

# JUDE: *Contend Earnestly*

## *Defend the Faith!*

**Jude** is probably the brother of the author of the Epistle of James, and half-brother of the Lord (Jude V.1). The author does not consider himself an apostle, but only a servant of the Lord (vv. 1, 17). In the early church, there was only one James who could be referred to in this way without further specification (Acts 15; Gal. 1:19). This Jude is probably the same one who is numbered among the physical brothers of Jesus in Mat. 13:55 and Mk. 6:3. Some scholars identify the author with Jude the Apostle (not Iscariot) in Lk. 6:16 and Acts 12:13, also called Lebbaeus or Thaddaeus in Mat. 10:2-3. Keeping mind that Jude 17-18 is almost verbatim in II Peter 3:3 it is reasonable to say that Jude was stimulated to write his epistle after reading II Peter 2. Like his brother James, Jude does not claim any authority by virtue of his natural relationship with the Savior; he is but "a servant of Jesus Christ" (cf. James 1:1).

**DATE:** It was probably written about A. D. 67 or 68, or soon after Peter wrote II Peter.

**READERS:** The first readers are only identified in the letter as "dear friends" (v. 2). It seems to have been intended for Christians everywhere.

**PURPOSE:** Jude starts out with the intention of writing a treatise on salvation, but the pressing circumstances in the church required him to write a warning against false teachers and a plea that his readers contend earnestly for their faith. Both Jude and Peter were alarmed at the inroads which false teachers were making. Jude urges the Christians to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). The heresy seems to have been an incipient form of Gnosticism, not the ascetic variety, but antinomian. This heresy allowed the flesh to run wild. They said, "Do anything you want to do; if it feels good go ahead as long as it doesn't hurt you or the other person. It was a very serious situation in the early church."

**THEME:** The central theme is to be strong in the faith and fight for the truth of the Gospel.

**KEY VERSES:** Verses 3, or 24.

**KEY WORDS:** remember, remind, faith, kept

**STYLE:** This writing reminds us of an urgently penned tract rather than an ordinary letter. It is controversial with a vigorous defense of the truth.

### QUOTES FROM APOCRYPHAL BOOKS

Jude 9 gives a quotation from the apocryphal book of *The Assumption of Moses* and Jude 14 gives another from the book of *Enoch*. Does this mean that Jude thought those apocryphal books were inspired? No, they simply illustrate how the early writers quoted from contemporary religious literature to bring out a truth, much the way modern writers do. Paul did the same thing in Acts 17:28; I Cor. 15:33; and Titus 1:12 where he quotes from heathen poets without implying their inspiration. This does not mean they considered the pseudepigraphal writings to be inspired as the canonical Scriptures were.

See background notes on [Gnosticism](#) in the introductory notes on [Colossians](#).

Title: Introduction to Jude  
Series: A Look at the Book

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