

# Corrupt Character, Conduct, and Creed

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[0:00] We are slowly working our way through Jude.

We don't have a lot of verses in Jude, some 25 or so. That the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is in a fight.

We are locked in a battle for truth. And I actually taught this block to my Sunday morning class in 2012.

That fight's increased by leaps and bounds. Since then, I had somebody tell me a few weeks ago, he said, you know, the country you and I were born into is gone.

And the guy was talking with me, we were born in the late 40s. And I said, our country from five weeks ago is not the same.

[1:19] That's how rapid things change. But we are arrayed, the church is arrayed against forces that are both visible and invisible.

And the fight we are in for truth is part of the larger battle that we refer to as spiritual warfare.

I think all of us have a concept of physical warfare. Some have been in it.

We've seen it on television. I would have probably killed a guy today if I'd been there first. But we had a guy beating and choking a two-year-old.

We had to pull him off. And I was unfortunately not close. But had I been, I'm quite certain I'd be standing before you tonight without this weapon because you have to turn that in when you do that.

[2:22] Then I'd get three days off. This fight that we're in has been going on for millennia, untold millennia.

Now, let's consider this fight from God's perspective. It originated in the hallowed halls of heaven when an exalted angel by the name of Lucifer declared that he was going to be more powerful than God himself.

And, you know, you ask people a trivial pursuit question of where did sin come in to the world, the universe, you know, and you're quick to say, well, the Garden of Eden.

No, no. It started in heaven. It started in heaven. The thing that always amazes me is one-third of the angelic hosts threw their lot in with Lucifer.

That's mind-boggling. But they did. So from God's perspective, this war was joined when Lucifer said, I will be exalted higher than the Most High God.

[3:44] From the human perspective, this war began in the Garden of Eden when Lucifer, and by then he had a new name, Satan, he appeared to our original parents and he planted, I think we could say successfully, a seed within their mind that God's Word, which we refer to as truth, or as Dr. Schaeffer said, true truth, could not be trusted.

And that seed was planted in the Garden. I would suggest to you that all lies since that time have flowed from that encounter.

And really, the heart of it was, can God be trusted when He says something to us, or can He not be trusted?

And the battle was joined on earth. Well, our parents, as you well know, named Adam and Eve, chose disobedience, sin, and rebellion in the Garden that day.

The human race, and by that I mean the entire human race, was polluted with a sin nature that affects and impacts everything we do and everything that we think down to and including the subconscious level.

[5:45] I told Dr. McBride once, I don't think we've ever plumbed the depths of the fall in the Garden. I don't think humanly we can do that. How that changed the cosmos.

Everything was changed. The attack on truth has taken an unfathomable toll on the human race.

Billions have perished with either without the knowledge of the true God. Billions more have a twisted and false view of the true God.

Guys, don't ever take for granted what we do in this building. We are unique to the entire world. This is unique what we are doing. Some of you guys know that. Sean knows it. Anthony, you know it. Mike, you've been, Jerry, you guys have been overseas. This is not normal in most, Wes, I left you out.

[6:57] This is not normal in most of the world. That we can come in here like this. Not only we don't have to fear a police officer coming in here and stopping it as if he does, I'll discipline him.

I'll tell him to leave. Most of the world has a twisted and false view of God.

The triune God. But the most devastating attacks originate from within the church and they originate by people who claim to know God, claim to love God, claim to believe in God and that is why it is so difficult to defend against error.

It often occurs by perhaps even the person sitting next to you on Sunday morning. I've said this before in here but some of you weren't here. I remember Ed Gordon just a few months ago having a conversation with the associate pastor of one of the mainline denominations and the way the conversation was going, Ed finally asked him he said well what's your view of the atonement? He's the associate pastor and he said the what? He said the atonement and he said I'm not familiar with that term. This is a seminary graduate with a doctorate a d-man I would imagine that seminary they mentioned the atonement once or twice when he went yeah I mean the liberal church has heard of the atonement they may not understand it but they've heard of it amazing we meaning everybody in this room that is a follower of Christ have been commanded to guard the truth that God has delivered to us from the apostles and of course from Christ himself in the gospels and you know let's be frank on a global scale we probably haven't done a real good job of that there is encroaching darkness everywhere we go y'all remember the series dispatches from the front and that was an excellent series

[9:29] I think he's got one more I know he's written a book and I've seen that down at VOM they've got that but Jude told us the problem and it is today the greatest danger facing the church here's the inspired words of God we can identify the problem certain perverses have crept in unnoticed and then later in verse 12 he says these men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts they feast with you they're sitting next to you now you should all sense a danger here they have crept in unnoticed that's scary you know there's a lot of things going on in America right now with law enforcement we have police officers dying every three days in law enforcement one died over the weekend in Memphis was shot and killed one was shot in

I think Michigan or Minnesota with a crossbow he lived and the state trooper with him killed the bad guy but there's a lot going on there we've gone to lockdown at the Barville police department if you want to come see me you've got to push a buzzer identify yourself I'll come down and get you I'll take you to my office I'll take you back down and let you out that's where we're at there's danger out there and we don't want it inside the building if we can prevent it and the word says they crept in unnoticed and they were like hidden reefs a hidden reef can destroy even the largest ships these destroyers are within the church they I'll tell you how they do it there's a pattern and they gain control of boards and committees and seminaries and they work until they get the entire denomination that has happened a lot in this country and I've said before it came very close to happening to ours in the last century these people refer to them as Christians they have neither salvation nor obviously the Holy Spirit and the statement that they have crept in unnoticed is quite instructive in the original language it carries with it the idea that they were able to sneak in without being detected it means to sneak in secretly but all the time they're sneaking they have an evil intent they know why they're there they know what they're going to do once they get in but they come to the door and they look they don't have a sign that said evil here and they get in it is one thing for an enemy of Christianity to rail against our faith from the outside we expect that that happens all the time but these evil people do it from the safety of the church roles note also Jude refers to them as certain persons that is a rather vague description if we ever have anyone want to join name certain don't let them in my name is certain person you don't know we don't know who they are specifically but we do know that they are operating within the church and the Bible refers to them as apostates and guys don't wear signs that say apostate class of 1966 they just don't do that the theologian Thomas Manton and if you want to borrow his books I'll be glad I've got 36 of them I'll be glad to want them Thomas Manton said they are like a worm inside a body bent on

destroying the very body that houses him it's like cancer it's destroying the body and by doing that it's going to die but that's what they do they're inside

Jesus said they're wolves but then he goes along and says but they're inside sheep's clothing they look like sheep but they're wolves they are so dangerous that Jesus Peter Paul and John warned us about them and so does Jude they come in many forms they have many names but they are bent on destroying the Lord's work and they've been around since the beginning their views are called Gnosticism Nicolaitanism Modernism Cultism Liberalism Antinomianism there's a lot of isms out there a whole lot of isms and I'm sure we can come up a lot of the names but that's just to scratch the surface so the first thing we have to do we have to be on guard against the apostate because theirs is a work of infiltration now the

Lord himself knows them in fact he says I have already marked them out for condemnation their end has been predicted and this is what Jude 4 says and this is really our focus here for certain persons have crept in unnoticed those who were long before 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 a whole bunch there in those brief words from the opening days of redemptive history God has promised to judge apostates and there is no doubt they will be judged with the greatest of severity now remember an apostate is someone who heard the truth said under the truth embraced part of the truth and then turns and denies truth and wants to destroy the work of [16:11] God that's the apostate the Greek construction here I'm told indicates that their destruction was ordained from ages ago probably before there was a human race in the garden they were already marked out for destruction truth refers to this destruction later in his letter with these words and we'll get to this it was also about these men that Enoch in the seventh generation from Adam prophesied saying behold the Lord came with many thousands of his holy ones to execute judgment upon all and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him so we have a whole list here of ungodlies which we will get to in a few weeks but all the way back to the beginning of mankind the

Old Testament prophets predicted the destruction of apostles this is in keeping with what the apostle Peter said and he said this in 2 Peter chapter 2 verses 3 to 6 in their greed would we live in a greedy time you ever see guys preaching Jesus to get rich on television hope you never get to that channel in their greed they will exploit you with false words their judgment from long ago is not idle and their destruction is not asleep for if God did not spare angels when they sin but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness reserved for judgment and did not spare the ancient world but preserved Noah a preacher of righteousness with seven others when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly and if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes he's going to have to apologize to San Francisco if he doesn't destroy them reducing them to ashes having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter the final judgment of the apostate is certain and unalterable nothing is going to change that so how does God picture these apostates in Jude here's what he says they are ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God and is there any greater doctrine than grace they turn the grace of God into licentiousness and deny our only master and Lord Jesus

Christ the leading trait of an apostate or a false teacher in any day was their ungodly character when you get behind the real person and able to look they have ungodly character they claim to belong to God they claim to speak for God in a unique way but scripture repeatedly says they are far from him Jude tells us in light of God's description we conclude we can conclude that their character conduct and creed are always corrupt!

When you cut away the layers it's it's a corrupt view of the God head and of the Bible and of truth so what are the specific characteristics of the apostates this is important because as members of the Lord's church we must be able to identify the apostates in our midst not fall under their sway and then we have to deal with them and we have a process to do that church discipline we we have a process to do that of course Kenneth Hagen Sr.

[20:46] said when he left the Southern Baptist Church he said they gave me the right Buddha fellowship that was Dr. Hagen's view of it first thing is their character ungodly persons that's their character they're ungodly persons it is impossible for an ungodly person such as a false teacher to worship God properly we have one of these guys that shows up about every five weeks at city hall

on every fifth city council meeting because the mayor is a member of his church and I was sitting there one evening and they start with prayer and he got up there and he said I'm going to pray to the Christian God you can bow your heads and pray to any God of your choosing I'm up there looking at

Ed Gordon my boss and the minister of Trinity and he's going kind of like this it is impossible for an ungodly person to worship properly such a person does not have a high view of God and does not hold him in reverence we reverence the name of God the early church fathers and those are the guys you know like in the second century after the apostles they wrote about such men describing them as those who play at religion while having no fear of God or love for him they pretend to be spiritual leaders but they are the enemy sent within our borders to wreak havoc on the church they claim to know

God and speak for God but their sinful character undermines! them and identifies them eventually it will come out eventually what about their conduct they turn the grace of God into licentiousness brothers please mark this thought down in your mind false spirituality cannot restrain the flesh if you are if you don't have true spirituality it can't restrain the flesh it will show up and let's face it what one thing is probably under greater attack in the 21st century of Christian men than the flesh I've said it before you can't turn on television and see someone selling hammers without some woman in a bikini can't do it she know how to use that hammer she thinks it's a saw but that's because Madison Avenue knows the hot buttons false spirituality cannot restrain the flesh apostates have no ammunition with which to deal with fleshly fallen desires false teachers consistently indulge the flesh in matters that are sinful and one need only look at the fallen high profile television preachers who have succumbed to sin probably the first one some of us of a certain age you remember was Jimmy Swagger followed by Jim Baker and there's been a host of others it's interesting because a lot of them fell into heterosexual!

sin now they're falling into homosexual sin a lot of them not just a few I always remember this young pastor went to John MacArthur and was writing for Swagger and he had been caught with his secretary in an illicit affair but put out of the church and he asked Dr.

[25:11] MacArthur he said do you think I can ever preach again and John said I think you get one shot at that and we all hang by a thin thread and you only have one shot at that and if you violate that in a moral sense it's pretty much over for us to which he said look I'm not Jimmy Swagger nobody even knows who I am and John's response was but God knows who you are God knows who you are false teachers consistently indulge the flesh when we look at these high profile guys no true minister of God would use God's grace as a license to sin well I can do this because I've been saved by grace that's rank antinomism against the moral law and yet we have seen it repeated over and over among high profile ministers they are in it for what they can get out of it be it huge mansions fast cars and faster women and I'm never amazed when these guys show up and brag about having 40 Rolls Royces and 5 houses and Learjets they are at the top of the Ponzi scheme of course they are going to get that of course they are going to get that

Joel Osteen preached and said I can get anything I ask for and the other day I was at the mall and I asked for a park it spot up close because I couldn't find one and there it was and the response to that is what about the little old lady you almost ran over who was trying to park were her dreams dashed on the rocks when you did that Paul covered this in Galatians what I'm teaching on Sunday mornings in here you cannot begin in the spirit and have any hope of finishing in the flesh can't be done now the most high profile guy in my opinion and some of you are too young to even remember him but that violated that passage was Jimmy Swagger he thought he had begun in the flesh but was in the spirit but could now you know had the strength I'll just complete it in the flesh and he couldn't do it and none of us can none of us can guys we're all let's just put it this way we're all nine days from cannibalism you realize that sin is working out there you gotta be on guard for yourselves and your family it's out there so Paul says you can't begin in the spirit and finish in the flesh the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the lure of sin are far too strong we live in unredeemed flesh and we battle sin our entire lives on this planet our only hope is to begin in the spirit and finish the same way finish the race in the spirit well these guys according to

Jude have a creed they deny our only master and lord Jesus Christ that's their creed apostate false teachers believe they answer to no one they answer to no one they are their own masters of their own fate you will never find an apostate preacher or teacher preaching about the sovereignty of God or the lordship of Christ over them this passage says they will not submit to him as master and lord

master denotes sovereign ruler lord is king and how much does the king own everything he is king and owner king and owner false teachers never give to christ the honor that his do him and i'll tell you i cringe when i hear some of these guys and i don't make it a practice to listen to them but you know our buddy in the sky or the man upstairs or you know stuff like that they deny his rightful position in the godhead christ is both god and messiah but the apostate teachers will not acknowledge this this is confirmation that they are counterfeit teachers and preachers ceded into the church by the enemy and paul had this to say about them in titus 1 16 they profess to know god but by their deeds you know they have an action plan here things they do they deny him being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed any good deed

I'm going to throw this in I've been debating in my mind whether I do or not flip over to youtube sometime and type in the roman catholic church praising lucifer and they have a song in latin but you can hear the words and they have the translation you can dope out the words where they and the pope is sitting there the current pope and they sing it's an easter mass and they sing to lucifer the father of christ now I just challenge you listen to it yourself and don't get caught up in the guy the cantor that's singing because he sounds pretty good yeah guys understand what's around us so I want to make a final point today we are a strong church doctrinally

I think we hold to sound doctrine it doesn't mean we know all truth no one does except the Lord but we guard the truth that has been delivered that means we have to know it which means we have to be in the word and live it and in that regard we accumulate for ourselves preachers and teachers that hold to strong doctrine you know there used to be a rule in southern baptist life to be a teacher you had to join the church and come three Sundays in a row and then you would either be a teacher or you would be in charge of the bus ministry for the little kids didn't know if you just got out of prison or not but if you were there three weeks in a row in the you know the 70s the 60s man you're in I think we're a little tougher now

[32:33] I hope we are we are to accumulate for ourselves preachers and teachers that hold to strong doctrine but let me tell you something this is another warning label I want to put on all this these facts mean that we may be the ones at greatest risk we may we Highland Park may be at greatest risk Satan has little to do with the churches that are already in his clutches why would he go disrupt them they're doing what he wants them to do he wants those who oppose him he wants those who preach the word of God to fall hopefully in a high profile way so we have to be strong it's incumbent upon us and we have to lift up our leaders we have to lift them up and hold their arms up like they did was it

Moses they had to hold his arm up we got to be strong we got to be vigilant as we live out our lives in the 21st century!

and I don't know when the Lord's coming back but we've got to be able to pass along to the next generation strong doctrine strong beliefs strong commitment to truth guard it commit ourselves with our young guys some of them sitting back there tonight that will be fashions of strength when it comes to the living one Thank you.