

Author

- 1) First, I am excited about this study. There are several very interesting things here...
- 2) Well, I guess it is appropriate that we follow the study of James' epistle with that of Jude – one of the other half-brothers of our Lord.
- 3) Most scholars do agree that Jude the brother of Jesus is the author:
 - a) He identifies himself in the first verse.

Jude 1 (NASB 2020)

¹ Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James

- 4) As with James, we must assume that in the beginning he was not a believer in Jesus' mission, Messiahship, or Sonship.
 - a) Remembering the passage in John...

John 7:3–5 (NASB 2020)

³ So His brothers said to Him, "Move on from here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. ⁴ For no one does anything in secret when he himself is striving to be *known* publicly. If You are doing these things, show Yourself to the world." ⁵ For not even His brothers believed in Him.

- 5) If we continue with the assumption that Jude, like James, was with the rest of the brothers and did not believe in Him.
- 6) It then follows that he was probably not a believer during most of Christ's ministry.
- 7) But, obviously from the introduction to this letter he does now for sure.
- 8) Beyond this letter, we have one other quote from Paul that may (strong may) lend a bit more credence to this idea.

1 Corinthians 9:3–5 (NASB 2020)

³ My defense to those who examine me is this: ⁴ Do we not have a right to eat and drink? ⁵ Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?

- 9) Obviously, the point here is that Paul refers to "brothers of the Lord" plural which one can assume with reasonable certainty would include Jude.

Date of Writing

- 10) Unfortunately, we have another scholarly debate regarding the actual date of the epistles' writing.
 - a) The normally accepted date is 65-68 CE.
 - b) The earliest running nominally from the 60 CE to 70 CE and the later dates would be 80 to 90 CE.
 - c) A few scholars date the letter much later, which of course would make the letter a pseudepigraphic writing.
 - d) I bring this up only to make you aware that such dating and "scholarly" ideas are out there.
 - i) I personally will never buy into a writing being a forgery and being in our scriptures.

- 11) While we are here, let's talk a bit about this letter's authenticity and its acceptance into the canon.
- 12) Let's begin with some reasons why it was not initially included in the canon.
- a) First, as I just mentioned, some think the letter would have been written after Jude's death obviously by someone else.
 - b) Additionally, there are some comments which are made in the letter that are considered against Gnosticism.
 - i) The problem there is that Gnosticism was not fully engaged so to speak at this time.
 - ii) The whole matter of the Gnosticism progression is a debate unto itself, so I personally do not put much stock in that argument.
 - c) Another factor in Jude's being accepted as canonical was that he makes two references to non-canonical books – Enoch and “The Assumption of Moses” (also known as the Testament of Moses).
 - i) We will discuss those in due time.
- 13) Now, to the more positive side, let's at least consider some early references that make the issue of authenticity a little less questionable: (i.e. why it was accepted into the canon)
- a) The Muratorian Fragment, dating to around 170 CE, explicitly mentions the Epistle of Jude as being accepted in the Catholic Church³.
 - b) Clement of Alexandria (late 2nd century) and Origen (early 3rd century) accepted the Epistle as canonical and apostolic³.
 - c) Tertullian (late 2nd to early 3rd century) recognized the Epistle as canonical in the African Church of Carthage³.
 - d) Jerome (late 4th to early 5th century) discussed Jude's letter, noting that while some rejected it due to its quotation from the apocryphal Book of Enoch, it had gained authority through age and use and was counted among the Holy Scriptures⁴.
 - e) Also included in the canon (list) of Athanasius in around 397 CE.
 - f) Origen also commented on Jude's letter, praising it as "filled with the healthful words of heavenly grace" despite its brevity⁴.
- 14) These references demonstrate that by the late 2nd century, the Epistle of Jude was widely accepted in various parts of the early Christian world, including Rome, Alexandria, and Carthage. ³.

Citations:

1. <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/jude/0>
2. <https://sermons.logos.com/sermons/1039028>
3. <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/info/jude-cathen.html>
4. <https://www.julianspriggs.co.uk/pages/Jude>
5. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistle_of_Jude
6. <https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/jude.html>
7. <https://www.catholiccrossreference.online/fathers/index.php/Jude%201:5;%20Jude%201:6>
8. <https://rsc.byu.edu/shedding-light-new-testament/overlooked-epistle-jude>

Target Audience and Location of Writing

- 15) Here again, we are more or less in the dark on the exact audience for this letter and where exactly Jude was when he wrote it.

Jude – Faith Contended For - 2025

- a) Jude makes literally no references to places or people in this epistle that could be used as a clue as to where or when it was written.
- 16) We do know from the content of the letter that it is likely targeted to Jewish Christians.
- 17) We can also assume that perhaps, since it was not specific to its audience, it may have gone to more than one church.
 - a) One clue we can take from the internal evidence regarding this is Jude's comment in verse three.

Jude 3 (NASB 2020)

³ Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all *time* handed down to the saints.

- b) Obviously, he has one theme in mind for this letter then changes, likely due to some external influence, to what he considers a much more pressing matter.
- c) Now, this does not preclude multiple churches.
 - i) However, I don't think in this case that it would necessarily be to "all the churches" either – perhaps only a select group.

The Odd Couple

- 18) One final interesting note here that you may or may not be aware of is the connection between 2 Peter and Jude.
 - a) There is a scholarly debate as to who copied who but when one looks at 2 Peter 2:1 – 3:10 the similarities are striking.
 - b) The majority of Jude is contained in these verses.
 - c) 2 Peter does edit out the more explicit references to Enoch and the Testament of Moses yet puts in some explicit references to Greek philosophy and mythology.
 - d) One other idea here is that 2 Peter seems to be addressing a group of teachers whereas we have no indication that Jude is addressing teachers at all.

Purpose and Message

- 19) As we just indicated, Jude had in mind to write about common salvation.
 - a) I would assume that that meant writing to encourage them in their salvation and assure them of their security in that salvation.
- 20) However, something transpired –
 - a) It could have been information about some particularly bad false teachings
 - i) knowledge of many false teachers
 - ii) Or perhaps knowledge of one or some of these congregations falling prey to false teachings.
- 21) Regardless, he felt it was much more important to bolster their faith and warn them to remove these false teachers than to discuss their "common salvation."
- 22) Again, he appeals to them to "contend earnestly for the faith."
- 23) To aid this, he minces no words. He vividly describes these false teachers:

- a) Ungodly people who pervert God's grace
- b) Hidden reefs at love feasts
- c) Shepherds who feed only themselves
- d) Clouds without water
- e) Wandering stars for whom the darkness of eternal judgment is reserved
- f) Moral Corruption
- i) One comment I read says:

“Jude emphasizes that these false teachers not only teach incorrect doctrine but also live immoral lives, using Christian freedom as a license for licentious behavior.”

Outline

24) As to an outline, one I found was quite simple and straightforward:

- 1. The danger of false teachers (1–16)
- 2. The duty to fight for God’s truth (17–25)¹

25) Before we jump into the text, just a couple of more items:

- a) The only file in there at this point is the Jude Introductory Handout.
 - i) It is a PDF file so if you are not here to get one this evening, you can print it from that PDF.
 - ii) There’s not much there in the way of new info but one thing you might find interesting is the image of one of the actual early manuscripts that we have for Jude.
 - iii) If you really want to look, there is also a list of most of the other manuscripts in the file. If you are curious, you can google them to see what they look like.

26) As has been the case through the book of Acts and James, I will be sending you an email from the biblical-matters website each Monday with a link to the site and the notes for this series of lessons.

27) I really hope you guys will take advantage of these notes as they are posted.

- a) Especially if you have missed a Sunday, all the notes that we discussed are there and a quick skim through them will help keep you up to date on where we are.

=====

28) For those who are curious (or not) I have included a list of manuscripts dating from the first to the fourteenth century CE in the notes:

- i) Papyrus 72 (3rd/4th century CE): Contains the complete text of Jude [1](#).
 - (1) Catholic letters collection.
- ii) Papyrus 78 (3rd/4th century CE): Contains verses 4–5 and 7–8 of Jude [1](#).
 - (1) Standalone papyrus of Jude.
- iii) Codex Vaticanus (325–350 CE): Contains the book of Jude [1](#).

¹ Bruce B. Barton, [1 Peter](#), [2 Peter](#), [Jude](#), Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Pub., 1995), 233.

- iv) Codex Sinaiticus (330–360 CE): Contains the book of Jude¹.
- v) Codex Alexandrinus (400–440 CE): Contains the book of Jude¹.
- vi) Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus (c. 450 CE): Contains verses 3–25 of Jude¹.
- vii) Papyrus 74 (Bodmer 17) (7th century CE): Contains the complete text of Jude⁵.

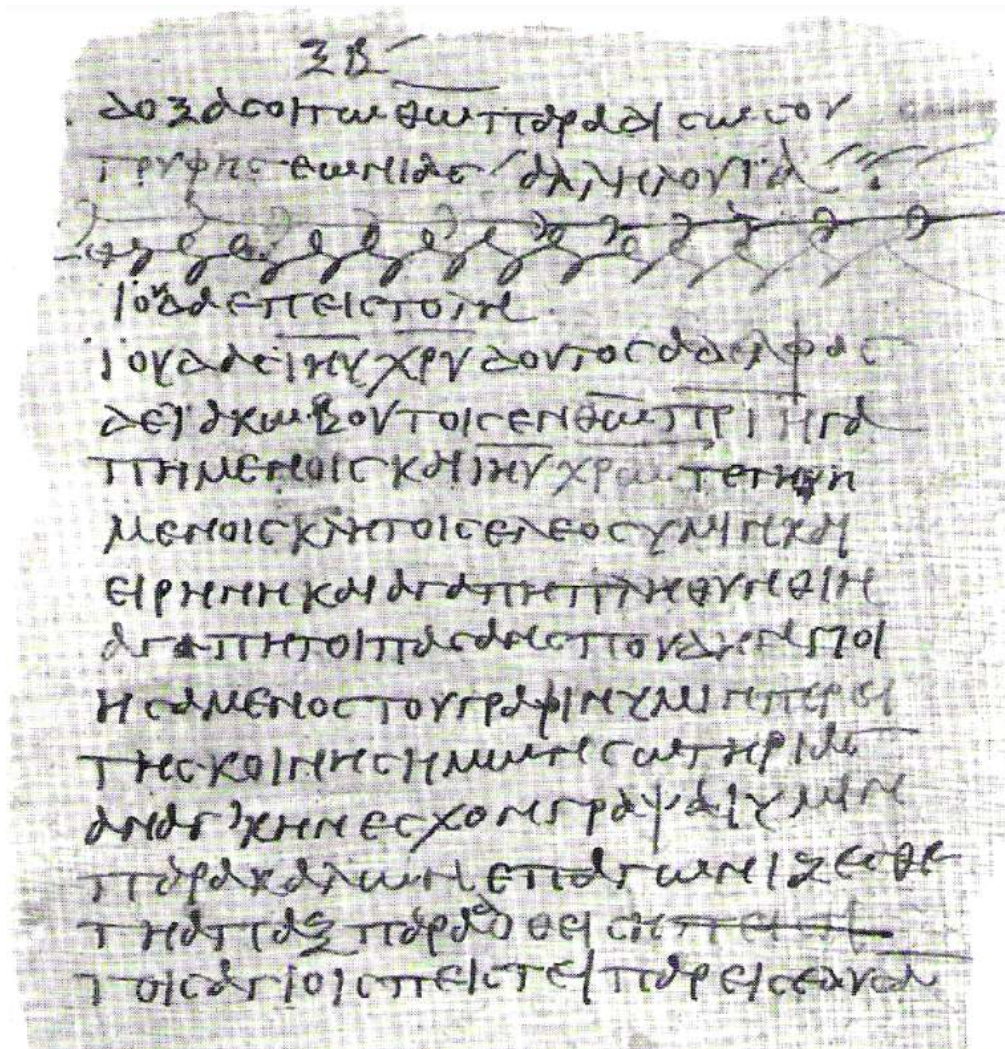


Figure 1- P72 Fragment, First few lines of Jude

29) Figure 1 shows a small fragment of Jude’s letter from a copy dated late 2nd to early 3rd century CE.

- a) The Jude text actually begins under the scroll squiggle

1) So let's begin our look at the text – verses 1-2...

Jude 1–2 (NASB 2020)

The Warnings of History to the Ungodly

¹ Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ: ² May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

1) Let's begin by looking at why Jude introduces himself as he does.

- a) I find it interesting that neither Jude nor James claims the kinship with Jesus.
- b) They both essentially do the same thing – declare themselves to be bond-servants of Jesus Christ.
- c) In Jude's case he does claim to be the brother of James.
 - i) This connection does establish two things:
 - (1) The family ties – James is the half-brother of Jesus therefore Jude must be also.
 - (2) James is a prominent member and leader in the Jerusalem Church. This obviously establishes credibility in addition to family ties.
- d) I think however that the reason both men first and foremost in their introduction claim to be bond-servants is priority.
 - i) Being a servant of Jesus Christ is more important to them than being His relative.
- e) There is also the possibility that both James and Jude, though they knew Jesus as a big half-brother growing up once they realized the truth of His nature – who He really was – it was humbling.
 - i) It is one thing to claim someone as a brother in a family sense – it would be quite another to claim that of a brother who was born of a virgin who you knew was the Son of God and had seen Him raised from the dead.
 - ii) We are not privy to exactly when this all came together for these men, but it must have shaken them to their core to say the least.

2) Jude continues by describing those to whom he is writing.

- a) Again, we do not know who or even where these folks are located – we do know however from his description that they were believers.

Jude 3–4 (NASB 2020)

³ Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all *time* handed down to the saints. ⁴ For certain people have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into indecent behavior and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

1) Jude continues with what may be for the New Testament epistles an unprecedented statement about the way this letter began and finished.

- a) He had one thing in mind yet there is an urgency in something entirely different that he must share with them.
 - i) I think the reason he injects this comment is to impress on them perhaps the urgency he obviously feels.
 - b) We of course are not told what transpired to cause this urgent shift in themes for the letter but what we do know is that it is serious.
 - c) The real idea here is that Jude was writing a letter – perhaps even in the middle of it when it became more necessary to change horses so to speak.
 - i) We can almost see him writing and then (if it were in today’s times) taking the piece of paper, wadding it up, throwing it in the trash and beginning all over again.
 - ii) Now, in truth, that probably was not the case.
 - iii) Papyrus was not exactly like our cheap paper today.
 - iv) It was much more difficult come by and would not be wasted.
 - d) The idea is still the same – he considered it vital to switch subjects and begin again.
- 2) He begins by calling on them to “contend for the earnestly for faith.”
- 3) “The faith” refers to all that they had for beliefs that had been taught by the apostles and held by the Christians everywhere.