

# Introduction to Jude: Is Jude about *False Teachers* or Something Else?

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## I INTRODUCTION

The author of Jude is Judas (from the Greek Ιουδᾶς), but due to his introduction (v. 1) and his reference to the apostles in v. 17, it's likely not the apostle Judas (Lk. 6:16). Tradition states that it's Judas the Lord's half-brother (Mt 13:55). The target audience is uncertain since there are no internal clues but it's probably a single church.

## II WHAT THEOLOGIANs SAY ABOUT JUDE AND THE EVIDENCE THEY CITE

### A. Commentaries Say that Jude is about False Teachers and Defending the Gospel

The Introduction to Jude in the Word Biblical Commentary, WBC, states that Jude addresses a church (or churches) concerning the danger of false teachers. Thus, Jude urges his readers to uphold the gospel (v. 3). They see a connection between 2 Peter and Jude, particularly that the author of 2 Peter used Jude to write his letter.

The NAS study Bible's Introduction to Jude has a similar understanding. But they think 2 Peter was written first and that the author of Jude used 2 Peter to write his letter.

The evidence presented by WBC and the NAS study Bible for their understanding of Jude is the similarity between Jude and 2 Peter and passages in Jude itself. This is peculiar because Jude nowhere mentions false teachers/false teaching or the Gospel.

A word about using other books in the bible to interpret Scripture....

All the books in the Bible are interrelated because the Bible contains One overall story. However, the primary interpretation of any book in the Bible must come from the book itself. One can use other books to add to the interpretation, but not to acquire the interpretation. Additionally, when using a different book, one must ensure that the two books (or subjects) are in fact related.

### B. Commentaries Also Say that Jude is About Apologetics, Particularly Jude 3

The WBC thinks that Jude 3 refers to the gospel which must be defended against the false teachers. They cite vv. 3 and 20-23 as evidence. The book on apologetics *When Skeptics Ask* by Geisler and Brooks on page 12 states that Jude 3 is a call to do pre-evangelism. They cite verse 22 as support.

### C. Why is it Important to Know what Jude is **Not** About?

**Two Reasons: (1)** to guard against misunderstanding the message of Jude. If you rely on commentaries or study Bibles to understand the Bible, but their understanding is wrong, then you will miss God's message. **(2)** to teach you to be a Berean, Acts 17:11. We must constantly verify what others tell us about the Bible, even preachers. We must ask how they justify their interpretation and compare what they say to what the Bible says. This does not imply that every other source apart from the Bible is wrong. There is much useful information in commentaries and study Bibles. However, we must weigh that information against the Bible as we ground our interpretation in its CONTEXT.

### III WHAT IS JUDE ABOUT?

**1:1-2**, Jude's Greeting.

**1:3**, What does *contend earnestly for the faith* mean? The rest of Jude's letter defines it.

**1:4**, Beginning with this verse, Jude begins to define *contend earnestly for the faith*. Rather than asking his audience to defend the Gospel, Jude wants the leadership of this church to deal with the vile creatures walking among them. *Faith* in v. 3 does not refer to the Gospel, it's used in a collective sense (as it's used in Col. 2:7) to refer to the whole body of biblical truth that believers must uphold.

And when seeking to define *faith* in v. 3, one must define it from its **context**. Right after telling his audience to *contend earnestly for the faith* Jude spends the rest of the letter detailing the severe problem that plagues their flock. Thus, in this instance to *contend earnestly for the faith* means to stand up for the biblical truth that instructs the leaders of this church to execute judgment against the miscreants that are ensnaring their flock.

**1:5-8**, Jude provides two examples of vile individuals like the ones in his letter.

**1:9-10**, Jude makes a contrast between the behavior of the godless ones, who love to blaspheme, versus Michael the archangel, who refused to blaspheme even though he was on righteous ground in his argument with Satan.

**1:11**, Jude pronounces woe upon the wicked ones because they have followed in the footsteps of three other vile individuals in history: Cain, Balaam, and Korah.

**1:12-13**, Jude holds nothing back in describing these evil individuals because he wants the leadership to execute judgment on them for the danger they pose to their flock.

**1:14-15**, Jude shows his audience that these ungodly individuals will be judged severely by the Lord in the future so that they will execute judgment against them now.

**1:16**, Jude gives further evidence of the danger posed to the flock. These vile creatures walk by the flesh and fleece the flock through flattery.

**1:17-18**, Jude reminds them of the apostles' warnings concerning such miscreants.

**1:19**, Jude's final description may indicate that these deviants are unbelievers.

**1:20-21**, Jude's audience needs to resist the evildoers and stay on the right path.

**1:22-23**, Some of the flock have joined the deviants. So the leaders of this church must rescue them, some mercifully, but others forcibly as if yanking them out of a fire.

**1:24-25**, Jude's words of encouragement to the leaders of the flock to take action.

### V CONCLUSION

Jude urges the leadership of the church to eliminate the cancer that is among them. He describes it in vivid detail and gives ample justification for eradicating it. Further, the relationship between 2 Peter and Jude is that Peter talks about false teachers, while Jude speaks of those who've followed in their footsteps. This is evident from Jude vv. 17-18 and all that the Bible, our Lord, and the apostles teach about false teachers/prophets. False teachers did not originate with Peter's 2<sup>nd</sup> letter.