

The Letter of Jude



GULF SHORES

CHURCH OF CHRIST

Gulf Shores, AL

BIBLE CLASS STUDY GUIDE

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Study Guide for the Letter of Jude
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Study Guide for the Letters of Jude

INTRODUCTION

Author:

The writer of Jude was undoubtedly known to the Christians of the first century, but this knowledge was not passed down to us. Basically he only references himself as a servant of Jesus and a brother of James (**Jude 1**). There were seven people named Jude (Judas) in the New Testament four are more or less conspicuously mentioned but only one had a brother named James. This was the half-brother of Jesus (**Matthew 13:55, Mark 6:3**). Foxes Book of Martyrs states that Jude also went by the name Thaddeus (Lebbaeus) and was crucified at Edessa in 72 AD.

Similarly to book of James, both begin their letters by showing their humility and faith in the deity of Jesus calling themselves “bondservants” rather than brothers. This reveals that they had changed their views after Christ’s death and resurrection. Early on in Jesus’ ministry they did not seem supportive. Neither brother went with their mother to the cross (**John 20:25-27**).

Date:

It is generally accepted it was written in the mid to late 60’s AD. However, it could have been written as early as 50 AD or as late as 70 AD. Most scholars believe that the dating of Jude’s letter can be based on whether it preceded or succeeded II Peter. If Jude preceded II Peter, then it was written before Peter’s death in 64 AD. If it was written after II Peter, then it was written near the close of the first century. When one takes into account the influence of false prophecy it seems likely that Peter was declaring it on the horizon, while Jude talks about it as a current issue. Therefore, it is possible that II Peter was written first, though they may have been within just a few months or years apart.

Theme:

This book is about contending for the faith. The book of Jude is the third shortest biblical book. Its twenty-five verses are a panorama of the Old Testament and a challenge regarding the future of the church. We are introduced again to Sodom, angels, Cain, Moses, Balaam, Korah, Egyptian bondage, the wilderness wanderings, and Satan. Considering its size, few books present as many issues in such a short space.

One unique part of Jude is his use of extra-biblical sources (**Jude 14, Enoch 1:9; 60:8**). He also makes a statement about the body of Moses that is not recorded in the Old Testament (**Jude 9**). The story of the archangel Michael contending with Satan over the body of Moses was in an extra-biblical book written in Hebrew between 7 A.D. and 29 A.D and is also quoted by Luke in **Acts 7:36 (Jude 9, 16, 18, II Baruch, Clement of Alexandria, Origen)**. There is a fragment of this book, called the Assumption of Moses, that can be viewed today but it is damaged.

Some people like to make an issue out of the sources mentioned above. This shouldn’t prove to be a significant issue because the Old Testament alone refers to at least fourteen extra-biblical books (**Numbers 21:14, Joshua 10:13, I Kings 11:41, I Chronicles 29:29, II Chronicles 9:29, 12:15, 13:22, 20:34, 24:27**). In the New Testament Paul quotes the Hymn of Zeus from Aratus of Tarsus written around 270 BC (**Acts 17:28**). He also uses Menander (**I Corinthians 15:33**) and Epimenides (**Titus 1:12**) as sources in his writings.

Audience:

The letter is lumped with the general epistles because it was intended for a general audience. Mainly it was intended for a challenge to Christians. All of the readers shared a “common salvation” with the author (v.3), though many may have had a Jewish background. This would also reveal the reasoning behind using apocryphal books in the letter. These books were well circulated about the Jewish Christians, but not universally considered to be inspired.

There may have been a congregation the writer intended to read this letter. However, that information is hidden from us. He uses endearing terminology and passionately warned them as if showing deep personal concern for their well-being. It is possible that he served as an elder in the church in Edessa before his death and they could have been the intended recipients.

Key Verses:

Jude 3-4, 9-11, 14-15, 20-21, 24-25

Outline:

- I. *Contending For Faithful Living (1-4)*
- II. *Condemning Unfaithful Living (5-13)*
- III. *Complaining About Faithful Living (14-19)*
- IV. *Committing To Faithful Living (20-22)*
- V. *Conquering Faithful Living (23-25)*

Study Guide for the Letter of Jude
Contending For Faithful Living
Jude 1-4

Introduction: The book of Jude is a small but powerful book. It was written by Jude (Judas), the brother of James. He may have been the brother of Jesus (**Matthew 13:55, Mark 6:3**). It was written around 75 AD (as early as 66 AD and as late as 80 AD). His theme: Fight, contend, and do battle! The enemy is near!!! However, the underlying theme shows us how to connect with the lost. And those that are lost can be those inside and outside of the church. We need to find ways to stay connected to our power source. . . . The LORD! Let's study together . . .

Discussion:

I. Faithful Christians Have A Common Calling (v.1)

We are God's elect.
We are God's beloved children.
We are safe under God's protection.

II. Faithful Christians Have A Common Blessing (v.2)

We enjoy the blessing of God's mercy.
We enjoy the blessing of God's peace.
We enjoy the blessing of God's love.

III. Faithful Christians Have A Common Salvation (v.3)

We share in salvation.
We share in suffering.
We share in servanthood.
We are volunteer soldiers.

IV. Faithful Christians Have A Common Warning (v.4)

We will see sneaky Christians (secretly entered).
We will see ignorant Christians (against God).
We will see immature Christians (change the grace of God).
We will see weak Christians (do not except Christ - pressure from Jews).

Conclusion : The church needs to be prepared to fight, contend, and do battle. The enemy is on our doorstep and we have to stand up! We are the soldiers of the Lord. We need to stay connected to our Lord and find ways to connect the lost to Him!

Study Guide for the Letter of Jude
Condemning Unfaithful Living
Jude 5-13

Introduction: The book of Jude is a small but powerful book. He reveals to the reader that we need to find ways to stay connected to our power source, but also find ways to reach out to those outside of the Lord's body! Maybe we can bring them back to God. In the meantime, we have to confront sin and false doctrine. Let's study together

Discussion:

- I. Unfaithfulness Condemned Israel (v.5).***
Those led out of Egypt complained about everything.
Their unbelief in God was clearly seen.
They died in the wilderness because of that unbelief.

- II. Unfaithfulness Condemned Angels (v.6)***
These angels have fallen because of their faith in Satan and themselves.
They no longer have the joys of heaven.
If angels can fall, what makes us think we cannot fall?

- III. Unfaithfulness Condemned Sodom & Gomorrah (v.7).***
They were given a chance to change their ways.
The angels looked for righteous men, they found none.
These cities were destroyed for not obeying God.

- IV. Unfaithfulness Condemned False Teachers (v.8).***
There are literally dozens of scriptures that warn of false teaching.
Some preachers spend countless hours preaching about these people.
Even more spend countless opportunities debating these false teachers.
I suppose I try to be like Jesus, by their fruits you will know them (educate).

- V. Unfaithfulness Condemned Satan (v.9).***
Michael fought Satan for the body of Moses.
He never once brought reviling accusations against Satan.
He, an angel, refused to play judge over Satan or the other angels.
He allowed the Lord to have victory of Satan in the matter.

VI. *Unfaithfulness Condemned Ignorant People (vs.10).*

Do you know people who speak up about things they don't understand?
A wise person thinks and listens in silence before he speaks.
Jude compares them to retarded or dumb animals.
Sometimes we need to get more of the facts.
Some people just talk to hear their own voice!
He has already condemned the dreamers and the defilers.
Now he deals with those who are dumb, doomed, and depraved.

VII. *Unfaithfulness Condemned Cain (v.11).*

We know that Cain killed his brother in his unfaithfulness.
His sacrifice was not the problem it was his heart.
God would have accepted his sacrifice if it would have been heartfelt.

VIII. *Unfaithfulness Condemned Balaam (v.11).*

Balaam ignorant concerning the will of God.
He was willing to follow the crowd and God humbled him.
Were it not for his faithful donkey he would have been a dead man.

IX. *Unfaithfulness Condemned Korah (v.11).*

The rebellion of Korah was one of the first major obstacles Moses faced.
A relative, a cousin, decided he was more fit to lead the Israelites.
Moses may have wished for some help, but this was not the right kind of help.
He, his household, and his followers were killed because they were unfaithful.

X. *Unfaithfulness Condemned The First Christians (vs.12-13).*

Many of the early first century Christians found themselves sucked in.
It's not impossible to stray from the straight and narrow.
Jude tells them that they leave a dirty spot at the table when we fellowship.
Unfaithfulness will condemn us!
We are to follow God and live in the world but not conform to the world.
The world will lead us in the wrong direction every time.
Who are you following today? – There are only two choices!

Conclusion: Those who choose to teach or follow things that are false are condemned. We have to be faithful to the Lord even when it's not popular. The church needs to be prepared to fight, contend, and do battle. The enemy is on our doorstep and we have to stand up! We are the soldiers of the Lord. We need to stay connected to our Lord and find ways to connect the lost to Him!

Study Guide for the Letter of Jude
Complaining About Faithful Living
Jude 14-19

Introduction: The book of Jude is a small but powerful book. In this middle section of Jude, he reveals that faithful Christians will still suffer hardship. Compare this section to the book of James, written by his brother. Let's study together

Discussion:

I. Faithful Christians Deal With Judgmental People (vs.14-15).

We will face people inside the church that are judgmental.

We will face people outside in the world that are judgmental.

II. Faithful Christians Deal With Selfish People (v.16).

We will face people inside the church that are selfish.

We will face people outside in the world that are selfish.

III. Faithful Christians Deal With Prideful People (v.16).

We will face people inside the church that are full of pride.

We will face people outside in the world that are full of pride.

IV. Faithful Christians Deal With Forgetful People (v.17).

We will face people inside the church that are forgetful.

We will face people outside in the world that are forgetful.

V. Faithful Christians Deal With Mocking People (v.18).

We will face people inside the church that are mockers.

We will face people outside in the world that are mockers.

VI. Faithful Christians Deal With Divisive People (v.19).

We will face people inside the church that are divisive.

We will face people outside in the world that are divisive.

VII. Faithful Christians Deal With Worldly People (v.19).

We will face people inside the church that are full of the world.

We will face people outside in the world that are full of themselves.

Conclusion: There is no way to avoid complainers. The church needs to be prepared to fight, contend, and do battle. The enemy is on our doorstep and we have to stand up! We are the soldiers of the Lord. We need to stay connected to our Lord and find ways to connect the lost to Him!

Study Guide for the Letter of Jude
Committing To Faithful Living
Jude 20-22

Introduction: The book of Jude is a small but powerful book. In this part Jude builds on the previous thought of hardship and suffering. However, he also shows the importance of staying committed for the long haul. Are you committed to the end? Let's study together

Discussion:

I. Faithful Christians Build Up Their Faith (v.20)

We can build up our faith by staying close to other Christians.
We can build up our faith by striving after holiness.
We can build up our faith by starting to put God first.

II. Faithful Christians Pray in the Spirit (v.20)

We can commune with the Spirit.
We can bear fruit of the Spirit.
We can become more spirit-led people.
We can become more spirit-fed people.

III. Faithful Christians Stay in God's Love (v.21)

We need to understand the love of God.
We need to appreciate the love of God.
We need to remain in the love of God.

IV. Faithful Christians Look for the Mercy of God (v.21)

God's mercy will give us peace.
God's mercy will give us hope.
God's mercy will give us eternal life.

V. Faithful Christians Have Compassion (v.22)

We can show compassion to weak Christians.
We can show compassion to ignorant Christians.
We can show compassion to faithless Christians.

Conclusion: We need to be committed to living in Christ no matter how difficult life seems. The church needs to be prepared to fight, contend, and do battle. The enemy is on our doorstep and we have to stand up! We are the soldiers of the Lord. We need to stay connected to our Lord and find ways to connect the lost to Him!

Study Guide for the Letter of Jude
Conquering Faithful Living
Jude 23-25

Introduction: The book of Jude is a small but powerful book. In this final section of Jude we can see the consequences of falling away and the rewards for staying faithful. How can we remain faithful? Jude gives us some pointers. Let's study together

Discussion :

I. Faithful Christians Fear God (v.23)

We can snatch the sinner from the gates of hell.
We can snatch our own souls out of the hands of Satan.
We can rest assured that our eternal life is safe.

II. Faithful Christians Save Others (v.23)

We should love the sinner and hate the sin.
We should do all that we can to save sinners and teach about sin.
We should fulfill the Great Commission.

III. Faithful Christians Depend Upon God (v.24)

Dependence upon God shows a sign of faith.
Dependence upon God shows a sign of strength.
Dependence upon God shows a sign of maturity.

IV. Faithful Christians Trust God (v.24)

We should know that God will give us eternal glory.
We should know that God will give us eternal joy.
We should know that God will give us eternal salvation.

V. Faithful Christians Glorify God (v.25)

We recognize that God alone is God.
We recognize that God alone saves.
We recognize that God alone deserves praise.

Conclusion: God deserves the praise, honor, and glory. He will bring the victory! The church needs to be prepared to fight, contend, and do battle. The enemy is on our doorstep and we have to stand up! We are the soldiers of the Lord. We need to stay connected to our Lord and find ways to connect the lost to Him!