

Jude and Second Peter (Late 64)

By Ed Stevens -- Then and Now Podcast -- Feb. 10, 2013

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The Neronic persecution was the "eve of destruction" for the Jews. They wanted to wipe out the Church, but instead got wiped out by the Romans. It was a very dark time for the Church, and even though it was short-lived, only two years (AD 64-66), it was extremely intense and killed the majority of remaining Christians. In this lesson we will look at the last two New Testament books to be written, **Jude** and **Second Peter**, which I believe were written just about the time the Neronic persecution was beginning (Late Summer or Early Fall of AD 64).
- B. We need to mention the Lesson Outlines for These Podcasts: If you are not a regular listener, you may not be aware that there is a PDF lesson outline available for each podcast. Many listeners find it helpful to have that in front of them as they listen. If you would like to get that PDF, simply email me and request it. If you are planning on being a regular listener to this program, and would like to automatically receive the PDF as soon as it is ready, without having to request each one separately, simply email me and ask to be put on the **PDF list**. My email address is: <preterist1@preterist.org>
- C. Let's ask God for His guidance in our study here --
Our Heavenly Father, we again ask for your guiding hand upon the leaders of this nation who have forsaken Your Ways. We pray that our fellow Americans will join with us in humbling ourselves, and praying, and seeking Your Face, and turning from our wicked ways. Just like the Jewish nation in AD 70 deserved Your Wrath to be poured out upon them, we here in America have not kept Your ways and have invited disaster upon ourselves. May this nation turn back to its biblical roots and restore the godly foundation that this country was originally built on. Use these historical studies to teach us the mistakes of the past, so we can avoid them in the future. We praise Your Holy Name for your first century saints who suffered unspeakable tortures and unthinkable horrors in the Neronic persecution in order to be salt and light in the midst of a very perverse and crooked generation. They deserved the great resurrection and rapture reward that You gave them at the Parousia of Your Son Jesus. May all who listen to these podcasts be inspired to live holy lives by looking at their amazing examples of faithfulness in the midst of terrifying persecution and overwhelming hardship. It is in the Name of our precious Savior, and Your Glorious Son, that we pray. Amen.
- D. If you have benefited from these studies, we would encourage you to become partners with us in this teaching and publishing ministry, in order to share in all the good fruit that comes from it. I get emails every week from listeners all over the country and around the world expressing their appreciation for these historical studies. Those who contribute to International Preterist Association will receive some of our latest and greatest resources as our gift to you. Simply go to our website and click on the left sidebar button entitled "Make a Donation to IPA" where you can make a one-time donation or contribute monthly. Our website

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- E. In our study last time, we looked at the First Epistle of Peter, showing when it was written, and the circumstances around which it was composed and sent out by courier to the churches in Turkey. We suggested that there are two possible dates for the epistle, either in the Summer of 63 just before Paul was arrested the second time in Turkey, or in very early 64 several months before the Neronic persecution broke out.
- F. This time we will look at the last two books of our New Testament to be written, the epistles of Jude and Second Peter. This will complete our survey of the dates of writing for all 27 of our New Testament books. Since this pre-70 date for all the NT books has enormous implications for the interpretation and application of these books, it will be worth spending some extra time on it. We probably will not be able to complete our study in only one session.
- G. Of course, any time we talk about the completion of the NT canon of Scripture, we have to deal with all the issues of inspiration, authorship, relevance, and authority. Those of you who have listened to me in the past KNOW that I am a die-hard conservative on canonical matters. Not only do I date all the NT books before AD 70, but I also believe in their apostolic authorship, and their absolute relevance and authority for us today.
- H. A couple years ago, in my podcasts at AD70.net, we presented a series of four lessons on **Apostolic Canonization**. However, I will not repeat all of that material here, but will simply offer the PDF lesson outlines to anyone who requests them. Those of you who have signed up to receive the PDFs will automatically get them.
- I. The concept of an **Apostolic Canon** may be new for most of our listeners. It is essentially the idea that all the NT writings were written, collected, and certified as authoritative by the apostles before they passed from the earthly scene. The preterist version of that theory goes even further to assert that this process of apostolic canonization was completed BEFORE AD 70. This is not a totally new idea. It has been around since the first century, and several evangelical conservative theologians who are futurists espouse most of it in one form or another. Ernest L. Martin and Norman Geisler are examples. Ernest Martin even uses the term "Apostolic Canonization" to label his view.
- J. So, keep this idea in the back of your mind as we look at these last two books of our NT to be written: **Jude** and **Second Peter**. I might also note here that Don Preston and I have exchanged emails on the date of these two books. I tend to place Second Peter as the last book of our New Testament to be written, while Preston tends to see Jude as the last book. But both of us agree that the two books were written about the same time, and could have used the same courier to deliver them to the churches. So, for all intents and purposes, they tie for the honor of being the last book of the NT to be written.
- K. I first want to discuss the authorship issues, and then survey the similarities between the two books.

Notes on Jude and Second Peter

Everyone has a theory about who wrote the epistles of Jude and Second Peter, and they do not all follow the traditional view that early Christian writers have handed down to us. All of us are reading the same facts, but in some cases coming to different conclusions. Since we preterists are not the only ones who have taken a different approach to the question of authorship and date on these two epistles, there can be no sustainable objection to our theories, as long as we harmonize with the biblical and historical facts.

I have looked at the evidence and argumentation of several who reject the traditional authorship and date, and have found it weak and unconvincing. Therefore, I will be staying within the more traditional views on authorship and date, which is the idea that the Epistle of Jude was written by the brother of Jesus, about the same time as Peter wrote his second epistle in about AD 64.

I believe Peter's second epistle, as well as the epistle of Jude, were written near the beginning of the Neronian persecution. I am aware of the fact that some scholars dispute the authorship, date, and canonicity of both these epistles, especially since Jude quotes a verse from the book of **Enoch** as being a true prophecy, as well as alludes to another apocryphal book, the **Assumption of Moses**. The commentaries explain all this adequately.

Some excellent online resources for Jude and 2 Peter

There are some great online resources for these two biblical books. I have listed some of them down below:

- *The Pillar New Testament Commentary on Jude and Second Peter*. written by Gene L. Green, published by Baker Books, 2008.
- Dr. Daniel Wallace's defense of the Petrine authorship and pre-70 date:
<http://bible.org/seriespage/second-peter-introduction-argument-and-outline>
- Excellent article showing the similarities between Jude and Second Peter:
http://www.frontline-apologetics.com/2nd_Peter___Jude.html
- **Preston's Excellent Defense of the Early Date**: Before we get into the actual text of Jude and Second Peter, I want to read some excerpts from an excellent article written by Don Preston in defense of the early date of Jude and Second Peter, which he wrote in refutation of Stanley Paher's late date theory. Preston very effectively shows that the book of Revelation, as well as Jude and Second Peter are dealing with the Nicolaitan heresy that was already present in the pre-70 church at least as far back as the Jerusalem council in Acts 15 (AD 49-51). The name of his article is: "The Nicolaitans and the Date of Revelation." I have copied the whole article below. This article is found at his website articles page. **Found here:**
<http://www.eschatology.org/index.php/articles-mainmenu-61/40-revelation/137-the-nicolaitans-and-the-date-of-revelation>

The Nicolaitans and the Date of Revelation

By Don Preston

The condition of the 7 churches of Asia is often posited as evidence for the late date, i.e. 95-98 A.D., of the book of Revelation. Stanley Paher, for instance, in an unpublished paper says "the existence of heretical sects such as the Nicolaitans, the Balaamites and Jezebel's group [Rev. 2:6; 14, 15, 20] is not confirmed by anyone in A.D. 64." He then takes note of Ignatius, early 2nd century, and Irenaeus, later in the 2nd century, both of whom referred to the Nicolaitans. Paher then says "It takes time for heresies to arise from within, for in the first place a church must have had developed a more or less orthodox faith as a standard to compare a departure from it."

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that the Nicolaitans, instead of being evidence for a late date, serve as extremely strong evidence for the early date of the Apocalypse.

The Doctrine of the Nicolaitans. The doctrinal identity of the Nicolaitans helps us place them within a definite framework: the Nicolaitans taught that it was alright to "eat meat sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication" Rev. 2:14-15. Why was it wrong to eat meat sacrificed to idols? Why was it wrong to commit fornication? Caution is needed before answering too hastily.

The doctrine of the Nicolaitans was in direct conflict with the Jerusalem Conference, Acts 15:29, the purpose of which was to enhance Jew and Gentile oneness in Christ! This conference is generally dated around A.D. 51.

It is clear from Paul that the eating of meat sacrificed to idols was in and of itself not wrong, Romans 14; I Corinthians 8; but clearly it was offensive to the Jewish segment of the church. Thus for the sake of unity in the body, the Gentiles were told to abstain in those circumstances in which the eating would bring offense to brethren, I Corinthians 10:23ff. The question of fornication should also be seen in light of its association with the idolatrous background so offensive to the Jewish Christians.

The doctrine of eating of meats sacrificed to idols and fornication was then a matter of grave importance and an issue that arose very early in the life of the first century church. It was an issue of body unity; of Jew and Gentile fellowship. If the Gentiles could be convinced that they had the liberty to continue, because of the abounding grace of Christ, to eat meats and participate in the sensual practices of idolatry then the unity of the body of Christ would be threatened if not sundered. The significance of this issue is revealed when one examines Romans 14, I Corinthians 8, and 10 in great detail and see how much time and energy Paul devoted to it. This was not just an issue of setting forth a doctrine of expediency; it impinged upon "unity of the Faith," Eph. 4:13f; the "the fullness of the Gentiles," Rom. 11:25; and the consummation of the mystery of God in Christ, Ephesians 3:3ff.

2 Peter 2 sheds light on the issue before us. If 2 Peter was addressed to the same audience as 1 Peter then it was addressed to "the pilgrims of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia" 1 Peter 1:1. Thus, 2 Peter was written to the very churches addressed in Revelation. 2 Peter is, we believe, to be dated circa, 64-66. [See The New Open Study Bible, Nelson, NASV, introduction to 2 Peter]. What issues did Peter address?

Peter says that the false teachers he is addressing "walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness" 2:2:10; they "have eyes full of adultery" and they were constantly "beguiling unstable souls" vs. 14. Further, Peter says what they were doing was "following the way of Balaam the son of Beor" vs. 15. This is precisely the charge against the

Nicolaitans, Rev. 2:14! Compare also the epistle of Jude, vss. 7-12. What we find then is that the very things that were troubling the seven churches of Asia were the issues at stake in books generally dated earlier than the Apocalypse.

Revelation deals with those from within the body teaching false doctrine, 2 Peter and Jude do the same, 2 Peter 2:13. Revelation deals with those teaching sexual immorality, as does 2 Peter and Jude. Revelation calls the false teachers Nicolaitans; but they are also called teachers of the way of Balaam; just as in 2 Peter and Jude. Revelation is addressed to the churches in Asia; 2 Peter is also. With these points of parallelism how can one discount the association? And if the early date of 2 Peter is admitted then the early date for the Apocalypse can hardly be denied.

Further, when one considers how early the issue of eating meats and fornication, [cf. I Cor. 6], became an issue, circa A.D. 51, Acts 15; Romans 14, circa A.D. 57; I Corinthians 8, 10, circa A.D. 56, it can hardly be argued that these doctrines were not major issues as early as the 60s. On the contrary, it is seen in the light of Acts, Romans, and Corinthians that the issues of Revelation 2-3 were issues of long standing trouble in the early church. Revelation does not stand isolated therefore from the religious milieu of the rest of the New Testament. Instead, we have the testimony of Acts, Romans, Corinthians, 2 Peter and Jude that the very issues addressed by Jesus in Revelation were part of a widespread endemic problem within the early church.

Instead of the doctrinal problems of the Asian churches being distinctive from the issues in the other epistles we find that they are the identical issues. Instead of Revelation demanding a later period of time allowing for a time of evolutionary doctrinal development and then apostasy we find the standard established very early, Acts 15 and within 5-6 years problems arising in direct relationship to that standard. Instead of the doctrinal aberrations of the Nicolaitans being indicative of the late date for Revelation therefore we find that it provides evidence that the possibility for the early date for Revelation certainly cannot be ignored; the probability becomes apparent; the certainty becomes increasingly likely.

There is a great deal more that could be written in regard to the Nicolaitan controversy as it related to the Jew-Gentile one-ness and the attempts to destroy or prevent that unity from becoming reality. I believe, however, that this article has refuted the basic argument of Paher and others that attempt to remove the historical and doctrinal situation of Revelation from the context of the rest of the New Testament.

Notes on Jude and Second Peter

Jude

1:1 - Authorship - Jude the brother of James (not son of James) & half-brother of Jesus

1:1 - "kept for Jesus Christ" -- clear time statement and expectation statement

1:3 - The Faith, once for all delivered to the saints

1:4-16 - The Nicolaitans (see Preston's great article copied above)

1:13 - Black darkness reserved forever (Eternal Conscious Punishment - not Annihilat.)

1:14-15 - quote of Enoch and labeled as a true prophecy by Jude

1:18 - In the Last Time there will be mockers (those Nicolaitans were the ones), therefore they were in the Last Time.

1:21 - "waiting anxiously" for something that they would not even recognize when it occurred? What does Jude say they would get? "mercy ... to eternal life"? I thought they were already Christians and had mercy and grace and eternal life! What is this additional mercy and eternal life that they would get at the Parousia? Did they get it?

Did they know they got it? Did they experience it any cognitive way? Or were they still "waiting anxiously" for it after AD 70, not realizing that it had already arrived? It seems more likely that they did receive that merciful rescue out of the tribulation and their heavenly home when Christ returned. *Do you catch the power of that?*

1:24 - Notice the expectation that Jude gives to those first century saints: "**keep you from stumbling** and to **make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy.**" Jude prays that God would keep them from falling away into the error of the Nicolaitans, so that they would remain faithful at the time of the Parousia, so that they would be allowed to stand blameless, unashamed, and with great joy in the presence of His glory at the Parousia. He is clearly talking about those who would remain alive at the Parousia, praying that they would remain faithful to the very end, so that they would stand unashamed and joyful in His glorious presence at the Parousia. They were not expecting to miss that Parousia. They were promised here that they would stand blameless in His glorious presence. They would see His glory and know that He had come, and would receive the mercy and eternal life. They would experience great joy when they saw and experienced these things. *Do you catch the power of that?*

2 Peter

2:17 - Peter mentions the "black darkness" being reserved for those same Nicolaitans that Jude mentioned. (Eternal Conscious Punishment - Not Annihilation)

3:12 - "**looking for** and **hastening** the coming of the Day of God" -- why bother looking for it and hastening it if they were not going to see it and recognize it when it came, or experience it in any cognitive way? This language by Peter presupposes that they would "**see**" this event for which they were "**looking** and **hastening**"! Why does Peter tell them to "look for it" and "hasten it" if they were not going to **see it** and experience it in any way? What would be the point of looking for it? And if they did see it and experience it, why didn't they talk about it later, and let the next generation of Christians know that the Parousia had happened? Evidently they were no longer around to tell anyone (i.e., raptured). *Do you catch the power of that?*

3:13 - Peter again says that "**we are looking for** new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" -- certainly heaven is such a place where true righteousness dwells. There is nothing to forbid that application here, especially in view of the preceding and following verses describing what they would see, hear, and experience at the Parousia. Peter says he was looking for it. Did he know what he was looking for? Did he share that with the first century saints so that they would also know what to look for? Did they see it? Did they know it happened? Why didn't they speak up afterwards and set the record straight when Papias, Polycarp, and Ignatius began saying that the Parousia was still future? *Do you catch the power of that?*

3:14 - Notice the words "**to be found by Him** in peace, spotless and blameless" -- This is referring to their spiritual condition at the time of the Parousia. What condition would Christ "**find them in**" when He returned? Would they be "**found** in peace, spotless and blameless"? **Would they know** that they were **found** in that condition? Would they see Christ return and **find them** in that condition? Or would the Parousia come and go without them even being aware of it? And if they were aware of it, and were found in peace, spotless and blameless, why don't we hear them talking about

that experience later if they were still alive on planet earth? The implication is that they were no longer around. They weren't killed at the Parousia, so they must have been changed into their immortal bodies at the Parousia, and caught up to be with Christ in the UNSEEN realm forever afterwards. *Does the reader see the implications of all these expectation statements?*

Here is a Challenge for Us All: Read back through the whole New Testament asking (and answering) these two questions:

1. *What do Jesus and the Apostles tell the pre-70 saints that they could **expect** to see, hear, and experience at the Parousia.*
2. *What do the apostles and other pre-70 saints say that they were **expecting** to see, hear, and experience at the Parousia?*

Jude and 2 Peter

Summer or Fall 64 – The epistle of **Jude** (half brother of Jesus and full brother of James) was evidently not written until after his brother James was killed (i.e., sometime after April in AD 62 and before the outbreak of the war in August of AD 66). Otherwise, James would probably have been the one to write this as his second general epistle to these churches. This allows for the possibility that Jude may have been functioning in the role that his brother James had formerly occupied. Since there are several similarities between Jude and 2 Peter, it seems probable that these two books were written about the same time, with Jude being written first, and then Peter showing that he approved of it by using some of the same information that Jude had used from Enoch about the fallen angels, thus putting his stamp of Apostolic canonical approval ("binding and loosing") upon this epistle that had been written by someone who was not one of the twelve apostles. Having two books saying the same thing about the Nicolaitans (Balaamites) was important -- at the mouth of two or more witnesses every fact is determined. This delivered a powerful legal judgment against those false teachers. Jude condemns them, and Peter backs it up with his "binding and loosing" authority as an Apostle.

The Body of Moses (Jude 9) -- Individual or Collective?

Jude 9 (notes) -- Some preterists (who take the collective body view of the resurrection) have suggested that "*the body of Moses*" mentioned here is speaking of the collective body of Israelites in the wilderness, and not a literal individual physical body of Moses. How can we determine whether or not that is the case? Notice what Jude says here:

But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" [Jude 9 NAS95]

Here are a couple of comments about this from the **Bible Knowledge Commentary (BKC)** and the **Jamieson-Fausset-Brown (JFB)** commentary:

"The archangel Michael was sent to bury Moses' body, but according to Jewish tradition (in the pseudepigraphal book, *The Assumption of Moses*), the devil argued with the angel about the body, apparently claiming the right to dispose of it. But Michael, though powerful and authoritative, did not dare dispute with Satan, so he left the matter in God's hands, saying, The Lord rebuke you!"
[BKC]

Josephus [*Antiq.* 4.8] states that God hid Moses' body, lest, if it had been exposed to view, it would have been made into an idol. Jude ... either adopts it from the apocryphal "Assumption of Moses" (as ORIGEN thinks [*Concerning Principalities* 3.2]), or else from the ancient tradition on which that work was founded. [JFB]

So, here is what we can conclude about the body of Moses mentioned here:

1. It is clear that Jude was alluding to the story in the apocryphal book, *The Assumption of Moses*.
2. It is also clear that the *Assumption of Moses* was talking about the literal individual physical body of Moses, and not a collective body concept.
3. Therefore, it seems clear that Jude had the literal individual physical body of Moses in mind when he wrote these words. This means that the collective body idea does not apply to this particular text.

Summer or Fall 64 – 2 Peter was probably the last book of our New Testament to be written. Peter put his capstone on the canonical collection. That appears to be one of the reasons he was given the keys of the Kingdom. He was inspired and had the authority from Christ to "bind and loose," i.e., the authority to decide what was canonical and what was not. Second Peter was definitely written after Paul's letter to the Hebrews (March of 63), since he refers to it here in 2 Pet 3. Peter was aware of what Paul said about the "new heavens and earth" in the book of Hebrews (compare Heb. 12:18-29 and 2 Pet. 3:13-16). And it seems that Peter's mention of Paul here in 2 Pet 3 is in **memoriam** (i.e., after Paul had been executed in Rome in late 63 or early 64). I take it as a **post-mortem** reference to Paul for several reasons:

1. Peter refers to Paul as "our beloved brother Paul" in typical **eulogistic** style.
2. Peter said in **past tense** (as if Paul's writing process was now finished) that Paul "wrote to you." This also implies that Paul wrote a general epistle to all those same churches in the five provinces of Turkey that Peter was writing to. The book of Hebrews is the only one of Paul's epistles that did that.
3. Then Peter refers to "**all his letters**" as if there was now a finished collection of all of Paul's epistles (2 Pet 3:15-16). There is no way Peter could have "all of his letters" unless Paul was dead and was no longer writing.

Whether we take it as a post-mortem reference to Paul or not, it was at least a clear recognition of Paul's inspiration and canonical authority alongside Peter, since Peter puts all Paul's epistles on a par with "the rest of the Scriptures." So I believe 2

Peter was written after Paul's letter to the Hebrews which mentions the New Heavens and Earth in Hebrews 12 (AD 63), and after the Neronic persecution began in July of AD 64 (which prefigured the soon-coming conflagration in Jerusalem predicted in 2 Pet. 3). Since there are several similarities between Jude and 2 Peter, it seems certain that these two books were written about the same time. Second Peter was most likely written during the Neronic persecution (from summer 64 to winter 65) after Peter was arrested and was awaiting execution there in Jerusalem.

From the reference to "Babylon" in his first epistle (1 Pet. 5:13), it is apparent that Peter was writing from Jerusalem. See the notes down below about Peter's martyrdom in Jerusalem (instead of Rome).

Since Peter says his "departure is at hand" the same way Paul did, it could mean that Peter had read 2 Timothy and was familiar with Paul's statement there, and used a similar expression about his own imminent death. If Timothy and Mark followed Paul's instructions in 2 Timothy and went to Rome immediately after Paul's arrest in summer or fall of AD 63, then Mark could have traveled back to Judea after visiting Paul in Rome during the fall or winter of 63-64. Mark would have carried copies of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus with him back to Peter in Jerusalem. Peter then could have written 2 Peter in the summer of AD 64 and sent Mark back to the Diaspora to deliver that second letter in the early fall of AD 64. This would mean that 2 Peter could have been written sometime between summer of 64 and winter of 65.

After March of AD 65 the Jews would no longer have had the full cooperation of the Romans to kill Christians, because Nero killed his "religious" wife (Jewish proselyte) in March of AD 65, and this ended the cozy relationship that the Jews had with Nero through his wife Poppaea. Based on this reasoning, I would place the writing of 2 Peter somewhere in that range (summer 64 to winter 65 AD), while the news of the Neronic persecution was still fresh and the Jews were still in a good position to use the Romans to kill the Christians who were in Judea.

Dec - 64 – Peter's Martyrdom. Peter knew that his own martyrdom was drawing near when he wrote his Second Epistle. He was probably arrested and killed during the Neronic persecution like Paul. News of the Neronic persecution may not have reached Palestine until after John and Paul had already been martyred. The Jews in Judea probably used Nero's persecution in Rome as an easy way to get the Romans to arrest all the Christians in Judea and kill them. Since Peter was not a Roman citizen, he would not have had the right to a trial in Rome like Paul did. So it does not seem likely that Peter would have been taken to Rome. Peter would not have supported the Zealot cause in Judea, so all the Jews, including the Zealots, would have had plenty of reasons to kill Peter, and when the Neronic persecution broke out, they would have had an easy way to get the Romans to do their dirty work for them.

Peter also knew his days were numbered because he was now growing old and many of his generation had already passed on. Jesus had told him that when he grew old (John 21:18) he would stretch out his hands and someone else would gird him and take him where he did not wish to go. John interpreted this to signify the kind of death that Peter would suffer (i.e., probably a crucifixion). The crucifixion idea leans in the direction of death at the hands of Romans. Even though this would allow

for the possibility that Peter could have been taken to Rome to die at the hands of Nero, it is still much more likely that he was killed right there in Jerusalem by crucifixion just like Jesus was. In fact, some scholars claim that Peter was killed and buried in Jerusalem. Search the Internet for "The Discovery of Peter's Tomb in Jerusalem" written by F. Paul Peterson in Fort Wayne, Indiana in 1960. The reason why the Catholics claim Rome as the place of his death is because they think his reference to "Babylon" (1 Pet. 5:13) was referring to Rome (instead of Jerusalem).

Some Christians could have left Judea as early as the Fall of 62 right after the book of Revelation was written and put into circulation. We noted in past sessions that Eusebius claimed the Church received a "revelation" commanding them to leave Jerusalem and Judea, and that they did leave "before the war." If the "revelation" that they received was the book of Revelation, it would mean that they would have begun leaving as early as the summer of 62, two years before the Neronic persecution broke out (summer of 64). If they waited until the Neronic persecution to leave Judea, it would have been very difficult to escape arrest and death. Evidently Peter remained in Jerusalem until the Neronic persecution, and was killed then.

Shortly after the Great Fire in Rome (July 64), the Roman people began to circulate the rumor that Nero was responsible for setting those fires. Evidently someone came to Nero's rescue by suggesting that he shift the blame over to the Christians. We have to ask who would have had "motive and opportunity" to do that? Certainly the Jews in Rome would be prime suspects. And the case against them is made even more probable by the fact that there are early historians who actually make that connection. Nero got off the hook, and the Jews temporarily rid themselves of the Christian threat to their dominance. Whether it was the Jews who put this idea into Nero's head or not, it is clear that the Jews used Nero's hostility against Christians as an excuse for exterminating Christians in Judea and throughout the Roman empire. So the Neronic persecution was the time (late 64 or early 65) when Peter was killed, soon after Paul and John had also been killed.

After Nero killed his Jewish wife (Poppaea) in March of AD 65, the Jews would have had difficulty getting the Romans to do any more favors for them (such as arresting Christians and killing them), so it is more likely that Peter was killed before March of 65, which also means that the book of 2 Peter had to be written before that (late 64 or very early 65).

Second Peter appears to be the last book of our New Testament to be written. Peter used his canonical "binding and loosing" authority to put the finishing touches (the capstone) on the New Testament canon. Here is the list of the books in the order in which we have suggested that they were written and circulated (with their dates):

Matthew (before AD 49)
Galatians (AD 51-52)
1 Thessalonians (AD 51-52)
2 Thessalonians (AD 51-52)
Mark (cir. AD 55)
1 Corinthians (AD 57)
2 Corinthians (AD 57)
Romans (AD 58)

Luke (AD 61)
Acts (AD 61-62)
John (AD 60-62)
James (AD 61-62)
1, 2, 3 John (AD 61-62)
Revelation (AD 62-63)
Ephesians (AD 62-63)
Colossians (AD 62-63)
Philemon (AD 62-63)
Philippians (AD 62-63)
Hebrews (AD 62-63)
Titus (mid-AD 63)
1 Timothy (mid-AD 63)
1 Peter (mid-AD 63)
2 Timothy (late-AD 63)
Jude (late 64)
2 Peter (late 64)

Since we have now finished dealing with the date of writing for all 27 of the New Testament books, I want to spend some time looking at the development of the NT canon. The next few podcasts will be devoted to that. I will be sharing the material that I developed for two different paper presentations at the Regional and National meetings of the *Evangelical Theological Society*. I believe this material will give us a lot of insight into how our New Testament was written, copied, collected together, and ultimately certified by Peter and the other Apostles as inspired scripture. When the apostles authorized (certified) all these books for circulation among all the churches, that was an exercise of their apostolic "binding and loosing" (canonical) authority. That is why we call it an Apostolic Canonization. Stay tuned for these canonical studies.

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