
Επιστολή του Ιουδα † THE LETTER OF JUDE

INTRODUCTION

The *Letter of Jude* was written primarily to denounce the false teachers who were (and are) a danger to the Christian faith; he threatens them with the divine punishment familiar from Jewish tradition (vv. 5-7) and he uses both Canonical and Apocryphal sources. He does not explicitly state the doctrines of those false teachers, so they cannot be identified - with any certainty - as Gnostics.

The brief letter concludes with a beautiful and moving doxology.

AUTHORSHIP AND DATE

There are a number of early Christians called Jude (or variant forms of the name, like Judas or Judah) and there is no reason to identify the author with the apostle of the same name (Lk 6:16, Ac 1:13, Jn 14:22), especially as he refers to himself as being outside the apostolic body (v. 17). The letter must be dated fairly late in the 1st Century: the apostles are mentioned in the past tense, the faith is now something 'fixed' for all time, and the author appears to be acquainted with Paul's letters.

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¹ Ἰούδας Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοῦλος, ἀδελφὸς δὲ Ἰακώβου, τοῖς ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ ἡγαπημένοις καὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ τετηρημένοις κλητοῖς· ² ἔλεος ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη καὶ ἀγάπη πληθυνθεῖη.

³ Ἀγαπητοί, πᾶσαν σπουδὴν ποιούμενος γράφειν ὑμῖν περὶ τῆς κοινῆς ἡμῶν σωτηρίας ἀνάγκην ἔσχον γράψαι ὑμῖν παρακαλῶν ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι τῇ ἅπαξ παραδοθείσῃ τοῖς ἀγίοις πίστει. ⁴ παρεσέδυσαν γάρ τινες ἄνθρωποι, οἱ πάλαι προγεγραμμένοι εἰς τοῦτο τὸ κρίμα, ἀσεβεῖς, τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν χάριτα μετατιθέντες εἰς ἀσέλγειαν καὶ τὸν μόνον δεσπότην καὶ κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἀρνούμενοι.

⁵ Ὑπομνήσαι δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι, εἰδότας ἅπαξ πάντα, ὅτι Ἰησοῦς λαὸν ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου σώσας τὸ δεύτερον τοὺς μὴ πιστεύσαντας ἀπώλεσεν, ⁶ ἀγγέλους τε τοὺς μὴ

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¹ Jude, servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those called, who are dear to God the Father and kept safe for Jesus Christ; ² mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance.

³ Dear friends, while eagerly looking forward to writing to you about our shared salvation, I felt I must write to you appeal to you to fight hard for the faith that was once and for all entrusted to the saints. ⁴ Certain people have infiltrated you, who were long ago marked down for condemnation as ungodly; they pervert the grace of our God to debauchery and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

⁵ I want to remind you – though you already know it once and for all – that Jesus rescued the nation from Egypt but, later, he still destroyed those who did not believe; ⁶ and the angels who

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¹ In place of ‘to those who are’, some MSS have ‘to the nations who are’; and, in place of ‘dear to’, some MSS have ‘made holy by’.

² Literally translated, this verse reads, “may mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.”

³ The NJB has ‘God’s holy people’ in place of ‘the saints’.

⁴ Most later MSS have θεόν (‘God’) after δεσπότην (‘Master’), which appears to be a motivated reading in that it explicitly links ‘Master’ to ‘God’ in keeping with the normal NT pattern (see Lk 2:29, Ac 4:24, 2Tm 2:21, Rv 6:10). The earlier and better MSS lack θεόν and the shorter reading is thus preferred on both internal and external grounds.

⁵ In place of ‘Jesus’, the NJB & NRVS have ‘the Lord’; reading Ἰησοῦς is deemed too hard by many scholars, since it involves the notion of Jesus acting in the early history of the nation Israel. However, not only does this reading enjoy the strongest support from a variety of early witnesses but the plethora of variants demonstrate that scribes were uncomfortable with it; for, they seemed to change it to either κύριος or θεός. As difficult as the reading Ἰησοῦς is, in light of v. 4 and in light of the progress of revelation (Jude being one of the last books in the NT to be composed), it is wholly appropriate.

⁶ In place of ‘their own position’, the NJB has ‘to the authority they had’.

τηρήσαντας τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀρχὴν ἀλλὰ ἀπολιπόντας τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον εἰς κρίσιν μεγάλης ἡμέρας δεσμοῖς αἰδίοις ὑπὸ ζόφον τετήρηκεν.⁷ ὡς Σόδομα καὶ Γόμορρα καὶ αἱ περὶ αὐτὰς πόλεις, τὸν ὅμοιον τρόπον τούτοις ἐκπορνεύσασαι καὶ ἀπελθοῦσαι ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἐτέρας, πρόκεινται δεῖγμα πυρὸς αἰωνίου δίκην ὑπέχουσαι.

⁸ Ὁμοίως μέντοι καὶ οὗτοι ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι σάρκα μὲν μαινύουσιν, κυριότητα δὲ ἀθετοῦσιν, δόξας δὲ βλασφημοῦσιν.⁹ ὁ δὲ Μιχαὴλ ὁ ἀρχάγγελος, ὅτε τῷ διαβόλῳ διακρινόμενος διελέγετο περὶ τοῦ Μωϋσέως σώματος, οὐκ ἐτόλμησεν κρίσιν ἐπενεγκεῖν βλασφημίας, ἀλλὰ εἶπεν, Ἐπιτιμήσαι σοι κύριος.¹⁰ οὗτοι δὲ ὅσα μὲν οὐκ οἶδασιν βλασφημοῦσιν, ὅσα δὲ φυσικῶς ὡς τὰ ἄλογα ζῶα ἐπίστανται, ἐν τούτοις φθείρονται.¹¹ οὐαὶ αὐτοῖς, ὅτι τῇ ὁδῷ τοῦ Κάιν ἐπορεύθησαν, καὶ τῇ πλάνῃ τοῦ Βαλαὰμ μισθοῦ ἐξεχύθησαν, καὶ τῇ ἀντιλογίᾳ τοῦ Κόρε ἀπώλοντο.¹² οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἐν ταῖς ἀγάπαις ὑμῶν σπιλάδες συνευωχούμενοι ἀφόβως, ἑαυτοὺς ποιμαίνοντες, νεφέλαι ἄνυδροι ὑπὸ ἀνέμων παραφερόμεναι, δένδρα φθινοπωρινὰ

did not keep their own position, but left their appointed sphere, he has kept in darkness in eternal bonds until the judgement of the great Day.⁷ Sodom and Gomorrah, too, and the neighbouring towns, who with the same sexual immorality pursued unnatural lusts, are put before us as an example, since they are paying the penalty of eternal fire.

⁸ Yet, these people do the same: in their delusions, they defile the flesh, disregard Authority, and abuse the Glories.⁹ When the archangel Michael contended with the devil about the corpse of Moses, he dared not make a slanderous judgement but said, “May the Lord rebuke you.”¹⁰ But these slander whatever they do not understand; and the only things they do understand – by instinct, like unreasoning animals – will destroy them.¹¹ Woe to them! For, they follow Cain; and abandon themselves to Balaam’s error for greed; hence they will perish in Korah’s rebellion.¹² They are dangerous reefs at your love-feasts, coming for the food and quite shamelessly only looking after themselves. They are like the clouds blown about by the winds and bringing no rain, or like autumn trees,

⁷ The literal translation of ‘pursued unnatural lusts’ is ‘went after other flesh’.

⁸ Some MSS have ‘Authorities’ in place of ‘Authority’.

⁹ The verse possibly alludes to a (now lost) part of the apocryphal [Assumption of Moses](#), in which Michael has an altercation with the devil as to who claims Moses’ body after his death.

¹⁰ The NJB has ‘abuse’ in place of ‘slander’.

¹¹ In place of ‘follow’, the NJB has ‘have followed’.

¹² The NJB has ‘a dangerous hazard’ in place of ‘dangerous reefs’.

ἄκαρπα δις ἀποθανόντα ἐκριζωθέντα, ¹³ κύματα ἄγρια θαλάσσης ἐπαφρίζοντα τὰς ἑαυτῶν αἰσχύννας, ἀστέρες πλανῆται οἷς ὁ ζόφος τοῦ σκότους εἰς αἶωνα τετήρηται.

¹⁴ Προεφήτευσεν δὲ καὶ τούτοις ἑβδομος ἀπὸ Ἀδάμ Ἐνώχ λέγων, Ἴδου ἦλθεν κύριος ἐν ἀγίαις μυριάσιν αὐτοῦ, ¹⁵ ποιῆσαι κρίσιν κατὰ πάντων καὶ ἐλέγξαι πάντας τοὺς ἀσεβεῖς περὶ πάντων τῶν ἔργων ἀσεβείας αὐτῶν ὧν ἠσέβησαν καὶ περὶ πάντων τῶν σκληρῶν ὧν ἐλάλησαν κατ' αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτωλοὶ ἀσεβεῖς. ¹⁶ οὗτοί εἰσιν γογγυσταί, μεμψίμοιροι, κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας αὐτῶν πορευόμενοι, καὶ τὸ στόμα αὐτῶν λαλεῖ ὑπέρογκα, θαυμάζοντες πρόσωπα ὠφελείας χάριν.

¹⁷ Ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀγαπητοί, μνήσθητε τῶν ῥημάτων τῶν προειρημένων ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. ¹⁸ ὅτι ἔλεγον ὑμῖν, Ἐπ' ἐσχάτου [τοῦ] χρόνου ἔσονται ἐμπαῖκται κατὰ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἐπιθυμίας πορευόμενοι τῶν ἀσεβειῶν. ¹⁹ οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἀποδιορίζοντες, ψυχικοί,

barren and uprooted and so twice dead; ¹³ like wild sea waves with their own shame for foam; or like wandering stars, for whom the deepest darkness is stored up for ever.

¹⁴ It was with them in mind that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, made his prophecy, saying, "I tell you, the Lord will come with his holy ones in their tens of thousands, ¹⁵ to pronounce judgement on all humanity and to sentence the godless for all the godless things they have done, and for all the defiant things said against him by godless sinners." ¹⁶ They are mischief-makers, grumblers governed only by their own desires, with mouths full of boastful talk, ready to flatter others for gain.

¹⁷ But remember, dear friends, the words of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ "In the last time," they told you, "there will be mockers indulging their own godless desires." ¹⁹ It is they who cause division, who live in the flesh and do not have the Spirit. ²⁰ But you, dear friends, must build yourselves up

¹³ The NJB has 'the gloom of darkness' in place of 'the deepest darkness'.

¹⁴ The word 'generation' is not in the Greek text but is here added for clarity.

¹⁵ In vv. 14-15, Jude quotes Enoch 1:9 (possibly from memory).

¹⁶ In place of 'mischief-makers' (as the NJB), the NRSV has 'malcontents' and NETB has 'fault-finders'.

¹⁷ In place of 'the words of the apostles', the NJB has 'what the apostles ... foretold'.

¹⁸ No saying is found in this exact form but see Ac 20:29-31, 1Tm 4:1, 2Tm 3:1-5, 4:3 and Mt 24:24 & Mk 13:22.

¹⁹ The NJB has 'according to nature' in place of 'in the flesh'.

²⁰ The participles in this verse have been interpreted in different ways: Some treat them as imperatives attendant to that in v. 21 ('maintain') but they do not follow the normal contours of this usage. A better option is to treat them as the means by which the readers are to maintain themselves in the love of God; this both makes eminently good sense and fits the structural patterns of instrumental participles elsewhere.

πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες. ²⁰ ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀγαπητοί, ἐποικοδομοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς τῇ ἁγιωτάτῃ ὑμῶν πίστει, ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ προσευχόμενοι, ²¹ ἑαυτοὺς ἐν ἀγάπῃ Θεοῦ τηρήσατε, προσδεχόμενοι τὸ ἔλεος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. ²² καὶ οὓς μὲν ἐλεᾶτε διακρινομένους, ²³ οὓς δὲ σώζετε ἐκ πυρὸς ἀρπάζοντες, οὓς δὲ ἐλεᾶτε ἐν φόβῳ, μισοῦντες καὶ τὸν ἀπὸ τῆς σαρκὸς ἐσπιλωμένον χιτῶνα.

²⁴ Τῷ δὲ δυναμένῳ φυλάξαι ὑμᾶς ἀπταιίστους καὶ στῆσαι κατενώπιον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ ἀμώμους ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει, ²⁵ μόνῳ Θεῷ σωτῆρι ἡμῶν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν δόξα μεγαλωσύνη κράτος καὶ ἐξουσία πρὸ παντὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος καὶ νῦν καὶ εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας· ἀμήν.

on the foundation of your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit; ²¹ maintain yourselves within the love of God and wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to give you eternal life.

²² And to some, you must be compassionate because they are wavering; ²³ others you must save by snatching them out of the fire; to others again, you must be compassionate but wary, hating even the tunic stained by their bodies.

²⁴ Now, to the one who is able keep you from falling and bring you safely to his glorious presence, without blemish and rejoicing, ²⁵ to the only God, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, authority, and power, before all time, and now and for ever. Amen.

²¹ Literally translated, this verse ends, “Jesus Christ to eternal life.”

²² The NJB lacks the opening conjunction.

²³ The literal translation of ‘their bodies’ is ‘the flesh’.

²⁴ In place of ‘without blemish’, the NJB has ‘innocent’.

²⁵ The NJB has ‘ages’ in place of ‘time’. For ‘keep you’, the WEBBE reads ‘keep them’.