

JUDE

(Exegesis by Duane Watson unless otherwise specified)

- 1) -- Two vastly different opinions as to who wrote the letter:
 - a) This letter is so similar to the 2nd chapter of 2 Peter that it was probably written c 100 AD or later. If Jude was really the brother of James, he would have been a brother of Jesus and very unlikely that he would still be alive. Some later editor may have added the reference to increase its importance. /// *Not an “early catholic document”*: a reconstruction of early Christianity which postulates that beginning with the second generation of Christians there was a movement away from hope in the imminent parousia, toward institutionalization of church offices, and the understanding of faith as a body of doctrines rather than personal commitment.
 - b) Almost certainly was written by Jesus’s brother Jude (Judas). He didn’t believe Jesus was the Messiah during Jesus’s lifetime but did after the resurrection (Acts 1:14) and became a missionary (1 Cor 9:5). Probably written around 50: original converts still living (vss 17-18), Jewish Christians apocalyptic stance, used by 2 Peter as an authoritative document. The recipients were probably Jewish Christians in a church of unknown location, probably within Palestine. /// Why it was written: itinerant teachers and prophets who were common in early Christianity, “infiltrating” the church for financial gain, preaching “contorted” doctrines, mostly antinomianism, the doctrine proposed that once you are “saved,” you can do anything you want without jeopardizing your salvation. They believed that judgment was already past, not in the future. They denied both the laws of Moses and the parousia. See also 2 Peter, note #7.
- 2) 1 – Jude was probably an itinerant missionary – see 1 Corinthians 9:5 – with his wife. The fact that he starts his letter with “a servant of Jesus Christ” does not mitigate against his being a brother of Jesus. In fact, James starts his letter in exactly the same way – and no one disputes that he was Jesus’s brother.
- 3) 3 -- “Contending for the faith” – metaphorical words borrowed the Greek Games.
- 4) 4 – “Intruders” – the antinomianists. 4b – Trinitarian in thinking?
- 5) 5-9 – Three judgments:
 - 1) In Moses’s time, God destroyed those who didn’t believe that he could give them their promised land as he had said he would. Joshua and Caleb were the only people over age 20 who lived to see the Promised Land because they had concluded that the Israelites **could** win over the inhabitants, forty years before, whereas all the other “spies” sent into Canaan by Moses were afraid to even try.
 - 2) Dave Breese (Israel My Glory) believes that **humans** will judge the angels (saints) because of what is written also by Paul in 1 Cor 6:2-3 (in part: “Do you not know that we will judge angels?”)
The “evil angels” in Jewish tradition were the “watchers” who came down to earth to have sex with human females (Genesis 6:1-4), corrupted humanity with their teachings, and precipitated the flood. In Enoch 10, the watchers are bound by Michael, placed in darkness under the earth until judgment day when they will be transferred to the fires of Gehenna.
 - 3) The “dreamers” refer to the teachers of antinomianism who claim to have received revelatory dreams and usually used by false prophets (Deut 13:1-6, Jer 23:23-26, etc).

- 6) 9 – A reference to the "Assumption (or "Testament") of Moses," a book written by a Palestinian Jew during the lifetime of Jesus. The devil disputes with the archangel Michael for the body of Moses. The devil claims that Moses does not deserve an honorable burial because he murdered the Egyptian. Michael dares not rebuke the devil on his own authority so he invokes God's authority by quoting Zechariah 3:2: "The Lord rebuke you!" which comes from God's rebuke of the devil's accusation of the high priest Joshua.
- 7) 11 -- **Cain** (Gen 4:1-16) -- sins of envy, greed, hatred.
Balaam (Numb chapters 22-24) -- sins of greed, sex, idolatry. Balak was a Moabite king who tried to get the prophet Balaam to curse the migrating Israelites. He starts off to do so, but is stopped by his talking donkey who sees the angel with a sword and Balaam doesn't.
Korah (Numb 16:1-35) -- antinomian heretic. A Levite priest who led a revolt against Moses. He and 250 followers were buried alive by God.
- 8) 12 -- May be alluding to Ezek 34:2 which holds the leadership accountable for enjoying the benefits of leadership but not aiding the people: "Thus says the Lord God: Ah, you shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not the shepherds feed the sheep?"
- 9) 13 -- Metaphors from the four regions of creation: sky, earth, sea, heavens (1 Enoch 2:1-5:4). The laws of God are contrasted with the wicked, showing them to be false. "Waterless clouds": Proverbs 25:14 -- "Like clouds and wind without rain is one who boasts of gifts never given." Implying that the false teachers cannot deliver on their promises. /// The second death is the fate of those who do not have Christ as their advocate at the final judgment. (See Rev 20, especially vv 6 and 14.) /// The "wild waves" is an allusion to Isaiah 57:20 -- "For the wicked are like the tossing sea that cannot stay still." /// The "wandering stars" is an allusion to Enoch in half a dozen places, where he compares the false teachers with the watchers who are represented as wandering stars who didn't obey God and were cast from heaven into the dark abyss.
- 10) 14 -- Enoch is an apocryphal book written in 100 BC, contains a prophecy of divine retribution against heretics. But we must remember that it wasn't "apocryphal" for Jude. It was just another of the books and letters available to him. The original prophecy was of God's coming with an army of angels in apocalyptic judgment.
- 11) 17 – An indication that the "time (era) of the apostles" is in the past?
- 12) 20-21 -- Four exhortations insisting what the people can do for themselves.
- 13) 22-23 -- Three exhortations what they can do for others. Jude clearly expects the parousia in his life time. "Hating even the tunic..." – Be careful about being spiritually polluted by the false teachers.