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## I & II Peter and Jude Introduction: *Background Material*

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*With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.*  
1 Peter 5:12

Peter and Jude are writing to Christians who are oppressed, confused, and struggling, seeking to live for Christ in a world that not only does not understand but also persecutes those of the faith. In the midst of the oppressions from the world and family, come people who seek to deceive and entice them to live for sin and not for Christ. Peter and Jude encourage, challenge, and give them the hope to remain in Christ. At the same time, Peter and Jude do not hold back from telling them where they are in error and admonishing them to be aware and be on guard to live for Christ, putting on His virtues and not the worlds. Both of Peter's epistles and Jude are as relevant today as they were nearly two thousand years ago because what they went through, we go through, too! They needed hope and encouragement just as we do—whomever, whenever, and wherever we are!

### **Background and Setting**

We look at a small group of new and struggling Christians, living, perhaps, in Rome where the city had just undergone a devastating fire in 64 A.D. Just about everything was destroyed. The Emperor Nero is credited with starting this fiasco of a fire, in his insanity, by fastening fox's tails together and then strapping torches on them and letting them loose; Rome was destroyed. People saw him do this and he is in trouble—emperor or not; what is he to do?

Quickly, Nero finds a scapegoat in a new, Jewish, "cult" group that takes the focus off of him, a seemingly clever move for a pagan king. The Jews were already hated due to their antisocial inclinations and refusal to worship the Roman gods and emperors. They stayed to themselves and were pious, and this displeased a pagan society. Who wants to be convicted of sin!? Cult groups were also hated due to their unpredictability and refusal to acknowledge Caesar as god. Now there is a group that is both—and worse!

These Christians treated one another with dignity and respect; they were accused of incestuous behavior—how dare they call one another brother and sister! Society proclaimed these Christians to be atheists because they refused to acknowledge Apollo! They were also accused of being cannibals because they "ate" this person called Christ! So, a stereotypical archetype is developed—perfect for blaming! And, blamed they were for the fire; no evidence was required, just gossip and accusation, and that is all that was needed to pursue the persecutions.

In addition, many churches in Asia Minor were starting to undergo the spiritual persecutions from ruthless or perhaps misguided, self-proclaimed teachers who were mixing pagan ideas of mysticism and philosophies in with their faith (2 Peter 2:1; 3:3-4). This was causing the Christians to question their own faith. Is Christ all? Is there more? Then, a crisis of faith was at hand. The false teachers gave them what they wanted—a

license to sin. *After all, Christians have liberty; and, since we are saved anyway, we can do as we please.* Other arguments sprang up to support this, saying the body is evil but the soul is good, so one can engage in adultery or fornication at his/her pleasure and be OK in God's sight. Or, one can get secret codes from spiritual beings and they will protect him/her and show him/her spiritual enlightenment. These Christians got it from both ends—dysfunction in the church, and dysfunction in the community. Christians were a people in persecution and in great need of instruction, hope, and the comfort of assurance. What would they do now?

And, it gets worse! Tacitus, a contemporary Roman historian who had a distain for Christians, stated that Nero frequently had Christians brought to him so he could pour tar on them, tie them to poles, and ignite them to give luminance to his garden at night. When that bored him, Nero fed the Christians to the lions for public entertainment. And, the main persecutions had not even started yet! All of the churches of Asia Minor were in jeopardy due to spiritual blindness, apathy, and being overwhelmed (Acts 4:17-18; 28:25-28; Rom. 10-11; 2 Cor. 3:13-15)! Ironically, both the persecutors and the persecuted suffered from the same root problem—ignorance of the grace of Jesus Christ! They put their hope either in themselves or in the mysteries of unseen and unknowable forces yet had no real solution for them.



Along comes Peter—the Apostle of Hope! First Peter is a letter about the hope we have in Christ, regardless of what we experience or face. He gives us the ultimate weapon to fight discouragement—the ultimate hope that what we face and go through is temporary. Peter is telling us that Jesus offers His forgiveness and grace, then enables and empowers us. He indeed has a plan and a purpose for us! Our citizenship is to come in a glorious, wondrous eternity; our life here and now is preparatory and temporary. Our God is in control and totally sovereign. He gives us the faith and the ability to face whatever comes our way.

Peter is, perhaps, writing to both Jewish and Gentile Christians. The Jewish Christians were once traditionalists and the Gentile Christians came out of pagan backgrounds; both groups are embracing Christ for the first time. In contrast, James was mainly speaking to Jewish Christians. The principle of Peter was to bring forth encouragement for people being persecuted for their faith while teaching them humility and submission. Dependence on God is the quintessence of growing in faith, handling life, and becoming more mature so we can be our best for His Highest, as well as a blessing to those around us (1 Peter 1:6-7; 3:13-17; 4:8, 10, 12-19; 5:1-2, 8-9). Maturity was essential for handling conflict and the growing hostility Christians were beginning to face. But, these persecutions/sufferings—other than Nero’s escapades—seem to be harassment from religious leaders and family members, such as expulsion from their synagogue, being beaten, insults, and slander (1 Peter 2: 12, 20; 3:16; 4:4, 14) not from “organized” government oppression. This government oppression comes later after Peter is martyred. Perhaps, Peter is also preparing for the worst to come.

**Theme and Purpose:** First Peter is a short epistle and 2 Peter is even shorter. Peter tackles various doctrinal issues as well as how to live the Christian life with excellence. It is hard to pinpoint a principal theme. Like James, Peter writes in a series of exhortations or “sermonettes” (1 Peter 1:13 to 5:11), each section involving a different subject matter. Peter gives us imperatives with which to deal with suffering, persecution, hope, courage, our acceptance of truth and grace, and our duty before God. The book of Jude challenges false teachers and is more of a sermon or a “letter essay” (written as a speech and then read when the speaker could not be present) than a formal letter. It is often referred to as a “Pocket Epistle,” like 2 and 3 John and Philemon.

The principle theme of 1 Peter is the encouraging of new Christians in a new church, scattered across a wide area, and going through trials and persecutions. They were losing their families and businesses, beaten by mobs, and taken advantage of by tax assessors and local authorities, etc. They were bewildered that once they accepted this new life in Christ, the freedom from the restraints of the Law and the guarantee of salvation, they would be really hurting. *What happened to Christ’s Gospel of hope and freedom* they wondered, as we, too, wonder when we go through the tough stuff. The suffering—what they were going through and perhaps what you are going through—is unjust! So, what do we do?

Peter reassures them and us, telling us to stand firm. We have joy now; our hope is in Christ. The ultimate hope is the eternal assurance we have in what is to come. Life is not just about the here and now; it is also about our eternal life to come (1 Peter 1:3-13; 4:13; 5:1, 4, 12). Peter also challenges them to behave and watch their character. Freedom in Christ and enduring suffering gives no one license to sin or do wrong to others (1 Peter 2:12; 3:16; 4:1, 19). What we go through, what we endure, is never a waste; there is hope, and there is a plan and purpose. God is there—loving and carrying us through.

Thus Peter tells us, *But, in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.* We can learn and live through whatever the world brings when our faith is in Him; our humbleness is what we bring. The key is to *prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the*

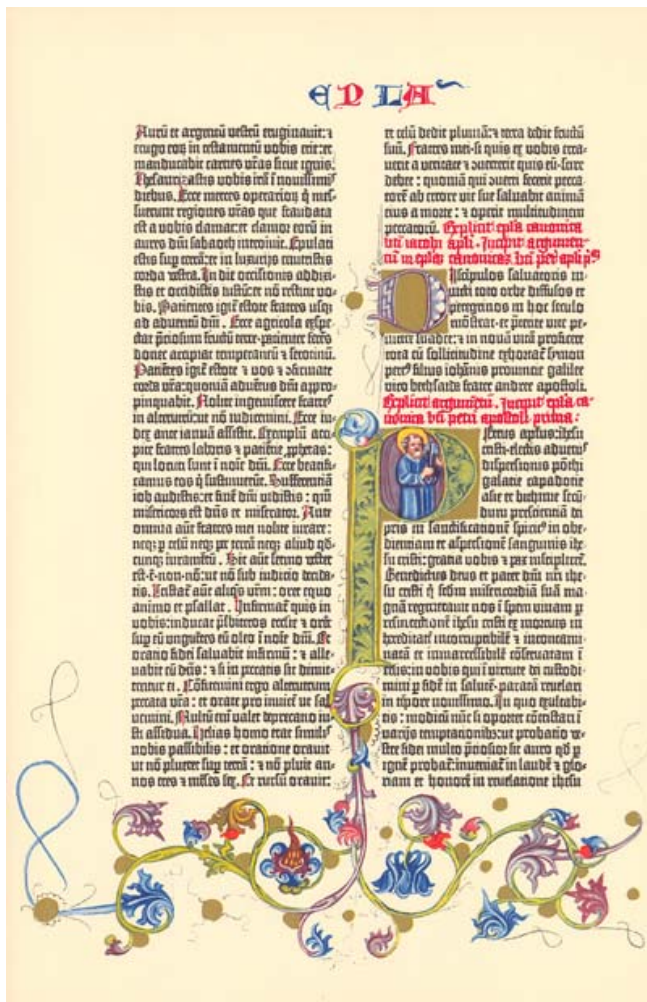
*grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. And always remember that, your faith and hope are in God. The quintessence of our faith and what we do is summarized in these two verses: So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. And, Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 1:3, 13, 21; 3:15; 4:19; 5:6-7). Bottom line? Trust and obey, no matter what, for there is no other way than His Way!*

In 2 Peter, Peter is combating false teachings from within the church and warning the people to be on guard from those ideas elsewhere (2 Peter 2:1). There is Truth; there is absolute Truth—even when you may not feel it or when others proclaim otherwise. We are called to learn and know the truth and be on guard against false truths.

The church to which Peter writes seems to be suffering not only from persecutions, but from an early form of *Gnosticism*. This “false doctrine” asserts we have to learn the secret and esoteric ways of God through His angels and solve the riddles; then, we are released to spiritual enlightenment. They also believed the body is evil, but the soul is good; so, one can do all one wants, such as sin, and as long as one’s soul is clean, one is OK and saved (2 Peter 2: 1,10, 13-19)! Also, Greek philosophies, oriental mysticism, and other unorthodox teachings were emerging and influencing the Christians negatively. Peter, perhaps with Paul’s help (2 Peter 3:15-16; Gal. 1:18; 2:1-21), takes a bold stance and sets them straight, saying it is faith in Christ, not obscure philosophies that save! Peter again addresses the issue that we are not to sin, either because we can come up with the good excuse when we feel wronged and we want to get back at someone, or to feel good. Sin is never excusable, thinking we can sin because we can rationalize that it is not wrong.

Jude confronts false teachers as does 2 Peter (Jude 1:4-19). These teachers were teaching that we have the liberty to sin because we have grace. They were also being arrogant—a true sign that a person is not from God (Psalm 5:5; 107:17; Hab. 1:7-9; Titus 3:3-8). Like Peter, Jude realized that false teachers were the biggest threat to the church—even more than tribulations and/or persecutions! Jude tempers his attack of the false teachers by focusing his readers on drawing on and growing in the knowledge and truth of Christ (Jude 1:3, 20-23). Jude is also being comportsing and encouraging, telling them to remain in the faith and trust in Christ, and, like Peter and James, to go after those who have fallen away from the faith.

We can apply this by realizing the veracity and impact of spiritual error! We do not have the right to rationalize sin, or to bow and be influenced by the world; rather, we are called to be the influencers of it. We live in a world that sees truth as relative, but truth is not relative. There is one Truth, Jesus Christ, and any thoughts of a Christian that stray from that truth causes that Christian and perhaps others around him or her to stray from the faith and into confusion, disillusionment, and even sin, corruption, and the world!



2 Peter 1:1-10 from the Gutenberg Bible 1450AD

**Authorship:** In both First and Second Peter, the first chapter and the first verse identify for us the author: *Peter, an apostle (1 Peter); bondservant of Jesus Christ.* (2 Peter) The obvious conclusion is that the author is *Simon*, the one whose name was changed to *Peter* by Jesus (It is “Cephas” an ancient Aramaic language called Syriac spoken in Syria. This is Peter’s surname, the Greek transliteration is *Petros* which is also a transliteration of the Aramaic *kepa*, meaning rock or a detached stone or boulder). Peter was one of Jesus first disciples, and he was a principal leader in the early church (Matt. 15:15; 16:15-19; 18:21; Mark 1:26-37; 8:29; 9:5-6; Luke 12:41; John 6:68; Acts 10:18; 15:14; 2 Peter 1:1). Peter was one of the first disciples called, and was among the “inner three” who, along with John and James, were the closest of the twelve to Jesus. Peter was given the special call of feeding the sheep and his faith being the foundation of the church (Mark 1:16-18; 5:37; 9:2; 14:33; John 21:15-19). After Jesus was resurrected, He appeared to Peter, although it was much later on (1 Cor. 15:5). He was “evangelized” by his brother Andrew who was also a disciple of John the Baptist. Peter was never a disciple of John (John 1:35-42). He was a fisherman from the Trans Jordan area of Bethsaida, east of Galilee, and had a home in Capernaum just three miles away (Mark 1:21, 29; 14:70; John 1:44). He was a married man as most, if not all the disciples

were (Matt. 8:14; Mark 1:30; Luke 4:28; 1 Cor. 9:5). Peter is also the “author” of the Gospel of Mark, as Mark was the scribe who dictated and edited this most precious work.

It would have been almost impossible to impersonate him at that time and then to carry on the impersonation to the rest of the church—from the early Church Fathers down to our time. The evidence is overwhelming and no serious theologian who takes the Bible as God’s Word has contested Petrine authorship. Others have, to prove a point of contention so to disprove the Bible, or to bring disrepute to the church and our Lord. Some have said the epistles were written long after the Apostles’ deaths without any historical or textual evidence to support such a claim. Such sloppy, rhetorician scholarship tends to be useless and even repugnant when it becomes intellectual dishonesty.

The internal and external exegetical evidence of Peter’s authorship is clearly supported. Chapter one, verse one is where he identifies himself personally. In chapter 5, verse 1, Peter gives his testimony as a witness and even having been a participant in suffering for our Lord. The book of Acts gives us a historical account of the early church and Peter’s activities that jump right in where the Gospels leave off. The speeches in Acts that are attributed to Peter clearly correspond to his epistles textually by word use, style, and grammar. Thus, his authorship of 1 Peter is exegetically supported through textual criticism. Second Peter has been in some dispute due to stylistic differences between the two epistles (Matthew 17:1-8; John 21:18-19; Acts 4:10-11; 1 Peter 2:7-8; 3:1; 2 Peter 1:14-18).

Also, research through the writings of the Early Church Fathers as well as archeology, church tradition, and other forms of redaction criticism also clearly support Peter as the author. There has been no evidence brought forth to disprove Peter as author of both 1 and 2 Peter other than stylistic diversity and Hellenistic and philosophical word use and expressions, which can be easily explained by time, location, or secretarial dictation. None other has claimed this work, nor have there been any disputes.

The only textual objection worth mentioning is Peter’s claim to be persecuted (1 Peter 1:11; 2:19; 4:12-13; 5:1, 8-9). Most believe the “real” persecution did not start up until later under Domitian’s reign (A.D. 81-96). Because the liberal contention is that these persecutions did not start until Domitian’s reign, their conclusion is that Peter could not be the author. Granted, under Domitian’s tenure it was far worse, but that does not discount the veracity and impact of Nero! Also, the fact is that the epistles are about preparing people for greater persecution than what they were enduring at that time!

But, what is major tribulation? Peter’s suffering and that of his church were the result of the typical religious leader’s persecution most Christians endured then. These included being kicked out of the Temple and losing family support, as well as the periodic harassment of fellow Jews and Romans which were deep, impacting, emotional hurts! Thus, to what magnitude is hurt hurtful?

This debate over the severity of persecutions has led some liberal scholars to suggest that 2 Peter was a later work by a pseudonymous person’s writing who then, for authentication, claimed Peter wrote it. Also, there are striking similarities in imagery and allusions with Jude and 2 Peter, but this only indicates they both used the same

secretary or that Jude used 2 Peter as a guide and inspiration and did a commentary on Peter. Using different literary devices for each work is common for most writers. Also, forgeries and the heretical epistles (pseudepigrapha) which claimed authorship was from a greater authority were quickly identified, then refuted and not tolerated. It would be a poor attempt. Attestation to style is a legitimate concern, but the stylistic parallels are far more impressive than the deviations (Acts 3:12; 2 Peter 1:3, 6-7; 3:11). The objections are neither absolute nor conclusive.

The bottom line is that 2 Peter, chapter three, verse one tells us that Peter wrote both. The Early Church Fathers, such as Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* (185AD), Tertullian (160-225AD), Origen (185-253AD), Clement of Alexandria (150-215AD), Jerome (340-420). The Church Historian, Eusebius (265-340), and the rest of the church Fathers such as Athanasius, Cyril, Ambrose, and Augustine all state, without a doubt, that Peter is the author of both. Origen, who firmly affirmed 1 Peter but at times listed 2 Peter as a “disputed book,” still acknowledged its power and purpose. Clement of Alexandria and Jerome both said Peter dictated both Epistles and used a different secretary for each letter, accounting for the stylistic differences. All of the Church Councils, as well as an archeological find of a second century Roman memorial also affirmed Peter’s timeline, authorship, and canonicity. The end result is that there is no question that Peter, the Disciple of Jesus and early church leader is the author of both First and Second Peter.

The objections that have come about in the last two centuries regarding Peter not being the author center upon the quest to devalue the Bible for “enlightenment” reasons or personal endeavors. The same argument has been used to discredit all of the disciples of Jesus as being capable of writing beyond their competence. It is further challenged by whether uneducated fisherman from Galilee were able to write idiomatic Greek in as a sophisticated and polished manner as those from the Mediterranean (Acts 4:12-19; 5:6-9). Another objection is that Peter’s Greek is too similar to the type of Greek used in the Septuagint (early Greek translation of the Torah and Writings in 70 A.D.). The logical conclusion for the objectors is that fishermen are uneducated and therefore unable to write, or to write in a polished way. And, the assumption is that the Greek used was not developed until after their lifetime. The answers to these objections are rather simple. First, the objectors make unrealistic presumptions in both cases. They assume the Greek was not in use, but this contradicts the archeological evidence that it was. Also, saying, without serious investigation, that fishermen are not educated, is both not knowing or understating the Judean and Hellenistic trade culture and practicing intellectual dishonesty.

It is a popular, liberal belief that the disciples were uneducated and even perhaps illiterate. But, this is just not the case! In fact, the disciples had the equivalent of a college education, as they attended schools and were able to read and write well. It is highly likely that they also had the further “formal education” that the Scribes and Pharisees had, which was equivalent to a postgraduate degree of today.

Liberal commentators quickly jump to the Gospels saying they tell us these men were uneducated. But, if you exegete those passages carefully, you will find that the reason the Pharisees looked down on them and said the disciples were uneducated was because they did not have “their” education and title, and they were not under the care of another Rabbi (that they approved of)—not because they were uneducated (Mark 6:2-3; 11:27-28; John 7:14). In the Acts passage, *unschooled* refers to being bold

in speech while not being trained in the proper rabbinic schools. It also means that they did not hold official positions, nor were members of the recognized religious circles of the day. It further means they were not trained in “rhetoric” (public speaking), as the priests of the Sanhedrin were.

So, take your pick on the accepted meanings, all of which apply, but none of which mean “uneducated” as being unable to read or write (Acts 4:13). Furthermore, modern research now suggests that Ezra did indeed set up schools and that most of the population, as in ours today in the U.S and Europe, were educated to read and write. In addition, they were taught to know the Torah. The Romans also set up schools where people learned to read and write Greek, then, “forced it “as the official language. Thus, the people of Galilee were bilingual—speaking both Aramaic and Greek.

Peter and all of the disciples would have been more than capable of writing such a letter and/or had access to “Amanuenses” (secretaries). Peter's comment in 1 Peter 5:12 regarding *Silas* may indicate that he wrote “with the help of” Silas (Acts 15:22-29). A further point is that Paul, the most educated of all of the disciples, dictated his letters, as did the very educated Josephus. Peter, being a fisherman, was running a commerce and trade; thus, he would have had access to an even higher education than was necessary for this profession then because it was also a valued and praised profession! In addition, Galilee was not the backwards, small town as many commentators have advocated. It is near the city of Capernaum about which recent archeological evidence suggests was a thriving metropolis. It was a large, industrious city which, in addition, would also have afforded many other educational opportunities. Furthermore, during the twenty to thirty years that passed from Jesus’ resurrection to the writing of this epistle, Peter could easily have gone “back to school” if he needed to. Thus, Peter certainly could have written it or, perhaps, as Paul and many educated men of his day, dictated it (Acts 12:12; 15:22-29; 1 Peter 5:12-13; 1 Thess. 1:1).

We are told by the Early Church Fathers and tradition that Peter was martyred in Rome under Nero, and was crucified. Because of his high reverence for the Lord, he felt he was unworthy to die in the same way, and requested to be crucified upside down. The date for his crucifixion during Nero’s reign and by his hand was 68 A.D.

The authorship of Jude is more complicated. Jude, a one chapter, very short “Pocket Epistle,” identifies in the very first verse, *Jude, a bond servant of Jesus Christ and Brother of James*, as the author. But, who is Jude, and which James is this (see James background article)? Jude is a declension of the name *Judas*—a common name then, as was *James*. There are eight different persons with this name in the New Testament, including two of the disciples (Luke 6:16). But, because of the assertion made by Jude and the research in the Early Church Fathers, a good case is made that it is James, the half brother of Jesus. In conjunction, this Jude was known to his readers and did not need to clarify who he was. Also, Jude does not make the claim to be an apostle; he even seems to disconnect himself from the other apostles in his humility (Matt. 13:55; Mark 3:21, 31; 6:3; John 7:5; Acts 1:14; 12:17; 15:13; 1 Cor. 9:5; Gal. 1:19). Because of these traits, it is highly unlikely a pseudepigrapher (a false person claiming apostleship or authorship) would introduce him self in this humble way. Thus, Jude, like James, is a half brother of Jesus, and a son of Joseph and Mary. He, like James, was not convinced that Jesus was the Messiah until after the resurrection. Jude,



with such an honored position of family and authority, does not overstate who he is, and exercises the humility of a true follower of Christ (John 3:30; Gal. 2:20-21; James 1:1-2).

Jude caused two of the Early Church Fathers, Jerome, and Didymus, to have a primary problem for this book's acceptance in the canon. The contention was that Jude used some apocryphal material (a book that is "extra-biblical," and was sometimes used as Scripture but not included in the Bible for various reasons such as authorship, dating, inspiration, and content) from "1 Enoch" and "The Assumption of Moses," but this practice does not say the "entire" apocryphal work that is quoted is true or inspired, only the part they quote. This means the apocryphal book referenced may be true or have truth in it, but not enough to be in the canon of the inspired-by-God Bible. Many parts of it were used in other parts of the Bible because it would be familiar to the readers for illustration's sake or to make a point (Acts 17:28; 1 Cor. 15:33; Titus 1:2; 2 Tim. 3:8). The rest of the Early Church Fathers fully accepted Jude.

The same objections given to Peter as being the author were given to Jude, and consist of the date of the sufferings indicating a later date and the issue of literacy competence of the author. The other controversy worth mentioning is concerning *Gnosticism*. Some scholars contend it was not developed until the second century A.D., thus Peter and Jude could not have written about a heresy that had not occurred yet. But, they make the logical error of not realizing that Gnosticism was prevalent as an idea, but not a full blown philosophy. Thus Gnosticism, just as other heretical ideas, was not formally accepted and written on until the second century. Such ideas take root in various forms and become more formal as they evolve and time moves on. However, these were not issues considered until the nineteenth century when liberalism and the attack of biblical authority started its reign. The Early Church Fathers accepted it as orthodoxy and valuable, and it was widely circulated and used without question. Jude was also listed in the earliest canons (listing of the accepted books of Scripture) including the Muratorian Canon in 200 A.D.

**Date and Occasion:** Most conservative scholars give the dates of 1 Peter about 60-65, with a maximum of 68 A.D., and of 2 Peter a few years later (67-68) since he was martyred in 68 A.D. Peter also mentions in 2 Peter 3:1 his other letter to them. It is assumed to be 1 Peter, or perhaps a Pauline circulating letter, such as Romans, where he added an addendum to a lost epistle. Liberal commentators state both letters were written after Peter's death, but that would involve time travel or something more ludicrous. Actually, their intention of a later date presupposes Peter is not the author. In 2 Peter, Peter indicates in 1:14 he is going to be with the Lord soon, as he senses his pending death. Thus, 67-68 A.D. would be reasonable.

Peter was in "Babylon," (which could be modern day Iraq or perhaps in Rome or Egypt, as "Babylon" was also a colloquialism for "Egypt" and "Rome," as seen in Rev. 17:5, 9-10) when he wrote this epistle (1 Peter 5:13). The theory that he was in Rome has the most textual weight as Peter was with Paul there, and was martyred there (Col. 4:10; Philemon 24). This also gives evidence that Paul may have influenced or collaborated with 1 Peter, accounting for its more eloquent use of words and style (Eph. 5:22-24; Col. 3:22; 1 Peter 2:18; 3:1-6). In addition, the persecutions were far more advanced in Rome at that time, giving Peter a glimpse into what would soon happen in the other provinces.

Judging from Peter's use of frequent Old Testament quotes, his audience may have been mostly Jewish Christians as with the Epistle of James. Peter also used Greek philosophical terms indicating the inclusion of Greek Christians as a once pagan-now Christian audience. However, Greek education and culture were a part of Judaism at that time (1 Peter 1:18; 4:3). The contexts and textual evaluation indicate both Jews and Gentiles were a part of the congregation receiving Peter's Epistle (1 Peter 1:18; 4:3-4). The debate on the date centers upon when the sufferings of the church took place. When sufferings are mentioned, as discussed in the previous section, it is usually considered the persecution from Jewish religious leaders' inquisitions, then the Romans'. The first four chapters of 1 Peter do not mention persecution; then, in chapter 5, it is mentioned. This sets the textual scholars off in debate.

But, as for the main picture of Peter issuing his teaching in a logical order, he does not get to that topic until late in chapter four. The persecutions did not fully erupt until the time of Emperor Trajan in the early second century; there are also other periods, such as those of Domitian, Nero, and then Flavian. Peter was martyred in Nero's backyard. However, we also have to consider what Peter meant by sufferings. Were they severe, as in tribulation, or moderate, as in harassment? Both were serious emotionally and impacted the church. Also, Peter, in His epistles, was, as said before, preparing his people for bigger sufferings! The argument is that since he does not talk about it until later means the suffering did not take place, and places the epistle at an earlier date. Or, in saying the sufferings did take place indicates they were after Peter's lifetime and thus, its authorship is in question, too. Such debate does not take into consideration the purpose and intent of the epistle, the actual impact of suffering from family and Synagogue excommunication, or the role of the Holy Spirit's inspiration.

Since either 2 Peter "borrowed" from Jude or Jude was an addendum to 2 Peter, the dating of Jude is also very similar, occurring between 65-67 A.D.

**Canonicity:** In contrast to other Epistles, 1 Peter has no objections that are worth mentioning, other than the issue of a fisherman being able to write. No other N.T. Epistle has more universal recognition than 1 Peter. The early church fully recognized, embraced, and accepted it. However, 2 Peter comes to us with a couple of difficulties. This does not take away its power, inspiration, or veracity as God still is the main Author! However, under close examination, 2 Peter either "borrows" from Jude, or Jude "borrows" from 2 Peter. Just like the Synoptic Gospels where there are commonalties, so is the case here. The argument is that someone borrowed from someone because there is verbatim agreement textually such as 2 Peter 2:17 to Jude 1:13. They also share the same words, phrases, ideas, illustrations, and Old Testament quotes (2 Peter 2:1-18; Jude 4-16). This can mean cooperation as both authors worked with each other, one copied the other (the scholarly conscience is that Jude copied 2 Peter and expanded on it for his congregation), both used the same scribe, or it was a common speech and both quoted from a lost third source, and so forth (1 Cor. 5:9; Col. 4:16). But, quoting or copying was common practice, as was quoting without stating the source because the source for them was well known, such as Paul perhaps quoting early hymns in Phil. 2:6-11 and 1 Tim. 3:16. This is interesting to study and know, but, again, does not take away from the impact and authenticity of 2 Peter.

There is contention in that the style of Greek is weaker and less sophisticated in 2 Peter than 1 Peter. This could lend further credence that Peter dictated it to Silvanus (1 Peter 5:12), whereas in 1 Peter he may have dictated it to Silas (1 Peter 5:12). Because of these difficulties and the problem previously mentioned about the style, 2 Peter was in question of whether it belonged in the canon of the Bible. Although James is the most contested, 2 Peter seems the second most contested. But, it was finally admitted as Scripture for profit and learning.

**Theological Value:** Unlike the Pauline Epistles, 1 and 2 Peter are not theological treatises. They do, however, like James, incorporate solid theological value. Peter, like Paul, comes to God's sovereignty as absolutely gracious, holy, and righteous, and He will be the final Authority and Judge (1 Peter 1:17; 2:12, 23; 4:5-6, 7-19; 5:2, 10). Peter fully acknowledges that Jesus Christ is God, and the Trinity is implied in that all three persons—Father, Son, and Spirit—are God and there is only one God (Matt. 16:16; Acts 2:36; 1 Peter 1:3, 11, 19-20; 2:3-4, 13, 25; 3:15; 5:4, 11). The Spirit is participating in our lives and our salvation (1 Peter 1:2, 11-12; 4:14), and we are in God's world as His people. We are chosen in Him, yet are still living in a rebellious world (1 Peter 1:2-5, 15, 20-21). Peter also acknowledges that the Devil is there seeking to steal and devalue us, but he is not omnipotent (all powerful and all knowing); only God is (1 Peter 5:8). Even though this is God's world and we are securely His children in Christ, we are still subject to sin, the desires of our will, and the seeking of the ways of the world (1 Peter 1:14; 4:3-4).

Peter, in a loving, caring, pastoral tone also deals with suffering—why we have it and, most importantly, what we are to do with it. Peter does not hold back; we will face sufferings and trials—we will even be persecuted for following the faith and being a good witness. It is how we grow through them and what we learn that is the real matter to God and value for us. Also, Jesus, being fully God, suffered on our behalf; we live in a world of sin that suffers due to the consequences thereof. He bore our sins and took away our ultimate, deserved suffering. Our Lord modeled to us how we are to deal with suffering (1 Peter 1:16-21; 2:21, 4-25). The key to the Christian life and our spiritual growth is our faith that develops our trust in Christ, and our submission to His precepts that produces character and maturity (1 Peter 2:12; 5:10-11).

First Peter also deals with the end times with Christ as Redeemer and Glorious, just as Paul does in 1 Thessalonians (Acts 2:17; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 1:1; 1 John 2:18; 1 Peter 1:11-12, 20). In addition, Peter confirms for the church that the Messianic Period has come with Christ, and there is no other for which to wait (1 Peter 1:7, 13, 21; 4:13).

Second Peter and Jude give us less theological substance, but accomplish essential, needed tasks such as growing in faith (2 Peter 1:8-10, 12, 16-21; Jude 1:3), how to face dangers (2 Peter 1:13-14; 2:1-3; Jude 1:20-22), combating false teaching and false teachers (Rom. 12:8; 2 Peter 2:1-22; 3:3-4, 15-18; Jude 1:4-19), and the second coming of Christ (2 Peter 3:1-13)!

**Genre and Destination:** The type of literature is a Greek Epistle, or commonly known to us as a *personal letter*. Thus, 1 and 2 Peter are letters of encouragement and instruction to a church, but also “encyclical,” as in circular letters like Romans. This

means 1 Peter was addressed to *God's elect*, and then it was sent out to many churches in Asia Minor—*Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*, which is now modern *Turkey*. Peter gives exhortation and hope to Christians of a common faith who are facing common problems (1 Peter 1:1; 2 Peter 1:14). Tradition asserts that Peter went there in his early years to evangelize and plant churches. At the same time, Paul was in the southern region of Asia Minor preaching and planting there. These letters were sent by messengers who also gave oral instructions and copies of other letters or Gospels. Usually, a personal addendum was placed in the letter for each church. This practice gives credence that Jude may have been an added in part of 2 Peter, which Jude personalized as a sermon for his congregation.

Peter, like James, parallels Jesus' teachings. The rhetorical (literature symbol types and placement) and didactic (educational nature) textual character indicates he wrote his letter perhaps by incorporating aspects of his sermons, and incorporating some hymnic segments (early church songs), and early catechesis (doctrinal statements). He then organized them as a commentary, directly from Jesus' own teachings, giving us practical ways to put our faith into practice by means of our Lord's precepts (John 21:15-17 1 Peter 5: 2-3). Each of these individual, literary aspects were incorporated into an intelligible, unified literary work as an epistle. Like most epistles, it was designed to be read aloud in congregations for reproof and teaching (Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27; Rev. 1:3).

Second Peter and Jude are also circular, personal letters addressed to the providences in Asia Minor. Peter is less formal and comes across as a shepherd of Christ's sheep (John 21:15-17). He seeks to praise his readers while encouraging them to grow further in Christian faith, reason, and practice. Peter's purpose is to rekindle Christian growth (2 Peter 1), point out false teachings (2 Peter 2), and to encourage the vigilance and hope we have in our Lord's return (2 Peter 3) which they did not fully believe at the time. Jude follows the occasion of 2 Peter.

## 1 Peter Outline

**Chapter 1:** God's grace and abundant mercy is available to us now and as an inheritance!

- I. Salutations of greetings, acknowledgments and hope (1:1-2)
- II. As Christians we have hope, and assurance, so we can give praise to God for His Grace and Salvation (1:3-12)
  - a. Gods abundant mercy
  - b. He is our Living Hope that will not fade away
  - c. We have salvation available to us and an eternal inheritance
  - d. Introduction to the running theme of suffering
  - e. We are kept by God by faith
  - f. Real, genuine faith is precious to God and will preserve us through trials and life
  - g. Salvation produces hope and joy

- h. Even if we do not see Jesus , He sees us, loves us, and perseveres with us
- i. We live in hope

III. Exhortations to live a life of holiness before God (1:13-21, a running theme through 5:11)

- a. Keep our mind focused on Christ to help see our hope
- b. Conforming our lives to holiness
- c. Reverent fear for our Lord
- d. His precious blood poured out for us

IV. Live the life of holiness through His Word (1:13-2:3)

- a. Obey the Truth
- b. The Spirit guides us
- c. Love one another
- d. Do not be corruptible; rather, be incorruptible
- e. Our life here is temporary and preparatory
- f. Do not engage in evil; rather, grow in Christ
- g. Crave the Word
- h. Christ is gracious to us

**Chapter 2:** We have position in Christ, are chosen, and are a part of a spiritual community!

I. We are chosen, even when rejected by others (2:4-10)

- a. We are precious before God even when others hate and come against us
- b. We are a part of a spiritual house
- c. We are to come to Christ in worship
- d. We are chosen in Him
- e. We are a holy priesthood
- f. We are acceptable before God
- g. We are called to praise and proclaim Christ
- h. We have mercy in Christ whereas before, in the world, we had no mercy
- i. We are the people of God called to do the work of God
- j. Our identity is in Christ, not with the world

II. Living Honorably (2:11-12)

- a. We are on a journey in life
- b. Stay away from lust
- c. We are at war with God's desires versus ours
- d. Our conduct is to be honoring to God and others
- e. All that we do is to be glorifying to God

III. Submission in Social Relationships (2:13-3:13)

- a. Be submissive to those in authority
- b. Show gentleness and respect to all
- c. Do not be harsh; endure harshness

- d. Our conscience toward God may beget suffering
- e. Jesus is our example of submission
- f. Christ suffered for us and is an example of suffering
- g. Our Overseer is Christ
- h. Submission In family relationships
- i. The duty of wives and husbands to respect and love each other in Christ
- j. Adornment needs to be from within, not just outwardly
- k. Inward beauty, which is our trust and obedience to Him, is precious to God,
- l. We are to exercise care, honor, respect, love, and understanding

**Chapter 3: Duty of all is to be serving for God's Glory!**

- I. Our grace, suffering and service in Him (3:1-12)
  - a. We are called to be a blessing to others
  - b. Compassion, love, and courteousness are prime
  - c. Be mindful of our words and deeds
  - d. God's eyes are upon us
  - e. Make Jesus not just Savior but LORD
  
- II. When we suffer for righteousness sake we are blessed (3:13-18).
  - a. Do not be afraid of others
  - b. Keep Christ in our hearts
  - c. Always be ready to defend our faith with love and reason
  - d. Show the hope we have by adding respect to our words and deeds
  - e. Others who come against us will be ashamed
  - f. It is far better to suffer in the will of God than to prosper in evil
  
- III. Christ Himself suffered (3:18-4:6)
  - a. Christ suffered for our sins
  - b. He brings us to God
  - c. He makes us alive
  - d. The cleansing of baptism
  - e. Don't waste any more of your life in evil deeds
  - f. We are called to live in the Spirit
  - g. Christ is our continual Example

**Chapter 4: We are to have the attitude of Christ**

- I. We live and serve to glorify our Lord (4:7-11)
  - a. Our conduct and prayers are to be serious
  - b. Fervent love for one another
  - c. Love covers sin
  - d. Practice your spiritual gifts
  - e. Be hospitable and don't complain

- f. Be good stewards
  - g. Be careful how you speak and minister as we sometimes speak for, and are used by God
- II. Watch our conduct because when we suffer, we glorify Christ (4:12-19)
- a. Trials are normal and should be welcomed
  - b. Rejoice in all things, including suffering
  - c. God's Spirit of glory rests on us
  - d. Do not get into suffering by your own misdeeds
  - e. Do not condescend to others
  - f. Never be ashamed when we suffer, as it glorifies Christ
  - g. Beware: judgment is still coming
  - h. All that happens to us, when we are obedient, is the will of God

### **Chapter 5: Shepherd the flock of Christ with wise conduct**

- I. Caring for God's people (5:1-4)
- a. Serve as Elders with faithfulness and honor
  - b. Humbleness is essential in leadership
  - c. Leading is not compulsion; rather, it comes from a willing heart
  - d. Dishonesty devalues the Kingdom
  - e. We can trust Christ to lead us
  - f. Real leaders are real examples
  - g. Look to the return of Christ for hope
- II. Submit to God and resist the devil (5:5-11)
- a. Submit to elders
  - b. Submit to one another
  - c. Be faithful and humble to God and to others
  - d. God is the only One to exalt us
  - e. Cast your care to Him
  - f. Be sober and vigilant
  - g. Beware of the Devil and resist him
  - h. Jesus is our Promise, Strength, and Validation
  - i. To God be the glory and nothing else
- III. Depend on God's grace (5:12-14)
- a. The purpose of this epistle is to lead us to trust God
  - b. We have true grace in Christ
  - c. Closing salutations

## **2 Peter Outline**

### **Chapter 1: The Gospel is real, impacting truth**

- I. Greeting people in the faith (1:1-4)
  - a. Peter, the dedicated true servant
  - b. Faith is precious
  - c. Knowledge of Christ increases our faith and power
  - d. He gives us precious promises
  - e. We are called to virtue
  - f. We partake in Christ
  - g. We escape the evils of the world
  
- II. Faithful growth in Christ (1:5-11)
  - a. We have privileges and responsibilities
  - b. Faith requires our diligence
  - c. We are called to grow in Him
  - d. We are called to emulate Christian virtues
  - e. Our growth has value
  - f. Our election is proven by our obedience and growth in Christ
  - g. Do not be shortsighted concerning your faith and the opportunities He brings
  
- III. The main theme of Peter's message (1:12-15)
  - a. Our lives are temporary
  - b. We are established by Truth
  - c. We have a purpose
  - d. We have a legacy
  
- IV. The prophetic testimony of Peter (1:16-21)
  - a. Christ is a fact in history and in our lives
  - b. God's Word is a Light to the darkness of the world
  - c. Allow His Word to shine in your heart
  - d. Real prophecy and knowledge comes from God, not our agendas

## **Chapter 2: The Problem of False Teachers**

- I. False doctrines are extremely destructive (2:1-3)
  - a. False teachers will come, or, are already here
  - b. False teachers like secrecy, and work to undermine the real work of Christ
  - c. Number of followers is no sign of authenticity
  - d. They use deception and manipulation
  
- II. False teachers will be judged and destroyed (2:4-11)
  - a. God did not spare the angels who fell; He will not spare those who live ungodly lives, are self willed, and who refuse His grace
  - b. Hell is real; you do not want to go there
  - c. God is loving and will save those He has chosen
  - d. He will deliver us out of temptation
  
- III. The Characteristics of False Teachers (2:12-17)



- a. They are immoral and will be condemned
- b. False teachers need to be revealed and dealt with swiftly
- c. They love sin and will rationalize that it is OK, enticing others to sin also
- d. If not dealt with, they will feast on you

IV. False teachers are deceptive (2:18-22)

- a. They may use words to persuade, but, under careful examination, they are empty.
- b. They may lure you with sin or corruption, telling you it is liberty
- c. It is better not to have known real truth than to know it and then reject it

**Chapter 3: God's great promise to keep us in the faith**

I. God promises Christ's return to us (3:1-9)

- a. Beware of scoffers who deny Christ's return
- b. Peter restates his purpose
- c. Christ will return
- d. There will be a judgment
- e. We have no knowledge of God's timing
- f. God wants us to repent

II. Christ will certainly return unexpectedly (3:10-13)

- a. Do not be ignorant of His promise
- b. We are to conduct ourselves with good ethics, honor, and godliness
- c. Great signs will take place

III. The exhortation to remain In Christ (3:14-18)

- a. Be diligent in looking forward to Christ's second coming
- b. What we go through, even suffering, has meaning and purpose
- c. Be steadfast in faith and in Christ
- d. Do not be led away by error or personal desire
- e. Grow in the grace and love of our Lord
- f. Benediction

**Jude Outline**

**Chapter 1: The Denouncement of False Teachers**

I. Greetings (1:1-2)

II. Admonition to be alert

- a. Theme and purpose—contend for the faith (1:3-4)
- b. Stay focused on the faith
- c. Beware that not all teach correctly
- d. False teaching will contaminate you

III. Do not be an Apostate (1:5-11)

- a. God will destroy those who do not believe and teach others not to believe
  - b. Warning against sexual immorality
  - c. Warning not to reject authority
  - d. The one authority is Jesus—even for an Archangel
- IV. We are not to serve ourselves but serve our Lord (1:12-15)
- a. Further warning about sexual immorality
  - b. Quoting 1 Enoch
- V. There will be false teachers (1:16-19)
- a. False teachers are apostate and will deceive you
  - b. False teachers show themselves by their bad character
  - c. False teachers show themselves by their false flattery
  - d. False teachers are combated by our focusing on Christ and His precepts
- VI. Build yourself up in Christ (1:20-25)
- a. Prayer is essential and builds us up in Christ
  - b. Love builds us up in Christ
  - c. Mercy builds us up in Christ
  - d. Compassion builds us up in Christ
  - e. We have eternal life
  - f. God keeps us from stumbling
  - g. Benediction: to God be the glory

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