

# LETTER OF JUDE



**T**he Holy Spirit may have wanted to leave us the Letter of Jude so that we could appreciate the Gospels and other writings of the apostles better. We would have to be familiar with the literature of those days to know how complicated and incredible religious books were, both the books of the Jews and of the non-Jews. In comparison, the Gospels and Paul seem to belong to this century.

This letter, which is attributed to the apostle Jude Thaddeus, was written, in fact, about the end of the first century. It denounces the false teachers like those mentioned in the letters to Timothy and Titus.

Nevertheless, the comparisons and the examples which are used come from the Jewish books of the time. The Church had not yet defined which books were inspired by God and were part of the Scriptures. Besides the Old Testament, Christians used the religious literature of the Jews (for example, the Book of Enoch, the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, and the Assumption of Moses). So there are many legends concerning ancient times which we find in this letter. In this literary form, which seems rather antiquated to us, there is a strong call to preserve the integral faith of the apostles, which at the time was a serious concern of the Church. Therefore, a few years later, the author of the second Peter copied part of this letter.

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<sup>1</sup> Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and a brother of James, to those called to the faith, beloved by God the Father, and kept in Christ Jesus.

<sup>2</sup> May mercy, peace and love abound in you. <sup>3</sup> Most beloved, I had wanted to write to you about the salvation we all share, but now I feel I must urge you to fight for the faith God has given, once for all, to the saints.

<sup>4</sup> Some individuals have slipped into your midst, godless people who were, long ago, marked down for condemnation. They make use of the grace of our God as a license for immorality and deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ.

## JUDE 1:1-4

**Read:** The letter begins by encouraging the Christian community to be faithful and not to be misled by people who, with the excuse of being in God's grace, live a disorderly life.

**Reflect:** Do you live in accordance with the faith that you profess? What are the concrete implications in your everyday life? What does it mean for you "to fight for the faith"?

**Pray:** Pray that mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

**Act:** Reflect on the times you have not been faithful to the faith you profess. Why did you do it? What difficulties did you have? What consequences did it have in your life? Ask forgiveness for that, be it through the sacrament of reconciliation or expressing your sorrow to those you have offended.

<sup>5</sup> Although you may be aware of it, I wish to remind you that the Lord saved his people from the land of Egypt, but later delivered to death

those who did not believe. <sup>6</sup>He did the same with the angels who did not keep their rank but abandoned their dwelling places. God enclosed them in eternal prisons, in the pit of darkness, until the great day of judgment. <sup>7</sup>Sodom and Gomorrah, and the surrounding cities that prostituted themselves and were lured into unnatural unions are also a warning of the punishment of eternal fire. <sup>8</sup>In spite of all this, these people now do the same: in their ravings, they debase their bodies, scorn the celestial authorities, blaspheme against the angels.

<sup>9</sup>When the archangel Michael fought against the devil and disputed about the body of Moses, he did not dare insult him, but simply said, "May the Lord rebuke you!" <sup>10</sup>Not so these people, they insult and scorn what they cannot understand; what they know by instinct, like animals, they use for their corruption. <sup>11</sup>Woe to them! They follow the footsteps of Cain, and like Balaam, go astray because of money: they will finally perish like the rebellious Korah. <sup>12</sup>When you celebrate your love-meals, they spoil everything, coming only for the food, and shamelessly seeing to their own needs. They are like clouds carried along by the wind, which never bring rain, like trees without fruit at the end of autumn, twice dead when uprooted. <sup>13</sup>The scum of their vices is splashed like foam on the rough waves of the sea; they are like shooting stars, which the thick darkness engulfs for ever. <sup>14</sup>The patriarch Enoch, the seventh after Adam, said these words about them: The Lord comes with thousands of angels <sup>15</sup>to judge everyone and call the wicked to account for all the evil deeds they committed; he will punish all the injurious words, the impious sinners uttered against him. <sup>16</sup>All these are discontented, who curse their lot and follow their passions. Their mouth is full of arrogant words, and they flatter people for their own interest.

<sup>17</sup>But, most beloved, remember what the apostles of Christ Jesus our Lord announced to you. <sup>18</sup>They said to you, "At the end of time, there will be scoffers, led by their desires, which are those of godless people." <sup>19</sup>Actually, these people are those who cause divisions, they are worldly people, and do not have the Holy Spirit.

<sup>20</sup>But, dearly beloved, build your life on the foundation of your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>Remain firm in the love of God, welcoming the mercy of Jesus Christ our Lord, which leads to eternal life.

<sup>22</sup>Try to convince those who doubt; <sup>23</sup>others you will save, snatching

them from condemnation. Treat the others with compassion, but also with prudence, shunning even the clothes that touched their body.

<sup>24</sup>To the one God, who is able to keep you from all sin and bring you, happy and without blemish before his own glory, <sup>25</sup>to the one God who saves us through Jesus Christ our Lord, to him be glory, honor, might, and power, from past ages, now and forever. Amen.

### JUDE 1:5-25

**Read:** Jude uses a variety of stories to show that God has weeded out evil doers among the angels, Cain who killed Abel, people in the time of Abraham and Moses, God will weed out those evil doers from their midst. The community should remain faithful to the teachings of the Lord as announced by the apostles. Its witness is a life built “on the foundation of your most holy faith.”

**Reflect:** Some of the most colorful insults and curses are found in this section. God is not neutral in the face of evil. God wants the community to be built up in the Holy Spirit. Is your community living according to the faith they profess? Are prayer and mutual service encouraged in your community? What do you do to deepen and to propagate your faith?

**Pray:** Ask forgiveness from the Lord for the times you have not been faithful to his teachings and commandments, especially the commandment of love. Ask also for the grace of solidarity that your community may also live in love.

**Act:** Begin to pray to the Holy Spirit that you keep yourself in the love of God.