

Character of the Apostates:

What are the basics of communication?

Choice of words, timing, tone, facial expression, non-verbal language, and the response of hearers. All we have from Scripture is what the Bible tells us – the words. We are reading from a translation, from a culture different from ours, and both thousands of years old. These factors make Bible study difficult, and apart from the Holy Spirit we wouldn't get it. What's missing from Jude's letter is the way he spoke – as a slave of Jesus Christ – to the called, to the beloved in God the Father, who are kept for Jesus Christ.

Jude wrote to precious people, from a heart of compassion and grace.

He wrote to warn them of the dangers that were coming.

If he were here today, the letter would be much longer, since he would outline each of the dangers we face today.

From verses 17-18 Jude speaks to us:

“But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, ‘In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.’”

Since we are living in a time that is much closer to the end of the age there is an added intensity due to the accumulation of false teachings.

From an earlier sermon, Autopsy of the End Times, I listed some major philosophies and errors that affected our society and the Church through the ages up to the present in an accumulative way.

2 Timothy 3:1-6

¹But realize this, that in **the last days**,
difficult times will come.

²**For men will be**
lovers of self, lovers of money,
boastful, arrogant, revilers...

“But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.” (vs. 1-2, 13)

Sacramentalism – 300's religion replaces relationship with Christ. Methods and means via the Church impart righteousness by works apart from grace through faith.

Dualism – reviving of the belief that spiritual was good and material was evil.

13-1400's Rationalism began developing

17-1800 Empiricism (rise of Science- 'discerner of all truth')

1900's industrial revolution

Rise of Atheism – Nietzsche proclaimed “God is dead”

Christianity is no longer the dominant influence in the West.

Scientism – science is the final judge of truth.

“Since God is dead, traditional morality is dead as well;
Even truth is dead.”

Nihilism = no truth, no morality, no meaning.

Existentialism – we have to will to find meaning.

Liberalism – theological rationalism beginning the 1900's

Removal of miraculous from truth base...

During **the 1900's Politicism**

- the gospel is set aside to promote social improvements, or governmental changes.

In the **1950's Ecumenism** belief that doctrine and truth didn't matter,

- Just that we love each other.
- Unity without Dogma.

In the **1960's Experientialism**

Truth comes through experience.

The problem that resulted was ... **experience became authoritative.**

1970's brought the advent of **Psychology** in the church.

Development of self-esteem gave rise to narcissism.

Psychology took the place of the expository preaching.

The subjective church – moved away from expository preaching.

1990's Mysticism – energized by rationalism. – move toward eastern Hinduism.

-Things are coming faster now –

Contemporary Thought (confusion)

- **Pantheism** – denial of reality - belief that God is in everything.
- **Pragmatism** – means of ministry with what is most popular with people.
- **Syncretism** – All worship the same God – forget about differences.
- **Materialism** – this life is all that matters. – acquiring things
- **Existentialism** – living for the moment, feelings ahead of the future.
- **Post Modernism** – Denial of truth
- **New Tolerance** – all beliefs are equal.
- **Political Correctness** – deletion of the individual
- **Extreme business**

- Point: Evil accumulates and build up

Jude warned in his letter that dangerous people had infiltrated the churches, and was calling on them to contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all handed down to the saints. **How were they to do that?**

Two ways:

1. Beware by knowing who they are – be able to identify them.
2. Become able to deal with them by being personally equipped in truth.

Jude sounds the alert,

⁴for certain persons have crept in unnoticed,
those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation,
ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness
and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Two key descriptions:

They turn God's Grace into licentiousness. - Behavior

They deny Jesus Christ as Lord and Master. – Belief

- By their lifestyle they deny Christ's Lordship.

**Their behavior and their belief demonstrated that they did not belong.
The Apostates Are Coming! Sound the alarm!**

Jude does this by showing God's perception of apostates.

-Judgment, Behavioral, Historical, and Metaphorical.

I. **Examples of Historical Judgments**

God's judgment of those who knew the truth and rejected it:

1. Israel

⁵Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all,
that the Lord, after saving **a people** out of the land of Egypt,
subsequently **destroyed** those who did not believe.

2. Angels

⁶And **angels**, who did not keep their own domain,
but abandoned their proper abode,
He has kept in **eternal bonds under darkness**
for the **judgment** of the great day,

3. Sodom and Gomorrah

⁷just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them,

since they in the same way as these [fallen angels]
 indulged in gross immorality
 and went after strange flesh,
 are exhibited as an example
 in undergoing the **punishment of eternal fire.**

Jude is saying that according to God's perspective these false teachers have the same expectation of judgment in their future.

II. Examples of Evil Behavior

What are key areas of bad character and behavior in the lives of false teachers.

⁸Yet **in the same way** [Israel, angels, sodomites]

these men, also by dreaming,
defile the flesh, and reject authority,
 and revile angelic majesties,

1. Immorality and Apostates

Defiling the flesh...

Jude describes those who reject Jesus' Lordship by the way they live. They live immoral lives by following their dreams, visions and extra-biblical revelations, which give them license to break God's laws.

The same can be said concerning lifestyles.

We must never endorse what God has forbidden, calling good what God calls evil.

1 Thessalonians 4 gives us clear instruction is given concerning purity,

“God's plan is to make you holy, and that entails first of all a clean cut with sexual immorality. Every one of you should learn to control his body, keeping it pure and treating it with respect, never regarding it as an instrument for self-gratification, as do pagans with no knowledge of God. You cannot break this rule without in some way cheating your fellow-men. And you must remember that God will punish all who do offend in this manner, and that we have warned you how we have seen this work out in our experience of life. The calling of God is not to impurity but to the most thorough purity, and anyone who makes light of the matter is not making light of a man's ruling but of God command. It is not for nothing that the Spirit God gives us is called the Holy Spirit.”

(1 Thess. 4:4-8 Phillips)

Whenever someone claims that grace gives us freedom to do evil, isn't speaking from God, no matter how attractive the message or messenger may appear.

Paul wrote this reminder to the Corinthians concerning evil activities,

“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? **Do not be deceived**; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.” (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

While The highest moral standards are upheld in Scripture, the next verse shows God generous mercy and grace to all who will come to Him.

“Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.” (vs. 11)

Jude's apostates are immoral and promoters of immorality in those who follow them, because they have rejected God's revelation concerning moral purity.

Someone has rightly stated:

“A man's morality dictates his philosophy.
A man's morality dictates his theology.”

2. Rebellion and Apostates.

...Reject authority

1 Samuel 15 gives the story of Saul who became proud and decided to do things his own way. He was supposed to completely destroy the Amalekites, along with all the spoil. Instead he insisted that he did follow the Lord's instructions, but had saved the best as a sacrifice to the Lord.

Then the prophet answers him,

Samuel said, “Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.

For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king.” (1 Sam. 15:22-23).

God has set up authority as a protection from the realm of Satan, (like an umbrella protecting us from the rain). When someone gets out from under authority (**Rebellion**) they expose themselves to demonic influence just as if they had become involved in divination of witchcraft.

Insubordination is setting oneself up as the authority, becoming one's own god. So much of idolatry happens as we put someone or something else in the place of God. The first commandment is

"You shall have no other gods before Me." (Exodus 20:3).

Someone may add, "*including yourself...*".

Jude's apostates abound with rebellious attitudes and incomplete obedience.

3. Reviling

...Revile angelic majesties

⁹But **Michael the archangel**,

when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses,

did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, '*The Lord rebuke you!*'

¹⁰But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed.

To revile is to speak evil of someone. To speak abusively, disrespectfully. The false prophet may feel he can speak out against fallen angels or demonic realm; but the example of Michael, the highest of the holy angels was to refrain from verbally judging the vilest enemy of God.

Jerry Bridges, in *Respectable Sins*, writes of this in his chapter on The Sins of the Tongue:

"In this category, we must also include the lying, slander, critical speech (even when true), harsh words, insults, sarcasm, and ridicule. In fact, we would have to say that any speech that tends to tear down another person – either someone we are talking about or someone we are talking to – is sinful speech."¹

These false prophets, Jude says, "revile angelic majesties" in their prideful speech.

III. Examples of Evil People

Jude's comparisons with historical figures of infamy show what these men are like, compared to their evil doppelgangers from the past.

¹ Jerry Bridges, *Respectable Sins*, (Navpress: Colorado Springs, 2007), p. 159.

Types of Evil persons from the OT.

¹¹**Woe to them!** For they have gone the way of Cain,
and for pay thy have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam,
and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

1. The way of Cain

Cain chose wickedness over goodness, then murdered his brother.
Cain is synonymous with evil.

2. The error of Balaam

Balaam (Numbers 22-24) is a picture of the classic 'Prophet for profit'

He was hired by Balak, the leader of Moab, to curse the children of Israel. When he was about to do so God told him to bless Israel. The result was that he was in trouble with Balak and would loose out on all the money he was offered. So instead he gave Balak counsel to use the women of the land to seduce the men of Israel, and then God would curse them.

Balaam received his money. Israel fell for it and were in trouble with God. Later on Balaam was killed (Numb. 31:8) in an attack of Israel against the kings of Midian led by Moses. He is forever remembered for his duplicity and greed – selling his prophetic gift for money.

3. Rebellion of Korah

Korah held a priestly position under Moses and Aaron. He was a leader of a rebellion in which he organized others against Moses' leadership and was swallowed up by the ground along with all his followers.
So false teachers and their followers will be judged by God.

IV. Metaphors that describe apostates

Descriptive Images

Jude's use of metaphor brings a picturesque association describing these men, showing why they cannot be trusted nor included in the fellowship.

¹²These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts
when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves;
clouds without water, carried along by winds;
autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted;

¹³wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam;
wandering stars,
 for whom then black darkness has been reserved forever.

1. Hidden Reefs – destructive to the fellowship; narcissistic manipulators.
 – fearlessly *caring only for themselves*
2. Clouds without water – all talk; no fulfillment of their promises.
3. Autumn Trees without fruit – no fruit in their lives or their followers.
 -*doubly dead, uprooted*
4. Wild Waves – Their shame is like foam of the waves – their end product.
5. Wondering Stars – forever they inherit darkness – perpetually lightless.

Review: Jude has covered who the apostates are who are endangering the church
 -Judgment, Behavioral, Historical, and Metaphorical.

Here's how I see Jude's message.

Jude is the brother of Jesus, the crucified and risen Lord;
 and the brother of James (be-headed in Acts 12 by Herod),
 and close friends with Peter, who may have collaborated on this letter
 (See 2 Peter 2)

I believe that Jude was as fiery as they get and that He had a lot to say.

I picture these as his sermon notes, which the Holy Spirit gave him to speak
 prophetically in a letter that God would sovereignly place just prior to Revelation.

Why did Jude write this letter? So that we will ... **contend earnestly for the faith...**

Two ways of dealing with heretics/apostates within the church:

1. Be able to identify them.
2. Be equipped in the truth.