

Bible Study Notes and Questions on the Letter of Jude

Jude, identified as the brother of James and half brother of Jesus Christ (**Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3**), had intended to write a letter to Christians about the common salvation that they shared in. However, Jude had discovered that he needed to write a completely different letter urging believers to preserve the true faith.

Sadly, false teaching had become so widespread in the Church that Jude had to warn Christians of ungodly men infiltrating the Church as wolves to propagate their heretical teaching. Paul had warned the Ephesian elders of savage wolves coming into the Church to destroy the flock (**Acts 20:28-30**).

Jude's letter has majored much on these wolves who were unbelievers because they had denied the only Lord God and the Lord Jesus Christ (**Jude 4**). He warned the Church of the danger of apostasy where believers were being deceived by receiving the teaching of these wolves and in danger of becoming apostates by rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word "**apostasy**" means a political revolt or defection and it usually relates to rebellion against God; a dictionary definition gives the meaning "abandonment of religious faith, vows, principles or party". The Greek word "**apostasia**" (646 in Greek Dictionary section of Strong's Exhaustive Concordance) appears twice in scripture translated into the English words in the authorised version of the Bible as "forsake" in **Acts 21:21** and "falling away" in **2 Thessalonians 2:3**.

Jude gives examples of people that rebelled against God: 1) The children of Israel after being delivered from Egypt (**Jude 5**). 2) The angels that sinned against God (**Jude 6**). 3) Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbouring cities (**Jude 7**).

He then gives a clear description of the wolves. They are filthy dreamers (**Jude 8**), with no respect for authority (**Jude 8-10**) – bear in mind the way Michael the archangel contends with the devil in the dispute of Moses' body (**Jude 9**). They were selfish, having pride in human effort like Cain; they were greedy for material gain like Balaam; and they rebelled against leadership because they wanted power for themselves as shown in Core (Korah) (**Jude 11**). The description of the wolves continues in picture language in **Jude 12-13**.

Jude then refers to Enoch giving a prophecy of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to bring judgment on ungodly men as described in **Jude 15-16,18-19**.

He then exhorts Christians to: 1) Be faithful to the word of God to edify themselves (**Jude 17,20**). 2) Pray in the Spirit (**Jude 20**). 3) Maintain the love of God (**Jude 21**) 4) Seek God's mercy (**Jude 21**). 5) Be ready to rescue brethren who have been deceived by showing compassion (**Jude 22-23**).

Jude closes his letter with a doxology declaring 1) God's ability to keep us and to present us perfect in his glorious presence (**Jude 24**) and 2) God's sovereignty for ever (**Jude 25**).

Questions on the Letter of Jude

The following questions can be studied individually or in a small group study of about 10 to 12 people. It is recommended that the leader or coordinator of the group hands out the notes and questions before the bible study takes place. Every person has the opportunity to spend some time beforehand in preparation for the bible study.

Bible study references have been given to help answer the questions. Additional scriptures have been given to help you appreciate how this letter relates to other books in scripture.

- 1) What is known about Jude? See **Jude 1; Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3; John 7:3-5; 1 Corinthians 9:5.**
- 2) Who is Jude writing this letter to in **Jude 1**?
- 3) What does Jude want to see increase in Christians? See **Jude 2; Galatians 5:22-23.**
- 4) What had Jude intended to write about in **Jude 3**?
- 5) Why did Jude change his mind in what to write? See **Jude 3-4.**
- 6) What is known of the beliefs of ungodly men in **Jude 3-4**?
- 7) How do you think ungodly men infiltrate the church? See **Jude 4.**
- 8) What is Jude reminding us from the examples he gives in **Jude 5-7**?
- 9) Discuss and where possible make a list of the characteristics of these ungodly men. See **Jude 8-13.**
- 10) How does this letter help us to know how to treat the devil in **Jude 9**?
- 11) Who do you think buried Moses? See **Jude 9; Deuteronomy 34:5-6.**
- 12) What is known of Enoch? See **Jude 14; Genesis 5:1-24.**
- 13) What did Enoch prophesy about in **Jude 14-16**?
- 14) What is learnt from Cain? See **Jude 11; Genesis 4:1-24; Hebrews 11:4; 1 John ch3:14.**
- 15) What is learnt from Balaam? See **Jude 11; Numbers 31:13-16; 2 Peter 2:15-16; Revelation 2:14.**
- 16) What is learnt from Core (Korah)? See **Jude 11; Numbers 16:1-50.**
- 17) What does Jude show us will happen in the last days in **Jude 17-19**?
- 18) How are we to keep the faith according to Jude's letter? See **Jude 20-21.**
- 19) Does Jude teach us to show care for Christians who have gone astray? See **Jude 22-23.**
- 20) What does Jude reveal of who God is? **Jude 21,24-25.**

Additional notes

The question may arise over what is an apostate? Some Bible commentators regard wolves as apostates. William Macdonald in his Believers Bible Commentary takes this view of what an apostate is in saying (p 2338): “An apostate is a person who professes to be a true believer but who, as a matter of fact, has never been regenerated. He may be baptized and participate fully in the privileges of a local Christian fellowship. But after a while, he wilfully abandons the Christian faith and maliciously renounces the Saviour. He denies the deity of Christ, his redemptive work at Calvary, his bodily resurrection, or other fundamental doctrines.” W. Macdonald says also (p 2338) referring to apostates: “He is hardened in his unbelief and stubbornly opposed to the Christ of God.” He shows Judas as an example (p 2338): “Judas Iscariot was an apostate. He professed to be a disciple; he travelled with the Lord Jesus for about three years. He even served as treasurer of the team, but finally he revealed his true self by betraying the Lord for thirty pieces of silver.” Added to that, Judas would have known the power of God in being sent out to preach the kingdom of God having healed the sick, cleansed lepers, raised the dead and cast out demons (Matt ch10:5-8). Sadly, Judas was lost forever being the son of perdition (meaning destruction) doomed to everlasting hell, which will be the place for all apostates.

There are Christians who do not take this view of W. Macdonald and others. They believe that apostates were genuine believers who were regenerate, but at some point, later in life they have turned away from God to wilfully reject him ultimately to be lost forever in hell.

The writer does accept that many people can be active in the church and were never regenerate and then at some point deliberately leave the local church and speak openly against God. Such people can be regarded as apostates. The writer agrees with the view of William Macdonald that apostates were never regenerate in the first place.

In Jude’s letter what we have are wolves who are unregenerate men trying to lead many believers in the church astray to go after false teaching.

It seems true in part of Jude’s letter that apostasy is being illustrated as seen in the examples in **Jude 5-7**. The character of wolves is clearly unregenerate people who were never apostates in the first place.

In conclusion, the writer has compared Jude’s letter with Peter’s second letter in **chapter 2:1-3:4** to see the similarities but also the differences. Jude exposed the unregenerate wolves infiltrating the church whilst Peter seems to show evidence of apostates who rise up from within the church to draw people away. Study carefully **2 Peter 2:1-4 and 2:20-22**.

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