

Who Is Jude?

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[0:00] It is, of course, a privilege for me to be here with you this evening.

! I feel a certain intimidation factor. Not being accustomed to public speaking is one thing, but the other thing is following in the footsteps of Lee and Willard.

We've been blessed to have both of these men guide us through the pages of Holy Writ. Now I've come up with some idea that I can somehow contribute something.

That's chiefly the intimidation factor I feel. We tend to think of the Bible as a collection of 66 books and certainly that is the case.

But in a larger sense, the Holy Bible, which we also accurately refer to as the Word of God, is actually one book from one divine author.

[1:16] Humanly speaking, it was written by some 40 men over a period of 1500 years. However, these 40 men were inspired by the Spirit of God and the original autograph was without the slightest mixture of error.

And by the way, we don't have any of the original autographs that have survived that we found anyway. The Bible, which we are greatly privileged to own and to study on our own, and men help us, us, that we're divinely appointed to help us to understand.

It begins with the creation account in Genesis chapters 1 and 2, written by Moses, talking about the creation.

And the Bible ends, that was about 1500 BC, the Bible ends with the account of eternity future written by the apostle John around AD 95 after the birth of Christ in the book of Revelation, chapters 21 and 22.

In these 66 books, which we know as, under the name of one book we call the Holy Bible, God progressively reveals himself and his purposes in the inspired scriptures.

[2:53] Some of these books are massive. I think we tend to think the longest book must surely be the Psalms. And if we count chapters, it is, 150 chapters.

But if we go by word count, Psalms actually comes in third place. Jeremiah and Genesis have a lot more words.

Now in the New Testament, we have the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. They're big books, long books. John is long and lengthy.

But likewise, there are some brief books in the Bible. But their brevity in no way compromises their divine inspiration.

All of the so-called short books are one chapter long and by word count are listed as follows.

[3:57] Here's the word count of some of the short books. 3 John, 219 words. 2 John, 245 words.

Philemon, 335 words. I still remember the first time I taught that. And I got up to the class and said Philemon. And Diane almost died on the spot.

Jan Heffer corrected me. Can you believe that? Obadiah, 440 words. And Jude, 461 words. And the number of words I'm referring to are in the original language of Hebrew for Obadiah and Greek for the other four books listed.

Now the number of words in English can be a little deceiving and they vary somewhat based upon the particular translation used.

So these numbers are approximate at best. For the next little while, I had down the next month or so, but I've modified that for a while here.

[5:08] And we're going to be looking at book number five on our list of the New Testament books. It is the book or epistle or letter of Jude.

Now, if you're not familiar with Jude as to location in the Word of God, the book of Jude has lived its life in the shadow of the massive revelation of Jesus Christ.

So go to the last book of the Bible and start back. And it's one book from there. But Jude's 25 verses are just as Holy Spirit inspired as any word in the apocalypse of John or any word elsewhere in the Bible.

So the first task and one we're going to spend this evening on, this is sort of the introduction to the introduction to the introduction. But we're going to plow some ground tonight.

We need to figure out the identity of the author. Who is this man named Jude?

[6:22] And let me say the name Judah was very common among the Hebrews. The Greek pronunciation of Judah was Judas.

And in English, we call the name Jude. One reason the Hebrews were very fond of the name was because of the tribe of Judah.

Remember, that was the tribe from which the Messiah came in his incarnation. Another reason Judas was so popular was a man by that name led the Maccabean revolt against the Greek ruler Antiochus Epiphanes, whom they hated, and he hated them.

And this all occurred in the second century B.C. That particular Jude or Judah was a hero among the Jews, and thus many Jewish parents named their sons after him.

Now, to move forward in our study, we need to identify the Jude who self-identifies as the author of this epistle.

[7:38] In the New Testament, there are several men referred to as Jude or Judas, and some can be eliminated quite easily as to authorship.

The others we have to work at a little bit. I would suggest the easiest person to eliminate as being the author of the book of Jude is a man by the name of Judas Iscariot.

We've probably all heard that name. Undoubtedly, that's the easiest person in the New Testament to remove from our list.

This man was one of the twelve original disciples. He was the betrayer of the Lord Jesus. In John 6, 70, Jesus said, Did I not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?

So Jesus knew from the very start, didn't he? He knew everything about Judas Iscariot. And Jesus Iscariot was the devil referred to by our Lord there.

[8:45] So with confidence we can say, Judas Iscariot did not write the book of Jude. There's another Jude that gets a little more complicated.

He was an original disciple. He was also known by the name of Thaddeus. This Jude was the son of James.

Thaddeus, unless you have a real old King James version in which they named him the brother of James. And they incorporated the same name as the epistle to Jude.

But that brother to... son, brother of James, that's wrong. It's wrong. This Jude, Thaddeus, is not who we're talking about.

The only time this Jude speaks in John's Gospel, when he asks the Lord a question, he said, Judas, not Iscariot, that's Thaddeus, said to him, Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world?

[9:57] That's the only time we hear from him. And that's in the great chapter of John 14. Jude, the Jude or Thaddeus that we're talking about was listed as one of the apostles.

Jude, the author of the book that bears his name, was very clear that he was not an apostle. He refers once to the apostles in Jude verse 17, but does not include himself on that list.

There were others named Jude mentioned in the New Testament, and they too can be eliminated from consideration. I've already mentioned Judah of the Old Testament.

He's in the genealogy of Jesus. He was the son of Jacob for whom the tribe of Judah was named. This is the tribe from which Jesus descended in his human incarnation, humanity.

This Judah is easily eliminated as the Jude of the book of Jude. In the fifth chapter of Acts, we read of Judas the Galilean.

[11:06] He was a revolutionary. He was killed because of his subversive activities. He didn't write the book of Jude. And in Acts, the 15th chapter, we read about another Judas, Barzabbas.

Judas, he was present at the Jerusalem Council, which, by the way, was led by James. We're going to talk about him in a moment. And he served as a letter carrier to the Gentile churches.

They appointed this Judas as a mailman, and he carried the letters from the Jerusalem Council made up of the Jewish churches. He carried those to the Gentile churches in the Roman world.

So who is the author? Well, the epistle gives us a very strong clue. In the opening of the book, verse 1, we read the following, Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James. Now, there's a wealth of information in those few words. The Jude that authored the book that bears his name was the brother of James.

[12:26] That is the clue that unlocks the identity of the author of the book. The James, with whom Jude identified himself, was a brother, and probably more accurately, a half-brother to the Lord Jesus Christ.

He was a half-brother. More specifically, this James is the half-brother of Jesus, and I'm sure you recall that after their marriage, Joseph and Mary, under orders from the angel of the Lord, abstained from any physical relationship until after the birth of the Christ child, and after that, they had a number of children.

I think it was five boys and two girls. It's in the Scriptures. Maybe four boys. The Roman Catholic Church was repulsed by such thinking.

They couldn't handle that. They ascribe to the erroneous belief that Mary was and still is a perpetual virgin.

They can't handle the idea that at some point, the virgin Mary that they pray to in a form of idolatry, and that's what it is, they can't stand the idea that Mary at some point lost her virginity to Joseph.

[14:00] Well, why not? They were married. It's okay. And so, the Roman Catholic Church was just repulsed by that idea.

So, to get around this problem, they postulated the idea that James was actually a cousin to Jesus, and thus, they were able to keep Mary's virginity intact.

But this is just one of many errors within the church in Rome. Since James was the half-brother to Jesus, and since James and Jude are full brothers being born by Mary, I started to say the virgin Mary, but she wasn't by then, Mary and her husband Joseph, guess what that means?

Jude, the author of the epistle, is the half-brother of Jesus as well. His brother is a half-brother to Jesus, so he's a half-brother to Jesus.

And by the way, Jude is the only writer in the New Testament that identifies himself by family ties by naming James as his brother.

[15:17] He's the only guy that does that. You don't see that in Paul and Matthew. You don't see that in Peter. You sure don't see it in John. John, in his gospel, never even mentions himself.

His name's not even in there. Now, we are going to find out in our study that Jews exposes and condemns the apostates that have infiltrated the church.

That's what Jude's going to deal with. It is no small irony, I think, that Jude shares a first name with Judas Iscariot, the most notorious apostate that ever lived.

There's no greater apostate than Judas Iscariot. And while I'm not going to get into this any diff, let me explain to you what an apostate is.

A person in an unreached tribe in the Amazon or in the outback of Australia or in the jungles of Asia or wherever that has never heard of Christ is not an apostate.

[16:32] He's lost and God sends missionaries to go to those people and to tell them about the Lord, but he's not an apostate. An apostate is someone who is heard come near to an extent and then walked away for something else.

They would say something better, something greater. That's an apostate. And Jude is going to spend all his energy in this 25 verse book talking about apostates and apostasies.

Why? Why would he do that? Because apostates who knew who Jesus was or claimed to be and had considered him and then walked away, they have now infiltrated the church.

In Jude's day, the church had been infiltrated with them. Interestingly, both Jude and his brother wrote books in the New Testament that bear their names.

One being Jude, one being James. But neither one of these men identified himself as the brother of Jesus. They didn't start either one of those books saying, by the way, my brother is Jesus Christ.

[17:56] They didn't do that. Jude, in fact, refers to himself as a slave of Jesus Christ in Jude chapter 1.

Now, your Bible says servant or bond servant, unless you have the Holman edition, which gets it right. It's the word *doulos*. It is slave. And we're going to be talking about that in the near future to some extent.

Very, very important concept. So why wouldn't Jude, and for that matter James, identify themselves as brothers to the Lord Jesus Christ?

If these men had written their respective books, and then gone to New York City, to Madison Avenue, and some of you young people here, probably like what, Georgia, probably don't know what Madison Avenue is.

That's where all the advertisers have offices. All of them. And they would have shown up, they'd gone to Madison Avenue and said, hey, we've written these books, will you help us market them?

[19:05] And Madison Avenue would have said, man, you guys are the brothers to Jesus? Well, yeah, but we don't mention it. Well, you've got to mention it. We're going to have a massive advertising campaign to announce that fact.

We're going to have billboards everywhere. It's going to be all over YouTube, all over the internet, all over TV. These are the brothers of Jesus. You've got to get this book.

And we're going to bump up the price. I mean, this is how Madison Avenue would have done that. Every theologian I studied in this introductory lesson are in agreement on this point where they do not self-identify as a brother of Jesus that Jude and James, although we're not studying James, Jude is here exercising the very greatest in humility in not identifying himself as the Lord's brother. A great act of humility. Both Jude and James grew up in the home of Joseph and Mary. Jesus was their older brother.

He's at their side. They played together. They skinned their knees together. My wife brags off the fact that we raised two boys.

[20:31] She knows how that is. Well, three. If you throw me in. They did stuff together. We tend to think that when Jesus walked around with a halo and he was a boy.

He was a man. They did the things boys did when they grew up, except they noticed their older brother, one thing about him, he didn't commit any sin.

And I'm sure they did. I'm sure they did. Jude, like his siblings, did not believe the Lord's claims that he was the Messiah.

when Jesus turned 30 and began his public ministry, Jude rejected the very idea that he was the Messiah.

All his brothers and sisters rejected that. None of them. That happened only after the resurrection.

There can be no doubt that Jude's original unbelief deeply humbled him.

[21:37] he was probably at the point of embarrassment that neither, not even his own brother believed him to be the Messiah. One can only imagine the awe he must have had when the Holy Spirit saved him and gave him spiritual eyes with which to see the truth concerning his brother Jesus.

can you imagine the light bulb coming on in that salvation experience? The boy he grew up with? The boy he played with?

The boy he sat down at table and ate? This is the incarnate son of God. His brother was the savior savior and died for Jude's sin of unbelief.

The same brother, Jesus, rose triumphantly from the dead on the third day following his crucifixion. And I have no doubt that Jude was one of the believers that gathered after 40 days of ministering on earth following the resurrection and watched his brother Jesus ascend into the sky and return to heaven.

And Jude was there when the angels came and said, why are you looking at that? Guys, he's going to come back the same way. He was taken up in a cloud, he's coming back in a cloud. I find myself up there in the farm looking toward the east to see if the cloud has appeared.

[23:23] I heard a guy the other day said, you know, people are all saying the world's really messed up. No, the world's just really getting ready to be this creator. That's what the world's happening to the world.

The world doesn't know that. Once saved, Jude would never and indeed could never view Jesus as he once had.

I mean, I just don't think you went to family reunions where Jesus said, remember when we played softball when we were in the fifth grade and you hit a home run?

I don't think that happened. It changed his whole perspective of Jesus and his relationship to him. he wasn't just a brother to Jesus, which he doesn't even want to mention to draw attention to himself.

He was a slave to Jesus. We're going to be talking about that in a future lesson. So in writing this letter, he did not use his family relationship to Jesus, which would have gained him significant recognition.

[24 : 32] Jude and James did not draw attention to themselves, but to the master. They wanted the Lord Jesus to be the focus. They wanted and didn't deserve any special privilege and they understood that.

We know very little about the man named Jude, other than what I've already told you. It is believed that following the ascension of Christ, that Jude had an itinerant ministry as an evangelist. the church historian Eusebius wrote in his work Ecclesiastical History that the grandsons of Jude were taken into custody and hauled before the Roman emperor Domitian because they were identified as being in the Davidic royal line.

And the Roman emperors understood what that meant. The possibility of a Messiah would come from the line of David. When the Roman emperor discovered these guys are just simple farmers, he dismissed them with some disdain, said these guys are no threat to the Roman empire.

And other than that, secular history and tradition are largely silent concerning Jude. A couple more points I want to make.

[25 : 55] First of all, why did Jude pen this letter? And we're going to talk about that at some length, just not tonight. We will cover that in a future lesson.

But the fact is it didn't start out that way. Not at all. Jude sat down to write a very positive letter explaining the greatness of our common salvation in Christ Jesus.

Jesus. And the more he wrote, the more he watered up the paper and threw it in the trash can. And he filled up trash cans. And he couldn't get finally figured out. The Holy Spirit doesn't want me writing about this.

So he did not. I mean, I'd love to have seen the notes even though he threw them away. But he wanted to write a letter about our beautiful common salvation in Christ.

And why wouldn't he? His brother was the Savior of the world. His brother's where salvation comes from. Of course he wants to write about salvation.

[27 : 06] This direction of writing a letter on salvation changed when Jude learned that the very congregations who would receive this letter concerning salvation had been infiltrated by false teachers who wanted to destroy the understanding of salvation that had been handed down by the Lord Jesus.

They were ripping it up. These false teachers plagued the church toward the end of the first century and they plague the church today particularly in the West.

Western Europe to include the British commonwealths, include Scotland, Diane's ancestral home and part of mine.

They just have gone black. The lights have gone out. We've been to Scotland where giant cathedrals are for sale or have been turned into pubs.

It's very disappointing. And we'll be discussing that truth in much more detail as we work through this great epistle. Another point that I want to make here as we embark on this study.

[28 : 37] Scholars have for centuries and even millennia borne witness to the striking parallels between 2 Peter and Jude.

Remember, Peter wrote two letters, called them 1 and 2 Peter. 2 Peter and Jude are closely related. of Jude's 25 verses, some 19 verses are very similar to the verses found in Peter's second letter.

This is what Peter prophesied concerning false teachers. I'm reading from 2 Peter chapter 2 verses 1 and 2. But false prophets also arose among the people just as there will be false teachers among you who will secretly bring in destructive heresies even denying the master who bought them bringing upon themselves swift destruction.

And many will follow their sensuality and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And then in 2 Peter chapter 3 verse 3 knowing this first of all that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing following their own sinful desires.

Unless there be any confusion on when the last days begin John in one of his epistles said these are the last days. We've been in the last days for 2,000 years and they're getting more and more last every time the clock ticks.

[30:24] I think that's good English. Now to this day some scholars are divided over which epistle came first who borrowed from whom.

Did Peter borrow from Jude? Did Jude borrow from Peter? Personally I believe that 2 Peter came first and I think I have some sound reasoning.

You don't have to believe that way but if you want to be right you will. When Peter wrote his second epistle he predicted that false teachers would be infiltrating the church in the future.

That was the gist of Peter's message. When Jude wrote his epistle he said they're here.

So you see the timeline? Peter said they're coming Jude said they're here. They've arrived. They've arrived. The infiltration had occurred.

[31:31] I believe Jude fulfilled what Peter prophesied. Now interestingly when Peter talks about the character of false teachers he uses the present tense.

When he talks about the coming of false teachers he uses the future tense. I think that again lends support to my belief there. Now we're going to be talking much more about that in the book of Jude. I close with this sad note. Paul gave a blueprint for the church in the epistles. Peter comes along he warns that scoffers and false teachers are going to come and infect the church.

Jude writes and he says they're here just like Peter prophesied they have arrived. And then we see John in the book of Revelation chapters 2 and 3 showing us how churches were being destroyed in his day because of false teachers and scoffers.

Of the seven churches in Revelation five were destroyed or are no longer effective. No longer effective. And I've been to one of them that's still there in Smyrna.

[33:07] The church in Smyrna is called Ismir nowadays. That's the Arab name but it's Smyrna. Churches are still being destroyed in our day as well as our whole denominations.

And I would say they're being destroyed in our country at a rate that is unparalleled in history. I heard a guy this week on radio.

It was Christian radio and they were dubbing in what he was saying to refute what he was saying. But he's a minister and I put that in quotation marks. And he told his church and they have this recorded we have to take the next step in human evolution.

And someone asked him a question. He said he explained it and I don't even want to get into that but someone said would that necessitate abandoning your belief in Christ Christ as the God creator and Messiah and savior and he said yes it would.

For us to grow and to evolve we have to abandon Jesus. I would say he's an apostate. I think he meets the criteria. Churches are still being destroyed.

[34:22] False teachers fill pulpits across America and sit in pews. we have to be on guard. That's the warning of Jude.

We have to be on guard lest we fall under their sway. I read a statistic several years ago that 265 southern Baptists leave the denomination every day for a cult.

Every day. Jude's message is going to help us. we're going to look at apostasy. We're going to look at false teachers and we're going to look at true teachers and true beliefs.

So it's going to be fun for us to go through this book together. Let's close with a word of prayer. And Father we thank you for your glory.

Even the heavens declare your glory. we thank you Lord that you did not leave us as orphans. You sent another the Holy Spirit himself.

[35:34] The Holy Spirit the great author of the Bible and preserver of the Bible. And we thank you Lord that you did raise up men both Old and New Testament and that this book is still true truth.

and we thank you Lord that we can worship you both in the church and in our private time and that we can look up because our redemption draweth nigh.

We look forward to that day as well. Bring us back Sunday Lord that we may worship you in spirit and truth. Be with all those mentioned this evening in the prayer request and those that weren't mentioned.

We pray in Jesus name. Amen. Amen.