



JUDE: “The Acts of the Apostates”

Week 32: “Do Something About What You Know, Part 1”

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Instructor: Steve Schmutzer

Review:

- A. We have just completed a two-week mini study on the Pre-Tribulation Rapture.
- B. We did this to expand on Jude’s instruction in **vs. 21** to “*wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.*”
- C. The videos for those lessons are online. You can go to our YouTube Channel under ‘Solid Bread Community’ to listen to them.

- I. Now we begin **Jude 22**. The title of this lesson is. ‘**Do Something About What You Know.**’ This verse provides the next instruction Jude has for his readers.

- A. This next instruction continues to reinforce Jude’s instructions to believers during days of apostasy.
- B. He has spent much of the book warning about those who have willfully left the truth of God’s Word. His instructions are intended to keep believers faithful and upright.
- C. Before we look at this next instruction, let’s look back at the four we’ve already studied:

- 1. Build yourselves up in your most holy faith
- 2. Pray in the Holy Spirit
- 3. Keep yourselves in God’s love
- 4. Wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ

- D. Now here is the 5th one from **vs. 22**: It is, “*Be merciful to those who doubt.*” That is the whole verse; it’s pretty short!

- 1. There is debate among Greek scholars as to the true meaning here, and various translations reflect this discussion.
- 2. Most, like the ESV I have, state ‘mercy’ or ‘being merciful.’ However, a few like the KJV suggest ‘compassion’ as the operative term, and one or two focus on ‘kindness.’
- 3. Some older manuscripts introduce the idea of ‘convince’ in this verse.

- E. However, I feel any discussion about the instruction being ‘mercy’ or ‘compassion’ is less the issue than the second part which follows, “*....to those who doubt.*” That’s the emphasis here.

- 1. One cannot have true mercy without compassion, nor can one exercise compassion without showing mercy.
- 2. If those two terms are essentially twins, then let’s accept the term ‘mercy’ for our purposes and go from there...

- F. Now - loosely, we're going to approach this lesson and the next one with the following outline: The DOUBTERS, The DESPERATE, and The DEFILED. These three 'D' words describe three different groups of people. This basic outline will help us organize our thoughts:
1. **The first thing I want you to notice about vs 22 is the change in focus. It's here we need to consider that first group of people: the DOUBTERS.**
 2. The prior four instructions that begin in **vs. 20** and conclude in **vs. 21** are all focused on the first person (on 'you,' and not on 'others').
 - a. Jude's target in those previous four instructions are his readers – you and I!
 3. But the instruction in **vs. 22** shifts to a focus on individuals beyond you, to those who are around us. It's not about Jude's readers anymore.
 - a. Jude is essentially saying we have a job to do, and that job is rescuing others.... ***"from the fire" (note vs. 23).***
 - You and I should be thankful that we ourselves have been saved from the fire, but that's not enough. Our passion should be to rescue others from the fire too.
 - This shows we are living with real purpose, with real meaning, and with real conformity to Scripture.
 - b. I believe that some well-meaning people are focused on the instruction of **vs. 22** while ignoring (or at least 'diluting') the prior instructions of **vss 20-21**.
 - For example, some people camp on the importance of the Gospel, but they diminish - or even mock - the details of the Lord Second Coming. According to Jude and Peter, that's a danger sign.
 - Some people emphasize their desire to 'spread the Good News' to all nations, but they have not personally and sufficiently *'built themselves up in their most holy faith'* first. That's a problem.
 - Some people are consumed with the 'urgency to reach the lost' but they themselves have abandoned the importance of 'praying in the Holy Spirit.' That's being unprepared.
 4. I think you get the point. The Bible teaches us that spiritual development is a process, and foundations are important. A solid faith is one that is built securely.
 - a. Just as *"Summer soldiers don't do well in winter conditions,"* so one who is unprepared or immature in their personal faith is likely to be ineffective in their ability to look out for others.
 - b. We have a lot of summer soldiers out there in ministry today, and many of them are reducing the truth instead of reinforcing the truth.
 - c. According to passages like **2 Timothy 2:15**, Bible study is very important. It's a well-known verse which reads:

"Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

- d. But this command in **2 Timothy** is NOT to become proficient in isolation. This is not a suggestion that we should quarantine ourselves, wear robes, keep silent, and make craft beer.
- e. Being an approved workman involves not just proper study, but it requires subsequent action. That action is the bigger picture.
- f. Don't misunderstand me. There is a HUGE need in the church today to correctly handle The Bible. It is urgent that we return to proper study, contemplation, and prayer. This is the church's biggest need if you ask me.
- g. But the CONTEXT of **2 Timothy 2:15** is one of interaction with others. In **vs 14** before it and **vs 16** after it, it's obvious we are not intended to exist in a silo.
- h. Paul makes the point in **2 Tim. 2:15** that our personal study is intended to have an interpersonal impact. This shares some parallels with the 'convince' element I mentioned before.
- i. The point is: Becoming proficient in handling truth should result in a positive impact on those around you.
- j. Let me say that another way, using the things we've learned in **Jude**: When we *"build ourselves up in our most holy faith"* (**Jude 20**), it should result in the capacity to *"Be merciful to those who doubt..."* (**Jude 22**).

II. **The second thing I want you to notice is the requirement of Jude 22: to be "merciful."**

A. This action of being merciful is very important, and it's easy to miss what Jude is drawing our attention to:

1. The focus is not on the false teachers anymore, but on those individuals these false teachers are impacting. We need to be merciful to this group.

- a. Keep in mind here, Jude's language is setting up a contrast.
- b. Jude's previous expressions about false teachers are not merciful. They are not gentle.
 - In **vs. 4**, he calls them '*godless men*,' and in **vs. 8**, he calls them '*dreamers*' because they are impractical and unrealistic.
 - In **vs. 10**, Jude calls these apostates '*unreasoning animals*,' and so he adds in **vs. 11**, '*Woe to them!*'
 - In **vs. 16**, Jude says they are '*men who follow evil desires*,' in **vs. 18** he calls them '*scoffers*,' and in **vs. 19**, Jude identifies false teachers as '*men who divide you*.'
 - So, let's get one thing straight here: Jude has no kind words, no merciful words, and no compassion for false teachers.
 - As we've seen in our study in Jude, apostates WILLFULLY distort, dilute, deride, and dismiss the truth of God's Word.
- c. It's not that the false teachers and apostates do not also need mercy. Rather, it is Jude's intent to show THEY are the problem. However, those they impact are a different matter. These folk need some genuine understanding.
- d. This is why we're talking about the DOUBTERS. This group is *"those who doubt."*

- They are those who personal faith is wavering....
 - Those who have many questions and are getting few answers....
 - Those who are wilting under the assault, arrogance, and misdirection of false teachers....
 - Those who are just as weak in their faith after Year 5 of sitting under a poor pastor as they were after Year 1 of sitting under the same leader....
 - Those who are not strong enough on their own to discern truth from fiction....
 - Those who believe the programs, methods, and cultural constructs of the modern church are every bit as Biblical as the doctrine of the Trinity....
 - Those who don't really know when their leaders are bending the boundaries and standards of God's Word to suit personal or political ideals, and so on.
 - And I've only scratched the surface. These are the DOUBTERS. They are confused, lost, and unsure. It's a VERY large group, and Jude says they need our help!
- e. **Being merciful means: we need to show compassion.** This is, in fact, one of the words a few translations choose to use in this verse instead of mercy.
QUESTION: Why is compassion such a key part of mercy?
- It sees the true condition of others: helplessness, misdirection, doubt, vulnerability, etc. and it responds to these people with care, concern, compassion, and genuine love.
 - Compassion sees the big picture. It understands the larger view that some are under the spell and influence of others and cannot get out from under it on their own.
 - Here's what compassion does not do: It does not express anger, rage, division, judgment, criticism, or godlessness.
 - Because compassion and kindness is derived from the control of the Holy Spirit, it does not show any self-righteousness, arrogance, pride, or self-serving intent.
- f. **Being merciful also suggests patience.** Carrying out the ministry or work of Jesus Christ (in all respects) requires great patience and great endurance.
- Few positive things happen immediately. Usually work, sacrifice, and time is needed, and these efforts require faithful patience.
 - Patience is one of the 'fruits of the Spirit' according to **Galatians 5:22**, which in turn means dealing with DOUBTERS is enabled by God's control and by His leading.

NOTE: This idea of patience circles back to the operative point here...

B. We need to recognize, and we need to remind ourselves, that we are reaching out to those "...who doubt."

NOTE: This is why the primary focus of **vs 22** is NOT on false teachers. Jude denounces the false teachers, and he says their choices and activities are deliberate in **vs. 4**.

1. Jude describes these apostates as those “....*who suffer the punishment of eternal fire*” in **Jude 7**.
2. Again, this underscores the willful intent of false teachers rather than putting them with the group that doubts.
3. And so we need to remind ourselves of the condition of those we need to reach out to.
- C. As I said before, there are a great many good, sincere folks who find themselves dealing with doubt.
 1. Our goal, according to Jude, is not to add to their dilemma of doubt.
 2. Our goal needs to help them properly deal with their doubt.
- D. Face it, there are honest doubters of the Word of God.
 1. We should remember the example of Jesus as he effectively dealt with Thomas.
 2. He was compassionate and understanding with Thomas. He did not ‘talk down’ to Thomas, but Jesus met Thomas at his level of doubt.
- E. Some people who want to believe the Word of God have problems doing so because:
 1. They have been taught a wrong view.
 2. They have been persuaded by the bad examples of others.
 3. They have been corrupted and misled by false teachers.
 4. All these things are common in many churches today.

NOTE: While we can certainly reach out with mercy to willful apostates, I think our next verse has better pointers for that. Meantime, I feel **vs. 22** is a focus on those who have been lulled or lured into doubt by false teachers.

- III. Having mentioned the next verse, let’s go there. Let’s move on to **vs. 23**, and it’s here we need to wrap our minds around the next instruction from Jude and the second group of people. These are the DESPERATE. Let me take a running start at unpacking **vs. 23** by giving us all a sobering reality check. I’ll be blunt.
 - A. I believe most Christian denominations and most churches today – (and many people in those very churches!) - have departed from true Biblical faith.
 - B. They have abandoned true Christianity, one way or another. Here’s the BIG problem: They are happy in that place. And that’s why they are DESPERATE. This word describes their true condition.
 - C. I’ll present arguments for my views in a moment, but let’s see how the Word of God sheds light on what I just said (***Cf. Revelation 3:14-22 – turn there and let your eyes go over that text***).
 1. This letter to the church at Laodicea is one of the 7 letters to 7 churches outlined in **Revelation, chapters 2-3**.
 2. These were 7 literal churches at the time when John wrote **Revelation**. He wrote to these churches to instruct them as God directed him to do.
 - a. So, the first intent was to correspond with those literal churches and address the needs they each had then.

- b. However, the second intent of these 7 letters, when seen within the prophetic context of **Revelation**, is to reveal the different types of churches that have defined all of history.
 - c. They represent the various kinds of churches that have existed since the start of the church age, AND they represent a larger trend or flow within church history.
- 3. Now, I believe the church today, particularly the sort that typifies most churches in America and other western cultures, is represented best by the Laodicean church.
- 4. This is the last of the 7. It represents the greater church right before the point the Lord calls John to “...come up here...” in **Revelation 4:1**.
- 5. This is an event which many scholars feel is meant to illustrate The Rapture. That is my belief too.
- 6. Furthermore, there are keys in **Revelation 3:14-22** to identifying The Laodicean church, and these fit precisely what we see today in our churches.
- 7. This church is in a precarious, a dangerous, a DESPERATE spot because she is not really the Bride of Christ that she thinks she is. Instead, she:
 - a. ...is spiritually blind, but she thinks she has vision. She refuses to be told she has the problems she has. **She does not see that she does not see.**
 - b.is lukewarm, but she thinks she’s on fire for God. In fact she says that a lot. **This church pats herself on the back for things God cares little about.**
 - c.is rich. And she is – but by worldly measures! **However, by God’s measures, she is completely broke, destitute, and bankrupt.**
 - d.is proud. She celebrates her achievements, her programs, and her numbers. She parades her ‘good works.’ **But God calls this church ‘pitiful.’**
 - e.believes she is poised, professional, and beautiful. Her goal is to play by the world’s standards to reach the world by their standards. That’s not the Biblical model. **She thinks she’s attractive and inviting, but God calls this church ‘naked and wretched.’**
 - f. ...has taken the full truth of God and His Word out of the picture. Partial truths and feel-good messages have replaced the convicting truth of the Gospel. In **Revelation 14:6-7**, ‘the eternal Gospel’ is the clear proclamation of the entire Word of God, from God as Creator to God as returning Judge!
 - g. The result of all this is Jesus Christ is on the outside of this church. He’s knocking on the door in **vs. 20**, and He’s trying to get back in.

BUT NOTE: In this passage about the Laodicean church, Jesus Christ has reassurances for the individual believer, NOT for the corporate church!

- 8. There are three facts which are crystal clear if you study the Laodicean Church and allow the Holy Spirit speak to you:
 - a. Laodicea is the church type that is identified with this generation,
 - b. in contrast to the other six churches, the Laodicean Church is not commended, and...

- c. Jesus is coming soon.
- 9. It's that third fact that also argues for today's greater church being The Laodicean Church.
 - a. Jesus asked in **Luke 18:8**, "*When the Son of man comes, will He find faith on the earth?*"
 - b. And in **Matthew 24:12**, where Jesus was speaking about the time just before His return, He said, "*Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall grow cold.*"
 - c. Various other passages make the same point. It is clear from Scripture that the times just preceding Christ's return are going to be qualified in part by a diluted, cold, waning, and ineffective faith.
- 10. So while many churches today are singing about a new generation rising up in selfless faith, or are talking about revival, and are even praying for another great reawakening, it is my opinion that these views do not account for the prophetic teachings of Scripture.
- 11. A great '*apostasy*,' a great '*falling away*' is coming as we've learned in **2 Thessalonians 2:3**, and we are warming up for it right now.
- 12. While pockets of remarkable individual and collective faith will be found here and there, rampant and increasing apostasy instead will be the standard.

NOTE: Let's try to bring all this into focus with where we are in this study in Jude. At this juncture, this close to the end of this book, we need to remind ourselves of the nature of the apostate church, and of the apostate individual. THIS IS JUDE'S FOCUS)

I believe the Scriptures give us three characteristics which conform to the things we've studied in Jude, and it's these characteristics that render this second group as DESPERATE:

D. First, the apostate church will give up accurate and solid Biblical teaching.

- 1. **(Cf. Timothy 4:3-4)** "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lust shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*"
- 2. One characteristic of this DESPERATE group is the clear, convicting, and cutting truth of the entire Word of God will be shelved.
- 3. Instead, socially-acceptable, seeker-friendly, watered-down devotionals – sprinkled with a few Bible-sounding terms and phrases – will be promoted which are intended to "attract" the lost.
- 4. It's not that these sorts of themes are untrue in and of themselves – but they are LUKEWARM! They are milk and not meat.

E. Second, the apostate church will be apathetic, ineffective, and indifferent as measured by God's standards in Revelation 3:14-20. This is the passage concerning the Laodicean church.

1. As I said, this church will not see their true condition. It will be hostile to anyone and anything that causes them to take an honest look in the mirror.
2. It will promote leaders who are not properly gifted, who are shallow, who 'play the game' well, and who say the things and teach the things to keep everything the way it is.
3. This sort of church will emphasize themes of money, personal achievement, and how we can succeed and grow in the Christian life.
4. But nothing is said that is confrontational. Nothing is said that confronts the sin of 'alternative lifestyles.' Nothing is said that might be deemed offensive or politically incorrect.
5. The church is now so inclined towards 'Christiann culture' that it has forgotten what it means to be Christlike.
6. Jesus didn't conform to culturally-acceptable standards of His day – HE CHALLENGED THEM AND HE CHANGED THEM.
7. The religious leaders of His day hated Him for the way in which He exposed their true apostate nature, and I strongly suspect it would be the same way today!

F. Then third, the apostate church will dilute and mock Bible prophecy.

1. Specifically, the apostate church diminishes and mocks the message and themes surrounding Jesus's Second Coming (**Cf. 2 Peter 3:3-4**).
2. A KEY LITMUS TEST: A mark of the apostate church is to ignore nearly 1/3 of the Bible which is fulfilled and unfulfilled prophecy.
3. We are told instead that we need to focus on Jesus. This is a double standard!
4. **Revelation 19:10** states *"The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."* Let me translate: The accurate teaching of prophecy is designed to reveal the fullness of Jesus! It's about focusing on Jesus.

IV. Let's quickly review;

- A. There is a shift seen in **vss 22 and 23 of Jude**. Jude moves from **how to be** in times of apostasy to **what to do**. As the title of this lesson says, we need to 'Do Something About What We Know.'
- B. There is a responsibility to put into action the things which we have learned and which we understand.
- C. HERE IS SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT: Jude makes a connection here that we cannot overlook. The corruption and self-deception of the false teachers leads to the corruption and self-deception of their followers. **There is a direct relationship!**
 1. Jude is basically telling his reader, *"The false teachers are already condemned (ex: vss. 10, 11, 13), but you can help their followers from becoming condemned too, and you need to do this."*
- D. We've looked at a specific population of the followers of false teachers. They are called in **vs. 22** *"....those who doubt,"* and Jude's instructions in dealing with them are to **"Be merciful..."**

NOTE: But now, things are different. We're talking about the DESPERATE, and we have an action point in **Jude 23**. For DOUBTERS we are to show mercy, but for the DESPERATE, we need to *"...snatch (them) from the fire and save them."*

The condition of the DESPERATE cannot be overstated. I want to return to the Laodicean church to make a few rather strong points here as I wind down this lesson (NOTE: Some of you are going to be uncomfortable with some of the things I'm about to say, but I'll say them anyways).

E. #1: There is no benefit to institutionalized religion.

1. This Laodicean church was an institutional icon. It had all the proper trappings as seen from the outside: definition, wealth, no apparent needs, notoriety, accomplishments (deeds), the right numbers, etc.
2. But in truth – they had absolutely nothing! When we become infatuated with the trappings of Christian culture rather than Christlikeness, we too run the risk of becoming *'wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked.'*
3. You see, it's not about RELIGION. It's about a RELATIONSHIP. It's not about RITUALS; it's about RIGHTEOUSNESS.
4. Let me be very clear: Religion damns the soul! Religion requires conformity and not Biblical unity. Religion deceives. Religion misses the point!
5. Religion is going to waltz right into the Tribulation patting itself on the back as it faces God's judgment!
6. We are not called to be RELIGIOUS; we are called to be RIGHTEOUS! The Pharisees were devoutly religious, but they were not righteous. There is a huge difference. It's so important that we get this correct!
7. *"Snatching others from the fire"* may involve confronting and correcting the comforts that many feel within institutionalized religion.
 - a. **Let me be very clear:** A large building, a big budget, a worship band, Children's church, Youth Groups, AWANA, suits and ties, Sunday School, gluten-free communion wafers, special music, and so on.
 - b. **NONE** of these things are prescribed in the Bible for the church. ALL of them, in one way or another, have come to be part of institutionalized religion more than anything else.
 - c. Challenging the status quo is not likely to earn personal rewards or respect. Most people don't like to be told they are wrong. Most people do not want to re-evaluate the things they most want to believe about themselves.

F. #2: The love Jesus has for us carries a consequence (Cf. Revelation 3:19).

1. The path of correction is rebuke. This training in righteousness involves discipline. None of this is easy.
2. Jesus' rebuke is not of hostility, but it's a display of His love. *"The Lord disciplines those he loves"* (Cf. **Hebrews 12:6**).
3. Seen through the lens of Scripture, there is a desired response or outcome to God's correction, and that is change and **true repentance**.

4. It's the same thing when we reach out to the DESPERATE. It is also a great demonstration of love and mercy.
5. When we care for others despite the personal consequences that care may elicit, we are showing we are putting other's needs and interests above our own.

G. (#3, and here's an essential point to make): It is a deliberate – and often awkward - action to “snatch others from the fire.”

1. There is nothing graceful about it. It is dramatic, it is distressing, and it can be dangerous.
2. **It means we must show them the fire.** QUOTE: “Most people do not change because they see the light; they change because they feel the heat.”
3. The famed American theologian, Jonathan Edwards, preached a famous sermon in the 1740's, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.”
4. It's not the sort of title which most pastors would preach today, but it WAS highly effective. Many people were saved because they were responsibly shown the fires of Hell.
5. Because those whose hearts are in rebellion will never see the need for a Savior on their own, they must receive a strong message.
6. They must be confronted without fear or flinching, and they must be made accountable for their choices. This is ‘*snatching them from the fire.*’
7. False teachers teach others to be false. Sometimes it is a desperate truth that is delivered desperately that will be the only means to ‘*snatch them from the fire.*’

H. And then lastly, #4, don't give up!

- This is not an obvious point in **Jude 23** or in **Revelation 3:14-21**, but it is an apparent one all the same.
- Jude does not call us to back down, but to stay in the fight. He tells us to ‘*contend for the faith*’ in **vs. 3**.
- John shows how Christ stays at the door and continues to knock. There is never a point of quitting.
- **Jesus is passionate about the individual, and we should be too!** This is seen in Jude telling us to “*save others.*” And we see Jesus seeking to fellowship with any person who hears His voice.
- We must not give up trying to reach the lost.

NEXT WEEK: We're going to look at the third group of people, and that is the DEFILED. We will see why this is the most dangerous group that we are called to reach out to.