



World Christian Fellowship

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Apostates of Jews

Jude 1:4-7, *For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. ⁶And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; ⁷as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*

The truth war.

V 3, *“Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.*

Jude, who was the half-brother of our Lord Jesus and the brother of James, wrote this epistle. Having changed his original intention, appealing to us to contend earnestly for the Christian faith, the truth.

This is calling us to battle.

The truth is under attack by those who hate it and desire to undermine it or assault it.

The most devastating attacks, however, that come on the truth come from those who claim to love and believe it.

The devastating attacks come from those who say they believe it, are attached to it, and assault it.

Defending the truth against those who attack from the inside is very difficult.

Defending the truth against those who claim to be the true teachers of God's truth takes great discernment and endurance.

Contemporary Christianity lacks this.

We are not very good today at guarding the truth.

1 Timothy 6:20, *O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—*

2 Timothy 1:14, *That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.*

2 Timothy 2:2, *And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

You received a trust of truth. A truth trust and you have the responsibility to guard it and to pass it to the next generation.

Acts 20:29-31, *For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.³⁰ Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.³¹ Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.*

The long war on the truth, of course, began in the garden when Satan deceived Eve into believing that he was the one who told the truth, not God.

It has gone relentlessly since then.

Jude, our Lord's half-brother, wrote this epistle to call us to engage ourselves in the protection of the truth against those who are on the inside.

V 4, *“Certain persons have crept in unnoticed.”*

V 12, *“These men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts. They feast with you.”*

They are inside the Church.

They are at the Lord's Table, at the love feast.

They have crept in.

The most dangerous part of the battle goes on inside the Church against apostates who call themselves Christians but are without the Holy Spirit and without salvation.

So, Jude writes to help us in the battle, and he introduces the apostates to us.

The apostates from three sides.

Presence, their prediction, and their portrayal.

V 4, *“For certain persons have crept in unnoticed.”*

The Greek word here is only used here in the New Testament.

It's one of those words that doesn't appear anywhere else.

It has the idea of sneaking in. It is used outside the Bible, in some secular Greek uses, to describe the cunning cleverness of

a lawyer who sneaks into the minds of the jury or the judge, to corrupt their clear thinking.

It is also used of a criminal who is exiled, who disguises himself, after a period of time, and sneaks back into the country from which he was exiled. It basically means to sneak in secretly with an evil intent.

2 Peter 2:1-2, *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. ²And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.*

There are lots of false teachers, outside the Church, who make no secret about the fact that they hate Christianity. They teach some lie, and some deception. They are rather readily recognizable because they don't make any claim to belong to the Church.

The ones that are far more dangerous are the counterfeits. They sneak in unnoticed. They slip in by the side door.

- They get in the Church.
- They get into the books,
- They get into the radio,

- They get into the television,
- They get into the seminaries,
- They get into the colleges, and
- They get into the pulpits.

They were there in Jude's day, and they are still around.
Satan always sows his tares among the wheat. False brethren.

Notice they are called certain persons.
It's a rather vague description.
We don't know specifically who they were.

It's not important for us to know what heresy existed at that time. They were apostates. We don't know exactly the full range of the deviation of their teaching but calling them "certain persons".

The Christian Church first began to move out in the world.
There were adverse powers outside ready to crush the Church.

Jesus had warned them.

- They will arrest you.
- They will take you to court.
- They will put you in prison.
- They will kill you.

There were haters of the truth who wanted to crush the Church. But as time went on, the enemy went inside, trying to eat the Church up on the inside.

They cause people to turn aside from the truth. They cause people to be corrupted. They cause the fellowship of the faithful to be lost.

Our Lord Jesus prophesied about this.

Matthew 7:15, *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.*

They would come wearing the garment of a prophet. Prophets wore wool garments and traditionally were viewed that way.

There would be apostasy in the Church.

Paul warned of it in Acts 20.

The Corinthian church was infiltrated by apostates.

The Galatians were infiltrated by apostates.

The Colossians were infiltrated by apostates.

The letters that John wrote 1, 2, and 3 indicate that the recipients of those letters were infiltrated by apostates.

Certainly, those to whom Jude writes are going to be experiencing the same thing.

So, Jesus warned about it.

Peter warned about it.

John warned about it.

Paul warned about it.

Jude says, "It's here."

It was just some certain persons. They don't need to be defined. It isn't what they teach that really matters, it's what they attack mainly the truth.

Jude may have known who they were and may have known what it was that they taught, but he doesn't say, except he gives us some pretty good hints that are somewhat universal.

So, this then is the first thing to understand about apostasy. Apostates penetrate. They sneak in, and they come into the Church from which they do their great damage.

The Church is always going to have them in their midst. There never will be a field sowed by the Lord and there will always be tares.

Why don't you just ease up?

We all believe in the same Jesus.

But we don't, and we must fight for the true faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

V 4, *"Those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation."*

Immediately after identifying apostates, Jude says, “Their end has been predicted. They were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation.

Their judgment was pre-programmed.

It was written out in advance.

They were ordained by God for nothing but judgment!

There’s no need in trying to save them or rescue them.

They are deadly dangerous.

They are children of destruction, sons of wrath, marked out for judgment. It is already predetermined their end.

V 14-15, *Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints,¹⁵ to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”*

They are ungodly,

They are ordained to condemnation, and

They were ordained to condemnation long ago, even seven generations from Adam.

Enoch gave this prophesy.

This is nothing new. This is all the way back in the patriarchal period, when it was established what the end of these people will be.

Jude is saying that the word concerning their destiny was made in the past and still is full authority and effect right now. Their doom has been predicted from long ago, from Enoch's time on to Peter who wrote about it, Jesus spoke of it, and now Jude himself.

Already marked out for this condemnation.

Listen to what Peter says,

2 Peter 2:3-6, *By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. ⁴For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; ⁵and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; ⁶and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly;*

If God did all that to those who turned away from the truth, you can be sure He is going to keep His pledge to the apostates throughout all of history.

Their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not sleeping.

Isaiah wrote about the damnation of apostates, Isaiah 8, 9, and 47.

Jeremiah wrote about the damnation of apostates.

Hosea 9,

Zephaniah 3:1 to 8, the prophet spoke of this judgment.

Jude calling Christians don't hesitate to engage in an assault on them, because they have already been ordained to condemnation.

When you attack them then you are doing the work of God. You are doing the work of God. They are already ordained for condemnation.

Jude describes them as ungodly persons.

They are godless.

They may claim to belong to God, to represent God, to speak for God. However, they are ungodly.

Jude introduces us to three fronts upon which we can see their ungodliness made manifest.

- Character,
- Conduct, and
- Creed.

They are characterized as ungodly as to their character.

They are perverters of grace as to their conduct.

They are deniers of Christ as to their creed.

“They turn the grace of God into licentiousness.”

They want to live in God’s free grace and forgiveness, but they use it as a license to sin because they have really never embraced salvation in Jesus Christ.

They leave the truth.

They reject the truth.

They think the grace of God is an excuse for blatant immorality.

Most men and women when they sin, seek concealment, try to hide their sin. They have enough conscience, at least, to have some feelings of shame. They have enough respect for common decency and enough desire for a good reputation not to wish to be found out.

We meet the apostates.

Remember, they are not on the outside but inside.
Be discerning.

Look for those who have a pure understanding of who Jesus Christ is, a biblical understanding of the gospel and who have demonstrably humble, broken, bowing, bending live of submission and humility before the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Look for those who live cautious lives of righteousness and purity.

Look for those who are characterized as worshipers who fear God above all and desire to honour and to reverence Him.

Titus 1:16, *They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.*

No wonder Jude was concerned.

We would be concerned, too, if we had responsibility for the Church!

We do!!

The Church today is living testimony to the justification of his concern. It just seems to me that it never, ever ends. You just get rid of one heresy and another one comes.

You can't even keep up with them. We are always in the battle. Satan's always twisting and perverting and altering and bringing some new deception. But learn to be discerning, to see their character, to see their conduct, to see their creed, and to fight for the truth against that.

The aspect of judgment.

V 5-7, *But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. ⁶And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; ⁷as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*

Three past judgments God has made on apostates.

1. Apostate of Jews
2. Apostate of Angels
3. Apostate of Gentiles

V 5, apostate Jews.

V 6, apostate angels.

V 7, apostate Gentiles.

This passage is somewhat parallel to the passage I read you in **2 Peter 2:4-8** that mentions God's judgment there on angels, on the people alive at the time of the flood, and on Sodom and Gomorrah.

Jude uses two of these. He talks about the angels and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and he talks about the Jews instead of the people in the flood.

But here are three illustrations as examples of God's judgment on apostasy.

We know the stories well.

Jude's readers knew the story well because they obviously knew the Old Testament.

Three illustrations.

Number one:

V 5, But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

Because it was very basic in the Old Testament. The story of Israel in the wilderness was the most told story of all stories ever told by Jews.

Why?

Because it illustrated God's redeeming love.

The greatest story of the whole Old Testament was the story of God redeeming Israel out of Egypt.

Of course, became symbolized and memorialized in the Passover. Every year, when it came to Passover, they were reminded of this great exodus, this great deliverance.

That is really the primary story of the Old Testament.

The apostasy of a nation of people whom God had miraculously delivered. That is the most dominating story of the Old Testament. They all knew it.

The Lord miraculously delivered a people out of the land of Egypt.

It's an incredible story of God's deliverance in the exodus.

How God brought the terrible plagues described in the book of Exodus, and God lead them out through a miraculous series of these miracles and led them to the sea and opened the sea and across they went. The sea closed, and the Lord led them to the place called Kadesh Barnea to enter into the land of promise, and all that God had ever promised to them was lying at their feet, as it were, and yet a terrible thing happens.

They send spies into the land, you can read the story in the book of Numbers, particularly in chapters 13 and 14. God's mighty hand has delivered Israel from Egypt. He is guided

them safely across the desert to the borders of Canaan, the Promised Land. They are at the door of Canaan, Kadesh Barnea, the spies go into the land, and the spies come back and say, "They are too big. We are just grasshoppers, and they are giants," except for Joshua and Caleb, who trusted the Lord.

Numbers chapter 13 and 14, this horrible thing happens. The people come to Moses, and they say, "Why don't you take us back to Egypt. That would have been better. You have brought us here, were all going to go into the land and die, and it's going to be the end of everything."

They had a terrible defeatist attitude, didn't have trust in God, didn't believe in the power of God, the purposes of God.

They didn't believe in God.

They were an apostate people.

They had seen the power of God.

You look at your own life and wonder whether if you had seen God, bring all the plagues, and if you had seen God destroy the whole Egyptian army in a body of water that you had just walked through on dry land, with the water up on both sides like a wall, you would tend to think there was a God.

Not long after that, would you have the same problem as they had, standing on the brink of the Promised Land?

Only if you didn't really, in your heart, believe in God.

Only if you had some other explanation or if your faith was woefully shallow.

So, the people rejected the report. God judged them with really a tragic judgment. It's one of the saddest times in the Old Testament history of Israel.

Numbers 14:1-4, *So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. ²And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! ³Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" ⁴So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."*

Numbers 14:20-22, *Then the Lord said: "I have pardoned, according to your word; ²¹but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord— ²²because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice,*

I am not going to kill them all in one spot right here, but I will tell you this, they are never going into that Promised Land. Never.

Numbers 14:27-35, *“How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. ²⁸Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says the Lord, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: ²⁹The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. ³⁰Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. ³¹But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. ³²But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. ³³And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. ³⁴According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. ³⁵I the Lord have spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.’ ”*

This is what Jude’s referring to.

1. When the Israelites are trapped between Pharaoh’s army behind them and the Red Sea in front of them,

they cry out to the Lord and complain to Moses, saying, “Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have led us out into this wilderness to die? Didn’t we tell you when we were in Egypt to leave us alone so that we could continue serving the Egyptians? It would have been better for us to have died back there than to die here.” **(Exodus 14:10-12)**

2. After the Israelites have been in the Wilderness of Shur for three days without finding water, they come to Marah. There is water in Marah, but it is so bitter no one can drink it. So, the people complain against Moses again. **(Exodus 15:22-24)**
3. On day 15 of the second month after their departure from Egypt, the Israelites grow hungry and complain against Moses and Aaron, saying, “Oh, that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by pots of meat and ate bread to the full. Now you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill us all with hunger.” **(Exodus 16:1-3)**
4. When God starts sending the Israelites manna to eat every morning, Moses warns them against trying to save some of their daily portion and eat it the following day. Despite the warning, however, some of them try it and learn that the manna breeds worms and starts stinking if left overnight. **(Exodus 16:11-20)**
5. Also concerning the gathering of the manna, Moses tells them that they should gather twice as much as

usual the morning before each Sabbath morning because God won't send the manna on the Sabbath. Still, even though the Sabbath is to be a day of rest, some of the Israelites go out to gather manna on the first Sabbath morning following that command. Of course, they find none. (**Exodus 16:25-30**)

6. When the Israelites come to Rephidim, they complain because there is no water to drink. They ask Moses, "Why have you brought us out of Egypt? Was it to kill us, our children, and our livestock with thirst?" Their complaints are serious enough for Moses to think they are going to stone him. (**Exodus 17:1-4**)
7. When the Israelites are encamped at the base of Mount Sinai, Moses goes up into the mountain to be alone with God and receive revelation. Moses is gone so long, 40 days, that the people figure he is never going to return. So, they, with the help of Aaron, create a golden calf to serve as their new god. They worship it and offer sacrifices unto it. (**Exodus 32:1-6**)
8. Three days after their departure from Mount Sinai, the Israelites complain again. The Bible doesn't tell us precisely what they complain about on this occasion, but the complaints are infuriating enough to God to cause Him to burn some of the people to death with fire. (**Numbers 11:1-3**)
9. Shortly after the deaths by fire, the Israelites complain again about the food situation. This time they are tired

of eating the manna and long for the fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic of Egypt. (**Numbers 11:4-34**)

10. When Israel's 12 spies return from studying the land of Canaan, they tell the people that Canaan is a land of giants that devours those who try to inhabit it. This causes the people to complain against Moses and Aaron, saying, "If only we had died in Egypt or in the wilderness. Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword and watch our wives and children become victims? Wouldn't it be better if we all just returned to Egypt?" Then the people start making plans to select a new leader, one who will lead them back to Egypt. (**Numbers 14:1-4**)

Back to Jude.

After saving the people out of the land of Egypt, He subsequently destroyed those who didn't believe.

This is an illustration of the fate of those who having been exposed to the power and the truth of God fail to believe. God is going to condemn and judge and destroy apostates.

Hebrews chapter 3 is kind of a reminder of this, when they were in the wilderness.

Hebrews 3:7-11, *Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, ⁸Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, ⁹Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. ¹⁰Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.' ¹¹So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'"*

Psalm 95, which rehearses again in poem form the terrible judgment of God on unbelief.

Hebrews 3:12, *Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;*

There were some people in this congregation to whom the epistle of Hebrews is written. Some people in the congregation who had heard the truth, known the truth, understood the truth. They were right up to the edge of believing the truth, and they wouldn't come all the way to faith.

The writer of Hebrews says, "You are just like those people in the wilderness who came all the way up to the edge of Canaan and, by unbelief, died in the wilderness. Don't be like them."

Hebrews 3:13, *but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

Don't harden our hearts.

Hebrews 4:1-3, *Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. ²For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. ³For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,' " although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*

Hebrews 4:5, *and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest."*

The writer of Hebrews is drawing off this illustration.

There are always those people who come toward Christianity.

They get involved in Christianity.

They identify with Christianity.

They understand, to some degree, but they never make a commitment to Christ.

They move back in unbelief.

That's apostasy.

It is falling away from the edge of the faith.

Many of these people stay in the Church. It was these kinds of people who corrupted all the people of Israel by sowing the seeds of unbelief. God brought this terrible judgment down on the heads of those people.

Hebrews 3:17-19, *Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? ¹⁹So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

Apostates never really believe.

They come close, and they reject the truth, but they hang around to become the tools of Satan.

Why do they do that?

Because they are in Satan's control.

Because they see a path to money and power.

They were driven by filthy profit.

Jude here warns apostates, "Your privileges, if you have been exposed to the gospel, are great."

If you have been brought all the way to the edge of salvation, rest. If you have had the favour of knowing the truth, a great

favour. Most of the people in the world, in human history, have not known the gospel truth.

If you have come all the way to the knowledge and the hearing of that truth and had it confirmed to you, and you fall away, you are in the direst of conditions.

Hebrews 10:26-29, *For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. ²⁸Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?*

Why do people come to the edge and fall away?

Persecution.

Like the seed that went into the ground and when the sun came out and tribulation came, it died.

The influence of false teachers, it sucked them away.

Temptation and the deceitfulness of riches and the love of the things of this world.

For whatever reason, they fall away, and they therefore fall into the direst condition of judgment. This will be their end.

Conclusion:

We have learned to expect the presence of apostates in the Church. Not necessarily in this church, and not necessarily in your Sunday school class, but in the church in general.

We have learned to expect not only their presence, but we have learned to expect that they will be devious and subtle and try to hide themselves so that they are not readily discovered.

How do you contend for the faith?

Be true to the Scripture.

Know your Bible and be faithful to it.

Support faithful pastors and teachers who honour the truth without compromise.

Give unflinching witness to the truth of God's Word.

Live it and proclaim it.

Do everything you can to make possible the training of more faithful warriors for the truth.

We are like Nehemiah's people.

We are building with one hand, and we are holding a sword in the other!

That is how we go through our Christian life, fighting a war on the one hand, and edifying the Church on the other.