



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

False Teacher Characteristics

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The Epistle of Jude (AD 68-70), considered one of the general epistles, likely author was Jude. Jude was the half-brother of Jesus Christ and the brothers (Mt 13:55) of Joseph, Simon and James, the leader of the Jerusalem Church and the Jerusalem Council. While Jude had initially rejected Jesus as the Messiah (Jn 7:1-9), he, along with other half-brothers of Jesus accepted Jesus as the Messiah after Christ's resurrection (Ac 1:14). Jude likely wrote this epistle from Jerusalem and while the exact audience is unknown it was likely to Jewish believers and to a body or region that was under the influence of and plagued by false teachers. While Christianity and Christians were under political attack from Rome, the bigger threat to the church was false doctrine being preached by gnostic-like apostates. Jude calls the church to fight for the truth. Jude sites OT examples of rebellion and rejection to God and the character traits of these apostates. (Jude 8 NASB)

“Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties” (8)

Apostates in the church. Jude is not addressing all apostates but a specific dangerous group of apostates, *“these men”* that reject that faith and stay within the church. Jude was warning those in the early church that these false teachers are the ones to watch out for. Jude calls them dreamers, or *“filthy”* dreamers (KJV) or *“relying on their dreams”* (ESV) or *“on the strength of their dreams”* (NIV). Apostates develop their belief by what they dream-up or develop in their own minds and are numb and reject God's will, direction and the truth of His Word. Jude shares 3 characteristics of apostates in the church.

Few moral restraints. Jude state that these apostates *“defile the flesh”*, meaning that they frequently have immoral lifestyles and few moral restraint.

Peter provides a similar warning of false teachers; *“and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties,”* (2 Pt 2:10)

“Reject authority.” Jude shares a second common trait of an apostate in the church is that they reject authority or *“despise dominion”* (KJV). Apostates reject the authority of the lordship and deity of Christ; that Jesus is Lord. These apostates tend to reject all authority including spiritual which results in the rejection and denying of Christ's Lordship and God's Word.

“Speak evil of dignities.” (KJV) or *“revile angelic majesties”* is a third characteristic of an apostate in the church. Apostate *“do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties”* (2 Pt 2:10). They speak poorly of angelic majesties, (Gk *‘doxa’* lit. glory; defn. as impressive beauty, dignity).

Jude is warning his fellow brothers in the faith to be on their guard for these false teachers, not that they may come into the church, but rather they are in the church currently and have crept in unnoticed. While Jude provides these 3 characteristics of these apostates, later in his letter he adds that they are *“ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit”* (19)

For Your Consideration:

- Do you recognize those people in the church that have few moral restraints?
- Do you recognize those people in the church that reject the authority of the lordship and deity of Jesus the Christ?
- Do you recognize those people in the church that speak evil or revile angelic glory?

BIBLE STUDIES

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