

# **JUDE - A TEACHER'S GUIDE**

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## **THE CENTRAL QUESTION:**

### **What does this book/story say to us about God?**

This question may be broken down further as follows:

- a. Why did God do it/allow it?
- b. Why did He record it for our study?

**“To be permitted to have a view of God is the highest privilege accorded to man. This privilege should be prized above all earthly distinction or honor.”** ST, June 16, 1898

1. Does the tiny book of Jude add anything to our understanding of God's character? Or, the way He runs His government?

This book was probably written near the end of the first century A.D. Apparently, Jude intended to write a different and perhaps larger book about the great truths of salvation. Instead, apparently because of the crisis in the Christian church caused by false teachers, he felt it necessary to write this short book condemning those teachers of falsehood and pointing out their errors. Jude was clearly aware of ancient Jewish history and wrote from a Judeo-Christian perspective. Jude is one of the relatively few books in the Bible that presents the Devil in direct conflict with God (Michael the Archangel). (See Jude 9.) It is our only biblical source for explaining what happened to Moses and why he was alive instead of dead in the days of Jesus, appearing on the mount of transfiguration along with Elijah to encourage Jesus. (See Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36.) Without this passage, we would have a difficult time explaining how Moses, who according to biblical theology and the biblical understanding of the nature of man in death should have been in the grave, but instead, had been in heaven. Where did Jude get that information? Was that a direct revelation from God?

There is much in the book to suggest the controversy that goes on between God and the Devil—good and evil. At least partly for that reason, this book was basically considered of little value by Martin Luther. He rejected five New Testament books, placing them in a separate section at the end of his New Testament and not including them in his table of contents. Those five were the books of Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, Jude, and Revelation.

Clearly, Jude was very familiar with the thoughts and attitudes of the Jewish people at the eastern end of the Mediterranean in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. Like many of the Jewish Christians of his time, he was aware of many traditions carried down by mouth from ancient times. Some of those ideas found their way into certain uninspired books known as the *pseudepigrapha*. One of the big questions raised by scholars about the book of Jude is whether or not he actually “borrowed” words from that uninspired source.

## **Jude**

Our spiritual communities are as susceptible to disease as our physical bodies. But it is easier to detect whatever is wrong in our stomachs and lungs than in our worship and witness. When our physical bodies are sick or damaged, the pain calls our attention to it, and we do something quick. But a dangerous, even deadly, virus in our spiritual communities can go undetected for a long time. As much as we need physicians for our bodies, we have even greater need for diagnosticians and healers of the spirit.

Jude's letter to an early community of Christians is just such a diagnosis. It is all the more necessary in that those believers apparently didn't know anything was wrong, or at least not as desperately wrong as Jude points out.

There is far more, of course, to living in Christian community than protecting the faith against assault or subversion. Paranoia is as unhealthy spiritually as it is mentally. The primary Christian posture is, in Jude's words, "keeping your arms open and outstretched, ready for the mercy of our Master, Jesus Christ." All the same, energetic watchfulness is required. Jude's whistle-blowing has prevented many a disaster. (*The Message*, Introduction to Jude)

2. James MacKnight notes that although five of the General Epistles (James, 2 Peter, 2, 3 John, and Jude) were slow in being received into the New Testament canon by the early Church, it does not mean that they were viewed as forgeries; it rather showed that slow circulation of these epistles had not allowed them to be as quickly judged and proven authentic. This is because the New Testament church was extremely careful before accepting any book as canonical, and did in fact identify certain writings as forgeries. Westcott says, "As a general rule, quotations have a value positively, but not negatively: they may shew that a writing was received as authoritative, but it cannot fairly be argued from this fact alone that another which is not quoted was unknown or rejected as apocryphal."

Another reason that the epistles of James, 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John and Jude were not quickly recognized by the early Church was the brevity of these letters. This brevity gave them less attention during public readings, since they were not immediately recognized as circulatory letters. This circumstance accounts for their slow circulation and for them being omitted from some of the earliest translations of the Christian Scriptures and canons. Because of their slower circulation, they were much less referred to by the earliest church fathers, making it more difficult to establish their genuineness. However, apostolic authorship won their favor by the time the canon was officially closed.—Everett, *The Epistle of Jude*.

3. Who was Jude? Is he mentioned elsewhere in the Bible? (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3)

Many conservative scholars believe that the Jude who was the author of this book was probably the son of Joseph and younger brother of James, both of whom we would consider stepbrothers of Jesus. This is supported by the fact that he mentioned the name of James as if he expected everyone to know who James was. Acts 15 suggests that James, the oldest stepbrother of Jesus, may have acted as the "General Conference President" of the early church. (See Acts 15:13-21.)

Some modern critics believe this book was not written by Jude himself but was written in Jude's name by one of his close associates or followers.

4. Why are the writings of Jude so much like the writings of Peter? Who do you think wrote first? Did one of these authors borrow from the other? Compare Jude 4-18 with 2 Peter 2:1-3:3. An estimated 90% of the writings in Mark are in either Matthew or Luke. Compare 2 Kings 19 and Isaiah 37. See also Isaiah 2:2-4 and Micah 4:2-3; Isaiah 36:1

and 2 Kings 18:13. Could a Bible writer be accused of plagiarism? Fifty-five verses are verbatim in both Ephesians and Colossians; Paul was the author of both books.

The Book of Jude is similar to portions of 2 Peter. This raises questions about whether either of these biblical authors borrowed from the other. Compare the following passages:

Jude	2 Peter
2	1:2
3	1:5
5a	1:12
5b-19	2:1-3:3
24	3:14

There are only two ways that have been suggested for significant similarities to arise in the writings of two different authors. Either one of them borrowed from the other or both of them borrowed from a third source, perhaps local legends or traditions handed down from the Jewish fathers and learned by many Jewish children. If that is the case, it would not be considered unusual for both authors to use these words, assuming all readers were familiar with them, without in any way borrowing from each other.

5. Conservative Christian scholars have often contended that one argument against the inspiration of the *Apocrypha* and the *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* is that they are not quoted in the New Testament. Then, how do we explain that Jude 9 (Compare 2 Peter 2:11.) seems to refer to *The Assumption of Moses* a pseudepigraphical book probably written in the first century? Three early church fathers—Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Didymus—all asserted that Jude 9 is a quotation from that other book. However, it should be noted that this verse is not found in the portions of *The Assumption of Moses* that we have available today.

There are parallels between the pseudepigraphical books of *1 Enoch* and *The Assumption of Moses* and the books of 2 Peter and Jude. The following notes on these two books are from the *SDA Bible Commentary* or the *SDA Bible Dictionary*:

**First Enoch (Ethiopic Enoch).**—This is a compilation of the works of several authors, who were Pharisees, and was written partly in Hebrew, partly in Aramaic. It is known today as “Ethiopic” because it has been preserved only in an Ethiopic version.

Of particular interest are its teachings regarding the coming kingdom and the future life. It appears to declare of the transcendental ruler of that kingdom that he was hidden with God since before the creation of the world (chs. 46:1,2; 48:6; 62:7). Several titles apparently given him are applied in the New Testament to Jesus. Thus he is called “His [God’s] Anointed [or Messiah]” (ch. 52:4); “the Righteous [or Just] One” (ch. 38:2; cf. Acts 3:14); “the Elect [or Chosen] One” (Enoch 40:5; 45:3,4; cf. Luke 23:35); and “the Son of Man” (Enoch 46:3,4; 62:5). The different parts of 1 Enoch, apparently by different authors, indicate the presence of varying views among the Jews of the 1st century B.C. in regard to the Messianic kingdom: 1 Enoch 1-36 teach that it will be eternal on the earth after the final judgment; 1 Enoch 37-71, that it will be eternal on earth and in heaven

and will be introduced by the last judgment; and 1 Enoch 91-104 hold that the Messianic kingdom is to be temporary and on earth, and will be followed by the final judgment.

Prominence is also given to Azazel, who is identified as the one who “hath taught all unrighteousness on earth and revealed the eternal secrets which were (preserved) in heaven, which men were striving to learn” (1 Enoch 9:6; R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. 2, p. 193). The final judgment of Azazel is declared in the words, “The Lord said to Raphael: ‘Bind Azâzêl hand and foot, and cast him into the darkness: and make an opening in the desert, which is in Dûdâêl, and cast him therein. ... And on the day of the great judgment he shall be cast into the fire. ... The whole earth has been corrupted through the works that were taught by Azâzêl: to him ascribe all sin’” (1 Enoch 10:4-8; Charles, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 193,194). Although this identification of Azazel with Satan cannot be taken as proved on the authority of the Book of Enoch, its appearance here is evidence of the Jewish understanding of the figure of Azazel in the 1st century B.C.

1 Enoch indicates the ferment of eschatological thinking prominent in certain areas of Judaism just before and during the New Testament period. The prophecy of Enoch recorded in Jude 14 is closely paralleled in 1 Enoch 1:9. Authorities differ on dates assigned to the various sections of this book, but it is generally agreed that the entire book was in circulation at least by the middle of the 1st century B.C.—Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1980). *The Pseudepigrapha. The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 5, pp. 87-88). Review and Herald Publishing Association.

**Assumption of Moses.**—This work probably consisted originally of two distinct books, the *Testament of Moses* and the *Assumption*. The author, a Pharisee, attempted to draw his compatriots back to the old paths of implicit obedience to the Torah. Patriotically, he looked for the return of the ten tribes and felt that it was the duty of Israel to keep the law and to pray God to intervene in their behalf. This work seems to have been written during the 1st century A.D. Early Christian writers connected Jude 9 with this book, but Jude’s words are not found in the *Assumption* in the sections that are extant today.—Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1980). *The Pseudepigrapha. The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Vol. 5, p. 89). Review and Herald Publishing Association

*The Assumption of Moses.* A composite Jewish work written in Hebrew or Aramaic early in the 1st cent., but surviving only in part in 2 Latin fragments, translated from the lost Greek version. The fragments contain Moses’ speech to Joshua predicting the history of Israel, but the account of Moses’ death and of his assumption are lost. (Article on Pseudepigrapha, *SDA Bible Dictionary*)

To protest against the growing secularization of the Pharisees, *The Assumption of Moses* was written around A.D. 7 to 29. (*Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*) [Brackets and content in brackets are in the source referenced.]

6. Jude 6 (Compare 2 Peter 2:4,9.) seems to be a reference to the pseudepigraphical book of 1 Enoch 10:4-6,12. There are similarities between: 1) Jude 4 and 1 Enoch 48:10; 2) Jude 9 and *The Assumption of Moses*; and 3) Jude 13 and 1 Enoch 60:8. If the *Los Angeles Times* or even the *National Enquirer* should say something that an inspired writer had already said, would this fact give it greater or less authority? Would it have any effect on its inspiration at all? Aren't the only things that really matter: 1) Did Enoch say it? And 2) Is it true?

**Jude 4 (GNB):** For some godless people have slipped in unnoticed among us, persons who distort the message about the grace of our God in order to excuse their immoral ways, and who reject Jesus Christ, our only Master and Lord. Long ago the Scriptures predicted the condemnation they have received.

**2 Peter 2:1 (GNB):** False prophets appeared in the past among the people, and in the same way false teachers will appear among you. They will bring in destructive, untrue doctrines, and will deny the Master who redeemed them, and so they will bring upon themselves sudden destruction.

**1 Enoch 48:10:** ...For they have denied the Lord of the Spirits and his Messiah. Blessed be the name of the Lord of the Spirits. (*The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, James Charlesworth, editor)

**Jude 6 (GNB):** Remember the angels who did not stay within the limits of their proper authority, but abandoned their own dwelling place: they are bound with eternal chains in the darkness below, where God is keeping them for that great Day on which they will be condemned.

**2 Peter 2:4 (GNB):** God did not spare the angels who sinned, but threw them into hell, where they are kept chained in darkness, waiting for the Day of Judgement...<sup>9</sup>And so the Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their trials and how to keep the wicked under punishment for the Day of Judgement.

**1 Enoch 10:4-6:** And secondly the Lord said to Raphael, "Bind Azaz'el hand and foot (and) throw him into the darkness!" And he made a hole in the desert which was in Duda'el and cast him there; he threw on top of him rugged and sharp rocks. And he covered his face in order that he may not see light; and in order that he may be sent into the fire on the great day of judgment.

**1 Enoch 10:12:** ...and when they have seen the destruction of their beloved ones, bind them for seventy generations underneath the rocks of the ground until the day of their judgment and of their consummation, until the eternal judgment is concluded. (*The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, James Charlesworth, editor)

7. The pseudepigraphical book 1 Enoch in 1:9 reads:

**1 Enoch 1:9:** Behold, he will arrive with ten million [footnote: ten thousand times a thousand.] of the holy ones in order to execute judgment upon all. He will destroy the wicked ones and censure all flesh on account of everything that they have done, that which the sinners and the wicked ones

committed against him. (*The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, by James H. Charlesworth, vol. 1, p. 13,14) [Content in brackets is added.]

This book was probably written in the first century B.C.; but, it claims to have been written by Enoch himself! Why would Jude apparently include this passage in Jude 14-15?

See #1 above.

**Jude 14-15 (GNB):** <sup>14</sup>It was Enoch, the seventh direct descendant from Adam, who long ago prophesied this about them: “The Lord will come with many thousands of his holy angels <sup>15</sup> to bring judgement on all, to condemn them all for the godless deeds they have performed and for all the terrible words that godless sinners have spoken against him!”

It is clear that these examples as translated from the Ethiopic back into Hebrew or English are quite similar to the Greek of the New Testament. First Enoch was written by several Pharisees, perhaps initially partially in Hebrew and partially in Aramaic (the language of Palestine in Jesus’s day). It was written in several different parts, some as early as 200 B.C. and some as late as 100 B.C. Thus, it is clear that the writings of those Pharisees which they claimed were written by Enoch were written a long time before Jude wrote his small book. It is also quite likely that all of these materials were a part of an oral tradition passed on from parent to child down through the centuries and eventually accepted as being true by much of the population in Jesus’s day.

8. Some think that Christians in our day should look for their “spiritual roots” primarily to the reformers, especially Luther. Considering this, would you agree with Luther that the five books: Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, Jude, and Revelation do not measure up to the standard of the rest of the Bible and should be given a “lesser” status? Luther put them at the end of his New Testament, not even including them in the table of contents.

See #1 above.

9. In what sense was the fire that burned Sodom and Gomorrah eternal or everlasting? (Jude 7)

This is an important verse illustrating the normal biblical meaning of the terms *eternal* and *everlasting*. The following note, condensed from *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* by Arndt and Gingrich, may be helpful.

The Greek lexicon describes this as “of time to come which, if it has no end, is also known as eternity.” To the ancient near-eastern mind, the vast stretches of time that we try to envision as “forever” were unfathomable. To them the term *forever* just meant “as long as it is supposed to last.” While these verses suggest that forever does not have to go on for a long time, the righteous can be assured that eternal life will have no end because “there will be no more death.” (See Revelation 21:4; compare 20:14.)

**Revelation 14:10 (RSV):** “He also shall drink of the wine of God’s wrath...and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone...**for ever** and ever.”

**Jude 7 (RSV):** Sodom and Gomorrah...serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of **eternal** fire. [or forever fire]

**Jude 7 (GNB):** They suffer the punishment of **eternal** fire as a plain warning to all.

**Exodus 21:6 (KJV):** Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him **forever**. [Compare Deuteronomy 15:17.]

**Exodus 21:6 (GNB):** Then he will be his slave for life.

**Jonah 2:6 (GNB):** [Jonah said:] “I went down to the very roots of the mountains, into the land whose gates lock shut **forever**.

But You, O Lord, my God,  
brought me back from the depths alive.”

**Revelation 21:4 (RSV):** [The voice speaking from the throne in heaven said:] “...He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.” [Content in brackets and bold type are added in the passages above.]

**FOREVER.** (Ps. 136:1) <olam (oh-lahm); Strong's #5769: Eternity; the ages; infinity; the universe, the world. Derived from the verb <alam (“veil from sight” or “conceal”), <olam refers to that infinite and everlasting expanse God has created. It is both an unending expanse of space (universe) and time (eternity), indicating the limitless dimensions in which God's sovereignty is displayed. The word sometimes refers to the remotely distant past (Ps 93:2) and sometimes to the remotely distant future (Jer. 25:5). God is called <El <Olam, “the Everlasting God” (Gen. 21:33; Is. 40:28). As God is eternal, so is His mercy le-<olam, that is, “unto the forever.” (Hayford's Bible Handbook)

5769. / [>olam, o-lawm'; or ׀; [O >olam, o-lawm'; from 5956; prop. *concealed*, i.e. the *vanishing* point; gen. time *out of mind* (past or future), i.e. (practically) *eternity*; freq. adv. (espec. with prep. pref.) *always*:— alway (-s), ancient (time), any more, continuance, eternal, (for, [n-]) ever (-lasting, -more, of old), lasting, long (time), (of) old (time), perpetual, at any time, (beginning of the) world (+ without end). comp. 5331, 5703.”—Strong, J. (1996). *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

**Everlasting.** [Heb. <El <Olam, “for a long time,” “for all time”; Gr. *aiónios*, “age-lasting,” “for ever,” “eternal.”] A term Biblically denoting time of long duration, always in a relative sense with respect to the inherent nature of the circumstances or conditions described by the expression. Neither <El <Olam nor *aiónios* of itself implies time without beginning or without end, as does the English term “everlasting.” Because the meaning of these words is conditional on the nature of that to which they are applied, the period of time they designate may have neither beginning nor end, or a beginning without an end, or both beginning and end. “Perpetual” would at times be a preferable English translation. <El <Olam indicates time of indefinite duration whose limits are either unknown or unspecified. When used of God it means “eternal” in the absolute sense, without beginning or

end, because God is eternal (Gen 21:33). When used of the life of the redeemed it specifies time with a beginning but without end, the result of bestowal of immortality (Dan 12:2). The indefinite, durative, but nevertheless finite quality of *<E1 <Olam* is clearly evident from Ex 21:6, where the expression is translated “for ever.” Here it is specified that a slave who has already served his master for 6 years but who at the close of this period of indentured service voluntarily elects to bind himself to his master henceforth “in perpetuity,” may do so. Obviously, *<E1 <Olam* here has both a beginning and an end, the beginning specified and the term of servitude assumed to end upon the death of the servant. In view of the fact that the NT writers were Hebrews by race and background, they used *aiōnios*, the Greek equivalent of *<E1 <Olam*, in the same sense that they would have used *<E1 <Olam* had they been writing in Hebrew. The noun form from which the adjective *aiōnios* is derived (*aiōn*) means “age” or the “world” considered from the viewpoint of time, as in Mt 12:32; 13:22, 39; etc. The derived adjective *aiōnios* means simply “age-lasting.” In every occurrence of the word the nature of the thing or circumstance described as “everlasting,” as evident in the context and the analogy of Scripture, must determine the durative and terminal significance of *aiōnios*. The popular concept that “everlasting,” as the translation of *<E1 <Olam* or *aiōnios*, always denotes time without end is wholly without scriptural support. (Article: Everlasting, *SDA Bible Dictionary*)

10. What do you think of the great doxology recorded in Jude 24-25?

There are few if any doxologies in the Scriptures that surpass this one. For example, compare the doxology that Solomon used at the dedication of the temple.

**1 Chronicles 29:10-13 (GNB):**<sup>10</sup> There in front of the whole assembly King David praised the LORD. He said, “LORD God of our ancestor Jacob, may you be praised for ever and ever! <sup>11</sup>You are great and powerful, glorious, splendid, and majestic. Everything in heaven and earth is yours, and you are king, supreme ruler over all. <sup>12</sup>All riches and wealth come from you; you rule everything by your strength and power; and you are able to make anyone great and strong. <sup>13</sup>Now, our God, we give you thanks, and we praise your glorious name....”

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Last Modified: April 15, 2016

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