

Aquifer Open Study Notes (Book Intros)

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This resource has been adapted into multiple languages, including English, Tok Pisin, Arabic (عربي), French (Français), Hindi (हिंदी), Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia), Portuguese (Português), Russian (Русский), Spanish (Español), Swahili (Kiswahili), and Simplified Chinese (简体中文).

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Jude

The short letter of Jude has one main purpose. Jude is warning Christians about false teachings. He is helping them remain faithful by describing these false teachers as full of pride, sin, and greed. These teachers will encounter severe judgment from God for denying and defying God. Who would want to follow them to their spiritual collapse? In a world with many views that distort true Christianity, we need reminders about the dangers of false teachings.

Setting

Jude wrote this letter to address false teachers in the early church. He focused more on their behavior than their teachings. Jude accused them of being libertines. This means they believed God's grace in Christ allowed them live however they wanted ([Jude 1:4](#)).

They did not respect authority and engaged in many sinful acts ([1:8-9](#); [16, 19](#)). These people, who claimed to follow Christ, were actually denying the Lord ([1:4](#)). As a result, God would condemn them to the same spiritual destination as all who rebel against him.

Summary

After the opening remarks of the letter, Jude explains why he wrote the letter ([1:1-2](#), [3-4](#)). The false teachers posed an immediate threat, so he had to write a different letter than he had planned.

In [1:5-16](#), Jude describes the character of these false teachers. This section follows an *A-B-A'* pattern:

- Jude first uses three scriptural examples to show the condemnation these false teachers will encounter ([A, 1:5-10](#)).
- He then provides three more scriptural examples to criticize their attitudes and behavior that do not honor God ([B, 1:11-13](#)).
- At the end, Jude returns to their condemnation, using Jewish tradition to emphasize his point ([A', 1:14-16](#)).

Jude then directly appeals to his audience ([1:17-23](#)). He urges them to remain true to God's teachings and help Christians who might follow false teachers. The letter closes with a well-known prayer of praise to God ([1:24-25](#)).

Author

Jude calls himself "a brother of James" ([Jude 1:1](#)). This James is probably the "Lord's brother" ([Galatians 1:19](#); see [Matthew 13:55](#) and equivalent passage in [Mark 6:3](#)). He later became the leader of the Jerusalem church who wrote the letter of James ([Acts 15:13-21](#); [21:18](#)). Therefore, Jude was also a brother of Jesus ("Jude" is the same as "Judas" in [Matthew 13:55](#) and equivalent passage in [Mark 6:3](#)).

Jude and Jesus's other brothers did not follow Jesus during the whole time of his ministry on earth ([John 7:5](#)). But they became Christians after the Jesus resurrected (see [Acts 1:14](#); [1 Corinthians 15:7](#)). They traveled to spread the message about the Lord's resurrection ([1 Corinthians 9:5](#)).

Date and Destination

We know very little about Jude, so we cannot determine the exact date and destination of the letter. He probably wrote it after AD 45. This would allow time for the false teachings described to develop. Thus, he probably wrote it before AD 90. Even a younger brother of Jesus would have been old enough by then. The close relationship between 2 Peter and Jude suggests Jude and Peter might have written them around the same time (see 2 Peter Book Introduction, "Relationship to Jude").

Meaning and Message

False Teachers

Over the years, many types of false teachers have troubled God's people. Jude's letter strongly warns about their potential harm to the community and gives a lively description their terrible fate. Jude uses the Old Testament and other Jewish traditions to describe these false teachers.

He compares them to:

- the Israelites who rebelled in the wilderness ([1:5](#)),
- the angels who rebelled against God ([1:6](#)),
- the sinners of Sodom and Gomorrah ([1:7](#)), and
- Cain, Balaam, and Korah (see [Genesis 4](#); see [Numbers 22–24](#); see [Numbers 16](#)).

Like these examples, false teachers rebel against the Lord and will experience his judgment.

Defending the Faith

In [Jude 1:3](#), Jude suggests that the early church has a core message that forms the foundation of Christian belief. Paul shares this view when he tells Timothy to “guard what God has entrusted to you” ([1 Tim 6:20](#); see [2 Tim 1:14](#)).

Being a Christian means having faith in God and loving others. It also means openly accepting the truth God revealed through Jesus Christ. We cannot truly show faith in God unless we recognize this truth. For this reason, early Christians, even during the New Testament times, created creeds to summarize key Christian beliefs (for example, [1 Timothy 3:16](#)). These creeds often intended to oppose false teachings.

To follow Jude's call to “defend the faith,” we must understand what that faith is. Many Christians focus too much on debating minor details and not enough on learning the important parts. By learning the essentials, Christians can explain their faith to others and protect Christian truth from false teachings.