

Jude

Lesson One

Introduction to the Book

I. Author

- A. This epistle was written by Jude, the brother of James and half-brother of Jesus.
 - 1. He identifies himself as Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James (vs. 1).
 - 2. Though there are several men named James mentioned in the New Testament (and several named Jude, also), this James was a prominent leader in the church at Jerusalem (Acts 15:13; Galatians 1:18; 2:9; etc.).
 - a. James was a son of Mary and Joseph (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3).
 - b. Thus, he was also a brother of Jesus (Galatians 1:19).
 - i. In truth, he was only a half-brother.
 - ii. They shared the same mother, but not the same father.
 - c. James was the penman of the book of James.
 - d. Neither of these men were apostles, but servants of Jesus.
 - 3. Jude was also a son of Mary and Joseph and a half-brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3).
 - 4. His description of himself as a servant of Jesus Christ is evidence of his humility and modesty.
- B. There are only a few details of his life revealed in Scripture.
 - 1. On occasion, Jesus' family desired to speak with Him, but He emphasized that His disciples were His true family (Matthew 12:46ff; Mark 3:31ff).
 - 2. Due to his name coming last in the lists, it is likely that he was the youngest of Jesus' brothers.
 - 3. Like his brothers, Jude did not believe in Jesus as the Messiah until after His resurrection from the dead (John 7:3-8; Acts 1:14).
 - 4. It seems that Jude was married and travelled with his wife in his evangelistic work (1 Corinthians 9:5).
 - 5. There is a tradition recorded by Eusebius (from Hegesippus) that two of Jude's grandsons – Zocer and James – became elders in the Lord's church and lived until the time of Emperor Trajan.
- C. It is worth noting that Jude seems to exclude himself from the apostles (vs. 17).

II. Date

- A. There is no indication in the letter itself about the date of its writing.
- B. Brother Woods states: "All of which we may be sure is that it was written during the latter half of the first century of the Christian era...."
- C. Because of similarities with Second Peter, many assume that it was written after Peter's final epistle.
- D. However, this cannot be proven; and, it is based on speculation that Jude copied from Peter.
- E. This letter could have been written anytime from AD 66 – 80; thus, several scholars choose to date it at AD 75.

III. Audience

- A. Simply put, this letter was written to Christians.
- B. No geographical information is given as to where these Christians lived.
- C. It is clear that there was a local need that is addressed by this letter.
- D. However, it also has a universal appeal and application.

IV. Purpose

- A. This epistle was written to encourage Christians to “earnestly contend for the faith.”
- B. There was a threat to the church and to the faith of individual Christians because of false teachers.
- C. From verse 3, it seems that situation arose quickly and was a spiritual emergency that needed to be addressed strongly and quickly.
- D. This book was written to condemn sin and error with severity.
- E. It was written to warn the church with boldness and vigor.
- F. Its lessons are just as vital and need today as they were then.

V. Style

- A. This epistle is unique in its consistent and persistent use of triplets.
 - 1. Verse 1
 - 2. Verse 2
 - 3. Verses 5-7
 - 4. Verse 8
 - 5. Verse 11
 - 6. Verse 16
 - 7. Verse 19
 - 8. Verses 22-23 (ASV)
 - 9. Verse 25
- B. Comparisons with Second Peter
 - 1. There are many similarities between these two books.
 - 2. Thus, many commentators spend much effort arguing which wrote first and who borrowed from whom.
 - 3. To those who accept the inspiration of the Bible, this question is moot.
 - 4. If a similar situation arose in two different places, would not God give the same instructions to both congregations?
 - 5. Perhaps Jude referred to the writings of Peter just as Peter referenced the writings of the Old Testament.
 - 6. No matter the specifics, both men were inspired of God and their letters are Scripture.

VI. Outline

- A. Verses 1 – 4 Introduction and Purpose
- B. Verses 5 – 19 Warnings against False Teachers
 - 1. Three examples of OT punishment (vs. 5-10)
 - 2. Three examples of individual sin (vs. 11)
 - 3. Description of the false teachers (vs. 12-19)
- C. Verses 20 – 25 Exhortations to Faithfulness