

23. 2 Peter

A. Authorship

- 1) The writer identifies himself in 1:1 as “Simon Peter.”
- 2) The writer speaks of his death as being right around the corner (1:14), which the Lord had previously revealed to him (see John 21:18-19).
- 3) In 1:16-18 the writer describes himself as being present at Jesus’ Transfiguration (see Matt 17:1-8).
- 4) In 3:1 the writer refers to this as his “second letter.” The best assumption is that the “first letter” refers to 1 Peter.

B. Recipients

Unlike 1 Peter 1:1, 2 Peter has no reference as to the location of the recipients. However, as Peter’s reference to a previous letter (2 Pet 3:1) refers to 1 Peter, this points to the same individuals being addressed in 2 Peter. Thus, the recipients are those addressed in 1 Peter, primarily Gentile Christians living in Asia Minor.

C. Occasion and Purpose

- 1) Occasion
 - a. Peter had evidently received a report that the readers were being threatened by false teachers trying to wriggle into their churches and lead them astray (2:1-2).
 - b. In his first letter Peter wrote to strengthen the readers so they could endure persecution and suffering they experienced from **outside** their churches. Now Peter exhorts the readers to be faithful in the face of a greater danger, false teaching that was erupting **inside** their churches.
- 2) Purpose
 - a. Peter states his purpose in writing in 1:12 and again in 3:1-2, but the last two verses (3:17-18) clearly and especially summarize the entire letter.
 - b. In light of the false teaching arising in their churches, Peter reminds the readers of essential truths from God’s Word that they had already been taught.
 - c. The specific truths that Peter reminds the readers of involve exhortations to **guard against false doctrine** (3:17) and to **grow more like Christ** (3:18).

D. Characteristics

- 1) False teachers
 - a. They misrepresent themselves as teachers of truth (2:1)
 - b. They secretly introduce heresies that malign the truth and bring judgment (2:1, 2–3)
 - c. They deny the Lord by lifestyle and doctrine (2:1)
 - d. They are motivated by greed (2:3, 14)
 - e. They openly indulge in sexual immorality (2:10, 14)
 - f. They revile heavenly authorities (2:10–11)
 - g. They entice others by appealing to sensual desires (2:18)
 - h. They promise their followers freedom (2:19)
 - i. They are enslaved to their own sinful practices (2:19)
 - j. They have turned away from the truth (2:20)
 - k. They deny the coming of the Lord to judge the world (3:4)
 - l. They deny that God has intervened in the past to judge the world (3:4)
 - m. They distort and twist the Scriptures (3:16)

- 2) Response to false teaching
 - a. It can be easy for us and others to think that denunciations of false teaching and teachers are harsh or ungracious. However, keep in mind that “the Spirit of God sees the end of false teaching, and so warns us against its beginnings” (Scofield, *Bible Correspondence Course*, p. 326).
 - b. False teaching consists of both **content** and **practice**. In other words, ungodly living and ungodly teaching go hand-in-hand.
 - c. False teachers, then, must be exposed, thwarted, and defeated. Christians must defend the faith and themselves, and do so by **combating** false teaching and **growing** in Christ-likeness.
 - d. Peter’s emphasis on true knowledge is essential for protection against false teaching. **You cannot see what is wrong unless you know what is right and live right.** There must also be right living otherwise you can be tempted to fall into what James addressed (a dead faith) and/or become susceptible to false teaching

E. Keys

- 1) Theme – **Remember** God’s Truth
- 2) Word – “**knowledge**” (16 times)
- 3) Verses – **3:17-18**

F. Outline

Here's a basic outline of 2 Peter—

- 1) Grow in Christian Truth and Maturity, 1
- 2) Beware of False Teachers, 2
- 3) Recognize God's Coming Judgment, 3

Here's a more detailed outline of 2 Peter—

Greeting, 1:1-2

1. Grow in Christian Truth and Maturity, 1:3-21

- 1) Pursue Christian Growth and Maturity, 1:3-11
- 2) Peter's Reasons for Exhorting this Pursuit, 1:12-21
 - a. It is the Right Thing to Do, 1:12-15
 - b. Peter's Message is True, 1:16-21

2. Beware of False Teachers, 2:1-22

- 1) False Teachers are Coming and are Dangerous, 2:1-3
- 2) God will Judge False Teachers, 2:4-10a
- 3) False Teachers are Ungodly Sinners, 2:10b-22

3. Recognize God's Coming Judgment, 3:1-18a

- 1) Remember the Scriptures, 3:1-2
- 2) False Teachers Deny God's Coming Judgment, 3:3-7
- 3) God's Judgment Is Coming, 3:8-18a
 - a. The "Delay" Explained, 3:8-10
 - b. Christian Living in Light of God's Coming Judgment, 3:11-18a

Conclusion, 3:18b

Greeting, 1:1-2

1. Grow in Christian Truth and Maturity, 1:3-21

In this first section Peter reminds the readers of their responsibility to grow in the truth taught by the apostles and to grow more spiritually mature. The best defense against the threat of false teaching is to be grounded in the Christian faith.

1) Pursue Christian Growth and Maturity, 1:3-11

Given the great value and provisions of salvation (1:2-4), Christians should diligently strive to grow more like Jesus Christ (1:5-11).

2) Peter's Reasons for Exhorting this Pursuit, 1:12-21

Peter gives two reasons for writing and exhorting the readers—

a. It is the Right Thing to Do, 1:12-15

Being reminded of right doctrine is necessary for Christian growth and protection from false teaching.

b. Peter's Message is True, 1:16-21

Christ's return is a key doctrine that the false teachers denied (cf. 3:4) and so Peter defends this teaching as something that has great implications—if one denies Christ's return one also denies Christ's judgment on the wicked.

Here (1:16-18) Peter testifies that what he says is true by focusing on the Transfiguration (which God allowed him to see—the Transfiguration was a “peek” at Christ's return, Matt 17:1-8). Peter also points out that what he says agrees with the OT prophets (1:19-21).

2. Beware of False Teachers, 2:1-22

1) False Teachers are Coming and are Dangerous, 2:1-3

While we may wonder how such a situation could happen, Paul prophesied such would happen in Acts 20:29—“I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.”

2) God will Judge False Teachers, 2:4-10a

Peter reminds the readers that God will judge false teachers by giving three examples of such judgment in the OT—fallen angels (2:4), the ungodly of Noah's day (2:5), and Sodom and Gomorrah (2:6-8).

The “if” in 2:4 is followed by an understood/implied “then” in 2:9. If God judged in the past (vv. 4-8) He will definitely judge in the future (vv. 9-10).

3) False Teachers are Ungodly Sinners, 2:10b-22

Peter gives a detailed description of the character and influence of false teachers, marking them as worthy of God’s judgment and also warning the readers to stay away from everything associated with the false teachers.

3. Recognize God’s Coming Judgment, 3:1-18a

Having described what the false teachers are like Peter now directs his attention to what the false teachers are saying.

1) Remember the Scriptures, 3:1-2

The readers should neither be fearful nor surprised by the presence of false teachers, as Jesus and His apostles foretold the coming of such.

2) False Teachers Deny God’s Coming Judgment, 3:3-7

Here Peter identifies the basic error of the false teachers—they denied Christ’s Second Coming.

3) God’s Judgment Is Coming, 3:8-18a

Having identified and refuted the false teachers’ error, he now considers the truth of Christ’s Second Coming and why there seems to be a “delay.”

a. The “Delay” Explained, 3:8-10

b. Christian Living in Light of God’s Coming Judgment, 3:11-18a

Conclusion, 3:18b

24. Jude

“Perhaps more than another New Testament book, the Epistle of Jude is assumed to have little or no permanent value and is, therefore, virtually excluded from the practical, as distinct from the formal, canon of the many sections of the church...But to deny a permanent spiritual value to the letter is to miss its main message, which is relevant to any period of history...As long as men need stern rebukes for their practices, the Epistle of Jude will remain relevant. Its neglect reflects more the superficiality of the generation that neglects it than the irrelevance of its burning message” (Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, p. 926).

A. Authorship

Jude, brother of James and the half-brother of Jesus, identifies himself in verse one as the author of this letter.

B. Recipients

No information is given as to where the readers lived, what church they were a part of, or what their cultural background was (Jew or Gentile).

C. Occasion and Purpose

1) Occasion

- a. Jude originally was going to write his readers about the salvation they shared. However, somehow Jude learned of the alarming presence of false teachers who threatened that very salvation (vv. 3-4).
- b. From verse 4 we see that false teachers were present who believed that grace gave a license to sin.
- c. The situation is worse than in 2 Peter. In 2 Peter, the threat of false teachers was expected and real (cf. 2 Pet 3:1), but in Jude the false teachers were already present, unnoticed, and destroying the church (Jude 3-4, 19). The situation Jude addresses is definitely a serious one.

2) Purpose

- a. Jude originally (most likely) in this letter was going to teach about the doctrine of salvation (v. 3a), but given the change in occasion there came a change in purpose in writing (v. 3b). Jude instead wrote to exhort the readers to action.
- b. Given the presence of false teachers who threaten the very core of the Christian church, **Jude exhorts his readers to vigorously fight for the faith they received (v. 3).**

D. Keys

- 1) Theme – **Contend** for the Faith
- 2) Word – “**ungodly**”
- 3) Verse – **3**

E. Outline

Here’s a basic outline of Jude—

- 1) Contend for the Faith, 3-4
- 2) Condemnation of False Teachers, 5-16
- 3) Continue in the Faith, 17-25

Here’s a more detailed outline of Jude—

Greeting, 1-2

1. Contend for the Faith, 3-4

2. The Condemnation of False Teachers, 5-16

- 1) God’s Judgment on the Ungodly of the Past, 5-7
- 2) The Present Pattern of the Ungodly, 8-13
- 3) Judgment of the Ungodly at Christ’s Return, 14-16

3. Continue in the Faith, 17-23

- 1) The Character and Activities of False Teachers, 17-19
- 2) The Character and Activities of Believers, 20-23
 - a. Believers must Persevere in the Faith, 20-21

- (1) Mutual Edification—“building yourselves up on your most holy faith,” 20
- (2) Spirit-Led Prayer—“praying in the Holy Spirit,” 20
- (3) Anxious Anticipation—“waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life,” 21

- b. Believers Must Rescue those Departing the Faith, 22-23

Closing Benediction, 24-25

Greeting, 1-2

1. Contend for the Faith, 3-4

*“The faith” is the body of truth that has been “handed down,” delivered, committed, and entrusted to believers. Paul exhorts us to “hold fast” the truth, but Jude exhorts us to “contend earnestly” for it. Whenever God’s truth is attacked, obedient Christians cannot stand **neutral** in the conflict.*

2. The Condemnation of False Teachers, 5-16

1) God’s Judgment on the Ungodly of the Past, 5-7

Jude gives three examples from the OT of God’s judging the ungodly to show that such is nothing new. This establishes a historical basis for God’s future judgment.

2) The Present Pattern of the Ungodly, 8-13

Here Jude turns and attacks the false teachers who had infiltrated the local churches of his readers. His purpose is to show that these were ungodly individuals, thus worthy of the same judgment that the OT examples received.

3) Judgment of the Ungodly at Christ’s Return, 14-16

Jude’s purpose in the body of the letter is to excite the readers to defend the faith by showing them the judgment of those who pervert the faith. The three essential commands of the readers must be read in light of the body of the letter—

- *Contend for the faith (v. 3)—they are on the “winning” side*
- *Persevere in the faith (vv. 20-21)—they won’t enter into judgment*
- *Rescue those beeding the false teachers (vv. 22-23)—they save them from the judgment the false teachers will face*

3. Continue in the Faith, 17-23

1) The Character and Activities of False Teachers, 17-19

Apostolic teaching clearly foretold the danger of false teachers. The readers should recognize their presence by the divisions they cause and their ungodly lifestyles.

2) The Character and Activities of Believers, 20-23

Jude’s readers must respond to false teaching by staying faithful to Christ and helping those who fall prey to false teachers.

- a. *Believers must Persevere in the Faith, 20-21*

The main command is “Keep yourselves in the love of God” (v. 21). The readers are to fulfill this command though...

- (1) Mutual Edification—“building yourselves up on your most holy faith,” 20
- (2) Spirit-Led Prayer—“praying in the Holy Spirit,” 20
- (3) Anxious Anticipation—“waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life,” 21

b. Believers Must Rescue those Departing the Faith, 22-23

Closing Benediction, 24-25