

# *2 Peter and Jude: Contend for the Faith!*

## TITLES

Second Peter and Jude are named after their authors. Peter is well known. “Jude [or Judas], . . . brother of James” is not as well known; he is another half-brother of Jesus (Mt. 13:55, 56; see notes in the article “James: Practical Christianity”). The authenticity of these two volumes has been questioned; but both internal and external evidence testify to their genuineness.

## BACKGROUND

In 2 Pet. 3:1 the apostle says; “Beloved, the *second* letter I am writing to you. . . .” If the first letter was written after Nero’s persecution of Christians began in A.D. 64—and Peter died around A.D. 65-67 (see notes in the article “1 Peter: Suffering With Dignity”)—this second epistle had to be written shortly after the first. The two letters supplement each other: The first deals with attacks on the church from *without* (persecution); while the second deals with attacks from *within* (false teaching). In 2 Pet. 1:14, 15, Peter makes it clear that his death is imminent and that he is writing to remind brethren of these matters even after he is gone.

The little epistle of Jude is similar to 2 Peter (note 2 Pet. 2:1—3:3 and Jude 4-19). Jude intended to write “of the common salvation” (v. 3; cf. 1 Pet. 1:9, 10), but he became convinced that he needed to write to encourage the Christians to “contend earnestly for the faith” (v. 3). Perhaps he saw a copy of Peter’s second letter and, realizing that Peter’s warning had come true (v. 17), he decided to send the same warning to his own circle of influence. If this scenario is correct, the letter was probably written in the late 60s or early 70s, perhaps from Jerusalem. We can only guess at the circumstances. The important thing to remember is that both Peter and Jude were guided by the Holy Spirit, who felt the warning important enough to be repeated.

## OUTLINES

### 2 PETER: “BEWARE OF FALSE TEACHERS!” SALUTATION (1:1, 2).

- I. PROTECTION AGAINST FALSE TEACHING (1:3-21).
  - A. Continue to grow in knowledge (vv. 3-11).

- B. Continue to be reminded of truth (vv. 12-21).

### II. WARNING ABOUT FALSE TEACHING (2).

- A. The existence of false teachers (vv. 1-9).
- B. The expression of false teachers (vv. 10-16).
- C. The end of false teachers (vv. 17-22).

### III. AN EXAMPLE OF FALSE TEACHING (3).

- A. The denial of the second coming of Christ (vv. 1-13).
- B. The demands of the Second Coming: the life we should live (vv. 14-18).

## JUDE: “CONTEND FOR THE FAITH!”

- I. INTRODUCTION (vv. 1-4).

- II. WARNING (vv. 5-16).

- III. ADMONITION (vv. 17-25).

## LESSONS FROM 2 PETER AND JUDE

One challenge fits all Christians—new converts, those mature in the faith, and all in between. The challenge is to *grow* (2 Pet. 1:5-7; 3:18). Where we are spiritually is not nearly as important as where we are going.

Christians sometimes complain of being “bored” with the basics of the gospel: “We’ve heard those things before!” We need to be *reminded* of these matters with great regularity (2 Pet. 1:12-15; 3:1). If we are not careful, we will raise a generation that has not learned the grand old truths, because we have convinced our preachers and teachers they must ever teach us “something new” (Acts 17:21).

False teachers still abound; never doubt it. Their fate—as well as the stance we must take toward them—is still the same. “*Contend* earnestly for the faith!” (Jude 1:3).

Some are concerned by Jude’s apparent reference to two noncanonical Jewish books (vv. 9, 14, 15). Paul occasionally cited uninspired sources (Acts 17:28; 1 Cor. 15:33; Tit. 1:12). This does not necessarily mean that either Jude or Paul endorsed everything in their sources.

Jude ends with a beautiful benediction (vv. 24, 25).

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## Don't Forget That Day! (2 Peter 3)

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How important memory is! Peter was “stirring up” the memory of his readers (3:1) concerning what the prophets and the apostles had spoken (3:2), specifically about “the day of the Lord” (3:10). The term “day of the Lord” was used frequently in the Old Testament to refer to God’s coming in judgment upon people or nations (see the Book of Joel). In the New Testament, the term is used to refer to the *final* day of judgment (1 Con 1:7, 8; 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14; 2 Thess. 2:2; 2 Pet 3:10, 12).

We get wrapped up in things we can see, hear, touch, and taste; we also need to remember “there’s a great day coming”!

### I. REMEMBER THE PROOF OF THAT DAY (3:1-9, 17).

#### A. Scoffers (the false teachers of chap. 2) were denying that Christ would return (vv. 3, 4).

1. The long delay since the promise.
  - a. Christ and the angels had made the promise (Jn. 14:1ff.; Acts 1:11), but in thirty years Christ had not returned.
  - b. Today one might say, “It has been *two thousand years* since the promise was made; He is not coming again!”
2. The ongoing world implies a stable, fixed universe free from cataclysmic events.

#### B. Peter answers the arguments in opposite order (vv. 5-9).

1. This is *not* a “stable, fixed” universe in which catastrophic events cannot occur.
  - a. This earth was destroyed by the flood (v. 6). The Greek word translated “flooded” is the word from which we get the English word “cataclysm.” The earth was destroyed once; it can happen again!
  - b. Next time it will be destroyed by fire (v. 7)! In this atomic age, people no longer ridicule this idea. (Not *man*, but God, however, will “push the button.”)
2. The fact that time has transpired does not prove the promise has been aborted.
  - a. God is not time-bound as we are (v. 8; see Ps. 90:4).
  - b. The delay is a gift to mankind, giving all a chance to *repent* (v. 9; see v. 15). God wants all to be saved (Ezek. 18:23; Rom. 11:32; 1 Tim. 2:4)!

#### C. That Great Day is really going to happen (v. 10a)! Do not be led astray by “sophisticated” minds of today who deny it (v. 17)!

### II. REMEMBER THE PORTRAYAL OF THAT DAY (3:7, 10, 12, 13).

- A. It will come unexpectedly: like a thief (v. 10a; see Mt. 24:36, 43, 44; Mk. 12:42; 1 Thess. 5:2, 3; Rev. 3:3; 16:15). How foolish are those who set specific dates for Christ’s return!
- B. It will be a time of unparalleled destruction (v. 10b; see 7b; Mt. 24:35).
  1. The heavens (sun, moon, stars) will pass away with a great noise (see v. 12).

2. The elements will melt (disintegrate, dissolve—see v. 11a) with fervent heat (see v. 12).
  3. The earth and its works (man’s achievements and creations) will be burned up.
- #### C. It will be a time of judgment (v. 7b)!
1. Read Acts 17:30, 31; Heb. 9:27.
  2. The destruction (KJV: “perdition”) of ungodly men (the impenitent, v. 9). They will “perish” spiritually (v. 9; see 2 Thess. 1:8).
- #### D. For those prepared, it will also be the coming of the “new heavens and new earth” (v. 13; see Is. 65:17)!
1. This is where the righteous will spend eternity. The “*new* heavens and a new earth” will accommodate the *spiritual* body that will be raised (1 Cor. 15), according to Jesus’ promise (Jn. 14:1ff.). There righteousness will dwell (Rev. 21; 22).
  2. For some, it will be a happy day! For others, it will be the most tragic of days. Which will it be for you?

### III. REMEMBER THE PREPARATION NECESSARY FOR THAT DAY (3:11-14, 18).

- A. The biblical doctrine of the Second Coming is not just theological truth; if we really *believe*, it should impact our lives as nothing else can!
- B. “What sort of people ought you to be?” (v. 11).
  1. Godly people who live holy lives (v. 11; see v. 14), in contrast with the ungodly (v. 7).
  2. Expectant persons (vv. 12-14a).
    - a. “Looking” means “to await eagerly, be expectant.” (We should “*love* His appearing,” 2 Tim. 4:8.)
    - b. Christians in the first century prayed earnestly for the Lord to come (1 Cor. 16:22; Rev. 22:20).
  3. Peaceful persons (v. 14).
  4. Growing, maturing persons (v. 18).

### CONCLUSION

- A. If you are not a Christian, or are an unfaithful Christian, the Lord has delayed His coming because He loves you and wants to give you another opportunity to respond (v. 9)! You can be saved today if you will come to *repentance* (Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30; 2:38; 8:22, 23)!
- B. Notice the words of the song we sing, “Are you ready for that day to come?”

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### The Writing of Jude

Very discouraging news had come to Jude as to the state into which some Christians were drifting. He started to write about salvation but changed his mind and wrote about the false teachers who had crept in among the believers (see v. 3). The epistle is very sharp and severe in speaking out against these false teachers, who were abusers of the grace of God and deniers of the Lord Jesus Christ. The situation brought forth this epistle, whose theme is “Contend for the Faith!”