

# GOD'S AMAZING BOOK

THROUGH THE BIBLE, BOOK BY BOOK

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## FIGHTING FOR THE FAITH

A Quick Look at the General Epistle of JUDE

### Fast Facts on JUDE

**Written by?** Jude (Heb., Judah; Gk. Judas)

**Written when?** A.D. 65-90

**Written why?**

To encourage sound doctrine (3)

To encourage believers to contend for the once for all FAITH (3)

To warn of the danger of false teaching (4, 5-23)

To assure believers of their eternal security in Christ (24-25)

### *Our Behavior Affects Our Beliefs?*<sup>1</sup>

The twentieth-century writer Aldous Huxley made an unusually candid mid-life admission as he was in the process of moving from agnosticism to Eastern mysticism: Like many of his contemporaries, he says, he “took it for granted” that life has absolutely “no meaning.” This was partly due to his scientific worldview. But he admits it was due “partly also to other, non-intellectual reasons. I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption.” Other, non-intellectual motives? What does Huxley mean? He continues: “The philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in pure metaphysics; **he is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to do,** or why his friends should not seize political power and govern in the way that they find most advantageous to themselves.”

Then Huxley changes to a more personal note and sounds eerily similar to the teachers Jude is warning us about: **“For myself, as, no doubt, for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation. The liberation we desired was simultaneously liberation from a certain political and economic system and liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom;** we objected to the political and economic systems because it was unjust .... There was one admirably simple method of confuting these people and at the same time justifying ourselves in our political and erotic revolt: we could deny that the world had any meaning whatsoever.”<sup>2</sup> **Francis Bacon made the same point even more concisely: “Man prefers to believe what he prefers to be true.”** Faithless lives are marked by immorality and by a denial of the truth.

*Although Jude had earlier rejected Jesus as the Messiah, he, along with his other three half-brothers of Jesus, was converted after Christ’s resurrection. Because of his close family relationship with Jesus and because he was an eyewitness of Jesus’ life, ministry, and resurrection, Jude has a burning passion for the salvation that comes in Christ. But as he writes, he transitions to a matter that is heavy on his heart at this time. Jude is intensely concerned about the threat of heretical teachers in the church and the response that Christians should have concerning this threat. Therefore, Jude seeks to motivate his readers to wake up from their complacency and take action against false teachers.<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Mark Dever, *The Message of the New Testament*, 519.

<sup>2</sup> Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937), 269-273.

<sup>3</sup> Jim George, *The Bare Bones Bible Handbook*, 287

## THE SKELETON<sup>4</sup>

### Verses 1-4 The Reason for Writing

In light of those who are denying Christ and **using the grace of God to justify immoral behavior**, Jude writes this timely word of rebuke and warning.

### Verses 5-16 The Danger of False Teachers

Jude begins this section by reminding his readers that false teachers will meet their doom just as three other groups in the Old Testament met theirs: Contentious unbelievers who died in the wilderness; fallen angels who cohabited with women before the flood and who are in chains until judgment; and men who exhibited homosexual behavior and were destroyed in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

False teachers are characterized by Jude as being ruled by their flesh, rejecting authority, and reviling angelic beings. Jude compares false teachers to three spiritually rebellious men in the Bible-Cain (from Genesis), and Korah and Balaam (from Numbers)-and says their evil is likened to hidden reefs, airy clouds, uprooted trees, wild waves, and wandering stars. Jude affirms the judgment of God upon these ungodly men.

### Verses 17-25 The Duty to Fight for God's Truth

After exposing the behavior of false teachers, Jude now addresses his readers and reminds them that others have warned about these men. He exhorts them to protect themselves against this onslaught of apostasy by building themselves up in the Scriptures, praying consistently in the Spirit for God's will, and looking for Christ's second coming. In the process of fighting for God's truth, they are to show compassion to those who deserve it and, if necessary, to pull others out of the fires of apostasy with great fear of personal defilement. Jude then returns to the theme of salvation that he mentioned at the beginning of his letter. He closes with one of the most often-cited doxologies in the Bible (verses 24-25), emphasizing the power of Christ to preserve His followers from being overpowered by the enemy.

## LIFE LESSONS FROM JUDE<sup>5</sup>

1. As long as Satan is alive and well, false teachers will threaten the church with error. Do what you must to know the truth.
2. Mark it well: One of the revealing characteristics of a false teacher is fearless, ungodly behavior.
3. False teachers act as if God will not punish their godless behavior.
4. Genuine servants of God will faithfully point to Christ with their words and their conduct.
5. **Complacency is not an option for Christians. You are to earnestly contend for the faith.**

The word for "contend" is the word from which we get our word "agonize." It is a strenuous, athletic word. You might think of some sporting event you like. Perhaps you have a favorite player. Imagine how your favorite player looks at the high point of the game or match, straining with every nerve and muscle in the body. Now, says Jude, we are to do that for the faith. **Contend for the faith not because it is familiar or traditional or conservative. Contend because it is true and it is essential.** When I first became a Christian, I loved the song "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus," particularly the line that says, "Though none go with me, still I will follow." We must have such a determination for the truth. I am determined to contend for the truth of the faith once for all delivered. I contend first with myself but also with my family. I contend among my friends and in my church. I contend in our community and in our convention of churches. As God gives me opportunity, I will contend in our nation and in our world.<sup>6</sup>

What value do you place on God's Word? God's church? God's people? Today, as in years gone by, many false teachers have infiltrated our churches, Bible colleges, and Christian institutions. What price are you willing to pay to defend God's truth? Are you ready to stand with Jude and "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (verse 3)? If so, then you stand with Jude in the long line of faithful Christian soldiers who have answered the call and are fighting the good fight of faith as they engage the forces of evil for the souls of men.

<sup>4</sup> Jim George, *The Bare Bones Bible Handbook*, 287-288

<sup>5</sup> Jim George, *The Bare Bones Bible Handbook*

<sup>6</sup> Mark Dever, *The Message of the New Testament*, 522-523.

## Extra Material

*A clash of cymbals! A boom of tympani! A cannon blast and a cascade of fireworks! That is what the letter of Jude is like. The words of this apostle thunder from the pages. – Ray C. Stedman*

### THE BACKGROUND<sup>7</sup>

#### **I. Author: Jude**

Jude identifies himself as a servant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James. The determination of his identity rests principally upon the process of elimination. The half brothers of Jesus are mentioned in Matt. 13:55 and Mark 6:3. Among those named are both James and Jude. James, the half brother of the Lord (to be distinguished from both James the son of Zebedee and James the son of Alphaeus), rose to a prominent position of leadership in the church at Jerusalem. Jude, who was not as widely known as James, does not use an apostolic title. He simply identifies himself as the brother of the well known James. The conclusion must be that this Jude is one of the Lord's half brothers. His name is the same as Judah or Judas and means "praise."

#### **II. Place and Date of Writing: Uncertain**

The assignment of date and location for the epistle is difficult, if not impossible. Suggestions about the place from which the epistle was written have ranged from Alexandria to Rome. The literary relationship between Jude and 2 Peter has a bearing on the dating of Jude. If Jude utilized 2 Peter, and 2 Peter is viewed as authentic (as it should be), then a date any time after A.D. 65-68 is reasonable. If, on the other hand, Peter utilized Jude, then a date of c. A.D. 65 is probable and even necessary, due to the time of Peter's martyrdom (c. A.D. 66-67). The identification of the apostolic era as a past phenomenon (v. 17) and the affirmation of a finalized faith (v. 20) that has been once for all delivered unto the saints (v.3) suggests a relatively late date, between A.D. 75 and 90. Viewed in this light, 2 Peter predicts the coming danger of false teachers; and Jude warns us that they have arrived. This would explain why Jude would utilize 2 Peter 2, and also why he would write such a strong and urgent epistle.

#### **III. Theme: Warning against False Teachers**

There is no obscurity in Jude's purpose. He wished to discuss facets of salvation, but the threat of subversive teachers compelled him to write and exhort his readers "to contend earnestly for the faith" (v. 3). Thus, the entire epistle is an assessment of false teachers and a strong warning to the recipients. The false teachers reject Christ's authority, but Jude stresses that Jesus is Lord, now and forever. Therefore, He is to be followed both in doctrine and deed.

#### **Jude's Description of an Apostate**

Godless (verse 4)  
Denies Christ (verse 4)  
Rebels against authority (verse 8)  
A grumbler (verse 15)  
A fault finder (verse 16)  
Mocks the truth (verse 18)  
Divisive (verse 19)  
Worldly (verse 19)  
Lacks the Holy Spirit (verse 19)

#### **Jude's Seven Challenges**

1. Earnestly contend for the faith (v. 3)
2. Remember the teachings and warnings of the apostles (v. 17)
3. Build yourselves up in the most holy faith (v. 20)
4. Pray in the Holy Spirit (v. 20)
5. Keep yourselves in the love of God (v. 21)
6. Look for the mercy of the Lord to bring you to eternal life (v. 21)
7. Show mercy to Christians who are doubting; snatch unbelievers from the fire; and cautiously show mercy to the corrupt (vv. 22-23)

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<sup>7</sup> Daniel Akin, "Jude".

## THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT JUDE<sup>8</sup>

1. Jude is one of only two New Testament books written by a brother of Jesus (James).
2. Jude is the only book in the Bible solely devoted to the subject of apostasy.
3. Jude has more non-canonical references (three) than any other New Testament book (v. 9, the Assumption of Moses; vv. 6, 14-15, book of Enoch),
4. The book of Jude, along with Hebrews and 2 Peter, makes more references to Jewish history than any other New Testament book.
5. There are approximately a dozen groups of triads in this brief epistle (v. 1: called, sanctified, and preserved; v. 8: defile, reject, and speak evil, and so on).
6. Jude addresses the most general audience of all the New Testament Epistles (v. 1).
7. Only Jude and 2 Peter contain Scripture references to fallen angels being chained (Jude v. 6; 2 Peter 2:4).
8. Only in the epistle of Jude is Michael referred to as an archangel (v. 9). No other archangels are mentioned as such in Scripture.
9. Jude's epistle is very similar in content and theme to 2 Peter 2, and he apparently continued the previous warnings of Peter (vv. 17-18).
10. In many ways, Jude is the "book of Judges" of the New Testament.
11. Jude has often been referred to as "The Acts of the Apostates."

### "How Should We Respond When Biblical Authors (Like Jude) Cite Non-Biblical Sources?"<sup>9</sup>

1. Recognize that such actually occurs:  
Jude 9 – The Assumption of Moses  
Jude 14 – The Book of Enoch  
\*also Jesus, Stephen, and Paul (see Acts 17:28)
  2. Recognize that all truth is God's truth, wherever it is found.
  3. Recognize that the 66 books of the Bible, though true, do not contain **all** truth.
  4. The Holy Spirit may and did direct the biblical writers to a variety of sources for the creation of their books.
  5. To cite or quote a part of a non-biblical source does not demand that one believe all of that source is correct, or that it is inspired.
  6. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the early church came to recognize and compile the books of the Bible which truly belong.
- The 66 books of the Bible belong not because the early church said that they belonged, but rather they belong (were inspired) and the early church **recognized** this as the case.

<sup>8</sup> Jeff Lasseigne, *Highway 66* (Santa Ana, CA: Calvary Chapel Publishing, 2004)

<sup>9</sup> Daniel Akin "Jude" [www.danielakin.com](http://www.danielakin.com)