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TAG: 2 PETER AND JUDE USED COMMON SOURCE

On the Relationship between 2 Peter and Jude

ON JULY 15, / BY JOVAN
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[Note: This is an independent study Advanced Critical

Introduction to the New Testament graduate course paper from 2005. Aside from some reformatting and stylistic emendations, the viewpoint argued for has not been altered. Furthermore, the thesis is still held to have the merit as maintained here. Not all will be satisfied with the argumentation, but I'm sharing this paper in hopes it will help others who come across this question in their biblical studies. I may return to this subject again.]

Introduction

It has been suggested that in recent years the epistolary genre has received greater academic attention among scholars than in previous generations.[1] These advancements in the nature, function, and composition conventions which have been made in the last century, is demonstrated by the works of E. Randolph Richard (1991, 2004), Jerome Murphy-O'Connor (1995), William G. Doty (1988), and Stanley K. Stower (1989).[2] The overall impact of the New Testament genre of the letter is demonstrated by Simon Kistemaker's observation that in the letters, "the writers develop the teachings of the gospels and apply those teachings to churches and individuals," and with regard to 2 Peter and Jude, they "address themselves to the perseverance of the saints and to the doctrine of the last things." [3] This importance embedded within them, in addition to canonical considerations, has called attention to this genre, providing an impetus to analyze this part of the New Testament canon.[4]

Among the 21 New Testament letters, eight of them are normally called “Catholic,” or “General,” because the Christian audiences of the epistles have been taken to be universal in scope.[5] They are Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Jude. Despite the recognition of their universal application for Christian living, it appears that, in both academic and ministerial circumstances, they have been neglected considerably for their individual contributions and context. This is not to say the General Epistles have been totally abandoned, but that in comparison to the Gospel accounts and Pauline literature, they have suffered practical orphanage.[6] So much so that J. Daryl Charles applies Rowston’s infamous declaration that 2 Peter is the most neglected book in the New Testament to the *entire* General group.[7] Unfortunately, due to this lack of attention, the General letters are a troublesome spot in New Testament analysis; especially, because these letters “are sufficiently different from one another to preclude any general treatment of those historical features that may group these letters into a discrete and coherent collection.”[8]

Of the several trouble spots within the General letters is the relationship between 2 Peter and Jude. The basic problem of this relationship is the similarities which exist in 2 Peter 2 and Jude regarding their treatment of certain libertine opponents (2 Peter 2:1-3:3; Jude 2-16). It is to this relationship that this paper will address itself; however, this is simply one among a number of problems. For example, within some academic circles, the authorship of 1 and 2 Peter is questioned and the

conclusions drawn from that study impacts how one examines the relationship between the latter and Jude.[9] Moreover, Jude's use and reliance on certain Hebrew sources (pseudepigrapha) move some to call into question the use of Jude by an inspired apostolic author;[10] thus, granting a rationale to see non-apostolic authorship of 2 Peter. This paper by necessity will hint at these issues; however, they cannot be discussed at length, as they do not necessarily bear upon the investigation at hand.[11]

The basic problem being addressed is as follows: how shall the similarities of 2 Peter and Jude be explained. Academic circles are divided, as is common with any issue of a critical nature, but many sources I am aware of assert or assume that these similarities are best explained by Judaic priority. This priority is typically advanced to mean that the author of 2 Peter depends upon Jude for the bulk of his denunciation of the false teachers. As will be described below, this position is not unassailable; furthermore, there are other solutions to the evidence. This critical matter shall be examined in a three-fold matter.

First, the question of whether or not dependency exists shall be examined. Second, an evaluation of key solutions to the dependency question shall be developed. Third, following the analysis of the dependency problem conclusions shall be drawn regarding the compatibility between the solution proposed and the dogma of inspiration.

Evidence Considered Germane to the Dependency Question

When 2 Peter 2:1-3:3 are studied it is a rather difficult matter to dismiss the contribution and illumination that Jude 2-18 provide;**[12]** however, it can be studied independently with great profit,**[13]** and it should be.**[14]** Despite these remarks, the subject matter and vocabulary are so similar that many students have suspected a dependency issue of some between them. Douglas J. Rowston states:

If one compares Jude 4-16 and 2 Pet 2:1-18, one is led to the conclusion that there is a literary relationship between Jude and 2 Peter. The parallels may be accounted for in four ways. It is possible, not probable, to explain the parallels as coincidental. By the very nature of the parallels this is most unlikely.**[15]**

The argument is that the similarities between 2 Peter and Jude are so strong that scholars suggest this “literary relationship” cannot be explained away as “coincidental.” Michael Green observes that, “of twenty-five verses in Jude no less than fifteen appear, in whole or in part, in 2 Peter” and that “many of the identical ideas, words and phrases occur in parallel in the two writings.” Consequently, this makes it difficult to “doubt that there is some sort of literary relationship between them.”**[16]**

The question faced here is whether or not this similarity demands that dependency exists. This will be accomplished

by evaluating the evidence typically advanced to affirm dependency. The lines of evidence typically advanced are following in two broad argumentations: thematic content and language. Udo Schnelle provides an example of the argument:

How heavily dependent 2 Peter is on Jude is seen in the numerous details of subject matter and vocabulary as well as in the similarities in the structure of the two letters: after the introductory greeting both authors remind their churches of the faith transmitted in the tradition, a faith that now must be preserved in view of the threats of the false teachers. Then follows a description of the heretical teachers, to which are joined admonitions to hold firmly to the right faith and to be vigilant.[17]

Denial of the similarities is, consequently, impossible and it is obvious that some type of relationship explains the similarities existing between 2 Peter and Jude.

The false teachers of 2 Peter 2 are described in five ways. Jerome H. Neyrey discusses this matter in balance to Jude.[18] The theme of a denunciation against the opponents is developed as the author of 2 Peter describes them as false teachers (2 Pet 2:15, 19, 3:3-4, 15-17), who deny authority and judgment (2 Pet 2:10-11, 20, 3:4, 9; Jude 4, 8, 10, 16), whose faulty theology leads to immorality (2 Pet 2:13-14, 18, 20-22; Jude 4, 8, 16), for which judgment and ruination await (2 Pet 2:4-10, 12, 16-17, 3:5-8, 10, 16; Jude 4). With such thematic parallels, it is understandable to see the evidence for an

impetus to affirm a dependency of some kind. Those like Bauckham believe that dependency flows from 2 Peter upon Jude, principally because of the brevity of Jude and comparatively larger size of 2 Peter.**[19]**

Guthrie, likewise, points out that the problem between these two documents is “how it came about that both epistles use such similar descriptions of these people [i.e. false teachers] and the natural conclusion is that one has used the other.”**[20]** Consider Guthrie’s last clause, “the natural conclusion is that one has used the other.” This conclusion has given rise to the certainty that the parallels being so strong, literary dependency then automatically seems to imply one author had to use the epistolary work of another. However, Guthrie reminds, that there exists another possibility – “that both have used the same source, incorporating the materials into their epistles in different ways.”**[21]** Still even here, Guthrie implicitly accepts that this source is of a literary variety, which it seems is rarely disputed. However, this assumption may prove to be more of a weakness, than it is a strength.

It is interesting to observe how proponents of Judaic priority argue with the evidence. Often an expression of certainty is made regarding the conclusion that 2 Peter 2 is based upon Jude, and then the author proceeds to detail how actually it is not that certain. This line of thinking applies not only the thematic issues between the two epistles but also within the vocabulary similarities as well. Terrance Callan is an

excellent example; he writes:

It seems obvious to all readers that there is some kind of close relationship between Jude and 2 Peter. For good reasons it is now widely accepted that 2 Peter is dependent on Jude. This is so much the case that authors at times overstate this dependence, saying that 2 Peter has simply incorporated Jude. A closer examination shows that the relationship is not this simple. The author of 2 Peter adopted Jude 4-18 in 2 Pet 2:1-3:3.**[22]**

What is commonly described as a dependency of Jude by the author of 2 Peter is actually an adaptation, not a literary dependency; in fact, Callan continues by observing that 2 Peter “has not adapted Jude by quoting it directly.”**[23]** Instead, it is regarded as a redaction of Jude by the author of 2 Peter, which means it is a “free paraphrase.”**[24]**

Before a complete evaluation is rendered towards the thematic similarities between Jude and 2 Peter, the second line of reasoning, being vocabulary, must be considered. Statistics vary regarding how much is similar, but one thing remains constant, there are exact points of contact between Jude and 2 Peter. This may appear impressive; however, even Richard Bauckham, a proponent of Judaic priority and pseudepigraphical origin for 2 Peter, writes:

Despite the large number of rare words in Jude, it is relevant to notice that 2 Peter has, in taking over material

from Jude, taken over few rare words. Of thirty-eight words in 2 Peter which occur only once or twice elsewhere in the NT, only four occur in Jude and these are only four words which are found exclusively in Jude and 2 Peter in the NT (*asebeîn*, *empaíktēs*, *suneuōcheísthai*, *hupérongkos*, and of these *asebeîn* is probably not borrowed from Jude). This suggests that, despite its dependence on other sources as well as Jude, few of 2 Peter's rare words are likely to derive from sources. They belong to the author's own vocabulary.**[25]**

Now observe, out of these 38 words found in the 2 Peter, only four are in Jude at the most, and quite possibly only three. What sort of dependency is this then, if the author of 2 Peter can only be said to have employed three words for "certain"? Not to mention Bauckham's belief that these particular rare words belong to the author of 2 Peter's own vocabulary.

Donald A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo and Leon Morris likewise have questioned this argumentation; though, they have decided to remain somewhat moderate on the issue. They suggest that there is nothing inherently opposed to 2 Peter incorporating some verbiage that is Judaic, a moderation that Michael J. Gilmour has argued for at length.**[26]** Guthrie presents the following evidence regarding the verbal parallels, and seems to have the last word on the impact of such matters:

It is often overlooked that although the parallels between

these epistles stretch to a wide range of subject-matter, yet verbal agreements are not impressive. If statistics are any guide, the following data may supply some indication. Out of the parallel passages comprising 2 Peter 1:2, 12; 2:1-4, 6, 10-12, 15-18; 3:2-3 and Jude 2, 4-13, 17-18, the former contain 297 words and the latter 256 words, but they share only 78 in common. This means that if 2 Peter is the borrower he has changed 70% of Jude's language and added more of his own, whereas if Jude borrowed from 2 Peter, the percentage of alteration is slightly higher, combined with a reduction in quantity.**[27]**

The matter for Guthrie must still remain open because the evidence is "too short to lead to certainty"; however, he affirms based upon this evidence that "neither author can be considered more concise than the other."**[28]**

The question remains, if thematic and linguistic considerations that are the ground upon which dependency is based, how does this evidence point exclusively to any other kind of dependency other than 2 Peter borrowing from Jude when the dependency is not air tight as is generally believed to be? The question has merit because even the proponents of Judaic priority observe, "despite the great similarity of theme and terminology one detects here, as elsewhere, very different agenda on the part of the two authors."**[29]** Furthermore, they argue forcefully, that "Jude and 2 Peter are very different works, from very different historical contexts," thus it is suggested, "the literary relationship between 2 Peter and Jude

does not justify the common habit of classing these two works together as similar works.”**[30]** With the testimony of this nature it is difficult to be persuaded that literary dependence between the two epistles is as viable as it is popular.

Furthermore, much is made of the similarities between 2 Peter and Jude; meanwhile, there are considerable matters that are distinct between the two epistles, at least six.**[31]** Jude 1-4 and 20-25 (the beginning and close) are distinct from 2 Peter 2 and are not parallel, being the “most important and distinctive parts of Jude.”**[32]** Jude exclusively employs triplet constructions (Jude 1-2, 4-8, 11-13, 20-23, 25), while 2 Peter breaks them up. Jude quotes the Pseudepigrapha (9, 14-16), while 2 Peter does not (2:2-22). In fact, he is very vague in his allusions to such traditions. 2 Peter refers to the false teachers in the future tense (2:1-3); meanwhile, Jude does not (5-7, 9). Jude’s Greek is less difficult than that of 2 Peter. In fact, Daniel C. Arichea and Howard A. Hatton write:

As to style, scholars have noticed that 2 Peter is characterized by long sentences and elaborate constructions. These are all attributed to Greek influences, which have also somewhat influenced the contents of the letter. But in contrast to 2 Peter, Jude seems to use simpler constructions, although not lacking in eloquence and in figurative language [...].**[33]**

Finally, mockers in Jude do not ridicule the delay of the Lord’s coming; however, it is abundantly clear that the opponents in

2 Peter do (3:1-7).

What may be said then about the facts and the proposals given by scholars regarding the relationship between Jude and 2 Peter? Is there reason to believe that there is a dependency issue? Little could be said which would shift the attention away from the fact that Jude and 2 Peter have similarities, but again, do these similarities demand literary dependence? Moreover, what may be said of their differences? It appears that this is not necessary to conclude that there is a literary dependency where one had the other's epistle before them as they composed their letter. This last point will be examined when the four solutions often proposed to explain this critical problem are considered. But for now, it is sufficient so summarize that despite the thematic similarities and some vocabulary parallels, the testimony of the evidence and those who promote a literary model of dependency concede the point that such is not the solid ground upon which to build a wholesale use of Jude by 2 Peter.

An Evaluation of the Key Solutions to the Dependency Question

There are four basic proposals that have been used to explain the relationship that exists between Jude and 2 Peter. Michael Green succinctly notes them when he writes "that there is a dependence either of 2 Peter on Jude or of Jude on 2 Peter, of both on some lost document, or that both share a common author, is certain":**[34]**

1. Dependence of 2 Peter on Jude
2. Dependence of Jude on 2 Peter
3. Dependence of 2 Peter and Jude on a lost document
4. 2 Peter and Jude share a common author

Others would reclassify Green's third proposals more generally, suggesting that Jude and 2 Peter may be based from a common source. Generally speaking, scholarship tends to argue that dependency flows from the author of 2 Peter. Powerful presentations of the 2 Peter dependency proposal is represented in commentaries by Richard J. Bauckham (1983) and Jerome H. Neyrey (1993).[35] These works, among others, demonstrate that there is weight behind this proposal. Although there is a general scholarly consensus that the author of 2 Peter employed the epistle of Jude to compose the bulk of 2 Peter 2, a case can be adequately presented which argues that 2 Peter and Jude drew upon a *common source* to combat a common problem. The case is based upon the clear problem with defining the nature of dependency involved and the strength of some kind of common source theory.

The Problem of Defining Dependency

Arguing for literary dependency can be a misleading enterprise, especially in epistolary material. As noted above, it is difficult to argue that there is no relationship between Jude and 2 Peter, but this difficulty does not within itself demand an exclusive means to explain dependency. Literary

dependency is not as foolproof as it is often assumed to be as G. Barr explains:

Beyond the area of literary dependence which is involved in direct copying, there lies a large grey [sic] area in which an author may use many synonyms of words found in another's work, and may employ parallel syntactical constructions. In such cases it is difficult to distinguish between material which shows familiarity with the written work of another author and material which has been produced after shared discussion, each author writing up the discussion in his own way.[36]

An exclusive means to explain dependency is, therefore, unnecessary since there is another valid explanation. It is very true that at least two types of dependency exist: literary and thought (i.e. Barr's "shared discussion"), and sometimes it is difficult to distinguish familiarity from literary dependence. Consequently, for all its prominence as a viable explanation, a weakness is evident which suggests that literary dependency is not the only appropriate explanation for the similarities that exist between Jude and 2 Peter.

It is a virtually uniform approach to Jude and 2 Peter where scholars advance that the author of 2 Peter 2 employed the bulk of Jude in their argumentation. It is interesting, though, that it is proposed that Jude's argument and language were copied, and yet modifications are accepted and assumed and explained as the letter writer making adjustments to fit

the purposes of a pseudepigraphic argument. Callan employs phrases such as “no sentence of Jude is quoted in 2 Peter,” “2 Peter re-wrote Jude, avoiding direct quotation,” “2 Peter has changed Jude’s critique,” Callan constantly claims 2 Peter changed, rewrote, omitted a phrase or a verb and as a final example 2 Peter 2:4-10a is “a thorough revision of Jude 5-8a.”**[37]** Such description betrays more assumption than critical analysis because the case can be easily explained as familiarity with the subject at hand rather than literary dependence upon a letter.

To affirm dependency on a literary basis Barr’s case must be acknowledged, which is that instead of low calculations such as Guthrie pointed out above, demonstrating a low level of contact, there should be a high level of contact. For dependency of a literary nature is the:

copying of vocabulary, phrases, sentences and ideas, [but it] will not be rich in synonyms as the copyist is in a position of dependence and may be unsure of precise shades of meaning. The points of contact may well cluster in the original, as some particular passages are likely to appeal to the copyist as containing the essence of the work. The borrowed portions of text may also preserve something of the order of the original.**[38]**

In a sense, it is what may be called “synoptical dependency.” In the Gospel narratives, there is strong verbal agreement and arrangement. The “points of contact” are so strong that there

is virtually no other way to explain the relationship except the wholesale employment of a previous document, no matter which arrangement of dependency is argued for among the Gospel narratives. Among the Gospels,

not only is the wording almost exact (as is true in the Greek original), but each of the three evangelists inserts an abrupt break in Jesus' words at the same point. Such duplication of unusual or awkward constructions occur at other places, along with passages in which two or three of the evangelists use precisely the same words, in the same order, over several lines of text.**[39]**

However, the relationship between Jude and 2 Peter is such that it does not enjoy the same literary dependency, as does the synoptical record. Instead, exact "points of contact" are few, but this paucity is rationalized as redaction.**[40]**

In truth, the literary dependency, which supposedly exists between 2 Peter and Jude, is rather weak since it requires a significant theory of revision. On such grounds, it must be it stands or falls. The premises upon which the Judaic priority theory is based must be constantly reevaluated in light of fresh thinking and research. Here it is argued that it should be rejected, on the grounds that the relationship can be well explained through another theory which best explains the relationship. As Merrill Unger argues in his article, "Scientific Biblical Criticism and Exegesis":

True scientific approach to the Bible must also severely test the validity of its presuppositions and the hypotheses it advances. [...]. It must question relentlessly any hypothesis of literary criticism, [...] that is constructed on the assumption of not only the fallibility but the actually falsity [...] of the Sacred Record. [...] In other words, a true scientific approach to Biblical criticism must be erected on the proper foundation of authority with its expression directed by this guiding star into channels of constructive research where human reason, enlightened and liberated by faith, will make a fair and honest effort to harmonize this sound position with the inductive difficulties of the text. *'But in no case is the doctrine of inspiration accommodated to the difficulties. If orthodoxy were to tolerate such accommodation, it would forfeit the principle by which any Christian doctrine is established.'***[41]**

Despite the fact that a majority published scholars accept a certain view on the literary relationship between 2 Peter and Jude, such a consensus must not automatically dictate opinion to any investigator of truth. Thus, the dependency solutions, for “one of the most vexing issues” of the New Testament, has been briefly reevaluated here.**[42]**

Three of the proposals in Green’s list and an additional proposal will be considered below. (1) Is it possible that 2 Peter and Jude independent of each other? (2) Did Jude write his letter based upon 2 Peter? (3) Was it the other way around as many believe; did Peter depend upon Jude in writing 2

Peter? (4) Or, are these two letters bound by a common source(s) which can account for the similarities and the differences?

2 Peter and Jude wrote Independently

One of the presuppositions of the present author is that revelation and inspiration can explain and support that 2 Peter and Jude were composed independently of each other. If the Holy Spirit guided all inspired writers into all truth (John 14), then it is not a stretch to affirm that each was composed independently. As Donald Fream observes:

The inspired writings of the Scriptures have a supernatural relationship that is not found in secular writings. Inspiration of the Holy Spirit gives each book of the Bible a common source and a common planner [...] Thus quotations and imitations of the different writers in the planned revelation of God are not to be judged on the same basis as the writings of uninspired authors.**[43]**

However, since we are evaluating this relationship rationally, it must be evaluated if independent composition is still a viable alternative.

From a rationalistic point of view, we would be hardpressed to explain away the thematic and linguistic relationship – which is strong but not decisive. It may be advanced that both authors based their argumentation from contemporary Jewish

exegesis of the Old Testament and Hebrew sources. J. Daryl Charles' work on the General letters offers some insight to this point of view.**[44]** Charles argues that the authors:

Reflect a conspicuous debt to the OT and to contemporary Jewish exegesis of the OT. They are rich in their appropriation of characters, events, and imagery associated with Israel's history. In the main it is the literary tendency of the General Epistles to display their relationship to the OT technically through indirect allusions rather than direct citations.**[45]**

This includes non-canonical tradition material where "they mirror a Jewish religio-cultural matrix to which their message as well as mode of literary expression are owing."**[46]** E. Earle Ellis likewise follows this line of reasoning in his analysis of Jude, and labels this method as "midrash patterns common to first century Judaism."**[47]**

Consequently, the ability to argue in a similar fashion, and yet remain distinct can be explained through this medium.

However, ancient methods of hortatory exegesis cannot unassailably stand, because there are moments within the two letters that demonstrate a similar vein of argumentation and this may weaken the case of independent authorship.**[48]** Particularly, because there are words which are common between the two epistles, even if few. Still Green observes that if the two epistles are based upon a style of preaching and teaching (i.e., "catechesis"), the similarities and

differences between the two presentations will be easy to understand since neither writes in slavish dependence on his outline.”**[49]** Ultimately, although this is a valid possibility because first century Jews were “accustomed to accept rabbinical explanations and additions to Scripture,” it is currently not widely held.**[50]**

Jude used 2 Peter

In his fourth century work, Eusebius chronicles the “current” status of “canonical affairs” and writes:

At this point it may be appropriate to list the New Testament writings already referred to. The holy quartet of the Gospels are first, followed by the Acts of the Apostles. Next are Paul’s epistles, 1 John, and 1 Peter. The Revelation of John may be added [...]. These are the recognized books. Those that are disputed yet known to most are the epistles called James, Jude, 2 Peter, and the so-named 2 and 3 John, the work of the Evangelist or of someone else with the same name.**[51]**

Eusebius continues this discussion with another brief list, of spurious and heretical works under which the book of Revelation (some viewed it spurious) was listed since it was still not fully recognized. Eusebius’ work is of great value since it demonstrates that the early church had difficulty with a majority of the general epistles; of which, 2 Peter and Jude are named as disputed.**[52]**

However, J. Neyrey makes the observation that the early church tradition accepted that Jude was dependent upon 2 Peter. This, of course, makes sense in a context where a higher premium was given to an apostolic source, a time of pre-critical naiveté.**[53]** “Those who favour [sic] the priority of Peter lay stress on the unity of style in 2 Peter which makes it unlikely that he made wholesale borrowings from another author.”**[54]** Nevertheless, “it is also difficult to understand why, if he had the whole of 2 Peter before him, the author of Jude restricted his borrowings so drastically (it surely contained much else that he could have exploited profitably), and why he speaks vaguely (17) of ‘the apostles of our Lord’ instead of mentioning Peter by name.”**[55]**

One might argue based on a parody of 2 Peter that Jude should have acknowledged Peter by name if he were depending upon his second letter for composing Jude. Peter employs and calls upon the letters of Paul in 2 Peter 3:14-16 as a spiritual foreground for his letter. It allows the reader to understand that Peter’s discussions allude to and rest upon in some fashion the writings of the beloved Paul. Meanwhile, Jude makes no such allusion to Peter individually in v. 17, only the collective “apostles” who similarly predicted “scoffers/mockers” (based on same root *empaiz-*) as in 2 Peter 3:1-3. If Jude was using 2 Peter as part of the spiritual foreground for his letter, the lack of inclusion of Peter’s name is a curious omission.

Kistemaker suggests two weaknesses to further dismiss this

option. Despite the antiquity of this view, there appears to be a subjective bias that rules out “that [1] Peter could not have borrowed passages from Jude and [2] that Jude had to consult 2 Peter.”**[56]** Moreover, since little is known about Jude, the widespread impact of Jude’s ministry is a mystery. This may be similarly said regarding the historical context of his letter.**[57]** Consequently, historical ambiguity and perceived “inconsistency” in dependence by Jude to not mention Peter when he refers to the apostles (Jude 17) suggests this as an unconvincing solution –though not outside the bounds of possibility.

2 Peter used Jude

What benefit is there to discuss a matter that is viewed by a great deal of New Testament scholars to be so self-evident**[58]** that rejection of the priority of Jude in the dependency question of Jude and 2 Peter implicates one as being a theologically biased student?**[59]** Perhaps this is a pessimistic appraisal of the academic atmosphere regarding this topic. It cannot be overlooked, however, that Jude’s priority is so widely accepted that many assume it as orthodoxy and propose how the author of 2 Peter used, augmented, revised, or omitted portions of Jude’s letter without even an equally balanced consideration of genuine Petrine articulation.**[60]** This is somewhat alarming since to a great extent, the explanations proposed are based upon possibilities and probabilities, *not* upon crisp fact.**[61]**

Michael Green observes that “those who favour [sic] the priority of Jude stress the freshness and vitality of the letter compared with the more restrained style of 2 Peter and the probability that the longer letter, 2 Peter, drew from the shorter, rather than vice versa.”**[62]** Especially is this possible when Jude is viewed as having the more “simpler constructions” than the 2 Peter’s elaborate constructions.**[63]** Fornberg writes, “the incidence in 2 Peter 1 and 2 Peter 3 of parallels to Jude strongly suggests that Jude, or possibly a text very like it, was the original for 2 Peter 2 rather than vice versa. There is also a general consensus that Jude can be regarded as a direct source for 2 Peter.”**[64]** Of this, Terrance Callan repeatedly affirms 2 Peter redaction of Jude;**[65]** however, Jerome Neyrey makes the observation, “The difficulties for an accurate interpretation of the redaction lie in the historical and theological scenario which commentators imagine to be the background of each document.”**[66]**

This means one’s reconstruction of the church setting plays a large role in interpreting the relationship between these two letters. If 2 Peter is viewed to be a pseudepigraph (lit., “false writing”), then the document is traditionally thought to be a late first-century to early-second-century document written in the power, weight, and theological tradition and authority/name of Peter. It would then be no stretch to see a Christian author writing a commemorative letter for the church to advance an “orthodox” point of view, and basing it upon the letter of Jude to do so. Hence, if one reconstructs the setting for 2 Peter as a pseudepigraph, then dependency upon

Jude naturally flows.

For more on First-Century Evidence for 2 Peter read my article, “Canonization of Scripture and 2 Peter 3:15-16”

It is impressive when one stops to contemplate that a majority of biblical scholars believe that 2 Peter incorporated to some extent, Jude. Not all conclude that 2 Peter is pseudepigraphical, such as Green; however, this is a minor consideration. Nevertheless, those who promote Judaic priority, concede the inability to have completely closed the gap on this theory's validity. In other words, as Neyrey observes, “these studies have all added weight to the hypothesis of Jude's priority by offering convincing interpretations of 2 Peter's use of Jude, but they have by no means proven it.”**[67]** And as mentioned earlier above, there are serious weaknesses in affirming that 2 Peter borrowed from Jude; namely, that “it is difficult to distinguish between material which shows familiarity with the written work of another author and material which has been produced after shared discussion.”**[68]** How does one tell the difference with any degree of certainty? It appears, then, that one may still appeal to another solution to the dependency issue with academic credibility intact.

2 Peter and Jude used a Common Source

If taken here that there is no rationale that requires Jude's dependence on 2 Peter, nor that there is a necessity to

conclude that 2 Peter employed in some fashion Jude; but instead, there was probably a common source of some kind rendering composition of each epistle somewhat independently. A common source is usually considered to be a written source. For example, Norman Hillyer writes that the explanation where “both writers have employed a common written source, seems more probable, for while the same topics are touched upon in the same sequence, the differences in treatment are palpable” and it just seems unlikely that they copied from one another.**[69]** Yet, J. N. D. Kelly remarks that while, “one point advanced in favor of this is the fact that, for all their close correspondences, actual verbal agreement is rare; the only clauses where they are identical are 2 Pet 2:17b and Jude 13b”; nevertheless, the uniformity of the logical framework of the argument in both weakens this solution.**[70]**

The parallels being so strong, dependency then automatically seems to imply one author had to use the epistolary work of another. After all, as Guthrie points out that the problem between these two documents is “how it came about that both epistles use such similar descriptions of these people [i.e. false teachers] and the natural conclusion is that one has used the other.”**[71]** Observe Guthrie’s last clause, “the natural conclusion is that one has used the other.” This natural conclusion has given rise to the certainty that the dependency issue is literary, meaning that one had to borrow from the other. However, even as Guthrie reminds, “But there is a third possibility – that both have used the same source,

incorporating the materials into their epistles in different ways.”**[72]** Guthrie seems to implicitly accept that this source is of a literary variety, but Barr and Charles independently demonstrate this is an unnecessary limitation for the source may be a preaching style or shared theological discussion on false teachers. Since the former has already been introduced, that latter will be discussed.

Dependency may be based upon “shared theological discussion” and articulation. Again Barr is quite useful here for the definition and explanation of this type of dependency; in which he observes that while the epistles:

May show points of contact without there being any question of literary dependence, synonyms may be more commonly used as both authors are fluent in the subject. It is more difficult to distinguish between the latter case [i.e. fluency in the subject] and one in which an author is familiar with the written work of another [i.e. literary dependence], rather than having engaged in discussion with him.**[73]**

The case Barr makes is that “points of contact” may exist, particularly if it is allowed that the author may be fluent in the subject being addressed, which may have been obtained through discussion. There are examples of this within the New Testament.

Adding to the concept of dependence based upon previous

dialog and articulation among the apostolic or inspired circles of the New Testament canon, Barr contributes substantially when he pens:

The writers of the New Testament epistles were [...] original researchers breaking in new ground, developing new vocabulary in discussion of giving old words (such as *agápē*) new meanings. They had to tackle rival philosophies and heretical tendencies. [...] Much discussion must have taken place in the group of apostolic writers as the expression of the Christian faith developed, and each writer reflected the discussion in his own way. If dependence of one upon another is to be established, then it must be shown that there is a difference between the kind of literary dependence in which one writer has before him the text of another author and copies key terms, ideas or syntactical rhythms from it, and the kind of similarities which arise from the sharing of thought and terminology among partners engaged in research and discussion.[74]

The quotation is lengthy but vital to the present discussion. Validity must be given to this observation; otherwise, the apostolic circle of authors is viewed extremely one-dimensional exempt from the communications which modern day preachers and Bible students enjoy today. This seems particularly impractical; especially, since such occasions have existed within church history during apostolic times (cf. Acts 15).

It appears that the only thing next to consider is how this latter position, which appears to explain the similarities, differences, hermeneutical preaching styles, exact word choices of each epistle, and agrees with pre-existent situations, is to consider it in light of the dogma of inspiration. Does the “Pre-existent discussion” theory, as developed here, alter the dogma of inspiration? It will be argued that it does not.

The Impact of the “Pre-Existent Discussion” Theory upon Inspiration

A common misconception regarding the Bible has to do with its origin and production. There are many who allege that the Bible originated through the sole ingenuity of humanity. The statement, “the Bible was written by men,” is a common affirmation by those who often wish to reject its message. A more accurate rendition of this negative epithet is that “that Bible was written by God-guided men.” However, how does this conception of the Bible interact with the “Pre-Existent Discussion” Theory suggested here to bring about a solution for the supposed tension between 2 Peter and Jude? In order to answer this question the nature of both revelation and inspiration will be examined, and then a discussion will be generated to see if this theory is compatible with the dogma of inspiration.

The Nature of Revelation

The word revelation is a rather expressive term which clearly distinguishes an individual preacher from another. When Paul is demonstrating the independent and authentic nature of his preaching, in contrast to those that were troubling the Galatian Christians (1:6-9), he discusses the concept of revelation. He affirms:

[11] For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. [12] For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal 1:11-12). [All Scripture references are from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.]

In fact, he mentions his encounter with the Apostles in Jerusalem, and that after he rehearsed to them his preaching, they “added nothing” to his preaching (2:1-10). There are several points of interest in this passage contributing to an appropriate understanding of revelation. The word revelation comes from

There are several points of interest in this passage contributing to an appropriate understanding of revelation. The word revelation comes from *apocalúpsis*, an “uncovering,” but when applied to the gospel means, “an expression of the mind of God for the instruction of the church.”**[75]** Again, revelation “has to do with that which could not be known except by direct communication from

Jehovah.”[76] Consequently, revelation is God unveiling his mind to his people. Furthermore, Galatians 1:11-12 provides three more observations: First, Revelation is received it is not a religious epiphany; second, revelation has not derived from human intellect; and third, revelation is received from Jesus Christ.

The Nature of Inspiration

Revelation is God’s action of expressing his message to his prophets (1 Cor 2:11-16); inspiration, however, is a related but somewhat distinct term. The apostle Paul’s second letter to Timothy provides the clearest case of what inspiration is. Paul writes to Timothy the following words:

[14] But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it [15] and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. [16] All Scripture is breathed by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:14-17)

As Paul encourages his young friend to have confidence in his ministry and his training, placing all confidence in the “sacred writings” (here the OT), Paul uses one of the most unique

words in the entire New Testament –used only once, *theópneustos* (“God-breathed”).

The word has often been translated as *inspired*, an English word that needs some clarification as to its origin. Jack P. Lewis discusses this point in *Questions You’ve asked about Bible Translations*. Latin translators of the New Testament used, Lewis observes, the phrase *divinitus inspirata*, meaning “Divinely breathed in,” *not* “God breathed,” and this rendition has affected English translations for subsequent generations.**[77]** The difference between the two is this: First, “Divinely breathed in” refers to a characteristic of Scripture; while second, “God breathed” is a statement of how Scripture came to be. To capture the meaning of “God breathed” Scripture, Louw and Nida suggest that the phrase “all Scripture God breathed” be understood as: “Scripture, the writer of which was influenced by God.”**[78]** *Ultimately*, inspiration is a characteristic of every ounce of Scripture, but this is *not* Paul’s point here. Paul’s point is that the origin of Scripture is due to God’s guidance.

Revelation and Inspiration

Although *revelation* and *inspiration* overlap in some aspects of their meaning, it is important to keep them distinct. It has been correctly noted, “all revelatory material contained in the Bible is inspired of God, but not all inspired material was revelatory in nature.”**[79]** Meaning, there are parts of Scripture that did not need God to *reveal* a thing, as in the case of

eyewitness testimony. For example, the apostle Matthew would not have needed revelation per se to produce his Gospel account; however, he would need God's guidance to select the appropriate narratives and emphases.

Furthermore, there are examples where Paul quotes poets (Aratus in Acts 17:28), play-rights (Menander in 1 Cor 15:33), and philosophers (Epimenides in Titus 1:12). Inspiration *secures* that when a writer uses non-biblical literature or "un-revealed" sources, such will be selected and reproduced on God's terms.

Turning attention to the question regarding how revelation and inspiration impact one's perception of the Bible, it is important to recognize that God revealed and secured the accuracy of the message penned. It is interesting to reflect upon the fact that what God had his prophet preached, is the substance of what God had his prophets pen (Isa 30:8-17). The Bible is the product of revelation (a God-given message) and inspiration (God's message accurately reproduced). The written word is as authentic and authoritative as the spoken word because each avenue of communication was Divinely guided, observe:

[19] And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, [20] knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. [21] For no prophecy was ever produced by

the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet 1:19-21)

Any student of the Scriptures must understand that its message is God given, produced through the guiding hand of God, and finally committed to written form. "God's Word is thus not limited to books or scrolls, the prophetic words are known only because they were committed to writing."**[80]** This implies that one should not suppose that it is within the epistolary documents themselves that are found the origin for all that is contained within them.

Concluding Thoughts on the Dependency Question and Common Source

Attention must now be turned to inspiration and the discussion theory. Earlier Barr was quoted defining the theory, underscoring that "points of contact" may exist, particularly if it is allowed that the author may be fluent in the subject being addressed. Moreover, this would have been obtained through discussion. Furthermore, it was advanced that examples exist within the New Testament. In the book of Acts, an example exists where Apostles, elders, and preachers gathered together to discuss what shall be done with the Gentiles who had obeyed the Gospel (Acts 15:6-21). Were they to submit to the rite of circumcision or just the fundamental laws of holiness instructed within the Hebrew Bible? There was an interchange between several individuals which some would feel had no need to discuss the matter;

however, Paul and Barnabas who had been preaching the Gospel came to discuss the matter, and Peter along with the Jerusalem leadership – which consisted of apostles (Acts 15:6).

Paul and Barnabas “declared all that God had done with them” (Acts 15:4). Peter and James likewise stood up before a multitude and provided impute on this matter, regarding the Gentiles reception into the kingdom. Each provided positive testimony as to why the Gentiles should need to submit to the rite of circumcision. As a consequence of this shared discussion, “the apostles and the elders, with the whole church” (Acts 15:22) sent a letter with the results of their conference. In fact, they place in their epistle two unique phrases: first, they say, “it has seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose men and send them to you [...]” (Acts 15:25); and second, “it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements” (Acts 15:28). The requirements were consistent with the conclusions drawn in the “conference” at Jerusalem.

The fact that such an example exists, without any negative and derogatory statement on the part of Luke, demonstrates that quite possibly when difficult issues arose Holy Spirit lead men would come together to discuss the matter. Shared discussion from such events would create the common vocabulary and common argumentation methods. Thus, it is quite within reason, and Scripture demonstrates that such has happened, that discussion can generate epistolary action and theological vocabulary to address doctrinal matters. Indeed, it almost

sounds like modern conferences on biblical themes; however, their advantage is that they were guided by God to produce Scripture. Consequently, the “Pre-Existing Discussion” Theory as we have developed it is very valid and possible. In fact, it appears to have been a convention of the early church to gather together and discuss the matter. Despite the paucity of evidence, Acts 15 is a strong positive evidence for this theory. Inspiration, therefore, is preserved and buttressed as this solution theory maintains the traditional approach to 2 Peter and Jude, and the inspiration of these letters.

Endnotes

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2. E. Randolph Richards’s landmark study, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1991), later supplemented with his *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition, and Collection* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004); Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer: His World, His Options, His Skills* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1995); William G. Doty’s introduction *Letters in Primitive Christianity* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1988); Stanley K. Stower’s *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1989).

3. Simon J. Kistemaker, "The Canon of the New Testament," *JETS* 20 (1977): 12.
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5. Arthur G. Patzia, *The Making of the New Testament: Origin, Collection, Text and Canon* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995), 92-93.
6. J. Daryl Charles, "Interpreting the General Epistles," in *Interpreting the New Testament: Essays on Methods and Issues*, eds. David A. Black and David S. Dockery (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 34.
7. Charles, "Interpreting," 434; Douglas J. Rowston, "The Most Neglected Book in the New Testament," *NTS* 21 (1975): 554-63.
8. Robert W. Wall, "Introduction to Epistolary Literature," *NIB* 10:377.
9. Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 143-47.
10. Rowston, "The Most Neglected Book," 562-63.
11. Consequently, a few items are assumed to be well within the framework of academic reality; such as: **(1)** it will be assumed that the authorship question between 1 and 2 Peter can be well explained by similar Petrine authorship (Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction.*, 4th rev. ed. [Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1990], 762-81, 812-34), E. Randolph Richards's strong argumentation notwithstanding ("**Silvanus Was Not Peter's Secretary: Theological Bias in Interpreting *dià Silouanoû... égrapsa*," *JETS* 43:3 [Sept. 2000]: 417-32); **(2)** the pseudonymous theory for the authorship of 2 Peter is without substantial merit (James I. Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God: Some Evangelical Perspectives* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans,**

1958], 182-86); and **(3)** the role of an amanuensis plays a fundamental role in examination of epistolary literature (Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer*, 6-40).

12. D. Edmond. Hiebert, "Selected Studies from 2 Peter Part 3: A Portrayal of False Teachers: An Exposition of 2 Peter 2:1-3," *BSac* 141.563 (July-Sept. 1984): 255-63.
13. Duane A. Dunham, "An Exegetical Study of 2 Peter 2:18-22," *BSac* 140.557 (Jan.-March 1983): 40-51.
14. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 143.
15. Rowston, "The Most Neglected Book," 562-63.
16. Michael Green, *The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude: An Introduction and Commentary*, 2d ed. (1987; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 23-24
17. Udo Schnelle, *The History and Theology of the New Testament Writings*, trans. M. Eugene Boring (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998), 429.
18. Jerome H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1993), 186-93.
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22. Terrance Callan, "Use of the Letter of Jude by the Second Letter of Peter," *Bib* 85 (2004): 42.
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24. Earl J. Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 303-05; Callan, "Use of the Letter of Jude," 43.
25. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 136.
26. Donald A. Carson, James D. Moo, and Leon Morris, *An*

Introduction to the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 438; Michael J. Gilmour, "Reflections on the Authorship of 2 Peter," *EvQ* 73.4 (Oct.-Dec. 2001): 299-302.

27. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 925 footnote 1.
28. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 925.
29. Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter*, 303.
30. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 143.
31. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 59.
32. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 52.
33. Daniel C. Arichea and Howard A. Hatton, *A Handbook on the Letter from Jude and the Second Letter from Peter* (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1993), 3.
34. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 23.
35. Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (Waco, TX: Word, 1983) and Jerome H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1993).
36. George K. Barr, "Literary Dependence in the New Testament Epistles," *IBS* 19.4 (Oct. 1997): 149.
37. Callan, "Use of the Letter of Jude," 42-52.
38. Barr, "Literary Dependence," 153.
39. Carson, Moo, and Morris, *An Introduction*, 26.
40. Tord Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society: A Study of 2 Peter* (Lund: Gleerup, 1977), 33-59.
41. Merrill F. Unger, "Scientific Biblical Criticism and Exegesis," *BSac* 121.481 (Jan.-March 1964): 62-63. Unger here cites E. J. Carnell, *A Case for Orthodox Theology*, 110.
42. Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 415.
43. Donald Fream, *A Chain of Jewels from James and Jude* (1965; repr., Joplin, MO: College Press, 1987), 246.

44. J. Daryl Charles, "Interpreting the General Epistles," in *Interpreting the New Testament: Essays on Methods and Issues*, eds. David A. Black and David S. Dockery (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 433-56.
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49. Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 62.
50. Walter M. Dunnett, "The Hermeneutics of Jude and 2 Peter: The Use of Ancient Jewish Traditions," *JETS* 31.3 (Sept. 1988): 290.
51. Paul L. Maier, trans., *Eusebius: The Church History – A New Translation with Commentary*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1999), 115.
52. It is highly important to stress here that simply because they are labeled "disputed" does not mean that they can be capriciously rejected as non-canonical –i.e., not inspired.
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55. Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 226.
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57. Douglas J. Moo, *2 Peter, Jude* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 28.
58. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 142-43; Callan, "Use of the Letter of Jude," 42; Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 122; Ben Witherington, III, "A Petrine Source in 2 Peter," *SBLSP* (1985): 187.

59. Gary B. Ferngren, "Internal Criticism as a Criterion for Authorship in the New Testament," *BSac* 134.536 (Oct.-Dec. 1977): 331.
60. Callan, "Use of the Letter of Jude," 42-64.
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64. Fornberg, *Early Church in a Pluralistic Society*, 34.
65. Callan, "Use of the Letter of Jude," 63.
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68. Barr, "Literary Dependence," 149.
69. Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 14, 18.
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78. *L&N* 1:418
79. Jackson, *Essays in Apologetics*, 2:236.
80. Ken Cukrowski, Mark Hamilton, and James Thompson, *God's Holy Fire: The Nature and Function of*

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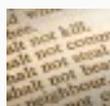
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