

Jude

Background

- The New Testament mentions several men by that name, including two among the Twelve. This Jude has always been identified with the brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:55, Mark 6:3)
- Objections to this letter center around verse 14 in which Jude cites a prophesy of Enoch that is not otherwise recorded in the Bible. Some claim that Jude cited the apocryphal book bearing Enoch's name. Although the first part of that book was written about three centuries before Jesus, the part Jude supposedly quoted was written a century after Jude. So, the addition to the Book of Enoch cites Jude, not the other way around. The fact that the Book of Enoch was appended speaks to its lack of inspiration.
- The date of writing always has been assumed to be near the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, specifically referencing verse 18, "the last time." This "last time" cannot be the end of time since a sign is given ("mockers...who would walk according to their own lusts") which the original audience was observing. Others used the same phrase to describe the entire period between Jesus and the fall of Jerusalem, or just the last decade or so. However, disobedient angels (verse 6) were already locked up, whereas they were clearly active in the gospels and in Acts.
 - Acts 2:17 The prophet Joel described the entire period from Jesus to the fall of Jerusalem as "the last times." Peter announced that this prophecy was coming to pass in the events of Acts 2, including much prophecy. Prophecy was scheduled to end with the fall of Jerusalem (Daniel 9:24 – 27, Zechariah 13 – 14).
 - 2 Timothy 3:1 Paul wrote 2 Timothy shortly before his death (4:6), after his release from prison (4:16). The last days of which he wrote had signs, so was not the end of time.
 - Hebrews 1:2 These "last times" were those in which Jesus spoke, probably including the words of those to whom Jesus spoke.
 - James 5:3 These "last days" were "at hand" (5:8).
 - 1 Peter 1:5 These "last times" likely refer to Judgment.
 - 1 Peter 1:20 These "last times" were in the lifetimes of the original audience, when Jesus revealed the plan that was formulated before creation.
 - 2 Peter 3:3 These "last times" were near to Peter's death (1:14) and had signs.
 - 1 John 2:18 John placed his original audience in "the last times."

The Text

- (1) Description of Christians which we should bring to mind often:
 - Called – which is as simple as it sounds. We are to remember God's initiative in that we were called; we were not diligently seeking.
 - Sanctified – reserved for godly purposes.
 - Preserved – God is responsible for keeping us safe (spiritually) if we will allow Him to do so. Several promises relate to this (see Promises handout).
- (2) As in most other letters, mercy, peace, and love are to be our central focus.
- (3) "Common" salvation – a small pun. "Common" was used both to describe that which is shared and to describe the unclean. Compare Acts 2:44, 4:32, 10:14, 10:28, 11:8, 11:9, Romans 14:14, and Titus 1:4.
"Contend earnestly" is one Greek word which means literally "upon agony." The word looks inward, not outward, illustrating the level of effort required, not contentiousness which is condemned.

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“Once for all delivered” specifies that this is not to be a continuing or evolving revelation.

- (4 – 19) Problems existing in Jude’s day can help us deal with the problems of today:
- (4) Unnoticed: problem children do not come with labels.
 - Long ago marked out: God planned for this. The presence of condemned people “in the church” will not destroy it.
 - Turn grace into lewdness: This is not a new thought.
 - (5) God will destroy the unbelievers in the church. While I must contend earnestly for myself, the fate of the unbelievers is God’s problem.
 - (6) Those who lost the battle (Revelation 12:7 – 12) were already captive when Jude wrote. This illustrates the fate of unbelievers in the church. A fuller description of that end may be found in Revelation 20:7 – 15.
 - (7) Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 14, 18 – 19) are used as examples of God’s response to depravity by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, and Zephaniah. These events are to remind us that clever arguments cannot excuse immorality.
 - (8) See Colossians 2:18. The authority they reject is divine, either angels (Hebrews 1:14) or specially appointed people (Ephesians 4:11 – 12). The reminder is that those in the church who “set their own course” are dreamers, not in touch with reality.
 - (9) The scene with Michael is not otherwise recorded. Some later apocryphal books embellish this short description, causing some to claim the Jude cited works written long after his death. Jude’s point was that if Michael did not dare revile Satan, then we ought not revile the dreamers of the church. Rather, simply speak what God has said without embellishment.
 - (10) Reminder to the church: those who speak evil in the church often do so out of ignorance; usually they are just following their instincts instead of depending on the Spirit.
 - (11) Cain (Genesis 4), Balaam (Numbers 22 – 24), and Korah (Numbers 16) remind us that selfishness, greed, and the desire for equality are the root of most church problems.
 - (12 – 13) Stains, clouds without rain, and trees without fruit describe the uselessness of such dreamers. They are unaware that they are displaying their shame so they have no fear for their destination, but rather believe that they are leaders.
 - (14 – 15) Jude had information about Enoch that we do not have. Apparently, Enoch spoke of Judgment Day.
 - (16 – 19) Church members who do not have the Spirit grumble, complain, succumb to lust, speak high-sounding and flattering things to manipulate, and cause division. Feel sorry for them because they are truly on their own.
- (20 – 25) Those who have the Spirit should focus on these topics:
- Build faith
 - Pray in the Spirit (Galatians 4:6 *et al*) – an essential attitude.
 - Stay inside the love of God (Romans 5:5).
 - Seek to appreciate God’s mercy.
 - Be compassionate on the dreamers who wake up.
 - God is able to keep us from stumbling (promise).