

Jude

Purpose: To warn his readers to be on guard against false teachers (cf. vv.3-4)

Outline: 1-2 – Salutation

3-16 – Sin and doom of godless men

17-23 – Call to persevere

24-25 – Doxology

Author: Perhaps Judas/Thaddeus the apostle, or possibly the brother of James and thus brother of Jesus; (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:5)

Date: 60-65 AD

Highlights:

There are substantial links between Jude 4-18 and 2 Peter 2, which cause most scholars to date the letter before 2 Peter (65-67 AD). Both passages discuss fallen angels and false teachers.

Verse 9, and verses 14-15 quote non-biblical literature (*The Assumption of Moses*, and *Enoch* – respectively). Paul did this on three occasions (Acts 17:28; 1 Corinthians 15:33; and Titus 1:12).

False teaching was, and is, a problem in the church; and so it is a problem for the church. It is right and good for the larger church to admonish appropriately false teachers and false teaching. Jude's letter is not written to just one church, but is a general/pastoral letter to the whole church as a warning about false teachers.

The false teaching that exists in one church, or one fellowship/denomination of churches, effects the Christian witness of that church; and the church as a whole. Still today, false teaching among one group of people eventually spreads like a virus.

Much false teaching is old heresies made new ("there is nothing new under the sun" Ecclesiastes 1:9; "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man" 1 Corinthians 10:13). An important guard for Christians today is to know the various false teachings throughout history: Gnosticism, Docetism, Arianism, Marcionism, anti-nomianism, Pelagianism, etc.

Jude recalls three incidents from the Old Testament to admonish his readers: the unbelieving Israelites in the desert (v.5), rebellious angels (v.6), and the immoral inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah (v.7). Jude then references another three Old Testament events in v.11, along with the references from non-biblical literature.

In all of these references, he affirms the important biblical truth that the Lord has, does, and will bring judgment on those who don't believe. The Lord judges rebellious angels and people. The Lord is judge, not us – not even the archangel Michael. Jude is not seeking to speak as judge, but to bring warning.

Still today, we speak words not of our judgement, but of the Lord's judgment from which there is rescue through Jesus Christ. We speak these words in love for our fellow man as "dear friends" and "be merciful to those who doubt."

Our warning about false teachers is different than our warning to false teachers.