**Jude - Introduction**

*“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”*

 *(Jude 3)*

**Book in a Nutshell**

At the time Jude’s letter was written, false teachers were active, teaching an error that brought sensuality and lust among the people of God. They couched their rhetoric in terms like “liberty”, and denied the Lord. In this epistle, Jude warns of their leavening influence, and called on the faithful to fight against them.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Considering the evidence, who can we reasonably identify as the author of this epistle? Who is the ultimate author?

2. Why would the date of writing of the epistle of Jude be relegated to the last half of the first century?

3. Jude refers to his readers as “called”. What does he mean?

4. Jude says that his readers had been “sanctified” by the Father, and “preserved” by Jesus. Please explain the significance of these two terms.

**Authorship**

* The internal evidence (1) identifies the author as Jude, a bondservant of Jesus, and brother of James.
* James, a leader of the church in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15:13-21) is believed to be the one to which Jude refers. He is believed to be a brother of Jesus (cf. Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3). Thus, Jude was also a brother of Jesus.
* Some claim Jude was the apostle Judas (cf. Luke 6:16), but Jude seems to distance himself from the apostles in verse 17 of the epistle.

**Date of Writing: (70-90 A.D.)**

* There is not sufficient information in the book to set a time of writing.
* The only possible indication would be the nature of the error addressed. (It is the same error dealt with by Peter in his second epistle). As the error is an incipient form of Gnosticism that had its origins in the second half of the first century, scholars vary in their estimates between 70 and 90 AD.

**Persons Addressed**

* There is no way of knowing the place from which the letter was written.
* The recipients of the letter are identified spiritually, but not by location or name. Jude refers to them as *“those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ”* (1)
* References to Old Testament examples, and the affinity of his brother James to Jewish Christians are the only indications that Jude may have been writing to a predominantly Jewish audience.
* The letter of Jude can be considered a general epistle with broad appeal to any who would read it.

**Purpose of Writing**

* A strong libertine element was teaching a doctrine which led to dissolution and a denial of Jesus Christ.
* Jude’s letter is written for the explicit and singular purpose of warning and exhorting the brethren to fight this error, and those who taught it.

**Jude - Text**

*“But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves” (10).*

**Book in a Nutshell**

Jude was galvanized to write an epistle for the specific purpose of warning Christians about a false doctrine, proclaimed by individuals he described as *“sensual persons, who cause divisions”* (vs. 19). He exhorted his readers to defend the truth (vs. 3).

**Discussion Questions**

1. How can we contend for the faith? How are we to conduct ourselves as participate in this commanded action?

2. Please give a description of the false teachers of the text? Is there a difference between a description of, and definition of a false teacher?

3. What do we know of the prophecy of Enoch in verses 14-15?

4. What defenses do we have against liscentiousness and ungodly influences among us today?.

5. What does it mean, that Demetrius had a good testimony *“from the truth itself”*?

*(Please put answers on back of page or another sheet of paper)*

**Contend for the faith (1-4)**

* Greeting. Jude as writer, Christians as recipients (1-2)
* Jude could not write about common salvation because of a present need. Contend for the faith! (3)
* Reason for the need of contending? False teachers (4)

**Identification & end of apostates (5-19)**

* Previous references to apostates. Israel (5), fallen angels (6), and Sodom & Gomorrah (7)
* The present apostates shared traits with those who came before - immoral, rebellious and slanderous (8)
* Contrasted even with powerful Michael, these individuals are disrespectful of authority, they are given to corruption and libertinism (9-11)
* They were destructive to Christian fellowship, self-serving, and had nothing of true value to offer (12-13)
* Enoch prophesied their eventual destruction (14-15)
* An identification of these false teachers: self-willed, flatterers to gain advantage (16)
* Jude warns about the inevitability of these mockers bringing their evil doctrine. Their doctrine (as doctrines of men most often do) leads to sensuality and ungodly lusts. (17-19)

**Maintaining spirituality (20-23)**

* Instructions given on maintaining their standing with God in the face of such error and opposition.
* Build their faith, pray, keep themselves in love, look for God’s mercy, be compassionate, be discerning, look out for one another (20-23)

**Final words of praise to God (24-25)**

* Doxology to God. He is worthy of our praise, because:
* He is able to keep us from stumbling; He is able to present us faultless (through our conversion); He alone is wise. (14-15)
* As such, He is worthy of glory, majesty, dominion, power. “Both now and forever. Amen.” (15)