

1-2 PETER & JUDE

Study Guide

AUTHORS

Though Peter identifies himself as the author in the first verse of both 1 & 2 Peter, some challenge Peter's authorship due to the quality of Greek writing – a stretch for a Galilean fisherman. However, Peter mentions in 1 Peter 5:12 that Silvanus (or Silas in the NLT) helped write the letter. So, while the Holy Spirit inspired Peter, Peter's thoughts and ideas were communicated to Silvanus who completed the process of writing.

2 Peter is one of the most contested books in the New Testament as to authorship. Though Peter identifies himself again, many believe the letter was written in Peter's name, but not by Peter himself. Because of the amount of similar material between 2 Peter and Jude, some consider Jude to have been source material for 2 Peter. Others argue that the language and style is vastly different from 1 Peter. However, internal evidence within the book point to Peter. First, Peter names himself. Second, he speaks of his impending death (2 Pet. 1:14). He also speaks of being an eyewitness to the transfiguration (2 Pet. 1:16-18), his previous letter (2 Pet. 3:1) and Paul, the "beloved brother," (2 Pet. 3:15).

Jude also names himself as the author of Jude. A few scholars question whether "brother of James" (Jude 1:1) truly means biological brother or co-worker, and some believe Jude to be the apostle mentioned in Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13. However, "Judas of James" referenced in those passages refers to Judas *the son of* James and is most likely the Thaddeus mentioned in Mark 3:18 and Matt. 10:4. Taking all things into consideration, Judas the actual brother of James, is the most likely candidate, especially since he does not identify himself as an apostle. We know little about Jude, but biblical evidence suggests he was not a believer in Jesus until after Christ's resurrection (Mark 3:21, 31; John 7:5; Acts 1:14) and became one of the traveling missionaries (1 Cor. 9:5).

DATE

- **1 Peter** – Historical tradition holds that Peter was martyred in the persecutions by Nero in A.D. 64. Because Peter fails to mention Nero's intense persecution of believers in Rome and instructs readers to honor the king (1 Pet. 2:17), we can assume the book was written in the early A.D. 60s.
- **2 Peter & Jude** – Establishing the dates of these books hinges on whether Jude uses material from 2 Peter or vice-versa. If 2 Peter was written first (which many scholars believe), it would have been written shortly before his death in A.D. 64 and Jude would have been written around A.D. 80. However, if Jude was written first, then it would have been written in the mid A.D. 60s.

ORIGINAL AUDIENCE

- **1 Peter** – The first verse designates the recipients as Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythnia. In other words, regions within Asia Minor or modern-day Turkey. See the map below for further understanding of where these different places are located.

Because of the numerous Old Testament references (1 Pet. 1:10-12; 2:6-10; 3:10-12, etc.), it may seem the original audience is Jewish. However, there are greater indications the readership was Gentile. Here are a few:

- Ignorance associated with pagan past (1 Pet. 1:14)
- Empty way handed down from forefathers (1 Pet. 1:18)
- Past pagan practices, lusts, etc. (1 Pet. 4:3-4)

The Old Testament references show that Gentile converts were instructed in the Old Testament, and though the congregations may have had some Jews who were dispersed following Pentecost, the churches were largely Gentile in background.

What we do know is that the congregations were experiencing persecutions of various kinds for their Christian faith. This was not a widespread, empire sponsored mistreatment, but rather local and sporadic in nature. That said, persecution – whether widespread or individual – still creates challenges to one’s faith, which Peter seeks to address and encourage believers toward faithfulness.



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- **2 Peter** – Assuming the first letter mentioned is 1 Peter (2 Pet. 3:1), then one can assume that 2 Peter is designated for the churches in Asia Minor and therefore mainly Gentile in background. However, if the first letter is a lost letter, then it is much harder to determine the destination & audience. Most scholars believe the letter was sent to Asia Minor churches facing syncretism – a mixture of religion & culture – which explains why Peter uses language from the culture to address his concerns.
- **Jude** – The text gives few clues as to the original audience, beyond a more general grouping of believers which may be one church or multiple churches. We also don't really know the location of the audience, though Asia Minor, Palestine, Syria, and Egypt have all been proposed. Jude's use of apocalyptic literature and references leans toward the audience being of Jewish background, or mixed Jewish and Gentile.

Based on the material within the book, believers were dealing with false teachers endorsing a separation of behavior from spiritual matters. Jude argues that if God cared enough to send His Son into the world to free from sin and its behaviors, then He cares how people behave and will judge for unholy and ungodly behavior. There is no separation of faith and lifestyle.

LITERARY STRUCTURE

Outlines by Dean Niforatos

- **1 Peter**
 - Part One: Salvation of the Believer (1:1-2:12)
 - Part Two: Submission of the Believer (2:13-3:12)
 - Part Three: Suffering of the Believer (3:13-5:14)
- **2 Peter**
 - Part One: Cultivation of Christian Character (1:1-21)
 - Part Two: Condemnation of False Teachers (2:1-22)
 - Part Three: Confidence in Christ's Return (3:1-18)
- **Jude**
 - Part One: Purpose of Jude (1:1-4)
 - Part Two: Description of False Teachers (1:5-16)
 - Part Three: Defense Against False Teachers (1:17-23)
 - Part Four: Doxology of Jude (1:24-25)

OBSERVATION WORDS *(Look for these in all books, but some will feature more than others)*

- Jesus
- Holy Spirit
- God
- Faith
- Trials / Suffering / Troubles
- Salvation
- Holy
- Revelation / His coming (all descriptors)
- Falling away / Doubting (all descriptors)
- These people / These men

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

- Through these books, what did you learn about:
 - God

 - Jesus

 - Holy Spirit

 - How the roles within the Trinity works separately & together

- What is the “to do” list for believers as described in these books? What instructions are given?

- What is the “to don’t” list in these books? In other words, what warnings are to be heeded?

- Based on these books, describe your identity in Christ. What in your life needs to better reflect your identity?

- What do you learn about suffering? Use the following to get you started.
 - When is suffering honorable? When is it not?

 - What are believers to do during suffering?

 - What are some of the dangers during times of suffering?

- Describe a time in your life where you endured suffering. What did you do well? What do you wish you'd done differently? How will you approach future suffering?

- What similarities do you see between these 3 books? What are some of the themes discussed by all?

- Peter & Jude give numerous Old Testament examples to explain key points. What connections are being made and what do you learn from these examples?

- How does Peter describe false teachers? What additional things does Jude add?

- What should you be on the lookout for to identify false teachers?

- Jude uses the following comparisons to describe false teachers and ungodly believers. How does each further explain the danger?
 - Dangerous reef

 - Shameless shepherd

 - Clouds blowing over with no rain

 - Autumn trees

 - Wild foaming waves

- Describe one or more concepts you intend to incorporate into your life as a result of these books.

KEY WORD:

- 1 PETER
- 2 PETER
- JUDE

KEY VERSE:

- 1 PETER
- 2 PETER
- JUDE

KEY CHAPTER:

- 1 PETER
- 2 PETER
- JUDE – I think we can all agree on this one! ☺