

# The Epistle of St. Jude

The little Letter of Jude, tells us that he is Jude, bond servant of Jesus Christ, and the brother of James, vs. 1. Historically, he has been called the brother of James (Gal. 1:19, author of the epistle bearing his name), and half brother of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3, and Acts 1:14). Though, not an apostle, there is no doubt as to his kinship to Jesus and James. Jude is the same as Judas, a common name in the first century AD. The siblings of Jesus did not believe in Him as the Messiah, until after the resurrection.

None of Jesus' brothers were apostles. Jude speaks of the *apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ*, (vss. 17, 18), this language which an apostle would not use of his fellow apostles. Thus, the Letter was accepted as canonical, based on the fact that Jude was a brother ( half or step brother) of Jesus. It is not clear where Jude was living at the time of writing this letter to the church catholic. It could not have been written later than AD 81, the year of the accession of Emperor Domitian. Hegesippus (born c.a. 110), writes that two grandsons of Jude were brought before the emperor as descendants of David, but were dismissed before Domitian. The letter could have been written as early as AD 64, if it was written before 2 Peter.

The letter was written in all probability, to the same Hebrew Christians as his brother James earlier wrote to. Especially since he mentions his brother by name. James more than likely is deceased, c.a. 62 AD, soon after the death of Festus. This according to the Jewish historian Josephus. The last time we hear anything about James, the overseer of the church at Jerusalem, is in Acts 21:18. It was Jude's intention to write to Christians who remembered James, and set things in order in the church, as they revered his brother James.

The Epistle of Jude was among the last of the New Testament books to be canonized. Because of its brevity, early Church Fathers did not quote from it. Origen and Clement state that the epistle was not universally received in their day (c.a. 200 AD), and Eusebius, the church historian makes the same statement (c.a. 3235 AD). The majority of Christian historians, place the writing of Jude at between 70 and 75 AD, while other theologians place the Epistle as late as 81 AD.

Jude presents seven foul teachings of the **Libertines and Apostates** and their vicious practices:

1. Surreptitious (a sneak attack) foes - Vs. 4
2. Perverters of grace and deniers of Christ - vs. 4
3. Censorious (harshly critical) and arrogant detractors - vs. 8
4. Ignorant calumniators (making false and defamatory statements, and brutish sensualists) - vs. 10
5. Hypocrites and deceivers - vss. 12, 13
6. Grumblers, fault-finders, pleasure-seekers, boasters, and parasites - vs. 16
7. Schismatics and sensualists - vs. 19

The relation of Jude to Second Peter:

The relationship of the two epistles, is confined to one section of 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, that is 2:1-3:4.

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The other sections of Second Peter bear no resemblance to Jude's letter. The parallelism, the subjects discussed, and even the language are very similar. If one copied from the other, it is likely in my mind that given the death of Peter (c.a. 65-67 AD) a martyr in Rome, Italy, and that Jude probably died later in the east, Jude copied from Peter). They treat common disruptive practices in the church at the time, however, one in the west and the other in the east.

The evil, and alarming practices in 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, become even darker and more sinister in Jude:

2 Peter 2:1-3:4	Jude vs. 4	false prophets
2 Peter 2:1	Jude vs. 4	destructive heresies
2 Peter 2:3	Jude vs. 16	speaking many words
2 Peter 2:4, 5	Jude vs. 5, 6	evil angels

Peter paints these people as godless and extremely dangerous, while Jude describes them as depraved and lawless. Peter appears to mention them as coming into the life of the church, while Jude writes about them already in the church. Jude's illustrations are darker and more hopeless than Peter's.

Writing about the authority of God, and the authority which was given to the leaders of Israel and to the Church, Jude carefully substantiates with Old Testament references:

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|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| - Sodom and Gomorrah                | Genesis 19       |
| - Cain murdering his brother        | Genesis 4        |
| - Balaam betraying his position     | Numbers 31:8, 16 |
| - Korah against God-given authority | Numbers 16       |

References used by Jude, other than the Old Testament, and Peter's Second Letter:

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|---|------------------|
| From the apocryphal Book of the Assumption of Moses   | Jude vs. 9       |
| Book of Enoch 1:9,                                    | Jude vss. 14, 15 |
| Book of Wisdom 11:15, 26, 18:25, and 19:15            |                  |
| Book of 2 Maccabees 11:20                             |                  |
| Book of The Testament of Moses, echoes from this book |                  |

An Outline of St. Jude:

- |             |                                     |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| - Vs. 1-4   | Introduction and reason for writing |
| - Vs. 5-16  | Condemnation of false teachers      |
| - Vs. 17-23 | Christian duty in the situation     |
| - Vs. 24-25 | A doxology                          |

# **The Reading below is on the Letter of Jude New Standard Revised Version of the Bible**

## **Salutation**

1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James,

To those who are called, who are beloved in God the Father and kept safe for Jesus Christ:

2 May mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance.

## **Occasion of the Letter**

3 Beloved, while eagerly preparing to write to you about the salvation we share, I find it necessary to write and appeal to you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. <sup>4</sup>For certain intruders have stolen in among you, people who long ago were designated for this condemnation as ungodly, who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

## **Judgement on False Teachers**

5 Now I desire to remind you, though you are fully informed, that the Lord, who once for all saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed those who did not believe. <sup>6</sup>And the angels who did not keep their own position, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains in deepest darkness for the judgement of the great day. <sup>7</sup>Likewise, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which, in the same manner as they, indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural lust, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

8 Yet in the same way these dreamers also defile the flesh, reject authority, and slander the glorious ones. <sup>9</sup>But when the archangel Michael contended with the devil and disputed about the body of Moses, he did not dare to bring a condemnation of slander against him, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!' <sup>10</sup>But these people slander whatever they do not understand, and they are destroyed by those things that, like irrational animals, they know by instinct. <sup>11</sup>Woe to them! For they go the way of Cain, and abandon themselves to Balaam's error for the sake of gain, and perish in Korah's rebellion. <sup>12</sup>These are blemishes on your love-feasts, while they feast with you without fear, feeding themselves. They are waterless clouds carried along by the winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, uprooted; <sup>13</sup>wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the deepest darkness has been reserved for ever.

14 It was also about these that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, 'See, the Lord is coming with tens of thousands of his holy ones, <sup>15</sup>to execute judgement on all, and to convict everyone of all the deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.' <sup>16</sup>These

are grumblers and malcontents; they indulge their own lusts; they are bombastic in speech, flattering people to their own advantage.

## **Warnings and Exhortations**

17 But you, beloved, must remember the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; <sup>18</sup>for they said to you, ‘In the last time there will be scoffers, indulging their own ungodly lusts.’ <sup>19</sup>It is these worldly people, devoid of the Spirit, who are causing divisions. <sup>20</sup>But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; <sup>21</sup>keep yourselves in the love of God; look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. <sup>22</sup>And have mercy on some who are wavering; <sup>23</sup>save others by snatching them out of the fire; and have mercy on still others with fear, hating even the tunic defiled by their bodies.

## **Benediction**

24 Now to him who is able to keep you from falling, and to make you stand without blemish in the presence of his glory with rejoicing, <sup>25</sup>to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time and now and for ever. Amen.