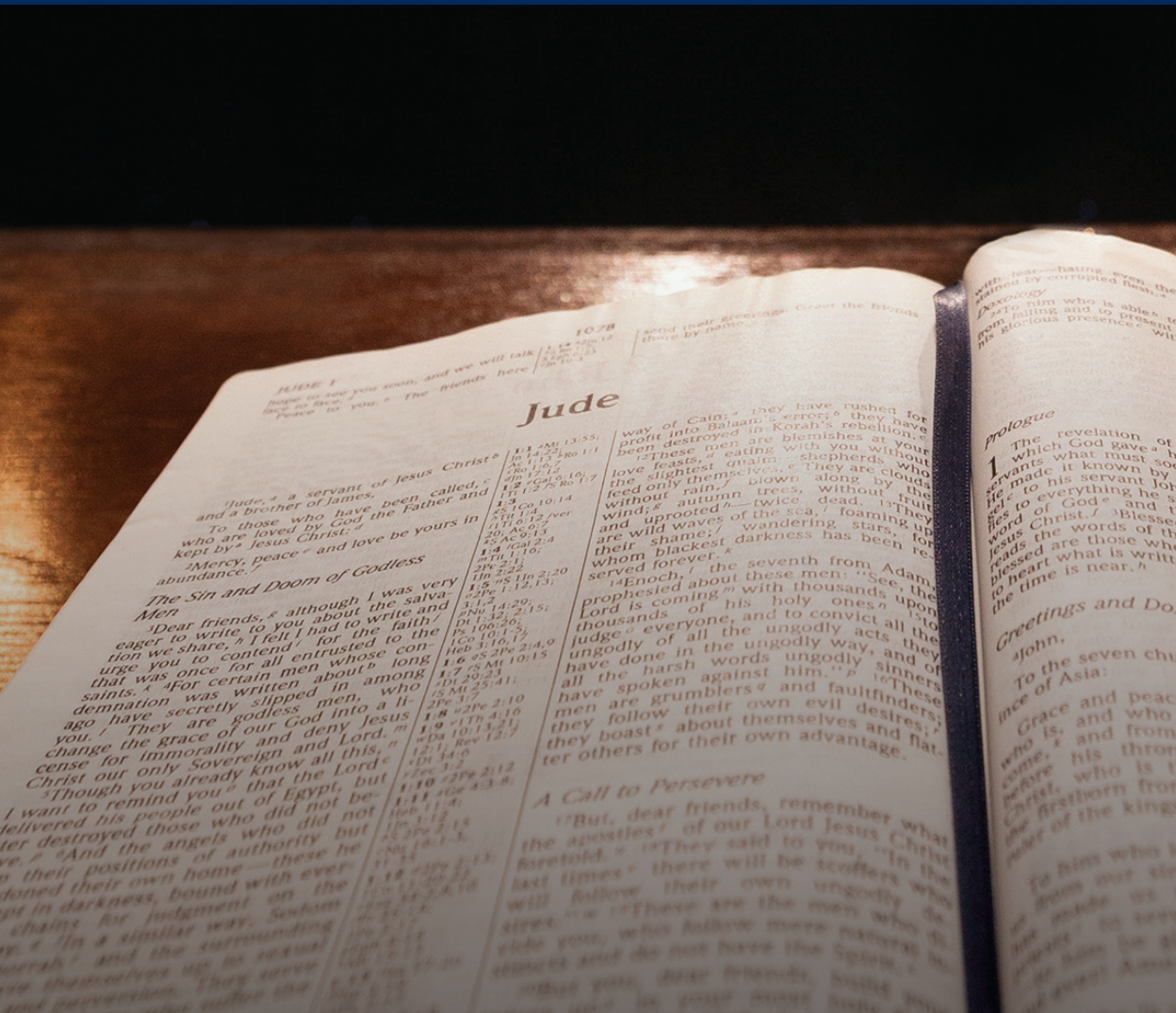


# JUDE



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## *Preaching Through Jude<sup>1</sup>*

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For over fifty years I was a pastor, but now as an itinerant preacher I find that I miss the opportunity to preach consecutively through books of the Bible. That is one of the real joys I experienced as a pastor. Not only was I able to feed our people, but I was able to feed my own soul. Preparation for preaching allows you to grow in the knowledge and love of the Lord. Although opportunities to preach through a book may be elusive in my current ministry, I have had the opportunity to preach a series of messages from the book of Jude. I preached through the entire book in four sermons—twice on Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Monday evening.

In my pastorate in Jacksonville, Florida, I also preached through Jude. There I actually brought seven messages. I have come to believe that sometimes preachers go overboard and spend too long breaking down the material so minutely that the overall thrust of the book can be lost. So I prefer my four sermon series in Jude over my seven sermon series in Jude. In the pages that follow, I would like to present the necessary considerations as you preach the book of Job.

### **Location**

When I prepare to preach a book of the Bible, one of the first things I do is locate the book in the canon of Scripture. Where does this book fit? Where is this book located? The book of Jude is located in a very important place in the New Testament. If there are three major sections of books in the Bible—Historical, Instructional, and Prophetic—Jude would be placed in the instructional section. There are three sections here as well—doctrinal, pastoral, and general—Jude is in the general section.

### **Context**

After placing Jude in its canonical context, the overall context of the book should be examined. It is important to know the historical context for any approach to preaching a complete book. In Jude it is rather easy to determine. Jude is writing in the first century of the early church in response to some circumstances that had arisen.

<sup>1</sup>This article is a transcription of an address by the same title delivered to the Advanced Expository Preaching Workshop, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2–3 March 2015.

Next the literary context needs to be determined. There are many different forms of literature found in the Bible. There is narrative, poetry, apocalyptic material, letters, Gospels, etc. These varying types of literature fall into three main categories: narrative, poetry, and discourse. The first is narrative found in the Gospels and much of the Old Testament. Narrative tells a story; there is a scene, a plot, and major and minor characters. Poetry, the second category, is typically found in the Old Testament. It is especially evident in the wisdom literature. There is some poetry in the New Testament, but it exists in parts of other works. Discourse is the third main category of literary material, where Jude is placed. Discourse is spoken material that is written down. In analyzing discourse you begin to look for the flow of ideas, the logical arguments, clauses and phrases, and the structure and content of words. In this material there are two kinds of words. There are structure words that provide the framework for the material and content words that provide understanding. In preaching preparation you should pay attention to the repetition of words, phrases, and transitional words.

### Purpose

After considering these broader issues of the book, we determine the purpose of the material. Why is Jude writing? What is his purpose? What is the rationale for his writing? It is very easy to discover in the book of Jude since the third verse provides the purpose of the book. Jude is dealing with the subject of apostasy and with apostates. In reading Jude, the words “apostasy” and “apostate” are not present. In fact, these words are not found anywhere in the New Testament.” However, just because the word is not mentioned does not mean that its concept is not present. Many believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, but the word “Trinity” is not in the text.

The word “apostasy” is really a transliteration from a Greek text. Consider 1 Timothy 4:1, “some shall depart from the faith.”<sup>2</sup> The verb form for, “depart from the faith,” (ἀποστήσονται) is transliterated into the English language as the word “apostasy.” Clearly the concept of apostasy is present here. A clearer example is in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, “for that day shall not come, except there be a *falling away* first.” In the Greek text this is ἡ ἀποστασία. Though the words “apostasy” and “apostate” do not occur in these texts, they are transliterated from the Greek text. The words describe concepts clearly presented in the New Testament. Jude is a book concerned with the subject of apostasy. It can be placed beside other books in the New Testament that also deal with apostasy. The idea of apostasy in the New Testament is tied closely with the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the period of Tribulation mentioned in the Scriptures. The Greek word for apostasy is in the same word family as the word for divorce. It literally means “a falling away.”<sup>3</sup> When

<sup>2</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the King James Version.

<sup>3</sup>George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 188.

a couple divorces, what has happened? They have fallen away from one another. So apostasy is a departing from the faith or a falling away from the faith. An apostate, then, is someone who teaches apostasy.

### **Author**

It is important to also consider the authorship of the book of Jude. We see that the stated author is “Jude,” and Jude is short for Judas. The important question to consider is which Jude? In the New Testament there are 5–7 “Judes.” We can eliminate all of these except for two. First, it is suggested that this Jude was one of the twelve disciples, Jude the son of James, which of course is not Judas Iscariot (see Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13). This option is not likely because the book of Jude seems to talk of the Apostles as if he is not one of them (vs. 17–18).

A second option is that this Jude is the half-brother of Jesus (see Mark 6:3; Matt 13:55). There are two arguments offered for why this view is not likely. First, the Greek style is too good, though it is dangerous to suggest what people did or did not know in New Testament times. Second, the reference to the Apostle’s writings and “the faith” reflect a date that would be beyond the brother of Jesus’ lifetime. However, it seems clear there was a fairly defined “faith” early in the life of the church (Acts 2:42; Rom 6:17). The preponderance of opinion, however, is that the author is Jude the brother of James and the half-brother of the Lord Jesus (Mark 6:3). We know that at first Jesus’ brothers did not believe him (Acts 1:14; 1 Cor 9:5, 15:7), but the resurrection changed their mind.

The other possibility is that the name “Jude” is a pseudonym. According to this view, the letter was written by an unknown author who adopted the name of Jude and wrote pseudonymously. This was a common practice in the literature in the New Testament days. However, if you read 2 Thessalonians 2:2, the Apostle Paul disapprovingly mentions a letter circulating falsely under his name. The question is then raised, if Jude is a pseudonymous author, why did he not pick someone better known than Jude?

### **Audience**

We also need to consider the audience. Jude does not provide their identity or locality, he simply refers to “them.” In verse 1 it says, “Jude, the servant [literally the bond slave] of Jesus Christ, brother of James, to *them*.” Afterwards the author uses other terms like, “you,” “ye,” “your,” “yourselves.” He is writing to a group of people in general. He is not writing to a specific group of believers in a specific location. Jude writes in a general nature, “to them who are *called*,” the κλητοῖς. Jude describes these called ones as those who are sanctified, loved by God the Father, and preserved in (or for) Jesus Christ. There is some indication that Jude carried on an itinerant ministry. This has led some to believe Jude is writing to believers in the places where he had preached and who were now affected by the problem of apostasy.

### Occasion

The occasion and theme of the letter is also important to consider. Verse 3 very clearly addresses the occasion. “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). There is an interesting difference of verb tenses in the text. The first time he says “to write,” it is the present tense, carrying the idea of a leisurely project. His intention was to write a leisurely little letter about the common salvation. Apparently something happened that then changed his plan. This occurrence was so serious and important that he said it was needful to write. This second Greek word is in the aorist tense and carries the idea of an inner compulsion. We could translate it as, “I had a compulsion to write and to exhort you to contend earnestly for the faith.” This compulsion is the occasion for the letter. Jude is addressing those who have departed from the faith and he is telling “the called” that they need to contend earnestly for the faith.

### Structure

The structure of Jude has all of the common elements of New Testament letters except the final greeting. The letter utilizes the rhetorical style of the day: *exhortium, oratio, probatio, peroratio*. This structure could be used in the sermon preparation, however, a simpler structure is thus: verses 1–2 is the greeting, verses 3–4 provide the theme, verses 5–16 give evidences to support the theme, verses 17–23 provide the summation of the argument, and, finally, verses 24–25 burst forth into a doxology.

### Outline

The outline for the book of Jude is simply divided into three categories. First, Jude provides words of explanation in verses 1–4. This introduction, or words of explanation, consists of a greeting in verses 1–2 and a warning in verses 3–4. Second are words of exposition in verses 5–16. Richard Bauckham states in *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus*, that this is “a very carefully composed” exposition.<sup>4</sup> There are some who say that the writers of the New Testament did not engage in Bible exposition; however, in saying so, they merely reveal their ignorance. When one considers the book of Jude, what is discovered is that there actually are two expositions. Two sermons are clearly placed in the middle portion of Jude. The expositions found in Jude are similar to a Jewish form of interpretation known as Midrash. This form was a genre of literature used in the time of the early church wherein the exposition, meaning, and application of Hebrew Scripture is provided. These interpreters expound a

<sup>4</sup>Richard Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), 181.

Scripture passage, apply that passage, illustrate that passage, and then apply it again. This is exactly what is in the middle portion of the book of Jude.

The first of the two sermons is in verses 5–10. Here, Jude selects three Old Testament events of apostasy and shows God’s judgment on them. First, he presents the children of Israel who came out of Egypt, went into the wilderness, and those who did not believe were destroyed. The second event deals with the fallen angels. Third, he mentions the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. His point is that God condemns apostasy collectively. Following these presentations of Old Testament apostasy Jude illustrates and applies.

In the second sermon, Jude presents three Old Testament individuals as examples of apostates. As a pastoral aside, it is interesting to notice that Jude did not call any apostate by name who was alive, he only called the name of dead apostates. This is a good example to follow. The first apostate he mentions is Cain, next Balaam, and third, Korah. Jude’s point is that God will judge apostates individually. He shows their conduct, their character, and their course of life. Then he shows how to spot them.

Finally, he comes to the third division: words of exhortation found in verses 17–24. These verses provide a hope needed after the first sixteen verses, for if that is all we had we would all be in a state of deep depression. In the exhortation, beginning in verse 17, Jude provides us encouragement on how we are to contend against apostasy.

### Special Matters

There are some special matters that need to be dealt with in Jude. First, you will have to deal with the relationship of Jude to the book of 2 Peter. Some say as many as nine or more parallels exist between these two books. There are several options as to how this occurred. One is that both were inspired by the Holy Spirit independently. Another is that they both quote from a common source. Still others claim Peter borrowed from Jude, which is, as best I can determine, the major current view of conservative scholarship.<sup>5</sup> Most conservative scholars take the view today that Peter actually borrowed from Jude; however, I tend to take another view. My view is that Jude is actually quoting from Peter. This is based upon several things. Consider Jude’s reference to the apostolic warning in verses 17–18. Here he mentions the warning of the Apostles. In 2 Peter, when this is written it is in the future tense. He said “*they shall*.” When Jude writes about apostasy and apostates he does so in the present tense. One of the best commentaries on Jude is the American Commentary volume by Thomas Schreiner.<sup>6</sup> I discussed the passage with him and I said that I lean toward Peter having written first on the basis of the tenses of the verbs. He indicated to me that that was a good, valid

<sup>5</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary 37 (Nashville: B&H, 2003), 418.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

argument. However, he takes the other view. Guthrie comments, “What 2 Peter foresaw, Jude has now experienced.”<sup>77</sup> The truth of the matter is, however, that it does not greatly affect the way in which Jude is taught or preached.

A second matter that may arise is Jude’s use of extra-biblical, or apocryphal, books. Jude uses two books that are not in our Bible. For instance, in verse 9, he makes reference to Michael the archangel contending with the Devil over the body of Moses. This passage is not found in the Old Testament, rather it is in an extra-biblical book, *The Assumption of Moses*. You will also notice the reference in verses 14–15 to Enoch. The Old Testament does mention Enoch, but the quotations in Jude are almost directly from 1 Enoch 1:9.<sup>8</sup> Jude is utilizing non-biblical material as the Apostle Paul did in Acts 17 and in 2 Timothy 3:8. Jude is using material that is not found in Scripture. In studying these passages you will notice that Jude does not use the normal formulas that are used for a book of the Bible. The word γραφή does not occur around these verses, nor the usual formulas, “it is written,” or “it is said.” Jude is just doing what all good preachers ought to do—drawing from existing materials to enhance the understanding of those who are listening. In no way is he endorsing everything found in those texts, rather, he is doing what many preachers do today, offering an illustration without endorsing the totality of the source.

A third matter of interest is Jude’s usage of triads. For instance, he presents a triad in verse 1 when he talks about those to whom he is writing. “Those who have been loved, those who are preserved, those who are called.” When he offers the greeting in verse two, he mentions mercy, peace, and love. When he gives the Old Testament events and apostates, he also includes triads. This usage of triads helps in understanding verses 20–23. In those verses Jude states “and some,” referencing the relative pronoun in the Greek text. Jude uses this word again in verse 22, “and some have compassion.” The King James uses it again in verse 23, “and others.” (He uses it only two times. But most of the newer translations today use it three times.) There is a third use of the relative pronoun right before the phrase, “hating even the garment spotted by flesh,” which causes me to believe that the better manuscript use of the material here should be used based on his interest in triads. Noticing this usage of triads is helpful when considering the structure of your sermons.

<sup>77</sup>Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1970), 923.

<sup>84</sup>“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him” (Jude 14–15). Cf. “Look, he comes with the myriads of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all, and to destroy all the wicked, and to convict all humanity for all the wicked deeds that they have done, and the proud and hard words that wicked sinners spoke against him.” (*1 En.* 1:9). All quotations of *1 Enoch* in this essay are from George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: A New Translation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004).

## Relevance

An important aspect to consider when preaching Jude is its relevance. Recently a preacher was on Oprah discussing the burning social issue of our day and he took the position that same-sex marriage is one of God's wonderful gifts. In the segment he said people are going to have to come up with more evidence than some dusty letters that are two-thousand years old. In other words, he is claiming that Scripture is not relevant for this day. Simply stated, this is apostasy.

It could be said that Jude is just an old book, written hundreds of years ago with no use today. However, as I have been studying Jude, I have come to believe that there is probably no book more relevant to deal with the current issues of our culture than the book of Jude. What you really have is a survival manual for believers in the days of apostasy. Rather than being irrelevant for our world, Jude is quite relevant.

## Outlines

When I approach the book of Jude, I preach it in four sermons. Listed below are the outlines I have used.

### **#1 Here Come the Apostates! vv. 1–4.**

- I. Introduction (vv. 1–2).
- II. Explanation (v. 3).
- III. Situation (v. 4).

### **#2 Apostasy: Then and Now. vv. 5–10.**

- I. Exposition (vv. 5–7).
- II. Application (v. 8).
- III. Illustration (v. 9).
- IV. Application (v. 10).

### **#3 Woe to the Apostates! vv. 11–16.**

- I. Exposition (v. 11).
- II. Application (vv. 12–13).
- III. Illustration (vv. 14–15).
- IV. Application (v. 16).

### **#4 Contending with the Apostates. vv. 17–25. (How to Survive and Thrive in the Apostasy).**

- Don't Let the Apostasy . . .
- I. Surprise You (vv. 17–19).
- II. Stop You (vv. 20–23).
- III. Stifle You (vv. 24–25).



## Analyzing the Book of Jude

Now we come to the matter doing the work of analyzing the book of Jude. I follow three basic steps when I am analyzing a passage of Scripture: investigation, interpretation, and application. In investigation, I ask myself the question, “What does the passage say?” There is only one way to know what the passage says, and that is to read it, and read it, and read it again. The repetition in reading will begin to provide an idea, or feel, for what is going on.

When you are reading you need to look for a few things. It is very helpful to notice the word pictures in the text. Jude has word pictures in virtually every verse. These word pictures are helpful as you preach to your congregation. John Phillips, one of my mentors, made this statement, “The difference between an average preacher and a good one is imagination.” Warren Wiersbe said, “exegesis and analysis are launching-pads, not parking lots; and imagination is what fuels the rocket.”<sup>9</sup>

The second step is interpretation. This is where you diagram the passage, engage in word studies, contemplate the grammar, examine the structure, consider parallel passages, and study the historical background.

The third step is application. The question to consider is, What does the passage tell me and my people to do? The text cannot be left in the New Testament times. The thought of the text must be brought into the here and now. David Helm says something I think is very, very helpful in that direction, “young preachers . . . make the mistake of thinking the sermon is . . . a storage container for housing everything they learned about the text that week.”<sup>10</sup> The task of the preacher is to make the text relevant to the present culture so that the truths of the text are rightly communicated.

## Organizing

After completing the analysis of the passage, the task is to organize it. This is the process of composition. Once the exposition is complete the job is far from through. Everything now has to be put back together. This is the process of synthesis. I have a six-step process in building my messages. 1. Unifying—identify the central theme, 2. Outlining, 3. Amplifying—add supporting material, 4. Illustrating—provide mental photographs, 5. Introducing—provide a hook, without getting too wordy, and 6. Concluding. John Broadus once said, “It is a fault of some energetic figures that they exhaust themselves before they reach the conclusion, and come up panting

<sup>9</sup>Warren W. Wiersbe, *Preaching and Teaching with Imagination: The Quest for Biblical Ministry* (Wheaton: Victor, 1994), 221.

<sup>10</sup>David R. Helm, *Expositional Preaching: How We Speak God’s Word Today*, 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014), 48.

and hoarse and with no banner but a moist handkerchief.”<sup>11</sup> These six steps are the way to build your message.

What has been presented are the basic approaches to preparing and preaching Jude. We have not presented the details, but have merely discussed an overview. As you approach preaching Jude remember that we have plenty of areas in our culture in need of the message found in Jude. It is the responsibility of preachers to bring this message up to date and bring it to our culture to aid the churches to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

<sup>11</sup>John Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 4th ed., rev. Vernon L. Stanfield (1870; revision, New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 111.

