

NAME

The title of the epistle, Iouda (Ιουδα), is derived from the name of the attributive author, Jude.

AUTHOR

The writer of the epistle identifies himself as “*Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James*” (1) - a very modest statement if indeed Jude is the half-brother of Jesus. Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3 name Judas (Jude) and James as brothers of Jesus.

Laney:

While there may have been another Jude with a brother named James, there was only one eminent, well known James - the brother of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:7; Galatians 1:19; 2:9; James 1:1). The author would not have been Judas the apostle, the son (or brother) of James (Luke 6:16), for the author seems to distinguish himself from the apostles (17). Because of the early martyrdom of the apostle James, Jude's reference, is more probably designating James the leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15; Galatians 1,2), and the half-brother of Jesus. The internal and external evidence indicates that the author of the epistle was Jude, the half-brother of the Lord Jesus.

The authenticity of the epistle is confirmed by its place in the second century Muratorian Canon and its recognition by Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria who writes in his Adumbrations that the letter was written by Jude, the brother of James, the Lord's brother. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis (c. 315-403 A.D.) affirms as well that he epistle was written by the half-brother of the Lord. Origen (c. 250 A.D.) hints of the doubts concerning the epistle, but did not share those doubts personally. Eusebius places the epistle among the disputed books, and Jerome explains that the epistle was rejected by some because of its appeal to the apocryphal book of Enoch as an authority. The epistle of Jude was recognized as canonical by the Council of Carthage (397 A.D.).

While it is evident that Jude the half-brother of the Lord Jesus authored the epistle, little is really known about him. Though he was not a believer until after the resurrection (John 7:5; Acts 1:14) he no doubt was influenced by his devout parents and personal contact he had with Jesus. Jude and some of the other believing brothers of the Lord later engaged in some itinerant preaching (1 Corinthians 9:5). Nothing more is know of the author except his composition of this brief letter.

DATE

The date is uncertain.

Laney:

The apostate conditions mentioned in Jude appear to be more advanced than those of 2 Peter. While 2 Peter warned of the coming of false teachers (2 Peter 2:1,2; 3:3,17), Jude writes that the false teachers are on the scene (4,8,10). Jude 17,18 seems as well to refer to the prophecy of 2 Peter 3:2,3. This would indicate that Jude was written after 2 Peter which may be dated in the summer of 64 A.D. Since Jude would probably have included the destruction of Jerusalem in his catalogue of judgments (5-7) had it already taken place, it is very probable that the epistle was written before 70 A.D. Jude was probably written not long after 64 A.D. when the error Peter had predicted had come to fruition (c. 65-68 A.D.).

If however, his reference in verse 17 implies the passage of a number of years, a later date is necessitated, possibly 80-85 A.D. The earlier date is more probable.

THEME

Linda: *"Fight For Faith"*

Halley (page 44): *"Imminent Apostasy"*

Laney: *"Contending for the orthodox faith in the face of apostasy"*

The purpose of Jude is to encourage the readers to contend for the orthodox faith (3); to remind the readers of the certain divine judgment on the ungodly (5); and to instruct the believers how to offset the evil effects of the false teachers (17-23). Jude does not refute the heretical doctrine of the false teachers, but simply denounces their conduct and warns the readers of the certain judgment on those who pursue such wicked ways.

Mitchell: *"The Book of Apostasy"*

Jude's statement of purpose is clearly given in verse 3. He set about to write to his readers of their *"common salvation,"* but was constrained instead to exhort them *"to contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints."* Apparently false teachers were taking their toll and Jude feels constrained to pen this strong plea in an attempt to thwart these evil men. The particulars of the various heresies receive not detailed description or rebuttal, but the heretics themselves draw vehement castigation.

Key Word (Nelson's): Contend for the faith - this epistle condemns the practices of heretical teachers in the church and counsels the readers to stand firm, grow in their faith, and contend for the truth.

Jude's purpose is clear: The threat of subversive teachers has compelled him to write and exhort his readers *"to contend earnestly for the faith."* False teachers reject Christ's authority, but Jude stressed that Jesus is Lord, now and forever.

Two Greek words convey this meaning of lord or master, *kyrios* and *despotēs*, and both of them are used to describe Jesus in the New Testament. Some other references include:

<i>"the only Lord God and Our Lord Jesus Christ"</i>	Jude 4
<i>"My Lord and my God"</i>	John 20:28
<i>"Lord of lords"</i>	1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 11:15
<i>"the Lord's Day"</i>	Revelation 1:10
<i>"the Lord's Supper"</i>	1 Corinthians 11:20
<i>"Prepare the way of the Lord"</i>	Matthew 3:3

Key Verse (Nelson's):

"Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints." (Jude 3).

RELATIONSHIP OF JUDE TO 2 PETER:

Mitchell:

There is a marked similarity in the description of false teachers in the respective books of 2 Peter and Jude:

2 Peter

1. _____
2. The fallen angels
3. The flood
4. Sodom and Gomorrah
5. _____
6. The way of Balaam
7. _____

Jude

1. Israel in the wilderness
2. The fallen angels
3. _____
4. Sodom and Gomorrah
5. The way of Cain
6. The error of Balaam
7. The gainsaying of Korah

How do we account for this? It is possible that one writer having read the other's letter was heavily influenced by it. There are Biblical scholars who argue both ways, that Peter copied from Jude, and that Jude copied from Peter. Of the two possibilities, it seems more likely that 2 Peter was written first and circulated. Jude upon reading Peter's letter was profoundly influenced by it and borrowed from it. For example: While 2 Peter speaks of the coming of the false teachers (future tense), Jude speaks of them as having already arrived upon the scene. However, it is also entirely possible that both Peter and Jude draw upon a common source unknown to us. Certainly they were both inspired by the same Holy Spirit.

Extra Biblical Quotations:

Mitchell:

Jude quotes from two pieces of non-Biblical literature: Assumption of Moses (9), and the Book of Enoch (14,15). It should be remembered that Paul also did this on occasion (Acts 17:28; Titus 1:12). The citation of such material does not imply that the books were considered inspired, nor does it mean that the Biblical writer approved of everything written in these books. In this instance it means that Jude, under Divine inspiration, selected the quotations out of these two books because they were true. There is no indication that these two quotes contain error. There is not the slightest hint that Jude was simply citing fantasy to illustrate a point.

Outline:

- I. The Introduction 1-2
- II. The Exposure of Danger 3-16
 - A. The Examples of Judgment 3-7
 1. The Peril 3,4
 2. The Punishment 5-7
 - B. The Character of the Apostates 8-16
- III. The Exhortations to Duty / The Response of the Believers 17-23
 - A. To Remember 17-19
 - B. To Enjoy 20,21
 - C. To Discriminate 22,23
- IV. The Benediction 24,25

Definitions:

1. Apostasy: ἀποστασία (απο = from - separation and cessation + στάσις = a standing, place, status) = defection, revolt. In English = a complete forsaking of one's religion, faith, political party, or principles.
2. Heresy: αἵρεσις = choosing, choice, that which is chosen, opinion. In English = a belief different from the accepted belief of a church, school, profession, or other group. The holding of such a belief.
3. Orthodox: ὀρθόδοξος (ὀρθός = straight, upright, direct + δόξα = opinion, judgment). In English = generally accepted, especially in religion, adhering to established customs and traditions, conforming to the basic Christian faith as established in the early creeds.

RECIPIENTS

Laney:

The epistle is addressed to those who are “called,” “beloved,” and “kept” (1). There is no indication as to the specific locality of the readers. The problems dealt with by Jude are too specific for the letter to have been addressed to believers in general. The readers had heard of the words of the apostles, and were acquainted with the teachings of Paul (18,19). The writer assumes the reader's knowledge of Jewish intertestamental and apocryphal literature, but this does not demand a Jewish setting. The syncretistic nature of the heresy may suggest a Gentile background. James confined his ministry to Palestine, and Jude may have followed that example. In that case it is not unlikely that the readers were Palestinian Christians, both Jew and Gentile.

Historical Setting:

Laney:

Jude writes his epistle to deal with an outbreak of false teaching (3,4). He addresses himself to the same problem of the libertine Gnostics which concerned Peter (2 Peter 1:1,2,10), and encourages the readers to contend earnestly for the orthodox faith (3).

The false teachers who had crept into the church were denying Christ and perverting the doctrine of grace, considering immoral indulgence perfectly legitimate (4). They were guilty of rejecting authority, and preferred their own dreaming to God's revelation (8). These libertines were critical of the orthodox doctrine of angels and used language against good angels that Michael the archangel did not dare to use against evil angels (8-10). They were ruled by their passions (4,16) and scoffed at the accepted Christian way (17). The character and activity of the false teachers was certain evidence that they were devoid of God's Spirit (16,19). The content of the epistle indicates that the error Jude deals with is the heresy of the incipient Gnosticism that manifested itself in antinomian license.

CONTRIBUTION TO CANON

Mitchell:

This epistle describes the character, course, and consummation of those who depart from God (apostates). It is a letter of most solemn warning for today. Examples are given from the Old Testament of people who did apostasize. By contrast, those who keep themselves in the love of God are kept from falling.

RESOURCES

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Gromacki, Robert C. *New Testament Survey*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Book House, 1978

Robert H. Gundry, Ph.D., *A Survey Of The New Testament*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1970

Halley, Henry H. *Halley's Bible Handbook*, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan Publishing House

Horton, David, General Editor. *The Portable Seminary*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Bethany House Publishers, 2006

Nelson's Quick Reference - Bible Maps And Charts, Nashville, Tennessee; Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1994

As general resources I've relied on my class notes from various professors at Biola University (especially those of Dr. Curtis Mitchell), Western Conservative Baptist Seminary (WCBS - [especially those of Dr. J. Carl Laney]), and Talbot Seminary as well as notes shared with me by Annie Kartoian.

Additional reference material has come from the study Bibles of the English Standard Version, New American Standard Version, and The New Living Translation.

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