

INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTER FROM JUDE

From Jude . . . the brother of James. From the earliest times, Jude has been identified as the *Lord's brother*. Neither he nor his brother James mention the fact that they are the Lord's brothers in the flesh, nor would we expect them to do so, since it would have been out of harmony with the spirit of humility. He did not believe in Jesus during the public ministry (*John 7:5*), but was one of the group in the upstairs room (*Acts 1:14*) which shows he had become a believer by that time, and he and his wife traveled among the churches (*1 Cor. 9:5*).

No one can say for sure just when Jude wrote his Letter. Nor can anyone say for sure whether Jude wrote before or after the Second Letter from Peter, which is very similar. J.W. Roberts thinks it dates from 68 A.D., which would put it after Second Peter. Jude had probably read Peter's Second Letter before writing this. Jude's Letter was slower to be accepted, possibly because it is more specialized and may have had a smaller circulation.

Some people saw Christianity as a way to get rich. Compare *1 Tim. 6:3-5; Acts 8:9-19; Rom. 16:17-18*. These had no love for truth, and so to get a following, they taught that what Paul said about faith meant that God would not credit sin to a believer. They said: "The sinful actions of men are decreed by God, therefore He will not punish the one who continues to sin." Compare notes on *Rev. 2:14,20*. Jude writes to show that God has already punished sin, and that He will continue to do so!

Jude and Peter write on the *same subject*, probably to emphasize that they, as "apostles of circumcision," oppose these false ideas and false teachers! See the Introduction to the Letter from James.

THE LETTER FROM JUDE

¹From Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and the brother of James—

To those who have been called by God, who live in the love of God the Father and the protection of Jesus Christ:

²May mercy, peace, and love be yours in full measure.

False Teachers

³My dear friends! I was doing my best to write to you about the salvation we share in common, when I felt the need of writing you now to encourage you to fight on for the faith which once and

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James,

To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ:

Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

The Sin and Doom of Godless Men

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that God has once for all entrusted to the

1. **From Jude.** If he had been one of the Twelve, he would probably have mentioned it. **Brother of James.** This identifies him. James was well known (*Gal. 2:9; Acts 21:18*). The brothers are mentioned in *Matt. 13:55*. **Who have been called.** "To those who have been called by God through their faith." Compare *Rev. 18:4*. **Who live.** Not only have Jude's readers been called by God, they also live in the love of God! Compare *Eph. 6:23-24*. **The protection.** Compare *1 John 5:4-5* and notes.

2. **In full measure.** Jude wants them to have these blessings in full measure, which comes through their faith and love. Compare *1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Pet. 1:2* and notes.

3. **My dear friends.** Jude stresses the common love which molds them into *one fellowship* in Christ! I was. Jude's first intention was to write to them (as an "apostle of circumcision") about the salvation which both Jew and Gentile shares in common. The early Christians did a lot of writing at a time when writing was not so widely used (See *Luke 1:1-4*). But of the things Jude may have written, the Holy Spirit included only this short letter in the New Testament. **When I felt the need.** "The problem about the false teachers made me change my plans." **To fight on.** "In a gentle and loving spirit, you must use the Jewish scriptures (Old Testament) and the writing of the evangelists and apostles (which would be complete now, except for this Letter and the writings of John) to oppose and destroy the false teaching that some are doing, and to teach the truth!!!" **The faith.** The faith is the teaching of the Good News which God spoke through Christ (*Heb. 1:2*), and which Christ passed on to his disciples (*1 Pet. 1:12; 2 Pet. 1:3-4; 2 Tim. 3:16-17*.) **Once and for all.** The Good News did not come in "bits and pieces" like the Old Testament revelation. It was given once and for all through Christ, even before the New Testament was written down. In the childhood age of the church, the Holy Spirit was the direct source of *the faith*. The Holy Spirit saw to it that the complete message was written down, and we have it as the New Testament. Compare *John 14:26; Gal. 1:6-9*.

for all God has given to his people. **For some godless men have slipped in unnoticed among us, who distort the message about the grace of our God to excuse their immoral ways, and reject Jesus Christ, our only Master and Lord. Long ago the Scriptures predicted this condemnation they have received.**

For even though you know all this, I want to remind you of how the Lord saved the people of Israel from the land of Egypt, but afterward destroyed those who did not believe. Remember the angels who did not stay within the limits of their proper authority, but abandoned their own dwelling place: they are bound with eternal chains in the darkness below, where God is keeping them for that great Day on which they will be condemned. Remember Sodom and Gomorrah, and the nearby towns, whose people acted as those angels did and committed sexual immorality and perversion: they suffer the punishment of eternal fire as a plain warning to all.

saints. For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. 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.

4. **For some godless men.** "I felt a need to write because some spiritual saboteurs have slipped in unnoticed." **Who distort.** "They claim to be inspired. They say God is too good to punish sinners. They teach an *easy grace*, which they say allows the believer unlimited sin with no fear of punishment." **And reject Jesus Christ.** "They say our human bodies are totally evil, and deny that Jesus is The Christ. They say the Logos who is infinitely holy could not have come in evil flesh and blood. By doing this, they reject Christ-on-the-cross, who is the *means* of our salvation!" **Long ago.** "The Scriptures predicted the fact that such people would come, and also the doom of such as these!" See *verses 14 & 17*.

5. **For even though.** "I am using things which you already know to prove to you that God will punish those who purposely continue to sin as a habit." **But afterward destroyed.** "Even after God has saved his people Israel and had led them out of Egypt, he did not hesitate to destroy all who sinned by refusing to believe what he said." See *Num. 14:29; Heb. 3:18-19*.

6. **Remember the angels.** "Even such beings as angels, who do not have a body of flesh and blood and whom even the false teachers admit were created holy, were punished by God when they sinned!" *2 Pet. 2:4* also mentions this. Some try to connect this with *Gen. 6:2; Isa. 14:4-23; 24:21-22*.

7. **Remember Sodom and Gomorrah.** "Remember the wrath of God against the sin of these people!" **Acted as those angels did.** Jude does not mean that they all sinned by committing the same acts of sin, but in each case, sin was a rebellion against God! **Sexual immorality and perversion.** This was the sin of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Homosexuality, especially, brought God's wrath down on them! **Eternal fire.** "Totally destroyed by fire, they are an example of God's eternal fire which will punish the wicked! This is a plain warning to all, that God does not permit sin!"

⁸In the same way also, these men have visions which make them sin against their own bodies; they despise God's authority and insult the glorious beings above. ⁹Not even the chief angel Michael has done this. In his quarrel with the Devil, when they argued about who would have the body of Moses, Michael did not dare condemn the Devil with insulting words, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" ¹⁰But these men insult things they do not understand; and those things that they know by instinct, like wild animals, are the very things that destroy them. ¹¹How terrible for them! They have followed the way that Cain took. For the sake of money they have given themselves over to the error that Balaam committed. They have rebelled as Korah re-

In the very same way, ⁸ these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority, and slander celestial beings. But even the archangel ⁹ Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" Yet these men speak ¹⁰ abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct like unreasoning animals—these are the very things that destroy them.

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.

8. In the same way also. "These men show the same spirit of rebellion that these examples show. It is the spirit of the Enemy of Christ which motivates them!" **Have visions.** Since such people claimed to be inspired (see *1 John 4:1*), they would boast about having *visions* from God, in which He was supposed to have told them the (false) things they were teaching. [*MacKnight* takes it as *sleep*, which comes through the intoxication of sin.] **Sin against their own bodies.** Our bodies are holy (*1 Cor. 6:18-20*). We defile them by sin. Compare *2 Pet. 2:2, 10, 18*. **They despise.** "The Israelites despised God's authority when they would not believe him. The angels despised God's authority when they sinned. These people despise God by rejecting Jesus Christ! In fact, they reject all authority. And in their pride, they even insult the angels, and God himself!" Compare *verse 15; 2 Pet. 2:10*.

9. Not even. "Look at the example of the chief angel Michael. Even he did not use insulting words to condemn the Devil who is a fallen angel! This ought to teach you that no human being should do such a thing as these false teachers are doing!" Jude refers to a Jewish tradition found in the apocryphal book, *The Assumption of Moses*. He only uses the fact he understands to be true, and does not imply that the apocryphal book is inspired. Compare *2 Pet. 2:10-11*.

10. But these men. "They claim to have special *knowledge*, but they show they are liars by insulting things they do not understand! They are not able to judge spiritual matters, because they are not spiritual (*1 Cor. 2:14; Col. 2:18*)!" **They know by instinct.** "They live on the level of animals! They destroy themselves by their own evil desires." The false teachers were saying that God had made them as they were, and that they were only following God by living on the level of wild animals. Jude destroys their excuses by the things he says!

11. How terrible for them. This is the kind of language Jesus uses in *Matt. 23:13-15*. **That Cain took.** Cain was selfish, jealous, and showed his *hate* by murdering his brother. **That Balaam committed.** See *2 Pet. 2:15-16*. **As Korah rebelled.** *Num. 16:1-35*. He opposed the appointment of the family of Aaron to the priesthood. Jude sees the actions of the false teachers described in these three examples. They are motivated by hate and selfishness, by greed and love of money, and they reject God's authority and the ones He has chosen to be teachers.

belled, and like him they are destroyed. ¹²They are like dirty spots in your fellowship meals, with their shameless carousing. They take care of themselves only. They are like clouds carried along by the wind and bringing no rain. They are like trees that bear no fruit, even in autumn, trees that have been pulled up by the roots and are completely dead. ¹³They are like wild waves of the sea, with their shameful deeds showing up like foam. They are like wandering stars, for whom God has reserved a place forever in the deepest darkness.

¹⁴It was Enoch, the sixth direct descendant from Adam, who long ago prophesied this about them: "Look! The Lord will come with many thousands of his holy angels, ¹⁵to bring judgment on all, to condemn all godless sinners for all the godless deeds they have performed, and for all the terrible words these godless men have spoken against God!"

¹⁶These men are always grumbling and blaming others; they follow their own evil desires; they brag about themselves, and flatter others in order to get their own way.

These men are blemishes ¹² 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. They are wild waves ¹³ of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.

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

12. Like dirty spots. "They are things of shame, like a dirty spot on a tablecloth." In your fellowship meals. Paul condemned the abuse of the fellowship meals (1 Cor. 11:17-22), but not the meals themselves. See notes on Acts 2:46; 20:7. The false teachers took part in the fellowship meals out of selfish motives, without any love for the brothers. **Of themselves only.** 1 Cor. 11:21. **Like clouds.** 2 Pet. 2:17. **Like trees.** Compare Matt. 21:19 and note. They died in both a Jewish and a Christian vineyard!

13. Like wild waves. Isa. 57:20. **Like wandering stars.** "Since they have rejected Jesus Christ and the truth, they are like shooting stars who flash across the sky and are gone forever!" 2 Pet. 2:17.

14. It was Enoch. Jewish tradition preserved some of the things which Enoch said. A *Book of Enoch* existed, but it was probably written in the first century B.C. Since Jude writes by inspiration, he quotes only facts, and does not authenticate the *Book of Enoch*. **Sixth direct descendant.** 1) Adam; 2) Seth; 3) Enos; 4) Cainan; 5) Mahalaleel; 6) Jared; 7) Enoch. **The Lord will come.** Enoch looks forward to a Day of Judgment! Compare Matt. 25:31.

15. To bring judgment. "Do not be fooled by what the false teachers say! Sinners will not escape the results of their godless deeds nor the terrible words they have spoken against God by saying that Jesus Christ was a phony (impostor) who deserved the death which he died!"

16. These men. This is Jude's description of them. "These ungodly teachers grumble against God for their hardships, and blame others for their problems (which they bring on themselves)! They are loud-mouthed boasters about themselves, who are insolent to the Roman authorities, and who will not listen to the true teachers. They flatter others to get their own way in the things that are done, and also to get people's money for themselves!"

Warnings and Instructions

¹⁷But remember, my friends! Remember what you were told in the past by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁸They said to you, "When the last days come, men will appear who will make fun of you, men who follow their own godless desires." ¹⁹These are the men who cause divisions, who are controlled by their natural desires, who do not have the Spirit. ²⁰But you, my friends, keep on building yourselves up on your most sacred faith. Pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, ²¹and keep yourselves in the love of God, as you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ in his mercy to give you eternal life.

²²Show mercy toward those who have doubts:

A Call to Persevere

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

But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. Be merciful to those who doubt;

17. **But remember!** "To prevent them from fooling even you, I ask you to remember what the true apostles of our Lord Jesus told you in the past!"

18. **When the last days come.** See *1 John 2:18* and note. The *last days* began at Pentecost (*Acts 2:16-17* and notes). **Men will appear.** "The apostles told you many times that these things would happen. People will make fun of the self-control and holy living that they see in you!" Compare *2 Pet. 3:3*; *1 Pet. 4:2-5*; *1 Tim. 4:1*; *2 Tim. 3:1-9*. The Book of Revelation also deals with this.

19. **Who cause divisions.** "In order to do as they please, they cause divisions and separate themselves and their followers from the fellowship of the messianic community (church)." Compare *1 Cor. 11:19*. **Who do not have the Spirit.** "These may claim to have the Spirit, but their claim is false!" Compare *Rom. 8:9*. [It is also possible that he means: "They are so fascinated with their sensuous desires, that they no longer have any real sense of the spiritual (*1 Cor. 2:14*). Did they ever really have the Spirit???" Compare *Heb. 6:4-6*.]

20. **But you, my friends.** "You, who do have the Spirit (*Acts 5:32*), by your conduct and by encouraging one another, must continue to build yourselves up on the foundation of your most sacred faith (the Good News)!" The false teachers proclaimed an un-sacred or unholy faith. **Pray in the power.** *MacKnight* views this as *inspired prayer*. Compare *1 Cor. 14:15*; *James 5:14-15*. But it is also true that every Christian has the Holy Spirit as his *prayer-partner* (*Rom. 8:26* and notes). The false teachers could have no such prayer-partner! Prayer and immorality are incompatible!!!

21. **And keep yourselves.** "God does not cease to love any man, since God himself is *love*. However, you as a person must keep yourself within the circle of His *fatherly love*, which is only available to the one who can truthfully say, '*Father! my Father!*' (*Rom. 8:15*). **As you wait.** See *Phil. 3:20-21*. The false teachers did not *wait* (*2 Pet. 3:4*)

22. **Show mercy.** "Some Christians have honest doubts brought on by the things the false teachers have said. Be gentle and kind as you try to bring them back to the truth of Christ!" Compare *Gal. 6:1*.

²³save them, by snatching them out of the fire. Show mercy also, mixed with fear, to others as well, but hate their very clothes, stained by their sinful lusts.

Prayer of Praise

²⁴To him who is able to keep you from falling and bring you faultless and joyful before his glorious presence—²⁵to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, might, and authority, from all ages past, and now, and forever and ever! Amen.

snatch others from the fire 23 and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

Doxology

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

23. **Out of the fire.** "I want to impress on you just how serious the matter of sin really is! When you rescue Christians from the false teachers, you are *snatching them out of the fire!*" **But hate their very clothes.** The symbolism is that of *Lev. 13:47-52*. "Even some of the false teachers themselves can be saved! But you must be afraid, even while you are trying to influence them, because you could be infected with the disease of sin and unbelief! However, it is our PURPOSE to save as many as possible!" Compare *1 Cor. 9:19-22*.

24. **To him.** To God our Father. **Who is able.** "To give you courage to *run the full distance in the faith*, and to show you God's promise, I tell you He is able to keep you from falling into error or sin!" See *1 Cor. 10:13*. **And bring you.** "God has acted in Christ to set us free! By means of Christ, He is able to bring you faultless and joyful before His glorious presence at the Judgment!" Compare Paul's prayer in *1 Thess. 5:23*.

25. **To the only God.** See note on *Rom. 16:27*. **Through Jesus Christ.** God saves us through Jesus Christ our Lord! [Both the TEV and NIV follow the *corrected Greek text*.] **And forever and ever!** Compare *Rev. 5* and notes. These last two verses are Jude's doxology of praise to the God of Israel and to His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord!!!