



JUDE: “The Acts of the Apostates”

Week 25: “Build Yourselves Up”

March 30, 2025

Instructor: Steve Schmutzer

Review:

- A. The main content of Jude up through the first 19 verses, has its focus on the identification and description of false teachers.
- B. Jude, the half-brother of Jesus, has gone to great lengths to reinforce what false teachers appear to be, what they do, what their effect is on a body of believers, and so on and so on....
- C. Last week, in **vs. 19**, Jude encapsulates all of his prior concerns. He summarizes with three points about false teachers:
 1. Something they **do**
 2. Something they **are**
 3. Something they **lack**
- D. The ‘something they do’ is they **divide**.
 1. They separate one portion of the congregation from the other. They create factions and disagreements.
 2. They do this by introducing errant doctrine and wayward teachings.
 3. They collect followers around themselves and against others, and as a result, they cause divisions.
- E. The ‘something they are’ is they are **worldly-minded**.
 1. They value the things the world values: influence, recognition, means, prestige, achievement, control and power, and so on.
 2. Jude clarifies that false teachers use their position, and they also use various insecure and shallow people around them to gain these things.
 3. It may be as blatant as getting your congregation to approve the purchase of a personal jet or a very expensive car.
 4. It may be something as subtle as trying to build a mega church or putting in place a group of Elders that are guaranteed to be ‘yes men’ and who will give a green light to everything you want to do.
 5. In both cases, the main priorities of leading, developing, and teaching a body of believers are lost as personal ambitions take over.
- F. The ‘something they lack’ is they lack the **presence and control of the Holy Spirit**.
 1. The false teacher, within the context of the book of Jude, is not a true believer.
 2. This has been hard for some of you to accept, but the Bible clearly teaches that many in the church are not saved. That’s not just the folks in the pews; it’s also those behind the pulpits.
 3. As we learned last week, these people may believe that they are saved, and it may appear to others that they are saved, but in fact, God knows they are not!
 4. Instead of being part of Christ and His Church, they are joined instead to the Devil, to the world, and to the flesh.

5. They are 'twice dead' as stated in **Jude 12**.
- G. So last week, we wrapped up **vs. 19**, and in doing so, we effectively came to the end of one section of Jude, and the beginning of another.

NOTE: Now we 'turn a page' as we move forward with **Jude 20**. Jude softens his tone, and he writes simply, gently, and lovingly to his readers with instructions he wants them to focus on – **read vs. 20** (See contrast, "But you, dear friends...." / same as **vs. 17**)

- I. In **vs 20** and beyond, Jude provides about eight to ten instructions (we'll unpack each one as we go...).
- A. These are instructions for true believers like you and I!
 - B. In other words, these are things which everyone who is truly in the faith should be doing and should be demonstrating.
 - C. These instructions are all built around VERBS (action elements) for days of apostasy, for times like now when literal Biblical interpretation is being attacked, and entire doctrines are being mocked.
 - D. Jude is setting up a contrast with everything he's already stated in the first 19 verses.
 - E. These instructions are keenly important for our times when a Biblical worldview is quickly fading, and faith is rapidly eroding.
 - F. These eight to ten instructions will preserve you and I in today's climate of overt and covert deception.
 - G. They will help us endure in a season where we see a tearing down of all things representing Christ and the complete Word of God.
- II. It is this list of instructions which tie back to Jude's urging in **vs. 3** to "contend for the faith."
- A. That was Jude's first pivotal directive, his first overarching mandate.
 - B. Jude starts his letter with '**what to do,**' to 'contend for the faith.' This is the first bookend.
 - C. He then spends most of his letter on '**why we ought to do it.**' That's everything in between that point and this one.
 - D. That's where he lays out all the facts, problems and reality checks about false teachers and apostates.
 - E. He now concludes Jude in the next few verses with '**how to do it.**' That's the second bookend, and **vs. 20** has two of these specific instructions:
 - 1. Build yourselves up in your most holy faith, and
 - 2. Pray in the Holy Spirit. (We'll see how far we get today...doubtful we'll get to this one.

F. (First instruction): "Build yourselves up in your most holy faith"

NOTE: John MacArthur says about this instruction, "*For those of us who are Christians to exercise discernment and protect ourselves from being led astray, we must remain on the path of sanctification. Doing so involves first building ourselves up in our most holy faith. We*

must become doctrinally strong if we are to recognize error and effectively fight the battle for truth."

NOTE: With MacArthur's excellent quote in view, I see several elements of importance in this simple exhortation to "*build yourselves up in your most holy faith.*" To help us unpack these things, we're going to take the various words and consider them.

1. The first two are '**Build yourselves...**' –
 - a. Here's the 'essence,' he's saying, "Take some personal responsibility here."
 - b. The integrity and efficacy of your faith is a matter of extreme importance. Make it a personal priority to give this issue some attention.
 - c. What are your priorities?
 - Health and fitness?
 - Finances? A 'golden retirement'?
 - Acquisitions and toys?
 - Notoriety and recognition?
 - NOTE: All these things need to be subordinate to 'building yourselves' in your walk with Christ. Look at all of this the way God does.
 - d. Note, there's also a big takeaway here that's easy to miss: We are not to depend too much on others for our spiritual diet and the condition of our fellowship.
 - e. That's why the instruction here is to 'build YOURSELVES.' We need to think now in terms of eternity.
 - f. In the end, God will evaluate YOU for the way YOU chose to conduct yourself, how YOU made His Word and His will a priority in YOUR life.
 - It's easy to 'tear down and divide' as we saw in **vs. 19**. Also, its natural to 'grumble' and 'find fault' as we saw in **vs. 16**.
 - It's easy to 'scoff' at things in Scripture we don't believe are important or we don't want to properly regard as we saw in **vs. 18**.
 - It's doing what others do if we think the way the world thinks - as we saw in **vs. 19**.
 - All these things are counterproductive to 'building yourselves' as **vs. 20** is instructing us.
 - In the end, each of us will stand before God and be accountable for the personal choices WE each made to avoid what's wrong and choose what's right.
 - g. That all said, we also need to recognize the plural aspect of this command.
 - Jude is writing to a community of believers here, and there is a purpose for him to do so.
 - We need to seek out regular fellowship with those who are committed to building up their faith the same way as we are.
 - We need to invest ourselves into the lives and experiences of others who have the correct priorities.

- Putting it another way, there is very little benefit to seeking fellowship with believers who just want to lower the bar.
 - There is not just little benefit, but as Jude has made clear to this point, there is also great potential danger in ‘just going with the flow.’
 - We need to exercise caution in pursuing cultural Christianity over Christlikeness, and in defending traditional church instead of Biblical standards of fellowship.
 - Jude recognizes that there is ‘strength in numbers,’ and so there is also the plural aspect in this first instruction to ‘build yourselves up.’
- h. One team that’s contending together for the same cause, in the same way, for the same reasons and in the same direction is more effective than one individual doing that.

IMPORTANT POINT (that is implied here): There is the opportunity to grow and flourish as a community of believers at the same time as false teachers are having their way and their effect! The context of Jude makes this clear!

2. The second element of importance I see in this first instruction to ‘build yourselves’ is the word “**up.**” Together, it all reads, “*build yourselves UP.*”

NOTE: Proper building always has a direction, and it is UP.

- a. You do not build ‘down’ a house, a business, or a marriage any more than you should build ‘down’ your faith.
- b. The very essence of the word ‘build’ suggests a responsible direction, and that is UP. That direction shows progress, maturity, and proper development.
- c. Want to know how well a group of believers is doing in their spiritual walk? See what direction their faith is evolving. Is it down, flat, or up?

IMPORTANT: Faith always has a trajectory, in the same way that faith also has a display.

- d. One can see faith being carried out (this is often when one is under trial).
- e. One can see faith not being carried out (this is also often when one is under trial).
- f. One can see faith being bravely displayed, or being kept in a box
 - Speaking of faith being ‘bravely displayed.’ Did you see the brave testimony and public prayer of Thompson Valley High School Senior Cora Cox this week?
 - She made national news as she faced off against woke transgender agendas and liberal activists in women’s sports?
 - I cried tears of gratitude for this young lady’s example. Her faith was clearly demonstrated on a national platform.
 - In her prayer, her conduct, and her words, she probably impacted more people for the truth than most woke pastors are doing in their pulpits today.
 - The reason is her faith showed UP!! She lifted the truth UP!

- g. The bottom line is real faith has direction. It shows and it grows. It is not static - in the same way we learned sin is not static.
- h. One can see faith going up, down, or nowhere. The Bible is very clear:
 - **Matthew 7:16** says, “By their fruit you will recognize them.”
 - Conversely, **Matthew 12:33** tells us bad trees produce bad fruit.
 - It’s not an issue of ‘judging.’ Too many people crisply retort here and say, ‘Don’t judge me,’ or ‘You don’t really know me.’
 - It’s not an issue of judging; it’s an issue of observation.
 - The Bible is clear: We can indeed know each other by the trajectory and direction of our faith. It’s on display for all to see.
 - If our faith is a real faith, it grows UP, it shows UP, and (I want to add) it looks UP.
 - In our conduct, our creed, and our choices, we are instructed to ‘*build yourselves*’ and that direction is.... **UP**”

3. The next word in this opening instruction is “...in...” It reads so far as “*build yourselves up IN...*”

NOTE: There is a mandate here, and that is to stay focused / stay intentional / stay motivated / stay true / stay defensive and offensive > in order to stay ‘in.’

- a. Understand, Jude has shown a lot of passion to this point. He is concerned about his readers staying committed.
- b. Faith requires commitment. Without this sort of commitment, faith erodes and ‘in’ will eventually become ‘out’
- c. We’ve all seen people, churches, and fellowships erode, fall away, and become lukewarm.
- d. They lost their commitment to stay IN. They lost focus and intention.
- e. We all need to work together to keep ourselves IN a proper expression of our faith and a fight for the truth.

4. The next few words in this first instruction are “...**your most holy faith**’

NOTE: Said another way, when we seek to ‘build yourselves up,’ it’s not for bigger buildings, budgets, bodies, and broadcasts.

- a. Those things may be OK, and they might even be justified under the right circumstances, but they are not inherently a priority by themselves.
- b. Instead, there is one thing that is most important to be built up in, and that is first and foremost our ‘most holy faith.’
- c. It’s what’s IN us that’s most important, not what’s around us.
- d. This ties in both directions with the first element:
 - There cannot be a true building up unless it is in our most holy faith.
 - It’s not possible to have this sort of ‘building up’ that Jude is talking about here without the end goal being the maturing of our faith.
 - Also, what the text is saying is the priority of our ‘holy faith’ becomes most evident when we actively seek to ‘build ourselves up’ in it.
 - So, there is a ‘cause’ and ‘effect’ here. It goes both directions.

III. **Let's ask ourselves an important question at this juncture: "How do we build ourselves up?") WITH THE PERSONAL INTENTION OF THIS INSTRUCTION IN VIEW, I HAVE TWO THOUGHTS...**

A. **First, we must invest ourselves into the complete Word of God to know the truth in it.**

NOTE: The major theme of Jude is false teachers: recognizing them, understanding them, contending against them, holding up despite them, and so on. None of these things are achieved without the true study of God's Word to know it fully.

1. Again, we need to study ALL of God's Word.

- a. As you do not have a complete house with just a roof and a foundation, so you do not have the ability to build yourself up by focusing on a few sections, books, or themes of Scripture.
- b. I am becoming more and more aware of one of the methods of Satan, the 'angel of light:'
 - To mimic the truth without fully yielding to the truth,
 - To emphasize the socially responsible themes of Scripture while denying and leap-frogging those parts which convict, cause repentance, and result in true salvation.
- c. **FACT:** It is the total Word of God which builds us up totally.
- d. Studying and applying the total Word of God for what it literally proclaims is what we are to do in days of mounting apostasy.
 - We are encouraged as believers to actively study the Word of God. We are never instructed to focus on the NT, or on certain themes or parts of it.
 - This kind of study takes effort and intentionality. There is nothing passive about this.
 - **(Cf. 2 Timothy 2:15 - Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a worker who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.)**

2. **Second, we must give some responsible thought to the description Jude uses, 'your most holy faith.'**

NOTE: This phrase is found only here in Scripture. To be 'holy' means to be separate or set apart.

- a. It's important that we understand the faith Jude instructs us to have is a faith that is distinguished and set apart.
- b. It is unique, and it is Godly. It is therefore alien and SHOULD be alien to cultural norms, worldly standards, and ever-changing social relativisms.
- c. Putting all that another way, the proper expressions of our faith and of the Gospel are not supposed to be attractive to the lost. That's the wrong goal!

- d. If a church seeks to be 'attractive to the lost,' then the only way they can do that is to dilute the truth of the Gospel. (**1 Cor. 1:18** says "*the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing.*")
- e. You cannot have it both ways. The church is off base when it seeks to be culturally relevant, or consistent with whatever the latest 'movement du jour' is emphasizing.
- f. Again, the very idea of the phrase '*your most holy faith*' means it is set apart, it is unique, it is different - - - and it's supposed to be that way.
- g. It's not in the same space as the world, and it doesn't conform in any fashion to the world's expectations and intolerances.
- h. It cannot be that or do that and still be 'most holy.'
- i. Instead...it is THE faith and the ONLY faith. It's the ONLY faith which saves us There is no other. As **Acts 4:12** says, "*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.*"
 - Our 'most holy' faith is based on the entire, the inerrant, and the complete body of truth contained in the Bible.
 - Our 'most holy' faith is the understanding and acceptance of salvation only as the Word of God declares it.
 - Our 'most holy' faith is the complete absorption and application of everything that is divinely inspired and given to us as instruction.
- j. (There is so much more I could say like all this.) Our 'most holy' faith needs to be on the Bible's terms and not on the terms defined by cultural Christianity (which is often a synonym phrase for apostasy).
- k. Remember, our faith here is called 'most holy' because it comes to us directly from God.
- l. It reveals God to us, and it also reveals our own sinful condition. It is only when we properly grasp our sinful condition that we can properly grasp our need for salvation.
- m. It is by the means of our 'most holy faith' that we are made righteous and are enabled to endure and to overcome the evil in the world.
- n. (Read the article "What's Your Brand?" on our website - - I go into more detail on the various issues of this lesson...)