

JUDE

This is the last of the one-chapter books of the Bible. There are 5 in all: Obadiah, Philemon, 2 John, 3 John, and Jude.

We do not know when, where, or to whom the epistle was written. It is generally thought that it was written in the late 60's (possibly 65 to 67). The content seems to indicate that it was written to Jewish believers. Where? We do not know!

The writer: Jude--like the writer of the epistle of James--a half-brother of the Lord Jesus Christ. Cf. Matt. 13:34, 35; Mark 6:3; Acts 1:14. See also John 7:5. Our Lord's brothers believed in Him after His death and resurrection. All that we know about Jude apart from the above passages is what we can glean from this Epistle.

A peculiarity of this letter is its similarity with 2 Pet. 2:1-18. Most scholars believe that Jude wrote first, but we have no way of knowing for sure.

Outline:

I. Introduction: Extension of Greeting (vv. 1, 2).

Note: Neither James nor Jude ever refer to their blood relationship with our Lord. To have done so would have thrown serious doubt on the authenticity of their writings, and would have been in violent conflict with the spirit of the NT writers.

II. Explanation of Purpose (vv. 3, 4). Jude had wanted to write a doctrinal epistle (perhaps something like Romans), but was led to write this epistle of warning and exhortation instead.

III. Examples of Past Judgments (vv. 5-7).

Note: Judgments of the OT serve as warnings for today. All three of these illustrate the "turning" and "denying" of v. 4. REBELLION AGAINST DIVINELY ESTABLISHED AUTHORITY CONSTITUTES ONE OF THE MAJOR EMPHASES OF THIS EPISTLE.

A. Israel in the wilderness--at Kadesh Barnea (v. 5). Note the three categories by comparing this with the two illustrations which follow. This one has to do with the people of God.

B. Fallen angels (v. 6)--angelic beings!

C. Sodom (v. 7)--unbelievers.

Note: This all means that none of God's creatures, human or angelic, can escape the judgment of God upon disobedience and rebellion.

IV. Exposure of False Teachers (vv. 8-16).

Note: Again Jude goes to OT people and records. The emphasis upon rebellion against divinely established authority continues.

V. Exhortations for Believers (vv. 17-23).

Note two quotations:

- 1) "He is to 'contend earnestly' . . . with all the energy and watchfulness of an athlete in the arena, for the preservation of this sacred deposit, lest it be lost or corrupted. And the manner in which this earnest contest is to be maintained is not left doubtful; not with the sword, as Beza rightly remarks, nor with intemperate denunciation or indiscriminate severity,

but with the mighty influence of a holy life, built upon the foundation of our 'most holy faith' (Plummer, p. 387).

- 2) "Now, is that meant to weaken confidence? It was revealed in order to enforce the need of dependence upon the Lord, to encourage us to look up from the earth and things that are here --but not to give up. We are never free to give up anything that is of God. We are never at liberty to plead the state of ruin for carelessness about any expression of God's will. The ruin of the church has nothing to do with weakening our responsibility. It brings in the necessity of greater watchfulness, or more prayer; and particularly the necessity of God and the word of His grace to deal with the difficulties altogether above man" (Kelly, p. 10). (Kelly's quotation was written about the letters in Rev. 2, 3, but with reference to the epistle of Jude.)

VI. Conclusion: Exaltation of God (vv. 24, 25).

A quotation:

"It is those who know their own frailty and liability to sin; who know the manifold temptations which surround them, and the terrible attractiveness which many of them can present; who know from past experience what frequent and grievous falls are possible; that can best understand the statement of fact which this doxology contains, and the significance of it. He who can guard such creatures as we are from stumbling, in such a world as this, must be the only God; must be He who was, and is, and is to come; must possess throughout all time and all eternity the highest powers and glories which the heart of man can conceive . . . Out of sinful man to make a saint is more than to make a world out of nothing; and to keep sinful men from stumbling is more than to keep the stars in their courses" (Plummer, p. 468).