



**JUDE: “The Acts of the Apostates”**  
**Week 24: “Scoffers and Mockers, Part 2”**  
**March 23, 2025**  
**Instructor: Steve Schmutzer**

**Review:**

- A. Last week, we wrapped up **vs. 18 of Jude** which says, *“In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.”*
- B. To help us understand this statement, we looked at four other passages of Scripture which speak to the context of **Jude 18**:
  1. **FIRST, 2 Corinthians 11:4-6** –
    - a. In this passage, we find apostates affirm teachings and positions that are contrary to the Scriptures.
    - b. Apostates also claim that ‘other spirits’ are legitimate when, in fact, they are not.
    - c. This shows how these folks have a wrong relationship with the spiritual world rather than a right one.
  2. **SECOND, 1 Timothy 4:1-2** –
    - a. It’s here we learned that as the Second Coming of Christ draws nearer, the activity and number of apostates will increase.
    - b. The church is not going to become stronger, greater, and more effective. The opposite is true instead.
    - c. This is due, in part, to the increased element of demonic influence WITHIN the church.
  3. **THIRD, 2 Peter 3:3-7** –
    - a. A compelling insight from this passage is ‘scoffers’ of the ‘last days’ will focus their ridicule on the Biblical teachings of the Second Coming of Christ.
    - b. The Bible makes the point that a prominent characteristic of apostates is they look down on all things related to Bible prophecy.
    - c. This fact is abundantly clear when we look at the greater church today.
  4. **AND LAST, Revelation 14:6-7**
    - a. A clear view of God necessitates a proper view of end times events as well as beginning times events! This is one of the angel’s points in this passage.
    - b. The Gospel Story, as well as a proper view of God Himself, requires the clear declaration of God’s Word from start to finish.
    - c. It is the full counsel of God’s Word that must be properly respected, not just parts of it or certain themes of it.
  5. **Now it’s time to move on to Jude vs. 19.**
    - a. Jude has some final thoughts about false teachers in **Jude 19**.
    - b. IMO, it’s almost as though he’s afraid he’s not said enough (or not emphasized things sufficiently) about these apostates that he has so much concern about – **READ Jude 19**.

6. Before Jude shifts gears to encouraging the believers in **vss. 20-25**, he has three final things to say about false teachers.
7. I see these three things as summary points of everything he has stated up to now (he's distilling all his concerns down to the very basics in this verse). We will treat these three elements with the same emphasis and concerns that Jude chooses to.
8. Jude identifies these apostates by:
  - a. Something they **do**
  - b. Something they **are**
  - c. Something they **lack**

**NOTE:** These are obvious assessment points. Jude shoots straight here. Basically, he is saying, "If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it's a duck."

**I. Jude gives us a 'how to' here. He tells us HOW we can recognize false teachers and apostates.**

**A. First, there is something they DO. They 'divide.'** This is self-evident in all the various translations - - they *"separate, create divisions, cause divisions, they are divisive, they set themselves apart."* One translation calls them *'agitators'* and I think this is a great description. It describes these folks well.

1. Let's state these qualities simply. People who have departed from the truth are notable for introducing factions, for causing disruptions.
  - a. When an apostate acts within a particular church or within a body of believers, that body starts to become divided.
  - b. Cracks appear. Unrest and separations enter. Friendships become strained. Tensions mount. Murmuring begins, and this leads to fault-finding.
  - c. Jude has not specifically stated this specific point before now, but it IS implied in every example he's shared with his readers up to this point in the text.
    - This is because these false teachers state or set forth heretical positions or teachings. They take issue with key positions of God's Word.
    - They try to gather around themselves people who support them, and this whole group then stands against basic teachings of the Word of God.
    - This group elevates man's ideas over God's truth, and so they disrupt the purposes and processes of Biblical fellowship.
    - This can take place within a specific body of believers, or it can occur within the church-at-large.
    - It can concern issues that seem relatively minor like the Biblical qualifications of an Elder or Pastor as one example.
    - Or, it can be about obvious major issues like homosexuality, Replacement Theology, and the literal interpretation of God's Word.
    - Regardless, Jude's point is apostates divide. They introduce factions and separations within a fellowship.

- d. This recalls Jude's example of Korah's rebellion which we studied in **Jude 11**. *(and that Old Testament story is found in Numbers Ch. 16).*
    - Korah's own views and his own selfish desires infected others around him.
    - It caused division against Moses and Aaron, and it led to terminal consequences for the whole group that had caused this problem.
  - e. Again, for reminder's sake - - this division can happen one of two ways. First, this division can start from within a congregation **(Cf. Acts 20:29-30)**.
    - This is the passage that warns us about 'savage wolves' and how men 'from your own number will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.'
    - Back in **Jude vs. 4**, we saw how these apostates can get their start in the church itself when Jude warns about 'certain men who have secretly slipped in among you.'
  - f. Second, this division can come in from outside a congregation **(Cf. 2 Timothy 4:3-4)**. NOTE: This is the passage about 'gathering around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.'
    - While this passage does not specifically state apostates can come in from the outside, it is strongly implied.
    - It summarizes how many churches actively seek to bring in a 'different sort of leadership.'
2. Make no mistake: this division that Jude mentions is a very dangerous, corrosive, and counterproductive element!
    - a. But I want to underscore how this division contrasts with Biblical instructions for 'unity.' Here are two passages to consider:

**(Cf. Eph. 4:4-6)** – *"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."*

**(Cf. Phil. 2:2)** – *"then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind."*

3. **A couple observations from these two texts:**
  - a. These verses are about 'unity.' They are not about 'conformity.' The two concepts are VERY different.
    - Unity finds motive in the heart's condition. Conformity finds motive in a desire for control.
    - Too many church leaders confuse the two, and I think all-too-often this is intentional. This causes disruption to the church as a whole.
    - Many church leaders push 'unity,' when instead, they are really pushing 'conformity.'
    - I've seen this personally, and it is always very damaging.

- a. This 'unity' that should be our goal is only possible when all believers are 'of one Spirit' and 'one mind.'
  - **IMPORTANT:** It is not possible to have Biblical unity when different spirits are both at work and are both heeded.
  - We learned last week in **2 Corinthians 11:4** that a hallmark of apostate teachers is they are heeding '*a different spirit.*'
  - They yield to and teach '*doctrines of demons*' which is how the Bible puts it. This is often a matter of dispensing partial truth and not the whole truth.
  - Naturally, this creates a conflict with the leading of the Holy Spirit. The two sides are diametrically opposed to each other.
  - Many close-knit bodies of believers have become sharply divided because various individuals within it chose to pay attention to deceptive spirits instead of the unifying nature of the Holy Spirit.
  - When people's hearts are properly aligned with God's Word, when they are in true 'unity of the Spirit,' then their minds meaning, their choices, their will, and their intentions, will also be in agreement.

**LET ME MAKE A COUPLE COMMENTS ABOUT UNITY AND DIVERSITY:** The Bible teaches that we are diverse in our gifts, that we are equal in Christ, and that all believers are included in the Body of Christ.

('Political' lesson): There is a Biblical concept to "DEI" which is far removed from current progressive ideas on that. It's one more reminder that Satan is always the great counterfeiter.

The Scriptures teach that we are all different from one another. God made us that way. We have different strengths, gifts, and weaknesses. That is normal and proper. **That is Biblical diversity.**

However, we should all be of one mind, heart, and purpose in the Holy Spirit. We should all regard and apply God's Word the same way. We should all love and hate the same things. **That is Biblical unity.**

**B. We looked at something apostates DO. They divide. Now let's look at something they ARE. They are worldly-minded.**

**NOTE:** (The Greek word here is psuchikos (SOO-kee-kos) from psuche = soul.) We get the word 'psychology' from it. This Greek term emphasizes the 'center of the personal being.' Literally, it means 'the selfish focus.'

- a. In other words, the false teacher thinks only of himself and his own interests.
  - a. He values life in this natural world and what pertains to it.
  - b. The world's priorities are his priorities (That may be income, recognition, influence, achievement, inclusion, belonging, prestige, control, power, etc.)
  - c. As a result, the false teacher's patterns are 'natural' and 'instinctual' because he is not really controlled or renewed by the Holy Spirit (**they are instead 'unreasoning' and 'animal-like' according to Jude 10).**

- d. These apostates value and follow common practice, They jump on cultural trends and the latest rituals and ideas, even if these things may detract from the pure truth of God's Word.
- e. Jude says here in **vs. 19** that these apostates have a wisdom which springs from 'sensual desires' – this means what they can understand and what they can get through their physical or natural senses.

**NOTE:** Let's glance at this issue from another angle:

**(Cf. James 3:14-15) –**

*"But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, **unspiritual**, demonic."*

Here in **James 3:15**, we see the English word 'unspiritual' being used. It's lifted from a derivative of the Greek term 'psuche' again. The 'wisdom' that false teachers embrace is ultimately based in worldly patterns and perspectives.

- b. He may act or appear as though he is concerned with others, but it is HIS egotistical ways, HIS self-centered goals, and HIS worldly ideas which are being served.

**RECALL FROM OUR PAST LESSONS:** Two ways this takes place:

- **Cf. Jude 12** – In regular fellowship, they manifest pride, greed, and selfish intent.
  - They use the occasions and processes of the church for their personal ambitions.
  - Everything is ultimately choreographed around their needs and wishes and insecurities.
- **Cf. Jude 16** – They manipulate relationship to seek their own affirmations.
  - They want recognition from others, and they are preoccupied with what others think of them.
  - One of the worst things you can do with these people is correct them in any proper fashion. They take it very personally.
  - It's because they base their own value and their own worth on recognition from others.

**NOTE:** OK, there is something false teachers DO – they divide. Then, there is something they ARE – they are worldly minded. Now...

- c. **There is something they lack. They lack the presence and the control of the Holy Spirit.**
  - a. Simply put, they are not indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

THIS IS SO IMPORTANT: The false teacher (within the context of Jude), is NOT a believer! Jude has been very clear: a true apostate is not truly saved.

d. LET ME MAKE A FEW COMMENTS HERE:

- a. Perhaps, more than another other point Jude has reinforced up to now, this one has caused the most consternation among you all...
  - b. Some of you have asked me questions regarding church leaders in your own lives that seem to be accurately described in the lessons we've had in Jude.
  - c. Several of you have mentioned you are very concerned about 'this person or that person' (some local, some national).
  - d. I have avoided discussing specific names and specific churches. I don't think that's my place to 'go there.' God alone knows the hearts and minds of others....I don't think I need to personalize issues.
  - e. However, let's be honest here. The Bible is very direct. It's blunt. The Bible is very plain!
  - f. Individuals that are described accurately in Jude up to this point are divinely-stated to lack the PRESENCE and CONTROL of the Holy Spirit.
  - g. According to Jude, such people are NOT true believers. I don't care how polished, popular, published, powerful, prominent, or persuasive they are.
- e. Let's quickly revisit Jude's claims on this issue:
- a. First of all, false teachers are **IN** the church. No question about that one.
  - b. They were in the church, they **ARE** in the church, and they will continue **TO BE** in the church. Like it or not, that's a fact, and the Bible says it will all get worse.
  - c. **(And according to Jude 10, 11)** – False teachers will be 'destroyed.' This is never a prediction about anyone that belongs to Christ.
  - d. **Jude 12** says they are spiritually dead twice. This is an indication that they will receive the 'second death' mentioned in **Rev. 20:14.**
  - e. **(Also, in Jude 13)** – The future of these apostates will be in 'blackest darkness forever.' That is a predicted fate that is without Christ. This point is very clear.
- f. Now, here in **Jude 19** - - they may believe they 'have the Holy Spirit' but they are fooling themselves (and fooling others). Jude says *"they do not have the Spirit."*

**NOTE:** There are Biblical precedents to the things I'm saying. Let's look at **Acts 19:1-7:**

*"While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and he asked them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' They answered, 'No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.' So Paul asked, 'Then what baptism did you receive?' 'John's baptism,' they replied. Paul said, 'John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.' On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all."*

**g. Let's briefly unpack what this passage is saying:**

- a. This is the time of the early church. The spread of the Gospel was therefore 'on the frontier' in these times.
- b. Signs and wonders were part of the Gospel's early spread and were part of the apostles' ministry (just as signs and wonders are still manifest in frontier missions work today).
- c. Anyway, Paul, in his travels and his missionary journeys, encountered people that were passing as believers, but they were not truly saved.
- d. Somewhere along the line, they had heard part of the truth but had not received all of it.
- e. They had done some things which made them think they were in the faith, but they had not gained the most important thing of all - - they had not truly '*received the Holy Spirit.*'
- f. They had not had the personal transformation of saving faith. Paul remedies this and they DO become saved in their earthly life.

**h. Now, let's take this thought and transition to another passage in Acts 19:13-16:**

*"Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, 'In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.' Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, 'Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?' Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding."*

**i. What's the point of this unusual passage?**

- a. Quite simply, there are those who never become truly saved in their earthly life, though, as we see in this passage, they may feel they were saved.
- b. They may do things that reinforce to themselves and to others that they are saved.
- c. But such people operate in a false confidence. While they believe they have a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ, they do not.
- d. A great danger with these folks is they rely on earthly credentials rather than heavenly credentials. It is difficult to convince these sorts of people that they are lacking anything.
- e. They base their own convictions on things they do and say, or on habits and rituals that they keep - (***Let's compare this passage in Acts 19 against Matt. 7:21-23.***)

*"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"*

- j. **Here are some absolute truths from all of this.**
  - a. It is easy to 'appear' as though one is a believer when, in fact, that person is not.
  - b. In this sort of situation, that person can fool others and even fool themselves. Nobody is really using the measuring stick of God's Word to properly assess what's going on.
  - c. The Bible says those who truly are in Christ have the Holy Spirit (**Cf. Rom. 8:8-9**), and what does that really look like? (**READ**):

*"Those controlled by the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ."*

- It's about control. It's about belonging. You and I are 'controlled.' We 'belong' to something and someone.
- But depending on our spiritual condition, WHAT controls us and to WHOM we belong are the real issues here.... **that's** the real question.
- If we are genuinely in the faith, then this should result in our being 'controlled by the Spirit of God.' And that shows we 'belong to Christ.'
- If we are not in the faith - - even if we (and others) think we are - - then we are controlled by the flesh and we belong to the flesh.
- This is not an issue of sin. We ALL sin. But do we properly confess it? Are we hurt or bothered by it? Does it weigh us down when we do wrong?
- If we are not controlled by the Holy Spirit, if we do not belong to Christ, the answer is "No, not really."
  - Coming full circle here back to **Jude 19**, false teachers are sensual or worldly-minded people who are controlled by their flesh and not the Spirit of God. That does not bother them.
  - IMPORTANT: There are only two paths here. There's nothing in between. You've only got two options.
  - We are either controlled by our flesh, or we are controlled by the Holy Spirit. It's all black and white here. No grays.
  - As I said before, this doesn't mean those 'in Christ' cannot slip, stub their toes, or sin. We can - - and we do!
  - BUT - - it does mean that those who are 'in Christ' recognize this when it happens, and they do what they can to get back on track.

**(Cf. 1 John 1:9)** *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*

- Our God is a faithful, merciful, gracious, and loving God. He desires to restore us to a RIGHT relationship with Him when we have sinned.
- As believers, we can confess our sin and KNOW that God will forgive us.



- We do this because our sin pains us. Our sin pricks our conscience. We don't WANT to belong to the world. We want to 'belong to Christ.'
  - Jude's point is this is not the nature and character of an apostate. They do not show these essential postures.
  - This is because they are not controlled by the Holy Spirit; in fact, they do not even HAVE it.
- k. **Here's a summary.** Jude, in **verse 19**, gives a short commentary about the type of men his readers are warned about.
- a. These men are separated from God and so they cause others to divide the same way.
  - b. They are sensual – they are worldly. They show animal-like instincts, rather than living a spiritual life.
  - c. They may look like the real deal, but they are not part of Christ and His church. They are joined instead to the devil, to the world, and to the flesh.
  - d. They engage in ungodly, selfish, and sinful practices, and this does not bother them the way it would if they were truly 'in Christ.'

IN CLOSING, HERE ARE THREE TAKEAWAYS FOR YOU AND I. I'M FRAMING EACH AS '**NEEDS.**'

1. First, we **need** to be cautious of people that have a pattern of causing disruption and division in a body of believers.
  - a. This is hard for some of us to hear because this accurately describes people we know and care about.
  - b. Likewise, we need to exercise similar caution in our own lives. We can be guilty of this problem too.
  - c. Our carnal nature likes to rear its head from time to time, and when it does, we can succumb to the temptation to be agitators and dividers as well.
2. Second, we **need** to embrace that tension that exists which allows for a diversity of gifts and abilities while still pursuing the 'unity of the Holy Spirit.'
  - a. Disagreements are not uncommon in the Body of Christ - - even Paul and Barnabas had disagreements which resulted in them going in two different directions.
  - b. However, schisms and factions which stem from heresy and / or the avoidance of sound doctrine are very different matters.
  - c. God's Word remains the final and ultimate authority, and we are all under obligation to conform to the literal teachings of Scripture.
3. And lastly, we **need** to guard against living apart from the control of the Holy Spirit.
  - a. Jude has made clear that sensual pursuits are the opposite of spiritual pursuits.
  - b. These apostates which Jude refers to think and act like natural men, not as spiritual men.
  - c. It is '*a natural man (that) does not accept the things of the Spirit of God*' according to **1 Cor. 2:14**.
  - d. It is incumbent on each of us to recognize that the **wisdom of the Spirit** ought to regulate all our thoughts, feelings, words, and actions.