



JUDE: “The Acts of the Apostates”
Week 6: “A Spotlight on False Teachers, Part 2”
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Review:

- A. This is week 6 in our Jude series, and so far, we’ve been embarking on a broad-based introduction to this tiny New Testament book.
- B. To this point, we have established...
 - 1. That Jude is alarmed at the entry and influence of false teachers in the church
 - 2. He is writing to the church to sternly warn them of the patterns and behaviors of false teachers
- C. We’ve explored four points concerning false teachers: their source, their subtlety, their strategy, and their sin.
- D. Last week, we looked at the first two points, and also studied partway into the third. (Those notes are available on the website.)
- E. From a high-altitude perspective, we’ve seen that false teachers DO two basic things:
 - 1. **First, they change something:** They move away from a strong foundation of faith to a weak one, usually this is gradual.
 - 2. **Second, they deny something:** They deny their Master. Doing the opposite of John the Baptist, they ‘increase themselves and decrease Christ.’
 - 3. Unlike Jude who saw himself as a bondservant or slave of Christ in **Jude 1** – they diminish the Sovereign Lordship of Jesus Christ in their lives.
 - 4. Instead, they promote their own credentials and agenda, and they reject the full subscription to Divine Authority.

I. Continuing with: The strategy of false teachers.

- A. **They have a particular message which has not changed over time. From past to present, the message of false teachers remains the same.**

NOTE: False believers (those who believe they are saved, but in fact, are not – *(Cf. Matthew 7:21-23 for insight on this)*) and do not like sound doctrine that disturbs them and disrupts them.

- 1. Rather than ‘endure sound doctrine,’ they ‘evade’ it.
- 2. (Why ‘endure?’ - because it DOES disturb and disrupt; that is the nature of Biblical truth).
- 3. Instead, according to **2 Timothy 4:3-4**, these folk gather to themselves teachers who, in accordance with their own desires, will “tickle” their ears.
- 4. This is a willful decision to skirt the hard, the important, and the essential doctrines of God’s Word. It is a willful decision to avoid change and accountability.
- 5. **IMPORTANT:** This is the very same thing that happened in the Old Testament, and we are instructed in **2 Pet. 2:1** to know this dynamic of the false prophets of the OT (**2 Pet. 2:1**).

6. We see here that we need to understand the past is to understand the present. False teachers of our own time will be the same way, and they will propagate the same kind of message.
7. So, let's unpack this important matter a bit more, and ask ourselves a couple of key questions: "What were these false prophets in the OT like?" "What was THEIR strategy?"

NOTE: This was who they were, and this was their strategy:

- B. **First, they advanced a comforting message instead of a convicting one (Cf. Jeremiah 5:12)** - *"They have lied about the Lord and said, 'Not He; misfortune will not come on us, and we will not see sword or famine'"*
 1. In other words, the Old Testament false prophets were not much different from today's false teachers.
 2. They only preached comforting words. They emphasized politically correct messages that did not address the depravity of man.
 3. They dealt irresponsibly with the consequences of sin, and the wrath of God against all unrighteousness.

- C. **Second, they addressed deep needs with a superficial approach (Cf. Jer. 6:14)** - *"They have healed the brokenness of My people lightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' but there is no peace"*
 1. Their approach was to put band-aids on deep wounds. The situation of the people needed more urgent care and attention, but these false prophets did not deal with this need.
 2. Instead, they dealt with symptoms and not the disease. It was an easier message to give and to receive, leaving the real dire problems to be 'kicked down the road,' and ignored.

- D. **Third, they promoted the kind of messages that people liked (Cf. Jeremiah 5:30-31)** - *"An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule on their own authority; and My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?"*
 1. In other words, these false prophets of the Old Testament, tickled people's ears!
 2. By avoiding the tough truths that needed to be stated, these false prophets kept the people from hearing a message of accountability.
 3. They were prophets that were popular with the people, but by God's standards, they were avoiding the things they most needed to say.

- E. **Fourth, as we've noted, they were messengers who preached without any disturbing or disruptive doctrines (Cf. Isaiah 30:9-11)** - *"For this is a rebellious people, false sons, sons who refuse to listen to the instruction of the Lord; who say to the seers, 'You must not see visions'; and to the prophets, 'You must not prophesy to us what is right, speak to us pleasant words, prophesy illusions. Get out of the way, turn aside from the path, let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel."*

1. Here we see that these Old Testament false prophets preached on the love of God but not the wrath of God.
2. They preached God's grace and mercy but not His justice and holiness.
3. They presented a partial view of God and not the full truth of Him.
4. The reason for all this is clear in these verses in *Isaiah*: the people to who they were prophesying were rebellious in their nature.
5. They did not want to be confronted with truth that disrupted and made them uncomfortable. They wanted instead a message of comfort.
6. They wanted their 'kumbaya' session - - let's just all get along and be happy.

F. The last thing these false Old Testament prophets did was they preached response without repentance. This is a BIG issue. (Cf. Jeremiah 23:21-22) - "They keep saying to those who despise Me, 'The Lord has said, "You will have peace"' and as for everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart, they say, 'Calamity will not come upon you.' I did not send these prophets, but they ran. I did not speak to them, but they prophesied. But if they had stood in My council, then they would have announced My words to My people, and would have turned them back from their evil way and from their evil deeds."

1. This is an ominous passage as it has so much warning to false teachers today and to those who will follow them.
2. Prescriptive rituals and responses were regarded as being the genuine article.
3. Culture and personal preference took priority over truth. There was an active substitution here: replacing God's standard with things that were substandard.
4. It's easy to overlook an important point in this last passage: False teachers, just like the Old Testament false prophets, were not sent from God.
5. Just because someone's in the pulpit or behind the lectern does NOT mean that person is sent from God. Many, perhaps most, are there for their own agenda (we saw this earlier).
6. As God in this passage says, 'I did not send these prophets, but they ran.'
7. This evidence for being in the wrong place at the wrong time is their message. It's their words. It's their actions and preferences.
8. They don't stand in the council of God. Therefore they don't properly announce "My words to My people." They don't properly confront those they are leading, and so they do not teach repentance.
9. They don't teach the full counsel of God's Word, and so they don't teach the tough stuff. They avoid teaching what God is actually saying..

II. This week we will get to the fourth point on false teachers. We've looked at their source, their subtlety, and their strategy, now, I want to focus on "The Sin of False Teachers" (read vs. 4b)

NOTE: Starting with a high-altitude view on this point:

1. To help us understand the gravity of the SIN of false teachers, we need to focus on two verbs: "change" and "deny." Then direct our attention to the two things each of these verbs apply to: "grace" and "Jesus Christ."

1. Grace is changed into something – what is that? (a license for immorality, for sin)
2. And denying Jesus Christ results in a different condition – what is that? (He is seen differently than our Sovereign Lord)

...Let's look at all this carefully....

2. First, let's look at the verb 'CHANGE:' Change of this nature, as described in *Jude 4* is a prerequisite to sin.

IMPORTANT: Change itself is not bad – sometimes it is good. But in the context here, there is a change from something that is already good to something that is not good, and that is bad.

1. **Remember, they'd already received the "...faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints..." (vs. 3).**
 - a. Put another way, they already knew what was right! They knew, therefore, what was wrong!
 - b. There had been a prior foundation of strong teaching and doctrine. Jude reminds them of this.
 - c. It's why Jude told his readers to 'contend for [that]' standard, to preserve that type of faith, to keep those convictions, and so on.
 - d. There is nothing easy about properly "*contending for the faith.*" There is nothing easy about standing firm for what's right, and for agonizing over the convicting core truths of God's Word.
 - e. NOTE: Sometimes, to understand present threats, we need to better understand our past convictions. This is what Jude reminds his readers.
2. So, the 'change' here that Jude mentions is a distortion of truth (**Remember Acts. 20:30**):

"Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them."

 - a. It is that distortion that defines the 'change' we're talking about here. It is distortion that moves from one thing to another.'
 - b. It is with this kind of change that Jude is concerned.

3. IMPORTANT: Change of this nature (moving away from a strong foundation of faith to a weak one) is seldom a sudden event. It usually happens little by little over time.

NOTE: As these 'certain men,' these 'godless' men 'secretly slipped in,' so the church's doctrines, teachings, and standards of faith began to erode the same way - gradually. The vitality and effectiveness of this body of believers, as a result, was drained.

4. Paul warns Timothy in **2 Timothy 3:5** that the peril of apostasy will become a hallmark of the 'last days.'
 - a. We've learned that apostasy is a departure from Biblical truth.
 - b. The result of this according to **2 Timothy 3:5** is that there will be '*...a form of godliness but a denial of real spiritual power.*'

- c. Things will look OK on the outside by man's standards, but they will be eroding and rotting away on the inside by God's standards.
- d. Paul states the end result: There is no real Godliness and there is no real spiritual power.
- e. And to Paul's point, Jude adds another facet. Jude outlines the subtle and persistent influence of false teachers.

5. Making an observation: The fact that these false teachers could secretly enter the church the way they did shows that the leadership of the church and/or the people themselves let their guard down.

- a. They were not constantly on the alert. They were not actively "*contending for the faith.*" These things are ongoing and vital disciplines in a body of believers.
- b. The result of this complacency and contentment is calamity. In the big picture, the process is insidious – it is gradual.

6. Again, I want to emphasize the point here that Jude is writing to the church. As we see from his points, and from our own experiences, churches are rarely destroyed from the outside. It is from the inside that the greatest threat emerges (Cf. 1 Timothy 4:1).

"The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons."

NOTE: It is the cunning of the devil to manipulate the faith from within the confines of the church, from within its protocols and standards, and from within its leadership and its congregants. Points from **1 Timothy 4:1.....**

- a. There is the phrase '*...abandon the faith*' (here again, we see the process of moving 'away from' something good to something bad)
- b. Then there is the phrase '*...follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons*' (here is the source of it all: demonic strategy).
- c. It is the strategy of the devil and his minions to distract from truth, to dilute truth, and to disparage truth. This is the trend in many pulpits today.
- d. But again - - - note the same pattern as we saw before in **Acts 20:30, 2 Timothy 3:5, and 2 Timothy 4:4):**
- e. There is always a change that is defined by a distortion of truth, a movement down from a better or a higher standard, and a decision to listen to (or to want!) a different message.

3. Now, let's look at the verb 'DENY:' This goes hand-in-hand with the 'change' idea.

IMPORTANT: Denial of something important is necessary for this type of change to take place. What is it? (**Recall 2 Peter 2:1 where it states they will 'even deny the Sovereign Lord**). I want to again focus on **2 Peter 2:1** for a few moments.

NOTE: The conjunction "**even**" underscores the preposterous and unthinkable magnitude of the false teachers' arrogance—a pride that was evidenced by "*...denying the Master...*" (which is how some literal translations put it...).

1. Recall, pride has no place in the heart of true teacher (as opposed to false teacher).
2. Jude could have touted his personal credentials in **vs. 1**, but instead he chose to simply call himself a 'bondservant' or 'slave' of Jesus Christ.
3. A true teacher will adopt John the Baptist's posture ("*He must increase, but I must decrease.*").
4. Conversely, the pride that is manifest in a false teacher will promote their personal credentials and / or their right to their position. They want to look good in the eyes of others.
5. So, the flagrant pride in a false teacher will even "*deny their Master.*" This is precisely the opposite posture Jude chose when he recognized his own position as a 'slave' or 'bondservant.'

6. **The verb "deny" is a very strong term which can be translated "to refuse," "to be unwilling," or "to firmly say no."**
 - a. **IMPORTANT!** This communicates a personal choice! Same verb is used in **Heb. 11:24** to portray Moses' refusal to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.
 - b. In **2 Peter 2:1**, the present tense participle of the word "deny" is used to underscore a pattern of refusal or unwillingness.
 - c. The idea is that false teachers habitually reject the structures of divine authority (Cf. language of **Jude 8**).
 - d. They have an ongoing pattern of rejecting what is right, what is proper, and what is humility. When they are confronted about this, they react with hostility and prejudice.

7. **Who or what are they denying? Their 'Master.'**
 - a. **Master** (Greek: 'despotes,' from which we get despot). It means "sovereign," "ruler," or "lord." This specific word is used 10X in the NT and it always refers to one who has supreme authority. In five of the occurrences (including **Jude 4**) it directly refers to Jesus Christ or God.
 - b. So what Peter is emphasizing is this: the supreme arrogance or sacrilege of false teachers is that they deny the sovereign lordship of Jesus Christ.
 - c. (What does this look like?) They may not outwardly or verbally deny Christ's deity, His atonement, His resurrection, or His Second Coming.
 - d. But inside, they refuse to submit their lives and their ministry to His sovereign rule, and they do not recognize the failures they bring on themselves.
 - e. As a result, their choices, their pride, and their lifestyles will inevitably give them away.

8. **The phrase "who bought them" reinforces Peter's point verywell.**

IMPORTANT: Peter is describing a master who would purchase slaves and put them in charge of various tasks. Because these slaves ('bondservants') were now the master's personal property, they owed their complete allegiance to him.

- a. False teachers tout that they belong to Christ and are part of Christ's household, but their actions deny their professions because they refuse to become servants under His complete authority.
- b. The false teachers of Peter's time claimed Christ as their Redeemer, yet they refused to accept His sovereign lordship or to carry out His directions and commands. They refused to function as they needed to.
- c. Thus, they revealed their true colors as a false teacher. They were opposed to the full record and accounting of Biblical truth.

9. The less-obvious form of attack on truth is something I have alluded to, but here I want to unpack it more. It is 'doctrinal drift.'

NOTE: Defending the full body of faith against those who claim to be the true teachers of God's truth takes great discernment, resilience, determination, and endurance. Generally-speaking, I feel the church is failing at the task of 'guarding the truth.'

(Cf. 1 Timothy 6:20). Paul is writing to his protégé here and he says,

"Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge,"

4. Properly guarding the truth involves several aspects:

1. 'Turning away from godless chatter' – this is distracting themes and ideas that find little root or substance in the scriptures
2. 'Turning away from opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge' – for example, the Bible does not teach that the church has replaced Israel, it does not condone homosexuality, it DOES affirm the virgin birth and the Divinity of Christ, and so on. Bottom line, we should not take positions against the clear teachings of the Word of God.
3. In the next verse, **1 Timothy 6:21**, Paul then instructs Timothy to 'avoid wandering from the faith' – in other words, it takes endurance and discipline to stay Bible-based and God-centered.

5. (Getting back to Jude 4 now. We read there is the perversion of grace into a license for something else.

NOTE: Various translations say, "a license for immorality, sensuality, licentiousness, uncontrollable lust, riotousness, and indecency." (That is quite a list. What's really being said?)

NOTE: The Greek word is 'aselgeia' (It means unbridled lust, excess, outrageousness, shamelessness, wantonness, insolence). The point is it is 'unrestrained vice' (as opposed to abundant virtue).

1. A false teacher, operating from a compromised faith, cannot restrain the natural tendencies of the flesh. They are going to manifest this in the corruption of their lives.
2. They want to live in God's grace, and they want to claim Christ's forgiveness. However, they use it as a license to sin and to carry out their personal desires.
 - a. NOTE: According to John MacArthur, they do this "...because they've really never embraced salvation in Jesus Christ. They leave the truth. They reject the truth. And so, they are then left to pervert what they think is the grace of God into an excuse for blatant sin."
3. Most people, when they sin, they try to hide it. Their conscience brings feelings of shame. They do not wish to be discovered in their choices.
 - a. But the idea behind 'aselgeia' is to communicate that the person has so lost his decency and honor and has become so callous to his conscience that he doesn't care who sees his sin.
 - b. While he may need to hide it from the people he's deceiving, he may proudly flaunt it to his inner circle. Sometimes, this is a very public thing.
 - c. He will take the liberties that he thinks are his under grace and pervert them into a justification for his own choices.
 - d. This is why when you look behind a false teacher you will find corruption, self-serving, pride, and an inability to control the flesh. It's inevitable because the only thing that restrains the flesh is godliness, and that is what they have compromised.

4. **They deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ.** Somehow, in some way, they choose to not live under the sovereign lordship of Christ.

NOTE: Remember, this is the opposite of Jude in **vs. 1** who refused to tout his personal credentials, but declared instead his personal position, that of a bondservant or slave.

- a. **This denial of our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ is manifest in these false teachers' refusal to live under the sovereign lordship of Christ.**
 - b. In their hidden life, and in their secret ways, - and sometimes in very public ways - they are 'king' of their domain. They are consumed with their position.
 - f. This is manifest in their personal pride and arrogance and inability to receive instruction.
5. Inevitably, this prevents them from showing honor, respect, and complete submission to Christ.
 - a. IMPORTANT: Because they are ungodly in character and fleshly in conduct, they become heretical in doctrine.
 - b. They twist and pervert teachings about Christ, they twist and pervert teachings about the gospel, and they twist and pervert basic doctrines of Scripture.
 - c. We need to be discerning, be 'on guard' (**again, Cf. 1 Timothy 6:20**).

6. Titus also describes these false teachers and their signs and symptoms (*Cf. Titus 1:16*). He writes:

“They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.”

7. Titus uses strong language: such as *“detestable, disobedient and unfit...”* (the idea of being unfit means they have been tested and they are not approved of....)
 - a. This is why Jude is concerned, and we should be too!
 - b. Today’s church is a prime example of Jude’s alarm. No question about it. We’re always in this battle and we always need to be ‘on guard.’
8. We need to be discerning within the Body of Christ. With ***Titus 1:16*** in view...
 - a. We need to be supporting those who demonstrate a proper understanding of who Jesus Christ is, a clear understanding of the need for the full counsel of God’s Word, and a sound demonstration of humility and submission to Christ.
 - b. We need to be looking for those who live lives of righteousness and purity, who make choices that pass the filters of Scripture, who receive Biblical instruction, and who fear God and desire to give Him glory.