some cases) The open disagreement with things stated in Scripture which *fights against the truth.*
 - These are ALL self-evident symptoms of apostasy.
- g. IMPORTANT: Apostasy has invaded when there is a choice to introduce compromise where commitment is required instead.

NOTE: Jude, by his choice to be vulnerable in **vs. 3**. He exposes a clear overarching symptom of apostasy: the obsession of **what** we don't want to be instead of having the passion of **who** we are supposed to be. (This is a major problem in many churches and with many church leaders today!)

- **Here's a key insight:** A false teacher is going to be very concerned about his image or what others think of him.
 - His primary goal is not to be a slave of Christ (like Jude in **vs. 1**), but to ultimately serve himself or to achieve his ambitions. (Consider implications of 'emptied himself' in **Phillipians 2:5-7** which we read earlier).
 - **Note:** Put another way: **"We cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit if we are already full of ourselves."**
3. Back to the 'vulnerability' issue here: Jude confesses, up front, that he had a different agenda when he first 'sat down' to pen this book.
- (Read J. Vernon McGee's quote from his 'Introduction to Jude')

"Jude was intending to write an epistle regarding our "common salvation" when the Spirit detoured him to write concerning the apostasy. It is a graphic and striking description of apostasy. What was a little cloud the size of a man's hand in Jude's day is, in our day, a storm of hurricane proportions, because we are in the apostasy of which he foretold. It is a question now of how much worse it can become before genuine believers are taken out by The Rapture."

- Jude had his own ideas when he chose to write his letter, but the Holy Spirit 'detoured' Jude and directed him to address something else instead.

NOTE: Many times, we have the opposite problem in pulpits today. Rather than staying true to God's inspired Word, pastors choose their own 'detours' instead. Rather than teaching what is there and what believers need to hear, they water down the Scripture, or worse, they take a particular passage in a direction it was not divinely inspired to go.

- NOTE: Getting back to Jude’s situation here, Holy Spirit-led detours are seldom, if ever, convenient or comfortable.
 - Nor will some of the issues we will unpack in Jude be comfortable. We could call them ‘detour doctrines’ here, and so they will be confrontational.
- D. **(continuing with vs. 3...)** “...to write and urge you to [earnestly] contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.” Here Jude states his purpose, his ‘WHY?’ He is passionate about ‘contending for the faith.’
1. What Jude sees is fundamental truths which have defined the early faith have experienced some theological slide.
 2. Or, by the definition of apostasy, there has been an abandonment of truth. This is what Jude sees.
 3. And Jude is alarmed at this development!
 4. Which accounts for his use of the phrase ‘to earnestly contend’ (Greek: **‘epagonizesthai’** which essentially means to ‘agonize’ (we get our own word ‘agony’ from it)
 5. **NOTE:** It also has a parallel meaning of ‘being a combatant in a contest’. The term was often used to apply to the skilled wrestler (This was well-known in Greek culture).
 6. The goals in this situation were both defensive and offensive: to avoid being thrown (defense) and to succeed in throwing your opponent (offense). In terms of Jude’s use of the term, there is much energy, effort, and agonizing in the phrase ‘earnestly contend.’
 7. There are commentators which try to put some poetic spin on this. They feel this phrase means to ‘contend on your knees,’ but this is not the intent of Jude or of this Greek term.
 8. Jude is very concerned about doctrinal drift or dilution, and he appeals to the imagery of ‘spiritual militancy and physical combat’ to deal with it.

IMPORTANT QUESTION: ‘How alarmed are we when doctrinal drift and dilution enters the church?’ (Related question: “How active should we be in dealing with it?”)

9. In response, note that in **vs. 4** (...I’m getting ahead here) that the subjects of Jude’s concern are: “...in among you.”
10. The ‘combatants’ or the adversaries that Jude is concerned with – the ones he wants us to focus on - are not outside the church – but rather inside the church!
11. As we will learn, Jude focuses upon identifying and dealing with those defectors from the truth that are part of the local body of believers that he is writing to. As we will see, that should be our focus as well.
12. **NOTE:** All too often, we as Christians are more concerned about dealing with doctrinal errors and carnalities outside of the church, so we boycott movies, we won’t shop at certain big box stores, we don’t buy certain jeans, and we refuse to go to Disneyland.
13. All of that is generally backwards! The unsaved world should be expected to act with indifference to the Word of God and to righteous values, and we shouldn’t be surprised when they do.

14. We need INSTEAD to be ready to combat or to *'earnestly contend for the faith'* within the confines of our churches where the real dangers lurk. This is Jude's clear intent.
15. The true believer urgently needs to cultivate affection for the full and complete truth of the Word of God, and then stand strongly for the comprehensive truth.

E. **How to do this?: Two answers: 'Avoid,' and 'Act' (I'll wrap up with this...)**

F. **"AVOID:" Avoid the relativism that is rampant in our culture** (This is the idea that knowledge, truth, and morality exist in relation to culture, society, individual choices, or historical context, and are not absolute....) Make no mistake - - this thinking has grossly infected the church!

1. The notion that there are no absolutes, no black and whites, no rights or wrongs, but only contextual relativities and variances is absolutely opposed to Scripture.
2. Biblical truth today has been compromised, diluted, and made to serve personal agendas in every imaginable way (**Cf. 2 Peter 3: 14b-16** to show example).
3. Here we see Peter calling those who distort Scripture as *"ignorant and unstable."*
4. NOTE: Peter also defends the legitimacy of Paul's writings as Scripture.
4. But the bottom line is we are to AVOID those who embrace worldly values and who deliberately distort and dilute the truth of God's Word.

G. **And second, "ACT:" Act or contend in the way we are instructed to** (we should not be fiery and contentious – that is NOT Jude's posture to us. 1.

H. We have great instructions for how to do this in **2 Timothy 2:24-26**, and key points to consider from this passage include:

1. Do not quarrel
2. Be kind about it
3. Be able to teach (not everyone can do this well, but all are called to state the truth to the best of their ability)
4. Do not be resentful in the situation
5. Be gentle in dealing with opposing views
6. Be hopeful (it is really God's problem, not yours....)
7. Recognize their condition (they have lost their senses and are in a trap)