

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, December 4, 2019 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

WHAT TO KNOW TO ...



AN INTRODUCTION TO 2 PETER *2 Peter 1:1-4*

"¹ Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like^{it} precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: ² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." -1 Peter 5:8-14 (NKJV)

If anybody in the early church knew the importance of being alert, it had to be the Apostle Peter. Remember he had a tendency in his early years to feel overconfident when danger was near and to overlook the Master's warnings.

Lessons Peter learned the hard way: Experience is the great teacher!

- (1) **Matthew 16:13-23** – What might Peter have learned? He rushed ahead when he should have waited
- (2) **Mark 14:32-42** – What might Peter have learned? He slept when he should have prayed;
- (3) **Matthew 26:31-35 / Luke 22:31-34** – What might Peter have learned? He talked when he should have listened.
- (4) **John 18:1-11** – What might Peter have learned? He was courageous, but careless, Christians.

In what ways are Christians “careless” when they should be cautious and courageous?

But Peter learned his lesson, and he wanted to help us learn it too. In his first epistle, Peter emphasized the grace of God (1 Peter 5:12), but in this second letter, his emphasis is on the knowledge of God. The word “know” or “knowledge” is used at least 13 times in this short

epistle. The word does not mean a mere intellectual understanding of some truth, though that is included. It means a living participation in the truth in the sense that our Lord used it in John 17:3, “This is life eternal, that they might know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.” Peter opened his letter with a generic identifying salutation that give us some of the essential background of the letter.

TITLE

The clear claim to authorship in 2 Peter 1:1 by the Apostle Peter gives the epistle its title. To distinguish it from Peter’s first epistle, it was given the Greek title “*Petrou B,*” or 2 Peter.

AUTHOR AND DATE

The author of 2 Peter is the Apostle Peter (see Introduction to 1 Peter).

4 Internal Evidences for Peter’s Authorship of 2 Peter:

1. In 2 Peter 1:1, the writer/author makes that claim - “*¹Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.*”
2. In 2 Peter 3:1 writer/author refers to his first letter – “*¹Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder).*”
3. In 2 Peter 1:14, the writer/author refers to the Lord’s prediction of his death (John 21:18,19) – “*¹²For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. ¹³Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, ¹⁴knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. ¹⁵Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.*” Remember that Jesus had predicted Peter’s death at the end of John’s gospel in John 21:18-19 as He reinstated Peter following Peter’s denial of Christ, “... ‘Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep. ¹⁸Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.’ ¹⁹This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’”
4. In 2 Peter 1:16-18, the writer/author claims to have been at the Transfiguration (Matthew:17:1-4) – “*¹⁶For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” ¹⁸And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.*” This is of course a reference to the “Transfiguration of Jesus” found in Matthew 17:1-4, “Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; ²and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. ³And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. ⁴Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

Even though the book/letter of 2 Peter contains much internal evidence and support for Peter's authorship, critics have generated more controversy over 2 Peter's authorship and rightful place in the canon of Scripture than over any other New Testament book.

Reasons for Questioning of 2 Peter's Authorship and Canonical Acceptance:

1. Lack of acceptance from earliest church leaders –
 - The church fathers were slow in giving it their acceptance - No church father refers to 2 Peter by name until Origen near the beginning of the third century.
 - The ancient church historian, Eusebius, only included 2 Peter in his list of disputed books, along with James, Jude, 2 John, and 3 John -
 - Even the leading Reformers only hesitantly accepted it – Martin Luther, John Calvin and other theologian from the Reformation period.
2. Differences in Greek writing style between 1 & 2 Peter - The question about differences in Greek style between the two letters has been satisfactorily answered. Peter wrote that he used an amanuensis, Silvanus, in 1 Peter (cf. 1 Peter 5:12). In 2 Peter, Peter either used a different amanuensis or wrote the letter by himself.
3. Discrepancies in vocabulary usage between 1 & 2 Peter - The differences in vocabulary between the two letters can be explained by the differences in themes.

Theme Differences in 1 & 2 Peter:

- (1) First Peter was written to help suffering/persecuted Christians -
- (2) Second Peter was written to expose false teachers -

On the other hand, there are remarkable similarities in the vocabulary of the two books.

Vocabulary Similarities in 1 & 2 Peter and Acts:

- (1) The salutation, “grace to you and peace be multiplied,” is essentially the same in each book – 2 Peter 1:2, “² Grace and peace be multiplied to you...” and 1 Peter 1:2, “... Grace to you and peace be multiplied.”
- (2) The author uses such words as “precious,” “virtue,” “putting off,” and “eyewitness,” to name just a few examples, in both letters -
- (3) Certain rather unusual words found in 2 Peter are also found in Peter’s speeches in the Acts of the Apostles - These include “obtained” (1:2; Acts 1:17); “godliness” (1:3,6,7; 3:11; Acts 3:12); and “wages of iniquity” (2:13,15; Acts 1:18). Both letters also refer to the same OT event (2:5; 1 Pet. 3:18–20).

NOTE: Some scholars have pointed out that there are as many similarities in vocabulary between 1 and 2 Peter as there are between 1 Timothy and Titus, two letters almost universally believed to have been written by Paul. Therefore, it is generally seen that the writing styles and vocabulary of the letter of 1 & 2 Peter and even Peter’s words in Acts are supportive of a Petrine authorship.

Accounting for Some of the Discrepancies & Misgivings of 2 Peter:

1. Apparent contradictory sayings/teaching in 1 & 2 Peter –

2 Examples :

(1) **Discrepancy concerning the second coming of Christ** - The differences in themes also explains certain emphases, such as why one letter teaches that the second coming is near, and one deals with its delay.

- *First Peter, ministering especially to suffering Christians, focuses on the immanency of Christ as a means of encouraging the Christians.*
- *Second Peter, dealing with scoffers, emphasizes the reasons why that imminent return of Christ has not yet occurred.*

(2) **Discrepancy concerning doctrinal themes** - Other proposed differences invented by the critics, such as the contradiction between including the resurrection of Christ in one letter and the Transfiguration of Christ in the other, seem to be contrived.

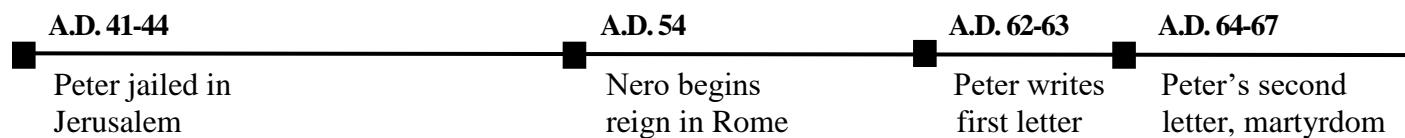
2. **Authorship questions of 2 Peter as a pseudepigraphical writing** – The term “psuedepigraphical” (writing) means “false writing” and refers especially to spurious or pseudonymous writings that are not written by who they claim to be written by. The **pseudepigrapha** are the books that attempt to imitate Scripture but that were written under false names. The term **pseudepigrapha** comes from the Greek pseudo, meaning “false,” and epigraphein, meaning “to inscribe,” thus, “to write falsely.”

Of all the epistles accepted into the New Testament canon, the book of 2 Peter remains the most difficult. Understanding with certainty the epistle’s complex issues feels like trying to untie a tightly woven knot—only to find more little knots to untie. However, if the issue of authorship can be reasonably determined, most of the knots considerably loosen themselves. The rejection of Peter as the writer of 2 Peter is by far the most common opinion today. In fact, the view of the pseudonymity of the epistle is almost universal. (Gary B. Ferngren) The term *pseudonymity* refers to an author assuming the name of another, writing supposedly on his or her behalf—or in his or her name. The prefix *pseudo* means “false.” “Scarcely anyone nowadays doubts that 2 Peter is pseudonymous, although it must be admitted of the few who do that they defend their case with an impressive combination of learning and ingenuity.” (J.N.D. Kelly)

As already stated, there is much internal evidence in the letter of 2 Peter itself to support Peter as the author, as the letter states. Moreover, it is seemingly irrational that a false teacher would spuriously write a letter against false teachers. No unusual, new, or false doctrines appear in 2 Peter. So, if 2 Peter were a forgery, it would be a forgery written by a fool for no reason at all. This is too much to believe.

The conclusion to the question of authorship is that, when the writer introduced the letter and referred to himself as Peter, he was writing the truth.

TIMELINE



Nero died in A.D. 68, and tradition says Peter died in Nero’s persecution. The epistle may have been written just before his death (2 Peter 1:14; A.D. 64-67).

BACKGROUND AND SETTING

Both the background and the setting for Peter second letter is significant. Unlike his first letter, written to encourage Christians being persecuted and scatter under Nero's brutal and tyrannical rule, 2 Peter was written to warn again and alert these vulnerable believers to the dangers of false religions and false professors that could undermine their own faith and sabotage the early church already reeling from these terrible times of persecution. We know that Peter wrote this second letter toward the very end of his own martyrdom and persecution. That tells us something about the background and setting.

Some things to take note of concerning these false teachers Peter wrote about:

- 1. The false teachers had increased and probably infiltrated the churches in the area Asia Minor** - Peter writes his brief, final reminder to the churches so that his readers will, by God's grace, live in a way that is pleasing to God. In doing so, Peter must also combat the false teachers who were apparently exerting pressure on the churches to depart from the true knowledge of Christ (see especially 2 Peter 2). We know from Paul's writing and concerns that the area of Asia Minor had dealt with the Judaizers, but this was only one group of false teachers and false religions in New Testaments... there were Gnostics, Stoics, Epicureans just to name a few. Since the time of the writing and sending his first letter, Peter had become increasingly concerned about false teachers who were infiltrating the churches in Asia Minor. Though these false teachers had already caused trouble, Peter expected that their heretical doctrines and immoral life-styles would result in more damage in the future.
- 2. The false teaching is both doctrinal as well as moral** - The false teaching is not only a theological challenge but also a moral one, promoting some form of sexual permissiveness as a legitimate Christian lifestyle. Thus Peter, in an almost last will and testament (2 Peter 1:13–15), *"¹³Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ¹⁴as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; ¹⁵but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy.'"*
- 3. We don't know who these false teachers were** - While the false teaching can be described based on what Peter writes, it is historically impossible to identify who the false teachers were. For example, there is no clear historical evidence that these teachers were Gnostics. Peter doesn't identify who this group is. Peter wrote to warn the beloved believers in Christ about the doctrinal dangers they were facing.

Place of Writing:

- 1. Peter does not explicitly say where he was when he wrote this letter, as he does in 1 Peter (1 Peter 5:13) -**
- 2. The consensus is that Peter wrote this letter from prison in Rome, where he was facing imminent death** - Shortly after this letter was written, Peter was martyred, according to reliable tradition, by being crucified upside down (*see note on John 21:18*).
- 3. The letter was apparently written to the same recipient as his first letter** - Peter says nothing in the salutation about the recipients of this letter, but according to 3:2, Peter was writing another epistle to the same people to whom he wrote 1 Peter. In his first letter, he

spelled out that he was writing “to the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1 Pet. 1:1). These provinces were located in an area of Asia Minor, which is modern Turkey. The Christians to whom Peter wrote were mostly Gentiles (*see note on 1:1*).

HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL THEMES

Major Historical/Theological Themes of 2 Peter:

1. **False teachers and false teaching** - Second Peter was written for the purpose of exposing, thwarting, and defeating the invasion of false teachers into the church. Peter intended to instruct Christians in how to defend themselves against these false teachers and their deceptive lies. Dr. John MacArthur calls 2 Peter, “This book is the most graphic and penetrating exposé of false teachers in Scripture, comparable only to Jude.” The description of the false teachers is somewhat generic. Peter does not identify some specific false religion, cult, or system of teaching. In a general characterization of false teachers, he informs that they teach destructive heresies. They deny Christ and twist the Scriptures. They bring true faith into disrepute. And they mock the second coming of Christ. But Peter was just as concerned to show the immoral character of these teachers as he was to expose their teaching. Thus, he describes them in more detail than he describes their doctrines. Wickedness is not the product of sound doctrine, but of “destructive heresies” (2:1). Other themes for this letter can be discerned in the midst of Peter’s polemic against the false teachers.
2. **Developing Christian character** - He wanted to motivate his readers to continue to develop their Christian character (2 Peter 1:5–11).
3. **Assurance of Salvation** – In writing and encouraging Christian toward Christian maturity he also address in brief fashion, something many believers struggle with. He explains wonderfully how a believer can have assurance of his salvation.
4. **The importance of knowledge** - Another recurring theme is the importance of knowledge. The word, “knowledge,” appears in some form 16 times in these 3 short chapters. It is not too much to say that Peter’s primary solution to false teaching is knowledge of true doctrine. This study of 2 Peter will center of what to know to be alert in this world that we live and especially in navigating the false messages and false teaching of our day... suffice it to say that as believer we need to be grounded in the Word of God.
5. **Divine nature of the Word of God** - Peter also wanted to persuade his readers of the divine character of the apostolic writings (2 Peter 1:12–21). Near the end of the letter, he presents reasons for the delay in Christ’s second coming (2 Peter 3:1–13). 2 Peter include a precise statement on the divine origin of Scripture (2 Peter 1:20,21); the future destruction of the world by fire (2 Peter 3:8–13); and the recognition of Paul’s letters as inspired Scripture (2 Peter 3:15,16).

INTERPRETIVE CHALLENGES

Important Passages and Interpretive Challenges in 2 Peter:

1. **The nature and authenticity of Scripture** - Perhaps the most important challenge in the epistle is to rightly interpret 2 Peter 1:19–21, because of its far-reaching implications with

regard to the nature and authenticity of Scripture. That passage, along with 2 Timothy 3:15–17, is vital to a sound view of the Bible’s inspiration.

2. **The nature of atonement** - Peter’s remark that the Lord “bought” false teachers (2 Peter 2:1) poses a challenge interpretively and theologically with regard to the nature of the atonement.
3. **The identity of angels who sinned** - The identity of the angels who sinned (2:4) also challenges the interpreter.
4. **The security of the believer** - Many who believe that the saved can be lost again, use 2:18–22 for their argument. That passage, directed at false teachers, must be clarified so as not to contradict a similar statement to believers in 1:4.
5. **The identity of those not perishing** - Further, whom does God not want to perish (3:9)? All of these matters will be treated in the notes.

OUTLINE

Salutation (1:1, 2)

- I. **Know Your Salvation (1:3–11)**
 - A. *Sustained by God’s Power (1:3, 4)*
 - B. *Confirmed by Christian Graces (1:5–7)*
 - C. *Honored by Abundant Reward (1:8–11)*
- II. **Know Your Scriptures (1:12–21)**
 - A. *Certified by Apostolic Witness (1:12–18)*
 - B. *Inspired by the Holy Spirit (1:19–21)*
- III. **Know Your Adversaries (2:1–22)**
 - A. *Deceptive in Their Infiltration (2:1–3)*
 - B. *Doomed by Their Iniquity (2:4–10a)*
 - C. *Disdainful in Their Impurity (2:10b–17)*
 - D. *Devastating in Their Impact (2:18–22)*
- IV. **Know Your Prophecy (3:1–18)**
 - A. *The Sureness of the Day of the Lord (3:1–10)*
 - B. *The Sanctification of God’s People (3:11–18)*