

**GOSPEL** of *Grace*  
FELLOWSHIP

**2 John, 3 John, Jude**  
**Jesus Christ, the Truth, the Way,  
Our Keeper**  
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September 23, 2020

**F - L - I - G - H - T**

**F** – The author of 2 and 3 John is identified as “the Elder” (2 John 1; 3 John 1), indicating someone of mature age. Church history suggests that this was the apostle John. The style, word use, and themes found in 2 and 3 John are very similar to the other works John wrote.

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**F - L - I - G - H - T**

**F** – The author of Jude is identified as “Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and a brother of James” (Jude 1). In the Gospels, a man named Jude is named as a half-brother of Jesus (Matt. 3:54-55; Mark 6:2-3) – a son of Mary and Joseph who was born after Jesus. A man named Jude (or Judas in the original text, though not Judas Iscariot) is also mentioned as one of Jesus’ 12 disciples (Luke 6:36)

It’s debated whether the author of this letter is the apostle, the brother, or neither. The author did not identify himself as an apostle, but that could simply be a mark of humility. On the other hand, the author spoke of apostles in the third person (Jude 17-18), so that seems to rule out that he was one of the 12.

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**F - L - I - G - H - T**

**F** – John probably wrote 2 and 3 John shortly after 1 John, sometime between AD 90 and 95. During this time, the apostle was finishing his work as a pastor in the city of Ephesus, unaware that his exile to the island of Patmos was right around the corner.

It’s unknown when Jude wrote this book. He probably wrote it before AD 70 because it doesn’t mention the destruction of the Jewish temple, and it confronts recurrent false teachings that were prevalent in the early church. The best estimate is AD 68-69.

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**F - L - I - G - H - T**

**L** – Second John warns the church about the danger of the Gnostic teachers who denied the humanity of Jesus Christ in his incarnation. In it, John encouraged believers to continue walking in love but to also be discerning in their expression of love, cautioning about receiving heretics into their homes and churches.

In 3 John, the apostle praised the hospitality believers were showing to faithful, godly qualified teachers. He desired those believers to have fellowship with their brothers and sisters in Christ, especially those who worked in full-time ministry. John used the examples of 3 different people in the early church to highlight 3 different ways to live – one bad and two good.

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**F - L - I - G - H - T**

**L** – Jude wrote this letter as a call to arms to the church to be constantly vigilant, standing strong in the faith and opposing heresy. Godless teachers were emboldening Christians to defect from the truth, saying that they could do as they pleased without fear of God’s punishment, but Jude would have none of it.

His letter was meant to motivate believers everywhere to take action by recognizing the dangers of false teaching, protecting themselves and other believers against that false teaching, and winning back those who had already been deceived.

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**F - L - I - G - H - T**

**I - 2 John**

- Balancing Truth and Love (1-3)
- Walking in Truth and Love (4-6)
- Standing for Truth and Love (7-13)

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**F - L - I - G - H - T**

**I - 3 John**

- Confirmation of Gaius – Loved in the Truth (1-8)
- Condemnation of Diotrefes – Who Loved Not the Truth (9-10)
- Commendation of Demetrius – Who Was Loved by the Truth (11-12)
- Conclusion (13-14)

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**F - L - I - G - H - T**

**I - Jude**

- Salutation – Preservation from Apostasy (1-2)
- Exhortation – Warning about Apostasy (3-23)
- Benediction – Victory over Apostasy (24-25)

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**F - L - I - G - H - T**

**G - [2 and 3 John]** The gospel centers on an act of divine, transforming love: Jesus laid down his life that we might live. But that sacrifice was necessary because of one significant and often hard-to-digest-truth: We are dead in our sins by nature, and only God can save us.

In other words, when it comes to the gospel, love and truth are inseparable. It's easy to look at the cross and acknowledge Jesus' love for us; it's another thing to know the truth of God's Word and live by it.

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**F - L - I - G - H - T**

**G -** True believers cling to the word of God and do what Jesus says. No extra-biblical stuff, no philosophy that says you need Jesus plus something else. As John wrote, *"This is love, that we walk according to his commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it"* (2 John 6).

The gospel is precious enough to defend and those who herald it must equip listeners to do the same. Martin Luther wrote, "A preacher must be both soldier and shepherd. He must nourish, defend, and teach; he must have teeth in his mouth, and be able to bite and to fight."

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**F - L - I - G - H - T**

**G -** In the early church, false prophets came right to your door, but John instructed believers not to receive these prophets into their homes. Lest you think that is overly harsh, remember that churches in the early days met in homes, so John was really saying not to let false teachers into the church.

Today, with wise preparation, we might have conversations with people who come to our doors teaching a different gospel. Even so, we need to protect the church – as well as our homes – from those who would lead us astray. The best way to do that is to walk in God's truth, growing in the knowledge of his Word.

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F-L-I-G-H-T

**G** – [Jude] Faith in Jesus Christ is a prize worth fighting for. It’s not something we earn, but it is something we need to fiercely guard as the most important truth in the world: Jesus Christ, who was both fully God and fully man, died for the sins of the world so that we could be saved from death and hell when we believe in him.

Defending the gospel was the whole reason Jude wrote his letter in the first place, saying he *“found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints”* (Jude 3).

F-L-I-G-H-T

**G** – When Jude wrote about the faith that had been *“once for all delivered to the saints,”* he was saying that everything God wanted to say had been said and recorded by the NT authors by AD 100.

All the other so-called revelations of God that have come after that time, including the Quran and the Book of Mormon, do not qualify as valid doctrine from God. Anyone who claims otherwise has to argue against or outright ignore Jude 3.

F-L-I-G-H-T

**H** – John wrote his biblical works after the dispersion of Jews and Christians under the persecution of Nero (reigned AD 54-68) and after the destruction of the Jewish temple in AD 70. The Roman emperors Vespasian (reigned AD 69-79), Titus (reigned AD 79-81), and Domitian (AD 81-96) ruled during the latter years of John’s life.

It was common for early Christians to meet privately in homes for worship and prayer (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philemon 2). Starting with the reign of emperor Nero, Christians were systematically persecuted by the Roman government, so home churches provided safety and comfort. It was not until Constantine ratified the Edict of Milan in AD 313 that a tolerance for Christianity was enforced.

F-L-I-G-H-T

**H** – Throughout his little letter, Jude referenced a number of events in the OT. To the early church, the OT was history, not some collection of made-up stories. Jesus himself considered the OT to be a source of authority (Matt. 4:4,7,10) and confirmed the stories of Jonah (Matt. 12:40), Noah (Matt. 24:37-39), and Adam and Eve (Matt. 19:4-6) as historical happenings.

True love requires love for the truth. You can’t throw out truth for love’s sake. Even with the best of intentions, loving others without sharing the truth of the gospel with them is counterproductive and could even end up those who want to undermine the truth. In those cases, John’s point seems to be, *“It’s not love if it’s not based on God’s truth,”* and Jude’s point was that truth is worth fighting for.

F-L-I-G-H-T

**T** – **Have the courage to address false teaching in the church.** Oftentimes Christians don’t want to deal with the fallout of drawing a line in the sand – even if it’s over an essential theological issue – so we bend the truth and call it an act of love. But John said love and truth should never be separated (2 John 6-8). Jesus was God’s love incarnate. His actions and words tell us that sometimes confrontation is demanded by a higher love – a love of God’s truth.

F-L-I-G-H-T

**T** – Love is rarely attacked, whereas truth often is. John wrote, *“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth”* (3 John 4). Why didn’t he say he rejoiced in his children walking in *love*? Because truth is the foundation of God’s love, and it’s the first Christian virtue the world attacks.

The minute you say, *“This is God’s absolute truth for everyone,”* you’ll be criticized. Love, on the other hand, is almost never condemned; the world simply lessens it by redefining it. But sincerity, good intentions, or love alone isn’t what makes a Christian. Be gracious, but stick to the truth.

### F-L-I-G-H-T

**T** – One of the marks of a Christian leader is hospitality.

Show faithful people the love of Christ by welcoming and hosting them in your home. Hospitality is also a way Christians can support other Christians who are doing God's work and need a place to stay, such as missionaries, traveling preachers, and musicians.

John praised Gaius for displaying this kind of hospitality. What a blessing to give a fellow believer a welcoming environment as you break bread with them and provide a comfortable place to rest, sharing in the work of the Lord.

### F-L-I-G-H-T

**T** – Jude's tone and topics were serious, yet he still graciously opened his letter by saying, "**Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you**" (Jude 2). These three things are the very qualities we ought to display as believers who are contending for the faith.

**Balance truth with love when witnessing.** While we want to contend earnestly for the faith, we don't want to do so contentiously (Jude 22-23). The nature of God's truth doesn't change no matter how you speak it, but nonetheless, speak it in love (Eph. 4:15). The truth of the gospel is less effective when spoken obnoxiously or with contempt. So, love people enough to tell them the plain truth, but tell that truth with respect and kindness.

### Purposes of 2 John

*Three reasons can be discovered from the text for writing this book:*

- John wanted to warn against the heresy of denying the humanity of Christ (v. 7).
- He wished to exhort them to Christian love (v. 5).
- He desired to encourage them to live a life of fidelity in the faith (vv. 4,6).

### Purposes of 3 John

*The reasons for writing this book:*

- John desired to praise Gaius for his fidelity to the truth (v. 1).
- He wished to commend the congregation for their hospitality and support for those in ministry (vv. 3-8).
- He wanted to condemn Diotrephes for his lack of humility (vv. 9-11).
- He desired to commend Demetrius for his testimony (v. 12).

### Purposes of Jude

*Four basic reasons for writing are evident:*

- Jude wanted them to be steadfast in the faith (v. 3).
- He hoped to explain the apostasy from the faith to them (vv. 4-16).
- He wished to inform them of how to avoid the coming catastrophe (vv. 17-19).
- He wanted to encourage them to mature in the faith (vv. 20-24).

### Who Was the "Elect Lady"?

John addresses his **second letter** to "the elect lady." Some have argued that because this was strictly a personal letter addressed to a particular lady, that it does not belong in the canon of Scripture. Was the "elect lady" a person or not?

First of all, if the elect lady were a particular person, this would not exclude it from the canon of Scripture. Several of the epistles of Paul were personal letters to particular individuals (for example, Timothy, Titus, Philemon).

### “Elect Lady”

Second, it is possible that the elect lady was not a particular person. The proposals of commentators basically fall into 2 categories, the literal and the figurative. Those who understand this address to be literal hold that this was indeed a certain individual whom John knew. The following points are offered in this view.

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24

### “Elect Lady”

1. It seems more natural to take the words as an address to an actual lady and her children.
2. This view fits with the references to the children of the elect lady, her sister and her sister’s children (v. 13).
3. The basic structure of the greeting in v. 1 fits with the basic structure of the greeting of 3 John 1 (“*To the...whom I love in truth*”), which was an address to a certain individual.
4. If the term lady refers to the church, then to whom does the word children refer? Are the children not included in the church? Are they somehow different from the church?

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25

### “Elect Lady”

Third, those who hold the view that this is a figure of speech maintain that this is a reference to the church as a whole or to a particular local church. The following points are made in support of this view.

1. John states that the lady is loved not only by him but by “all those who have known the truth” (v. 1). This would mean that everyone knew her. However, this kind of observation would fit better when referring to a local church than to an individual.

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26

### “Elect Lady”

2. Although John uses the singular pronoun you, he does switch to the plural in v. 8 where he seems to be warning the lady: “Look to yourselves.” But if this were a literal woman, why would he use plural at all?
3. The appeal to “love one another” (v. 5) makes more sense when directed to a community of believers than to a woman and her children. (4) The personification of the church in feminine terms is common in the Bible (for example, Eph. 5:30-33 where Paul develops the idea that the church is the bride of Christ; 1 Peter 5:13 where Peter uses the feminine expression of the church).

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27

### “Elect Lady”

Although we may not be able to decide the issue definitively on the basis of our current information, it is clear that, if this was a personal letter to a literal woman, this fact would not exclude it from the canon of Scripture. And it is not at all clear that it is a reference to an individual lady.

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28

### Shouldn’t We Love Our Enemies?

According to Jesus, we are supposed to love or enemies, bless those who curse us, and do good to those who hate us (Matt. 5:44). However, according to John (**2 John 10**), we are not to receive into our house or even greet anyone who comes to us and does not believe that Christ has come in the flesh. Which are we supposed to do?

We are supposed to follow both instructions. The apparent discrepancy between these directives arises from the fact that they are talking about two totally different situations.

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29

### Love Our Enemies?

In the passage in Matthew, Jesus is contrasting his own teaching to that of the Pharisees. The divine principle of love should be the guiding principle of one's life. Even though some people are the enemies of God, he still allows the rain to fall on their crops and causes the sun to shine on them. God treats the wicked with lovingkindness.

However, he never condones their wickedness. As Paul points out in Romans, the goodness of God is not a sign of his approval of their actions. Rather, the goodness of God is designed to lead to repentance (Rom. 2:4).

The passage in 2 John is not talking about someone who simply comes to visit. Rather, John is talking about false teachers who are deceivers (v. 7) and who come to present their doctrines.

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30

### Love Our Enemies?

First, John is instructing the local church, and the individuals of the local church, not to extend hospitality to these persons, because that would imply that the church accepted or approved of their teaching. The people of the local church were directed not even to give a Christian greeting to them, lest this be misconstrued as an attitude of tolerance of their false doctrines.

This was by no means a command not to love one's enemy. In fact, following John's directives would be the supreme act of love for one's enemy. By clearly demonstrating an intolerance for false doctrine, it would be possible to communicate to false teachers that they need to repent.

On the contrary, if the church or an individual were to extend hospitality to a false teacher, he would be encouraged in his position and take this action as an acceptance of his doctrine or as a covering of his unrighteousness.

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31

### Love Our Enemies?

Second, in the early church, the evangelistic and pastoral ministry of the church was conducted primarily by individuals who traveled from location to location. These itinerant pastors depended on the hospitality of the people of a local congregation.

John is directing the church not to extend this kind of hospitality to teachers of false doctrine. This is not contradictory to Jesus' teaching. We are to love our enemies, but not encourage them in their evil deeds.

As Jesus said, we are to show ourselves to be children of our Father. In the very same Sermon on the Mount, Jesus went on to warn his disciples to beware of false prophets "*who come...in sheep's clothing*" (Matt. 7:15). John gave practical application to this warning, and thereby encouraged the local church to maintain its purity and devotion to Christ.

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32

### Money From Unbelievers?

John says here (3 John 7) that the brethren took no support for their ministry from unbelievers. Yet when Solomon built the temple he accepted gifts from Gentiles (1 Kings 5:10; 2 Chron. 2:13-16). Is it always wrong to take money from unbelievers for God's work?

As a rule, God's work should be supported by God's people, for those who benefit spiritually should share materially with their teachers (1 Cor. 9:1-14). On the other hand, it may offend an unbeliever his gift turned down and could place an obstacle in the way of a person's becoming a believer.

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33

### Money From Unbelievers?

Moses did not reject gifts from Egypt (Exod. 12:25-26), nor did Solomon reject the gifts and help of the Gentile King Hiram (2 Chron. 2:13-16) or from the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:10). So while money should not be sought from unbelievers, neither should it be rejected, unless of course there are strings attached. Under no conditions should spiritual or other favors be bought by anyone.

Furthermore, it should be noted that this passage in 3 John is descriptive not prescriptive. It does not say, "Never take money from unbelievers." It simply notes that these believers on this journey did not accept help from unbelievers.

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34

### Money From Unbelievers?

No doubt they wanted to refrain from any appearance of selling the truth (2 Cor. 11:7; 1 Thess. 2:9). Rather, as it should have been, they depended on other believers to "*send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God*" (v. 6). We should not expect unbelievers to support the cause of faith.

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35

### Evangelist and Wife

We can conclude that Jude was a traveling evangelist and that his wife traveled with him.

1 Cor. 9:5 – *“Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, **the brothers of the Lord**, and Cephas?”*

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### Jude’s Sons and Grandsons

The church historian Eusebius tells us that Jude had sons and grandsons. Because these sons and grandsons were members of the House of David, the Emperor Domitian viewed them as potential leaders of a revolt against Rome and had them brought before his judgment seat.

They showed their callused hands to the Emperor, proving themselves to be farmers who were not seeking an earthly kingdom but a heavenly one. They were released and lived into the second century.

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### Jude’s Triads

Jude makes extensive use of triads – lists of three things.

There are a total of 14 triads in the book.

**Examples:**

*“To those who are **called**, **sanctified** by God the Father, and **preserved** in Jesus Christ:”* (Jude 1).

*“**Mercy**, **peace**, and **love** be multiplied to you”* (Jude 2).

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### Jude Quotes Peter

Anyone reading 2 Peter and Jude together will notice a great deal of similarity. It is quite obvious that one is quoting from the other.

*Which is it: is Jude quoting from Peter or is Peter quoting from Jude?*

2 Peter was written in AD 66. Jude was written in AD 68-69. Jude is quoting from 2 Peter.

Another indication: Peter wrote in the future tense whereas Jude wrote in the past tense. Peter predicted events that would happen in the future whereas Jude writes about the same events after they have already occurred.

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### Jude Quotes Peter

*There are 13 quotations from 2 Peter contained in the book of Jude:*

Jude	2 Peter	Jude	2 Peter
3	1:5	11	2:15
4	2:1	12	2:13
<b>6</b>	<b>2:4</b>	12-13	2:17
7	2:6	16	2:18
8	2:10	17	3:2
9	2:11	18	3:3
10	2:12		

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### Fallen Angels

*“And the angels who did not keep **their proper domain**, but left **their own abode**, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day”* (Jude 6).

*“...the **sons of God** saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose”* (Gen. 6:2).

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### Fallen Angels

- They were angels that kept not their own principality. Their own principality was the angelic sphere, and Jude is making the point that they did not remain in their own angelic sphere but chose to leave it. The Greek word for kept not means they did not “attend to their own business.”
- They did not keep proper vigilance and guard; they did not stay within the angelic sphere but chose to enter the human sphere.
- These angels left their proper habitation; they left the abode of fallen angels. They left that heavenly abode of the atmospheric heavens (Eph. 2:2; 6:12), their proper habitation, and they entered the earthly abode.

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42

### Fallen Angels

When angels (whether good or bad) appear, they appear as young men. These fallen angels appeared as young men and intermarried with human women. In this way, they left their proper habitation. The angels intermarried with human women in an attempt to thwart and corrupt the Seed of the Woman prophesied in Genesis 3:15.

Genesis 6 was Satan’s response to Genesis 3:15.

These angels are now *kept in everlasting bonds under darkness* as a result of that sin. When God used the Noahic flood to destroy the product of the intermarriage between fallen angels and human women (the *Nephilim*), these fallen angels were placed in confinement. As 2 Peter stated, they were confined to a place called Tartarus.

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43

### Fallen Angels

As 2 Peter stated, they were confined to a place called Tartarus. This is different than Hades or Gehenna, the two Greek words usually translated as “Hell.”

These fallen angels are confined unto the judgment of the great day; they are confined until the time of final judgment. These fallen angels will never be free again. After the Millennium, they will be summoned from Tartarus to appear before the judgment seat after which they will be cast into the lake of fire.

This lesson from Genesis 6 is an example from history used to remind the believers that God knows how to punish sinners.

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### Michael and Satan

**[Jude 9]** Isn’t the dispute between Michael the archangel and the devil based on an apocryphal story?

Jude records an account in which Michael the archangel and the devil have a dispute over the body of Moses, saying, “Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’”

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45

### Michael and Satan

This account is not found in the OT but is considered to be found in a pseudepigraphal book titled, *The Assumption of Moses*.

Just because the account is not found in any OT passages of Scripture doesn’t mean that the event did not occur. The Bible often cites truths from books that are not inspired, but which contain, nevertheless, some true statements. A biblical author is not limited to citing only Scripture. All truth is God’s truth wherever it is found.

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46

### Book of Enoch

**[Jude 14]** Does Jude cite the uninspired book of Enoch as divinely authoritative?

Jude quotes the *Book of Enoch*, saying, “Now *Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints.’”*

However, *Enoch* is not found in the canon of Scripture but is considered pseudepigraphical by the Christian church.

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47



### Book of Enoch

First, it is not certain that Jude is actually citing the Book of Enoch. He may simply be mentioning an event that is also found in this non-canonical book. It is noteworthy that Jude does not affirm that Enoch wrote this statement. He simply records what Enoch said. Jude may have been using a valid oral tradition and not the Book of Enoch.

Furthermore, even if Jude took this statement from the Book of Enoch, it is still true. As previously stated, many true statements can be found outside of Scripture. Just because Jude quoted from a non-canonical source does not mean that what he says is necessarily wrong. Not everything in the Book of Enoch is correct, but this does not warrant the conclusion that everything in it is wrong.

### Book of Enoch

The apostle Paul cited truths from pagan poets (Acts 17:28; 1 Cor. 15:33; Titus 1:12) without implying that these books are inspired. Indeed, even Balaam's donkey uttered a truth (Num. 22:30). The inspiration of the book of Jude guarantees that all it cites is true.

The existence of Enoch and his communication with God is a fact established elsewhere, both in the OT (Gen. 5:24) and the NT (Heb. 11:5).