



**FOUNDATIONS
OF FAITH**

The Message of the Bible

Week 38: 2 Peter & Jude

The Teaching of 2 Peter

The Introduction (1:1–2)

1. Peter's greeting is to no church or people in particular; it is addressed to the larger audience of all Christians. At the same time, the same audience for 1 Peter is assumed (cf. 3:1).
2. This greeting makes apparent that the book's primary goal is to increase the readers' knowledge of God and Christ.

The Application of Knowledge (1:3–11)

1. For Peter, the believer's access to divine power for a circumspect life is found in true knowledge of Jesus. That is, what we know affects the way we live, which Peter outlines in vv. 5–7.
2. Beginning with faith, Peter encourages the reader to diligently increase in moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, and brotherly kindness with the goal of love.
3. The purpose for seeking diligently these attributes is that they make one useful and fruitful in his/her knowledge of Christ.
4. This list is very useful in our being "diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing" (v. 10). Peter warns in vv. 9–11 that true believers grow in these things as they await their ultimate salvation.

Witnesses to Christ's Divine Power (1:12–21)

1. In giving his readers reasons for emphasizing these things in order to stir them up by way of reminder (vv. 12–15), Peter first turns to a personal testimony: Peter and his companions were eyewitness of Christ's majesty at the transfiguration (vv. 16–18).
2. Thus, the testimony of Christ's deity was not a cleverly devised tale but rather a fact witnessed to by the testimony of God Himself (v. 17).
3. Peter next turns to another witness to Jesus' divine power—Scripture (vv. 19–21).
4. Prophecy, i.e. the Bible, has the ability to bring light, just as the sunrise brings the clear light of day. This is important given the false teaching that Peter addresses in chapter 2.
5. Vv. 20–21 are important for a proper understanding of the nature of the biblical text. Like 2 Tim 3:16, this verse speaks of both the human and divine origin of the text, with the emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 27:15). On this same topic, Peter later likens Paul's letters to Scripture. This helps in establishing the inspiration of the NT writings (see 3:15–16).

Guarding against False Doctrine (2:1–22)

1. Whereas Peter's testimony can be trusted because of its divine testimony and Scripture can bring light because of its divine origin, false teachers will arise that distort knowledge of Christ and malign the truth.
2. These false teachers are characterized by their (1) heretical teaching, (2) denial of the sovereign God, (3) sensuality, and (4) greed.
3. Believers ought not think that these false prophets are getting away with it; God punishes the ungodly, as is evident from the teaching that Peter draws from the OT:
 - a. Fallen angels (in the Garden of Eden? or in Genesis 6?) were judged (cf. Ezek 28:11–19).
 - b. God destroyed the world in the Flood (Genesis 6–8).
 - c. Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19).
 - d. The story of Balaam (vv. 15–16; cf. Numbers 22–24)
 - e. Certain proverbs (v. 22; cf. Pr 26:11)
4. Amidst these teachings, Peter uses Lot as an example of believers living in an ungodly world. His conclusion is in v. 9.

Reminder of the Coming of the Lord (3:1–13)

1. Chapter 3 begins with Peter's purpose for the letter: to stir his readers up by reminding them of what they had heard in the OT text as well as through Jesus and the Apostles (vv. 1–2).
2. The primary teaching he is reminding them of is his emphasis on the return of the Lord from 1 Peter.
3. The error Peter corrects is the belief that the Lord does not intervene in the world because He has not done so in the past. As he has already demonstrated in ch. 2, this is not true. Here he reminds them of the Flood as a clear demonstration of God's intervention in the world. (vv. 5–6).
4. Likewise, the earth will once again be destroyed not by water but by fire (vv. 7, 12).
5. In the meantime, we must not regard God's patience with lack of power to intervene. (vv. 8–9). God's judgment tarries for the sake of those who would repent.
6. For believers, the end is not destruction. Therefore, there is hope in the promise of new heavens and new earth (v. 13; cf. Is 65:17).

Final Admonitions (3:14–18)

1. In light of his teaching, Peter encourages his readers (1) to pursue holy and pure lives, (2) to guard against being carried away from steadfastness, and (3) to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."
2. Note how the letter ends with an emphasis on the same thing with which it began—knowledge.

The Purpose of 2 Peter

2 Peter was written to encourage Christians beset by two dangers: seducers (2:1) who were spreading false teaching, which would lead to immoral behaviour (2:2, 13–15; cf. Rev. 2:14–15, 20–24; Col. 2:8–3:17), and scoffers using the fact that Christ had not returned as an excuse for immorality (3:3).¹

Peter's purpose in this brief work is to strengthen the reader's knowledge of God and Jesus through an emphasis on the importance of sound doctrine.²

Christian believers were exhorted to grow in Christ in the face of false teachers/teaching.

The Teaching of Jude

Introduction (1–2)

Jude's Reminder of the Christians' Duty When Faced with False Teachers/Teaching (3–23)

1. Jude clearly states the purpose of his letter: In light of the presence of false teachers, he encourages his readers to contend earnestly for the faith, that is, that body of teaching that has been handed down to them (vv. 3–4).
2. Throughout the book of Jude, the author uses triplets. Note these as we move through the book.
3. According to v. 4, false teachers are described as those who
 - a. were marked out for this condemnation,
 - b. turn the grace of God into sensuality, and
 - c. deny Jesus Christ.
4. The OT demonstrates God's judgment in the following ways:
 - a. the destruction of those in the wilderness who failed to believe,
 - b. the imprisoning of fallen angels (see above on 2 Peter), and
 - c. the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.
5. Moreover, these false teachers, seemingly rejecting all authority but their own,
 - a. defile the flesh,
 - b. reject authority, and
 - c. revile angelic majesties.
6. In doing such things, these teachers assume more authority than Michael, who apparently relied upon God to rebuke Satan regarding the body of Moses. This story is no longer extant.
7. Jude calls down woe upon them, for they
 - a. have gone the way of Cain,
 - b. rushed into the error of Balaam, and

¹ Wheaton, *NBC*.

² Sailhamer, *Compact Commentary*, 580.

- c. perished as those in the rebellion of Korah (cf. Num 16).
8. Such false teachers have no problem seeking their own profit among God's people (vv. 12–16).
9. Quoting from 1 Enoch, a first-century work, Jude assures his readers that the judgment of these individuals is sure. This quote drives home the ungodliness of these people.
10. As a side note, we should not be disconcerted that Jude quotes from a non-canonical book. His quoting it does not make it canonical. He simply uses it for his own advantage, adapting it to make his point. Even if we did not know from where it came, we would still understand Jude's point. In other words, proper interpretation is not at risk here.
11. In the final verses of this section (vv. 17–23), Jude turns to his readers, encouraging them to remember the words of the Apostles, specifically 2 Peter 3:2–3.
12. In light of the danger of those who infiltrate the church, Jude exhorts his readers to
 - a. build themselves up in the faith,
 - b. pray in the Spirit,
 - c. keep themselves in the love of God,
 - d. wait anxiously for mercy,
 - e. have mercy on doubters,
 - f. snatch other from the fire, and
 - g. have mercy on some with fear.

Conclusion (24–25)

The Purpose of Jude

The author warns his readers against the clever devices of the false teachers among them. Their false teaching may be new, but their error, manifested by their ungodly manner of life, is as old as time. For Jude, the question boils down to the authority by which these men claim to teach. They claim their own authority, whereas Jude warns his readers to remain faithful to the doctrine that they have already been taught.³

Christian believers were called to earnestly contend for the Christian faith.

How should I respond?

³ Sailhamer, 588.