

Next Steps with the Bible

Going Deeper and Growing Stronger

Week 5: Understanding the NT Letters

For my thoughts,
are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways,
declares the Lord.

For as the heavens are
higher than the earth,

so are my ways higher

than your ways and
my thoughts than your thoughts.

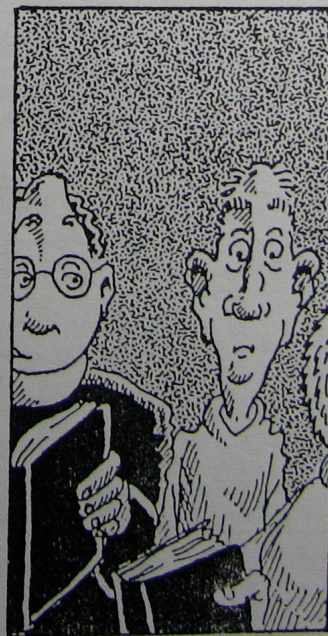
Isaiah 55:8-9



“What It Means to ME”



UM...THOSE ARE...VERY INTERESTING INSIGHTS. ...BUT DO YOU THINK PAUL COULD SIMPLY BE REFERRING TO HIS PRISON CHAINS, IN ROME?

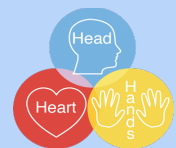


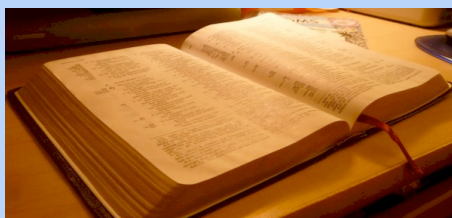


Understanding the NT Letters

1. Review of Week 4

- Observation
 - Interpretation,
 - Correlation
 - Application
- Apply this to Jude 3-4





Understanding the Basic Steps of Bible Study

3. Case Study: Jude 3-4

Verse	Observations	Interpretive Questions	Correlation	Application

Jude 1-4 NIV

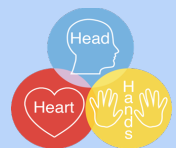
- 1** Jude,
a servant of Jesus Christ |
and a brother of James,
to those who have been called,
who are loved by God the Father
and kept by Jesus Christ:
- 2** Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.
- 3** Dear friends,
although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share,
I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith
that was once for all entrusted to the saints.
- 4** For certain men . . . have secretly slipped in among you.
. . . whose condemnation was written about long ago . . .
They are godless men,
who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality
and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.



Understanding the NT Letters

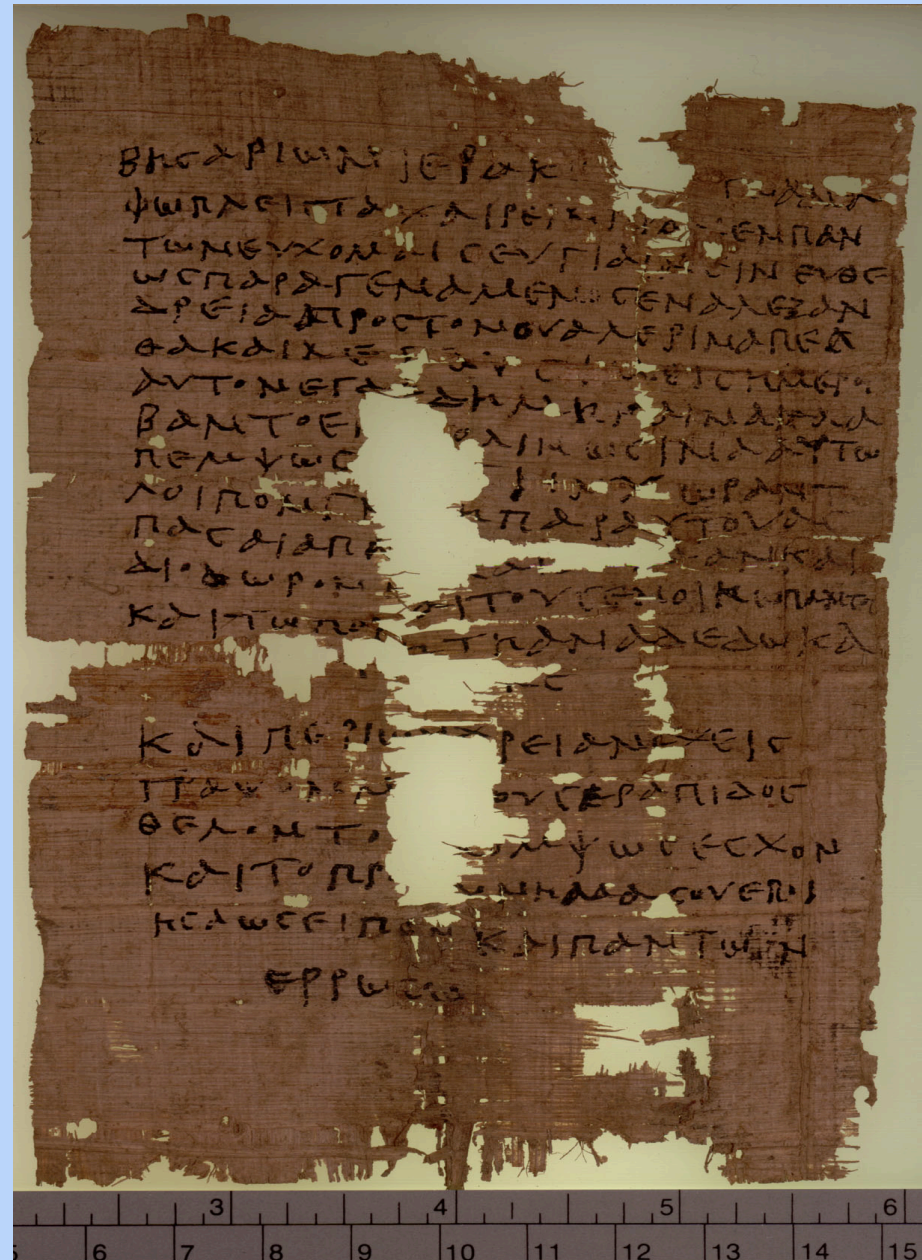
2. Examples of ancient letters

- Numerous everyday letters (**papyri**) from Egypt.
- New Testament Letters
 - Acts 9:2; 15:23-29; 23:26-30
 - Paul (13 letters)
 - Peter (2 letters)
 - James
 - John (2 letters by “the elder”)
 - Jude
 - Hebrews, 1 John, and the “letters” to the seven churches (Rev 2-3) are not really letters.



P. Oxy. 59.3988., 2nd century CE

Βησαρίων Ἰερακίων τῷ ἀδελ-
-φῷ πλείστα χαίρειν. πρὸ μὲν πάν-
-των εὖχομαί σε ὑγιαίνειν. εὐθέ-
-ως παραγενάμενος ἐν Ἀλεξαν-
-δρεία πρὸς τὸν Οὐαλέριον ἀπῆλ-
-θα καὶ λέγουσί μοι σήμερον
αὐτὸν ἐκδεδημηκέναι ἔλα-
-βαν τὸ ἐπιστόλιον ὥς ἵνα αὐτῷ
πέμψωσ[ι εἰς] τὴν χώραν. τὸ
λοιπὸν γν[ώσ]ῃ παρ' αὐτοῦ. ἄσ-
-πασαι Απα[. . .] καὶ αν καὶ
Διόδωρον καὶ τοὺς ἐν οἴκῳ πάντας.
καὶ τῷ προιητῇ ἀναδέδωκα
[.] τ[.] κς. vac.
καὶ περὶ ὧν χρεῖαν ἔχεις
γράψον μ[οι]. τοῦ Σεράτιδος
θέλοντο[ς] κομψῶς ἔσχον
καὶ τὸ προ[σκ]ύνημά σου ἐποί-
-ησα, ὡς εἶπον, καὶ πάντων.
ἔρρωσον





Understanding the NT Letters

3. Characteristics of ancient letters

- “*Ad hoc*”: Situational/occasional
- **Prose** language with occasional sections that are poetic, prophetic, etc.
- Logical flow: propositional linear **argument** containing instruction and exhortation.
- The chunks are typically presented as **paragraphs** in English translations.
- The NT letters contain **direct teaching** for the Church.



Understanding the NT Letters

4. Conventional Structure: how were letters written?

- **Opening**
 - Author, Recipients, Greeting
- **Preliminaries**
 - Personal comments, well wishes, prayer
- **Body**
 - Opening, middle, closing are sometimes noticeable
- **Closing** (P.S. . . ., additional greetings, benediction)
- ***How does Jude match up to this typical structure?***



Understanding the NT Letters

4. Conventional Structure: how were letters written?

How does Jude match up to this typical structure?

Opening:	_____
Preliminaries:	_____
Body:	_____
Closing:	_____

Jude 1-4 NIV

- 1** Jude,
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Understanding the NT Letters

5. How does the argument of Jude develop?

- Find the **body** of the letter . . .
- **Read it** through it several times . . .
- Take note of the logical **flow of thought** . . .
- Note the **paragraph divisions** as indicators of the main ideas . . .
- Pay attention to the **conjunctions** . . .
 - *and, also, as, but, yet, if, because, for, although, etc.*



Understanding the NT Letters

Jude Paragraph by Paragraph

NIVZSB	ESVSB	NLTISB
1-2	1-2	1-2
3-4	3-4	3-4
5-6	5-7	5-7
8-10	8-13	8-11
11		12-13
12-13		14-15
14-16	14-16	16
17-19	17-23	17-19
20-21		20-21
22-23		22-23
24-25	24-25	24-25

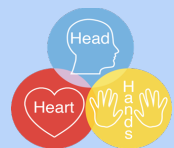


Understanding the NT Letters

4. So What? How does all this impact us?



- We are richly blessed to have the Bible in our language, along with the freedom and opportunity to study and teach it.
 - **Are we faithful stewards of this blessing?**
- Jude saw his church's situation in continuity with Israel's history as the ongoing one people of God.
 - **Do we read the OT like Jude did?**
- Jude speaks frankly and clearly about dangerous teaching and its judgment.
 - **Are we following Jude's example?**





Understanding the NT Letters

Luke 24

²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, **he explained to them** what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. . . . ³² They asked each other, “**Were not our hearts burning within us while he . . . opened the Scriptures to us?**” . . .

⁴⁴ He said to them, “. . . **Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me** in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”

⁴⁵ **Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.** ⁴⁶ He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ **You are witnesses of these things.**



James Tissot (1836-1902)