

Second Peter Introduction

Eusebius considered 2 Peter's authorship to be disputed and possibly not part of the canon of Scripture along with James, Jude, 2 John, and 3 John. Eusebius accepted 1 Peter but had doubts about 2 Peter. But, Eusebius clearly rejected as spurious other supposed writings of Peter:

- 1) Acts of Peter
- 2) the Gospel of Peter
- 3) the Preaching of Peter
- 4) the Apocalypse of Peter

The authorship of 2 Peter is doubted because of three reasons:

- 1) style – Jerome credited the difference in style to Peter's use of John Mark as a scribe in 1 Peter, but not in 2 Peter.
- 2) Content
 - a. Historical references:
 - i. 3:4 "since the time the fathers died" is said to refer to the apostles, but this was not a common way to refer to the early church leaders. More likely a reference to the OT saints.
 - ii. 3:2 "your apostles" is said to refer to a group that the author did not fit into. If "your apostles" refers to the Apostles of Jesus then the author was not one of them. But, "your apostles" simply refers to those who brought the message to these people. These "apostles" are not the "Apostles of the Lord."
 - iii. 3:16 mentions Paul's letters – some critics say the collecting of Paul's letters indicates a later date after the books were recognized as Scripture and collected. But, even Paul in his own letters recognizes his writing as authoritative and the completion of the divine revelation. (Col. 1:24-27; Ep. 3:9; Col. 4:16)
- 3) its late acceptance into the canon of Scripture

Second Peter seems to be a repeated letter sent to several churches such as Galatians, It may have been Peter's farewell address similar to:

- 1) Moses in Deuteronomy 31-33
- 2) Joshua in Joshua 24
- 3) Paul in 2 Timothy

The Jewish culture had developed a tradition based on Jacob's guiding words to his son at his death recorded in Genesis 48:8-49:27. This style of writing near the time of one's death would be called a "testament." Peter may have been writing this kind of a "testament" near the time of his death, but adopted the Jewish practice to fit the style of a written letter.

The author of 2 Peter claims:

- 1) to be Symeon Peter (1:1)
- 2) to have seen the transfiguration
- 3) to have written a first letter. (3:1)

Topic: Second Peter deals with false teachers like First Peter dealt with suffering.

Jesus' return is referred to as "apocalupsis" in First Peter, but "parousia" is used in Second Peter. (Jerome picks up on this and credits the difference to two different scribes working with Peter.

Interestingly, by rejecting the authority of Second Peter the critic is doing the very thing the letter of Second Peter warned would happen. They depart from the teaching of the Apostles and the Old Testament and, most likely, challenge the rest of Scripture and its teaching.

Internal evidence of Peter's authorship of Second Peter:

- 1) stylistic similarities
- 2) similar vocabulary to Peter's sermons in Acts
- 3) 1:1, claims to be Peter
- 4) 1:14, mention of his near death connected to Jesus' words to Peter in John 21:18
- 5) 3:1, refers to previous letter
- 6) 1:16-18, claims to have witnessed the transfiguration

Date, Location and Recipients

Peter wrote his second letter anywhere between 60-68 AD (or, 60-64 AD if Peter was executed in 64 AD). It seems that 64 AD is a solid date and the year of Peter's execution in Rome. Date of writing would be after Nero's persecution began in 64 AD and before Nero died in the spring of 68 AD.

- Written from Rome
- Sent to Gentiles in Asia Minor - the same as 1 Peter referred to in 2 Pt. 3:1

Outline of Second Peter

1. The Life of a Believer (1:3-21)
 - a. The Provision of the Divine Life of a Believer (1:3-4)
 - b. The Necessity of developing the Divine Life to grow & mature as a Believer (1:5-11)
 - c. The Source of a Believer's growth: The Authoritative Word of God
2. False Teachers (2:1-22)
 - a. Character of a False Teacher (2:1-3)
 - b. Judgment of False Teachers (2:4-10)
 - c. Worthlessness of False Teachers (2:10-22)
3. Jesus Return is Absolutely Certain (3:1-18)
 - a. Heretical Denial (3:1-7)
 - b. Correct Doctrine (3:8-13)
 - c. Exegetical Exhortation for Spiritual Growth

Similarity with the book of Jude

<u>2 Peter</u>	<u>Jude</u>
2:1	4
2:2	4
2:3	4
2:4	6
2:6	7
2:9	6
2:10	7, 8
2:11	9
2:12	10
2:15	11
2:13	12
2:17	12, 13
2:18	16
3:1-2	17
3:3	18
3:14	24
3:18	25

The Opposition in Second Peter

The problem facing the church in First Peter was confusion concerning suffering. (1 Pt. 1:6; 2:12, 15, 20; 3:6, 13-22; 4:1, 12-19). Here the problem facing the church is lack of growth and false teachers. The heretical teaching was not only preventing growth, but was producing immoral, worldly living. The church was drifting from the truth while still maintaining the title of “christian” and “church” just as Demas had in Paul’s ministry mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:10 –

“For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.”

The teaching of the false teacher’s is not completely clear. We do know they are:

1. Scoffing at the return of Christ
2. God’s grace is enough and there is no need to grow, mature or separate from the world
3. Introducing destructive heresies
4. Somehow their “christian” teaching was actually denying “the Master who bought them.”
5. They made false promises of freedom and blessing

Peter’s focus is on their lifestyle and the priorities of their lives:

1. Arrogant toward authority (2:10-11)
2. Sexual sins
3. Excess in eating and drinking
4. Greedy for money (2:13-16, 18-20)
5. They live a libertine lifestyle (a lifestyle that sees moral restraints as unnecessary or undesirable. Most often focused on casting aside the morals of society as a whole or those of a religious group.)
6. Their lifestyle caused the truth and Christianity in general to be ridiculed and blasphemed (in other words, they misrepresented the very message they claimed to be proclaiming.)
7. They were enslaved to the world
8. They seduced the unstable (young believers, untrained Christian)

Peter saw that this style of false teaching would grow with time and eventually expand its operation. (2:11-12, 17-18, 20; 3:5, 16) It appears that Peter was teaching that those who were rejecting the authority in his day would one day be the ones with the authority.

Knowledge

The letter begins highlighting the importance of knowledge in 2 Peter 1:3:

“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.”

And, continues throughout the letter in:

1:5 – ***“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge.***

1:6 – ***“and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness***

1:8 – ***“For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

2:20 – ***“For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.”***

Peter’s focus on knowledge is completed in a style of writing called an *inclusion* which envelopes the entire letter in brackets by ending the same way it began...encouraging the believers to use knowledge and proclaiming the importance of knowledge when Peter closes with 3:18:

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”

The word "knowledge" is used 16 times in the English translations:

- Oida 3x (1:12, 1:14; 2:9)
- Ginosko 2x (1:20; 3:3)
- Gnosis 2x (1:5-6; 3:18)
- Gnorizo 1x (1:16)
- Proginosko 1x (3:17)
- Epiginosko 2x (2:21)
- Epignosis 3x (1:2-3; 1:8; 2:20)