

1 Peter, 2 Peter, and Jude

1 Peter

Author: Traditionally attributed to the Apostle Peter, one of Jesus' closest disciples. Some scholars debate authorship due to stylistic differences, but early church tradition strongly supports Peter.

Audience: Written to "elect exiles" who were Christians in the Roman provinces of Asia Minor -- Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia—regions in modern-day Turkey. These were likely Gentile Christians who were marginalized, viewed as social outsiders, and facing persecution (1 Peter 1:6). Remember that Peter had a vision of unclean animals being made clean by God. The animals represented the Gentiles. Peter is taking his vision seriously.

Historical Context: Likely written around AD 62–64 during Emperor Nero's reign, a time of growing hostility toward Christians. Peter refers to "Babylon" (1 Peter 5:13), widely interpreted as a metaphor for Rome. The Asian Minor provinces were influenced by Greco-Roman culture and emperor worship, and Christians were seen as subversive for refusing civic religious rituals. Due to this, Christians were beginning to face social and political hostility. The church was still young and scattered, with many Gentile converts trying to navigate their new faith in these hostile environments.

Reason for Writing: To encourage believers to stand firm in their faith amidst suffering and persecution. Peter emphasizes hope, holiness, submission, and endurance.

Walkthrough Highlights:

- **Chapter 1:** Hope through Christ's resurrection and a call to holiness.

¹³Therefore, **with minds that are alert and fully sober**, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. ¹⁴As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ¹⁵But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

¹⁷Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.

²²Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.

- **Chapter 2:** Believers as living stones; submission to authorities.

¹ Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. ² Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— ⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house^[a] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

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⁹ But **you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation**, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

¹¹ Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

¹³ Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, ¹⁴ or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. ¹⁵ For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. ¹⁶ Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. ¹⁷ Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.

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¹⁸ Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.

- **Chapter 3:** Instructions for households; suffering for righteousness.

¹ Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, ² when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.

⁷ Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

⁸ Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. ⁹ Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

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¹³ Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats^[b]; do not be frightened.”^[c] ¹⁵ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

Interesting:

¹⁸ For Christ ... was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. ¹⁹ After being made alive,^[d] he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits—²⁰ to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.

- **Chapter 4:** Encouragement in trials; living for God.

³ For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. ⁴ They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. ⁵ But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. **⁶ For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.**

⁷ The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. ⁸ Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. ⁹ Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, they

should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised.

- **Chapter 5:** Guidance for leaders and the community; humility and vigilance.

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

2 Peter

Author: Also attributed to Peter, though more heavily debated due to differences in style and vocabulary. Possibly written by a close associate or follower. If Peter was in jail, then he likely dictated it.

Audience: The letter refers to a "second letter" to the same group (2 Peter 3:1), likely the same churches in Asia Minor addressed in 1 Peter.

Historical Context: Written between AD 64–68, likely from Rome shortly before Peter's martyrdom. Peter's tone suggests he knew his death was imminent (2 Peter 1:14). The church was facing internal threats—false teachers promoting immoral lifestyles and denying Christ's return. These influences mirrored Roman philosophical trends and mystery cults that emphasized personal freedom and esoteric knowledge.

Reason for Writing: To warn against false teachers and remind believers of the certainty of Christ's return. Emphasizes knowledge, growth, and vigilance.

Walkthrough Highlights:

- **Chapter 1:** Call to spiritual growth; Peter's eyewitness testimony.

3 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may **participate in the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

5 For this very reason, **make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.** 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, **they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive** in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

- **Chapter 2:** Condemnation of false teachers and examples of divine judgment.

¹ But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you.

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¹² But these people blaspheme in matters they do not understand. **They are like unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct**, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like animals they too will perish.

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¹⁷ These people are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them.

- **Chapter 3:** Assurance of Christ's return and exhortation to live holy lives.

³ Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. ⁴ They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." ⁵ But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. ⁶ By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. ⁷ By the same word **the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.**

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. ⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. **Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.**

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. **The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.**

Jude

Summary: A brief but powerful appeal to defend the faith against corrupt influences, using historical examples of judgment and urging believers to persevere.

Author: Jude, a brother of James and likely a half-brother of Jesus. Identifies himself as a servant of Jesus Christ.

Audience: General audience of believers, possibly Jewish Christians.

Historical Context: Likely written between AD 65–80, during a time when the church was dealing with early heresies and moral corruption. Jude was a traveling teacher and missionary in the early Jewish-Christian movement. His audience was likely familiar with Jewish traditions and apocalyptic literature, as seen in his references to texts like 1 Enoch and the Testament of Moses. The church was facing infiltration by immoral and heretical individuals who denied Christ's authority.

Reason for Writing: To urge believers to contend for the faith and resist false teachers who distort grace.

There are a lot of similarities and parallels to Peter's books:

- Warning against false teachers
- Encouragement in suffering
- Call to holiness and perseverance
- Hope in Christ's return
- False teachers and prophets secretly infiltrating the church
- False teachers and prophets will get the blackest darkness
- Reference Balam
- Reference Sodom and Gomorrah
- Reference fallen angels bound by everlasting chains

Uniquely, Jude references stories in two apocryphal books like they are fact:

- Michael and the devil fighting over Moses' body in The Testament of Moses
- Enoch's prophecy in the Book of Enoch.