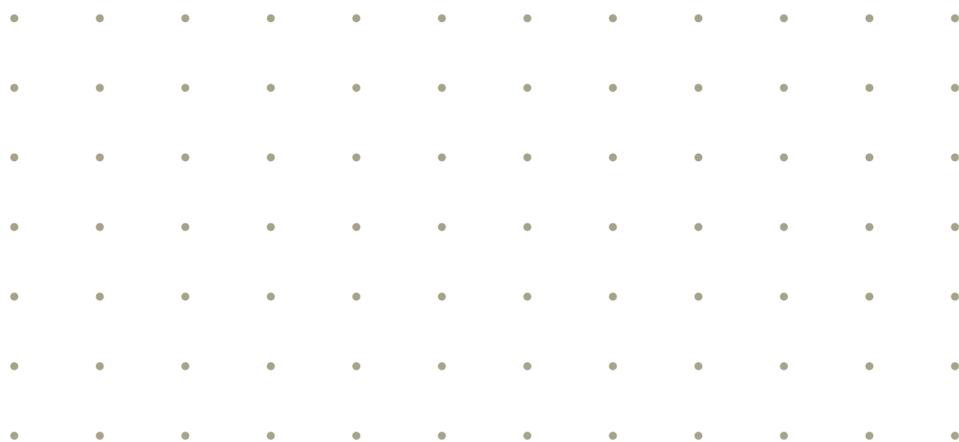




1–2 PETER *and* JUDE

A 12-WEEK STUDY

Jonathan K. Dodson



J. I. Packer

THEOLOGICAL EDITOR

Dane C. Ortlund

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“This series is a tremendous resource for those wanting to study and teach the Bible with an understanding of how the gospel is woven throughout Scripture. Here are gospel-minded pastors and scholars doing gospel business from all the Scriptures. This is a biblical and theological feast preparing God’s people to apply the entire Bible to all of life with heart and mind wholly committed to Christ’s priorities.”

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KNOWING THE BIBLE

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Ruth and Esther	Daniel	Galatians	1–2 Peter
1–2 Kings	Hosea	Ephesians	and Jude
Ezra and	Matthew	Philippians	Revelation
Nehemiah	Mark	Colossians and	
Job	Luke	Philemon	

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1-2 PETER
AND JUDE
A 12-WEEK STUDY



Jonathan K. Dodson

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S E R I E S P R E F A C E

KNOWING THE BIBLE, as the series title indicates, was created to help readers know and understand the meaning, the message, and the God of the Bible. Each volume in the series consists of 12 units that progressively take the reader through a clear, concise study of that book of the Bible. In this way, any given volume can fruitfully be used in a 12-week format either in group study, such as in a church-based context, or in individual study. Of course, these 12 studies could be completed in fewer or more than 12 weeks, as convenient, depending on the context in which they are used.

Each study unit gives an overview of the text at hand before digging into it with a series of questions for reflection or discussion. The unit then concludes by highlighting the gospel of grace in each passage (“Gospel Glimpses”), identifying whole-Bible themes that occur in the passage (“Whole-Bible Connections”), and pinpointing Christian doctrines that are affirmed in the passage (“Theological Soundings”).

The final component to each unit is a section for reflecting on personal and practical implications from the passage at hand. The layout provides space for recording responses to the questions proposed, and we think readers need to do this to get the full benefit of the exercise. The series also includes definitions of key words. These definitions are indicated by a note number in the text and are found at the end of each chapter.

Lastly, to help understand the Bible in this deeper way, we urge readers to use the ESV Bible and the *ESV Study Bible*, which are available in various print and digital formats, including online editions at esv.org. The Knowing the Bible series is also available online. Additional 12-week studies covering each book of the Bible will be added as they become available.

May the Lord greatly bless your study as you seek to know him through knowing his Word.

J. I. Packer
Lane T. Dennis

WEEK 1: OVERVIEW



Getting Acquainted

When global unrest, cultural turbulence, personal suffering, destructive theology, or everyday turmoil strikes, how do you respond? It is easy to become overwhelmed by such things, but Peter desires his audience to know that they have a unique ability to step back from their historical situation and view life from a transcendent perspective. In Christ, we possess the gift of gospel optimism. Gospel optimism insists that, no matter how dark the times, we have every reason to hope in Christ.

In the letters of Peter we find no mere spiritual suggestions but divine truths, warnings, and commands meant to give hope. He writes not to a loose collection of spiritually minded individuals but to “a royal priesthood, a holy nation” (1 Pet. 2:9), a living temple created to beam its collective, glorious hope into darkened surroundings. Peter identifies his audience as exiles¹ who, in their various sufferings, possess the hope of Jesus’ return, which is to motivate faithful living in the present.

Peter exhorts the exiles to aim not for cultural relevance or dominance but for faithfulness to Jesus. He reminds his readers that gospel hope produces an enduring optimism that shines through issues of personal holiness, attitudes toward authority, interpersonal ethics, and perseverance in suffering. Second Peter and Jude tighten the screws on deceitful teachers and their doctrines while lifting up the truth of God’s Word. They anticipate the return of Christ as a time of great judgment and salvation. Amid these heavy themes, Peter and

WEEK 1: OVERVIEW

Jude repeatedly remind their readers that their only hope rests in Jesus' promised return, which will one day bring us, and all creation, into the full glory we can only taste now. Until Jesus' return, the church is to live together as chosen pilgrims, loving one another and contending for the truth as a distinct witness to the glory of God in the risen Christ.

Placing 1–2 Peter and Jude in the Larger Story

With Jesus' birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension the church has been launched into the world. Starting in Jerusalem and spreading around the world, the church encounters opposition, misunderstanding, and persecution. Writing to Christians scattered throughout modern-day Turkey, Peter calls the early Christians "exiles." This term probably has a double meaning, one theological and one cultural. With the remnant of Israel exiled in Babylon in the background, Peter envisions the church as God's true Israel, exiled in the world. However, as a community of those who are spiritually foreign and socially marginalized, the church is also a community of exiles within their own culture. Jude also picks up on this theme, reminding the church that their identity is in "Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt" (Jude 5). He exhorts the church to live as saints delivered from sin by Jesus and urges them not to fall into unbelief. The whole church can thus be viewed as a community of exiles—God's chosen and redeemed people called to live for Jesus in this world.

Key Passage

"After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen." (1 Pet. 5:10–11)

Date and Historical Background

First Peter was probably written in the mid-60s AD to Christians scattered throughout "Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1 Pet. 1:1), all areas in modern-day Turkey. Second Peter was likely written closer to the end of Peter's life, in the late 60s. The apostle himself comments that "I know that the putting off of my body will be soon" (2 Pet. 1:14). We are not certain how Peter knew he would soon die. Perhaps this knowledge was an insight from the Holy Spirit, an awareness of intensifying plots to kill him, or a combination of both. Much less is known about Jude, who was probably a brother of James (author of the letter bearing that name) and of Jesus (Gal. 1:19). It is likely that Jude

was written before 2 Peter, although various scholars date the letter anywhere between AD 50 and 90. It is clear that Jude has a firm grasp on the Old Testament Scriptures as well as on the gospel of Jesus. He uses this understanding, together with his earnest faith, to respond to the particular issues of false teaching and ungodliness, which pervert the grace of God. He is intent on helping the church “contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).

Outline of 1 Peter

- I. Hope that Lives into Holiness (1:1–2:3)
 - A. Salutation (1:1–2)
 - B. A living hope (1:3–12)
 - C. Holy together (1:13–2:3)
- II. Community Made on the Cornerstone (2:4–12)
- III. The Church that Affirms Authority (2:13–3:7)
 - A. Submitting to governing authorities (2:13–17)
 - B. Submitting in suffering (2:18–25)
 - C. Submitting to husbands and honoring wives (3:1–7)
- IV. Suffering Together (3:8–4:19)
 - A. Community life as witness (3:8–22)
 - B. Ceasing from sin (4:1–11)
 - C. Suffering well (4:12–19)
- V. Humble Together (5:1–14)
 - A. Elders and the church (5:1–5a)
 - B. Resisting the Devil (5:5b–11)
 - C. Closing greetings (5:12–14)

As You Get Started

These three letters apply the hope of Christ to global unrest, cultural turbulence, personal suffering, destructive teachings, and everyday turmoil. Do any such conflicts affect your life? Reflect on your own situation and how you think the books of this study (1–2 Peter, Jude) should challenge you.

WEEK 1: OVERVIEW

What themes catch your attention in these letters? Do any particular passages from 1–2 Peter or Jude come to mind?

How do these letters clarify our understanding of sinful patterns, suffering, salvation, the Christian relationship with society, the end times, or other doctrines?

There are some strange and difficult texts in 1–2 Peter and Jude. Do you find any of them confusing? Are there any specific questions you hope to have answered through this study?

As You Finish This Unit . . .

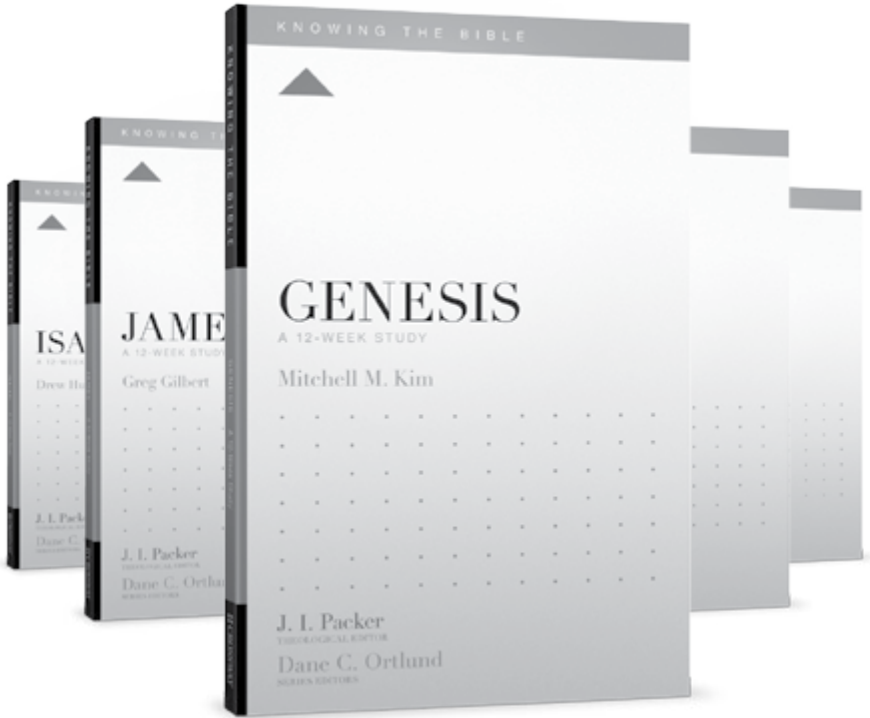
Pause and ask the Holy Spirit to give you biblical insight, self-understanding, and grace to respond to Christ however he wants you to as you study these letters.

Definition

¹ **Exile** – The term “exile” includes three strands of meaning: (1) physical displacement from home; (2) persecution by society, resulting in suffering; (3) cultural marginalization. To be an exile is to be at home in Christ while foreign to aspects of this world.

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1–2 PETER AND JUDE are letters written to churches experiencing various kinds of trials—false teachers, distorted views of the gospel, and harsh persecution. If 1 Peter exults, “Jesus will return!” and 2 Peter rebuffs the claim, “Jesus won’t return,” then Jude exhorts, “Jesus is just about here!”

Together, these letters form a kind of manifesto of hope for living faithfully no matter how dark the times. This study highlights the importance of holding fast to the true gospel, living distinct, holy lives, and looking ahead to the return of Christ.

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BIBLE STUDY

