

Jude

- 1. Who was the writer? What else do we know about him from the Scriptures?** The writer identifies himself in vs. 1 as "Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James." There are only a couple of real possibilities for the identity of Jude -- either Judas the apostle (not Judas Iscariot, but Thaddeus) -- Acts 1:13, or Judas the brother of Jesus -- Matthew 13:55. It doesn't seem likely that Jude is Judas the apostle, for he is called the *son of James* both of the other times he is mentioned in the New Testament. In this epistle, he specifically calls himself the *brother of James*, which he would be if he were the brother of Jesus. Neither James nor Jude mention that they are the brother of Jesus; they simply call themselves bond-servants of Christ. The only other information that we have concerning Jude is in connection with him being a brother of Jesus. We know that he did not believe in Jesus prior to the crucifixion and resurrection. Here are a couple of supporting evidences from the Scripture -- John 7:5, Mark 3:21, 31. It is also interesting to note that Jesus gives the responsibility of his mother Mary to John the apostle at His crucifixion, instead of to His brothers -- John 19:26-27. Following Jesus' resurrection, though, it is apparent that His brothers believed in Him -- Acts 1:14, 1 Corinthians 9:5, Galatians 1:19.
- 2. To whom was it written?** The letter of Jude was written "to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ." Within the Scriptures, Christians are often spoken of as "the called." Here is a list of some of the clear places where God's people are "called":
 - Matthew 4:21 -- Jesus called James and John
 - Matthew 22:14 -- many are called, but few are chosen
 - Romans 1:6,7 -- called of Jesus Christ, called as saints
 - Romans 8:28 -- called according to God's purpose
 - Romans 9:24 -- called as vessels of mercy (both Jews and Gentiles)
 - 1 Corinthians 1:9 -- called into fellowship with Jesus Christ
 - 1 Corinthians 1:24 -- the called, both Jews and Greeks
 - Galatians 1:6 -- called by the grace of Christ
 - Galatians 5:13 -- called to freedom
 - 2 Thessalonians 2:14 -- called through the gospel
 - 1 Timothy 6:12 -- called to eternal life
 - 2 Timothy 1:9 -- saved and called with a holy calling
 - Hebrews 9:15 -- the called receive the promise of the eternal inheritance
 - 1 Peter 1:15 -- we were called by the Holy One to be holy
 - 1 Peter 2:9 -- called out of darkness into His marvelous light
 - 1 Peter 2:21 -- called for the purpose of suffering
 - 1 Peter 3:9 -- called that we might inherit a blessing
 - 1 Peter 5:10 -- called to God's eternal glory in Christ
 - Revelation 17:14 -- the called and chosen and faithful

As far as beloved goes, this also shows up all over the New Testament. I just chose one place that I think really communicates what this means -- 1 John 3:1-2. God truly loves us -- so much that He is pleased to call us His children. We also see that we are kept for Jesus Christ. Christians are Christ's inheritance. We are His reward; this is why He went to the cross, so that we could be His forever -- Hebrews 12:2, 1 Peter 2:9.

- 3. Why was this letter written?** Although Jude says that he would have liked to have written about our common salvation, he finds it necessary to address another topic. This letter is written as an appeal for Christians to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." Let there be no doubt that there is a spiritual war that is ongoing and Christians need to fight for the truth and for the faith. The reality is that many wolves in sheep's clothing are continually trying to undermine the one real faith. These ungodly people are working at every level to distort the true gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. In our day, some of this happens when "ministers" openly challenge the divine authority of the Bible. This attack may be made under the clever guise of "textual criticism" or purporting the idea of "theistic evolution" or various other arguments. As Christians, we must contend earnestly; we must fight back. We need to make a logical defense of the Scriptures, both from an external perspective (scientific creationism) as well as from an internal view (fulfilled prophecies, etc.). Other common attacks against the faith include the "faith-only" arguments against "baptismal regeneration." Those who deny the work that God performs in the waters of immersion are certainly false teachers, and we must contend earnestly against them. The same would hold true for those who deny the power of God for us to overcome the flesh. We must stand and deliver the conquering message of victory through God's Spirit.
- 4. According to this letter, is being "saved" enough?** Jude uses the example of the nation of Israel in this regard. Although the people of Israel were saved out of Egypt, they did not enter the Promised Land. Jude reminds us that they were destroyed in the wilderness because they did not believe. It is clear from the Old Testament account as well as chapters 3 and 4 of the book of Hebrews that the Israelites' disobedience was a direct result of their unbelief. What was it that they did not believe? Apparently they did not believe in God's power to carry out that which He had promised. Do we believe God when He says things like, "greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world"?
- 5. What Old Testament examples are brought forth to characterize the ungodly spoken against in the book of Jude?** Here are the Old Testament examples of the ungodly listed in the epistle of Jude:

 - The unfaithful of Israel who were destroyed in the wilderness -- verse 5
 - Sodom and Gomorrah -- verse 7
 - Cain -- verse 11
 - Balaam -- verse 11
 - Korah -- verse 11
- 6. What in particular do we see about those who follow after their own lusts?** Here are some characteristics of those who follow after their own lusts:

 - Grumblers -- verse 16

- Finding fault -- verse 16
- Speak arrogantly -- verse 16
- Flatter people for the sake of gaining an advantage -- verse 16
- Mockers -- verse 18
- Cause divisions -- verse 19
- Worldly-minded -- verse 19
- Devoid of the Spirit -- verse 19
(could probably include the list from verses 12 and 13 as well)

7. What do we learn about Christ's return in this letter? Verses 14 and 15 give us some specific information foretold by Enoch about Christ's return:

- He is coming with many thousands of His holy ones -- verse 14
- He is coming to execute judgment upon all -- verse 15
- Jesus is coming to convict all the ungodly of both their evil deeds and words -- verse 15

8. In contrast to the ungodly, what are God's beloved to do? The beloved of God are to:

- Remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of Christ -- verse 17
- Build ourselves up on our most holy faith -- verse 20
- Pray in the Holy Spirit -- verse 20
- Keep ourselves in the love of God -- verse 21
- Wait anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life -- verse 21

9. How are we to conduct ourselves in reference to the lost and the weak? We know that the purpose of us as Christians is twofold: 1) convert sinners, and 2) perfect the saints. Jude mentions these specifics:

- Have mercy on those who are doubting -- verse 22
- Save others, snatching them out of the fire -- verse 23
- On some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh -- verse 23

10. What is our God able to do? Our God is a great God. He is omnipotent; with Him all things are possible. Here are two particulars mentioned by Jude:

- God is able to keep us from stumbling -- verse 24
- God is able to make us stand in the presence of His glory blameless, with great joy -- verse 24