



JUDE: “The Acts of the Apostates”

Week 22: “Jude Transitions”

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REVIEW:

- A. Last week, we studied *Jude vs. 16*. We unpacked a reminder in this verse that we are not supposed to ‘diminish the little sins,’ or ‘accept the world’s standards.’
- B. It’s one thing to study through the book of Jude and come away feeling this is all about false teachers.
- C. It’s easy to think, “They are not me. Those folks are ‘in there,’ or ‘over there.’”
- D. But it’s a very different matter to take a hard look in the mirror and realize Jude is also talking to us! I think last week’s lesson was a good reality check.
- E. Specifically, we studied five elements listed in *vs. 16* that have defined false teachers from Jude’s time up to our own and beyond.
- F. As we noticed last week, these five characteristics graduate from one to the next. As one of these things takes root, it then invites the next one, and so on.
- G. That’s because we learned that sin is not static. It wants to grow. It desires to control us or to ‘have us,’ as it did with Cain long ago.
- H. These five elements of false teachers (or apostates in general) are the following:
 1. **Murmuring** – This is a lingering tone of personal dissatisfaction against God and His righteous standards. It’s frustration with God’s choices and values because they force us to change and to step up.
 2. **Fault-finding** – This quality graduates the problem of murmuring or grumbling and it always gets interpersonal. Fault-finding always involves others, and so it leads to social conflict and breakdown of fellowship.
 3. **Follow their own evil desires** – This is nothing less than an open display of not wanting what God wants. Having previously complained against God’s standards, the apostate person will then makes choices that are contrary to the will and instructions of God.
 4. **Boast about themselves** – This kind of apostate person that *vs. 16* is talking about speaks proud things about themselves because they have no true confidence in the Scriptures. They fail to see themselves accurately, so they become self-promoters to their own shame. They are driven to make sure YOU see THEM as they do.
 5. **Lastly, they flatter others for their own advantage** – They manipulate others for personal gain. They appeal to others’ insecurities and immaturities to move forward or have their way. They do this because they are looking to men, and not to God, for their own promotion and opportunity.
- I. These are five serious things which define false teachers. As we observed last week, these five characteristics – in this order – are descriptive of every apostate person.

NOTE: In *vss. 17-19*, we see a transition in Jude’s letter. He shifts gears....

1. In the preceding portions of Jude that we've already studied, Jude's readers are told that false teachers have already '*secretly slipped in among you*' (**vs. 4**).
2. We need to understand that Jude wrote to a body of believers that already had a problem! They already had an infestation.
3. Now, in **vss 17-19**, Jude warns this same body of believers that these false teachers will CONTINUE to come. This infestation was not going to go away!
4. This is because the problem of false teachers was not, and it is not! - a one-time dilemma! In fact, the Bible is clear that this problem of false teachers is going to get worse and more common as the End Times draw near.
5. Looking ahead to **vss 20-25**, we will learn what believers must do and must be during these days and times of rampant apostasy.
6. There are some great applications for us in those upcoming verses, but for now let's focus on **vss. 17-19**.

I. NOW, I'VE SAID THAT THESE VERSES ARE A TRANSITION BETWEEN ONE INTENTION BY JUDE, AND NOW ANOTHER INTENTION.

NOTE: Today, I want to look at some basic observations from **vs. 17**. These are things Jude brings out in this verse. Next week we'll move into **vss. 18 and 19**.

A. The word 'But' that starts vs. 17 indicates a clear turning of the page. Jude is indicating he has something different to say now. He's on to something else....

1. If Jude had stopped his divinely inspired letter at **vs 16**, he would have done little more than make one main point.
2. He would have emphasized the secrecy and influence of apostates who constantly work against the truth of God's Word.
3. He's drilled all that home up through **vs. 16**, and it's here we need to be reminded of TWO THINGS:

B. First, and this is important for us to grasp, NO body of believers is immune from being invaded by those that disrupt the true work of God.

1. The reason is false teachers appear to be something that they are not (let's think about that).
2. It's here that we all need to be VERY discerning....VERY wise....VERY sound of mind.
3. These people 'appear' to be good folks, but the Bible says they are 'bad' instead. Jude has already made that point SO CLEAR.
4. These people 'appear' to be called to ministry, but they are pursuing personal ambitions and satisfying their personal insecurities instead.
5. They 'appear' to have good intentions, but rather they do not want to properly teach the full counsel of God's Word. In fact, they avoid, and sometimes even mock, this responsibility.
6. They 'appear' to have a right faith, but Jude says they are eternally lost instead.
7. They 'appear' to have something good to offer, however they are '*clouds without rain,*' '*autumn trees without fruit*' and so on. We've studied all of this.

8. It's all very sobering to be sure. In fact, it's rather frightening.
9. It's here we must be sure to let this truth settle in...

(Cf. 2 Corinthians 11:13-14) *"For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light."*

10. Paul says some things here that are very similar to what Jude has been saying all along.
11. I want you to notice the descriptive words in **2 Cor.** here: "false," "deceitful," and "masquerading." All three words say one thing: FRAUD.
12. The hard truth is false teachers look like the right kind of leader, but they are not - - - not if you compare them to God's proper standards.
13. These people, on the surface, seem to have all the right passions, personality, and plan, but it's all just shallow "show and tell."
14. They may look and sound like servants of God, but truth be told, they are much more concerned about themselves.
15. They look like people that have a true calling. But that's because we are measuring them the wrong way.
16. We evaluate them more by the standards of this world and more by the standards of cultural Christianity than we do by the standards of true Christlikeness and by God's Word.
17. That's enabled these kinds of people to manipulate others around them to get where they are at.
18. And they will continue to do whatever is necessary to keep themselves where they are and to keep the whole game going just as it is.
19. You know why???? It's working. It's keeping pews full and budgets black. That's why!
20. According to **2 Corinthians 11:13-14**, their model is Satan himself. They may not realize that, but they are serving, heeding, and succumbing to one who is the ultimate 'angel of light' pretender....

- C. The **second** thing we need to be reminded of is many churches (or at least the 'loudest voices' in them) want non-confrontational teaching. They don't want challenges. They don't want something that moves them towards obedience, towards the truth, towards personal growth and change, and towards faithful perseverance.

(Cf. 2 Timothy 4:3). *"For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear."*

1. Our churches today are dominated by politically correct leaders who lack the true gifts of teaching and preaching, support shallow teaching, promote superficial programs, and pursue a partial Gospel message.

2. As I've shared before, we should not seek to be 'politically correct.' This never supports the truth.
3. Rather we should seek to be 'Biblically-correct' This is going to be a clash of two world views, however it is the right approach.
4. According to what Paul instructs his protégé, Timothy, in this passage, the remedy to falling prey to political correctness, the remedy for avoiding theological drift, and the remedy for responding to false teachers is to teach sound doctrine.
5. That's teaching the Word of God literally, systematically, and plainly.

D. Let's look at another general observation from vs. 17.

1. Jude shows us from his own example how we ought to deal with false teachers in the mix:
 - a. He states his position with love and care. He's been blunt up to now, but he's also loving and caring.
 - b. In **vs 17** here, just as we see back in **vs. 3**, Jude says "Dear friends" [or "beloved" in most other translations].
 - c. He says, 'beloved' not so much because his readers are beloved by him, Jude, but instead, they are those "beloved by God" (**Cf. vs. 1b**).
 - d. Now, don't get me wrong. Of course, Jude loved them! He cared deeply for them, that's why he wrote this rather strong letter to them. That's why the book of Jude amounts to a crisis intervention.
 - e. The bigger point is we all have a common ground in our salvation. That's why Jude was originally wanting to write "about the salvation we share" (**vs. 3**).
 - f. We have a certain kind of relationship with one another because we each have a common bond in Jesus Christ. Jude makes this very clear.
 - g. Because one of our callings as believers is to 'love one another,' then I believe we must confront with the right intent.
 - h. In fact, this kind of love and interaction between believers is a sure sign of the Holy Spirit's control in our lives. It's a sure sign of a healthy faith.

(Cf. John 13:34-35) *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

2. Here is a lesson we need to learn from Jude's tough love approach. in **vss. 3 and 17**). It is this:

"If love is not our motive, then self-service will be our means."

3. If we are not acting in the bonds of true Christian love, then there is only one other alternative which drives us. We have some sort of personal issue or selfish motive at stake.

4. We'll learn more about all this when we get to "*building yourselves up*" in **vs. 20**.

E. Here's a third general observation from vs. 17. Jude instructs his readers to 'remember' something...

NOTE: This is the same thing Jude did back in **vs. 5**. He 'reminded them of something he said they should remember.'

1. **IMPORTANT:** All the way through God's Word, we are instructed to recall or remember. The question is, "Remember what?"
2. **ANSWER:** Generally speaking, we are to remember those things which prompt us to see ourselves accurately and to see God properly.
 - a. **In the 'Westminster Shorter Catechism of 1674,' the pivotal question is asked:** "What is the chief end of man?"
 - b. The response is simple: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever."
 - c. We are given just a few short years on this earth to prove out a right relationship with God.
 - d. The Bible says in **James 4:14** that our life is like a vapor or a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.
 - e. Our goal should not be to accumulate things, to gain notoriety in man's eyes, to become famous, or anything like that (Gene Hackman tragedy).
 - f. During our few short years on this earth, our chief end should be to glorify God, and to gain a right relationship with Jesus Christ, one in which we may enjoy Him forever.

F. Another general observation from vs. 17). Jude identifies himself in this verse as NOT being an apostle. This unpacks a specific matter that will take us through to the end of this lesson.

1. He refers to another group he calls, 'the apostles.' He does not include himself in that group.
2. Now, we learned at the outset of this study in Jude that he was the half-brother of Christ (**Cf. Matthew 13:55**). But he was not one of the 12 apostles.
 - a. **BIG QUESTION: "What is an apostle?"** This is an important question, especially in today's times where this concept of 'apostle' is mishandled.
 - b. The Bible lays out certain qualifications of being an apostle.
 - c. They are:
 - to have been a physical witness of the resurrected Christ (**Cf. 1 Corinthians 9:1**),
 - to have been explicitly chosen by the Holy Spirit for ministry (**Cf. Acts 9:15**), and...
 - to have the ability to perform signs and wonders (**Cf. Acts 2:43; 2 Corinthians 12:12**).

(NOTE: You can look up these references in the study notes online).

NOTE: The eleven remaining apostles respected all these conditions when they selected another to replace Judas Iscariot (**Cf. Acts 1:21-26**)

“Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.” So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.”

QUESTION: What about Paul?

- Paul's own words in defense of his apostleship are in **1 Corinthians 9:1**: *“Am I not an apostle? ... Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?”*
- He had the ability also to execute ‘signs, wonders, and miracles’ (**Cf. 2 Corinthians 12:12**).
- He was explicitly chosen by the risen Lord for a special ministry.

- The role of the apostles was to demonstrate a proper faith for the early Church, and they gave us the written Word of God by inspiration of the Holy Spirit (and certainly Paul was an active part of that).
 - ✓ And that’s another way of saying the Scriptures are complete! Believers today have all that is necessary of God’s revelational truth.
 - ✓ The apostles' words have been put to paper for all succeeding generations, teaching all on how to live in obedience to the faith.
- The point is, once a solid and proper foundation is laid down and a house is built on it – you don't go back and rebuild the foundation!
 - ✓ Note that the apostles are mentioned as part of that foundation (**Cf. Ephesians 2:20**) *“...built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.”*
- Furthermore, in **Revelation 21:14**, where the New Jerusalem city is described, there is a reference to twelve foundations with the names of the **12 apostles** of the Lamb which are written on them in Heaven.
 - ✓ And we learn also that the original 12 apostles will receive a special distinction of authority in the coming Kingdom (**Cf. Matthew 19:28**)
 - ✓ But here’s a BIG PICTURE takeaway from all this: it is wrong for anyone

NOTE: I want to emphasize that we are warned against false apostles....

- **Cf. Matthew 7:21-23 (one of the scariest passages in all the Bible)**

“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.’”

3. In this passage, we see MANY people who let themselves become personally fooled. They will find out too late they were in the wrong.
4. When they face Jesus Christ, they are desperate; they argue with Him. In the process they claim to have shown and exercised some of the distinct ‘signs’ of an apostle, but this passage says they are not the ‘real deal.’ In fact, they are not even saved.
5. This gets back to that passage we looked at earlier in **2 Corinthians 11:13-14**. These people are *“deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ.”*
6. They’ve let their pride, and their personal desires and motives in this life to override a right relationship with Jesus Christ.
7. They’ve listened to the wrong people and made the wrong choices. Dare I say they embraced ‘Christian culture’ rather than Christlikeness(?)
8. **This raises the issue of Christians being able to demonstrate ‘signs and wonders.’**
> I don’t want to go down a circuitous rabbit trail here, and besides, we’ve unpacked these issues at depth in earlier lessons.
9. But the bottom line is this: not all ‘signs and wonders’ are of God. In fact, the antichrist will splash onto the world scene enabled by many ‘*counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders.*’ (Cf. **2 Thessalonians 2:9**)
10. Remember, Satan ‘*masquerades as an angel of light.*’ His desire is to deceive as many people as he can.

NOTE: Let me wrap up with a few summarizing bullet points on this issue:

11. False apostles have always been in the church, and they will continue to be – (Cf. **Revelation 2:2**) - *“Unto the church in Ephesus write... Thou hast tried them that say they are apostles and are not, and has found them to be liars.”*
12. False apostles want to be recognized for something they are not qualified to have. They want recognition from others. They want to be esteemed. We’ve seen this in several passages we’ve looked at.
13. I would say false apostles and false teachers are basically one and the same. The false apostles are a subset, and they call more attention to themselves as a specific category, but they both are charlatans and they deceive many.
14. Those people who are seeking to restore the position of an apostle today are greatly misguided. Understatement. As **Matthew 7:21-23** makes very clear, they are due for a harsh wake up call.
15. Jude’s instructions to us in **vss. 17-19** amount to a remedy. It is to know what the Word of God has to say. WHY?
 - ✓ One cannot be effective as a believer and wise in this world if one does not have a deep knowledge of the Scriptures.

- ✓ The simple fact is many trips and falls in our Christian Walk are often due to an inadequate understanding and application of God's Word.