

Introduction to Jude and Revelation: Episode 1

We are beginning an entirely new series in which we will go verse-by-verse through 2-entire books of the Bible, **Jude** and **Revelation**. This is going to be quite different from what we have done in the past, but these two books are intricately connected and have a shared message to the entire household of God. And all we learned in the prior podcasts about Only God is Good, the 3-things we need to believe, and the names of God will come into play throughout.

Being sensitive of the time given to each podcast, however, I believe it is going to be difficult sometimes to stop in the middle of a discussion and pick back up in a subsequent episode and keep our train of thought. Therefore, I ask that you be patient and work with me as I figure out how to do this kind of deep study in a podcast format where sometimes it will just be difficult to cut off the discussion for time's sake. With that said, there might be times where it is best advised to listen to the past episode more than once to prepare for the next episode.

And, as usual, you can find and download a transcript of each episode with all the associated footnotes containing all the scripture references and other relevant information, including visuals, at threshermediagroup.com.

Jude and Revelation

Are You Talking to Me?

Due to many of the religious fictions which abound in our day-and-age, it does not readily enter the believers' worldview that **Jude** and **Revelation** speak directly, personally, to them. In large part, believers think it is addressed primarily to unbelievers (those in the world) or to those who have "obviously" gone apostate; but that is far from the truth. The messages of both **Jude** and **Revelation** direct intense **WARNINGS** to those who identify as believers (those within the household of God) and exhorts them to, now and continually, bet their lives on the truth of who Jesus is – **Yahweh**, our God Almighty.¹

¹ **Yahweh** is the personal name of God (His memorial name for all time). See **Exodus 3:13-15**. **Yahweh** is used in connection with various character traits – or promises – upon which He desires us to bet our lives. For instance, His name promises that to us He will be our shelter, our shepherd, our healer, our provider, our peace, our constant companion—the one who is always there, our only righteousness, the one who sets us apart, the one who is

JUDE AND REVELATION TARGET THE VISIBLE CHURCH WITH A MESSAGE WHICH SEPARATES THOSE WHO STAND ONLY ON THE GOODNESS OF GOD FROM THOSE WHO ARE TRYING VERY HARD TO BE GOOD FOR GOD.

This truth is never so poignant as in the opening chapters of **Revelation** where Jesus addresses 7 churches. Surprisingly, He has the strongest rebuke and busts the religious bubble of delusion of those who think that their zeal and intention to serve God means something to God. I say “surprisingly” because it is natural for our religious minds to think that the churches which are vibrant, active, and growing, and have an amazing reputation in their community for serving God would receive a higher appraisal from God than those struggling with the sins of the *flesh*. But that is not how God sees things.² As with the Pharisees and religious leaders of His day, Jesus has the strongest rebuke for those who are deluded as to their sick and dying condition because the light that they think they have is really darkness. And how deep that darkness runs.³

The messages in **Jude** and **Revelation** tear through the religious delusion of personal goodness that has blinded God’s very own people (those within in His household). This delusion has left many believers living as slaves, trying desperately to obtain the blessing and approval of God by being good for God, instead of simply living free as sons of God.⁴ We must never forget what the Spirit says:

Isaiah 42:18-20

Listen, you who are deaf! Look and see, you blind! Who is as blind as my own people, my servant? Who is as deaf as my messenger? Who is as blind as my chosen people, the servant

jealous for us, the one who utilizes the hosts of heaven (both angels and demons) to work out His purposes in our lives, and the one who saves us or leads us into freedom (both in this life and in the age to come).

² **Revelation 2:1-7** (letter to Ephesus), **Revelation 3:1-6** (letter to Sardis)

³ **Matthew 6:23; John 9:39-41**

⁴ **Galatians 4**

of **Yahweh**? You see and recognize what is right but refuse to act on it. You hear with your ears, but you don't really listen."

Apostasy Now?

There is a coming apostasy, a great falling away from the faith. And it has already begun. And keep in mind, a person cannot fall away unless their first belonged. In fact, this apostasy is a precondition to the revealing of the man of **lawlessness**, the son of destruction⁵ (the man we generically refer to as the Antichrist). Yes, the apostasy comes first, then the revealing of the Antichrist.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4

Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, **for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first**, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

Matthew 24:7-13

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. **At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another.** Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. Because lawlessness is

⁵ Note: This man is given the title "son of destruction" because he becomes possessed by a demonic spirit whose name in Hebrew is *Abaddon* – "destruction" and in Greek, *Apollyon* – the "destroyer." See **Revelation 9:11**

increased, most people's love (*agape*) will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

HOWEVER, A PERSON CANNOT FALL AWAY UNLESS THEY FIRST BELONGED.

Do not be confused, Jesus is talking about those who, even now, consider themselves to be believers. Their *agape* love will grow cold, or literally evaporate like a warm breath leaving the lungs which dissipates into cold air. And consider that for a person to possess *agape* in the first place, a fruit that is produced exclusively by the Spirit of God,⁶ they must belong to the household of God and have been given a measure of the Spirit of God. After all, God is *agape*.⁷ However, like the 5-foolish virgins who did not keep an ample supply of oil, they will **NOT** now and continually believe maintaining their supply of oil; instead, they will fall into lawlessness.

What is Lawlessness?

Jesus said that lawlessness will increase, thereby causing the *agape* love of many to grow cold. However, "lawlessness" is rendered as a noun not a verb. Therefore, those who practice lawlessness are in-and-of themselves, lawless. It describes their state of being. With that said, understanding how God defines lawlessness is critical.

Jesus gives us a description of lawlessness that shockingly is not described by all manner of evil and wrongdoing, but by all manner of religious works: healing, casting out demons, miracles, etc., all done in His name by those who call to Him, "Lord, Lord".⁸ Jesus declared these works and miracles to be lawless because they were not appointed by His Father. Accordingly, not everyone who calls Him "Lord" or "**Adonai**" will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of His Father.

⁶ *Galatians 5:22*

⁷ *1 John 4:8*

⁸ *Matthew 7:21-23*

This gives us deep insight into the ways of the Beast—the demonic spirit who possesses the man we call the Antichrist—and the ways of those who follow him into apostasy. They will operate within the realm of Christianity and perform amazing religious works attracting many who love to do good for God in the name of God!

Eventually, these apostates will turn against those who are now and continually betting their lives on **Yahweh**, and they will become the propagators of intense persecution. They will deliver the true sons of God to tribulation and kill them,⁹ all the while believing—being fully convinced—they are offering service to God.¹⁰

**HOW COULD ANYONE BE SO DELUDED AS TO THINK THEY ARE SERVING GOD
WHEN THEY ARE SERVING THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS?**

The Strong Delusion!

As with the coming apostasy, there will be a strong delusion, sent by God, to seal in their lawlessness those who are say they believe and do all manner of religious activity, but do not bet their lives on the name of **Yahweh**.

2 Thessalonians 2:7-12

For the **mystery of lawlessness** is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false

⁹ *Matthew 24:9*

¹⁰ *John 16:2-4*

wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. **For this reason, God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness.**

This **mystery of lawlessness** is already at work. And it is called a mystery because it is not obvious in terms of its evil nature and intent, for it is masked as goodness and expressed in all sorts of marvelous works done in Jesus' name.¹¹ Few are aware of its darkness therefore they tend to run to it as if it is the light. "And if the light that you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is!"¹² Hence, the "*deception of wickedness*" or strong delusion is for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

Sadly, the religion of Christianity is overrun with lawlessness, or another way to express it is as licentiousness, where being good for God, being a good witness, serving God, serving others, using your gifts, giving, and trying extremely hard not to sin, and so on, is an expectation and a duty to carry out. It is what good Christians do.

In fact, the tenets of licentiousness all sound so right, so godly, so Christian, yet it is a *deception of wickedness* for it is founded on legalism (however subtle) and not freedom. After all, we have learned, that unless what a person does comes from Jesus living His life in and through their life, such works are ALL lawless. **Only God is Good** and therefore only God can do good.¹³ Hence, we need Him to do His good works through our lives, doing only what the Father tells us to do, saying what He tells us to say, and going where He tells us to go, **when** He tells us to do it.¹⁴ In other words, we are to do only lawful works—His works. That is the *Design Point* of Christianity.

The Spirit speaks of a deluding influence, or a **strong delusion**—a straying from orthodoxy—which leads to a falling away, or to the great apostasy. We would naturally think that this is the

¹¹ Satan loves to pose as an angel of light and his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. See **2 Corinthians 11:14-15**

¹² **Matthew 6:23**

¹³ **Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19**

¹⁴ See **John 3:34, 4:4 (literally his hands were bound to go to Samaria), 5:36, 9:4, 10:25, 37-38, 14:10-11, 24, 17:8**

work of the enemy sowing seeds of delusion and division. And while God may use the enemy to accomplish this task,¹⁵ it is God Himself who **NOW** sends this delusion.¹⁶ The enemy is always just a tool in the hands of **Yahweh Sabaoth** (the Lord of Heaven's Armies).

What does this mean? Clearly, we are not waiting for this strong delusion; He has already sent it specifically on those who **NOW** choose to be perishing, because they did not actively choose, as a defining aspect of their lives, to receive the love of the truth, so as to be saved.¹⁷

This is beyond disturbing!

God sends this delusion so that they put their faith in what is false, in a lie, with the result that all who continually did not believe the truth, but continually took pleasure in unrighteousness (or lawlessness) might be judged.¹⁸ Again, we are talking about those who would claim to be Christians, claim to be believers, and who perform all manner of religious deeds.

Why would God send this delusion? Because there are those in His household (unworthy servants) who do not want or accept the truth about who **Yahweh** is (the **I AM**) and the type of relationship they are to have with **Yahweh** (as a little child dependent upon **Yahweh** for all things all the time where practically, in all things, He is their **I AM**, all the time). In fact, it might shock you to learn that Jesus said there are 2 requirements to entering the kingdom of heaven. One must first be converted or born-again, and second, then they must dig down deep in their soul and choose to be a little child (again, dependent upon **Yahweh** for all things all the time).

Many have been converted, but so few have chosen to live as if **Yahweh** is their **I AM** – their only source. The truth is difficult, and it is a scary way to live. Hence, there are many who are far more comfortable with their religious delusion, so, He lets them be deluded.

The one thing God never does is violate our *personal sovereignty*. He may do everything to

¹⁵ See **Job 1-2; 1 Kings 22:23** and **2 Chronicles 18:22** for examples of how God uses the angelic/demonic spirits, even Satan, to accomplish His purposes in the lives of humanity.

¹⁶ In **2 Thessalonians 2:11**, “send” is rendered in the *present active indicative*.

¹⁷ In **2 Thessalonians 2:10**, “perish” is in the *present middle participle* and “received” is in the *aorist middle indicative*.

¹⁸ In **2 Thessalonians 2:12**, “believe” and “pleasure” are rendered in the *aorist active participle* and could be translated “all who were not believing the truth” and “who were pleasuring in wickedness.”

induce us to choose Him, but He will never force us to choose Him. His *agape* love prevents it, for His love does not demand its own way.¹⁹

These people had once thought well of the truth and believed the truth, but somewhere down the pathway of life, they became bewitched and choose to put their faith in a religious lie and choose to live like a slave (a servant in the likeness of Ishmael, the son of the bondwoman) instead of a son (like Isaac, the son of the freewoman).²⁰

This is like what happened in the church of Galatia where the Spirit was shocked that they were so quickly choosing to leave the One who called them by grace and were choosing to believe a different gospel, a lie based on religious duties and sacrifices. This led the Spirit to ask: “But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and **worthless** elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.”²¹ That is quite the **WARNING!**

Yes, the Spirit said that religious practices are **worthless!** And the outcome is terrible. He said, “*You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.*”²²

To be fair, we are not told specifically what the deluding influence is, but based on the **WARNINGS** in *Jude* and *Revelation*, the statement in *Isaiah 42:18-20*, as well as *Matthew 7:21-23* and *24:10-13*, and the entire book of *Galatians*, *Hebrews*, and so much more, I believe it is the delusion that in one-way-shape-or-form we can be good for God to obtain His blessing and favor through all manner of religious deeds, service, acts, customs, and traditions—the weak and **worthless** elemental things, all of which is at the heartbeat of Christianity and all world religions.

THERE IS A FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PERSON WHO LIVES FOR

¹⁹ *1 Corinthians 13:4*

²⁰ See *Galatians 4:21-31*

²¹ *Galatians 4:9-11*

²² *Galatians 5:4*. With “fallen” being rendered in the *aorist active indicative*, it is a statement of fact over their lives. They fell and are fallen.

GOD AND THE PERSON WHO HAS GOD LIVING IN AND THROUGH THEM.

Here is the truth. Only God is good.²³ Thus, there is simply no good in us to offer to God no matter how hard we try and no matter how sincere our intentions.²⁴ Accordingly, there is absolutely nothing we can ever do for God that matters to Him, no matter how hard we try, how disciplined we become, how obedient, how sincere, and well meaning, or how caring and loving we act. It is all worthless to God. Unless God is the one who is doing the work in and through our lives, every aspect of our work, all our offering to God, is corrupted by our sin. This is the reason Jesus said, **“apart from me, you can do nothing!”**²⁵ And He meant literally nothing!

This delusion of our own personal goodness is nuanced (subtle and slight), but it displays itself across Christianity at large. For instance, people are compelled by others and by their own understanding and conscience to serve God, use their gifts for God, to give for God, to obey God, to discipline themselves and be held accountable so they do not sin and bring shame upon the brethren, and so on.

Why? What are the motives? To be right with God, to honor Him, to find favor with Him, to ensure His blessings, to avoid judgment or punishment, to find meaning, purpose, and fulfillment, because serving God feels good, because everyone else is doing it, and so on. These motives are empty of a knowledge of Grace where our lives are to be based on 100% what He has done for us, where our only requirement is to be **willing** to believe and then to let Him cause us to choose to be believing.

What about when we judge others, build walls to protect and defend ourselves, divide, attack, and tear at others when hurt? Or what about when we choose not to trust others and to blame others for what has gone wrong in our lives?

When we find ourselves in this place, we are choosing to live by the pretext that we (or others) could have done better, should have done better, and the next time we/they better do better. It

²³ *Matthew 19:17; Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19; Psalm 16:2*

²⁴ *Romans 3:10-12; Psalm 14:1-3, 53:1-3*

²⁵ *John 15:5*

denies the reality that **Yahweh** is sovereign—that He is **Adonai** – the Lord. We, them (those who hurt us) and even the enemy are just tools in the sovereign’s hands as He works to cause us to choose to live like a little child.

Our ridiculous religious notions of what we or they should and could do are premised on the delusion of personal goodness, what we can do for God. Again, it is very nuanced and plays out in the deepest motivations of our heart, of which most are not even aware.

IF ONLY GOD IS GOOD, THEN, BY DEFINITION, ONLY GOD CAN DO GOOD.

I would bet that very few people would disagree with the idea that only God is good, but most do not know the implications of that truth when it comes to their relationship with God. Similarly, most do not know how to distinguish what is sourced or rooted in God from that which is sourced within their own heart (or soul) and that part of their *flesh* that loves religion. After all, the heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick.²⁶ That means it is even more deceitful and twisted than Satan and his demons.

SIN IS DETERMINED BY THE SOURCE OF THE ACT, NOT THE ACT IN AND OF ITSELF.

To understand this view, we must realize that it does not matter if what we do is considered “biblical” and NOT blatantly sinful, for sin is determined by the source of the act, not the act in and of itself. **The source matters, the source is everything!**

Moreover, God’s standard is perfection,²⁷ a standard to which we can never live up. Only Christ in us, the perfect one,²⁸ can do perfect works in and through our lives. Therefore, our job

²⁶ **Jeremiah 17:9**

²⁷ **Matthew 5:48**

²⁸ **Hebrews 5:9, 7:28**

is to always present ourselves to Him as a living sacrifice,²⁹ believing that the one who is good will do good in and through our lives if we give Him unfettered access to our being. And, keep in mind, the notion of a “sacrifice” is not pretty, for it speaks of volitional death. In effect, to offer ourselves up as a living sacrifice, we are saying to God: “Go ahead and destroy every part of our being, known and unknown, that stands in opposition to you and in opposition to Your will being done in and through our lives; and do not stop until it is finished!”

This is true Christianity. The source is all that matters! If we believe there is anything we must do, or can do, for God, then we are delusional believing that God is our help when we fail, but not our one and only provision for life and godliness.³⁰ Hence, the intense **WARNINGS** in *Jude* and *Revelation*.

If it is not yet clear, it will become abundantly clear that the theme of the book of *Jude* and *Revelation*, the message behind all its warnings, the reason for all the judgment and destruction is that far too many in the household of God are living in this strong delusion and the *agape* love of God is fading from their lives because they do not love the truth. Hence:

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SEPARATES THOSE WHO STAND ONLY ON THE GOODNESS OF GOD FROM
THOSE WHO ARE TRYING VERY HARD TO BE GOOD FOR GOD.**

²⁹ *Romans 12:1*

³⁰ *2 Peter 1:2-3*