

# *Words of Warning and Encouragement from Jesus' Half Brother*

## **A Study of Jude – Study Guide**

### **Authorship of Jude**

The name, Jude, is an English form of the Hebrew name, Judas. This was a popular name among the Jews at the time of the early Christian Church in honor of Judas Maccabaeus who led the nation of Israel in a revolt for independence chronicled in the Deuterocanonical Books of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Maccabees. The most well-known Judas was, of course, Judas Iscariot who was an original Disciple of Jesus who later betrayed him and committed suicide. The author of **Jude** is obviously not that Judas.

Let's start with reading verse 1 of **Jude**. Considering the custom of that time period and culture, what is unusual about how Jude introduces himself and if Jude is the half-brother of Jesus why would he instead identify himself as the brother of James?

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Authorship is important because during the first three centuries of the Christian church, the author of a book or epistle gave it credence as to whether it should be considered as part of the Canon of Scripture. The authorship of **Jude** has sparked a lot of controversy. Most authorities believe that the author of **Jude** is one of the sons of Joseph and Mary i.e., a half-brother of Jesus and one of the brothers of James, the leader of the Jerusalem Christian church during the "Apostolic Period". Others believe he was one of the original twelve Disciples, the "other Judas" (not Judas Iscariot). "Liberal Scholars" maintain that Jude was not written in the first century at all and is pseudepigrapha, i.e., that it was written much later under the pseudonym of Jude.

How does the first verse of **Jude** argue against authorship under a pseudonym?

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Let's take a look at the family trees of Jesus as well as some of the Apostles to identify the most likely candidates for Judas (Jude), brother of James as well as the identity of James.

Compare **Mark 6:2 – 3** to **Matthew 13:53 – 56**. What do we learn about the Judas (Jude) described here?

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Compare **Matthew 10:2 – 4** to **Luke 6:13 – 16**. What do we learn about the Judas (Jude) described in these verses?

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Compare **Matthew 27:55 – 56**, **Mark 15:40**, and **John 19:25**. When reading these verses it is important to know that “Alphaeus”, “Cleophas”, and “Clopas” are the same person. All three of these names are derived from the Hebrew, *חלפאי*, and were just different ways of writing and pronouncing the same name. Therefore, what relationships do these verses reveal?

**Matthew 27:55 – 56** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Mark 15:40** \_\_\_\_\_

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**John 19:25** \_\_\_\_\_

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Going on a brief aside (☺), if the sons of Zebedee (the apostles James and John) truly were the cousins of Jesus, how might that give us insights into the following verses.

**Luke 2:41 – 45** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Matthew 17:1 – 9** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Matthew 20:20 – 22** \_\_\_\_\_

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**John 21:20 – 24** \_\_\_\_\_

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What do **John 7:1 – 5**, **1 Corinthians 9:5**, **1 Corinthians 15:3 – 8**, **Acts 1:12 – 14**, **Galatians 1:18 – 19**, **Acts 15:12 – 21**, **Galatians 2:8 – 10**, and **James 1:1** imply about the family relationships of Jesus or the importance of those family members in the first century Christian Church throughout the Mediterranean region?

**John 7:1 – 5** \_\_\_\_\_

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**1 Corinthians 9:5** \_\_\_\_\_

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1 Corinthians 15:3 – 8 \_\_\_\_\_

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Acts 1:12 – 14 \_\_\_\_\_

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Galatians 1:18 – 19 \_\_\_\_\_

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Acts 15:12 – 21 \_\_\_\_\_

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Galatians 2:8 – 10 \_\_\_\_\_

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James 1:1 \_\_\_\_\_

How does **Acts 12:1 – 3** impact which James is being referred to in **Jude 1**?

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Some argue that the author of **James** is the Apostle, James son of Alphaeus and not the half-brother of Jesus. They also argue that James the Apostle (James the Less or James the Younger) was the head of the Jerusalem church. What are the arguments for and against this?

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See also **Jude 17 – 18**. How do these verses impact the identity of Jude?

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Regarding Jude's authority as a writer of a canonical Book of the Bible, Dr. Geise compares **Jude 1** to **Romans 1:1** and **2 Peter 1** and comments:

*...the title "servant" of Jesus Christ designates a man in the NT era called into the holy office of preaching and teaching. He speaks and writes on behalf of Christ, with such authority that his epistle is canonical Scripture, normative for the church. The terminology for this office may be somewhat wider than "apostle", yet is parallel to it...The title is not only one of honor, but especially one of humility...Jude employs*

*this title as he writes to his audience to signify his divine office of service-authority in the church.*

## **Purpose and Content of Jude**

Let's read **Jude 1 – 2**.

We all are (or should be) servants of Christ. What does that imply for us?

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What are the theological implications of the second half of verse one of **Jude**?

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What comfort is there for you in this part of verse one?

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Read verse 2 of **Jude** and note the three-part blessing. How are the blessings mentioned in this verse different from each other and what benefit or comfort does each provide?

**“Mercy”** \_\_\_\_\_

**“Peace”** \_\_\_\_\_

**“Love”** \_\_\_\_\_

Why then do we chase after so many other things that do not give us peace?

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Let's read **Jude 3 – 4**.

Do any of your commentaries speculate on who the recipients are of this letter from Jude?

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What kind of relationship does Jude appear to have with the recipients and what was Jude's original intent in writing this letter?

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What does the latter part of verse 3 imply about the teachings and doctrines of the church?

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What does it mean to “change the grace of God into a license for immorality”?

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How do you and I do that today? \_\_\_\_\_

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See the handout that compares **2 Peter 2:1 – 2 Peter 3:4** to **Jude 4 – 18**. Much has been made about the similarities between these two sets of passages. It is commonly believed that either Jude drew upon **2 Peter** or the Apostle Peter drew upon **Jude** when they wrote their epistles. The most common belief is the latter, that **Jude** pre-dated **2 Peter**. Another possibility is that both authors drew upon a common source when each wrote their epistle. Borrowing from other writers was quite common in that era of time. We see this sharing of text also in the Synoptic Gospels (**Matthew, Mark, and Luke**). Using this handout as a reference guide, **2 Peter** can help us interpret **Jude** directly using the concept of “Scripture interprets Scripture”.

Read **Jude 4 – 8** and **2 Peter 2:1 – 10a**.

What are the implications that the false teachers have slipped in secretly?

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What do we learn about the false teachers from both Epistles?

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What is the purpose of recounting the instances of God’s judgment in the Old Testament?

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What differences do you see between **Jude** and **2 Peter** in the recounting of the Old Testament examples of God’s judgment?

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What do we learn about the evil angels in these passages?

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Read **Jude 9 – 10** and compare with **2 Peter 2:10b – 14**?

What does it mean to “**slander celestial beings**” and what is the warning for us?

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What do we learn about the secret infiltrators and do you see any parallels in our world today either within or external to the Christian church?

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Look again at **Jude 9** and compare it to **Deuteronomy 34:1 – 8**. What is the difference do we see about the death of Moses in these two accounts? What do you think about the account in **Jude**?

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Many authorities believe that Jude was relating a story from an apocryphal book called *The Assumption of Moses* that is now lost. (Note: This is not the same book you will find if you “Google” “The Assumption of Moses”). These authorities say that we cannot necessarily believe that there ever was a dispute between the Archangel Michael and Satan over the body of Moses. Knowing this do you now do you think this story is true? Why or why not?

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**Jude 11** references three Old Testament examples of God’s judgment. Note the correlating verse of **2 Peter 2:15**. What sin and/or example of judgment do each of these represent or serve and how does it correlate to what Jude is saying?

**Genesis 4:8 – 16** – Cain’s judgment \_\_\_\_\_

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