

Through The Bible
Session #60 – Jude & Revelation
April 5, 2006

- I. General Observations about Jude
 - a. Not a single verse from Jude appears in the Lectionary Readings for the church year.
 - b. Jude is 'buried' near the end of the New Testament and its very location suggests, "After the Gospels, Acts, the letters of Paul, and Hebrews, you may continue reading if you want, but it's not necessary."¹
 - c. In the 16th century, Jude came under suspicion. Luther relegated Jude to the appendix of his September Testament (1522) with no mention of it in the table of contents. This is contrast to the early Church where Jude seems to be very popular.
 - d. We often look past Jude because of the magnitude of the book that follows – Revelation.
 - e. There is a great deal of similarity between Jude and 2nd Peter. Consider Jude 6 and 2nd Peter 2.4.
 - i. Both letters have the habit of addressing the recipients as "beloved." The Greek word here is: Αγαπητοί
 - ii. Why are they so similar? Why are they different?
 - f. The Eucharist / Lord's Supper is called a "love feast" in Jude 12. This is a fairly common expression used today and it comes from Jude though most people probably don't realize it.
 - g. Jude 23's expression, "...snatching them out of the fire..." is often connected to death-bed conversions.

¹ Fred B. Craddock, *Westminster Bible Companion: First and Second Peter and Jude* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), p. 127. Much of this outline comes from Craddock's commentary.

Another commentary used for these notes was J.N.D. Kelly's *Black's New Testament Commentary: The Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers).

h. Jude 24 and 25 is often used by clergy today as they give their benediction. Hands are raised over the congregation and these words are spoken.

II. Who was Jude?

a. He had a brother named James (see Jude 1).

b. Jude as author

i. Since Jude identifies himself as the brother of James probably indicates that James was prominent in the Church.

ii. Those who attribute Jude to the Jude who was the brother of Jesus date this letter as one of the earliest documents of the New Testament.

iii. Most likely the recipients were Palestinian Jewish Christians.

c. Jude was a very common name.

i. Two of the twelve apostles were named Jude (see Luke 6:14-16). Jude is considered a shortened form of Judas.

ii. Jesus had a brother named Jude (see Mark 6:3).

iii. An outstanding prophet in the early Church was named Jude (see Acts 15:22-33).

d. Since this Jude had a brother named James, and Jesus had brothers named Jude and James, then some consider our Jude as one of the brothers of Jesus.

III. Locations mentioned in Jude.

a. Three locations are mentioned and none are mentioned favorably: Egypt (v. 5) which was a land of bondage for Israel, Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7) came to symbolize cities harboring the worst sinners and evil.

IV. The Church of Jude's day

a. To be a Christian is to share with other believers in the love feasts and to participate in community worship.

b. To be a Christian is to stand firm in the faith.

- c. To be a Christian means you may have to fight for the faith and not be intimidated or flattered by other flashy options (see Jude 16, 19).
- d. To be a Christian means you recognize your own vulnerability and capacity for going astray. So you need to be diligent in prayer.
- e. To be a Christian means throwing yourself at the mercy of Christ means you must be merciful to others.
- f. To be a Christian means you must remain humble. Never over-estimate one's spiritual strength (see Jude 23).

V. Jude as literature

- a. Jude is a letter.
 - i. Not all the features of a letter are present but the opening and closing make it clear it is a letter.
 - ii. Jude is a general letter. Recipients don't seem to be identified.

VI. Purpose of Jude

- a. The letter was to alert the Church to intruders among them who may pervert the faith and divide the faithful.
- b. The letter intends to exhort the believers to stand firm in faith and grow in grace.
- c. We don't know in detail about the problems in this Church though we have some clues.
 - i. People were denying Christ (v. 4) by their actions...not so much their words but their actions.
 - ii. They may have been making some false claims about the Holy Spirit (vv. 19, 20).
 - iii. They seem to take their freedom to extremes that hurts the rest of the believing community (v. 12).
 - iv. They are quite articulate and smooth in their arguments thereby convincing those who are susceptible (v. 16).