

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: August 10, 2014

Sermon Title: Understanding the Placement of 2 Peter and Jude in the Biblical Storyline

Series Title: A Study of 2 Peter and Jude

Text: Miscellaneous

Author: Patrick J. Griffiths ©2014

Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

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Introduction:

Two dominant ideas control how we understand our Bibles and life. This is the meta-narrative.¹ "At its simplest, the word represents a 'Big Story,' or a comprehensive explanation of many little stories."² First, God created so that we might know and experience the joy He has within Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. His presence grants fullness of joy and pleasures forever more (Ps. 16:11).

Second, Jesus is the divinely appointed and established means of knowing and experiencing this joy. The Bible promises and pictures this as Seed Promise (Gen. 3:15) and Blood Picture (Gen. 3:21). The entire *Storyline* of the Bible tells this single *Story*. Our desire in this study is to understand how 2 Peter and Jude fit into this epic tale.

THE BIG PICTURE:

I. Part One – Understanding the Biblical *Storyline*

To understand the micro [where you and I live] we must understand the macro [or meta-narrative] of the biblical *Storyline*. To make it easier, I speak of the **The Story in Six Acts**.

1. **God**

"In the Beginning **God**" (Gen. 1:1)

2. **Creation**

"In the Beginning God **created**" (Gen. 1:1; Col. 1:15-17; 1 Cor. 8:6)

3. **Rejection**

"You shall not eat . . . She took and ate and He ate" (Gen. 2:15-17; 3:6)

4. **Redemption**

"The LORD God made garments of skin and clothed them" (Gen. 3:15-21)

5. **Re-Creation**

"You Must Be Born Again" (John 3:1-21; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rev. 21:1)

6. **Joy Through Worship**

"Stop weeping, the Lion . . . has overcome" (Rev. 4; 5)

Knowing the overarching meta-narrative enables us to understand our pieces making up our stories. It also enables us to understand the two broad categories of the Bible and all of the subsections of the Bible.

It is with this in mind we will examine the placement of the General Epistles inside of the greatest *Story* ever told.

II. Part Two – Understanding the Biblical Canon

The Bible is a collection of 66 books written over a period of 1500 years by 40 different authors from all occupations: shepherds, farmers, tent-makers, physicians, fishermen, priests, philosophers and kings all telling a single *Story* with Jesus at the center. Such consistency, cohesiveness, and unification is the result of the Holy Spirit. Its formation began around 1450 B.C. (the time of Moses) to about 100 A.D. (following the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ). The *Story* is a running narrative. It has two broad categories. The first broad grouping tells the *Story* under the first testament and the second broad grouping tells the *Story* under the New Testament. We know each grouping by the captions: Old and New Testament.

The idea of a testament is that of a covenant. A covenant is a contract. It is an agreement between two parties. The contract is binding and in the case of the Bible, such covenants are unconditional. God fulfills the covenant regardless of the recipients' faithfulness.

The actual languages of the original text are Hebrew and Koine [common] Greek with a little Aramaic [A few sections of Ezra (4:8-6:18;7:12-26) and Daniel (2:4b-7:28)]. The categories of the Bible and the inclusion of these 66 books is a **process** called canonization and the final **product** is the canon. "Canon" is a transliteration from the Greek word "kanon," meaning, "measuring rod." God through inspiration **determines canonicity**. The church through the process of canonization **discovers inspiration**. The collection of books we call the New Testament was received as canonical in the 4th century AD. The collection of books we call the Old Testament was received long before the advent of Christ.

Let us consider the canon of the Bible.

The First Testament has 39 books under five subsections.

The first five are the PENTATEUCH

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy

The second twelve are the HISTORICAL BOOKS

- | | |
|------------|----------------|
| • Joshua | • 2 Kings |
| • Judges | • 1 Chronicles |
| • Ruth | • 2 Chronicles |
| • 1 Samuel | • Ezra |
| • 2 Samuel | • Nehemiah |
| • 1 Kings | • Esther |

The third five are the WISDOM LITERATURE

- Job
- Psalm
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Solomon

The fourth five are the MAJOR PROPHETS

- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Lamentations
- Ezekiel
- Daniel

The final twelve are the MINOR PROPHETS

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| • Hosea | • Nahum |
| • Joel | • Habakkuk |
| • Amos | • Zephaniah |
| • Obadiah | • Haggai |
| • Jonah | • Zechariah |
| • Micah | • Malachi |

The New Testament has 27 books under five subsections.

The first four are the GOSPELS

- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke
- John

The second subsection is HISTORICAL

- Acts

The next 12 books are Letters and authored by Paul

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| • Romans | • 1 Thessalonians |
| • 1 Corinthians | • 2 Thessalonians |
| • 2 Corinthians | • 1 Timothy |
| • Galatians | • 2 Timothy |
| • Ephesians | • Titus |
| • Philippians | • Philemon |
| • Colossians | |

The next eight Letters are GENERAL LETTERS and are non-Pauline

- Hebrews
- James
- 1 Peter
- 2 Peter
- 1 John
- 2 John
- 3 John
- Jude

The final book inside the New Testament is APOCALYPTIC or ESCHATOLOGICAL

- Revelation

Because the Bible came to us in a foreign language, two things had to happen. Either we had to learn Hebrew and Greek, or we needed someone to translate the text for us. The fact that we have a plethora of English translations is a result of John Wycliffe translating the Bible into English in 1382 AD. "William Tyndale's Bible was the first English language Bible to appear in print [1454 A.D. by Johannes Gutenberg who invented the 'type mold' for the printing press. It was the first book ever printed]. During the 1500s, the very idea of an English language Bible was shocking and subversive. This is because, for centuries, [Rome governed the English Church,] and church services were by law conducted in Latin. Most people in Europe were unable to speak Latin, and so could not understand the Bible directly. The Church therefore acted as the mediator between God and the people, with Priests interpreting the bible on behalf of their congregations."³

The thought that we gather as a free people without ecclesiastical or political intrusion possessing a Bible in our mother tongue and free to read it and understand it without mediation is a miracle.

The Codex Vaticanus, which dates from the first half of the fourth Century, is located in the library of the Vatican in Rome. There are older fragments of the Bible that are still preserved however-- the oldest being a tiny scrap of the Gospel of John was found in Egypt, dating back to the beginning of the second century. (It is currently in the Rayland's Library in Manchester, England).

"Corroborating statistics from Wycliffe as of 2013 (portions would combine some projects in progress with those with the New Testament and complete Bible)

Number of Languages in the World	6918
Languages w/o translation (and needing one):	2000+

Number of languages with Bible portions:	1010
Number of languages with New Testament:	1294
Number of languages with entire Bible:	513

Total World Population:	7 billion
Number of people who speak languages with no translation:	@350 million" ⁴

This is an enormous amount of translations. In comparison, Shakespeare, considered by many to be the master writer of the English language, is in 50 languages.

Perhaps it lacks a bit of credibility, but Guinness world records has this to say concerning the Bible:

“Although it is impossible to obtain exact figures, there is little doubt that the Bible is the world’s best-selling and most widely distributed book. A survey by the Bible Society concluded that around 2.5 billion copies were printed between 1815 and 1975, but more recent estimates put the number at more than 5 billion. By the end of 1995, combined global sales of *Today's English Version (Good News) New Testament and Bible* (copyright for which is held by the Bible Societies) exceeded 17.75 million copies, and the whole Bible had been translated into 349 languages; 2123 languages have at least one book of the Bible in that language.”⁵

III. Part Three – Understanding the General Epistles in General

Our intent in this study is to put our current study in 2 Peter and Jude into its canonical and literary context.

A. Understanding the relationship between the First Covenant and the New Covenant

Genesis 3:15 and forward tell a single tale. God would provide a deliverer to save His people from their sins for their joy and His glory. The Serpent would seek to stop the fulfillment of this promise. The First Testament tells this tale of preparation.

Since Jesus is the fulfillment of the **Seed Promise** and the completion of the **Blood Picture**, how do each of the “parts” tell us this GOOD NEWS?

B. Understanding the relationship of the Gospels to the General Epistles

1. The first four New Testament Books are the GOSPELS.

The Gospels tell us the fulfillment of this ancient promise. Jesus completes all of the blood pictures depicted throughout the first testament.

2. The fifth Book in the New Testament is the Book of Acts.

The Book of Acts reveals the inauguration of the return to the Garden where God is in His Temple for the joy of all nations. The Shekinah glory has returned and dwells in God’s Temple, the church. Acts happens because Jesus died, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scripture. The Book of Acts is the every expanding glory of God. It is a book of triumph and victory.

3. The next section of Books are Letters.

The Letters are in two sections, Paul and Non-Paul. In the earliest listings, the General Letters precede Paul's Letters. Each of the Letters have distinct purposes. Paul's writings fall into two categories. First, he addresses problems in local churches. Second, he writes to individuals who are either leaders within the local church (the pastoral Letters) or leading figures within local churches (Philemon).

The Non-Pauline Letters are the GENERAL Letters because some suggest they do not have specific churches in mind. However, I do not believe this is the case. Each of the Letters whether to individuals or churches all have churches in mind.

4. The final book inside the New Testament is APOCALYPTIC or ESCHATOLOGICAL

- Revelation

Apocalyptic literature uses symbols to communicate impending judgment. "**Apocalyptic literature**, literary genre that foretells supernaturally inspired cataclysmic events that will transpire at the end of the world. A product of the Judeo-Christian tradition, apocalyptic literature is characteristically pseudonymous; it takes narrative form, employs esoteric language, expresses a pessimistic view of the present, and treats the final events as imminent."⁶

"Most authorities regard early Christianity as a fervently apocalyptic religion, intent on the imminent 'Second Coming' of Christ to preside over the Last Judgment and the end of the world. Early Christian apocalypticism is evident in the Gospels, which are permeated with language taken from Daniel. The so-called Little Apocalypse, a sermon by Jesus found in Matthew (24-25) with parallels in Mark (13) and Luke (21), foretells the imminence of collective tribulation and chastisement before the coming of the 'Son of Man' who will 'sit upon the throne of his glory' and separate 'the sheep from the goats.' The last book of the New Testament, the Revelation to John, also known as the Apocalypse of St. John (the Greek term *apokalypsis* literally means revelation), concludes canonical Christian scripture in a ringingly apocalyptic key. Written in Asia Minor about 95 ce, the Revelation offers a vibrant, sometimes lurid, account of imminent crisis, judgment, and salvation."⁷

"7 Characteristics of Apocalyptic Literature

1. All apocalyptic literature claims to be revelation of new/hidden knowledge. Hence the name.
2. Apocalyptic literature often uses prophetic vision formula to see the future, "and I saw..." This phrase appears many times in Revelation. It is not in the earliest examples of the genre, however.
3. The literature uses mysterious and symbolic language. This is ironic, as the name means "unveiling" and then the writing goes to lengths to clothe everything in symbolism.
4. With the exception of Revelation, practically all written after the close of the Tanakh is pseudonymous. That is, the author's name on the piece is not the person who wrote it.

This was probably to avoid persecution of authors. John was already in exile so had no reason to hide himself.

5. Main theme throughout the life of the genre is surety of God's victory over evil.
6. The Theology of apocalyptic literature is very deterministic-moderately Calvinistic (where the sovereignty of God is inviolate) and far from ultra-Armineanism (where man's decisions and will decide the future with God being surprised). God is in control, even if evil seems to have run amuck.
7. Because the present stinks, apocalyptic literature is preoccupied with future events. While it does not envision the end of the cosmos, it does envision the end of evil and suffering and the visible reign of God on earth. The earth and Heavens as they are might end and be replaced or they might be cleansed where they are without being destroyed first. Either way, they will be purged."⁸

IV. Part Four - Understanding the General Epistles in Particular

"The term 'general' is at best an imperfect way to characterize the last eight epistles of the New Testament. It has been selected because, unlike the majority of Paul's epistles that are written to specific churches, most of the recipients of these eight epistles are either churches of some large area or are all Christians (the exceptions are Hebrews and 2 and 3 John). Also, with the exception of Hebrews, these epistles are named for their authors."⁹

The following is a faulty view of Paul and the General Epistles. Where this position sees discontinuity, the Bible speaks of continuity. Where they see competing stories, the Bible speaks of one *Story*. The intent of the quote is to show how some draw a strong dichotomy between Paul and the other apostles.

"Merging kingdom saints into the Body does not change the fact that *Paul* is our apostle, not Peter, James, Jude, or John. It does not alter the fact that our doctrine has to come from Paul's epistles. Paul never tells us to learn from any epistles other than his own (although Peter *does* tell the Jews to learn from Paul (II Pet. 3:15-16)). Because Paul is our Apostle and because we get our doctrine from his epistles alone, we know that the General Epistles are written for us, but not *to* us. In practical terms, this means that their primary application is to Israel. The General Epistles will find their primary application to the kingdom saints during the tribulation. We may draw applications and principles from the General Epistles but we must never forget that they are written to kingdom saints with a decidedly prophetic emphasis."¹⁰

In principle, the following statements are true, but again, the lines drawn are perhaps too sharp and should be a bit fuzzier.

"The Epistles are generally divided into the Pauline Epistles and the Non-Pauline (General) Epistles. Paul's epistles fall into two categories: nine epistles written to churches (Romans to 2 Thessalonians) and four pastoral and personal epistles (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon). This is then followed by eight Hebrew Christian epistles (Hebrews to Jude)."¹¹

“Since the Gospels, Acts, and Revelation have distinct genres and the thirteen letters of Paul form a natural collection, the remaining books of the New Testament are grouped into a catch-all category called the ‘General Epistles.’ Early Christians usually called these letters the ‘Catholic Epistles’ (James, 1-2 Peter, 1-2-3 John, and Jude) since they were addressed to a wider audience than Paul’s letters. The Greek adjective “katholikos” simply meant ‘general’ or ‘widespread’ or ‘universal.’”¹²

“General epistles (also called Catholic Epistles) are books in the New Testament in the form of letters. They are termed ‘general’ because for the most part their intended audience seems to be Christians in general rather than individual persons or congregations as is the case with the Pauline epistles. However, 2 John and 3 John are included in this group despite their addresses respectively to the ‘elect lady’, speculated by many to be the church itself, and to ‘Gaius’, about whom there has been much speculation but little in the way of conclusive proof as to his identity.”¹³

“Like the letters of Paul, the General Epistles are arranged in our New Testament today from longest to shortest.”¹⁴

All the Letters in the New Testament describe the condition of local churches and communication between the Apostles and churches after Pentecost. It would seem easier to understand the general epistles preceding Paul and after Acts. Acts leaves us with a Jewish “church.” As such, the general epistles would answer the questions asked by Jews practicing an Old Testament ethic.

I found the following paragraph insightful and the article from which it was pulled very stimulating.

“THESE SEVEN EPISTLES CONTAIN ONLY GENERAL TEACHINGS. Notice that there are no discourses on what baptism means, how to observe the Lord’s Supper, how to conduct oneself in the liturgies in the congregation, etc. The only instructions that we find in these seven epistles are of a general nature and all of them present basic teachings. James even spoke of his readers as going to war with one another: **‘Whence come wars among you’** (James 4:1). He also wrote of the rich among them as severely oppressing the poor (5:1). These statements have led some to wonder if he was speaking to converted Christian people. (It seems odd to think that Christians in that early period going to war with one another in a national way.) The theme of the epistle of James seems to be giving an overview (or an introduction) to the basic concepts of Christianity. It is significant that there are only two short references to Christ (1:1 and 2:1) and if those two references were removed from the text, the whole epistle could easily have been called a simple Jewish exposition on Old Testament values and theology.¹⁵ **This Old Testament theme presents no problem if one understands that the work was intended simply to be a Christian introduction of a general nature to people representing the twelve tribes of Israel located in the Diaspora.** It would have been ridiculous to tell ‘the twelve tribes’ in an introductory letter how they were to act in the Christian community, and in what order the Christian ministers should teach, etc. In fact, the people to whom James wrote were not

attending any Christian congregation – they were still members of various synagogues (James 2:2, Greek). James was speaking to Jews who were just beginning to learn what the first principles of Christianity really were. This is why his book is positioned directly after the Book of Acts. It was intended to provide some preliminary teachings of Christianity without involving the readers in major doctrinal issues. The other epistles following James were meant to set forth a little more advanced teaching of what the Gospel of Christ entailed, but still, their teachings remain quite general and non-specific. The seven epistles (starting with James) are positioned so as to present in a progressive manner the doctrines of Christianity, but in a general and non-doctrinal manner. This is shown when one compares the epistles of Peter, John and Jude with that of James. We find the same progressive teaching in Peter's epistles, though the geographical destination is more defined than James and his doctrinal matters are a little stronger. Yet Peter is still giving general teaching. **'As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby'** (1 Peter 2:2). Peter was followed by the three letters of John, and then that of Jude. The letters of John focus on the general need for love to be expressed among brethren and that people should pay attention to the first principles of Christian teaching – adhering to the primitive and basic doctrines which were given **'from the beginning'** (1 John 2:7, 13; 3:8, 11; 2 John 5). Though Jude homes in on a specific problem that was facing the Christian community when he wrote, his emphasis is still **'that you should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints'** (Jude 3). Jude then described a condition happening within the Christian community that some people have thought incompatible with the strict moral and doctrinal disciplines in the congregations which Paul supervised. True enough. But the seven General Epistles were not designed to give theological or ecclesiastical information to the Gentile section of the Christian community. These seven epistles were general letters dealing with large groups of people (mostly Jewish) who were still adhering, in many cases, to the national concepts of Judaism. This is why these epistles were placed *before* those of Paul. They present teachings for an 'infant' stage in the understanding of Christian doctrines and group discipline."¹⁶

"The seven letters of James, 1 & 2 Peter, and 1, 2 & 3 John, and Jude are often called the General (or Catholic) Epistles because they seem to speak to the Christian church in general, rather than to individual churches. They are also united by their interest in practical matters such as organizational leadership, hard work, fairness, good relationships, and effective communication. The General Epistles reflect the essential challenge Christians faced in the Roman Empire – how to follow Jesus in a tough environment. Early Christians faced problems such as slavery, favoritism, and abuse by the rich and powerful. They dealt with harsh words and conflicts. They dealt with the real tensions between ambition and dependence on God, and the fear that doing things God's way would put them in conflict with those in authority. In general, they felt a sense of alienation living and working in a world that seemed incompatible with following Jesus."¹⁷

"In the earliest and best manuscripts the seven epistles of James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3 John and Jude are placed before the fourteen epistles of the apostle Paul. And this is where they belong! Prof. Scrivener, after examining over 4000 manuscripts of the New Testament, said, 'Whether copies contain the whole or a part of the sacred volume, the general order of the books is the following: Gospels, Acts, *Catholic Epistles*, Pauline Epistles, Apocalypse.'¹⁸ The term 'Catholic' in

the above quote is not a reference to a church denomination. It meant in earlier times 'universal,' 'general,' or 'non-localized.' It signified a group of letters which went to no specific congregation, but they were intended to go to the generality of people, and in the case of these seven epistles, it meant that they were intended primarily for the 'Jewish' people."¹⁹

In our present discussion, we are only interested in the position of these seven epistles within the New Testament canon. There is no doubt that the evidence supplied by the manuscripts places them right after the Christian Pentateuch (Gospels and Acts) and before those of Paul. Salmon shows the judgment of every one of the textual critics of the last century:

"The earliest manuscripts which preserve all of these letters place Acts and the General Letters together. In their time, a complete New Testament would consist of four parts:

- The Four Gospels
- Acts and General Letters
- Paul's Letters (including Hebrews)
- Revelation

This order (i.e. Acts and General Letters immediately following the Gospels) is used in Codices Vaticanus (4th century) and Alexandrinus (late 4th or early 5th century). Codex Sinaiticus (4th century) places Paul's letters immediately after the Four Gospels.²⁰ In either arrangement, Acts serves to introduce the authors of the letters which follow."²¹

"This is the position [the General Epistles before Paul's] assigned them in the critical editions of Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Westcott and Hort."²²

"The Pauline epistles are usually placed between the Book of Acts and the General epistles in modern editions. Most Greek manuscripts, however, place the General epistles first,²³ and a few minuscules (175, 325, 336, and 1424) place the Pauline epistles at the end of the New Testament."²⁴

"In our English New Testament, the General Epistles are placed near the end of the volume, just before the Book of Revelation. The Greek manuscripts put them as a rule, immediately after the Gospels and Acts, and before the writings of Paul. This was no doubt in recognition of the fact that they bore the names of the Apostles who were directly associated with Jesus, and whose authority, therefore, might be considered superior to that of Paul. In keeping with this principle, the first place of all was accorded to the Epistle of James. Its author was assumed to be no other than James, the Lord's own brother."²⁵

V. Part Five - Understanding 2 Peter

Consider Paul's words to the Ephesian Elders and then consider the letter of Peter to the church.

²⁶ Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. ²⁷ For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. ²⁸ Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ I know that after my

departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹ Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. ³² And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (Acts 20:26-32)

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 Pet. 2:1)

THE BIG PICTURE:

“1 Peter develops the theme of **salvation** with its accompaniment of hope and resurrection, so needed when facing persecution. 2 Peter stresses **sanctification**, with its emphasis on holy living and its need to answer claims to a libertinism that results in immorality. 1 Peter looks back to the great events upon which the Christian faith is based; 2 Peter looks forward to the return of Christ (the *parousia*) and the warnings and hopes that promise raises. Peter gathers these teachings under five heads: (1) the need to stand upon apostolic teaching as reflecting the authority of Jesus; (2) the impossibility of possessing true spirituality when the lifestyle is one of immorality or debauchery; (3) the recognition of spiritual powers that are greater than men, and giving them respect; (4) the end of the age is coming and it will result at last in a new heavens and a new earth; (5) the reason for the apparent delay in the *parousia* and the fulfillment of God's prophetic program.”²⁶

“In the first chapter of his epistle, Peter summarizes the all-sufficient work of our sovereign God in making provision for our salvation and sanctification (verses 1-4). Included in these provisions are the ‘precious and magnificent promises’ of Scripture which make it possible to ‘become partakers of the divine nature.’ Peter urges us in verses 5-7 to make use of these divine provisions and to pursue the character qualities of the divine nature. Verses 8-11 spell out the fruits of the pursuit of holiness in terms of what we avoid as well as what we gain.”²⁷

- A. Introduction (1:1-2)
- B. The Christian’s Nature: The Work of God (1:3-11)
- C. The Christian’s Nurture: The Word of God (1:12-21)
- D. The Christian’s Warfare: The Attack of False Teachers (chap. 2)
- E. The Christian’s Hope: The Lord’s Return (3:1-16)
- F. Conclusion (3:17-18)

1. Who wrote it?

Some challenge its (1) authorship and (2) inclusion in the canon. Yet conservative scholarship has persistently assigned its authorship to the apostle Peter and confirmed its place in the Biblical canon.

“The author identifies himself as Simon Peter (1:1). He uses the first person singular pronoun in a highly personal passage (1:12–15) and claims to be an eyewitness of the transfiguration (1:16–18 [see note on 1:16]; cf. Mt 17:1–5). He asserts that this is his second letter to the readers (3:1) and refers to Paul as ‘our dear brother’ (3:15; see note there). In short, the letter claims to be Peter’s, and its character is compatible with that claim.”²⁸

“The author of 2 Peter is the Apostle Peter (see Introduction to 1 Peter). In 1:1, he makes that claim; in 3:1, he refers to his first letter; in 1:14, he refers to the Lord’s prediction of his death (John 21:18,19); and in 1:16–18, he claims to have been at the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1–4). However, critics have generated more controversy over 2 Peter’s authorship and rightful place in the canon of Scripture than over any other NT book. The church fathers were slow in giving it their acceptance. No church father refers to 2 Peter by name until Origen near the beginning of the third century. The ancient church historian, Eusebius, only included 2 Peter in his list of disputed books, along with James, Jude, 2 John, and 3 John. Even the leading Reformers only hesitatingly accepted it.”²⁹

2. When was it written?

“The reference to Paul’s epistles in 3:16 would seem to indicate a date some time after AD 60. Since 1 Peter is normally dated around AD 64, 2 Peter may be conservatively placed some time after the writing of 1 Peter and before Peter’s death, between AD 64 and 68.”³⁰

“If Peter is the author (as we have discussed above) the date can be narrowed to sometime between 60 and 68, A.D. It probably was written from Rome where the apostle spent the closing years of his life, and is best dated at 64 or 65 A.D.”³¹

“2 Peter was written toward the end of Peter’s life (cf. 1:12–15), after he had written a prior letter (3:1) to the same readers (probably 1 Peter). Since Peter was martyred during the reign of Nero, his death must have occurred prior to a.d. 68; so it is very likely that he wrote 2 Peter between 65 and 68.”³²

“Nero died in a.d. 68, and tradition says Peter died in Nero’s persecution. The epistle may have been written just before his death (1:14; ca. a.d. 67–68).”³³

3. To whom was it written?

“Peter was writing to Christian (1:1) to whom he had written before (3:1). If 2 Peter 3:1 refers to 1 Peter, then he was writing to the mixed Jewish and Gentile churches of ‘Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia’ (1 Peter 1:1).”³⁴

“The readers seem to be largely Gentiles (because of references to licentious lifestyles), or a mixed group of Jews and Gentiles, probably living in one of the provinces mentioned above. Word of their difficulties with false teachers has reached Peter in Rome and he dispatches this letter to them to encourage and warn of the danger they face.”³⁵

4. Why was it written?

“Second Peter was written for the purpose of exposing, thwarting, and defeating the invasion of false teachers into the church. Peter intended to instruct Christians in how to defend themselves against these false teachers and their deceptive lies. This book is the most graphic and penetrating exposé of false teachers in Scripture, comparable only to Jude.”³⁶

“In his first letter Peter feeds Christ’s sheep by instructing them how to deal with persecution from outside the church (see 1Pe 4:12); in this second letter he teaches them how to deal with false teachers and evildoers who have come into the church (see 2:1; 3:3–4 and notes).”³⁷

“Since the time of the writing and sending his first letter, Peter had become increasingly concerned about false teachers who were infiltrating the churches in Asia Minor. Though these false teachers had already caused trouble, Peter expected that their heretical doctrines and immoral life-styles would result in more damage in the future. Thus Peter, in an almost last will and testament (1:13–15), wrote to warn the beloved believers in Christ about the doctrinal dangers they were facing. Peter does not explicitly say where he was when he wrote this letter, as he does in 1 Peter (1 Pet. 5:13). But the consensus seems to be that Peter wrote this letter from prison in Rome, where he was facing imminent death. Shortly after this letter was written, Peter was martyred, according to reliable tradition, by being crucified upside down (*see note on John 21:18*).”³⁸

“The occasion of this letter is almost self-evident. Peter is about to die. ‘1:12-15 is full of language typical of farewell speeches... and explicitly describes the occasion for the writing of 2 Peter as Peter’s knowledge of his approaching death and his wish that his teaching be remembered after his death.’ This, however, is only part of the occasion for this epistle. In fact, Peter’s impending death *could* be seen merely as the catalyst for removing writer’s block! We think it is more than that, but there are other reasons for writing this letter as well. Altogether, I think three events converged, causing the apostle to the circumcision to write this letter to Paul’s churches.

1. *Paul had died.* As we argued at length in our discussion of 1 Peter, this was the immediate occasion for the writing of that epistle. Since this was still a recent event, and since Peter still wanted to make sure Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles did not go in vain, he took up the baton, keeping the apostolic connection with Asia Minor alive.

2. *Peter was about to die.* Not only would this motivate him to get the letter finished, it served another purpose as well. With Paul gone, these Gentile churches lost their apostolic witness to the faith. If Peter were to die, then a second apostolic witness would die with him. Although he had only ministered to them in writing, this important link with the apostolic faith would be gone. Not only this, but with the continuing and widening persecution from Rome against Christians, there was still the danger of apostasy.

3. *Peter anticipated that false teachers would soon creep into the church.* Paul himself was well aware that such would happen to the churches in Asia Minor (cf. Acts 20:29-30), as it had happened elsewhere. Peter wanted to safeguard Paul’s churches against these false teachers. In order to do so he not only asserted his own authority (1:16-19), but that of Paul (3:15-16) and his associates (3:2). This “preemptive strike” is reminiscent of Peter’s *modus operandi* in 1 Peter, where he encourages the saints in *anticipation* of governmental persecution. The reason Peter now

explicitly mentions Paul's authority (as well as his own) is because after his death the audience would have recourse only to the written apostolic voice, while false teachers would be very much alive."³⁹

"The main emphasis of 2 Peter is found in chapters 2 and 3, where the author writes preemptively against the coming heretics. These false teachers will imbibe in antinomianism and a denial of eschatological truths. Thus, the theme might be simply put, 'Beware of false teachers who skew grace and deny the Lord's return' (cf. 3:17)."⁴⁰

"The theme of 1 Peter is suffering, while that of 2 Peter is full knowledge. It appears some sixteen times with cognate words."⁴¹

"Faithful living in difficult times – that is the lesson Peter would have believers learn through this dynamic letter."⁴²

"The purpose of 2 Peter is to call Christians to spiritual growth so that they can combat apostasy as they look forward to the Lord's return."⁴³

5. The Outline for the Book of 2 Peter

It is important to remember that outlines are like maps. They guide and direct, but they are not inerrant or infallible. The following outline is from Roger M. Raymer.

"It is very similar to the book of Jude. Out of twenty-five verses in Jude, no less than nineteen are reiterated in some fashion in 2 Peter."⁴⁴

"There are conspicuous similarities between 2 Peter and Jude (compare 2Pe 2 with Jude 4–18), but there are also significant differences. It has been suggested that one borrowed from the other or that they both drew on a common source. If there is borrowing, it is not a slavish borrowing but one that adapts to suit the writer's purpose. While many have insisted that Jude used Peter, it is more reasonable to assume that the longer letter (Peter) incorporated much of the shorter (Jude). Such borrowing is fairly common in ancient writings. For example, many believe that Paul used parts of early hymns in Php 2:6–11 and 1Ti 3:16."⁴⁵

6. Peter's relationship to Jude

"Did 2 Peter borrow from Jude, or Jude from 2 Peter, or did they both borrow from an anonymous source now lost to us? Those seem to be the options available in discussing the obvious similarities between 2 Peter 2 and Jude. Current scholarship seems to lean to the first option: Peter borrowed from Jude. Certainly the parallel passages in Jude are fuller and more precise than those in 2 Peter, unless of course they were both quoting from memory some anonymous source. Either of these practices is not unknown to biblical writers (there seems general agreement that the gospel writers borrowed from each other or from some unknown source). To judge from the Acts account of the reverent treatment accorded James, it does not appear to be incongruous that Peter, as an apostle, should borrow from another one of the Lord's

brothers, Jude. At any rate, the issue does not affect the reliability of 2 Peter, nor detract from its thrust and power."⁴⁶

"Part of Jude is very similar to 2 Peter (mainly 2 Peter chapter 2), so much so that most scholars agree that there is a dependence between the two; that either one letter used the other directly, or they both drew on a common source.⁴⁷ Because this epistle is much shorter than 2 Peter, and due to various stylistic details, some writers consider that Jude was the source for the similar passages of 2 Peter.⁴⁸ However, other writers, noting that Jude 18 quotes 2 Peter 3:3 as past tense, consider that Jude came after 2 Peter.⁴⁹ Some scholars who consider Jude to predate 2 Peter note that the latter appears to quote the former but excise reference to the non-canonical Enoch."⁵⁰

a. An Afterword to the Book of 2 Peter

- The clarity of Scripture and 2 Peter 3:15, 16

"This epistle contains the only inter-connective reference from one apostolic epistle to another. In other words, Peter refers to Paul's writings."⁵¹

- Angels in chains and 2 Peter 2:4-6
- ¹ Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, ² that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. . . ⁴ The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. (Gen. 6:1,2,4)
- ⁶ And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, ⁷ just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. ⁸ Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. (Jude 6-8)
- "pits of darkness" 2 Peter 2:4
- "eternal bonds under darkness" Jude 6
- "bottomless pit" Rev. 9:1, 2, 11, 11:7, 17:8, 20:1, 3

Shepherding the Sheep: (What is the NEXT STEP?)

1. God gave us the Bible in order for us to know and experience the joy He has within Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus is the only source for knowing and experiencing joy.
2. Know the Biblical *Story* [i.e. JESUS] for your joy.
3. Do not be persuaded otherwise.

¹ “**Metanarrative** or **grand narrative** or **mater narrative** is a term developed by Jean-François Lyotard to mean a theory that tries to give a totalizing, comprehensive account to various historical events, experiences, and social, cultural phenomena based upon the appeal to universal truth or universal values. In this context, the narrative is a story that functions to legitimize power, authority, and social customs. A grand narrative or metanarrative is one that claims to explain various events in history, gives meaning by connecting disperse events and phenomena by appealing to some kind of universal knowledge or schema. The term grand narratives can be applied to a wide range of thoughts which includes Marxism, religious doctrines, belief in progress, universal reason, and others.”

² <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Metanarrative>

³ <http://www.postmodernpreaching.net/the-biblical-metanarrative.html>

⁴ <http://www.bl.uk/learning/timeline/item101093.html>

⁵ <http://christianity.stackexchange.com/questions/8490/into-how-many-languages-has-the-bible-been-translated>

⁶ <http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/records-1/best-selling-book-of-non-fiction/>

⁷ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/29733/apocalyptic-literature>

⁸ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/29733/apocalyptic-literature>

⁹ <http://hermeneutics.stackexchange.com/questions/4399/what-is-apocalyptic-literature>

¹⁰ <http://www.cru.org/training-and-growth/classics/10-basic-steps/10-the-new-testament/08-general-epistles.htm>

¹¹ <https://www.bereanbiblesociety.org/the-general-epistles-where-do-they-fit-in/>

¹² <https://bible.org/seriespage/pauline-epistles>

¹³ <http://web1.calbaptist.edu/jcate/cst100/Unit7B.htm>

¹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_epistles

¹⁵ <http://web1.calbaptist.edu/jcate/cst100/Unit7B.htm>

¹⁶ Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, p. 756.

¹⁷ http://www.askelm.com/restoring/res028.htm#_ftn4

¹⁸ <http://www.theologyofwork.org/new-testament/general-epistles/>

¹⁹ Frederick Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to Criticism of the New Testament for the Use of Bible Students*, 4th ed., ed by Edward Miller, vol. I (New York: G. Bell, 1894), p.72.

²⁰ http://www.askelm.com/restoring/res028.htm#_ftn1

²¹ Trobisch, *The First Edition of the New Testament*, 24-25.

²² <http://www.tfinney.net/General/intro.html>

²³ "Catholic Epistles," James Hastings, ed., *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. I (New York: C. Scribner's Sons: c1898-1904), p.360.

²⁴ Metzger, Bruce M. (1987). *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance*. pp. 295–296.

²⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pauline_epistles

²⁶ Ernest F. Scott, *The Literature of the New Testament* (New York: Columbia University Press, [1936]), pp. 209-210.

²⁷ <http://www.raystedman.org/2peter/intro.html>

²⁸ <https://bible.org/seriespage/false-teachers-2-peter-21-3>

²⁹ <http://www.biblica.com/en-us/bible/online-bible/scholar-notes/niv-study-bible/intro-to-2-peter/>

³⁰ <http://www.gty.org/resources/bible-introductions/MSB61/second-peter>

³¹ BKC, "2 Peter," Kenneth O. Gangel, 862.

³² <http://www.raystedman.org/2peter/intro.html>

³³ <http://www.biblica.com/en-us/bible/online-bible/scholar-notes/niv-study-bible/intro-to-2-peter/>

³⁴ <http://www.gty.org/resources/bible-introductions/MSB61/second-peter>

³⁵ BKC, "2 Peter," Kenneth O. Gangel, 862.

³⁶ <http://www.raystedman.org/2peter/intro.html>

³⁷ <http://www.gty.org/resources/bible-introductions/MSB61/second-peter>

³⁸ <http://www.biblica.com/en-us/bible/online-bible/scholar-notes/niv-study-bible/intro-to-2-peter/>

³⁹ <http://www.gty.org/resources/bible-introductions/MSB61/second-peter>

⁴⁰ <https://bible.org/seriespage/second-peter-introduction-argument-and-outline>

⁴¹ <https://bible.org/seriespage/second-peter-introduction-argument-and-outline>

⁴² *Willmington's Guide to the Bible*, 505.

⁴³ BKC, "2 Peter," Kenneth O. Gangel, 859.

⁴³ BKC, "2 Peter," Kenneth O. Gangel, 862.

⁴⁴ *Willmington's Guide to the Bible*, 505.

⁴⁵ <http://www.biblica.com/en-us/bible/online-bible/scholar-notes/niv-study-bible/intro-to-2-peter/>

⁴⁶ <http://www.raystedman.org/2peter/intro.html>

⁴⁷ *Introduction to 2 Peter in Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Ed. F.E.Gaebelein, Zondervan 1976–1992.

⁴⁸ Terrance Callan, *Use of the Letter of Jude by the Second Letter of Peter*, in *Biblica* 85 (2004), pp. 42–64.

⁴⁹ John MacArthur 1, 2, 3, *John Jude* 2007 p101 "...closely parallels that of 2 Peter (2:1–3:4), and it is believed that Peter's writing predated Jude for several reasons: (1) Second Peter anticipates the coming of false teachers (2 Pet. 2:1–2; 3:3), whereas Jude deals with their arrival (vv. 4, 11–12, 17–18); and (2) Jude quotes directly from 2 Peter 3:3 and acknowledges that it is from an apostle (vv. 17–18)."

⁵⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistle_of_Jude

⁵¹ *Willmington's Guide to the Bible*, 505.