



**JUDE: “The Acts of the Apostates”**  
**Week 26: “Praying in the Holy Spirit”**  
**April 6, 2025**  
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**Review:**

- A. We have moved on from the larger portion of Jude where he has urgently detailed out the dangers and the true condition of false teachers and apostates.
- B. Jude wrapped up his concerns on those matters by summarizing in **vs. 19**:
  - 1. What false teachers **do**
  - 2. What false teachers **are**, and...
  - 3. What false teachers **lack**
- C. Now, in **vs. 20**, Jude transitions to instructing true believers. He wants to protect them from the effects of apostasy. As teacher he adopts a gentle and loving tone.
- D. In **vs. 20-23**, he spells out how true believers ought to combat the subtle invasions of apostasy.
- E. He lists 8-10 specific instructions for how we should stay true in our faith. We studied the first of those last week: **“Build yourselves up in your most holy faith”**
- F. With this instruction we learned the following:
  - 1. **#1: We need to take some personal responsibility for the integrity and growth of our faith.**
    - a. This is because each one of us will ultimately face Jesus Christ and we will be accountable for the personal choices we have made.
    - b. As part of this personal responsibility, we need to seek out regular fellowship with those who are committed to building up their faith the same way as we are.
  - 2. **#2: We need to push one another to build our faith both individually and collectively UP.**
    - a. Our faith expresses itself in a certain trajectory. It’s not good if that direction is down. We need to be moving UP.
    - c. Faith is not or, SHOULD not be static. It needs to show direction. It needs to show growth.
    - d. By saying ‘up,’ Jude says we need to be maturing in our faith, and that upward trend needs to be evident to others.
  - 3. **#3: Our faith requires commitment. We need to be committed to staying IN the faith.**
    - a. Without this sort of conscious commitment, faith will erode. It happens all the time.
    - b. **“In”** will eventually become **‘out,’** and we all know people and churches that have gone down this path.
    - c. They lost the important commitment to stay IN. They compromised, and they lost focus and intention.

4. **#4: There is one thing that is by far the most important in our lives, and that is our 'most holy faith.'**

- a. It's what's IN us that's most important, not what's around us.
- b. What Jude is saying is that we need to get our priorities right. There is no greater priority we should have than 'our most holy faith.'
- c. This prioritization of our 'holy faith' becomes most clear when we individually and collectively seek to 'build ourselves up' in it.

- I. The question was raised last week if this process of "*building yourself up*" is the same thing David did in **1 Samuel 30:6** where David is facing a difficult chapter of his life. It reads:

*"David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God."*

- A. The question was (and is), "Is this the same exercise in faith and commitment as what we see defined in **Jude 20?**"

B. **"Yes, and no." (Here's the story)**

1. The Amalekites had plundered the Negev area and had burned the city of Ziklag. Everyone in it had been taken captive, including David's wives.
2. It was a very low moment for David, for his army, and for all who were following David.
3. In typical human fashion, those around David began to blame him and find fault with him when things got tough.
4. David hadn't done anything wrong, but he was the leader. He was the figurehead. So naturally, people began to point the finger at him and become very angry with him. They talked about stoning him.
5. David was experiencing a great personal trial in this passage, and nearly all of the translations say: He "*found strength in the Lord his God.*"
6. In other words, when trials and challenges and extreme distress faced David, he centered his focus on God. He oriented himself to WHO and WHAT mattered most.
7. He knew God was still in control even if he personally felt out of control, and he let God be God even if those around him were acting very human and carnal.
8. As the story goes, God subsequently directed David to a great victory over the Amalekites in this situation. As a result, David's critics were silenced.
9. As part of this journey, David had to exercise a focus, a commitment, an intention to 'stay IN his faith' as we talked about earlier.
10. That's the tough part. It's always a matter of personal will to '*find strength in God*' just as it is to '*build yourself up in your most holy faith.*' Especially when the chips are down.

11. When adversity strikes, life becomes even harder. There is a connection that can be made here with the **Jude 20** verse.

**II. Now we move on to the next instruction in this list, and it is also found in vs. 20.**  
It is *‘praying in the Holy Spirit.’*

- A. This is an instruction that is ripe for misinterpretation, and it certainly HAS been misinterpreted, misapplied, mishandled, misdirected, and all those sorts of things.
- B. I don’t want to get ‘lost in the weeds,’ and so I will deal with this instruction as follows:

1. We’ll look at what this phrase *‘praying in the Holy Spirit’* really means.
2. We’ll look at some examples from Scripture where this was done

**C. What can we know about this phrase, *‘praying in the Holy Spirit?’***

1. This phrase (not in English, but in the original Greek) occurs only one other time in Scripture, in **Ephesians 6:18**, which reads as follows:

*“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.”*

2. **Ephesians 6:18** follows the well-known passage of Scripture about *‘putting on the whole armor of God’* a few verses earlier. In **vs. 13** of that same chapter, we are also instructed to *‘stand our ground in the day of evil.’*
  3. So, this instruction in **Ephesians 6:18** shares something in common with the content of Jude which is all about contending for our faith and opposing those who are corrupt and apostate.
  4. Specifically, this **Ephesians** text emphasizes:
    - a. We are to stand our ground in the day of evil (**again, vs. 13**)
    - b. We are to engage in both defensive and offensive actions in the preservation and exercise of our faith.
    - c. We are to be alert, watchful, and perceptive. We are supposed to understand what is going on around us.
    - d. We are to be ‘always praying,’ like this. These are significant conditions of proper prayer.
    - e. Also, we are to be praying for ‘all the saints.’ This is very much like Jude’s instructions to a plurality of believers to be watching out for each other.
- D. From comparing these two verses in **Jude** and **Ephesians** already, I would suggest to you that *‘praying in the Spirit’* includes several things:

1. **First, it is praying in conformity with God’s Word**

- a. Putting that another way, we are NOT praying in the Holy Spirit when our motives, our understandings, and our personal desires do not align with what the Bible clearly teaches.
- b. I know someone who professes to be a Christian, but he prays for his homosexual child to find peace with his sexual orientation. One cannot pray for sin to be blessed by God.
- c. There is so much wrong with this picture, and this is NOT praying in the Holy Spirit. It all conflicts with what God's Word clearly teaches.
- d. Anytime we elevate our wishes over the clear counsel of God's Word, and we "pray" about things which are in conformity to OUR choices rather than God's choices, we are absolutely NOT praying in the Holy Spirit.

**2. Second, "*praying in the Holy Spirit*" is often an issue of opposing Satan's tactics.**

- a. ***Ephesians 6:13*** says we are to stand our ground in the day of evil. This is the context of the instruction in ***vs. 18***, only five verses later, to '*pray in the Spirit.*'
- b. In multiple places up through the first 19 verses of ***Jude***, we are warned against the evil and the damage of false teachers and apostates.
- c. Then, as part of his instructions to oppose all this, to contend for the faith properly against all this, and to insulate oneself from all this, Jude says in ***vs. 20*** to '*pray in the Holy Spirit.*'
- d. The bottom line is one aspect of '*praying in the Holy Spirit*' is standing our ground during a time and an expression of evil. That is both an offensive and defensive struggle.

**3. Third, we see that we are to be alert, watchful, and perceptive.**

- a. As believers we are not to check out of this world, sequester ourselves in some remote monastery and make craft beer. Instead, we are supposed to understand and be informed as to what is going on around us.
- b. This aspect of being alert, watchful, and perceptive is a mark of spiritual maturity. There is no commendation in Scripture in choosing to be an isolationist.
- c. Our posture instead, in this state of awareness, should be one of '*praying in the Holy Spirit.*'
- d. As we perceive the gravity and implications of those things which are taking place, we are to express to God our understanding and our humility by praying properly about them.
- e. This is the essence of '*praying for the peace of Jerusalem*' in ***Psalms 122:6***. That's not an appeal to pray for a peace deal between the Palestinians and Israel, but rather a display of one's conviction that peace will NOT come to Jerusalem until Jesus Christ reigns on His throne there in the Millennial Kingdom.
- f. Again, we are to be alert, watchful, and perceptive in these turbulent times. Also, we are to pray in conformity with God's divine plan for this world and all the ages.

**4. Fourth (and this is a tough one) we need to be ‘always praying’ like this. We are to exercise an ongoing routine of praying in the Holy Spirit.**

- a. This boils down to an issue of personal discipline, and so the direct implication here is properly *‘praying in the Holy Spirit’* takes work. It takes effort.
- b. I confess, it’s easy to fall into patterns of prayer that are prescriptive, cliché, convenient, and often shallow.
- c. That’s not what’s being implied here. As we are going to see in a moment, concerted prayer in the Holy Spirit is a matter of will and active dedication.
- d. It’s an ‘always’ thing which takes work. It demands focus. It requires discipline and personal sacrifice. It’s what **1 Thessalonians 5:17** says, *“Pray without ceasing.”*
- e. When Daniel prayed 3X a day as was his personal habit in **Daniel 6:10**, he did that in the face of great personal danger and opposition. But he did what was right, even if it was hard.

**5. Lastly, based on the clear instructions and contexts of Jude 20 and Ephesians 6:18, we are to pray for each other.**

- a. It is imperative that we continually support each other in thoughtful prayer.
- b. We are called to watch out for each other, to do what we can to build each other up in the faith, and to support believers around us in careful intentional prayer.
- c. It’s very easy to become self-absorbed in our prayers. We tend to give God a list of ‘gimmies’ in our prayer life. It’s about us more often than it should be.
- d. I understand that we are told to bring our ‘requests and petitions’ to God in **Philippians 4:6**. These things, too, are part of the healthy prayer life, but for most of us this is pretty much our main focus.
- e. However, here we see that *‘praying in the Holy Spirit’* has an outward focus. It’s a posture of prayer that is concerned about the needs of others, and we are instructed to be specific in addressing these needs.
- f. (I cannot express enough how grateful I am for the times when some of you come up and ask me how you ought to pray for me - - or you tell me you ARE praying for me - - it’s very moving and meaningful to me....)

**E. I want to shift gears here a bit and look at two examples ‘praying in the Holy Spirit.’**

**NOTE:** These are two cases, one in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament, where we learn something about praying in the Spirit *before* the redemptive work of Jesus Christ and *before* The Day of Pentecost. In these examples, we will see a few other attributes of this discipline.

**1. Hannah the mother of Samuel; Cf. 1 Samuel chapters 1 and 2: Background:**

- a. Many of you are familiar with this touching story. Hannah is introduced to us in **1 Samuel Ch. 1** as a devout woman of God and a devoted wife.
- b. However, Hannah is barren. She is unable to conceive a child. This grieves her greatly.

- c. Her despair is compounded by her husband's other wife who torments and teases her continually, for years. The other wife has plenty of children.
- d. Eventually, Hannah does conceive. The Lord answers her prayer, and she makes the commitment to bring the child, Samuel, to serve Eli, the priest, in the house of the Lord. She brings Samuel to Eli *right after Samuel is weaned*.
- e. After Hannah delivers Samuel to Eli, she prays a beautiful prayer, and you can read it in **vss. 1-10 of 1 Samuel Ch. 2**. Here are three points I want to make about Hannah's discipline of prayer and this prayer specifically:

f. **First, Hannah was persistent in prayer**

- She maintained a disciplined prayer life even when it seemed God was silent.
- Her prayers weren't prescriptive or polished. But they were passionate and personal. They were cries of desperation.
- Hannah's persistence shows us that '*praying in the Spirit*' can be all about our deepest struggles. It can be all about our strains and suspicions.
- It's our decision to keep seeking God - even when the road is hard and even when hot tears flow – that shows righteous persistence.
- God's faithful presence remains even when our circumstances are painful.
- We need to remain persistent in prayer – it's a display of a sound faith in God, and it's part of '*praying in the Holy Spirit*.'

g. **Second, Hannah surrendered everything to God.**

- It's implied in the previous points I made about her, but Hannah held nothing back from God.
- In **1 Samuel 1:16**, Hanna states "*I have been praying here out of great anguish and grief.*" Eli saw her and thought she was drunk. Clearly, Hannah's emotions were delivered in full to God and were visible to others.
- We need to be fully transparent before God in our prayers. God already knew Hannah's plight; nothing was hidden from Him. But, she surrendered everything to God that she was feeling.
- I think many of us are afraid to be this honest with God. We feel a need to brush aside our pain a little bit, or pretend we are okay when we are not.
- Not Hannah! She gave God her messy prayers. She got vulnerable. She didn't worry about appearing like she was keeping it together.
- Part of '*praying in the Spirit*' means we need to be authentic. It's OK if our inadequacies show. As **Romans 8:26** says, "*the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.*"

h. **(and third) Hannah celebrated God's faithfulness.**

- As Hannah prays to God, she gives Him thanks and she celebrates His faithfulness.
- In fact, back in **Ch. 1, vs. 20**, when Hannah birthed her son, she named him Samuel, meaning "name of God." The boy's name was a continual reminder of God's faithfulness.
- We all have trying times. In such times, when we remember God's faithfulness, that will strengthen us and remind us that He has not abandoned or forgotten us.
- Sometimes, we forget too easily the faithfulness that God has shown us. We may lack or experience trials in one place in our life, but in other places God has displayed continued provision and protection.
- If we make it a habit to celebrate God's faithfulness, our perspective will shift. Instead of our prayers focusing on what we lack or what we need, we become more aware of God's continued presence.
- We become more aware of God's holiness, and that there is no security and strength like Him. This is what Hannah acknowledges in **Ch. 2 vs. 2**.
- In the end, this practice of willful thankfulness is part of '*praying in the Holy Spirit*.'
- It strengthens our faith. It gives us hope and encouragement to keep trusting Him, even in seasons of waiting and distress.

i. **The Lord's Prayer (Cf. Luke 11:2-4).** Here, Jesus' disciples asked him to '*teach (them) to pray*,' and he then told them what to do.

**NOTE:** What can we learn from this about '*praying in the Holy Spirit*?' IMPORTANT: Jesus gave this example of prayer as a model or as a pattern, not necessarily as a specific set of words we should mindlessly chant (as some do).

There are elements or ingredients to The Lord's Prayer which we should take note of and incorporate in our own prayers. This helps us to '*pray in the Holy Spirit*.'

j. **First, the opening element of "Our Father in heaven" teaches us to whom we are taking our prayers — our Heavenly Father.**

- There is nothing wrong in praying to 'Jesus' or to 'our Lord and Savior.' We are not wrong to open our prayers with these approaches.
- But the essence of Jesus' instruction to His disciples here is to recognize to WHOM they are praying.
- They are praying to their true Father, and as The Lord's Prayer in **Matt. 6** records it, He '*is in heaven*.'
- That should give us pause. It's a worthy thing to consider that – in our prayers – we are addressing an Almighty God who is our loving

Heavenly Father. His realm is in heaven while ours (for now, anyways) is on earth.

- It reminds us of the essential arrangement here, and this helps to set a proper tone for *'praying in the Holy Spirit.'*

k. **"Hallowed be your name" tells us to worship God, and to praise Him.**

- This gets back a bit to Hannah's posture. She recognized and gave voice to God's faithfulness to her. In her words were her adoration and worship.
- We don't need our circumstances to be wonderful, our life to be great, and our resources to be flush to worship God.
- Proper worship is a humble recognition of WHO God is and WHAT He is owed from us regardless of what we may or may not be going through.
- Job lost everything in one calamitous moment: his children, his wealth, and everything that made him prominent and well. But **Job 1:20** says, *"At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship."*
- IMPORTANT: Worship is less about what we do and much more about who God is. A right response to God sees through our personal pain and challenges and CHOOSES to rejoice in God all the same.
- *'Praying in the Spirit'* is properly recognizing God and giving him the praise He is owed regardless of any other things that may be happening.

l. **The phrase "*your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*" is a reminder to us that we are to pray for God's plan for the world, not our plan.**

- More specifically here, we should desire the prophetic kingdom of Jesus Christ. That is His earthy reign of 1000 years known as The Millennial Kingdom.
- Here is a line in The Lord's Prayer that looks to a future time when God's will shall be executed on earth just as it is being carried out right now in heaven.
- This is a conundrum for anyone that holds to amillennialism. They don't believe in a literal 1000-year reign of Jesus Christ on earth, and headquartered in Jerusalem, Israel.
- That's why so many churches and Christians make the errant argument that Jesus is talking about some sort of spiritual kingdom, some sort of special condition that exists now and not a physical promise for the future.
- But that's wrong. We are not living in the Millennial Kingdom now, we're not making things better and better on earth, and we're not



exercising dominion over all sin so we can roll out the red carpet and have things ready for Jesus to come back.

- This is another reminder – and Jude has brought this to light already – that one cannot truly *‘pray in the Holy Spirit’* if one refuses to submit to the authority and truth of the full counsel of God’s Word.

Let me quickly wrap up the remaining issues of The Lord’s Prayer and the various patterns Jesus sets that ultimately guide us to *‘pray in the Spirit.’*

m. **We are to pray for God’s will to be done, not for our desires.**

- This is a conscious recognition that God needs to be in control and not us.

n. **We are encouraged to ask God for the things we need in the phrase “give us today our daily bread.”**

- It’s a not-so-subtle reminder that we should be more preoccupied with the here and now than the grand future. If God can take care of the sparrows, He can take care of our needs too.

o. **“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” instructs us to confess our sins to God and to turn away from them, and also to forgive others as God has forgiven us.**

- It’s hard to do that when we are weighed down by our own guilts, or when we are angry about the way others have mistreated us.
- But here, we see a way to keep the prayer path clean. Properly confessing our sins to God, and forgiving the wrongs of others enables us to *‘pray in the Holy Spirit.’*

p. **The Lord’s Prayer ends with, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”**

- ✓ This is a righteous plea for help in achieving victory over sin. This is a daily exercise.
- ✓ And lastly, we are to constantly appeal for protection from the attacks of Satan. He is unrelenting in his efforts to attack us, and so we need to constantly pray for strength and help against those attacks.

**Conclusion:** *“Praying in the Holy Spirit”* is work. It is an ongoing discipline, but it is something we can learn to do. The Bible teaches us in many places what this looks like. I’ve only touched on a few.

As the disciples asked Jesus in **Luke 11:1** to *“...teach (them) to pray,”* so we need to ask for the aid and guidance of the Holy Spirit as we learn to pray as we should.

