

#22. THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

1. **Jude is written** to warn the church against heretical teachings and to encourage the Believers to be strong in faith.

- Jude's challenge to Believers everywhere is to be on alert for false teachers, examine their doctrine, and be prepared to stand strong as we fight for God's Truth.

2. **Author and date** - Jude was the half-brother of Jesus and of James. Along with Joseph, James, and Simon (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3), he was an unbelieving sibling (John 17:1-9) until after the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 1:14). From the same passages we know Jesus was the eldest son in a family of at least six siblings.

- His name is *Judah* in Hebrew and *Judas* in Greek.
- Circumstantial evidence dates the epistle no earlier than 65 or 66AD, but perhaps in the late 70s or early 80s AD. The early date is taken if Peter borrowed from Jude. The latter date is taken if Jude borrowed from Peter. If they wrote independent of each other, which is entirely possible, the date of writing could range between the mid-60s until about 80AD. My personal belief is the letter was written probably as late as 80AD. The *coming false teachers* Peter wrote about in the mid-60s seem to be firmly in place by the date of Jude's letter. This could place the letter easily in the mid to late 70s AD.

3. **Jude's emphasis** is the realization that from the earliest days, the church has been susceptible to heresy and false teachers. As a result, we must always be on guard in order to defend Orthodox Christianity.

4. Key Verses

- **Jude 3, 4 NASB** "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. 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."

5. Key People

- **Jude** - the half-brother of Jesus and brother of James the Just.
- **James** - the author of James and the leader of the church in Jerusalem.
- **Enoch** - one of the great characters of the Book of Genesis. Though the First Book of Enoch is not considered Canonical, it appears the Holy Spirit gave approval and affirmation of that part of the book (1 Enoch 14). We see the same thing occurring in Acts 17:28 and 1 Corinthians 15:33, passages in which Paul cites a non-canonical source.

6. **Key Place** - the intended audience of Jude cannot be determined. It was probably a letter designed to be circulated within the church in all locations.

7. Key Themes

- **Unstable Doctrine and False Teachers** - Jude is not concerned about those who misunderstand truth or have a flawed viewpoint. We may all be subject to that on occasion. His concern is about those who have willingly and intentionally rejected the Lordship of Christ, and have set their mind to tear others away from faith in Jesus as well.
- **Apostasy** - is seen as a defection or turning away from Christ. Some secular usages of the word indicated one who has abandoned a military guard post, therefore endangering the welfare of those the soldier sought to protect. Apostates are described in 2 Thessalonians 2:10; Hebrews 10:29; 2 Peter 2:1-22; 1 John 2:18-23).

8. The Contents of Jude

- **Jude's Intent (1, 2)**
- **Jude's Condemnation of Apostates (3, 4)**
- **Apostates Produce Bad Fruit (5-7)**

- **Further Condemnation of the Apostates (8-16)**
- **Defending Against Apostates (17-23)**
- **Doxology (24, 25)**

Worth noting about the letter from Jude

- Only Philemon and 2 and 3 John are shorter New Testament books.
- Jude is considered the eighth and last general epistle (Hebrews, James, the Epistles of Peter and John precede Jude's letter).
- There are nine men with this name in the New Testament. Jude is to be differentiated from the Apostle Judas who was the son of James (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13). Care was taken to identify him as the brother of James, who was the leader of the church in Jerusalem and writer of the Epistle of James. He also took care to differentiate himself from the apostolic list (verses 1, 17).
- Old Testament allusions include the Exodus of Israel from Egypt (verse 5), the Fall of Satan (verse 6), Sodom and Gomorrah (verse 7), Moses death (verse 9), Cain (verse 11), Balaam (verse 11), Korah (verse 11), Enoch (verses 14,15), and Adam (verse 14).

When Reading Jude's Epistles:

- Notice the similarity between the style of Jude and Peter. Jude contains nearly a dozen parallel passages with 2 Peter. It is believed that Peter's writings came first, because Peter sees the flood of false teachers as *coming*. Jude sees their arrival as a present reality. Circumstantial evidence dates the epistle in the 70s AD, well after the death of Peter.
- Pay close attention to Jude's descriptive language concerning *Apostates*:
 - They are ungodly (verse 4).
 - They are involved in moral perversion (verse 4).
 - They deny the true nature and ministry of Christ (verse 4).

- They are rebels, above all law and restraint (verse 8).
- They are profane (verse 8).
- They are unstable thinkers (verse 10 *Dreamers*).
- They are ignorant of true knowledge and wisdom (verse 10).
- They are complainers (verse 16).
- They are critical fault-finders (verse 16).
- They are narcissists (verse 16).
- They are arrogant (verse 16).
- They are flatterers who manipulate, and control (verse 16).
- They are mockers (verse 18).
- They cause division within the church (verse 19).
- They are focused on a carnal mind-set (verse 19).
- They are not filled with God's Spirit (verse 19).