

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

AUTHOR

Jude, the brother of James, Bishop of Jerusalem, and the writer of the Epistle of James; a cousin of our Lord Jesus (Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3). Jude at first didn't believe in Christ (John 7:3-5) but after His resurrection he became His follower (Acts 1:14).

DATE AND CHARACTER OF THE EPISTLE

1. The Epistle was written in 66 or 67 A.D., to warn the church against false teachers, who had a "Gnostic attitude".
 - a. They denied the biblical doctrine of creation, for they believed that the creation of the body and material universe is evil and dark.
 - b. They denied the true incarnation of Christ. In their opinion, he was not a real man, but he seemed to be so and to have a body. He had an imaginary flesh, or a celestial body, come down from heaven and He was not of St. Mary.
 - c. They were disobedient to the church faith, proud, and lovers of money.
 - d. They were hypocrites and deceivers. They practice asceticism to appear as spiritual leaders while they practiced sexual immorality.

OUTLINE

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CHRISTIAN FAITH AND FALSE TEACHERS (JUDE)

St. Jude called the believers “Sanctified ones” who are preserved in Jesus Christ to exhort them to live in sanctity and to defend the true faith. Sanctity of life and “Truth” are inseparable.

What does the verse “You should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” mean? The Greek word “*epagonizesthai*” (contend) means “to fight while standing on a fortress at all costs.”

The meek and sanctified believers have to struggle for the perseverance of the deposit of faith, which we receive through the living tradition (1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 3:14).

Believers have to defend this faith by their godly conduct and by sound doctrines.

St. Jude presents three illustrations from history: God’s people in the wilderness, fallen angels, and Gentiles (Sodom and Gomorrah).

The characteristics of immoral and false teachers are:

1. Filthy dreamers (8); i.e., they live on dreams and imagination, and they don’t rely on the “Truth.”
 2. Sexual immoral; they defile the flesh (8), despise their bodies by their carnal lusts (2 Pet. 2:10).
 3. Insubordinate teachers; they despise dominion (8), i.e., the church authority.
 4. They speak evil of dignities (glories) (8), as the Israelites did against Moses.
 5. The are proud, contrary to the Archangel Michael, who in his contention against the devil (9), refused even to slander a fallen angel. Michael hid the body so that the people might not worship it, and in humbleness asked the Lord to rebuke the devil. This story is quoted from the Jewish tradition, and mentioned in “The Assumption of Moses”.
 6. They descended to a lower level than brute beasts (10), for they corrupted themselves.
 7. Self-willed religious naturalists: They depended on their own wisdom and not the divine one, as Cain (Gen. 4) Balaam (Num. 22-24) and Koreh (Num. 16:1-30) did.
 8. Hypocrites and barren; they used to set up feasts of charity but without love. They looked like clouds without water, fruitless trees, raging waves of the sea and wandering stars (12).
- * Jude quoted Enoch’s prophecy concerning the condemnation of false teachers (14) from the Jewish tradition, mentioned in the book of Enoch.

* The Spiritual edification of God’s people is realized by:

- Building up ourselves in our holy faith (20), i.e., unceasing spiritual growth.
- Spirit-energized prayer life (20)
- Keeping ourselves in the divine love and faith (21)
- Showing sympathy for sinners (22), who probably are influenced by false teachers.
- Abhorring sinners’ sins (23)

* In the closing benediction, St. Jude praises God for His ability to keep us from stumbling into sin and to present us in a glorified state at His joyful advent.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What is the relation between Christian life and Christian faith?
2. How can we distinguish between true and false teachers?
3. What are spiritual foundations for our growth?

