

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 432

The Epistle of Jude, Part 1

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Teacher: Dr. Michael S. Heiser (MH)

Host: Trey Stricklin (TS)

Episode Summary

The letter of Jude is one of the shortest books in the Bible. Its content, however, is dense, offering a variety of fascinating topics for study. In this episode of the podcast we embark on a series book study of the epistle of Jude.

Transcript

TS: Hey, Mike! Well, we have something new here: a sponsorship with probably our favorite software. According to a recent survey, 30% of evangelical churchgoers want more in-depth teaching like we do here at the Naked Bible Podcast. And if you want to go deeper, then there's nothing better that we trust than Logos. It's THE Bible study platform.

MH: Yeah, well, that's true. I mean, Logos... Having worked there a long time, I know Logos uses powerful technology with Biblical resources. We can access Bibles and search tools, commentaries, seminary level courses now with Mobile Ed, and even audiobooks right on your phone, tablet, or desktop.

TS: Yeah and they have over 200,000 digital books. It's crazy. I mean, the power, the technology, the search, and all the cross references. I honestly don't know how you could go to the depth that you can get studying the Bible if you don't use Logos software.

MH: Well, I think that's the point. You can't. There's no other platform like it. I can remember when I worked there when we crossed 100,000 resources, but now it's doubled since I've even been there. The difference is that Logos editions of books have been turbo-charged with powerful data that connect them with the rest of your library. So everything in the library is completely interconnected. This is not like an e-book or a Kindle book or a pdf or anything like that. It's so far beyond that that people don't really realize it until they've actually gotten into it. So whether you're comparing Bible translations or tackling tough topics, studying deep theological issues, Logos is going to have you covered no matter what. Then all that is before you even get to original language resources. One of the crucial tools in Logos are the reverse interlinears, where you don't even have to

know Greek and Hebrew to run searches in Greek and Hebrew to tap into the original languages. Logos will even help you pronounce the words.

TS: Yeah, that's great. I mean, if you're preparing a sermon or a Bible study, I don't know how you *don't* use Logos to get your study done.

MH: Yeah, I use it. Literally, I use it *every day*. I use it hours every day. No exaggeration. I use Logos every day. I'm very familiar with it and people know that and there's just nothing like it on the planet.

TS: I mean, if you're serious about Bible study, there's no other software tool out there that will get you deeper than Logos.

MH: Yeah, and I'm asked all the time in e-mail about Bible study tools and you know, having been on the podcast for all these years, how many times have you heard me say you need to invest in resources? If you're serious about Bible study, you must invest in resources and tools, and this is it. I get asked all the time this question and my answer is always the same. You need to get Logos. And people sometimes balk at the affordability question because Logos packages... There is so much in them and they can be expensive, but now Logos is more than affordable. You can get started for just \$49 and that is always what I tell people. Get into the platform low and then spend extra money on the books and resources that you want. And now is the perfect time to do that, just \$49.

TS: Yes, and if you want to support the Naked Bible Podcast and what we do here, please go get the Logos software now at logos.com/nakedbible. For \$49, get started. And like Mike said, you can build up your library over time, but there is no better time than now to support our show and Logos by going to logos.com/nakedbible. For \$49 you can get started right now, Mike. So we encourage all of our listeners go do it, and you'll be thankful that you did.

MH: Yeah, absolutely.

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 432: The Epistle of Jude, Part 1. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! How are you doing?

5:00 **MH:** Oh, pretty good, can't complain, though I might want to.

TS: Anything specific or...

MH: No, no, just the same old, same old.

TS: Yeah.

MH: Which is good. No news is good news.

TS: Yeah, yeah, that's good. Well, we decided to do another book study, Mike. We've talked about Jude for a while. It's been on some votes. We really did not do another vote, just because we wanted to do Jude, since there is only one chapter. And I think it's going to take three or four episodes to cover Jude.

MH: Yeah.

TS: So we thought it's an easy, quick Bible study. So you made the executive decision to do it, so yeah.

MH: Yeah, lots of good stuff in it.

TS: We're going to do it.

MH: Yeah, yeah, there's a lot of good stuff in it. And for today, this is going to be our standard introductory episode. For those who may not have listened to book studies before, we're not going to do verse-by-verse. It's not a commentary, but in a letter this short it might seem like it in places. We'll get close to that, but we're not writing out a commentary. It's just sort of going through the book and whatever I find interesting or think the audience might find interesting, we'll camp on those things. So as we typically do in these introductory episodes, we'll hit first some introductory issues, which is going to be for the most part this episode, but we'll get as far as the first three verses today and then just resume as we keep going through the book. Again, it's not long, but there's a lot of stuff in it to talk about.

So with that in mind, the first general thing that we should observe that might actually come in handy later (and I'll give you a heads up as to when that might be). Structurally, Jude is a typical first-century letter. There are lots of non-canonical examples of ancient letters that have been recovered from Jude's time period and the time period of the New Testament. It has a three-part structure. There's an opening greeting and, of course, we get that in the first couple verses. Then there's the main body of the content, and in Jude's case that is verses 3-23. Then there's a closing salutation or benediction—the last 2 verses, verses 24 and 25. So Jude conforms rather nicely to what you would think of as a typical letter between the person writing it and a specific audience, as you get hundreds and hundreds of examples from the ancient world. And again, I think that might come in handy a little bit later when we talk about something specific, but I'll give everybody a heads-up when we get to that point.

As far as the author goes, the name Jude, believe it or not (this is kind of a trivia question)... The name itself occurs 45 times in the New Testament. There are lots of Judes or Judas'. It's the same name in the Greek. And I'm going to quote here from Herb Bateman. Herb's a friend of mine, but he has a very lengthy commentary on the book of Jude in Lexham Press' *Evangelical Exegetical Commentary Series*. It's real nice and I recommend it. Herb writes this. He says:

The New Testament refers to many men who bore the name Jude.

In Greek, it's *Ioudas*.

There is the patriarch Judah, son of Jacob and Leah...

The Old Testament figure that gets mentioned in the New Testament, obviously, like in Matthew 1.

...as well as Judah, son of Simeon and father of Joseph.

Luke 3:30 mentioned the genealogies of Jesus, so those are some of the more obvious ones. Herb continues:

Obviously, neither of these two Old Testament figures wrote the letter. There is also the revolutionary Judas the Galilean (Acts 5:37), and the infamous disciple of Jesus, Judas of Iscariot.

And he's mentioned, of course, a lot.

These two seem unlikely candidates because both died prior to Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. There is Jude son of James and disciple of Jesus (Luke 6:16, John 14:22, and Acts 1:3) and Jude the brother of James (Jude 1:1) [MH: the letter that we're discussing], who was also the half-brother of Jesus.

So Jude, the brother of James, in Jude 1:1 is... Again, Herb takes it and I'm going to take it as the half-brother of Jesus. We will get to why in a moment.

Mark in Mark 6:3 says this:

³Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?"

So again, we notice that Jesus has brothers and sisters, and this Jude figure is one of them. Herb writes:

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Finally, there is Judas of Damascus, with whom Saul of Tarsus resided after his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:11), and Judas also called Barsabbas, the Jerusalemite prophet (Acts 15:22, 27, 32). Of these latter four options, three have been suggested as possible candidates for authorship: Judas son of James, Judas Barsabbas, and Judas, the blood brother of James.

And again, the half-brother of Jesus. So let's talk a little bit about those three. Judas the son of James... It used to be (prior to the 19th century anyway) that this Jude was considered the author of the book. So if you have a really old commentary, maybe in public domain, they might take this position. And this is based on the assumption that this disciple's description (referred to as *loudas lakobou* in Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13)... It's based on the assumption that this phrase literally should be translated "Judas, brother of James," even though it never says that. *loudas lakobou* literally is "Judas of James," but some people back in the day believe that it should be translated, "Judas, brother of James" on analogy to Jude 1. In other words, they used Jude 1 to interpret Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13. But if you go to Jude verse 1, it actually has a different wording. It's *loudas adelphos de lokobou*—Judas brother of James. So the two are not worded the same way, but again, back in the day, the assumption was that the *loudas lakobou*, "Judas of James" literally, should be interpreted as the brother of James because of Jude 1. And again, scholars nowadays are saying well, that's kind of an odd way to look at things because, again, the wording is not the same.

So we have two different contexts here and two different things that are said. So the propensity now is to keep them separate. *loudas lakobou* in Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13 should be translated simply as Jude, son of James, Jude who comes from James, or Jude of James. So Jude, son of James is how we should be thinking in Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13 of that disciple. And it's not the same as the figure in Jude 1. Again, really what drives this bus (other than the difference in wording) is that there is nothing in the gospels or Acts that connects Jude (*loudas*) and Jacob (*lakobou*) as brothers, or anything but father and son. There is nothing that connects them as brothers. So we shouldn't assume that this disciple back in Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13 is the brother just because Jude has that other wording. Jude 1 is talking about somebody different.

The second option, Judas Barsabbas... It had some support in less recent years, but basically there is no positive external support for this identification. There were no Early Church Fathers or Patristic Fathers, for instance, that thought that Judas Barsabbas was a good authorial candidate, unlike option number 3, which is Judas, the blood brother of James (and, by extension, the half-brother of Jesus). This is where the majority of scholars are today, and you can read about this Jude outside Jude 1 in Mark 6:3 and Matthew 13:55. So let me just read Mark 6:3.

³ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas [MH: there's the Jude] and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?"

Again, they took offense at him. So you have the mention of this literal blood brother of James who, by extension, would be the half-brother of Jesus. Now I'm going to quote Herb Bateman again in his commentary. He says:

This third view has overwhelming commentator support. To begin with, Jude, the brother of James, provides a straightforward testimony whereby he identifies himself both as the author of the letter, as well as the brother of James (Jude 1). Furthermore, as Bauckham states, "The preservation of all four names of the brothers of Jesus in Matthew and Mark indicates that all four brothers were well-known figures in the Early Church."

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Finally, there are several church fathers who explicitly name Jude the brother of James as the author of the letter.

I'll just end the Bateman quote there, but the four church fathers that he brings up in his discussion (and, again, he has a pretty lengthy discussion of this) are Clement of Alexandria (and his dates are, just call it 150 AD into the 250s), Origen (another church father, 185 to 254 AD), Jerome (347 to 419 AD), and Tertullian (back in 155 to 220 AD). So you have three church fathers that are living in the second century (in the 100s) who assign the book to this Jude, the blood brother of James (and then the half-brother of Jesus), and we're going to go with that. There's no reason to think that that is aberrant or not tenable.

Provenance and date... Can you really discern a provenance (the occasion of the letter) based on verses 1 and 2? We might as well read verses 1 and 2 as we jump in here. The letter says:

**¹ Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James,
To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ:
² May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.**

That's the opening and then he launches right into the letter where he says in verse 3:

³ Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

So right there we learn that the author had one letter in mind, but then circumstances dictate that he is going to be essentially writing a letter about false

teachers. But that's about all we know for sure. So how could we assume... How can we really get a secure provenance from that? And the answer is, we can't. The assumption, based on the identity of the author, is that he lived in Judea. Okay, that's probably a reasonable assumption if, of course, we've identified the author correctly. Bateman, again, observes this:

After the death and resurrection of Jesus, the siblings of Jesus appear to be with Jesus' disciples before Pentecost (Acts 1:14), and at least one brother, James, saw the resurrected Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:7). Without dispute, James was a prominent leader in Jerusalem until his murder in AD 62 (Acts 15:13, Galatians 2:12, Josephus, *Antiquities* 20, lines 200-204).

Again, it's a pretty straightforward comment to make. The siblings of Jesus appear to be with the rest of the disciples and so they would be from Judea. And once this persecution and martyrdom and the leadership vacuum have created the occasion for the letter... Again, it's impossible to know for sure. We have no idea. Did Jude emerge as a leader in Jerusalem? Again, we can't be sure of that either. We kind of think so because he was the half-brother of Jesus and some ancient sources suggest it. Many commentators think he was at least an elder in the Jerusalem church, but he may have traveled as well. He may have been someone who does itinerant ministry. We just don't know. So as another example of the guessing that goes on, I'm going to quote from a different commentary here. This is Jerome Neyrey (*Anchor Yale Bible Commentary*). And Professor Neyrey writes:

Scholars have tended to argue that Jude was written in either Palestine/Syria or Alexandria. J.J. Gunther revived the Alexandrian hypothesis...

Then he quotes from an article from 1984 which isn't real recent, but in terms of scholarship and the way that progresses, that's not too long ago. Gunther urged a few things:

1. Jude's strong Jewish strain and its knowledge of *1 Enoch* and the *Testament of Moses* are satisfied in Alexandria, as well as his fine Hellenistic style.

Let me just stop there. So some people favor an Alexandrian authorship because Jude is going to dip into the book of Enoch. Well, it's not like Enoch was unknown in Palestine—Syria/Palestine, Israel, or Judea. We know that from the Dead Sea Scrolls. So that's not really a great argument. But again, this is how the Alexandrian hypothesis is argued. Second thought from Gunther that Neyrey quotes is:

2. Miscellaneous items such as homiletic references, rocks in a harbor, and scant rain, sound like Alexandria and they accord with Alexandria...J.N.D.

20:00

Kelly (*The Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, 233-34) and more recently R. Bauckham (*Jude and the Relatives of Jesus*) have urged a Palestinian origin. Some evidence is extrinsic, namely, that James, Jude, and the relatives of Jesus were popular figures in that part of the Mediterranean. Other evidence points to a peshro-type exegesis practiced by Jude, which suggests close ties with Palestine. As persuasive as this argument is, it is by no means clear or subtle that Jude contains such a pattern of exegesis as Bauckham describes.

That's the end of the Neyrey quote. I'm going to agree with him there. It's not clear to me at all that Jude is using a peshro technique, but that doesn't mean it wasn't written in Judea or Palestine either. For those of you who might wonder what "peshro" is, this is common in the Dead Sea Scrolls, where in commentaries on Biblical books, the writer of a Dead Sea Scroll will quote something from some book of the Old Testament and then include the word "peshro," which means "its meaning." So it will be going "blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, quote, quote, quote, peshro (here's the interpretation)," and then he'll launch into an interpretation, like you would expect a commentary to do. Well, Jude doesn't really do that. I mean, that's not really a style that he copies. So I'm not sure where Bauckham is coming from here, but I would agree with Neyrey that I don't see that clearly. So I don't think that's a good argument either.

So this is the kind of guess work that goes on. "This sounds Alexandrian" or "This sounds like it's Judean." Again, that's all you've got. So it's really impossible to tell what exactly gave rise to the letter, what its occasion was, and where its provenance is or where it was written. And without a sure provenance, the date question suffers as to when it was written. Now if the letter was written by the half-brother of Jesus, though, you would think the date between 50 and 70 AD would be in view, and 70 AD being a cutoff point because there's no reference to the temple catastrophe of 70 AD. So you would think if that was something that had just recently happened that the letter would mention it, but it doesn't. It's very Jewish in orientation. It would be a natural thing to mention, but you don't get that. So again, scholars are typically going to put it at 50, 60, sometime before 70, but again, it's guesswork. Complicating this, scholars are all over the place in terms of dating. If you had maybe ten fairly recent commentaries on the book of Jude of the academic persuasion (academic works, critical scholarly commentaries), I don't know that you'd get ten different dates, but you'd probably get four or five. Because those who wouldn't ascribe authorship to a half-brother of Jesus, they're going to ascribe the authorship to somebody else, and many of them are going to just consider the book to be pseudepigrapha. So scholars are all over the place in terms of dating because of arguments about pseudonymity—the pseudonymity of the book. And again, for those of you for whom this might be an unfamiliar term, pseudonymity was the practice of someone writing a religious book and then basically naming the book after a character in the book or some famous character to draw a readership. So in theory you could have somebody

write this book that is called Jude, but the writer's name wasn't Jude and the writer just gave it that name because he is sort of putting himself in Jude's shoes or Jude is part of the picture he wants to portray. This is what we get with 1 Enoch. This is why 1 Enoch is a pseudepigraphal book. Enoch didn't write the book. The oldest textual testimony we have to the book of Enoch is around the third-century B.C., which is long, long, long (like *really* long) after the biblical Enoch would've lived. But the book is about Enoch, so that's where it gets its name. Whoever wrote it, that's why they named it that—because it's about the visions of Enoch and what happened to him when he was taken and the whole episode before the flood of the Watchers and all this kind of stuff. That's what it's about.

So there were a lot of scholars that think that Jude belongs in this group, but it wasn't really written by any of the Judes that are mentioned in the New Testament. It was written by somebody else and then just given the name. So since some commentators today consider Jude pseudepigraphic, that's going to affect what date they offer.

25:00

We should probably talk a little bit about this whole issue (Jude and pseudonymity) because it does come up, and those of you who might want to study Jude later and might be using a commentary, I don't want you to get blindsided by this part of the introductory material because this is actually a common discussion with the book. One of the main reasons is that Jude is listed among the disputed writings of the canon. You know, which New Testament books should we consider canonical? Jude is listed among the disputed writings by Eusebius. Eusebius was a famous Early Church writer who lived from 260 or 265 (as his birthdate isn't quite conclusively known) until 339 AD. So he's writing about the whole discussion of which New Testament books to include alongside the Old Testament books in the canon. And Jude is one that gets on the suspicious list. And you ask, "Well why?" The main reason is that Jude gets on the "we don't know about this book" list is because Jude quotes from other pseudepigraphical material; namely he quotes from Enoch and he has not a direct quotation, but almost a direct quotation from a book called *The Assumption of Moses*. So Jude, the book that we have in our New Testament, dips into the pseudepigrapha twice very clearly. And we'll hit those instances when we go through the book.

So for this reason, there were those who thought, "Well, would a Biblical book really do this? Would a Biblical book, a canonical inspired book, would it quote from external material like this?" Now that might sound goofy because, again, if you're no stranger to this podcast, the answer is, well, of course they could. Paul does it. Paul does it half a dozen different times. The Old Testament does it. The Old Testament quotes from the Baal cycle, for goodness sake, and the Wisdom of Amenemope in Proverbs, and it alludes to the Ugaritic material in other places, and Mesopotamian material, like in the flood stories. I mean, this happens a lot in

the Old Testament. So why should it disqualify anything? Why should it create a question mark for New Testament books? And my response to that is: it shouldn't. They're just using external material that their readers would have been familiar with to make something clear. It's all that is going on. But again, there are some people back in the day, especially, and even today that think that this is a reason for arguing for the book's being pseudonymous in nature.

So I am going to go to Gene Green's commentary. This is part of the *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament Series*. This is really a good commentary as well. By the way, I know we've been sponsored recently by Logos Bible Software, but this is why you should have it. This is why you should have instant access to these commentaries and these sources like Eusebius or Josephus or whatever. When they're referenced in commentaries, you can go look them up just with a click. So it's great to have. But I'm going to quote from Green's commentary, which is another one I like on Jude. And he writes this:

Woven into the fabric of Jude are a number of references taken from Jewish literature that did not become part of the Jewish or Christian canon. In verse 6, Jude refers to an angelic fall which was an interpretive tradition based on Genesis 6:1-4 and elaborated extensively in 1 Enoch 6-12 among other Jewish texts. In verse 9, Jude brings into his discussion the dispute over the body of Moses between Michael, the archangel, and the devil. This story is not found in the Old Testament, but was drawn from a book known as *The Assumption or Testament of Moses*. The most striking use of the extra biblical literature appears in verses 14 and 15 where Jude quotes 1 Enoch 1:9.

Here's the point: that Jude knows, echoes, and even quotes this literature is beyond dispute. He does. He knows it well and, therefore, he assumes his audience knows it well, and he quotes from it. Back to Green:

The question that all readers of this epistle must ponder is why he makes use of these texts that were not fully received into canon of scripture.

Why would he do it? And again, to me, this is an odd question, given the state of the Old Testament on matters like this where it's plain if you know the Ugaritic material and you know some of the Mesopotamian material. You're going to know when the Old Testament dips into this stuff. And if you're using commentaries in Bible study, a good commentary is going to tell you this. So it happens with some frequency, either quotation or allusion. Now in the past, this was reason for some scholars to think that Jude was pseudonymous. Jude's canonical status was put into question. But there were other ways of looking at it. You could go either direction. Some said Jude's canonical status given the other books' canonical status... And I've met a number of people that think that 1 Enoch should be in the canon because Jude quotes it. Well, that's not good reasoning. Then I guess Menander... When Paul quotes Menander, then

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Menander should be in the canon as well. People who typically say this are either fans of the book of Enoch or they don't know that all this other stuff gets quoted. We certainly don't want the Baal cycle in the Old Testament canon. Again, it's very poor reasoning, but you'll find people that say, "Well, Jude quotes pseudepigraphical stuff so that stuff should be in the canon." Then the reverse is what we've been talking about. "Well, since Jude quotes this noncanonical stuff, Jude doesn't belong in the canon." And that's equally poor reasoning. Again, that Jude was on the questionable list in Eusebius' day bears witness to this whole notion that Jude is not allowed to do this—questioning a book's authenticity because of citations of noncanonical material. Again, it makes little sense because the Old Testament does it a lot.

Let's talk a little bit about how Jude prompted others to think the pseudepigraphic content was canonical (again, citing Green's commentary). So we might as well go into this because we do have fans here on the podcast. I mean, I'm one of them. I don't think the book should be in the canon, but I enjoy the book of Enoch and my opinion is that we should read all this stuff to make us better readers of the New Testament—the books that are in the canon. When New Testament writers use this stuff (when they reference it and when they allude to it)... If we were familiar with it, we would be a more informed intelligent reader of the New Testament. It's not rocket science. It's pretty simple: become a good contextual reader.

So back to Green's summary about how this worked in the Early Church. The Early Church went the other way ("since Jude quotes from Enoch, maybe we should consider Enoch canonical"). So Green writes this:

A number of interpretive options have been explored through the centuries. One of the earliest was to invest 1 Enoch with canonical authority precisely because Jude used the book. This was the position adopted at the start of the third-century AD by Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria among others. Tertullian's take on the issue appears in apparel of *The Apparel of Women* 1.3, where he comments on the general rejection of the book.

Now this is Tertullian now.

"I am aware that the scripture of Enoch which has assigned this order of action to angels is not received by some because it is not admitted into the Jewish canon either. I suppose they did not think that having been published before the deluge [MH: again, Tertullian thinks it was written before the flood], it could safely have survived the worldwide calamity, the abolisher of all things."

Again, Green goes on:

But Tertullian counters by saying that Noah was the grandson of Enoch and could have preserved the work or even renewed it under the spirit's inspiration after it had been destroyed by the violence of the deluge.

Again, that was Tertullian's perspective. Green continues:

Tertullian likewise argues that Enoch spoke about the Lord and that whatever "pertains to us" should not be rejected by us.

So he says good things about the Messiah and we follow the Messiah so we should accept the book. That is essentially Tertullian's reasoning. Tertullian concludes:

"To these considerations is added the fact that Enoch possesses a testimony in the Apostle Jude."

So Tertullian's ultimately going to play the Jude card here. So Green continues:

Tertullian also affirms the angelic fall as presented in 1 Enoch 6-12 and referred to in Jude 6.

This is in *The Veiling of Virgins 7*; and *The Apparel of Women 1:2*.

Clement of Alexandria takes a similar line when he comments on Jude's use of the Assumption (Testament) of Moses in verse 9: Here he confirms the Assumption of Moses, (Fragments from Cassiodorus), Comments on the Epistle of Jude. [MH: That is the source text.] In the same way, he views Jude's quotation of Enoch as investing that book with authority.

Quote again from Clement:

"Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, he says, prophesied of these." In these words, he verifies the prophesy. Clement also refers to the arts that fallen angels taught the humans in *Selections from the Prophets* 53.4, where he makes use of 1 Enoch 7.1 – 8.3. Both Tertullian and Clement considered that if these books were good enough for Jude, then they were good enough for them. Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria did not stand alone in their positive assessment of these books, which did not become part of either the Jewish or Christian canons.

35:00

Nickelsburg in his commentary... Again, those of you who are familiar with my readers commentary on Enoch know that I utilize Nickelsburg's commentary a lot for that resource. Nickelsburg has a massive two-volume commentary on the book of Enoch, and it is the leading scholarly commentary on the book. It is very technical, but again, I think it can still be used by non-experts with some benefit.

Nickelsburg traces the reception history of 1 Enoch and, while noting that it was not accepted into the Hebrew canon, observes that “a careful sifting of Jewish writings from the previous centuries attests a substantial and dynamic use of the Enochic corpus.”

So lots of people were familiar with Enoch. Lots of people used it who were writing in the Second Temple period, including the New Testament. The New Testament is part of that. Back to Green:

Although the attestation for the Assumption (Testament) of Moses is not as wide as 1 Enoch, [MH: so that doesn't get as much attention], this first-century AD work was known widely enough that Jude merely had to refer to an incident in the book to make his point. He assumed that his readers were well familiar with the story. However, since this book comes from early in the first-century AD, we should not expect to find a wide witness to its contents much earlier than Jude. The story it records, however, was well known to Jude's readers and beyond.

And again, that's the story of Michael and the devil fighting over the body of Moses, which we will get to when we hit that point in this series. Green reminds us:

Jude's use of 1 Enoch is not unique among New Testament authors. The book forms the basis of Peter's account of Christ's proclamation to the Spirits (1 Peter 3:18-22).

And I am thankful he quotes Dalton here. Dalton's book on 1 Peter 3 is the best resource for that passage, and it affirms Christ's ascent into hell (into Hades, into the underworld) announcing to the Watchers basically bad news right before his resurrection. So Jude's use of 1 Enoch, again, affirms that.

And some have argued that the merger of the Son of Man terminology within the servant theology found in the New Testament finds its source in 1 Enoch.

What that means is that there are those who think that since Enoch predates the New Testament, that Enoch's use of the phrase “Son of Man” when he talks about the Messiah was the source for the New Testament, talking about Son of Man in conjunction with the Messiah. My own view is that the real source is Daniel 7 and not 1 Enoch, and then 1 Enoch is also riffing off Daniel 7 as well. But anyway, again, there is a lot in 1 Enoch about the Messiah and the Messiah as the Son of Man. So this gets Enoch points for being considered canonical in some ancient writers. So as Green goes on, it's another lengthy treatment. You wouldn't believe how long some of these commentaries could be on the book of Jude, but there's a lot of stuff in the book of Jude to talk about. But Green goes on, and he lists the Epistle of Barnabas, Papias, the Apocalypse of Peter, Gospel

of Peter, and Justin Martyr (his writings). All take this positive view of Enoch and the Testament of Moses. So they all refer positively to the story of the Watchers as well. And these are Early Church period books that were known to the readers of the day in the Early Church. They all took this high view of Enoch, just like Tertullian did and Clement and so on and so forth.

So again, it was very common for people to elevate 1 Enoch to the level of the canon just because Jude quotes it, just because you have this material in the book of Jude. Nowadays there's less of an inclination to do that. There's also less of an inclination to sort of look at Jude askance as being noncanonical and pseudepigraphic just because it quotes the material. So both of these ideas—that 1 Enoch gets baptized as canonical because Jude quotes it... That view is now sort of passé. And the other view about Jude's pseudonymity... The pseudonymity argument really is not based anymore on the fact that Jude quotes other pseudepigraphical material. Scholars typically argue it on other grounds. And again, for that argumentation for that issue, you can just consult one of the scholarly commentaries if you're really into that subject. But we're not going to get any deeper into the weeds here.

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So let's talk about, "Who were Jude's opponents?" Now he gets into this... This is the body of the letter, verses 3-23, and it's directed at false teachers. Well, who were they? The opponents that he is writing against get introduced in verses 3 and 4. The short answer is we don't really know who they are because he doesn't name them specifically and everything else is a guess. There is just no way to avoid that. So I'm going to read verses 3 and 4 again where he gets into who he is writing against and who he's writing about. Jude writes:

³ Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. ⁴ For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

That's Jude 3 and 4. And Neyrey writes of this opening part of the letter. He says:

We can only speculate what teaching or doctrines the opponents of Jude spoke to his church. Whenever Jude speaks about them, he negatively labels them in such a way as to present them as thoroughly evil and corrupting the holy church.

So Jude is very harsh. I mean, if you think verses 3 and 4 are harsh, just wait until we get to the rest of the letter. He is extraordinarily harsh. Jude, again, has his opposition operating within the wider church. So somehow Jude perceives a problem with certain teachers within this group—this community of believers—

the church (whatever specific community he is writing to). These false teachers are operating within the group, and that presents a huge problem to him, which is why Jude is going to address it.

So he has his opposition as operating within the wider church. Here are your options. Does that mean that they are (1) orthodox in their theology in some respects but not others? Are they (2) apostates who won't leave, and they linger among the believers to corrupt them deliberately? Or are they (3) totally heterodox (total heretics) and really unbelievers masquerading as followers of Jesus? With 2 and 3 there is some overlap there (the second and third options). You can make arguments for all these options, but the first one seems the weakest to me. I don't think Jude would talk about them the way that he does if they were partly orthodox in their theology in some respects, but not others. I think #2 is the most likely way to go here—that they are apostates who just aren't leaving—in some respects, just lingering to corrupt the believers intentionally. I think that is probably the best way to look at the opposition here. You get down into the later part of the book and Jews are characterizing them as devoid of the spirit. Again, that seems like what you would call an apostate or a heretic, not somebody whose theology is partly good and partly not devoid of the spirit. Again, there are just things in the letter that I think argue for #2 better than the other options. So I'm going to go with this notion that is very common among commentators—that what Jude is dealing with here are apostates within the church community who just won't leave and they're causing a lot of trouble.

So let's use Jude's opponents, therefore, as a segue to the one topic we can get into today (at least in what's left of the episode), and that is verse 3 and a little bit of verse 4 (because verse 4 builds on verse 3). But we're mostly camping on verse 3 here: the meaning of the faith once for all delivered to the saints, the holy ones—to the believers. So verse 3, what is "the faith once delivered?" And I am going to suggest to you that it needs to be defined in light of verse 4. Verse 4 said:

⁴ For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Now that's the ESV. I'm going to read that verse for you from the NET Bible. So let's just go with verses 3 and 4. Here's what the NET Bible says. Here's how it translates these two verses.

Dear friends, although I have been eager to write to you about our common salvation, I now feel compelled instead to write to encourage you to contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. ¹⁻⁴ For certain men have secretly slipped in among you—men who long ago were

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marked out for the condemnation I am about to describe—ungodly men who have turned the grace of our God into a license for evil and who deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Again, I like the language of the NET Bible a little bit more there. I think it's a little more clear. Back to Gene Green's commentary. He summarizes this in a way I think is pretty good. He says:

The false teachers had transformed the teaching on grace into an excuse for licentious or indecent behavior and, in doing that, were effectively denying the only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. The error had both a theological and moral component. Jude's Epistle is an impassioned plea for the believers to engage in battle against the incursion of the error, that is, "to contend for the faith that was once and for all handed down to the saints," (v. 3). This letter exhorts the believers facing the error to be built up and stand firm in the faith. But the troublers of the church were persuasive in their appeal and some in the church were being swayed by them. Jude, therefore, calls the church to action... The identification of the heretics is a question that has occupied commentators from ancient times. Clement of Alexandria, for example, believed that Jude spoke prophetically of the Carpocratians, a second-century gnostic sect that promoted unrestrained sexual indulgence.

That is the end of the Green quote. So he mentions here that there were some who thought that Jude was speaking prophetically of this group that would come later, a second-century gnostic sect. It's impossible to know that. And in one sense, it is unnecessary to turn Jude's words into some sort of prophecy to pin an identity on these false teachers. What can be determined with reasonable certainty are a few things. First, verse 12 in Jude suggests pretty clearly that these false teachers participated in the love feast that was associated with the Lord's Table in the Early Church. I am going to read you verse 12. And again, when we get to verse 12 we'll spend more time on this. But verse 12 says... Jude's coming up with metaphors and analogies for the false teachers. He says:

¹² These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted;

That's verse 12. So there's an allusion here to the false teachers participating in the love feast. Now again, that makes it likely that they had made professions of faith in Christ and were now apostate. But at one time they had made a profession, otherwise they wouldn't have been permitted to the Lord's Table. They wouldn't have been doing this. They wouldn't have been participating

[audio breaks up]. So 2 Peter seems to address the same groups. 2 Peter 2:1 sounds very similar to Jude's language. I'll just read you that.

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.

2 Peter 2:1 sounds very like Jude 3 and 4. So that's one thing I think we can know pretty clearly—that at one point they had made a profession of faith and were now apostate.

Secondly, I would also say that 2 Peter's wording (if you recall since I just read it: "denying the master who bought them") suggests that these false teachers had been believers at one point. Again, just the language about being bought by the Lord's blood... That kind of language in 2 Peter suggests that they had been at one point professing believers.

Thirdly, Paul's writings provide precedent that believers can fall into the error of presuming the grace of God permits licentious behavior or absence of moral restraint. And I get this from Romans 6:1. And I'll read Romans 6:1. Paul writes to the Romans:

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin, that grace may abound?

Of course, the answer is, "God forbid," of course not (Romans 6:15).

What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace?

By no means, and God forbid. Then there is similar wording in Romans 3:8. I mean, Paul has run into this problem as well. So there's no reason to posit that Jude is prophesying about a group, the Carpocratians, who are going to come later. Again, there's no reason to do that because there's ample precedent already in the New Testament for this kind of thing happening—false teachers, apostates creeping in, lingering, staying, trying to con people, even to the point of turning the gospel into something that just essentially is lawlessness. It's Antinomian. Its lawlessness and behavior. We can see that in Paul's epistles. It's not new, and that's part of how Jude describes the false teachers. I want to go back to Green here for a quote. Green writes, again, of the false teachers:

Jude portrays the heretics as being not only in error (v. 11b, 13), but also corrupt. Special attention is given to their unbridled sexuality (vv 4-8, 12, 16, 18).

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Again, there is a lot of this stuff that we will hit as we keep going. Green continues:

Jude demonstrates a deep concern for those who have been drawn in by the sexual license of these people and gives cautionary instruction to those who would help snatch them away from the error (v. 23) lest they too become entangled in the same corrupt practices.

I should cut in here and read verse 23. I'll go back to verse 22. Jude writes:

²² And have mercy on those who doubt; ²³ save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

Again, the goal here of Judas trying to get people [audio breaks up] behavior, trying to rescue people; otherwise, they're going to wind up like the apostates that he is dealing with. So again, he is writing lest the people in the church get corrupted by all this. Go back to Green here. Green writes:

The errorists (again, the false teachers) are motivated by avarice (greed, v. 11) and are characterized by prideful verbal excess as they blaspheme angels, slander, grumble, speak arrogantly, and mock (vv. 8-10, 15-16, 18). These people engage in immoral behavior without the slightest shame and act without any self-control (v. 13). They are truly ungodly (vv. 4, 15, 18).

Jude characterizes them that way.

What moves them is not the spirit (v. 19), the source of Christian virtue; instead, they are driven by nothing more than base, animal instincts.

In verse 10, there's an allusion to that.

The fourth thing I can say we can know for sure... So we're just listing out what we can know for sure here from the book as far as the identity of the false teachers. Again, just to summarize, they're most likely people who had made a profession of faith. They have become apostate. They're not leaving. They're still trying to infiltrate the church and are being fairly successful at it. And they're trying to, again, drag people into their own mode of behavior and their own false teaching.

Fourthly:

1 John's description of false teachers ("they went out from among us"), juxtaposed as it is with the letter's emphasis on Christology, provide precedent

for apostasy revolving around the denial of the deity and lordship of Christ – something to which Jude 4 seems to clearly allude.

I'm going to read you Jude 4 again.

⁴ For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Right there you have the loose living along with the denial of Christ being Lord and Master. Again, the question is, are these false teachers? Do we specifically label them as denying things like the deity of Christ? And I think you can make a good argument for that. So they're denying not only Christ's lordship over moral behavior, but they're also denying who He is as a person. It's a rejection of his deity.

So consequently, I would submit for my own sake here that this is how we ought to define "the faith once delivered" in Jude 3. It requires defining "the faith once delivered" as emphasizing both the lordship of Christ over our lives and also his deity.

Now in my view (here's why I'm spending some time on it)... In my view, this speaks to the nature of the gospel itself—believing loyalty. So they're denying the loyalty part by virtue of you can live anyway you want. And they're even denying the belief part because they're questioning the person of Christ. So I think what's really going on here is we need to define "the faith once delivered to the church" (as revolving around the gospel) as believing loyalty and the person of Christ as God come in the flesh. The flipside of this is that the verse ought not to be used to reject or disfellowship believers for any doctrinal disagreement. And I'll be honest with you here. In my Christian experience, I have seen Jude 3 whipped out to basically disfellowship or accuse of being a heretic or otherwise denigrate somebody who is genuinely a believer for disagreeing over the most arcane things—view of Genesis creation, what view of the rapture they hold, or if they hold to a rapture at all. "Well, we have to kick you out of the Church or we can't let you join because of Jude 3. We're contending for the faith and the faith is defined as the pre-tribulational rapture." Really? Again, I mean, how much more narrow can you get over matters that are genuinely disputable? The deity of Christ is not genuinely disputable in New Testament theology. Whether there is a rapture or not certainly is.

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So I'm harping on this because I don't think we can use Jude 3 to just disfellowship or deny fellowship to people on the basis of any doctrinal disagreements we might have with them. Just open the flood gates. In other words, the only people who are allowed in this church are people who agree exactly on everything. That goes too far. Again, I think it takes Jude 3 out of its

context. What he's really after, again, are people who would deny the lordship of Christ and drift off into some kind of immoral or amoral antinomian lawless behavior and who would question the person of Christ as to who he is in rejection of his deity. I think that is what Jude is after. Those are the two sides of that coin, not just disfellowshipping believers for anything and everything with the most arcane and ambiguous doctrinal beliefs that we can come up with and using Jude 3 to beat them over the head with it. So I think that's just the wrong way to go.

Another commentary here, Schreiner, summarizes my own thinking, I think, fairly well as to what the faith constitutes with a scriptural rationale, which is nice because we want where we're at here to be rooted in scripture. Schreiner writes:

The tradition believers must strive to preserve is designated as the faith. Faith in this context does not refer to trusting God, as Paul typically used the term. In this context faith refers to the traditional teaching that was to be safeguarded.

So it's not a verb; it's a noun, which is kind of obvious. Continuing with Schreiner, he writes:

Even in Paul, faith may refer to the message of the gospel.

For instance, Galatians 1:23 and I'll read that.

²³They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy."

That's a comment in Galatians 1:23, where Paul was relating about the reaction that people had to his own conversion. Ephesians 4:5:

⁵[there is] one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

Colossians 1:23:

²³if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

1 Timothy 3:9

⁹They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

Again, we could go on and on. There's a number of verses that talk about "the faith," and it revolves around the true nature of the gospel which invariably loops

in the true nature of who Jesus was. That's "the faith"—the person of Christ and the true nature of the gospel.

Back to Schreiner. Schreiner writes:

Jude returned to the theme near the conclusion of the letter, saying believers must "build yourselves up in your most holy faith (v. 20)."

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How do I want to say this? There are other scholars who would remark that the focus is on the gospel rather than detailed doctrinal formulas of later church history. Let's just put it that way. Schreiner goes on to quote some sources on this, and I don't want to have to read you all the sources, but basically this is the right direction to go. The focus is on the gospel rather than the detailed doctrinal formulas of later church history. In other words, when Jude is writing in the first century, we don't necessarily have all of the precise nice language about Jesus and about different issues that we're going to have later on as Early Church Fathers struggle with what the New Testament says. And we have church councils, and the creeds get written with their wording that was worked over for days and weeks and months and years. And that's okay. That's okay. We don't have to push the envelope that far. But where we do need to land is, again, the lordship of Christ over our behavior—that you're not allowed to just do whatever it is you want. There's believing loyalty here. This is the true nature of the gospel. And then denying who the Lord is—denying his deity and lordship. So again, I think Schreiner is on the right trajectory here. He says:

Yet we must also acknowledge that the gospel itself involves doctrines that must be confessed.

Bingo. I mean, I agree.

We have an early recognition here that the touchstone for the Christian faith is in the teaching of the apostles and that any deviation from their teaching is unorthodox.

In Acts 2:42, the Early Church did what? They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and the fellowship with the breaking of bread and prayers. There's that teaching element right there—fixation on what the apostles taught. And we know what the apostles taught in very solid terms, even though back in Jude's day, the language may not have been perfect. And you might have Early Church Fathers that you read and you wonder, "Where is this guy coming from?" Look, are they denying the lordship of Christ? Are they denying that Christ is God come in the flesh? It's a pretty short list as far as the things that Jude would really be concerned about with the faith, and I think both of those things tie into verse 4 very well.

So again, we're trying to define what "the faith" is based on the text and denying fellowship to people we just [audio breaks up] Are they dichotomous or trichotomous? There is just stuff like that [audio breaks up] scripture over. We should not be dividing over ambiguities in scripture. We *should* be dividing over denial of clear doctrine.

Back to Schreiner again. He says:

Jude did not merely say that the faith was handed down, but the NIV rightly translates hapax to say "once for all" [MH: It's only used one time—the Greek word for "once for all" here] handed down. No supplements or corrections will be tolerated.

Again, I think Schreiner is on the right track there. I think that's Jude's point. We have a faith. It's the apostles teaching. It was once for all handed down and we're not going to have it supplemented or altered or corrected. It doesn't need alteration or correction.

Schreiner says:

The gospel of Jesus Christ has received its full explication through the apostles. The author of Hebrews drew a similar conclusion when he said that God has spoken definitively and conclusively through his Son in the last days (Heb 1:2). From statements like these, early Christians rightly concluded that the canon of Scripture would be restricted to those early writings that explicated the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

(And personally Jesus himself.) And again, I think these are good thoughts to help us define what the faith was scripturally and also to take a stand on what we should be opposing within the body of Christ—certain teachings and certain doctrinal fiddling. When certain doctrines get fiddled with, they ought to be opposed. That process ought to be rejected. The gospel doesn't need a redefinition. The deity of Christ doesn't need a redefinition, but we need to submit to it. This is what the scripture teaches—believing loyalty and the true gospel, and believing loyalty and the true nature of who Jesus was. Again, it's a very simple recipe, but very wide-reaching as well.

So that's what I wanted to say about Jude 3. We'll spend a little bit of time next time on Jude 4, but most of our time next time is going to be spent with Jude 5. I'm going to read you Jude 5 just as a warm-up. This is where Jude writes:

⁵ Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

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And there's a text-critical issue here. I'm not going to get too far into the weeds. But we'll talk a little bit about the text-critical virtue of that reading that has Jesus delivering the Israelites from Egypt. You say, "Well how can that be?" Again, those of you who have read *Unseen Realm* know how this can be. It's Two Powers teaching. It's God as man in the Old Testament and God as man in the New Testament [audio breaks up] come in the incarnation in the flesh. So we're going to spend time talking about that, and really most of the episode next time is going to be on Jude 5 with a Two Powers twist. And I'm going to include some things that you have not seen out of *Unseen Realm*. We're going to be dipping into more *Unseen Realm* territory here with the Two Powers twist specifically, I think, and it contributes to our understanding of Jude 5. But that's just a heads up for next time.

TS: Alright, Mike, who knew Jude could be so packed in one chapter? I mean, we have Michael the archangel and the devil fighting, we have Enoch coming up, we have a Two Power twist. I mean, I love it.

MH: Yeah, yeah, there's a lot of good stuff in it.

TS: Yeah, absolutely, alright. Well, I'm looking forward to this series. Alright, don't forget, hey, we appreciate Logos for sponsoring us. Now is the time to go if you have not pulled the trigger to get Logos—logos.com/nakedbible will get you a discount. And like Mike says, it's an invaluable tool to do Bible studies. So now is the time to do it if you have not done so yet. We look forward to Part 2 next week, Mike. And with that, I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God bless.