

Jude

What's in a Name?	One of the most challenging aspects of the NT concerns trying to assign the appropriate figure to the right name. Many of Jesus' disciples had common names, like James and Jude. In the NT, we have James the Greater (John's brother), James the Lesser, and James the brother of Jesus. Jude is similar. It's a shortened form of "Judas." There are three Judas' we know about from the NT times: Judas Iscariot, Judas not Iscariot, and Judas, the half-brother of Jesus. In this writer's view, the "Jude" who wrote the book used this version of the name to distance himself from association with Judas Iscariot.
Which Jude	<p>Judas not Iscariot, or Jude the Apostle, was also known as Judas Thaddaeus and Lebbaeus. He only has one speaking part in the NT: "Lord, why are you going to reveal yourself only to us and not to the world at large" (Jn 14:22)? After the close of the NT, this Jude joined with Simon the Zealot to preach the Gospel. The other Jude is the half-brother of Jesus. We know this from Matthew: "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas" (Mt 13:55)?</p> <p>In light of this, internal context in the letter itself helps us with authorship: "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and a brother of James" (1:1). If Jude the Apostle wrote it, you would think he would have appealed to his apostolic authority. Instead, he tells his audience to remember the words of the apostles (v17), implying he was not one. This language favors the position that author was the half-brother of Jesus, not the apostle.</p>
Who He Was Is Important for Context and Interpretation	<p>The Book of James has a similar contextual problem with regard to authorship. The contents of the book itself, however, doesn't affect our understanding of it regardless of the "James" who wrote it (we suggested James, the half-brother of Jesus). The Book of Jude is different because it is polemical in nature. A polemic is a strongly critical attack on someone or something. Those "someone(s)" are heretics in this book.</p> <p>That's important because we know from the NT that Jesus' half-brothers, James, and Jude, were skeptical of Jesus during his ministry. John tells us that Jesus' own brothers did not believe him (Jn 7:5). Jude and James did after he rose from the dead. And Jude, now no longer a skeptic, has a bone to pick with heretics who got Jesus wrong.</p>
Jude's Purpose Is Clear	He gives us his clear purpose for writing in the first paragraph: "I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith...for certain individuals secretly slipped in...who pervert the grace of God into a license for immorality and deny the Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 1:3-4).
What Separates Jude from the Other Polemical Letters in the NT	We've seen several books in the NT that are polemical in nature and highly critical of heretics, Colossians and 1 John for example. Jude, however, is an important book for us today because he criticizes heretics in view of the Great Apostasy that will take place at the end of the age. The church "age" began with Pentecost. It will end when the seventh seal is opened and the time for repentance is over. Before that event takes place where Jesus comes back as a judge, there will be a Great Apostasy the likes of which the world has never seen. Thus, when we read Jude, we should think of it as a preview to that event (that will occur on a greater scale). We should also read it like it was designed: to encourage us to "contend for the faith."
In a Nutshell	Stand up for Jesus even if no one in the church will join you.
Connections	Jude is filled with references to the OT and even a book that is outside of the OT that he was familiar with even though it isn't canonical: The Book of Enoch (All you need to know is Enoch didn't write it to know why it was rejected). He references the Exodus, Satan's rebellion, Sodom and Gomorrah, Moses' death, Cain, Balaam, Korah, Enoch, and Adam. He does this to remind the <u>Jewish Christian</u> audience that he was writing of the necessity of true faith and obedience.
Structure	Jude is only one chapter. It starts with a greeting and purpose in v1-4. Then moves to exposing apostasy in v5-16. Then features commands to Christians to endure in this climate in v17-23 before Jude closes with a benediction in v24-25. Remember though, you should read it as a preview now here in the church age for what will take place in the future with the Great Apostasy.

Greeting and Purpose (v1-4)

¹ *Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved in God the Father and kept for^[a] Jesus Christ:*

² *Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.* ³ *Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people.* ⁴ *For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.*

- Important here is how great apostasy takes root by secretly slipping in among you. It's deceitful, intentional, gradual and has two goals: (a) pervert grace, (b) recreation of Jesus. The idea is that it happens unbeknownst to followers of Jesus until takes over everything.

Exposing Great Apostasy (v5-16)

⁵ Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord at one time delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. ⁶ And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. ⁷ In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

- Notice how apostasy always starts from within. The apostasy of angels (i.e., Satan's rebellion) started from within. Sodom and Gomorrah's sins came from within the land.

⁸ In the very same way, on the strength of their dreams these ungodly people pollute their own bodies, reject authority and heap abuse on celestial beings. ⁹ But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"¹⁰ ¹⁰ Yet these people slander whatever they do not understand, and the very things they do understand by instinct—as irrational animals do—will destroy them.

- Notice what apostasy always leads to, regardless of how it is couched in spiritual language. It always leads to pollution of the body (i.e., immortality)

¹¹ Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion. ¹² These people are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead. ¹³ They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.

- Notice here the apostates true motives: (a) jealousy/rage (taken the way of Cain) and (b) profit (rushed into Balaam's error).

¹⁴ Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones ¹⁵ to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness, and of all the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against him." ¹⁶ These people are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.

- The idea here is the Lord name so seriously that he will do something about apostates in the future who intentionally malign it.

How to Endure in This Climate (v17-23)

1. Remember the words of the Apostles. Our confession of faith should never deviate.

¹⁷ But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. ¹⁸ They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." ¹⁹ These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.

2. Keep yourself in God's love.

²⁰ But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

3. Be merciful and save by snatching.

²² Be merciful to those who doubt; ²³ save others by snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

Benediction

** This is one of the great benedictions/doxologies in the NT. Jude trusts that God is able to keep, guard, and prevent us from stumbling. He's sure of it.

²⁴ To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—²⁵ to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

Some Principles We Can Glean about the Future Apostasy

1. Comes from within and is intentional and hostile to the faith as expressed by the apostles.
2. Immorality and greed of the apostates themselves. Preachers who are apostates display these qualities. They smile on the outside but there is war with God, his people, and the apostolic confession in their hearts.
3. Apostasy will be influential and pervasive because it's attractational and appeals to the flesh and the spirit of the age (i.e., Sodom and Gomorrah).
4. All of it is rebellion against God regardless of how it is wrapped up and packaged.
5. It will increase and get worse.
6. Apostates will be judged severely.

