

Jude

AUTHOR: Jude, the brother of James. We know practically nothing of Jude. In Jude 1:1, he refers to himself as the "brother of James," who was probably the writer of the epistle James. It could be the same James who was referred to by Matthew in Matthew 13:55 and by Mark in Mark 6:3. We do not, however, know this for sure. It was not until after the resurrection of Jesus that the brethren of our Lord acknowledged the fact that He was the Messiah.

THEME: "Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." This theme is found in Jude 3, the key verse to the entire book of Jude.

INTRODUCTION: Jude was probably a Jew who was a careful student of the book of Daniel. He lived in a time of persecution. His object in writing the book was to console and strengthen those who were oppressed by their enemies and to stabilize them in the faith while they were enduring their trials. He tells of rewards awaiting the righteous and of the punishment to be given to the wicked.

Basically, he is writing to individual Christian people, admonishing them to stay true to the faith and to be separate from false teachers. He uses much of the Old Testament. In this one little 25-verse book, Jude mentions Sodom and Gomorrha, the fall of the angels, the deliverance from Egypt, Cain, Korah, Balaam, Enoch, and other stories and persons from the Old Testament. There is a lot of Bible study in this little book if it is studied carefully in detail.

I. THE BOOK IS ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIANS. In Jude 1, the word "sanctified" means "set apart." In other words, the entire book is written to God's people.

II. IT IS WRITTEN THAT GOD'S PEOPLE MIGHT STAND FOR THE FAITH AND FIGHT FOR THE TRUTH. Again, read Jude 3.

III. IT IS WRITTEN BECAUSE OF CERTAIN FALSE TEACHERS WHO HAD CAREFULLY AND SHREWDLY ENTERED IN TO TRY TO CAUSE THE CHRISTIANS TO DEPART FROM THE FAITH.

IV. JUDE REMINDS THE PEOPLE OF THE DANGER OF DISOBEDIENCE.

1. He reminds them of the Israelites who left Egypt but would not go into the Promised Land. In Jude 5, he refers to the children of Israel who left Egypt, crossed the Red Sea, marched across the wilderness, but did not believe that God could care for them in the Promised Land. They sent out the twelve spies and decided not to go forward and enter into their promised possession. God punished them by allowing only those under the age of 20 to enter the Promised Land. (See Numbers 14:29.) The others died and never entered. Jude is advising new Christians here concerning keeping on going for God. He is admonishing them to grow in grace, and he is telling them of the danger of not growing in grace. They will live wasted lives and never enter into the fullest possession and the full blessings that God has for them.

2. He reminds them of the angels in Heaven who did not believe God. Read Jude 6. Lucifer was once an angel in Heaven. There were three archangels in Heaven—Lucifer, Michael and Gabriel.

Perhaps each of these had one-third of Heaven's angels under his jurisdiction. Lucifer decided to rebel, to cause war, and to try to take over the throne in Heaven. Because of this, he and his angels were cast out of Heaven to the earth, and Hell was prepared for their future and eternal habitation.

Again, God is reminding us of the danger of disobeying Him and not doing His will.

3. He reminds them of Sodom and Gomorrha. See Jude 7. Here are the two cities (spoken of in Genesis) that were destroyed by fire. The people there did not believe the warning God gave them concerning the coming destruction. Because of this, they were destroyed. God is reminding us that He will not chide with us forever.

In these three illustrations. God tells us that if we do not serve Him and believe Him, punishment is definite. Jude is using these three illustrations in an effort to warn the Christian people not to follow the false teachers, but to keep on going for God, to keep on growing in grace, and to keep on serving God. (Teacher: Spend some time reminding the pupils of the punishment that God places on sin. Make a list of all the people in the Bible whom God punished because of their sins.)

4. He reminds them of Cain. Notice in Jude 11, "the way of Cain." What is the "way of Cain"? The "way of Cain" is the man who believes in a god and who believes in religion, but rejects redemption by blood. Cain was punished and expelled from the presence of God, again reminding us of the awful penalty for not believing in God.

5. He reminds them of the error of Balaam. Again, read Jude 11. Balaam was a prophet of God. He was lured by financial reward, popularity and honor to go into Moab out of God's will. He was a good man who left the will of God. He used his own reasoning instead of obeying God's command of separation. Because of this, his children and their children intermarried with heathen people, and God's judgment came on his family. Again, God is reminding us of the danger of not obeying Him.

6. He reminds them of the gainsaying of Korah. In Jude 11, the word "Core" is the same as "Korah." Korah was a man who in Numbers 16 rebelled against Moses and denied the authority of Moses as God's chosen spokesman. Because of that, an earthquake came and destroyed Korah's house and family. Many were destroyed. Again, God was judging one who did not obey His will and serve Him.

All of the above are simply examples that are given by Jude warning us that if we do not serve the Lord, definite punishment will come.

CONCLUSION: Jude was a true pastor. He pleaded with his people to go forward for God, to keep serving God. He warned them of false teachers and preached to them of the wrath of God. Perhaps nobody else in all the Bible in 25 short verses comes anywhere close to Jude in wrapping up the entire scope of the true pastor's job.

He feeds the sheep, skins the sheep, warns the sheep and scolds the sheep. He, like the true Shepherd, wants the sheep to turn out best!