

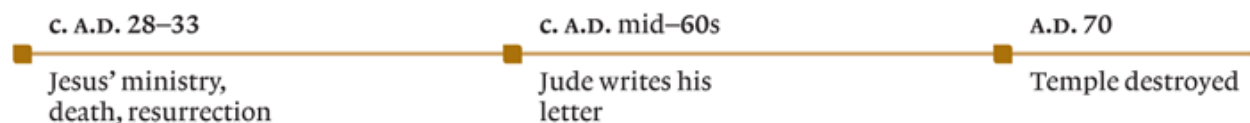
## JUDE

THE ACTS  
OF THE  
APOSTATES

CLEAR FAITH IN A BLURRY WORLD

## INTRODUCTION TO JUDE

## Timeline



## Author, Date, and Recipients

The book was written by Jude, the brother of James and Jesus (see [Matt. 13:55](#); [Mark 6:3](#), where “Judas” is the same in Greek as “Jude”). Jude was probably written in the mid-60s A.D. Considering the letter’s apparent Jewish perspective, Jude’s audience was probably Jewish Christians, or a mixture of Jewish and Gentile readers where the Gentiles were familiar with Jewish traditions.

Since Jude addresses a situation similar to the one addressed by [2 Peter](#) and exhibits a literary relationship to ch. [2](#) of that letter (Jude may have been a source for [2 Peter](#)), the two letters are commonly dated in fairly close proximity, even though evidence for the date of writing within the book of [Jude](#) is sparse.

## Theme

The church must defend the one true faith (v. [3](#)). Believers must be faithful to the end by resisting false teachers and following the truth.

## Purpose, Occasion, and Background

Jude warns against following false teachers who have infiltrated the church and are distorting the one true faith. Jude calls the church to defend the truth aggressively against such false teaching.

While the false teachers of Jude were profoundly libertine (morally unrestrained), it would be historically inaccurate to argue that they were Gnostics. This heretical sect (or group of sects) was influential primarily from the second century A.D. onward.

Jude accomplishes his purpose by drawing analogies with OT events, using the same principles of interpretation found in [2 Peter](#) (and elsewhere in the NT). He also draws on Jewish apocalyptic traditions from nonbiblical literature (he refers to 1 Enoch and the *Testament of Moses*) in building his case. Thus, as literature, Jude has a distinctively Jewish flavor.

The format is of a NT epistle (letter), with its loose divisions of salutation, body, and closing. But the central unit of the letter (vv. [5–16](#)) fits the style of a judgment oracle: it has an object of attack, an attack coming from several directions, a harsh tone, and an implied standard on which the attack is being conducted (“the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints”; v. [3](#)). The description of those who left the faith (vv. [8–16](#)) provides a picture of their character and actions. The use of images and allusions (e.g., to Sodom and Gomorrah and the archangel Michael) lends a poetic quality to the letter.

The writer displays horror over the apostasy and the false teachers who have caused it. The only NT passage that goes beyond Jude in these traits is Jesus' denunciation of the religious leaders in [Matthew 23](#). But this letter begins with the usual soothing notes of NT epistles, and in the last two verses it becomes one of the most moving benedictions in the NT.

### Key Themes

- I. Christians need to defend the doctrines of the faith (v. [3](#)).
- II. False teachers may be identified by their immoral character (vv. [4, 8, 10, 12–13, 16, 18–19](#)).
- III. God will judge false teachers (vv. [4, 5–7, 11, 14–15](#)).
- IV. Saints must endure to be saved (vv. [17–23](#)).
- V. As God grants mercy to those who are called, they must show mercy to others (vv. [2, 21–23](#)).
- VI. God grants the grace to ensure that his people will persevere (vv. [1–2, 24–25](#)).

### Outline

- I. Initial Greeting (vv. [1–2](#))
- II. Jude's Appeal: Contend for the Faith (vv. [3–4](#))
- III. The Immoral Character and Resulting Judgment of the False Teachers (vv. [5–16](#))
- IV. Concluding Exhortations (vv. [17–25](#))<sup>1</sup>

Here is a helpful overview video from the Bible Project: [villagebible.church/judevideo](https://villagebible.church/judevideo)



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<sup>1</sup> Introduction to Jude from <https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/introduction-to-jude/>

## OPEN IT

1. Who is your “favorite” villain from a book or movie? What makes them so dangerous as a villain?

## READ IT

Read Jude 1-25 to get a sense of the letter as a whole as we begin this study.

## EXPLORE IT

2. How does Jude view his relationship to Jesus?
3. How does Jude characterize the recipients of this letter?
4. What things does Jude pray would be multiplied to his readers?
5. According to verse 3, what is Jude’s purpose in writing this letter?
6. Who has crept into the church? How are these people described?

## APPLY IT

### **“To those who are called”**

Jude does not use the word “called” to mean “invited” (Schreiner, 1, 2 Peter, 429). Here the word means the effectual calling of God that opens the heart to freely respond to the gospel. In Scripture there are two types of calling. There is a general call (see Matt 11:28-30), and there is an effectual call (see Rom 8:30). There is a mysterious wonder in this truth that the sovereign God effectually brings persons to salvation in perfect harmony with their freewill response to the gospel. There is a marvelous complementarity and mind-bending mystery. Timothy George has well said, God created human beings with free moral agency, and He does not violate this even in the supernatural work of regeneration. Christ does not rudely bludgeon His way into the human heart. He does not abrogate our creaturely freedom. No, He beckons and woos, He pleads and pursues, He waits and wins. (Amazing Grace, 86–87) <sup>2</sup>

### **7. What elements are necessary for a full and accurate gospel call?**

### **8. What is the difference between a general “gospel call” and an “effectual call”? What is our responsibility in relation to each of those calls?**

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<sup>2</sup> Shaddix, James. Exalting Jesus in 2 Peter, Jude (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) (p. 147). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

**“To those who are beloved in God the Father”**

Jude reminds us that we are “beloved in God the Father”. It’s a sobering reminder and reality that the Creator of the universe, the God who spoke galaxies into existence, the God who commands the seas and the storms, loves us deeply with a love not based on our own achievements or merits, but originates from His own grace and mercy toward us. We are “beloved”.

The great love of God is one that calls, sanctifies, and keeps the “beloved”. It’s a love that is steadfast and unchanging.

9. How should our being “beloved in God the Father” impact not only our relationship with God, but our relationship with other believers? How does scripture support your answer?

10. As you look at this short letter as a whole, how do you see Jude’s affection for the people of God come out in his writing?

### **“To those who are kept”**

Again, the word translated “kept” is in the perfect tense, and it is one of Jude’s favorite words. It appears in verse 1, twice in verse 6, and again in verses 13 and 21 (five times total). The word means “to protect, keep from harm, or preserve.” Here the emphasis is that we are kept safe in our salvation by Jesus Christ. Hebrews 7:25 links our eternal security to the intercessory prayer ministry of Jesus. Jude 24 says he will keep us from stumbling and will present us to the Father “without blemish and with great joy.”

Scripture’s witness on this crucial doctrine of God’s preserving work is clear: By his work on earth, Jesus obtained my salvation. By his work in heaven, Jesus maintains my salvation. God is preserving fallen angels and apostates for judgment (vv. 6,13). God is preserving you and me for glory! <sup>3</sup>

- 11. Read Jesus’ words from His “High Priestly Prayer” in John 17:6-19.  
How would you characterize Jesus’ heart for His followers?**

**What are some of the means by which He prays the Father would keep His people?**

- 12. Why do you think Jude views these as defining features and characteristics of a follower of Christ?**

- 13. How do these spiritual realities shape and strengthen you personally in your faith?**

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<sup>3</sup> Shaddix, James. Exalting Jesus in 2 Peter, Jude (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) (p. 148). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

## **Contend for the Faith**

The word “contend” is a translation of the Greek word *epagonizesthai*, from which we get our word *agonize*. The word appears in both military and athletic contexts. It means “to fight or struggle with intense effort.” Jude calls on us to strive after and fight for the faith, and his words suggest that he knows it will not be an easy battle; it will be agonizing at times.<sup>4</sup>

**14. What might it look like for Christians today to “fight or struggle with intense effort” for the faith? Where does that “fight” start?**

**15. How do you see our church striving to “contend for the faith” and show mercy to people?**

No doubt the “faith” Jude had in mind is the gospel of Jesus Christ and all that derives from his person and work. A brief survey of this letter informs us what Jude was concerned about: the security of the believer (vv. 1,24), the grace of God (v. 3), the lordship of Christ and all its implications (v. 3), immoral living (vv. 4,7,8,10,13,16,18,19,23), unbelief (v. 5), a rebellious spirit (vv. 6,8,11), materialism (v. 11), deception (vv. 12,16), divisiveness (v. 19), and ungodliness (vv. 4,15,18).<sup>5</sup>

**16. Many scholars believe the false teachings that Jude was addressing were those that would later develop into the Gnosticism that would plague the early church within the next century. What are some false teachings that confront the Church today?**

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<sup>4</sup> Shaddix, James. *Exalting Jesus in 2 Peter, Jude* (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) (p. 155). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

17. According to verse 3, what is one of the best ways to ensure that we are prepared to contend against false teachings that may confront the Church?

### **The Heart of a Shepherd**

This letter is written to call attention to and confront false teachers in the church. “None of this is a license to hate, to insist on being right, to flash our tribal credentials and demonize those outside. That attitude has borne barrels of toxic fruit in our culture, our churches and our families. Jude brackets his strong words with calls to mercy and love. He’s not so much a militant warrior as a shepherd defending the sheep of his Lord and Master.

Some of the attacks we face will look different from those in Jude’s day, some will look shockingly similar. But whether we’re sheep or shepherds, we need to protect our brothers and sisters and ourselves from the devastating effects of spiritual falsehood.” <sup>6</sup>

18. Describe the character and attitudes necessary to contend well for the faith? How does Scripture support your answer? (Some helpful passages may include 2 Tim. 2:24-26; 2 Tim. 4:1-3; Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Cor. 6:2-10)

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

This study was compiled and questions were written by Jeremy Anderson (Indian Creek Campus)—[www.villagebible.church/smallgroup](http://www.villagebible.church/smallgroup)