

FIGHT FOR WHAT MATTERS
PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE: JUDE
Jude 3

I. INTRODUCTION

A. BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Jude at first commends his readers and wishes to encourage them concerning salvation. But the current dangerous situation makes it necessary for him to exhort them to stand up for their faith: ungodly persons have infiltrated the church and abused God's grace with immoral behavior that denies Christ. These apostates are like the earlier disbelieving Israelites, rebellious angels, and wicked Sodom and Gomorrah. They are impure, insubordinate, and disrespectful; they berate spiritual things they don't understand and reduce themselves to living by animal instincts that are self-destructive. Like Cain, Balaam, and Korah, they are intent on deceiving, disrupting, and destroying God's people. They grumble, find fault, pursue lust, speak arrogantly, and flatter people for profit. They will be punished for their ungodliness. All this was prophesied earlier by the Apostles. In the meantime, Jude tells his readers to grow strong in faith, prayer, God's love, and patience unto eternal life; to have mercy on doubters; to rescue those in peril; to pity those ensnared in sin; and to hate even the appearance of contamination. Only by God's power through Jesus Christ will they be preserved and be able to stand blameless in the presence of His glory.

B. TITLE

- GREEK = **Ιουδα**—'Of Jude'—from the name **Ιουδας**—in **v1**
 - Can be translated either 'Jude' or 'Judas'
 - Name means—'He shall be praised'
 - Popular name in first century
 - Probably after Judas Maccabeus—led revolt against Seleucids (d. 160 BC)
- LATIN = **Iudas**

C. PLACE IN BIBLE

- EIGHTH AND LAST NON-PAULINE EPISTLE
- POPULARLY [BUT INACCURATELY] KNOWN AS 'CATHOLIC EPISTLES'
 - Because James, I Peter, and II and III John were sent to specific addressees

D. AUTHORSHIP

1. JUDE, A BOND-SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST AND BROTHER OF JAMES—**v1**
 - a. Obvious and traditional identity

1. Brother of **James**—assumed to be the brother of Jesus
 - Early leader of Jerusalem church
 - Martyred about 62 AD in Jerusalem—at order of High Priest Ananus
2. Therefore—a **brother of Jesus**
3. Probably a younger brother—listed 3rd or 4th in Gospels

Mt 13:55—*his brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas*

Mk 6:3—*brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon*

4. Other possible [but not likely] persons named ‘James’
 - a. **Son of Alphaeus**—**Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:15; Acts 1:13**
 - One of 12 Apostles—little is known about him
 - Possibly brother of Matthew/Levi—‘son of Alphaeus’—**Mk 2:14**
 - Possibly ‘James the Less’—**Mk 15:40; 16:1; Mt 27:56**
 - b. **Father of Judas**—**Lk 6:16** and **Acts 1:13**
 - Not Judas Iscariot—**Jn 14:22**—but another Apostle
 - James’s son also identified with Thaddeus—**Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18**
 - c. **Son of Zebedee and brother of John**
 - Martyred by Herod Agrippa I in 44 AD—**Acts 12:2**
 - Died so early—almost certainly not this James
 - b. Other persons in NT—named **Jude/Judas**
 1. **Apostle**—Thaddeus (Mt 10:3)—also known as ‘Judas of James’ (Lk 6:16)
 - Also mentioned as ‘Judas’ in Jn 14:22
 - Calvin said this was the author
 - But this probably means ‘Judas son of James’—not brother of James
 2. Judas **Barsabbas**
 - Church leader sent to Antioch after Jerusalem Council—Acts 15:22, 27, 32
 3. Jew of **Damascus**, who helped Saul—Acts 9:11
 4. **Rebellious** Jewish leader mentioned by Gamaliel—Acts 5:37
 5. **Apostle**—Judas Iscariot
2. CHALLENGES TO AUTHENTICITY OF JUDE AS AUTHOR
- a. Challenge: Greek seems too polished for rural Jew
 - Support for authenticity:
 1. Palestinians were conversant with Greek—especially in Palestine
 2. An itinerant missionary, he probably improved linguistic skills for ministry
 - b. Challenge—later date—because Apostolic age is past (**v17**) and doctrine is established (**v3**)

- Support for authenticity:

▼17—does not mean apostolic writings had been gathered in to a collection

▼18—suggests ▼17 might mean the apostles had written these readers personally

3. EXTERNAL EVIDENCE CONCERNING JUDE AS AUTHOR

a. Support

1. Allusions to Jude may be found in Apostolic Fathers—early second century
2. Attested in the Muratorian Canon (AD 200)
3. Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria quoted Jude—early 3rd century

b. Questions

1. Origen affirmed Jude's authorship—early 3rd century—but said others questioned it
2. Eusebius—4th century—said it was challenged
 - Because it quotes pseudepigraphal books
 - *I Enoch* and *The Assumption of Moses*

- c. Luther accepted it in the canon—but said it was simply an abstract of II Peter

E. JUDE THE AUTHOR

1. EARLY LIFE—BEFORE CONVERSION

- At first did not believe Jesus was the Messiah—**Mk 3:21, 31; Jn 7:5**
- Thought Jesus was out of his mind—**Mk 3:21, 31**

2. LATER LIFE—AFTER CONVERSION

- Probably became a follower after the Resurrection
- Jesus' brothers were in the prayer meetings before Pentecost—**Act 1:14**
- Jesus' brothers were itinerant missionaries—I Cor 9:5
- Hegesippus says—Jude's grandsons were questioned and released by Emperor Domitian

F. SETTING

1. DATE—IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE

- a. If Jude borrowed from Peter—Jude was after 64-66 AD
- b. If Peter borrowed from Jude—Jude was before 64-66 AD
- c. If Peter and Jude borrowed from a common source—date could be anytime

2. RECIPIENTS

- Are well-versed in the Old Testament and Jewish apocalyptic literature
- So—probably Jewish converts to Christianity

3. LOCATION—IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE

4. OPPONENTS

- a. Some scholars say—Gnostics—but evidence is slim and inconclusive
- b. All that can be determined is a general description
 - ‘Ungodly’ persons—vv4, 15, 18
 - Libertines—who abuse the concept of grace—v4
 - Probably involved in sexual sin—vv7-8
 - Mystics—who justify their behavior—based on revelatory visions—v8
 - Ignorant, arrogant and rebellious
 - Divisive, deceptive, and destructive trouble-makers

G. STYLE

1. EPISTOLARY FORM

- Opening salutation—**vv1-2**
- Body—**vv3-23**
- Closing benediction—**vv24-25**

2. RELIES ON OT EXAMPLES (6) TO ILLUSTRATE SINFULNESS

3. ALLUDES TO AND QUOTES APOCRYPHAL LITERATURE

- *The Assumption of Moses*
- *I Enoch*

4. THREE-FOLD PATTERN

- Recipients are—called, loved, and kept—**v1**
- Salutation—mercy, peace, and love—**v2**
- Apostates—pollute, reject, and slander—**v8**
- Grumblers/slanderers—pursue lust, boast about themselves, and flatter others—**v16**
- They also—divide Christians, follow base instincts, lack spiritual discernment—**v19**
- Doxology—before all ages, now, and forevermore—**v25**

H. BIBLICAL CONTEXT

1. SIMILAR TO II PETER

- a. Compare **II Peter 2:1-3:4** and **Jude 4-18**
- b. However, Peter and Jude portray God’s opponents differently
 1. Peter identifies them as ‘false teachers’—Jude calls them ‘godless men’
 2. They are church members in II Peter—in Jude, they are outsiders who have crept in

I. THEMES

1. WATCH OUT FOR HERESY AND IMMORALITY IN THE CHURCH

2. STAND FIRM IN THE FAITH—AND HOLD SOUND DOCTRINE

- God's election—His calling—v1
- Perseverance—as a responsibility—vv3, 21
- Final judgment—vv4, 6, 7, 11, 15
- Salvation—v3
- Eternal security of believers—v21

3. HELP THOSE WHO ARE IN PERIL

J. OUTLINE

GREETING—vv1-2

PURPOSE—vv3-4

Contend for the faith—v3

Against ungodly intruders—v4

GODLESS PERSONS—vv5-16

Examples from history—vv5-7

Literal description of sins—vv8-10

Old Testament examples—v11

Metaphorical descriptions—vv12-13

Warning of judgment—vv14-15

Literal description of sins—v16

EXHORTATION OF BELIEVERS—vv17-23

Remember the apostolic warning—vv17-19

Grow strong in the faith and persevere—vv20-21

Show mercy and help weak persons—vv22-23

DOXOLOGY—vv24-25

II. BIBLICAL TEXT

1 *Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ: 2* *May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you. 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 handed down to the saints. 4** *For 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. 5* *Now 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. 6 And 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, 7 just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. 8 Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. 9 But 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!” 10 But 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. 11 Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. 12 These 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; 13 wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever. 14 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, 15 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.” 16 These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage. 17 But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, 18 that they were saying to you, “In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.” 19 These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit. 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. 22 And have mercy on some, who are doubting; 23 save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. 24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, 25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

III. EXPOSITION

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 handed down to the saints.

A. TWO POSSIBLE PURPOSES OF LETTER

1. THIS VERSE COMMUNICATES THE CENTRAL PURPOSE OF JUDE’S LETTER
2. INTERPRETATING THE PARTICIPLE
 - a. Participle—ποιουμενος = ‘making’

I was making every effort to write

b. Two possible interpretations

1. Temporal participle = **while** *I was making every effort*
➤ NASB, NRSV, KJV ('when making')

2. Concessive participle = **although** *making every effort*

➤ NIV, TEV, NEB

3. TWO POSSIBLE INTERPRETATIONS—AND PURPOSES FOR WRITING

a. Implications of 'temporal' interpretation—'while making every effort'

1. He intended to write this very letter

2. News about intruders hastens his work—increases his determination to do so

3. He assumes this 'shared salvation'—is something all his readers possess

4. He addresses the topic of salvation in two ways

a. Warning them of intruders who threaten the community of saved ones

b. Urging them to stand fast against the threat

c. Telling them to help others—not yet in the community—to be saved

b. Implications of 'concessive' interpretation—'although making every effort'

1. He did not intend to write this following letter this way

2. He was going to write about 'shared salvation'—as if everyone possessed it

3. But news of intruders raises a concern—do all his readers possess this 'shared salvation'?

4. He addresses the topic of salvation with this in mind

a. The intruders present a real threat to those who are not saved

b. Those who are saved will not lose their salvation, but they must stand fast

c. Saved ones must also help to rescue unsaved ones in the church who are at risk

B. EXPOSITION

1. THE 'BELOVED' RECIPIENTS

a. Repeated emphasis

1. As in the Johannine letters—**ἀγαπητός**—is a key term

2. It is an important term in the 'General Epistles'

➤ 18 of 29 NT usages are in the 'General Epistles'

3. Jude repeats the term three times—**vv3, 17, 20**

b. Meanings of 'beloved' in Jude

1. Obviously—his readers are dearly and personally 'beloved' to Jude

- But this is not his main emphasis
- He does not further state [like II and III John]—*whom I love in truth*

2. Jude also means they are **God's** 'beloved'

- a. They are—*beloved in God the Father*—**v1**
- b. God's love for them is contrasted with His condemnation of the 'ungodly'

3. Jude also implies a contrast

- a. His 'beloved' readers—have a loving relationship with God
- b. But the 'ungodly' and rebellious opponents—do not love God

2. OUR 'COMMON SALVATION'

a. Meaning—κοινος σωτηρια

- Common salvation—salvation 'shared' by the community

b. Jude's three-fold perspective—related to time

- 1. **Historic** salvation—God has saved in the past—Israel—**v5**
- 2. **Existential** salvation—exists presently—assumed in wording of **v3**
- 3. **Eschatological** salvation—will be fully realized in the future—**vv24-25**

c. Jude's two-fold perspective—related to people

- 1. Individual salvation—*save others*—**v23**
- 2. Communal salvation
 - a. The whole body of the church—all the 'saints' together—**v3**
 - b. Just as Graeco-Roman culture considered welfare of the whole—commonwealth
 - c. Jude seeks to protect the whole church—against intruding subversives

3. CONTENDING EARNESTLY

a. Meaning—*επαγωνιζομαι*

- Struggle—with intense effort—strive intensely

b. This parallels Jude's effort—'giving all diligence' to write this letter

c. To exert oneself—without distraction—to attain a goal

Phil 1:27—*Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.*

d. Military metaphors

Jn 18:36—*My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews. . .*

Eph 6:12—*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

e. Athletic metaphor

I Cor 9:25—*Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things.*

f. Jude explains—how to contend earnestly—in vv 20-23

4. CONTENDING FOR ‘THE FAITH’

a. Meaning—**πιστις**—can mean several things

- **Trust**—have confidence in someone/thing
- **Belief**—intellectual commitment to something/one
- **Body of truth/principles**—in which one believes

b. Here—it is the **body of truth**—not trust/belief

1. Because—it has been ‘handed down’—v3
2. Traditional and true teachings—objective body or truth—passed on
3. Teachings of the Apostles

v17—*the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ*

- Which the church perpetuated from the beginning—**Acts 2:42**
- Which became a foundation of the church—with the prophets—**Eph 2:20**

5. ONCE FOR ALL HANDED DOWN TO THE SAINTS

a. Once for all—**ηπαξ** = once—one time

1. One time only—for all time
2. No additions or substitutes will be allowed
3. Contrasted with new revelations that come through ‘dreaming’—v8

b. Handed down—**παραδιδομι**

1. Entrusted or delivered
2. NT usage usually means—transmission of tradition

Mk 7:13—**negative**—handed down human traditions—that invalidate God’s word

Gal 1:14—**negative**—Saul was advancing beyond his peers in his ancestral traditions

Col 2:8—**negative**—*See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men . . .*

I Cor 11:23—**positive**—Paul delivered the Lord’s Supper tradition—from the Lord

I Cor 15:3—**positive**—Paul delivered as of first importance—witness of Resurrection

II Thess 2:15—**positive**—*So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.*

c. The ‘saints’ = **αγιοσ** =

- Holy ones—set apart—sanctified
- Members of the church—who share in salvation
- In contrast to—the ‘ungodly’—who have infiltrated the church