

AUTHORSHIP OF JUDE

The author identifies himself as Jude (v. 1). The Greek is literally, *Judas*. Traditionally, English versions have used Jude to distinguish him from Judas (Iscaiot) who betrayed Jesus. (There was another Judas who was one of the original Twelve.) Further, Jude identifies himself as the brother of James and bond-servant (Greek, *doulos*) of Jesus Christ, just as James had. Jude is listed as the half-brother of Jesus in Matt. 13:55 and Mark 6:3. In Hebrew the book is called *Judah* and the Greek *Judas*.

We are not told much concerning the life of Jude, other than his relation in the immediate family of our Lord. In addition, we know that he had four brothers including Jesus and at least two sisters. We also learn from 1 Corinthians 9:5 that Jude was married. This same passage seems to indicate that Jude and his wife traveled around ministering to various churches.

THE PURPOSE & RECIPIENTS OF JUDE

Purpose

In verse three Jude tells his audience why he is writing to them:

"Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

Jude's original purpose had been to encourage the saints in the salvation that was enjoyed by believers everywhere. But this purpose needed to be set aside so that Jude could address a more important matter – the need to contend earnestly for the faith. Word had apparently been received by Jude about the infiltration of false teachers into the midst of these believers. Now there was a need to be aware of them as well as to reject their teachings.

Recipients

Jude seems to write to no specific group of people (or at least gives no indication of such). Rather the letter is simply addressed "To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ" (v. 1; any and all believers can fall into this category), also addressing them as "beloved" or "dear friends" (v. 3).

DATE OF WRITING

c. AD 75

Though the subject matter is very similar to 2 Peter, one of the chief differences between Jude and 2 Peter is that while Peter warned that "there shall be false teachers" (2:1), Jude states that "there are certain men who have secretly slipped in among you" (v. 4). Since 2 Peter anticipates the problem and Jude speaks of it as present, apparently Jude was written some time later than 2 Peter. If 2 Peter is dated about AD 66, then Jude might be placed around AD 70-80.¹

¹ J. Hampton Keathley III, "The Non-Pauline Epistles," Biblical Studies Foundation, 2004.

In 2 Peter there is insight given into the nature of the false prophets who will come into the church. Their character will be flawed and among other things they will deny the return of Jesus. In Jude we find the flawed character of the teachers but we do not find any warning against the false teaching that the Lord will not return. This type of false teaching seems to fit well during the time of Rome's war against the resistance in Israel (AD 66-70). During that time it would quite likely that the Lord could return at any moment to fulfill the Olivet Discourse. However, when the war concluded without His return the denial of His return would become a part of the doctrine of these false teachers.

SPECIAL GENRE

Many scholars regard this epistle as an "epistolary sermon." Jude could have delivered what he said in this epistle as a homily (sermon) if he had been in his readers' presence. Instead he cast it in the form of a letter since he could not address them directly. Other New Testament epistles that are really written homilies include James, Hebrews, and First John.²

ANALYSIS

THEME OF JUDE

Contending for the faith, against apostasy

Other thematic concepts:

- Certain doom of false teachers
- Judgment
- The return of Christ
- Abiding in the love of Jesus Christ
- Security in Christ

KEY VERSES IN JUDE

3 *Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.*

20-21 *But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

24 *Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, ...*

² Thomas L. Constable, *Study Notes on Jude* (Garland, TX: Sonic Light Publications, 2006) p. 2.

OUTLINE

Jude

I. Salutation (1-2)

II. The occasion for writing (3-4)

- A. Change of subject: From salvation to contending for the faith (3)
- B. Reason for the change: The infiltration of false teachers (4)

III. The judgment of the ungodly (5-19)

- A. Precedent: God's judgment of the ungodly in the Old Testament (5-7)
 - 1. Unbelieving Israel (5)
 - 2. Fallen angels (6)
 - 3. Sodom and Gomorrah (7)
- B. Parallel: Character of the present ungodly teachers (8-13)
 - 1. Their slanderous speech exposed (8-10)
 - 2. The ungodly character portrayed (11-13)
- C. Prophecy: The destruction of the ungodly is sure (14-19)
 - 1. The prophecy of Enoch (14-16)
 - 2. The prophecy of the apostles (17-19)

IV. The exhortation to believers (20-23)

- A. A call to persevere (20-21)
- B. A call to show mercy (22-23)

V. Doxology (24-25)

A seminary student³ concluded that Jude deliberately constructed his book in a chiasmic structure to focus on the warning of woe in verse 11.

- A** To you who are kept in Jesus Christ (1)
- B** Mercy to you (2)
- C** Common salvation (3a)
- D** Contend earnestly for the faith (3b)
- E** Licentious people (4)
- F** I remind you (5a)
- G** The Lord destroyed unbelievers (5b)
- H** Angels in darkness for rebelling (6)
- I** Sodom and Gomorrah an example (7)
- J** Defilement during sleep (8)
- K** Michael and Satan argued about Moses (9)
- L** Like unreasoning animals (10)
- M** Destruction for ungodly actions (10)
- N** *Woe to them!* (11)
- M'** Cain punished for ungodly actions (11)
- L'** Balaam's unreasoning animal (11)
- K'** Korah disputed with Moses (11)
- J'** Hidden reefs present unseen danger (12)
- I'** Open exhibition of shame (12-13)
- H'** Stars wander in darkness (13)
- G'** Enoch prophesied judgment on the ungodly (14-15)
- F'** Remember the apostles' warning (17)
- E'** Mocking people (18-19)
- D'** Build yourselves up in the faith (20)
- C'** Wait for eternal life (21)
- B'** Have mercy on some (22-23)
- A'** To Him who keeps you from from falling (24)

ARGUMENT

Read G. Campbell Morgan, "Jude," in reading compilation.⁴

24-25

Jude exploded with a most elevated doxology, answering the question, "But who will deliver us from the apostates and this dangerous apostasy into which they are attempting to lead us?"

(Doxology = "a hymn or form of words containing an ascription of praise to God";

doxa (Gk.) = glory

³ Brian Baker, 1995, as quoted by Thomas L. Constable, *Study Notes on Jude*, p. 3.

⁴ G. Campbell Morgan, *An Exposition of the Whole Bible* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell 1959, p. 532.