



## JUDE: "The Acts of the Apostates"

Week 29: "Wait, For What? Part 2"

May 4, 2025

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### REVIEW:

- A. Last week we studied "Part B" of **Jude vs. 21**.
- B. This is Jude's fourth instruction as he guides his readers into proper conduct during times of apostasy, when people are willfully departing from the truth.
- C. There are a series of 8-10 instructions which began back in **vs. 20**. We're tackling them one by one.
- D. Now - the main instruction in **vs. 21** is to "*Keep yourself in God's love.*" This instruction is qualified by part B of the verse which follows.
- E. This part reads: "*....as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.*"
- F. This secondary instruction, while it adds definition to the main command to "*Keep yourself in God's love*" it also stands on its own. Jude's instruction to his readers both then and now is to WAIT.
- G. We learned that most translations use the word 'wait,' while others lend some different hues. They say: "*....as you look for,*" "*as you anticipate,*" "*as you are expecting,*" and so on.
- H. The dominant idea behind this instruction is there is a 'mercy' of our Lord Jesus Christ that is still yet to come and until it arrives, we are to "wait" for it.
- I. This attitude of waiting, this specific faithful posture, therefore, becomes part of "*Keeping yourself in God's love...*"
- J. Within the body of this last instruction, there are three elements to consider:
  - 1. The challenge of waiting
  - 2. The endurance of mercy
  - 3. The hope of eternal life
- K. Last week, we studied the first element of these three, "The challenge of waiting," and we emphasized several key points:
  - 1. Waiting is always hard to do, but patient waiting often appears in Scripture as a virtue of the faithful believer.
  - 2. Here in Jude, we are instructed to wait with an eternal perspective. This is the point Jude is making.
  - 3. We should wait for the plan of God to unfold, wait for His eternal design to reach fruition, and wait while His purposes take priority over our own.
  - 4. Specifically, for Christians, we are supposed to wait for the return of Jesus Christ.
  - 5. We looked at **Luke 12:35-37** to learn four ways that is done responsibly: (1.) well-prepared, (2.) waiting, (3.) watchful, and (4.) wise.
- L. Lastly, we learned that this kind of waiting requires that we trust God fully as we see the ongoing depraved actions of the world according to **Cf. 1 Corinthians 4:5**.

- I. This brings us to the second of the three elements that we need to consider. I am calling that “*the endurance of mercy*” (see the specific phrase in **Jude 21...**). Let’s visit some overarching thoughts to set the right tone.

A. Jude says we are to wait for God’s mercy. Nearly all the translations say ‘mercy’ and one says ‘kindness.’

B. There are several questions for us to consider as we probe this phrase. They are:

1. “What is the difference between mercy and grace?”
2. “What is meant by God’s mercy in this text?”
3. “Have we not already received God’s mercy, so why are we still waiting for it?”
4. “How does this tie into the idea of ‘keeping yourself in God’s love?’” This is the main approach I’d like to take to this text today.

**C. First, what is the difference between mercy and grace?**

1. Mercy and grace are often paired together in Scripture, and so it is easy to think they are one and the same thing.
  - a. However, while the terms are similar, grace and mercy are **not** the same.
  - b. To put it simply: mercy is not receiving what we deserve, while grace is receiving what we do not deserve.
2. Both have their proper place within a responsible discussion of sin and repentance. Both mercy and grace are active elements in the salvation process.
  - a. **Cf. Romans 6:23** – “*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.*”
  - b. In other words, mercy shows up here as God not punishing us for our sins as we deserve.
  - c. Grace shows up by God blessing us with eternal life despite the fact that we do not deserve it.

**D. Second, we need to drill down a bit deeper here. What is specifically meant in this text by God’s mercy?**

(NOTE: It is important to distinguish the mercy of God from the mercy of man, because we are all capable of extending some level of mercy [i.e. an enemy soldier captured on the battlefield...]).

1. **According to the Scriptures, God’s mercy is deliverance from judgment.** Now this is an important review for all of us:
  - a. According to the Word of God, we have all sinned (**Cf. Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8**).
  - b. As a result of that sin, we all deserve death (**Cf. Rom. 6:23**). This is not just physical death, but also what the Bible calls ‘the second death’ which is eternal judgment in the lake of fire according to **Revelation 20:12-15**.

- c. With that view in mind, then every day we are living out the reality of God's mercy.
- d. If God gave us all what we deserve, then we would all be, even right now condemned for eternity.

**1. It is responsible for the believer to constantly acknowledge and ponder God's mercy which we are receiving every day, and which we are anticipating is coming.**

- a. This is demonstrated, in part, by Jude's instruction to: "...wait *FOR* the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ." (This is a forward-looking consideration of God's mercy).
- b. There is also a "rear-looking consideration" of God's mercy, and that is recognizing what we have been rescued from.

**1 Tim. 1:13** says, "*Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief.*"

- c. A forward-looking and a rear-looking view of God's mercy helps us to live the proper way in the present, between the reality of those two perspectives (more on this in a moment...).

**2. We particularly need to keep God's mercy top of mind and top of heart).** This is a faithful act of our will and our spirit especially when we have exercised our sinful nature!

- a. An example of keeping God's mercy in proper view is found in **Psalm 51:1-2** where David implores, "*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.*"
- b. **NOTE:** This plea by King David is AFTER he is noted by God Himself as being a man after God's own heart
- c. **(Cf. Acts 13:22)** – Here, the Apostle Paul is speaking before the men of Israel, and he tells them of God's feelings about King David.
- d. Conclusion: When we offer a plea to God for His mercy, we are asking Him to withhold the judgment that we know we deserve and instead grant to us the forgiveness that we know we have not earned.
- e. This concept of mercy therefore becomes an exercise of displaying a proper view of God!

**3. This raises a probing question:** Is it within the bounds of proper conduct to seek God's mercy even though we are already saved and even though God has already had mercy on us? Is it a lack of faith if we are doing that?

- a. **Answer:** It is **absolutely proper** to seek God's ongoing show of mercy in our lives this way.

- b. **Hebrews 4:16** says, “Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”
- c. In fact, it is MOSTLY during our times of distress and need that we should feel “confidence” in this pursuit of God’s mercy.

**4. IMPORTANT! It is wrong (and it is dangerous!) to take God's mercy for granted.**

- d. **Cf. Romans 2:5** – “But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God’s wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.”
- e. This text suggests it is stubbornness and a deliberate refusal that is behind a willful discounting of God’s mercy.
- f. We need to understand that this passage is directed to the ‘moralist:’ someone who thinks their relatively good behavior will be sufficient to escape God’s judgments.
- g. This passage underscores the danger of taking God’s mercy for granted.

**5. Now, let’s bring this all back to Jude 21:.....**Since we’ve already received God’s mercy, and since His mercy is clearly past AND present, then why are we to still wait for it?

- a. (Let me cut to the chase): The true believer recognizes their condition before salvation - that they were saved because God extended mercy to them.
- b. The true believer also properly recognizes that God’s mercy is being shown to them every day of their present lives.
- c. But.....the true believer ALSO recognizes that when Christ takes them out of the world at the time of the Rapture, it will still be because of the mercy of God.
- d. This is what we are to be waiting for! This is the forward-looking view.
- e. **Here’s the bottom line:** God is RICH in mercy!
  - He demonstrated His mercy for you when He brought you into salvation.
  - God continues in that care and that concern today. He continues to show you His mercy now.
  - And - - He will demonstrate that mercy once more when He rescues you from His judgments which are to come!
- f. **Remember: God’ mercy WAS, IT STILL IS and IT WILL BE deliverance from judgment!**
- g. As we’ve seen multiple times in various past lessons, Jesus wants us to live in an attitude of eager expectation for His physical return.
- h. But, we will leave this world supernaturally not because of who we are or because of anything special that we have done.

- i. If we depended upon that, we wouldn't 'make the cut.' We wouldn't get our ticket for the heaven-bound train. The Bible says we will leave this world because of HIS MERCY!

**E. Lastly, concerning this 'endurance of mercy:' "How does this concept of "waiting for God's mercy" tie into the idea of 'keeping yourself in God's love?"**

1. Remember the scoffers and mockers(?) – these are the apostates and the false teachers of **Jude 18** and **2 Peter 3:3**.
2. We've learned one of the primary doctrines that such people ridicule are the events and issues of the Second Coming of Christ.
3. The full counsel of God's Word makes a very compelling point: mocking Bible prophecy, specifically the Rapture, is a hallmark of the apostate person.
4. Because apostasy is departing from the truth, such people choose to doubt and disbelieve this important truth.
5. They dilute it and they discredit it. They twist it to mean something it is not saying. In other words, the Bible says they scoff at it and they mock it.
6. And so, Jude's instruction here in **vs. 21** stands in stark contrast to those who have 'strayed from the truth.' We are NOT to be like them!
7. Jude's instruction is to *"....wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life."* This is looking forward to a specific event.
8. We are called to wait for this future event. We are to wait for that blessed moment of being supernaturally taken up from this earth to be with our Lord and Savior.
9. As I've shared before, *"This moment too is also part of eternity."* It is a proper attitude that daily reflects on the mercy of God past, present, and future.
10. One of the marks of *"Keeping yourself in God's love..."* is maintaining a proper, a hopeful, a watchful and an eager attitude concerning God's promise to take us out of this world and *"....to eternal life."*

**F. NOW:** We've looked at:

1. The challenge of waiting, and...
2. The endurance of mercy.
3. (That brings us to the third point on this list which will wrap up **vs. 21**). That is "the hope of eternal life."

**G.** Jude instructs true believers to live in an attitude of expectation for Christ's return, so we're going to go a bit deeper into this element now.

1. We glanced at this issue a little bit last week,
2. We are going a bit deeper this week, and then, as I promised, we're doing a scholarly dive into the doctrine of the Rapture next week.

3. We'll look next week at the Biblical case for a pre-Tribulation Rapture. It should be a solid review for some of you, and it will be brand new info for others.

II. There are three points I want to unpack for the remainder of this lesson: The hope of Christ's return, The case for Christ's return, The effect of Christ's return.

**A. First, the hope of Christ's return –**

**Note:** The 'hope' idea here communicates an attitude we as believers should have, but it also communicates a reality.

1. As believers, Christ's return is a wonderful and promising event; it is true "hope."

**(Cf. Titus 2:11-13)** *"For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,"*

**Here are several observations from this passage....**

2. This 'hope' for Jesus Christ's return is not a possibility, but it is a certainty.
  - a. It's not the way we 'hope' our stocks go up, or we 'hope' our car doesn't break down on a long trip.
  - b. Rather this 'hope' is set up as a contrast with the *"ungodliness and worldly passions....in this present age"* **(Cf. vs. 12)**.
  - c. Since the depravities and ungodliness of this world are certain, so this 'hope' we have is ALSO certain.
  - d. Further, it is a *"blessed hope"* because:(1.) it is a reminder to us of God's continued grace and mercy to us **(Cf. Titus 2:11, and Jude 21)**, and....(2.) it is the fulfillment of Christ's promise to us. **2 Pet. 3:4** shows that mockers are mocking the promise of Christ's return, and...(3.) it is the complete fulfillment of our salvation. The total dimensions of our salvation (both soteriological AND eschatological) are fully realized at the Rapture.
3. A second observation from this **Titus** passage is this 'hope' is an imminent hope. It could take place at any time, because the rapture is not preceded by any prophetic event.
4. You would not know this if you heeded some of the so-called 'prophets' on YouTube, but they are wrong. We should not engage in date-setting.
  - a. There is a big difference between knowing that Jesus could return today and knowing that He will return today.
  - b. Jesus said, *"No one knows about that day or hour"* **(Cf. Matt. 24:36)**
  - c. It's that "He could come today" part that reveals the true heart condition of the mockers in **2 Pet. 3:4** when they ask, "Where is it?"

- d. It's easy to get frustrated with the world and wonder if anything is going to change, but part of "*Keeping yourselves in God's love*," part of standing firm against apostasy, and part of showing true faithfulness, is persevering in the hope of Christ's imminent return!

**B. Now let's look at 'the case for Christ's return.'**

**NOTE:** There are multiple texts in Scripture which relate to the Rapture indirectly (*like Jude 21*), but we'll briefly glance at three passages which deal forthrightly with the matter. We'll take a deeper look at these Scriptures next week:

1. **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (and surrounding passages in 1 Thessalonians)** - we won't read these passages now since we'll be exploring them much more next time.
2. But here in this passage, Paul's purpose in discussing the Rapture was to comfort and encourage the persecuted believers – not to alarm them.
3. The Rapture underscores God's mercy to believers because – again - it shows His mercy; it is **deliverance from judgment**. **NOTE:** Paul calls this judgement 'wrath,' and he makes his case:
  - a. In **1 Thessalonians 1:10** it says, this 'wrath' is '*coming*;' it is future.
  - b. Furthermore, this wrath is directly linked to '*waiting for His Son from heaven*.' It is much like the waiting in **Jude 21**; there is this overarching concept of a 'rescue.'
  - c. And in **1 Thessalonians 5:9**, we read that God has not destined or appointed the believer to this wrath.
  - d. **NOTE:** The 'wrath' mentioned in these two verses from **1 Thessalonians** point to future events. It's not a general term...
  - e. They are about divine judgments on the earth within a future prescribed period of time - - that is the Tribulation period.
  - f. And sandwiched within these passages in **1 Thessalonians**, Paul states how the mercy of God delivers believers from these upcoming judgments.

**IMPORTANT:** Paul's intent within this context is to comfort and encourage. He makes that clear. Now, if believers are expected to endure the intense tribulation judgments, it would be reasonable to expect specific Biblical prescriptions for enduring this trauma.

Paul would have been irresponsible and inconsistent in his effort to comfort believers if he failed to warn of the horrors they must endure prior to the return of Jesus Christ in the air.

4. Now, there are some specific events that accompany the Rapture:
  - a. Those believers who have previously died will return with Christ at this event.
  - b. Those who have already died will be 'raised into the air first' to receive their glorified bodies as Jesus also has.

- c. Those who are alive at the time of the Rapture will be next to be raised into the air. There is a sequence of events.
- d. Jesus comes down, but not all the way to earth. We meet Him in the air! In the clouds.
- e. This is in stark contrast to Christ's second advent when His feet are said to stand on the Mount of Olives (**Cf. Zech. 14:4**)
- f. I believe the Rapture will be a noisy and celebratory occasion. It's not a 'secret Rapture' as some people claim. It's very public and very visible and audible.
- g. There will be heard the loud command from Christ, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet call of God.
- h. I feel the Bible makes the case that the world will watch as believers ascend. All the Rapture types affirm this.

**5. Another passage which deals forthrightly with the Rapture is *John 14:1-3***

NOTE: At first glance, this text may not appear to be a 'Rapture passage,' but most scholars feel it is, and I agree.

NOTE: Furthermore, this passage shares several key words, phrases, or themes with **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** which we just looked at – and this further underscores this case:

- a. Both passages are intended to comfort, to ease distress of believers
- b. The return of Jesus is mentioned in both
- c. The idea of 'taking believers' or 'receiving believers' is in both
- d. In both passages, believers are taken to 'be with Christ' or 'meet Christ'
- e. And in both passages, believers will continue to remain with the Lord
- f. Specific to ***John 14:1-3***, however, these points should also be considered:
  - We will be taken to where Jesus is, the place He has prepared for us. Jesus will take believers to be in heaven.
  - This is not the same as when He physically returns a second time at the end of the Tribulation, and believers will live on earth with Him in the Millennial Kingdom.

**6. And then passage #3 is *1 Cor. 15:51-58***

NOTE: The emphasis here in this passage concerns the bodily resurrection of the dead. The time of this is the Rapture. Key points from this passage include:

- a. This is a 'mystery.' That does not mean it is something unclear, but it was previously unknown until Paul had it divinely revealed to him.
- b. This is not about a general future resurrection of the dead such as mentioned in the OT in ***Dan. 12:2***, but a specific future resurrection near the conclusion of the church age.



- c. Again, from this passage in **1 Corinthians**, we see not all will die. It speaks of those who have 'fallen asleep', and it speaks of those who have not. Same order of resurrection is noted here as in **1 Thessalonians**.
- d. (Getting ahead of myself here): But, to identify the last trumpet here with any of the trumpet judgments of the Tribulation contradicts the doctrine of imminency of the Rapture (NOTE: Paul expected the imminent Rapture)

**C. OK, we looked at 'the hope of Christ's return' and 'the case for Christ's return.' Let's quickly wrap up here with 'the effect of Christ's return'**

**NOTE:** The point is our theology should affect how we live. The promise of Christ's return (AKA, the Rapture) should have an effect on our lives and our choices.

**NOTE:** This circles back to the operative point in **Jude 21** in which we are instructed to '*keep ourselves in God's love.*' It's all about faithful living, views, and endurance.

There are several ways the truth of Jesus Christ's return should influence our choices:

1. We should be motivated to work with our time and opportunities
  - a. (**Cf. Luke 19:13** where the departing master instructs His servants to work until He returns)
2. But it's not just a 'work' thing. This same thought is expanded on in **1 Cor. 15:58** where Paul concludes the Rapture issue there by saying "*Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord.*"
  - a. The certainty of the Rapture is presented in Scripture as being a reason for service to Jesus Christ.
  - b. Christ's return is a Biblical motivation for devotion to '*the work of the Lord.*'
  - c. The Rapture is not a reason to step away from faithful service, but rather a reason to wholly immerse oneself in it.
  - d. Jesus Christ's return is not an irresponsible pajamas and rooftop situation. Rather, it is a call to action.
3. There is also the call to "*stand firm.*" When we are convinced of the blessed hope of the Rapture, it is a reason to be self-controlled, to be serene, and to be assured.
  - a. The depraved trends and events of the world should not unduly alarm us.
  - b. We've seen in many various lessons in this class that things are not going to get better and better. Things are going to get worse.
  - c. We're not going to be rolling out the red carpet for Jesus Christ. He's not waiting for us to get our act together so He can show up once more.
  - d. The reality is apostasy will continue to invade, and depravity will continue to grow. This is the clear position of the Bible.

- e. But it's because we know the truth, because we know our 'hope,' that we can live with certainty in a world that is uncertain.

**NEXT WEEK:** We'll do a deep dive into the Rapture: what exactly it is, and why we can know it is a pre-Tribulation event. After this little rabbit trail, we'll pick up ***Jude vs. 22*** where we are instructed to *'be merciful to those who doubt.'*