

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

JUDE

THEME

Author and Title

As its title implies, the book was written by Jude, brother of James and Jesus (cf. [Matt. 13:55](#); [Mark 6:3](#), where Gk. “Judas” is the same as “Jude” in [Jude 1](#)). There is little debate regarding the authenticity of the letter because of the strength of internal evidence (e.g., [v. 1](#)). Some have claimed that an anonymous author wrote this using Jude’s name, but it is unlikely that any imposter would choose the name of such an insignificant figure for his writing. Also, such a pseudonymous work would have been rejected by the church (see [Introduction to 1 Timothy: Author and Title](#)), and Jude has been accepted as canonical from earliest times.

Date

Since Jude addresses a situation similar to that addressed by 2 Peter and exhibits a literary relationship (probably as a source) to 2 Peter, the two letters are commonly dated in fairly close proximity. (See [Introduction to 2 Peter: Author and Title](#).) Therefore, while external evidence is sparse, Jude is best dated in the mid-60s A.D.

Theme

The church must contend for the one true faith once for all delivered to the saints ([v. 3](#)), and people of faith must persevere to the end by resisting the false teachers and following the truth.

Purpose, Occasion, and Background

Jude warns against following those who have surreptitiously gained entry to the church and are perverting the one true faith with false teaching. Indeed, the letter warns against allowing the false teachers to continue to have influence. Jude calls the church to defend the truth aggressively against this infiltration. While the false teachers of Jude were profoundly libertine (morally unrestrained), it would be anachronistic to argue that they were Gnostic (an early heretical sect, or group of sects, influential from the 2nd century A.D. onward).

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Jude accomplishes his purpose by interpreting the OT analogically, using the same principles of interpretation found in 2 Peter (and elsewhere in the NT). He also draws on Jewish apocalyptic traditions (he refers to *1 Enoch* and the *Testament of Moses*) in building his case. Thus, as literature, Jude has a distinctively Jewish flavor.

Given the apparent Jewish perspective of the letter itself, the audience of Jude is frequently identified as Jewish, or as a mixture of Jewish and Gentile readers where the Gentiles are familiar with Jewish traditions. However, any identification of the audience is largely conjecture.

History of Salvation Summary

Since Christ has accomplished salvation, believers are to hold fast to him and reject false ways. (For an explanation of the “History of Salvation,” see the [Overview of the Bible](#).)

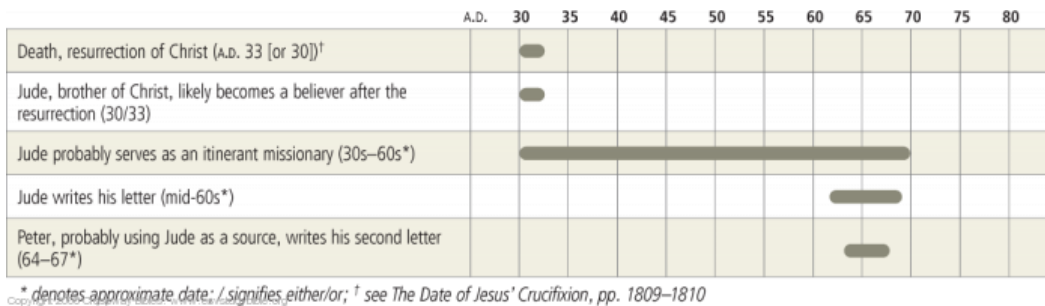
Literary Features

The format is that of the NT epistle, with its loose divisions of salutation, body, and closing. But the central unit of the letter ([vv. 5–16](#)) falls decisively into the genre of a judgment oracle: it has an object of attack, a many-sided vehicle in which the attack is embodied, a discernible harsh tone, and an implied standard by which the attack is being conducted (“the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints,” [v. 3](#)). The description of the apostates ([vv. 8–16](#)) uses the portrait technique in which, as one learns more and more about the apostates, one finally has a picture of their character and actions. The concentrated use of images and allusions (e.g., to Sodom and Gomorrah and the archangel Michael) lends a poetic quality to the letter.

The writer displays horror over the spectacle of apostasy and the false teachers who induce it. The only NT passage that surpasses Jude in these traits is Jesus’ denunciation of the religious leaders in [Matthew 23](#). But the letter begins with the usual soothing notes of NT epistles, and in the last two verses it modulates into one of the most moving benedictions in the NT.

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Timeline



Key Themes

1. Christians need to defend the doctrines of the faith.	3
2. False teachers may be identified by their immoral character.	4, 8, 10, 12–13, 16, 18–19
3. God will judge false teachers.	4, 5–7, 11, 14–15
4. Saints must persevere to be saved.	17–23
5. As God grants mercy to those who are called, they must show mercy to others.	2, 21–23
6. God grants grace that ensures that his own will persevere.	1–2, 24–25

Outline

- I. Initial Greeting (vv. [1–2](#))
- II. Jude’s Appeal: Contend for the Faith (vv. [3–4](#))
 - A. The urgency of the defense (v. [3](#))
 - B. Description of the false teachers and their teaching (v. [4](#))
- III. Immoral Character and Consequent Judgment of the False Teachers (vv. [5–16](#))
 - A. Judgment reserved for the false teachers (vv. [5–7](#))
 1. The analogy of Egypt (v. [5](#))
 2. The analogy of the rebellious angels (v. [6](#))
 3. The analogy of Sodom and Gomorrah (v. [7](#))

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- B. Nature of the false teachers (vv. [8-13](#))
 - 1. The false teachers are blasphemers (vv. [8-10](#))
 - 2. The false teachers are motivated by greed (v. [11](#))
 - 3. The false teachers exemplify depravity with impunity (vv. [12-13](#))
- C. Judgment on the false teachers revisited (vv. [14-16](#))
 - 1. Description of the judgment (vv. [14-15](#))
 - 2. Further reasons for judgment (v. [16](#))
- IV. Concluding Exhortations (vv. [17-25](#))
 - A. On the apostolic warnings (vv. [17-19](#))
 - B. On the antidote to the false teachers (vv. [20-21](#))
 - C. On showing mercy (vv. [22-23](#))
 - D. Doxology of great joy (vv. [24-25](#))¹

¹ Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (pp. 2447-2448). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.