

NT Survey – 2 Peter and Jude
Valley Bible Church Adult Sunday School
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We are studying 2 Peter and Jude together since both epistles deal with false teachers.

Introduction to 2 Peter

Author – The author is the apostle Peter. See the introduction to 1 Peter.

Date – The consensus of opinion is that Peter wrote this letter while in prison in Rome where he was facing imminent death. This information dates the letter at AD 66 or 67.

Audience – Even though Peter does not name the recipients, they are most likely the same as those who received his first letter.

Theme – Second Peter is a letter of warning, the last written communication from the Apostle Peter. Previously, he had written to comfort and encourage believers who were in the middle of suffering and persecution; attacked from outside. Now, some time later, they were being attacked from inside the church by complacent Christians and false teachers with Gnostic tendencies. In response, Peter uses forms of the word "knowledge" 16 times and tells his readers to hold fast to the truth, continue to mature, and reject all who would twist the message.

Outline – 2 Peter

- I. Introduction (1:1-2)
- II. Confirm Your Calling (1:3-21)
- III. Warning Against False Teachers (2:1-22)
- IV. Christ's Return (3:1-16)
- V. Conclusion (3:17-18)

Summary – 2 Peter

Introduction (1:1-2)

Peter begins in standard fashion by identifying himself as a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ.

Peter would obey his Master now matter the cost. He also identifies his audience as believers who are united with him in the same faith. We have received the faith by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

- ❖ What master do I obey? Will I obey God's Word no matter the cost?

Confirm Your Calling (1:3-21)

1:3-4 – Blessings – Peter begins with reminding his readers that God's divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness (1:3); we have been called by His own glory and excellence (1:3); He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises (1:4); we have become partakers of the divine nature (1:4); and we have escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust (1:4). We have a fully sufficient salvation brought to us by God's power.

- ❖ Do I live like a saved person who has been given everything I need for life and godliness?

1:5-7 – Diligence – "For this very reason" takes us back to our salvation and enablement to live pleasing to the Lord. "Diligence" refers to eagerness, earnestness, or zeal to do something with intense effort and motivation. In the original Greek it is placed first for emphasis. "Applying" implies making a strong effort to provide something necessary. Believers are to respond to all that God has done for them in Christ with maximum effort toward progressing in sanctification.

- ❖ Am I applying maximum effort in becoming more Christ-like?

God and man cooperate in making progress in sanctification. God is at work in us both to will and to work for His good pleasure (Phil 2:13). The indwelling Holy Spirit, when filling the believer, produces growth. Our role in sanctification is to strive to obey God and take steps that will increase our sanctification. It can be seen in the active words used to describe that work (i.e. “long” in 1 Pet 2:2; “pursue” in Heb 12:14; “abstain” in 1 Pet 2:11; “cleanse” in 2 Cor 7:1; “present” in Rom 12:1).

❖ Am I “cooperating” with God?

“Supply” conveys the thought of a generous and lavish provision. Believers are to exercise maximum effort in supplying (providing lavishly) the following list of virtues to the faith that they have received. Peter is not giving a sequential list. He is using a common literary form in ancient literature referred to as *sorites* that uses a step-by-step chain that leads from one level or relationship to another. A *sorites* can be thought of as a circle of reasoning where everything works together or else the entire thing falls apart. For example: $7 = 1+1+1+1+1+1+1$; if any one of the “1s” is not there... you do not have “7”. This can be seen in 1:8, 9 with the reference to “these qualities”.

Peter’s use of *sorites* is clearly to communicate a simple message: a life changed by Christ is characterized by the diligent pursuit of a godly life. This changed life demonstrates that God’s calling is true (1:10) and makes us fruitful for God’s work (1:8).

❖ Am I diligently pursuing godliness?

The Holy Spirit, through Peter, shows us seven areas in which we should apply maximum effort for growth. Growth in these areas demonstrates that we have been made new – that we belong to Jesus.

1. moral excellence – fulfilling our purpose of glorifying God
2. knowledge – a love of and hunger for God’s word
3. self-control – in control of our impulses, passions, appetites, and desires
4. perseverance – bearing up under difficulties in a way that honors and glorifies God
5. godliness – a mind and heart set on things above; an awareness of God in every area of life
6. brotherly kindness – a fervent, practical caring for others in the body of Christ
7. love – the unconditional, sacrificial commitment of my will to another’s needs and best interests regardless of the cost to myself

❖ Am I demonstrating a changed life?

1:8-11 – Assurance in Growth – A true believer, one who has been given the gift of true saving faith, will increase in these qualities for they are evidences of a true calling and choosing, works flowing from a true faith. Yet we are also commanded to diligently pursue them. Growth brings about assurance of salvation.

❖ Am I pursuing growth?

1:12-15 – Shepherdly Encouragement for Growth – Because growth is evidence of conversion, Peter will always be ready to remind believers of these things. Peter desires to have a lasting legacy of ministry in the lives of those he is shepherding.

¹³I consider it right, as long as I am in this *earthly* dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder, ... ¹⁵And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind. 2 Pet 1:13, 15

Peter used his own witness to add encouragement for spiritual growth. Peter was an eyewitness to the Transfiguration and passed on the truth of Christ’s deity and majesty to his readers. The supernatural power and majesty of Jesus should spur us on to growth.

❖ What kind of legacy am I leaving?

1:19-21 – Scriptural Encouragement for Growth – The source of truth and power for the believer is the prophetic message of Scripture. Scripture is able to give guidance and support for righteous living until Jesus returns, and is reliable because it is of divine origin.

❖ How high is my view of God and His Word?

Warning Against False Teachers (2:1-22)

2:1-3 – Coming Predicted – “But” contrasts the truth of God’s word with error brought to God’s people by false teachers. There will always be false teachers among the true church of God.

¹But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. ... ¹³**But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.** 2 Tim 3:1-13

⁴For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. Jude 1:4

These false teachers introduce destructive heresies. These are self-styled, self-willed opinions exchanged for the truth of God’s Word. The false teachers characteristically reject divine authority. Wickedness is not a product of sound doctrine, but of heresy. Reckless and hardened immorality accompanies their doctrinal error and they will lead many into sexual immorality. Because of this, the way of the truth will be maligned. The false teachers will also exploit believers in their greed.

❖ Am I being diligent to ensure that my understanding of God’s Word is correct and therefore influencing holy living and godliness?

2:3-9 – Judgment Assured – For the false teachers, their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. Peter uses OT examples of judgment on sin in order to show the certainty of punishment for false teachers. The examples are:

1. God's condemnation of the angels who sinned (v4)
2. Judgment of the world during Noah's time (v5)
3. The destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (v6).

In contrast, the Lord is powerful and able to deliver the godly from the temptation of false teaching.

❖ Am I relying on the Lord and His Word to overcome temptation?

2:10-22 – Characteristics of False Teachers – Peter denounces the false teachers:

- They are daring (reckless) and self-willed; brashly declaring their authority over demons.
- Full of lust like creatures of instinct; eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin.
- Enticing unstable souls; having a heart trained in greed.
- Loving the wages of unrighteousness.
- Springs without water – offering the spiritually thirsty nothing more than false hopes of relief.
- Mists driven by the storm – without substance and provide no life-changing refreshment.
- Speaking out arrogant *words* of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error.
- Promising freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption.

Peter warned that those who made a superficial commitment to Jesus, and had even turned their back on sin as part of their show, are in a worse place than those who from the beginning had never heard the gospel. Their "first" state was eternal damnation without having heard the gospel, but their "last" worse state was eternal damnation having rejected the gospel. The passing of time demonstrated that the false teachers had made a pretense of faith in Christ, but it was not a genuine faith.

Christ's Return (3:1-16)

3:1-2 – Peter's Purpose in Writing Restated – Peter's purpose had not changed. His readers were "beloved" and had a "sincere mind". His shepherd's heart drove him to care for them and leave them fully established in the Scriptures.

3:3-7 – The Coming of Scoffers – The main doctrinal errors of the false teachers are clearly seen and lead to immorality. One that could get some traction among believers and could cause them to doubt the faithfulness of God is the second coming of Jesus. The scoffers questioned that Jesus would return since he had not yet returned. The stability of the universe did not seem to indicate that God was going to break into human history again. By thinking this way, the scoffers ignore that the people of Noah's day thought the same thing before the flood judgment. Today, future judgment has been promised and everything that currently exists is reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. This is as applicable today as it was 30 years after the ascension.

❖ Am I looking expectantly for Jesus' return?

3:8-10 – The Certainty of Christ's Return – God is faithful and will fulfill every promise. He is steadfast, unchanging, perfectly reliable, and utterly dependable. Because God is faithful, He can be completely trusted; we can fully submit ourselves to His sovereignty. The passage of a thousand years should not lead us to conclude that God will not fulfill what He has promised. The passing of time does not cause God to forget His promises.

❖ Do I live like God is faithful?

The Lord is patient toward the elect, not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance. When the full number of the church age elect are brought to repentance, the day of the Lord will come. "The day of the Lord" describes God's cataclysmic future judgment on the wicked. A systemization of the passages describing the Day of the Lord (Isa 2:12; 13:6, 9; Ezek 13:5; 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1,11,31,3:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Obad 15; Zeph 1:7, 14; Zech 14:1; Mal 4:5; Acts 2:20; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess 2:2; 2 Peter 3:10) indicates it is an extended period of time, which appears to include the entire Tribulation (or perhaps the last half of the Tribulation – the Great Tribulation) through the Millennial Kingdom to when the current heavens and earth are done away prior to the Great White Throne judgment. Since the Day of the Lord will come suddenly and unexpectedly, bringing destruction on those who are spiritually unaware, believers should be alert and sober.

❖ Am I sober and alert?

3:11-16 – Exhortations – Since the Lord is not slow about His promise to bring final judgment to the universe through His own power, "what sort of people ought you to be" or "**how outstandingly excellent you ought to be**". The revelation of the future should drive us to a changed lifestyle; to holy conduct (external actions and behavior) and godliness (internal heart attitudes and reverence). Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, and regard the patience of our Lord *as* salvation.

❖ Does God's faithfulness in bringing future judgment drive me to holy conduct and godliness?

Peter referred to Paul's writings as a support for his teaching that divine patience was a factor in the delay of it is Scripture and must be accepted and not dismissed or distorted (v15-16) as the untaught or unstable do with all the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

Conclusion (3:17-18)

Peter ends his letter by stating that his readers could protect themselves by being on guard and understanding how false teachers operate, and pursuing growth. To Him (Lord and Savior Jesus Christ) be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Introduction to Jude

Author – The author identifies himself as Jude. He is the brother of James (v1) who was the leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15). He was one of the four half-brothers of Jesus (Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3). Like his brothers, he had rejected Jesus as Messiah (John 7:1-9) until after Christ's resurrection, when they all became believers. Jude and his brothers traveled on missionary trips, with their wives (1 Cor 9:5), but active in the church at Jerusalem and it is likely the letter was written from that city.

Date – An accurate dating of this letter is impossible since little evidence is available. Except for John, who lived to the close of the century, all other Apostles had been martyred. All the information available presents us with a wide range of possible dates from AD 66-80, or perhaps even later.

Audience – No indication of the identity of the readers appears in the letter, though its intensely Jewish character strongly indicates that it was written for Hebrew Christians. It bears a strong resemblance to parts of 2 Peter. There is no reason to assume that one of the authors copied from the other as the two would have ministered together in Jerusalem and would have been familiar with the same teaching.

Theme – Jude fully intended to write a treatise on "common salvation," but found himself faced with an alarming rate of apostasy, or falling away, among the professing believers. He writes, therefore, to encourage the church to "contend earnestly for the faith" and to unmask the villains who have "crept unnoticed" into the fellowship. Jude is writing to expose the false teachers who are leading believers into apostasy and immorality.

Outline – Jude

- I. Greetings (1-2)
- II. Occasion for the Letter (3-4)
- III. Warning against the False Teachers (5-16)
- IV. Exhortation to Believers (17-23)
- V. Concluding Doxology (24-25)

Summary – Jude

Greetings (1-2)

Jude introduces himself and associates himself with his brother James so there is no confusion about the author's identity. His letter is addressed to "the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ." These are people who have been given both grace and faith (Eph 2:8-9). They are believers by God's doing and are kept by His doing. There is nothing that can separate us from Christ (Rom 8:37-39).

Occasion for the Letter (3-4)

Jude's original topic was to be a mutual encouragement concerning the salvation he shared with his readers, but then he learned that "certain ungodly persons had crept into the body unnoticed". They were denying the person and work of believers' only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ and using grace as an excuse to live licentiously. Therefore, Jude appealed to his readers, and to us, to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints"(v3). "Contend earnestly" stresses the need to defend the truth continually and vigorously. "The faith" refers to God's revealed will in the Scriptures; everything that God has revealed for "life and godliness".

❖ In what ways am I "contending earnestly"?

Warning against the False Teachers (5-16)

5-7 – Historical Examples – Jude begins his warning with three powerful illustrations from the OT that are exhibited as examples of judgment (undergoing the punishment of eternal fire). In each of these instances, apostasy is followed by judgment.

1. The Lord had saved Israel out of bondage in Egypt. The salvation was visible to all the people of Israel, yet some had not believed. Those who did not trust God were destroyed (v5).
2. Angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, most likely cohabitating with women (Gen. 6:1-4). These demons (fallen angels) were put into eternal bondage under darkness, waiting for their final judgment (v6).
3. The cities of Sodom and Gomorra indulged in gross sexual immorality and were punished by destruction of fire as an example of the punishment of eternal fire (v7).

The inference is clear. False teachers are no different than Israel, or angels, or evil cities. Apostasy will not go unpunished and must not be allowed a place in the church.

8-13 – Description of the False Teachers – Next Jude moved to an analysis of the apostasy creeping into the church, exposing its character.

v8-10 – The false teachers arrogantly declared supposed revelation from God in dreams (Acts 2:16-17). They defy God’s authority by their teaching and behavior. They daringly proclaim their authority over demons. Even the Archangel Michael refrained from railing against the devil in a dispute over the body of Moses, but the apostates have no such humility. They are living filthy, immoral lives and yet they badmouth and blaspheme others far greater than themselves.

❖ From where do I get my revelation? Do I defy God’s authority?

v11 – The false teachers had the same type of perverse rebellion against God as three men in the past: Cain, Balaam, and Korah. Cain, in rebellion against God, founded a new religion based on his own works culminating in murder. Balaam prostituted his divine gift for wealth even serving God’s enemies. Korah led a rebellion against the spiritual leadership of Moses and Aaron.

v12-13 – Jude compared the apostates with five natural phenomena.

hidden reefs – hidden ship wreckers in the body of believers, caring only for themselves.

clouds without water, carried along with winds – attracting attention to themselves and promising refreshment, but they proving to be all show and no substance.

autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted – not only fruitless because they have no life, but dead at the very core.

wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam – storms bringing destruction, spewing their own shame.

wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever – leading bodies of believers astray and off course with supposed brightness.

14-16 – Judgment Prophesied – The Lord will come with His holy ones to execute judgment on the ungodly. To punctuate this, Jude quotes from the non-canonical, Apocryphal Book of Enoch (1:9), which is thought to be written a century or more before the birth of Christ. Enoch, who lived in the days before the flood and watched the growth of a great apostasy actually foresaw that the coming of the Lord at the end of the age would be preceded by a major apostasy from the true faith. Enoch faithfully warned about this coming apostasy.

Exhortation to Believers (17-23)

Jude brings his short letter to a close by pointing his readers to their surest defense, the Word of God.

The Word of God is a sure source of information on all apostasy. God was not taken by surprise, in fact, the apostles had already warned against the divisiveness and spiritual emptiness of the coming teachers (v17-19). Jude encourages his readers to keep themselves in the love of God, build themselves up in faith through prayer and obedience with the help of the Holy Spirit (v20-21).

We are to show kindness, compassion, and sympathy to those who have been influenced and are confused by false teachers; attempt to rescue those that have been convinced by false teachers; and outreach with extreme caution to those committed to heresy.

²²And have mercy on some, who are doubting; ²³save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. Jude 22-23

❖ Am I actively trying to minister to those influenced by apostasy?

Concluding Doxology (24-25)

Jude ends with one of the most powerful benedictions in Scripture. The true believer will be kept from stumbling and presented blameless to Jesus Christ by the power of the almighty God.

Homework

Read 1, 2, and 3 John.