

Xenos Christian Fellowship
Christian Ministry 2
Week 5 – Epistles Inductive Study

Introduction - What is Inductive Study?

Inductive reasoning: "the act or process of reasoning from a part to a whole, from particulars to generals, or from the individual to the universal."¹

Inductive Bible Study: utilizing the _____ (the particulars) to arrive at the author's _____ (the generals).

What is an epistle?

- A letter

- An “occasional document”

Studying the Epistles

The basic unit of study in the epistles is _____.

Epistle Overview

What are we trying to learn?

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1. Paragraph titles:

- The titles should be short.

¹ *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*, © 1996, 1998.

- The titles should cover most of the significant content in the paragraph.

2. Information about the author, audience, and 3rd parties:

NOTE: Do steps 1 and 2 together as you read through the letter paragraph-by-paragraph.

3. Summary of the historical situation:

4. Author's purpose for writing the letter:

Jude Overview

1. Paragraph titles & 2. Information about the author, audience, and 3rd parties

Paragraph Titles	Author: Jude	Audience: A Church	3 rd Party: False Teachers
Vs. 1,2			
Vs. 3			
Vs. 4			
Vs. 5-7			
Vs. 8-13			

Vs. 14-16			
Vs. 17-19			
Vs. 20,21			
Vs. 22,23			
Vs. 24,25			

3. Summary of the historical situation

Jude	Church	False Teachers

4. Author's purpose for writing the letter

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Paragraph Study

1. Language

- What **key** words and/or phrases are **unfamiliar** to me?

One easy way to perform a word study is to go to www.biblos.com. Key in the verse (upper-left). Then click on the “interlinear” tab, and find the word you want to study. Then click on the number above that word. This will take you to a screen that shows the other places in the Bible where this word is used (right side). It will also show you the range of meaning for the word from several reference works.

- *Does the writer’s style/genre affect interpretation?* This is rarely an issue in epistles.

2. Historical

- *What does this paragraph tell me about the author, audience, or third party?* This is a quick review of your inductive overview, which reminds you of the letter’s original setting.
- *What do I need to research in order to understand the historical/cultural context?*

Use a Bible dictionary or other resources to explain historical references not covered by your overview (e.g., “praetorian guard” in Phil. 1:13).

3. Theological

- *What does this paragraph teach about theological truths such as the nature of God, sin, man, Satan, salvation, the church, and the Christian life?* It is important to limit your observations to the information in the paragraph at hand and the preceding paragraphs.
- *What is the main theological truth in this paragraph?* Clues for finding the main truth include:

Answers the “What?” question

Is a command

Is at the beginning of the paragraph

Is repeated in the paragraph

4. Strategic

- *How does this paragraph fit into the purpose(s) of the author for this book?* How does it follow from preceding paragraphs and/or prepare for following paragraphs? Skimming your paragraph titles and author’s purpose (inductive overview) may help you here.

5. Contemporary Application

- *How does the theology in this paragraph apply to our world today?* What current lies (e.g., culturally accepted values or practices, philosophical systems, psychological

assumptions, religious beliefs and practices [including the Church]) does the theological content of this paragraph refute?

6. Personal Application

- *How does the theology of this paragraph apply to my own life and ministry? What are its implications for my sin-problems, relationships and general spiritual growth? What are its implications in the same areas for the people in your ministry? What steps of faith does it call me/others to take?*

Paragraph Study: Jude 1:20-23

1. Language

- **“your most holy faith”** probably refers to the content of the gospel (1:3 “the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints”)
- **“fire”** is probably used figuratively to refer to God’s judgment
- **“garment polluted by the flesh”** is figurative for sinful deeds, lifestyle, etc.

2. Historical

- **The audience is “beloved” by Jude and refers to faithful Christians.**
- **Three kinds of people who need the church’s help:** “doubters” (still in fellowship, but wavering?), those in the “fire” (non-Christians), and those whose “garments are polluted by the flesh” (deeply damaged/deceived by sinful lifestyle, false doctrine, etc.)

3. Theological

- **A key responsibility for Christians is to “keep ourselves in the love of God” – staying focused on and anchored in God’s love for us.** The fact that Jude strongly urges this implies that true Christians can easily stray from this focus! Three ways of doing this are building ourselves up with the gospel (the message of God’s love for us), praying with the help of the Holy Spirit (talking to the One who loves us), and looking forward to Christ’s return (meeting face-to-face the One who loves us). Since Jude calls the church do this, this involves being in community with other Christians (not just in our private spiritual lives).

- **A key responsibility for Christians is to reach out to those outside the church** – not only Christians who have strayed, but also people are deeply immersed in falsehood and life-destroying sin. The fact that Jude strongly urges this implies that true Christians can easily stray from this focus, especially when they are fighting against apostasy in the church. It is possible and necessary to “hate the sin” and still “love the sinner” (1:23b).

4. Strategic

- **Jude’s commitment to help this church includes not only helping them identify and reject false teachers, but also urging them to stay focused on God’s love and reach out to non-Christians.** Full-orbed church health always involves faithfulness to sound doctrine, a healthy focus on God’s grace, and reaching out with the gospel to outsiders.

5. Contemporary Application

- **Much of the American evangelical church is very weak at these three key responsibilities.** Some churches remain doctrinally orthodox, but lack spiritual vitality and love for sinners. Others are tolerating doctrinal compromise and lack of clear verbal witness outreach. How we need churches that are deeply grace-focused, doctrinally discerning, and sacrificially reaching out to the lost people around them!

6. Personal Application

- I need to regularly recall and focus on my eternal destiny, because otherwise I default to obsessing on temporal problems and comforts. Meditating on key biblical passages like 2 Cor. 4:16-5:6, reading sound Christian books on this subject, praising God by faith for this and asking Him for illumination (i.e. Eph. 1:18), and talking about this with other Christian friends has been helpful for me.
- I also see this as a big problem for many adults in our church. So I am also teaching on this subject more, and exhorting individuals to practice 2 Cor. 4:17,18.

Memory Verses

None this week. There will be a quiz next week.

Assignment

Do an overview of Titus based on the method above. This assignment must be turned in at the beginning of our next lecture. For your benefit, this assignment must be turned in to complete this course.