

Epistle of Jude—Handout #2

What does the word “canon” mean?

Examine the Muratorian Fragment (ca. 170 A.D.) (attached)

This text deals with the accepted or authoritative NT books as listed in the 2nd c. A.D.
What do we learn?

What are the marks of authority according to this Fragment?

1. Theopneusty [thee-OP-news-tee]
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Compare Jude 6 with 2 Peter 2:4

Jude 9 with 2 Peter 2:11

Jude 12-13 with 2 Peter 2:17

Patristic Testimony

Clement of Alexandria (†215 A.D.)

Writes a commentary on the letter: *Comments on the Epistle of Jude*

States: “Jude, who wrote the Catholic Epistle . . .” (*Hypotyposes*)

Quotes Jude 5-6 and 11 in his *The Instructor*, 3.8 (Ante-Nicene Fathers, 2:282)

While indicating “Jude prophesied,” he cites Jude 8 and 16 in his *The Stromata*,
3.2 (Ante-Nicene Fathers, 2:383)

Tertullian (†225 A.D.)

“To these considerations is added the fact that Enoch possesses a testimony in the
Apostle Jude” (*On the Apparel of Women*, 1.3 in Ante-Nicene Fathers, 4:16)

Origen (†255 A.D.)

Lists the books of the canon and states: “. . . James and Jude . . .” (*Homilies on
Joshua*, 7.1 [ca. 240 A.D.] as quoted in Metzger, *The Canon of the NT*
[1987] 139)

Declares: “. . .if indeed one were to accept the epistle of Jude. . .” (*Commentary on John*, chap. 19:6)

Cyril of Jerusalem (†386 A.D.)

“. . .in addition to these the seven Catholic Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude. . .” (*Catechetical Lectures* [dated ca. 348/50 A.D.], 4.36 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2*, 7:27-28)

Athanasius (†373 A.D.)

“. . .and Epistles (called Catholic) . . . one of Jude” (*Letter 39* [dated 367 A.D.] in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2*, 4:552)

Confessional Reflections on Canonicity

Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 1, paragraph 5

We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture (1 Tim. 3:15), and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts (1 Jn 2:20, 27; Jn 16:13-14; 1 Cor 2:10-12; Is 59:21).

Commentaries

Best critical commentaries:

Gene Green, *Jude & 2 Peter* (2008) beware of use of pagan rhetorical treatises for language and style of Jude. But on the Biblical text, very helpful.

Curtis Giese, *2 Peter and Jude* (2012). Skip the Lutheran sacramentalism.

Best brief layperson's evangelical commentary:

Philip Towner, *2 Peter & Jude* (2009)

For additional remarks on commentaries for Jude, see <http://www.nwts.edu/commentaries.pdf> and scroll down to “Jude”.

Muratorian Fragment (ca. 170 A.D.)

...at which never the less he [Mark] was present and so he placed it in his narrative.

The third book of the gospel is that according to Luke. Luke the well know physician wrote it in his own name, according to the general belief after the ascension of Christ when **(2) Paul had associated him with himself as one zealous for correctness.** One who took pains to find out the facts. It is true that he had not seen the Lord in the flesh. Yet having ascertained the facts he was able to begin his narrative with the nativity of John.

The fourth book of the gospel is that of John's, one of the disciples. In response to the exhortation of his fellow disciples and bishops he said "Fast with me for three days then let us tell each other whatever shall be reveled to each one." The same night it was reveled to Andrew, who was one of the apostles, that it was John who should relate in his own name what they collectively remembered. Or that John was to relate in his own name, they all acting as correctors. And so to the faith of believers there is no discord even although different selections are given from the facts in the individual books of the gospels. **(1) Because in all of them under the one guiding Spirit** all the things relative to his nativity, passion, resurrection, conversation with his disciples, and his twofold advent, the first in humiliation rising from contempt which took place and the second in the glory of kingly power which is yet to come, have been declared. What marvel it is then if John induces so consistently in his epistles these several things saying in person "what we have seen with our eyes and heard with our ears and our hands have handled, those things we have written." For thus he professes to be not only an eye witness but also a hearer and a narrator of all the wonderful things of the Lord in their order.

Moreover the Acts of all the apostles are written in one book. Luke so comprised them for the most excellent Theophilus because of the individual events that took place in his presence. As he clearly shows by omitting the passion of Peter. As well as the departure of Paul, when Paul went from the city of Rome to Spain.

Now, the epistles of Paul, what they are and for what reason they were sent they themselves make clear to him who will understand.

First of all he wrote at length to the Corinthians to prohibit the system of heresy, then to the Galatians against circumcision. And to the Romans on the order of scriptures intimating also that Christ is the chief matter in them. Each of which is necessary for us to discuss seeing that the blessed apostle Paul himself, following the example of his predecessor John, writes to no more than seven churches by name, in the following order: Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Galatians, Thessalonians, and Romans. But he writes twice for the sake of correction to the Corinthians and to the Thessalonians.

That there is one church defused throughout the whole earth is shown by this seven fold writing and John also in the Apocalypse. Even though he writes the seven churches, he speaks to all. But he wrote out of affection and love one to Philemon, one to Titus, two to Timothy and these are **(3) held sacred in the honorable esteem of the church catholic,** in the regulation of Ecclesiastical discipline.

There are adduced one to the Laodiceans another to the Alexandrians, forged in the name of Paul against the heresy of Marcion. And many **(3) others which cannot be received into the church catholic** for it is not fitting that gall be mixed with honey.

Further [Or "no doubt", "indeed", "moreover" to be included] an epistle of Jude and two bearing the name of John are counted among the catholic epistles. And Wisdom written by the friends of Solomon in his honor.

We receive the Apocalypses of John and Peter only. Some of us do not wish the Apocalypse of Peter to be read in church.

But Hermas wrote "the Shepherd" in the city of Rome most recently in our times, when his brother bishop Pious was occupying the chair in the church at Rome. And so **(4) indeed it ought to be read but that it be made public to the people in the church** and placed among the prophets whose number is complete or among the apostles is not possible to the end of time.

Of Arsenus, Valentinus, or Miltiadees we receive nothing at all. Those also who wrote the "new book of Psalms," Marcion together with Basilides, and the Asian Cataphrigians...