

SLOW FOOD: 2 PETER and JUDE (28 studies)

These two shorter New Testament letters contain some common material and appear to have been written at about the same time in the early to mid-sixties AD (CE). Michael Green argues cogently for Petrine authorship of 2 Peter, despite differences in style from 1 Peter. Jude, like James, is a brother of the Lord (Mk 6:3), who did not believe in him during his lifetime (Jn 7:5) but now gladly describes himself as 'a servant of Jesus Christ'. It is uncertain whether one draws from the other, or whether both quote from an unknown third source. 2 Peter confines itself to Biblical references, whereas Jude refers freely to extra-canonical sources such as the intertestamental book of *Enoch*.

Both letters passionately attack false doctrine within the church emanating from leaders who advocate some kind of seductive 'freedom' and exhibit immorality in their own lives. The context fits well with the unrestrained licence of the later years of the emperor Nero as described in the *Annals of Imperial Rome* by the historian Tacitus. We may find ourselves reflecting on similar features in our own age; but even more on our responsibility as Christian teachers (in whatever aspect) for setting a sound example doctrinally and morally.

Standard commentaries include *2 Peter and Jude* by Michael Green (Tyndale 1968), *The Message of 2 Peter and Jude* by Dick Lucas and Christopher Green (BST) and *Early Christian Letters: James, Peter, John and Judah* by Tom Wright (SPCK 2011).

The idea behind the Slow Food studies is to explore a single point of interest in each passage rather than to embark upon an exhaustive exposition. The questions may be used as a jumping-off point for personal meditation. The first person singular is normally used to encourage personal application; it can be pluralised for group study. Cross-references chase up one or two ideas in the section and are listed in biblical, not topical, order. Studies may be combined as desired.

2 PETER

1:1-2 Who am I? What encouragements does Peter offer? *Jn 17:3, 25-26; Rom 4:25-5:1; 2 Cor 12:9.*

1:3-4 What gifts has God made available to me? Am I putting them to good use? *Isa 55:6-13; Eph 4:20-24; Jas 1:16-21.*

1:5-7 In Peter's seven-point training schedule, are there areas where I need to put in greater effort? (Don't rush this question – we all have our weak points!) *Gal 5:6; Phil 2:12-13; Jas 2:14-18.*

1:8-11 'There is no excuse for resting content with present attainment' (MICHAEL GREEN). What warnings, and what encouragements, does Peter offer us here? *Ps 15; Mt 13:22; Phil 3:12-14.*

1:12-15 What is Peter's attitude to death? If I am 'moving on' (in whatever sense), what is my responsibility to those I leave behind? *Jn 21:18-19; 2 Cor 5:1; Heb 11:9-10.*

1:16-18 What does Jesus' transfiguration teach me? *Isa 42:1; Dan 7:14; Mk 9:2-8.*

1:19 Do I use the Old Testament as a means to bring me (and perhaps others) into a surer knowledge of Christ? *Num 24:17; Lk 1:67-79; Lk 16:31.*

1:20-21 What is Peter's view of Scripture? Do I share it? *Ps 119:105; Jn 6:63; 2 Tim 3:15-17; 1 Pet 1:10-12.*

2:1-3 Have I encountered any 'destructive heresies' recently? Have they led me to devalue the work of Christ on the cross? *Deut 13:1-3; Mt 24:24; 1 Tim 2:3-7.*

2:4-10 Is God's judgment arbitrary, or is it logical? Does the same apply to his salvation? *1 Cor 10:1-13; Eph 2:1-10.*

2:10-16 Am I, as a Christian teacher, abusing my responsibility in any way? Is God using surprising means (like asses speaking words of wisdom) to get through to me? *Num 22:22-35; Lk 12:41-48.*

2:17-22 How do we gain true freedom? Is it possible to lose it again? *Lk 22:31-32; Jn 8:32-36; Heb 6:4-12.*

3:1-2 Am I getting a healthy and balanced diet of holistic Bible teaching? *Jer 17:5-18; 1 Pet 1:22-2:1.*

3:3-7 What are 'the last days'? How much store do I set by the doctrine of the second coming of Christ? *Job 19:25-29; Jn 5:24-29; Acts 17:30-31; Rom 13:11-14; 1 Th 5:1-11.*

3:8-9 What is God's purpose in delaying the return of Christ? Am I aligned with that purpose? *Ps 90:4; Ezek 18:23; Mk 13:10; 2 Tim 2:10.*

3:10-13 If there is a new world to come, does it matter how I live in this one? *1 Jn 2:28-3:3; Rev 21:1-4, 22-27.*

3:14-16 How patient has the Lord had to be with me? *Rom 2:4, 3:25, 11:22.*

3:17-18 Have I stopped growing? *Prov 4:18; Jn 3:30; Eph 4:13-16; Phil 3:12-17; 1 Pet 2:1-3.*

JUDE

1-2 What do Jude and I have in common? *Mk 6:3; Jn 10:14-16; 1 Th 5:23-24.*

3-4 If I hold to Biblical teaching about morality and the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, am I failing to adapt to the culture in which I live? *Mt 7:13-14, 24-27; Rom 6:1-4; 2 Pet 2:1-3.*

5-7 What point is Jude trying to illustrate, and does it apply today? *Num 32:8-15; Jer 23:14; 2 Tim 2:19-21.*

8-10 Do I need greater humility in spiritual matters? *Ps 131; Mt 11:25-30; 1 Cor 8:1-3.*

11 Jude chooses 'classic examples of the disastrous effects of jealousy, greed and pride' (DAVID WHEATON in NBC⁴). Are any of these stories relevant to my situation? *Gen 4:1-8 (Cain); Num 16 (Korah); Num 22-24 (Balaam).*

12-13 If I am supposed to be a moral and spiritual guide to others, am I myself off course? *Isa 56:10-11; Mt 15:14; 1 Cor 11:31; Phil 3:1-3.*

14-16 What is wrong with these people's attitude to God, to others and to the circumstances of their lives? The word translated 'fault-finders' in NIV means 'cursing their luck' or 'blaming their lot in life'. *Ps 16; Phil 4:11-12; 1 Tim 6:6-8.*

17-21 Does true spirituality consist in being entirely passive? *Jn 15:9-10; Eph 6:18; Rom 8:26-27; Heb 5:12-14.*

22-23 How urgent is the service to which God may be calling me today? *2 Cor 6:1-7:1.*

24-25 Does my final salvation depend on me? *Isa 1:16-20; Mic 7:7-8; Jn 17:11-15.*