

Jude – Introduction

Author

1. The author identifies himself as “Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James”
2. Jude is Judah in Hebrew and Judas in Greek.
 - a. The name Jude is only used by Jews in the ancient world.
 - b. The name Jude would be used in place of Judas in Christian circles for obvious reason
3. Which Jude? There are several options, but only one that is likely.
 - a. Jude (Judah, Judas) the half brother of Jesus and brother of James
 - i. This is the accepted and most probable author of this letter
 - ii. Jude identifies himself with a brother who is simply called James. This brother James was well-known enough to simply be “James”. This is the way the author of the book of James identifies himself, simply as “James”.
 - iii. It would appear that Jude and James (brothers) are well-known to the readers of this letter
 - iv. Jude is the youngest of the brothers
 - v. In John 7:5,
“For not even his brothers believed in him,” during Jesus’ ministry, but after the resurrection they were with the believers in Acts 1:14,
“All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.”
 - vi. Jude was based in the church in Israel, but traveled and taught as did Peter and Paul according to 1 Corinthians 9:5 –
“Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?”
 - vii. Eusebius records an account from Hegesippus (wrote notes on the history of the church around 165-175 AD, see here <https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/hegesippus.html>) concerning the grandsons of Jude who still lived and farmed near Nazareth. Here are Hegesippus’ words:

“There still survived of the kindred of the Lord the grandsons of Judas, who according to the flesh was called his brother. These were informed against, as belonging to the family of David, and Evocatus brought them before Domitian Caesar (81-96 AD): for *that emperor* dreaded the advent of Christ, as Herod had done.

So he asked them whether they were of *the family of David*; and they confessed they were. Next he asked them what property they had, or how much money they possessed. They both replied that they had only 9000 *denaria between them*, each of them owning half that sum; but even this they said they did not possess in cash, but as the estimated value of some land, consisting of thirty-nine *plethra* only, out of which they had to pay the dues, and that they supported themselves by their own labour. And then they began to hold out their hands, exhibiting, as proof of their manual labour, the roughness of their skin, and the corns raised on their hands by constant work.

Being then asked concerning Christ and His kingdom, what was its nature, and when and where it was to appear, they returned answer that it was not of this world, nor of the earth, but belonging to the sphere of heaven and angels, and would make its appearance at the end of time, when He shall come in glory, and judge living and dead, and render to every one according to the course of his life.

Thereupon Domitian passed no condemnation upon them, but treated them with contempt, as too mean for notice, and let them go free. At the same time he issued a command, and put a stop to the persecution against the Church.

When they were released they became leaders of the churches, as was natural in the case of those who were at once martyrs and of the kindred of the Lord. And, after the establishment of peace *to the Church*, their lives were prolonged *to the reign* of Trojan.

- b. Judas, the apostle known as Thaddeus (Matthew 10:2-4 and Mark 3:16-19) and Judas son of James (Luke 6:13-16 and Acts 1:13)
 - i. Verse 17 seems to eliminate the possibility of Jude being one of the apostles when he writes, “you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - ii. If Jude was one of the twelve it would have been likely that he identifies his authority when he wrote this important issue in the church
- c. Judas Barsabbas, a leader in the early church of Jerusalem that traveled to Antioch with Paul, Barnabas and Silas (Acts 15:22).
 - i. This Judas Barsabbas could have been the brother of Joseph Barsabbas who was one of two options to replace Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:23)
 - ii. If he wrote the letter he likely would have needed to identify himself as Judas Barsabbas or, even better, Judas brother of Joseph Barsabbas.
- d. Judas the Galilean, a revolutionary who led a rebellion in 6 AD encouraging the Jews not to register. His political philosophy led to the Zealots and the Jewish wars with Rome in 66-70 AD. His sons followed him and were executed by the procurator in 46 AD. His grandson Menahem ben Judah was one of the early leaders of the Jewish Revolt in 66 AD. Gamaliel refers to this Judas the Galilean as an example (along with Theudas) of failed Messianic movements when he spoke before the Sanhedrin in 30 AD in Acts 5:37.

Place of Writing

1. Since Jude and his family remained in Israel it is likely he wrote from Israel, even Jerusalem, as did James.

Recipients

1. Jewish because of OT illustrations:
 - a. Exodus (5)
 - b. Death of many Israelites in wilderness (5)
 - c. Sodom and Gomorrah (7)
 - d. Moses' body (9)
 - e. Cain (11)
 - f. Balaam (11)
 - g. Korah (11)
 - h. Enoch (14)
 - i. Adam (14)
2. Referred not only to the Jewish text of Scripture, but also to the Jewish apocryphal text that were known by Jews:

- a. Book of Enoch
- b. Assumption of Moses
- 3. It would seem these were Jews in the churches in Israel
- 4. Jude was a traveling teacher, so he could be addressing Jews throughout the Syria, Egypt since he is writing in excellent Greek in a Hellenistic style.
- 5. The recipients could have been Jewish believers living in Gentile society.
 - a. The text of the letter is filled with Jewish references
 - b. The sins and lawless behavior matches that of Gentile society and the corrupt philosophies of the pagans

Date of Writing

- 1. General estimate is Jude was written sometime between 40-80 AD
- 2. If Peter used Jude then Jude had to be written 40-63 AD.
 - a. This would make Second Peter the earliest testimony to the existence of the book of Jude.
- 3. If Jude used Second Peter then it was written 64-80 AD.
- 4. False teaching that Jude was addressing was already in the churches in 55 AD (think Corinth) and 57 AD when Paul wrote to the Romans that some had twisted Paul's teaching into an excuse to sins:

“And why not do evil that good may come?—as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.” (Romans 3:8)

“It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their actions” (2 Corinthians 11:15, 57 AD)

- 5. A good date for the book of Jude would be 55 AD.

Purpose

- 1. Warn believers about immoral men traveling and teaching false doctrine that perverted the grace of God into a license to sin.
- 2. Jude's love for the believers caused him to warn of the doctrinal and behavioral error many of the church leaders were promoting.
- 3. Beware of the traveling apostate teachers in the church
- 4. Contend for the faith.
 - a. “The Faith” was the doctrine and traditions handed down by the Lord and his apostles.
 - b. Paul did the same in 55 AD in 1 Corinthians 11:23 and 15:3:

“For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

Who were the apostates?

1. Denying the lordship of Christ (4)
2. Practicing unrestrained sinful desires (4, 8, 16)
3. Rebelling against authority (8, 11, 18)
4. Sexually Immoral - Following their own desires (16, 19)
5. Greedy - Shepherding only themselves, or concerned only with gain for themselves (11-12, 16)
6. Divisive (19)
7. Finding fault (16)
8. Boasting (16)
9. Claim to be leaders in the Christian community and had been accepted by Christians
10. They had nothing useful to offer the people
11. They abused the teaching of God's grace to turn forgiveness into a chance to continue in their lawless lifestyle (4)

The Book of Jude

1. Used many figures of speech
2. Advanced Hellenized style of Greek is used in the letter. The author is well educated.
3. Jude uses 13 Greek words not used anywhere else in the New Testament
4. Uses up to 18 groups of three or triads in this short letter:
 - a. Identification: Jude – servant – brother (1)
 - b. To those...called – loved – kept (1)
 - c. Greeting: mercy – peace – love (2)
 - d. Apostates: godless men – change the grace of our Lord – deny Jesus Christ (4)
 - e. Examples: people of Egypt – angels – Sodom and Gomorrah (5-7)
 - f. Apostates: pollute their own bodies – reject authority – slander celestial beings
 - g. Examples: taken the way of Cain – rushed for profit into Balaam's error – destroyed in Korah's rebellion (11)
 - h. Characterized: divide you – follow mere natural instincts – do not have the Spirit
 - i. Response: be merciful – snatch others from the fire – to others show mercy
 - j. Apostates 4x: grumblers/fault-finders – follow their own evil desires – boast about themselves – flatter others
 - k. Imagery 5x: blemishes – shepherds leading only themselves – clouds without rain – autumn trees without fruit – wild waves – wandering stars

Second Peter

1. Peter writing Second Peter right before his death in 64 AD is similar to Jude.
2. One of these is the case:
 - a. Peter and Jude were familiar with a text that we do not have, and both used it.
 - b. Peter in 64 AD was familiar with the book of Jude (written before 64 AD) and used it.
 - c. Jude was familiar (after 64 AD) with Second Peter (64 AD) and used it.
3. Compare Jude with Second Peter 2:3-3:3:

| JUDE | | 2 PETER |
|-------------|---|----------------|
| 4 | False teachers' condemnation from the past | 2:3 |
| 4 | Deny the Sovereign Lord | 2:1 |
| 6 | Angels confined for judgment; "gloomy" (Peter) and "darkness" (Jude) both translated the Greek word <i>zophos</i> | 2:4 |
| 7 | Sodom and Gomorrah | 2:6 |
| 8 | Reject or despise authority and slander celestial beings | 2:10 |
| 9 | Angels do not bring slanderous accusations | 2:11 |
| 12 | Apostate teachers are blemishes | 2:13 |
| 12 | Jude: "clouds with out rain, blown blown by the wind" Peter: "springs without water and mists driven by a storm" | 2:17 |
| 18 | Scoffers following their own evil/ungodly desires | 3:3 |