

New Testament Foundations: Session Twenty-One

II Peter & Jude: Destructive Heresies

II PETER

Authorship

1. This letter was written shortly after I Peter – around 64 or 65 AD.
2. Peter knows that he does not have much time left on this earth.

II Peter 1:13-14

I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

Background

1. Peter's main purpose is to prevent and defeat the influence of destructive heresies.

II Peter 2:1

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

2. The heretics are urging an immoral lifestyle. This is a direct result of their theology—why worry about morality if there is no day of reckoning?

II Peter 2:18, 19

For 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 them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.

Peter makes plain that theological error quickly deteriorates into moral error.

3. There is a clear literary relationship between this letter and Jude.

JUDE		II PETER
1:4	the false teacher's "condemnation from the past	2:3
1:4	deny the Sovereign [and] Lord	2:1
1:6	angels confined for judgment	2:4
1:7	Sodom and Gomorrah as examples of gross evil	2:6
1:8	reject authority / despise authority	2:10
1:9	archangel Michael did not condemn him for slander / angels did not heap abuse	2:11
1:12	[the false teachers are] blemishes	2:13
1:12	clouds without rain, blown by the wind / springs without water, driven by a storm	2:17
1:18	ungodly desires / evil desires	3:3

Themes

1. In light of heresy that is there or on the way, Peter exhorts the church to spiritual growth and maturity. That is how they will combat these powerful influences.

- In his introduction and his conclusion he urges the believers to make every effort to grow in their faith. He knows that is the solution to these destructive heresies.

II Peter 1:5

*For this very reason, **make every effort** to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;*

II Peter 3:14

*So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, **make every effort** to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.*

- The primary way they will mature is through grace and knowledge. That is why he frames his letter with references to both.

II Peter 1:2

***Grace** and peace be yours in abundance through the **knowledge** of God and of Jesus our Lord.*

II Peter 3:18

*But grow in the **grace** and **knowledge** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.*

2. Peter highlights the importance of memory in the Christian life. Both in the positive of remembering...

II Peter 3:1

*I have written both of them [letters] as **reminders** to stimulate you to wholesome thinking.*

II Peter 1:12, 13

*So I will always **remind** you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to refresh your **memory** as long as I live in the tent of this body,*

II Peter 1:15

*And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to **remember** these things.*

And in the negative of forgetting...

II Peter 3:5

*But they deliberately **forget** that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water.*

II Peter 3:8

*But do not **forget** this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.*

JUDE

Authorship

1. Jude was the half-brother of Jesus and the brother of James.
2. His letter was probably written between 65 and 80 AD, making it one of the last documents of the New Testament canon. It was written to a predominantly Jewish-Christian congregation in Asia Minor.

3. This letter was slow to be admitted in the canon because Jude quotes from the apocryphal Book of Enoch (and possibly The Assumption of Moses).

Background

1. The error Jude confronted is similar to what Peter confronted. The heretics had a strong antinomianism bias.

Jude 1:4

...ungodly persons who turn the grace of God into licentiousness...

2. The letter is concise and picturesque, and Jude evinces a fondness for triplets.

Purpose

1. Jude plainly states his purpose for writing.

Jude 1:3

"Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

2. Jude attempts to answer the question, "How are Christians to react to this danger?" His answer is clear: "Join the battle and contend earnestly for the faith."
3. How do we battle these heresies? Remember God's Word (17), Grow in faith (20), Pray in the Holy Spirit (20), and Stay in the love of God.
4. How do we treat the people who are caught in these lies? Have mercy on those who are doubting and snatching them out of the fire. But while you are doing that guard yourself, hate even the garment polluted by the flesh. Jude gives us this great promise:

Jude 1:24

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy.