

# Jude

## Introduction

### Jude in History (Canonicity and Questions of Authorship)

- Most NT books which were included adhere to 4 main criteria – Catholicity (widely distributed/known amongst the churches), Orthodoxy (taught what was accepted as correct doctrine), Apostolicity (was connected to an apostle/1<sup>st</sup> generation leader), Antiquity (early and most likely written in the 1<sup>st</sup> century). Scholars debate these categories and they are posited retroactively to describe why these books are included rather than as criteria used by church fathers or the ancient church.
- Jude is mentioned by Eusebius of Caesarea as one of the “disputed” books. Other church fathers debated its inclusion in the canon of NT literature mainly due to its use of and actual quotation of Pseudepigraphal writings (namely the *Assumption of Moses* and *1 Enoch*).
- The author identifies as Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James (vs. 1). Ιουδᾶς can be translated in multiple ways (both Judas and Jude are acceptable). Mark 6:3 lists both Judas and James as brothers of Jesus by name. This has led many to associate the author with being both the brother of Jesus and the brother of James (author of the NT letter and the “pillar” and leader of the early Jerusalem church. See Acts 15, etc.).
- Because the book is brief and the only book to assert Jude as author, we do not know exactly who wrote it. Style and Greek usage have made certain scholars question whether the book was written by a Palestinian Jew who probably spoke Aramaic. The same issues will be discussed in our intro to 2 Peter.

### Jude: Dating, Audience, Occasion

- I wrote a term paper in grad school on Jude and reached a conclusion then that I still hold to now - the biblical and extra-biblical evidence make it nearly impossible to determine the exact dating, audience, and occasion of the letter.
- Dating to some extent is typically judged based upon one’s acceptance of 2 Peter as being authentic to Petrine authorship. Assuming Peter wrote 2 Peter and that he used Jude as source material for his letter, this would date the letter from the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century.
- Two audiences of the letter are typically proposed - a Jewish audience in Palestine or a Hellenistic Jewish audience in Alexandria. Palestine is suggested because of the use of extra-biblical source material that the audience is presumed to be familiar with and the connection of Jude with Jesus’ family. Alexandria is suggested due to the Greek style, an assumption that the Jews of Alexandria would also be familiar with the extra-biblical source material and the early acceptance of the letter as authentic/canonical in Alexandria as opposed to its early skepticism in Syria/Palestine.
- The author states the occasion as a change of course in vss. 3-4. Whereas he has desired to write about the audience’s common salvation, he felt it necessary to deviate from that wish and to address a heresy that had crept into the church.
- Some scholars see a connection to a gnostic heresy in Alexandria in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century that was noted by Clement of Alexandria as proof of an Alexandrian audience. However, Clement does

not make this explicit connection. He does however note the similarities of the heretics in Alexandria in his day and sees Jude as writing prophetically of them.

- This class will assume that the letter was written by Jude, the brother of James and Jesus to a Jewish audience in Palestine in the mid-1<sup>st</sup> century.

## Jude: The OT, Extra-Biblical Material and What to Consider

- The main the reason historically Jude was viewed with skepticism was his use and quotation of Pseudepigraphal writings (i.e. Writings not assumed to have been written by their purported author or their designated scribe).
- We will speak specifically to these issues in the respective classes, but as stated before these books are the *Assumption of Moses* and *1 Enoch*.
- In particular verses 14-15 seem to quote as authoritative *1 Enoch*.
- Jude also alludes to many other various OT stories in such a short letter.
- As we consider the letter and later it's connection with 2 Peter, our goal is not to belabor these references, but rather to be aware of the implications and to equip you to make an informed interpretation.