

CHAPTER 6

JAMES AND JUDE

These men were not apostles, but were brothers (actually, half brothers) of Jesus, and brothers of each other (Matt 13:55 = Mark 6:3; Jude 1). They both were concerned with the Jerusalem church, especially after it was scattered from the city because of persecutions (cf. Acts 12:17). The letters warn the Christians from forsaking their profession, either in doctrine or in life.

James

Author of James

“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (Jas 1:1)

- Not either of the two apostles named James (no claim to apostleship):
 - James son of Zebedee killed very early by Herod Agrippa I (A.D. 44; Acts 12:2)
 - James son of Alphaeus (“James the Less”) not suggested
- James the Lord’s brother (Matt 13:55 = Mark 6:3; Gal 1:19)
- Short biography:
 - At first an unbeliever (John 7:5)
 - After his resurrection Jesus appeared to him (1 Cor 15:7)
 - Was with disciples at Pentecost (Acts 1:14)
 - Visited by Paul after Paul’s conversion (Gal 1:18-19)
 - Leader of Christians in Jerusalem after A.D. 44 (Acts 12:17-18)
 - Presided over Jerusalem Council in A.D. 49 (Acts 15:13, 19; cf. Gal 2:9)
 - Continuing leader in Jerusalem (Gal 2:12)
 - Received Paul’s offering from the Gentile churches, and advised him to take part in a temple ceremony (Acts 21:17-25)
 - Killed by Jews in A.D. 62-63 (Josephus *Antiquities* 20:9:1)

Date of James

Probably the first NT book, ca. A.D. 45-48

- Synagogue still used by Christians (Jas 2:2)
- Doctrine and emphasis prior to Jerusalem Council of A.D. 49
- Probably after apostles scattered from Jerusalem in A.D. 44

Content of James

Directed to Christian Jews of the Dispersion

1. Genuine faith shown by works (Jas 1-2)
2. The tongue (Jas 3)
3. Peril of Worldliness (Jas 4-5)

Points of Interest in James

- Most Jewish book in the NT; Christ mentioned only twice (1:1; 2:1)
- Many allusions to Christ's teachings and figures of speech (1:2; 2:5; 3:12; 4:6; 5:1, 12)
- Proverbs and nature figures often used (1:6, 8, 10-11, 20; 3:1ff; 4:4, 7)
- Anti-gossip chapter (ch. 3)
- Prayer of faith for the sick (5:14-15)
- Elijah's effective prayer (5:17-18)

Jude

Author of Jude

“Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James” (Jude 1)

- Jude the brother of Jesus and James (Matt 13:55 = Mark 6:3; named third and fourth, thus younger)
- Not an original apostle (Jude 17)
- Like James, not a believer at first, but converted by time of Pentecost (John 7:5; Acts 1:14)
- Probably married and a missionary (1 Cor 9:5)

Destination of Jude

- Addressed to Christians in general (Jude 1)
- Probably like James, an emphasis to Jewish believers scattered around Jerusalem

Date of Jude

Judging by its contents, this letter was written when the believers were being threatened by false teachers, who taught various heretical ideas, and who approved of immoral conduct. These attacks came very early in the church's history.

Since Jude 4-16 is parallel to 2 Pet 2:1 – 3:3, there may be a relation between them. It appears that Peter used Jude, Jude used Peter, or they both used a third source. The most convincing theory is that Peter used Jude, thus placing Jude early in the apostolic period.

Yet, because of Jude's being younger than James, and the more developed attack against the church, it seems dated after James.

Suggested date: 50s

Content of Jude

1. Warning against apostate leaders (Jude 1-19)
2. Christian duty (Jude 20-25)

Points of interest in Jude

- Motto of American Council of Christian Churches (Jude 3)
- The good group: "dear friends, beloved" (Jude 3, 17, 20)
- The bad group: "certain men, these men, these" (Jude 4, 8, 10, 12, 16, 19)
- References to Pseudepigraphical literature (esp. Jude 14-15 and the book of Enoch; cf. Paul in Acts 17:28 and Titus 1:12-13)
- Bad examples of Cain, Balaam, Korah (Jude 11)
- Famous doxology (Jude 24-25)