

# The Epistle of Jude

Jude's epistle is one of the shortest books in the Bible, comprised of only twenty-five verses and less than one thousand words in the original Greek text. Ray Stedman describes the book as "*A clash of cymbals! A boom of tympani! A cannon blast and a cascade of fireworks* (Adventuring Through the Bible, p. 769). He indicates that the words of the writer thunder from the page.

## **Author**

The author identifies himself as Jude, the brother of James (1:1). The name Jude can also be Judas or Judah and there are two in the New Testament, each one having a brother named James (Matthew 13:55; Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13, 14, Mark 6:3). This particular James and Jude (Judas) were born to Mary and Joseph, telling us that they were also brothers of our Lord. Though they were brothers, they were not believe that Jesus was the Christ until after His death and resurrection (John 7:5). They are not to be confused with the apostles with the same names.

Jude does not mention his family relationship to Jesus directly. James at this time was a leading figure in the church in Jerusalem. It may be that the mention of his name was enough to indicate to his readers his identity. One author suggested that his relationship to Jesus changed after Christ was in His glorified body. He refers to himself as a "slave" of Jesus Christ and his name means "praise."

The early church fathers did not at first accept the epistle as being part of sacred scripture because he quoted from the apocryphal Enoch, noting that he was the seventh from Adam and because of the amount of material duplicated from Peter. It was later accepted that there could have been common oral and written sources for both authors.

## **Date**

There is no mention of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and since we know that Jude may have borrowed from Peter or from the same sources from which Peter borrowed, it is thought that it must have been written between 67 A.D. and 70 A.D. Since Jude comes out so strongly against apostasy suggests that the false teachers in that day were more organized since Peter wrote his last epistle. The place from which the text is written is not mentioned, though it was probably written and sent out from Jerusalem.

## **Purpose**

Jude is writing to a general audience of believers (v. 4), which suggests that he had several churches in mind. He seems to have had three key objectives:

1. To instruct his readers in the common salvation.
2. To warn them concerning the doctrinal error which had found its way into the church.
  - A. He identifies the false doctrine and its adherents.
  - B. He demonstrates the seriousness of their perversion.
3. To encourage them to stand firm in their faith in the midst of the attacks of the false teachers.

Both the presence and doom of the scoffers are noted in the apostolic preaching and the Old Testament Scriptures.

Jude started out to write a treatise on the "common salvation," an abstract term for Christianity. As he started to write, he noted that there were problems in the church that compelled him to write, encouraging believers to contend for the faith which was once delivered, being handed down from the apostles (I Corinthians 15:3). This was a reference to apostolic preaching of the Word of God.

The main heresy that Jude warns the believers about is antinomianism and is described in verse 4 as "***turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness***", which resulted then in their denial of "**the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.**" This sin (heresy) is summed up in verse 16 - "***These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.***"

### Source

1. We do not know how Jude and II Peter are related. Jude may have borrowed from Peter or Peter may have borrowed from Jude.
2. It is more intriguing that Jude quotes from the apocryphal book of Enoch (I Enoch 60:8 and 1:9), which was considered to be a forgery since the so-called author had been long dead. The Apostle Paul also quoted from reliable secular sources (Acts 17:28; I Corinthians 15:33; Titus 1:12).

### Outline Summary

- I. Introduction - Purpose (1-4)
- II. Apostasy (5-16)
- III. Admonishment (17-23)
- IV. Conclusion - Benediction (24-25)

False teachers who deny the Lord give license to sin, therefore, we must earnestly contending for the faith in the evil days of apostasy.

1. Earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints (3).
2. Apostasy in the church (4).
3. Apostasy in the past (5-7, 17-19).
4. Activity of the apostates (8-10).
5. Certain doom of the apostates (11-16).
6. Admonishment to believers (17-23)
7. Build up yourselves in the midst of apostasy (20-21).
8. Show mercy to those with doubts (22).
9. Restore those who have been influenced by apostates and have fallen into sin (23).
10. Christ's ministry in the believer's life (24-25).

Jude uses Old Testament illustrations of sins that led to apostasy noting Israel's unbelief (5), the rebellion of angels (6), Sodom and Gomorrah's immorality (7), Cain's self will (11), Balaam's covetousness (11) and Korah's rejection of God's authority (11).

**Key Verse** - Jude 24

***Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.***