

Y'hudah (Jude)

The letter of **Y'hudah**, one of the **General Epistles**, is very short. Until recently, scholars had neglected it more than any other book of the **Brit Hadashah**. **Y'hudah** sought to protect **Messianic** truth and strongly opposed heretics who threatened the faith. The letter's message remains relevant today because believers should defend the gospel vigorously. **Y'hudah's** message closely parallels **2 Kefa**, which also firmly addresses false teachers infiltrating the **Kehilah**.

¹ From: Y'hudah, a slave of Yeshua the Messiah and a brother of Ya'akov. (James)

Y'hudah is traditionally understood as the brother of **Ya'akov** and **Yeshua** (Matityahu 13:55, Mark 6:3, 1 Corinthians 9:5). If so, he might call himself a slave of **Yeshua HaMashiach** to avoid exploiting his blood relationship with the **Lord**. But some scholars think this **Y'hudah** is a relatively unknown person who mentioned his better-known brother (also unknown to us) to help his readers identify him. The text gives no clue as to the intended audience; the heresy described makes **Asia Minor** a likely destination.

To: Those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept for Yeshua the Messiah: ² May mercy, love and shalom be yours in full measure.

³ Dear friends, I was busily at work writing to you about the salvation we share,

I was busily at work writing to you about the salvation we share. As with many books mentioned in the **Tanakh** that have not survived, we cannot satisfy our curiosity about **Y'hudah's** soteriological ¹ treatise.

when I found it necessary to write, urging you to keep contending earnestly for the faith which was once and for all passed on to God's people. ⁴ For certain individuals, the ones written about long ago as being meant for this condemnation, have wormed their way in - ungodly people who pervert God's grace into a license for debauchery and disown our only Master and Lord, Yeshua the Messiah.

Keep contending earnestly for the faith which was once and for all passed on to God's people.

This, along with v. 17 ("**the words spoken ... by the emissaries of our Lord**"), suggests that the letter was written in the latter part of the first century when "**the faith**" had begun to crystallize. This is clear from v. 4: what the ungodly people do is not merely pass on mistaken information, but pervert **God's** grace into a license for debauchery and disown our only **Master** and **Lord**. They no longer recognize **Yeshua's** right to command obedience; instead, they teach a perversion of Romans 3:28 and Ephesians 2:8–9: that **God** considers a person righteous based on professing faith in **Yeshua**, regardless of what kind of works He does. Such an attitude quickly leads to debauchery and other kinds of antinomianism,² since it removes the ethical and moral component of faith/faithfulness/trusting. In **Y'hudah's** time, various kinds of **Gnostics** taught this way; our age has its share of false teachers too (see 2 Timothy 4:3–4, 1 Yochanan 4:4–6).

⁵ Since you already know all this, my purpose is only to remind you that Adonai, who once delivered the people from Egypt, later destroyed those who did not trust. ⁶ And the angels that did not keep within their original authority, but abandoned their proper sphere, he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for the Judgment of the Great Day. ⁷ And S'dom, 'Amora and the surrounding cities, following a pattern like theirs, committing sexual sins and perversions, lie exposed as a warning of the everlasting fire awaiting those who must undergo

¹ The branch of theology dealing with the nature and means of salvation.

² The doctrine or belief that the Gospel frees Christians from required obedience to any law, whether scriptural, civil, or moral, and that salvation is attained solely through faith and the gift of divine grace.

punishment. ⁸ Likewise, these people, with their visions, defile their own flesh, despise godly authority and insult angelic beings. ⁹ When Mikha'el, one of the ruling angels, took issue with the Adversary, arguing over the body of Moshe, he did not dare bring against him an insulting charge, but said, "May Adonai rebuke you."

Although modern **Jewish** popular ideology holds that angels are a **Messianic** invention reflecting a departure from pure monotheism, the **Tanakh** speaks of them often, and post-**Tanakh Judaism** developed an intricate angelology that helps explain this verse. Moreover, the tantalizing brevity of the **Tanakh's** account of **Moshe's** death, together with the fact that "to this day no one knows where he is buried" (Deuteronomy 34:5–6), has given rise to numerous elaborations (see Revelation 6:9, 11:3–6, and especially 12:7).

Here **Y'hudah** reportedly alludes to a story in the **Testament of Moshe**, a **Jewish** writing from the beginning of the first century C.E.; although some portions have survived, the relevant ones have not. However, elements of the legend are found elsewhere. **Deuteronomy Rabbah** 11:10 reports a dispute an hour before **Moshe's** death between **Samma'el** - regarded in **Judaism** as the angel of death and often identified with the **Adversary** (Satan)- and **Mikha'el** (Michael); who, on the basis of Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1, is regarded in **Jewish** tradition as **Isra'el's** defender and **Satan's** opponent. ¹⁰ *However, these people insult anything they don't understand; and what they do understand naturally, without thinking, like animals—by these things they are destroyed!*

¹¹ *Woe to them, in that they have walked the road of Kayin, they have given themselves over for money to the error of Bil'am, they have been destroyed in the rebellion of Korach.*

The rebellious road of **Kayin** (Cain) took him "out from the presence of Adonai" (Genesis 4:16) because he refused **God's** advice and did not take advantage of the five or six opportunities **God** gave him to repent (Genesis 4:1–16). **Kayin's** road led him to murder his brother **Abel**, but murder was not the road itself. They have given themselves over for money to the error of **Bil'am** (Balaam). Numbers 16 reports the rebellion of **Korach** (Korah) against **God's** appointed leader, **Moshe**, as a major threat to the community of **Isra'el**, eliminated only when God had the earth swallow up **Korach** and his 250 co-conspirators. Because the false prophets similarly wish to take on themselves the authority in the **Body of the Messiah** which **God** has given to others, **Y'hudah** says they have been destroyed.

¹² *These men are filthy spots at your festive gatherings meant to foster love; they share your meals without a qualm, while caring only for themselves. They are waterless clouds carried along by the winds; trees without fruit even in autumn, and doubly dead because they have been uprooted; ¹³ savage sea-waves heaving forth their shameful deeds like foam; wandering stars for whom the blackest darkness has been reserved forever. ¹⁴ Moreover, Hanokh, in the seventh generation starting with Adam, also prophesied about these men, saying, "Look! Adonai came with his myriads of holy ones ¹⁵ to execute judgment against everyone, that is, to convict all the godless for their godless deeds which they have done in such a godless way, and for all the harsh words these godless sinners have spoken against him."*

Y'hudah quotes 1 **Enoch** 1:9. 1 **Enoch**, a compilation of writings by several authors who lived in the last two centuries B.C.E., is one of the **Pseudepigrapha**, **Jewish** books attributed to famous biblical figures, such as **Chanoth** (Enoch, Genesis 5:18–24), in the seventh generation starting with **Adam** (Genesis 5:1). Such attribution was not deceptive but either honorific or a means of identifying the message of the actual author with the character and activity of the supposed one; compare the writer of an historical novel or documentary who puts words in the mouth of **George Washington**. **Y'hudah's** quoting a non-canonical book does not make 1 **Enoch** inspired Scripture, nor does it disqualify **Y'hudah's** letter. **Sha'ul** quoted pagan authors at

Acts 17:28–29 and Timothy 1:12, and no one supposes that their works should be included in **Holy Writ** or **Sha'ul's** excluded.

¹⁶ These people are grumblers and complainers, they follow their evil passions, their mouths speak grandiosities, and they flatter others to gain advantage. ¹⁷ But you, dear friends, keep in mind the words spoken in advance by the emissaries of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah. ¹⁸ They told you, "During the acharit-hayamim ³ there will be scoffers following their own godless passions."

The majority of scholars hold that **2 Kefa** is an expansion of **Y'hudah's** letter, but these verses suggest that **Y'hudah** drew on **2 Kefa**, since **Y'hudah** not only excludes himself from the emissaries of our **Lord Yeshua the Messiah**, but in reciting what they told you he seems to be quoting 2 Kefa 3:3. A third possibility is that both books partly depend on a common source.

¹⁹ These are the people who cause divisions. They are controlled by their impulses, because they don't have the Spirit. ²⁰ But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith, and pray in union with the Ruach HaKodesh. ²¹ Thus keep yourselves in God's love, as you wait for our Lord Yeshua the Messiah to give you the mercy that leads to eternal life.

Y'hudah contrasts "*you, dear friends,*" genuine **Believers**, with the ungodly libertines of vv. 4–19, and prescribes four things to do.

²² Rebuke some who are disputing; ²³ save others, snatching them out of the fire; and to yet others, show mercy, but with fear, hating even the clothes stained by their vices.

There are a number of textual variants of these two verses; several of them mention only two kinds of people who have left the "*most holy faith*" (v. 20), but the preponderant evidence favors three:

- (1) Those who are disputing have closed themselves off to the truth. One can neither teach nor save them, only rebuke them, praying that God will help them to change.
- (2) Others, who have been swept along by the libertine disputers, are themselves relatively innocent but in grave danger of falling away. Save them, snatching them out of the fire, then ground them in the principles of truth.
- (3) Yet others have fallen into sin but have not lost their basic teachability, so that they may be restored.

Show them mercy, but with fear, hating even the clothes stained by their vices - love the sinner, but hate the sin. "*You who have the Spirit should set him right, but in a spirit of humility, keeping an eye on yourselves so that you won't be tempted too*" (Galatians 6:1).

²⁴ Now, to the one who can keep you from falling and set you without defect and full of joy in the presence of his Sh'khinah - ²⁵ to God alone, our Deliverer, through Yeshua the Messiah, our Lord—be glory, majesty, power and authority before all time, now and forever. Amen. ⁴

In addressing **God** as the one who can keep you from falling, the closing prayer follows the theme of vv. 22–23. This passage is one of the greatest **Brit Hadashah** doxologies, comparable to Romans 11:33–36, 16:25–27; Revelation 4:10–11, 5:12–13, 15:3–4.

³ End times.

⁴ Y'hudah 1-25.