

New Testament Survey—Jude

Just be positive. That's the perspective some would take towards life and ministry. *Don't be negative. Always look for the positive side of things.* And that's good, to a point, for we certainly have so much to be positive about, if we know Christ.

But there's no getting around the fact that there is a sober side to life and ministry. There are realities that are weighty and challenging and burdensome. Quite frankly, there was no smile on his face when Jude wrote the epistle we're about to read and ponder this evening.

To do: Scan the book, looking for two things. One, what was it that Jude intended to write about when he began this letter? Two, what different subject did he end up writing about?

- **Who wrote the book?**

--Jude

Jude is a form of the Hebrew name Judah (or the Greek "Judas"), which was common among the Jews. It was either:

1. Judas the apostle (Lk 6:16; Acts 1:13), or
2. Judas the half-brother of the Lord Jesus (Mt 13:55; 6:3)

The latter is more likely.

Q: How does Jude refer to himself in v 1? A servant of Jesus, a brother of James (why? James was a key leader in the early church)

What do we know about Jude? (Gromacki)

--did not believe in the Messiahship of Jesus during His ministry (Mk 6:3; Jn 7:3-8)

--was present in the upper room prayer meeting (Acts 1:14), which indicates he was converted during the 40 day post-resurrection ministry of Jesus

--he later had an itinerant preaching ministry in which he was accompanied by his wife (1 Cor. 9:5)

--we know nothing of his death for certain

- **When was the book written?**

A Key Issue: The Relationship between Jude and 2 Peter

Observation: There are obvious similarities between Jude 4-19 and 2 Peter 2:1-3:3. Why are they so

similar? Possible explanations: (Gromacki, 386)

1. They wrote on the same subject independent of each other.
2. They used a common source.
3. Peter borrowed from Jude.
4. Jude borrowed from Peter.

Gromacki favors option #4. Why? Acc. to verse 3, Jude says his purpose in writing changed suddenly. The reading of 2 Peter could have caused this change. Peter talked about the false teachers are being a *future* problem (2:1), but Jude saw them as already *present* (4). The fact that Jude quoted from other sources makes it more likely that he borrowed from Peter than vice versa.

Gromacki (386), "In the final analysis, it is not one man copying another man's work; rather, it is God copying God or God writing twice."

--A.D. 65, if 2 Peter uses Jude; if not a date of 80 is possible (*NIVsb*)

--Gromacki says any date between A.D. 66 and 80

Discuss: Several of the early Church Fathers viewed the book with suspicion. Why? Because of its brevity, its author was not an apostle, and the quotations in verses 9, 14-15.

Discuss: Why would these quotations create a stir? Jude quotes noncanonical sources, the *Assumption of Moses* (9) and the *Book of Enoch* (14-15). Both are books from apocryphal literature (not to be equated with the Apocrypha which was incorporated into the RC canon by action of the Council of Trent in 1545-6. These two books are not in the Apocrypha).

How do you explain? What Jude did is not unique. Paul quoted Aratus, a pagan poet, while in Athens (Acts 17:28), and a pagan Cretan poet (Tit. 1:12). The fact that a Biblical author quoted such a book does not mean the apocryphal book was inspired nor that the Biblical author approved of everything in that book. It means (as Gromacki puts it), "The Biblical author, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, selected the quotation because it was true...Truth is truth no matter where it is found."

- **Why was the book written?**

--Jude was written to warn the church to contend for the faith in the face of apostasy.

Discuss: What is true of an apostate, a false teacher according to Jude? Let's scan the book to discover...

Q: What did Jude say was his original intent for writing? V 3

Q: Why did he change his mind? V 4 The appearance of false teachers

Q: Looking again at v 3b, what did Jude say his new intent for writing was?

Q: Where were the false teachers acc. to v 4? Slipped in *among* you

Q: What kind of message were these false teachers teaching? Look for clues:

- v 4--changed the grace of God into a license for immorality
- v 4--denied Jesus Christ
- v 8--pollute their bodies, reject authority, slander celestial beings
- v 10--speak abusively against what they don't understand
- v 12--blemishes at the love feasts
- v 12--shepherds who feed only themselves
- v 15--ungodly
- v 16--grumblers and faultfinders; boast about themselves
- v 19--men who cause division, and do not have the Spirit

- **What is the outline of the book?**

(adapted from Gromacki, 388)

Salutation (1-2)

- I. The Warning of Apostasy (3-4)
- II. Historical Examples of Apostasy (5-7)
- III. Description of the Apostates (8-16)
- IV. The Duties of Believers (17-25)
 - A. To the Scriptures (17-19)
 - B. To themselves (20-21)
 - C. To others (22-23)
 - D. To God (24-25)

- **What is the message of the book in one sentence?**

--Jude is a letter of warning for churches to guard the faith against the attack of false teachers inside the church.

- **What contribution does the book make to biblical theology (that is, how does this book relate to the rest of the Bible)?**

1. *Jude warns us about contending for the faith.*

Q: What is "the faith" in verse 3? Notice the definite article. It's not "guard *your* faith," but "the faith." Where did Jude say we got "the faith"? It was "once delivered to the saints." It's the revealed truth that God gave to His Church through His Son and the apostles. The gospel. The objective content of the gospel which is preserved for us in His inspired Word.

Discuss: How do we contend for "the faith"?

a. We must know what it is. We must study the doctrine upon which our salvation rests. We can't defend what we don't know.

Danger: We have a generation of contemporary Christians who want to *experience* God but aren't interested in *knowing* Him. To know Him takes diligent effort.

b. We must major on majors. "The faith" is a major. Lots of important "issues" are not major.

Think about it: "You can dilute something by addition as well as subtraction." What does that mean? One way to attack "the faith" is to deny it. Another way is to add so much "stuff" to it that it gets bogged down and lost.

c. We must be committed to the Scriptures.

Discuss: How can a person contend for the faith without being contentious? How can we maintain a balance between a positive presentation of the gospel and a negative defense of the faith?

2. *Jude helps us understand the sovereign work of God in the believer's salvation.*

The book begins and ends focusing on what God did.

Q: Acc. to v 1, what 3 things has God done for us as Christians?

Q: Acc. to verses 24-25, what else do we learn about God?

Discuss: What questions does Jude raise for you? What is something you're challenged to do in light of this epistle?