

Text: Jude 1-25

I have a commentary in my library on Jude by S. Maxwell Coder. He titles it *Jude: The Acts of the Apostates*.

He opens,

The beginning of the Age of the Church is described in the Acts of the Apostles. The end of the Church Age is set forth in the Epistle of Jude, which might well be called the Acts of the Apostates.¹

The book of Jude is one of the most neglected books of the NT, partly due to brevity, but also due to message. The word of judgement isn't popular.

“We can also say that the message of judgment is especially relevant to people today, for our churches are prone to sentimentality, suffer from moral breakdown, and too often fail to pronounce a definitive word of judgment because of an inadequate definition of love. Jude's letter reminds us that errant teaching and dissolute living have dire consequences. Hence, we should not relegate his words to a crabby temperament that threatens with judgment those he dislikes but as a warning to beloved believers (vv. 3, 17) to escape a deadly peril. Jude was written so that believers would contend for the faith that was transmitted to them (v. 3) and so that they would not abandon God's love at a crucial time in the life of their church. Such a message must still be proclaimed today, for moral degradation is the pathway to destruction.”²

I. Author: Jude, the brother of James (and half-brother of Jesus)

Writing between ad 67-80, after Peter, probably using Peter as a source.

II. Message:

Coder calls it “the vestibule to Revelation.”³

The doctrine of Apostasy

Jesus: Lk 18.8

¹ S. Maxwell Coder, *Jude: Acts of the Apostates*, Everyman's Bible Commentary (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1958), 3.

² Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, v. 37 (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 403–4.

³ Coder, *Jude: Acts of the Apostates*, 3.

Paul: 2 Thess 2.3; 1 Tim 4.1; 2 Tim 4.3

Peter: 2 Pt 2.1, 3.3

John also has a reference, but he writes after Jude: 1 Jn 2.18-19

Jude comments on “apostasy at the gate of Eden and within God’s ancient people Israel.”⁴

Coder’s observations towards an outline:

Salutation (containing threefold blessing) (1-2)

Salvation mentioned (3)

Contend for the faith (3)

Remember the OT (5)

Remember the NT (17)

Build yourselves in the faith (20)

Salvation mentioned (23)

Doxology (containing our threefold heritage) (24-25)

Following these observations, Coder gives a more detailed chiasmic outline:

Assurance for the Christian (1-2)

The believer and the faith (3)

Apostates described (4)

Apostasy in Old Testament history (5-8)

Apostasy in the supernatural realm (9-10)

An ancient trio of apostates (11)

Apostasy in the natural realm (12-13)

Apostasy in Old Testament prophecy (14-16)

Apostates described (17-19)

The believer and the faith (20-23)

Assurance for the Christian (24-25)

“Jude is not an epistle one reads for comfort or to ponder esoteric questions about theology; it is a letter of challenge. It is a letter of outrage, and we are unaccustomed to this much passion.”⁵

⁴ Coder, 4.

⁵ Steven J. Kraftchick, *Jude & 2 Peter*, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 23.

“The polemical thrust of the epistle may leave the impression that Jude was a man of stern and unbending character; yet his appeals to his readers reveal a more tender side.”⁶

Outline (based on Constable, but modified)

- I. Salutation (1–2)
- II. The purpose of this epistle (3–4)
- III. Warnings against false teachers (5–16)
 - A. Historical failures (5–7)
 1. The example of certain Israelites (5)
 2. The example of certain angels (6)
 3. The example of certain pagans (7)
 - B. Present failures (8–16)
 1. The nature of the error (8–9)
 2. The seriousness of the error (10–13)
 3. The consequences of the error (14–16)
- IV. Exhortation to the faithful (17–23)
 - A. The reminder to “be mindful” (see 2 Pt 3.1-3) (17–19)
 - B. The positive ministry of the readers (20–23)
- V. Concluding Doxology (24–25)

⁶ D. Edmond Hiebert, *Second Peter and Jude: An Expository Commentary* (Greenville, S.C: Bob Jones University Press, 1989), 195.