

LETTER OF JUDE

The Letter of Jude warns against false teachers who have intruded into the community. However, the letter identifies neither the specific teachings nor the location of such intruders, so this must have been a general warning to Church members about divergent viewpoints in the Christian community.

Scholars hold that the author was not the apostle Jude, but an anonymous writer attributing the letter to Jude, the brother of James, who was a leader of the Church in Jerusalem, and to whom the Letter of James was attributed. Elements in the letter indicate that it was post-Apostolic in time and the fact that the Second Letter of Peter repeats its central content argues for a composition date in the 90s A.D.

The letter warns that even after being saved, one can lapse into heresy – and the consequences can be severe. It gives several examples from Scripture and even includes two from apocryphal writings, in verses 9 (Assumption of Moses) and 14-15 (Book of Enoch). It follows with an exhortation to remain faithful to the Apostolic traditions received and await the mercy of Christ that leads to eternal life. It concludes with an extensive and noble doxology.

Outline (with selected verses)

1-2 – Greeting

3-4 – Occasion of the Letter

5-16 – Warnings of God's judgments against heretics, including Scriptural examples

17-23 – Exhortation to fidelity and to mercifully rescue those who stray

*Keep yourselves in the love of God
and wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ
that leads to eternal life. (21)*

24-25 – Praise to God our savior (doxology)

*To the one who is able to keep you from stumbling
and present you unblemished and exultant, in the presence of his glory,
to the only God, our savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord
be glory, majesty, power, and authority
from ages past, now, and for ages to come. Amen. (24-25)*