

The GENERAL LETTER of JUDE

LAST GENERATION VERSION

Translation & Notes by Tim Warner

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Jude,¹ a slave of Jesus Anointed and brother of James,² to those having been set apart in God the Father, invited, and having been kept in Jesus Anointed. 2 Mercy to you, and peace and love be multiplied.

Warning Against Gnostic Imposters

3 Beloved, using all diligence to write to you about the common deliverance, I found it necessary to write urging you to contend for the Faith³ having once for all been delivered to the holy ones.⁴ 4 For some men have crept in secretly, having been prescribed⁵ long ago for this condemnation, irreverent [men], perverting the grace of our God into incontinence, disavowing the only Lord⁶ and Master of us, Jesus Anointed.

¹ Jude is the English version of the Hellenized form of the Hebrew name, Judah which means “praise.”

² James and Jude were brothers of Jesus (Matt. 13:55).

³ With the martyrdom of James (AD 62), followed by Paul (AD 66) and Peter (AD 67), and then the complete destruction of Jerusalem, a great vacuum in leadership was left. Into this vacuum stepped the false teachers that Paul (Acts 20:28-31; 2 Tim. 3:1 – 4:5) and Peter (2 Peter 2:1-22) warned were going to corrupt the Faith, particularly the doctrine of the Anointed. Jude had been part of the Jerusalem assembly, but had fled along with the remainder of that assembly when the Roman armies surrounded the city (Luke 21:20-24). It was likely in response to this emergency and Jude’s plea that John settled in Ephesus and wrote all of his books, seeking to support what Paul had previously taught concerning the Anointed.

⁴ This statement implies that the entire body of apostolic preaching was considered fixed, referred to as “the Faith.”

⁵ Literally, “pre-written”

⁶ The Majority Text adds “God” but all of the early copies omit it. If “God” it is taken as genuinely what Jude wrote, and if Sharp’s rule is correct, then the clause, τὸν μόνον δεσπότην θεὸν καὶ κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν χριστὸν, must be translated “the only Lord God and Master of us – Jesus Anointed,” making Jesus “the *only* Lord God” thereby excluding the Father from being “Lord God.” Therefore, either the addition of “God” here in later manuscripts is a corruption, or else Sharp’s first Rule is invalid.

5 Yet I intend to remind you – you once having observed this – that Jesus,⁷ having delivered the people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed the unbelieving ones.⁸ 6 And the messengers,⁹ those not having guarded their personal dominion¹⁰ but having abandoned their own domain,¹¹ He¹² has placed under guard¹³ in enduring confinement¹⁴ under doom for judgment of the great Day. 7 Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them in like manner to these [men],¹⁵ having prostituted and having gone after strange flesh, display a specimen of permanent fire,¹⁶ experiencing justice,¹⁷ 8 likewise also these [men], although dreamers, indeed defile the flesh, and repudiate sovereignty, and denounce dignitaries. 9 Yet, Michael the arch-

⁷ Jude likely had Judges 2:1-4 in mind, where the “Messenger of Yahweh” claimed to have delivered the people out of Egypt, thus identifying Yahweh’s Messenger as Jesus. The Majority Text has ὁ κύριος (the Master). But the latest scholarly editions of the Greek New Testament have “Jesus.” This reading is based primarily on two of the oldest (4th cent.) uncial manuscripts, Alexandrinus & Vaticanus, but also many others. The very oldest surviving copy of Jude is the 2nd cent. papyrus fragment, p72, which has “God Christ,” thus agreeing in sense that Jude was referring to the Son rather than to the Father. The 5th cent. Latin Vulgate also has “Iesus,” the result of translating even older extinct Greek copies into Latin and standardizing the Old Latin text. Yet despite the textual variants, even if ὁ κύριος (the Lord/Master) is what Jude wrote, he was referring to the Son and not the Father because in the previous verse he referred to Jesus as “the only Lord and Master [κύριος] of us,” showing his use of the word κύριος (Lord/Master) for the Son. This is also consistent throughout the epistle, where κύριος (Lord/Master) is found four more times in reference to Jesus. (vss. 4,14,17,21,25). 1 Cor. 10:4,9 also places “Christ” in the wilderness with Israel. The following English translations also have “Jesus” here: CSV, DRV, ESV, LSB, LEB, NET, NLT, NRSVue. The New English Translation (NET) has the following footnote for this reading: “The reading Ἰησοῦς (Iesous, “Jesus”) is deemed too hard by several 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 (e.g., A B 33 81 1241 1739 1881 2344 pc vg co Or1739mg), but the plethora of variants demonstrate that scribes were uncomfortable with it, for they seemed to exchange κύριος (kurios, “Lord”) or θεός (theos, “God”) for Ἰησοῦς (though p72 has the intriguing reading θεὸς Χριστός [theos Christos, “God Christ”] for Ἰησοῦς). In addition to the evidence supplied in NA27 for this reading, note also 88 322 323 424c 665 915 2298 eth Cyr Hier Bede. As difficult as the reading Ἰησοῦς is, in light of v. Jud 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.”

⁸ 1 Cor. 10:4,9

⁹ Rev. 9:14-15 described four “messengers” who had been previously bound at the river Euphrates but are reserved for the specific “hour, day, month, and year,” who will be released for a brief time to destroy a third of mankind.

¹⁰ It is apparent from Daniel 10:11-13,20-21; Dan. 11:1 & Dan. 12:1, that celestial messengers have assigned dominions to guard, and that some were in rebellion and encroaching on the dominion of other celestial messengers in an attempt to alter the course of kingdoms contrary to God’s plan.

¹¹ These celestial messengers no doubt refer to those who joined the Adversary in his apostasy from God, which Jesus referred to as the his messengers (Matt. 25:41). In Rev. 12:7-9, Michael and his celestial messengers fight against the Adversary and his celestial messengers. The metaphor in verse four, that the Dragon drew away a third of the stars, implies that a third of the celestial messengers followed the Adversary in his rebellion. 1 Peter 3:18-22 indicates that these celestial messengers rebelled during the time of Noah. (See also 2 Pet. 2:4-5). These are the “principalities and powers” which we struggle against (Eph. 6:12), and which the Anointed Himself has triumphed over (Col. 2:15).

¹² 1 Pet. 3:18-22

¹³ Daniel 4:13,17,23 mentions angelic “Watchers” (guards) who have the responsibility of executing judgments related to kingdoms. Daniel 10:12-13,20 describes such celestial messengers using force against other rebellious celestial messengers who have abused their dominion.

¹⁴ This confinement does not necessarily render the fallen celestial messengers completely impotent, but restricts their activity within certain boundaries they cannot cross.

messenger, when disputing with the Slanderer about the body of Moses,¹⁸ dared not to bring an allegation of blasphemy, but said, *"May the Master rebuke you!"*¹⁹ 10 But these [men] indeed blaspheme what they have not seen. And whatever they do understand, as naturally illogical creatures, in these things they are being corrupted. 11 Woe to them because they have gone in the way of Cain; and they rushed to the straying of Balaam's bribery; and they were destroyed in the altercation of Korah. 12 These are jagged-rocks²⁰ in your love-feasts,²¹ communing with you, fearlessly shepherding themselves,²² waterless clouds carried along by winds, withered fruit trees, fruitless, having died twice,²³ having been uprooted, 13 wild waves of the sea foaming forth their own shame, wandering stars²⁴ for whom He has been preserving for an age the gloom of darkness. 14 Yet Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied saying, "Look! The Master came with myriads of His holy ones 15 to do judgment against all, and to expose all the irreverent ones of them, concerning all the deeds of irreverence and concerning all of the harshness which irreverent sinners spoke against Him."²⁵ 16 These [men] are

¹⁵ Jude repeatedly uses the term "these" (vss. 7,8,12,16,19,) to refer back to the apostate teachers he was warning about mentioned in vs. 4. "These" does not refer to the fallen angels mentioned in the previous verse.

¹⁶ "δειγμα πυρος αιωνιου" is translated in the KJV as "an example ... of everlasting fire." Yet, the Greek word "δειγμα" means a specimen (of the same thing) and not merely a representation. Thus, the fire that fell on Sodom and Gomorrah was indeed "πυρος αιωνιου." This shows that "αιωνιου" which is rendered "eternal" in the KJV does not mean that the fire burns forever, but that the effects of the fire are permanent. Sodom and Gomorrah were completely obliterated so that absolutely nothing remained.

¹⁷ 2 Pet. 2:6 makes it clear that the complete annihilation of Sodom and Gomorrah is the pattern for what will befall the ungodly.

¹⁸ The "body of Moses" is not a reference to Moses' corpse. The word "body" here is σῶμα (soma) and usually refers to a living body. The word πτώμα (ptoma) refers to a dead body. The "body of Moses" here is apparently in contrast to "the body of Christ," that is those under the Law of Moses vs. those under the Law of Christ. Hebrews 3:1-6 similarly contrasts the "household of Moses" with the "household of the Anointed."

¹⁹ Zech. 3:1-5 is the basis for this statement. Jude has identified the "messenger of the Lord" in that passage as Michael. The entire passage is an allegory. In the vision Joshua the high priest's robes were filthy (representing the Law, the Levitical priesthood, and "the body of Moses"). The robes were filthy because the Mosaic Covenant could never take away sin (Heb. 10:1-4). These filthy priestly robes were then removed and replaced with clean robes (representing the New Covenant, the Melchizedek priesthood, and "the body of Christ"). It is also no coincidence that the high priest's name was "Joshua" (Heb. "Yeshua," Gk. Iesous), named after Moses' successor, and that the Messiah was given the same name.

²⁰ Jagged rocks submerged just below the surface of the water, so as to rip open the underside of a sailing vessel

²¹ Love-feasts were Christian community meals

²² Apparently they were not submitting to the authority of the pastors of the Anointed's flock.

²³ This likely refers to apostasy – once believing, but having abandoned the true Faith.

²⁴ As the planets appear to wander among the fixed stars

²⁵ Many suppose that Jude endorsed the pseudo- book of Enoch which contains this passage in the first chapter. Yet, Jude said he was quoting what Enoch said (an oral tradition), not what Enoch allegedly wrote. Since the pseudo-book of Enoch was written after the Babylonian exile, and not by Enoch, it incorporated some very old oral tradition of Enoch. Yet, that book also contains many tall tales and scientifically absurd claims about how the solar system works, showing that it is not an inspired work. And the Jews never included it in their canon of sacred Scripture.

grumblers, complainers, going according to their desires. And their mouth speaks flattery, admiring appearances for the benefit of favor.

Exhortation

17 But you, beloved, be reminded of the speeches which have been spoken by the Emissaries of our Master, Jesus Anointed,²⁶ 18 because they said to you that in the end-time there will be mockers, going according to their own lusts. 19 These are the ones who segregate themselves, natural [men] without the Breath. 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up in the most holy Faith, praying in the holy Breath, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, anticipating the mercy of our Master, Jesus Anointed, unto permanent life. 22 And be merciful indeed to some, discriminating. 23 Yet some save with fear, snatching them out of the fire, hating even the garment soiled from the flesh. 24 And to the One able to keep you from stumbling and to set you before His glory unflawed in exuberance, 25 to the only²⁷ God, our Savior, through Jesus Anointed our Master,²⁸ be glory, and majesty, power, and authority now, and unto all the ages. Amen.

²⁶ The apostolic oral tradition was well known among the early Churches (see: 2 Thess. 2:15). This statement suggests that the speeches of the Apostles may have been memorized in a similar manner in which the Jews preserved oral tradition for many centuries.

²⁷ The Majority Text and Textus Receptus add "wise."

²⁸ The Majority Text and Textus Receptus omit "through Jesus Anointed our Master"