

## INVITATION TO JUDE

Jesus had several brothers, including James and Jude. James is better known, since he was a prominent leader in the church at Jerusalem (see p. 1761). Much less is known about Jude, but he too was clearly a church leader, since he wrote to believers with authority in this letter that bears his name. It's not clear exactly who was meant to receive this letter, although the references to angels, to the history of Israel and to specific writings suggest that it was addressed to Jews who believed in Jesus as their Messiah. But the problem that occasioned the letter is quite clear. Jude warns his readers about certain individuals who have secretly slipped in among you, whose teaching and example are threatening the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. These false teachers, on the basis of supposedly inspired dreams, reject authority and pollute their own bodies, engage in immorality and refuse discipline. Even though they claim to bring God's message, they really follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. The believers' response to them must be active resistance. They must contend for the faith by rejecting both the teaching and the example of these men and cleansing their community. Be merciful to those who doubt, Jude instructs them, save others by snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear. He assures them that as they do these things, they can entrust themselves to God their Savior. It appears that the apostle Peter received a copy of Jude's letter and wrote a similar one of his own to show that Jude was faithfully presenting the teaching of the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.