

## **Jude**

### **“Contending for the faith”**

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## Jude

### “Contending for the faith”

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#### I. Intro to the Letter of Jude

We now start our third book of the New Year in our third week namely the little letter of Jude. And before we get into the letter itself we should address the “*elephant in the room*” with regards to this letter. You see unlike the last two letters the investigation of this, 25-verse letter, will take much more time and challenge most Bible students. The reason for this is that the original writer used illustrations intended to emphasize his points about the danger of following false teachers. And it is these illustrations that challenge today’s readers as most are unfamiliar with them for various reasons. Thus, we will need to unravel these illustrations before we can rightly interpret the text of Jude and before we can have its truths applied to our lives. Before we start our examination I believe that it is valuable for us to first note the 5 difficult illustrations which make up a 1/3 of this letter or 8 out of the 25 verses in the letter of Jude. In so doing I will point them out and explain why they present a challenge to today’s readers of Jude. We won’t begin our investigation of these 5 difficult illustrations until we come in contact with them throughout these 25 verses. First allow me to make this point these illustrations didn’t present the same difficulties to the original readers as Jude would under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit have used illustrations that the reader would have grasped, and this is further supported in the fact that these letters had acceptance by the readers and included in the standard of scripture. Furthermore, I find it fascinating that Jude would use these difficult illustrations to describe false teachers who were attempting to divert the body of Christ away from the truth of God’s Word.

1. Vs. 6 Here the challenge for today’s reader of Jude is two-fold:
  - a. First there is a lack of familiarity with exactly what illustration Jude is referring too even though Jude does give supporting information in verse 5 and verse 7. The reference Jude is using here is Gen. 6:1-7.
  - b. And that brings us to the second reason this a difficult interpretation as even after we examine the illustration we are still left with a very difficult interpretation.
2. Vs. 9 In this illustration the challenge is that though the story referred to by Jude is ruffly found in Deut. 34:36 dealing with the death and burial of Moses. The problem for todays bible student is that none of the specifics mentioned by Jude are found in the Deut. 34:36 passage. Furthermore, the rebuke mentioned here in the words quoted by Jude “*The Lord rebuke you*” are not found in reference to Moses but do appear similarly in Zech. 3:1-3 and the vision that Zechariah received for Joshua the high priest. So where does Jude quote this story from? The answer to that question causes todays reader even more questions as it is taken from the apocryphal book called the Assumption of Mosses where we have fragments that tell the story of the funeral of Mosses in which Michael the archangel is commissioned to bury Moses but satan opposes him two grounds: First that satan is the lord of matter and as such the body should be turned over to him. To this

Michael is quoted by Jude here saying the Lord rebuke you as it was the Lord's spirit that created all matter including mankind. The second part of this rebuke has to do with Satan's charge against Moses as being a murderer and is what the Deut. 34:6 passage answers as it regards that fact that Moses was buried in an unmarked grave where no one knows which is what they were to do for a murder. The problem for today's reader is that Jude takes his story from an obscure text that is outside the Bible and is retold as a "matter of fact" and not merely an illustration. So how is today's reader supposed to examine this illustration when we don't recognize the book as being inspired in which it is taken from? The answer is that we recognize that Jude is inspired therefore we only need to accept this story as being true and inspired and not the entirety of the text in which it is found.

3. Vs. 11 The problems in this verse for today's Bible student is a lack of familiarity for the threefold illustration mentioned here. Today's Bible student will need to either be very familiar with these three illustrations or they will need to be able to examine their stories in the Bible and to do that they will need to be able to locate them in order to get the right interpretations. So, I'll go ahead and supply you with the Biblical references for these three illustrations.
  - a. **The way of Cain**: Gen. 4:1-7 and Hebrews 11:4 (***Cain ignored the Word***)
  - b. **The error of Balaam**: Numbers 22, Deuteronomy 23 and 2 Peter 2:15. You will also need to look at Numbers 25:2-3, 31:16 and Joshua 13:22 (***Balaam opposed the Word***)
  - c. **The rebellion of Korah**: Number 16 (***Korah rebelled against the Word***)
4. Vs. 12-13 The challenge in these two verses for today's Bible student is a bit easier and that is Jude's use of picture language as he uses five-word pictures to describe false teachers:
  - a. **Spots in your love feasts**
  - b. **Clouds without water**
  - c. **Late autumn trees without fruit**
  - d. **Wandering stars**
5. Vs. 14-15 Here the difficulty is again two-fold:
  - a. He is not a very familiar Bible character. Enoch is a person whom you will find briefly mentioned in Gen. 5:18-24 and his chief characteristic is that "he walked with God".
  - b. The second problem with this passage is there is no mention of Enoch making this statement in the Bible and like the story above in verse 9 it is found in the apocryphal book of Enoch. The book was known to the early church fathers of the second century and then was lost for many 100's of years except for a very few fragments. Then it was found in its entirety in a copy of the Ethiopic Bible in 1773. The book of Enoch that was found consists of a few revelations purporting to have been given to Enoch and Noah. The point of the book is threefold: To vindicate the way of God's divine providence, to set forth the retribution reserved against unrepentant sinners and to show that the world is under the government of God.

## II. Vs. 1-2 From and too

Vs. 1 Here at the beginning of the letter the author identifies himself as Jude! For the first time reader of this letter which is on false teaching and apostasy it is interesting that it bares the same

name as the greatest deception ever fostered, “Judas”! Jude’s identification is twofold with the greater being displayed first:

- A. **Heavenly identification** “*A bondservant of Jesus Christ*”: The Greek word for “bondservant” is Doulos and means a servant by choice. The connection of this Greek word with Whom Jude declares as his Master is a great truth; a person will never truly experience the “blessings” of our relationship with Jesus apart from laying our life down to the very Person who laid His life down for us.
- B. **Earthly identification** “*And a brother of James*”: Jude declares that he is the earthly brother of James. In verse 17 Jude refers to the “apostles” instead of identifying himself as one. This makes it unlikely that this is the Jude of Luke 6:16 who is called the “son of James”. This leaves the Jude of Matt. 13:55 where we read at the rejection from his hometown of Nazareth that some said, “*Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?*” And in Gal 1:19 this James is called “the Lord’s brother”. As such then we know that Jude like his brother James didn’t believe in their ½ brother as the Christ based upon John 7:5 and that their faith in Him came after the resurrection. The only other reference to Jude is in the brief passage in 1 Cor. 9:5 where we are told that “*that the brothers of the Lord took their wives with them on missionary journeys*”.

Jude calling himself the “brother of James” places him in the family of Jesus and Mary and Joseph and yet Jude does not chose to allude to his earthly connection to Jesus only his spiritual connection to Jesus. **This clearly indicates what Jude valued and identified more with as he would rather be identified with Jesus spiritually being His servant of choice than being identified with being his earthly brother!** It was only in his spiritual connection that he truly entered into an everlasting relationship which was far greater than his time of knowing his Brother in unbelief.

The time and location of this letter is a bit difficult to pin down as Jude doesn’t mention specifically who his readers were and the only clues we have as to the location is that the readers were being greatly troubled by false teachers. There is no mention of the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred in 70 AD which would suggest that this letter was written some time before this. In verse 17-18 Jude quotes the letter of 2 Peter 3:3 and attributes it to the apostles which would place this letter after that letter and that letters date is some where between 64-66 AD which means that this letter would have been written around 66 AD but before 70 AD. Vs. 2 “To those” is the designation to whom the letter was intended, and they have three qualities that Jude identifies:

1. **Called:** The word in the Greek is one that is used for an invitation and in our case we were called while sinners to salvation whereby the sinner is called to repentance by the act of faith in the Lord who called him. The amazing truth is that all have been “invited” to become believers. In John’s gospel 1:12-13 we read that “*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name, who born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but of God.*” Jesus said in Matt. 22:14 that “Many are called but few are chosen”.
2. **Sanctified:** The second quality is that they are “set apart” and Jude describes specifically Who it is that has “**set us apart**” as it is “**by God**”! We are the objects of the Fathers love and because we have received His only Son we are also the

recipients of this love as well. There is no greater experience a human being can ever have than to be “set apart in the love of God”. Chosen out of fallen humanity by His love. This love isn’t based upon our qualities but upon His and they can never be earned or deserved instead they are ours simply because we have accepted them. It is for this reason that they have “set us apart” from all that were to all that He has for us!

3. **Preserved:** Here the Greek word means to be “kept or guarded from loss or injury”. Again, the key to understanding this word is to be found in Who’s hands we are kept or guarded as we are told that it is “IN JESUS CHRIST”. It is in the very hands of the Person who our sin drove the nails meant for us through! It is in Jude’s closing in verse 24 that he reminds the reader that we are “*invited to be objects of our Father’s love, forever kept by the One in whom love was given through.*”

To the person who is “called, sanctified and preserved” by God and in Christ Jesus they can expect the following three things which are the prescription for contending for the faith as well as fruit of the above three qualities.

- A. **Mercy:** Mercy in the Greek is a word that has a view on the misery which is the consequence of sin. Mercy precedes grace as it means not getting what we deserve, and Paul says in Eph. 2:4 that God is rich in mercy.
- B. **Peace:** The word peace here means to join together that which has been separated. Such peace can be ours the moment when we as believers do what D.L. Moody encouraged that we, “*Worry about NOTHING, pray about EVERYTHING, and thank God for ANYTHING.*”
- C. **Love:** The word here is “agape” which is that divine love which is shed abroad in our hearts. This love is so infused with the believer that the believer security and identity becomes impossible to be separated from the love of God.

Jude prays that these three fruits of being a believer will continue to be multiplied as this is the antidote to being persuaded by false teachers to abandon the truth.