

Introduction to Jude

Authorship

Most scholars accept the self-identification of the author of this letter as Jude, who was a brother both to James the Just and to Jesus himself. It is generally accepted that Jude was sufficiently obscure a person that a pseudonymous author would have been unlikely to attach Jude's name to his letter. While arguments have been made against authorship by Jude, none is compelling.

Manuscript History

The earliest manuscript dates to the late third or early fourth century. The earliest manuscripts are:

P72, or P. Bodmer VII+VIII, housed at Cologne, contains portions of three New Testament books. The portions of Jude that have been preserved are Jude 1:1-25, and is thus complete. This manuscript has been dated paleographically to the late third or early fourth century AD.

P78, or P. Oxy. 2684, housed Oxford, contains Jude 1:4-5, 7-8, and is dated paleographically to the late third or early fourth century AD.

Many other Greek manuscripts have survived, but all date later than these two.

Canon

Jude has strong attestation in early literature, including possible allusions to it in Clement of Rome, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Epistle of Barnabas, and the Didache. It is mentioned in the Muratorian Canon. This early acceptance gave way over time to certain doubts about the book's authenticity, but these doubts were mainly grounded in the book's use of apocryphal material (such as 1 Enoch). Eventually it was accepted as authentic and its place in the canon assured.

Setting

Various considerations suggest a date shortly after the apostolic age for this letter, probably between AD 65 and 80. Although there is no clear internal evidence in the letter itself for its place of origin, there are a number of subtle indications that it may have been written from Rome to Gentile Christians in Asia Minor (perhaps Ephesus). As was 2 Peter, this letter was written to warn the Saints against false teachers.

Outline

- I. Salutation (1-2)
- II. Judgment on False Teachers (3-16)

- III. Warnings and Exhortations (17-23)
- IV. Benediction (24-25)

Further Readings

Non-LDS Sources

Neyrey, Jerome H. *2 Peter, Jude: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1993.

LDS Sources

Anderson, Cory D. "Jude's Use of the Pseudepigraphal Book of 1 Enoch." *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36/2 (Summer 2003): 47-64.

Nielsen, T. John, II. "Jude: A Call to Contend for the Faith." *The New Testament and the Latter-day Saints*, Sidney B. Sperry Symposium (Orem, Utah: Randall Book, 1987), 219-32.

Thomas, M. Catherine. "Refuge in God's Love." *Studies in Scripture Vol. 6: Acts to Revelation*. Ed. Robert L. Millet. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987, 244-55.

The General Epistle of Jude

Salutation

¹ JUDE,¹ the servant² of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,³ to them that are sanctified⁴ by God the Father, and preserved in⁵ Jesus Christ, *and* called: ² Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

Judgment on False Teachers (2 Pet. 2:1-17)

³ Beloved,⁶ when I gave all diligence⁷ to write unto you of the⁸ common salvation, it was needful for me⁹ to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend¹⁰ for the faith¹¹ which was once delivered unto the saints. ⁴ For¹² there are certain men crept in unawares,¹³ who were before of old¹⁴ ordained to this condemnation,¹⁵

¹ IE from Jude. The GR form of the name would normally be transliterated into ENG As “Judas,” which represents the Hebrew form “Judah.” The alternate ENG Form “Jude” is used to avoid any confusion of this author with the Judas who betrayed the Savior.

² OR slave.

³ Inasmuch as James is not further identified (leading to the assumption that he would have been well known to the reader), this is almost certainly James the Just, the brother of Jesus and the early leader of the Church in Jerusalem. See Mk. 6:3 and Mt. 13:55. Since, like James, Jude also was a brother of the Lord, one might wonder why he identifies himself as brother of James and not as brother of Jesus. Apparently both James and Jude made a conscious decision not to traffic in their earthly relationship with the Lord. Jesus’ siblings included, in addition to the James and Jude mentioned here, brothers named Joseph and Simon, and an undisclosed number of sisters as well. Although his brothers did not believe in him during his earthly ministry, it appears that at least James and Jude came to accept him after his resurrection.

⁴ OR called.

⁵ OR kept safe for.

⁶ The GR word is plural; thus the archaic plural ENG pronoun “you” repeated later in the sentence.

⁷ σπουδή *spoudē* whence we get ENG “speed”; IE haste, eagerness.

⁸ IE our.

⁹ IE I felt compelled.

¹⁰ OR struggle, fight. The metaphor is drawn either from a military context or from sporting contests.

¹¹ In this context, a synonym for the Gospel.

¹² Vv. 4-19 show close affinities with 2 Pet. It is evident that one of these texts is based on the other; the question which is the source document and which the derivative is debated.

¹³ OR secretly slipped in.

¹⁴ IE long ago.

ungodly¹⁶ men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness,¹⁷ and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁸

⁵ I will therefore put you in remembrance,¹⁹ though ye once knew this, how that the Lord,²⁰ having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward²¹ destroyed them that believed not. ⁶ And the angels which kept not their first estate,²² but left their own habitation,²³ he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness²⁴ unto the judgment of the great day. ⁷ Even as Sodom and Gomorrha,²⁵ and the cities about²⁶ them²⁷ in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh,²⁸ are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

⁸ Likewise also these²⁹ *filthy* dreamers³⁰ defile the flesh,³¹ despise dominion,³² and speak evil of dignities.³³ ⁹ Yet Michael³⁴ the archangel,³⁵ when contending with the devil

¹⁵ The allusion is to various prophecies, both in the OT and the Book of Enoch, of the judgments that would be meted out against evil men in the last days.

¹⁶ ἀσεβείς *asebeis* impious.

¹⁷ OR debauchery; IE using grace as a license for sin. This raises the theological problem known as "cheap grace."

¹⁸ The two referents are the same (both pointing to Jesus) according to a principle of GR grammar known as the Granville Sharp rule. Further, the original text probably did not have "the only Lord God," which is the reading of the TR and is followed in the KJV, but rather simply "the only master [τὸν μόνον δεσπότην *ton monon despotēn*]." Cf. 2 Pet. 2:1.

¹⁹ OR remind you. In vv. 5-7 the author uses the Israelites in the wilderness, the rebellious angels and Sodom and Gomorrah as illustrations of how the wicked were judged by God.

²⁰ Many early mss. read "Jesus" here.

²¹ Lit. the second time.

²² ἀρχὴν *archēn* in this context refers to the proper sphere of one's official activity, the domain over which lordship was given them; IE the angels did not keep to their proper place. The v. means to allude to the angels of Gen. 6.

²³ OR abode; IE their proper place.

²⁴ Referring to the gloom of the netherworld; the allusion is probably to the treatment of certain rebellious angels as described in the Book of Enoch.

²⁵ Representative of great evil; cf. Gen. 19.

²⁶ OR around.

²⁷ Sodom and Gomorrah were but two of the five cities of the plain described in Gen.

²⁸ A Hebraism for indulging in unnatural desires.

²⁹ Now referring back to the false teachers against which Jude wishes to warn his readers.

³⁰ ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι *enupniazomenoi* dreamers; note that the word "filthy" is not present in the text, but has been added by the KJV translators, and thus is given in italics. Although the word itself is neutral, the KJV translators felt the need to put it expressly in a negative light. The teachings of the false teachers are like a dream: sentimental, sensual, and ultimately impractical, unlike the teachings of the brethren leading the Church, which are grounded in reality and morality.

he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation,³⁶ but said, The Lord rebuke thee.^{37 10} But these³⁸ speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally,³⁹ as brute⁴⁰ beasts, in those things they corrupt⁴¹ themselves. ¹¹ Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way⁴² of Cain,⁴³ and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward,⁴⁴ and perished in the gainsaying⁴⁵ of Core.^{46 12} These are spots⁴⁷ in your feasts of charity,⁴⁸ when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear:⁴⁹ clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees

³¹ The verb "defile" has to do with the realm of ritual purity and pollution. To defile the flesh is to engage in sexual misconduct, but this has the potential to render the entire community ritually impure.

³² OR authority, referring to being subject to and governed by human leaders in the Church.

³³ Lit. the glorious ones; the allusion is to the angels of God's council in heaven.

³⁴ The name derives from HEB, and could be either a statement, "he who is like God," or a rhetorical question, "who is like God?"

³⁵ The archangels are the chiefs of the angels, their leaders. The other principal archangels along with Michael were Gabriel and Raphael, and one or more others according to various traditions.

³⁶ OR a charge against blasphemy (IE against the devil for claiming to be the god of this world).

³⁷ Although the words are found in Zech. 3:2, it is apparent that Jude's immediate source was one of the ancient traditions, preserved in the Testament or Assumption of Moses (extant only in a fragmentary way today), that dealt with claims the devil made on the body of Moses.

³⁸ IE the false teachers that are the subject of this letter.

³⁹ φυσικῶς *phusikōs* by natural instinct.

⁴⁰ ἄλογα *aloga* without reason.

⁴¹ OR destroy.

⁴² OR down the path.

⁴³ Cf. Gen. 4. In first century sources Cain was seen as a symbol of godlessness.

⁴⁴ The greed of Balaam, whose basic story is recounted in Num., was legendary, as recounted in extrabiblical accounts by Philo and Josephus.

⁴⁵ OR contradiction; IE rebellion.

⁴⁶ OR Korah; see Num. 16. Korah symbolized ambition and challenge to authority. Thus, these three types (Cain, Balaam and Korah) represent atheism, greed and rebellion against authority.

⁴⁷ σπιλάδες *spilades* can mean "submerged rocks" (as in hidden by the waves), and so is sometimes translated "reefs" in an imagery evoking shipwreck. But the word can also refer to that which soils or discolors (IE spots, stains), which appears to be its use here.

⁴⁸ OR love feasts. The allusion is to communal fellowship meals held by the Christians at which the sacrament was also taken; eventually the observance of the sacrament was separated from such meals.

⁴⁹ OR reverence.

whose fruit withereth, without fruit,⁵⁰ twice dead, plucked up by the roots,⁵¹ ¹³ Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars,⁵² to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

¹⁴ And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam,⁵³ prophesied of these, saying, **Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands⁵⁴ of his saints,⁵⁵ ¹⁵ To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all⁵⁶** that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed,⁵⁷ and of all their hard *speeches*⁵⁸ which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. ¹⁶ These are murmurers,⁵⁹ complainers,⁶⁰ walking after

⁵⁰ OR fruitless trees in autumn. "Whose fruit withereth" is a mistranslation of φθινοπωρινὰ *phthinopōrina* autumnal, of autumn, the time when trees bear fruit.

⁵¹ The trees are twice dead, both because of the symbolic death of the coming of the winter season, and the actual death of being uprooted with no possibility for renewed life in the spring.

⁵² ἀστέρες πλανῆται *asteres planētai* wandering stars, is the source for ENG "planet." Since the planets orbit the sun, from the perspective of earth they appear to "wander" in their path across the sky. The allusion here is not to planets specifically, but to celestial bodies that are not regular in their movements and therefore are not predictable and cannot be trusted.

⁵³ According to the genealogy in Gen. 5, Enoch is the seventh from Adam if we count Adam inclusively in the list. IE Adam + Seth + Enosh + Kenan + Mahalalel + Jared + Enoch = seven generations.

⁵⁴ μυριάσιν *uriasin* ten thousands. Note that the GR derived ENG word "myriad" lit. means "ten thousand."

⁵⁵ OR holy ones, referring to angels who will accompany the Savior's return.

⁵⁶ 1 Enoch 1:9. This pseudepigraphal work is also called the Ethiopic Enoch, from the language in which it has been best known and preserved. In addition to the Ethiopic, we now have versions of this passage in Aramaic from the Dead Sea Scrolls (4QEn), in Greek, and in Latin (Pseudo-Cyprian, *Ad Novatianum* 16). As with the earlier allusion to the Testament of Moses, Jude here cites a passage that talks about the judgment of the wicked in the end of days. Jude's version appears to be closer to the Aramaic than the Greek, from which it has several variations. The use of the word "Lord" in this passage is unique to Jude.

⁵⁷ ENG "ungodly" appears three times in this v. The first and second occurrences are adjectives, but the middle occurrence is actually a verbal form of the word, ἡσέβησαν *ēsebēsan*, lit. "they ungodlied"; IE they committed impious acts. This explains the awkward KJV usage of this middle occurrence of "ungodly" as if it were an adverb.

⁵⁸ Note that "speeches" is in italics and is not literally in the text. The GR word here simply means "hard," and in the neuter plural, as here, it means "hard things." Given that the context requires these hard things to be spoken, the reference is to hard (or defiant) words or speeches.

⁵⁹ γογγυσταί *gongustai* is onomatopoeic, as is KJV ENG "murmurers"; a synonym would be "grumblers." That is, the sound the word makes is meant to imitate the sound people make who murmur or grumble.

⁶⁰ OR fault finders.

their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words,⁶¹ having men's persons in admiration⁶² because of advantage.⁶³

Warnings and Exhortations

¹⁷ But, beloved, remember ye the words⁶⁴ which were spoken before of⁶⁵ the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,⁶⁶ ¹⁸ How that they told you there should be mockers⁶⁷ in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. ¹⁹ These be they who separate themselves,⁶⁸ sensual,⁶⁹ having not the Spirit. ²⁰ But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying⁷⁰ in the Holy Ghost, ²¹ Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. ²² And of some have compassion, making a difference:⁷¹ ²³ And others save with fear, pulling⁷² them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted⁷³ by the flesh.⁷⁴

Benediction

²⁴ Now unto him⁷⁵ that is able to keep⁷⁶ you from falling, and to present you faultless⁷⁷ before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, ²⁵ To the only wise God our Saviour, be⁷⁸ glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

⁶¹ IE pompous, bombastic speeches.

⁶² Lit. admiring faces; IE flattering, showing partiality.

⁶³ IE for the sake of gain.

⁶⁴ IE prophecies.

⁶⁵ OR by.

⁶⁶ Cf. 2 Pet. 3:2.

⁶⁷ OR scoffers.

⁶⁸ OR cause divisions.

⁶⁹ Natural, worldly, as opposed to spiritual.

⁷⁰ The participles should be rendered "by building up...by praying." IE this is the manner in which they are to keep themselves in the love of God.

⁷¹ OR have mercy on those who dispute/waver [in the faith].

⁷² Lit. snatching.

⁷³ OR soiled.

⁷⁴ IE contaminated by sinning.

⁷⁵ The reference is to "God our Saviour" in the next v.

⁷⁶ φυλάξαι *phulaxai* guard. ENG "prophylaxis" is any guarding in advance (*pro-*).

⁷⁷ Lit. without blemish, imagery from the animal sacrifices of the temple.

⁷⁸ The verb is not present in GR and must be supplied.