

New Testament Survey

2 Peter

I. Attestation and Authorship¹

A. External

1. There are a number of points of similarity between 2 Peter and other writings between A.D. 90 and 130, such as the *Shepherd of Hermas*, *First Clement*, *Second Clement*, and the *Didache*.
2. The churches of Vienne and Lyons knew about 2 Peter.
3. It appears to have been quoted by the *Apocalypse of Peter*.
4. It is not mentioned in the Muratorian Canon, nor does it appear in the Old Latin and Old Syriac translations.
5. Eusebius lists 2 Peter in the *antilegomena* (the books that were not readily accepted as Scripture by the early church).
6. We do, however, appear to have early attestation to 2 Peter in the Epistle of Jude. One need merely to note the similarities between the two books.

B. Internal Evidence

1. The writer calls himself Peter (2 Peter 1:1).
2. The charge that someone merely inserted the name of Peter to lend credence to the book cannot be substantiated.
3. The autographical allusions are true to the facts. For example, the writer talks about the Transfiguration (2 Peter 1:16-18), and to the prediction by Christ of the martyrdom of Peter (2 Peter 1:12-14). This was written prior to the Gospel of John in which this prediction was recorded.

C. Critical Objections²

1. Some note the differences in style and vocabulary between 1 and 2 Peter and assume they were written by two different men. However, we know that 1 Peter was probably written by Silvanus (Silas) as Peter's *amanuensis*. If 2 Peter was written by Peter himself, we would expect some differences.
2. Some say that 2 Peter is dependent for its content on the apocryphal book of the *Apocalypse of Peter*. However, it is more reasonable to assume that the *Apocalypse of Peter* borrowed from 2 Peter, and not the other way around.

¹ Henry C. Thiessen, *Introduction to the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Co., 1987), p p. 287-288.

² Thiessen, pp. 288-289.

3. There is no evidence that 2 Peter is a forgery. Also, 2 Peter lacks all of the marks of a forgery, such as unorthodox doctrine, anachronisms, and new teachings or notions.
4. The writer of 2 Peter makes reference to Paul's epistles, something that would happen only after Paul's epistles had been fully collected. However, we must note that the writer only alludes to some of Paul's Epistles, not all of them. Also, Paul had written nearly all of his Epistles prior to the writing of 2 Peter.
5. The earnestness, apostolic tone, and autobiographical allusions all point to the acceptance of 2 Peter as genuine.

II. Background and Destination

- A. The readers of this letter are, at the least, composed mainly of the original recipients of 1 Peter (2 Peter 3:1).³
- B. This would include those in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. These make up most of the modern-day nation of Turkey.
 1. Interestingly, note that these are the same people who for the most part were the recipients of Paul's letters (Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon).
 2. Note also that this would be the same people who would receive the commendations and warnings found in Revelation 2-3.

III. Occasion and Date⁴

- A. A proto-Gnostic heresy had begun to creep into the church. Specifically:
 1. It was antinomian in character (2 Peter 2:11, 12, 17-18, 20; 3:5, 16).
 2. Peter saw it as something that would grow (2 Peter 2:1-2, 3:3).
- B. 2 Peter is earlier than Jude because Jude quotes from 2 Peter.
 1. In 2 Peter the false teachers are in the future, in Jude the false teachers have arrived.
 2. Jude quotes from several sources, 2 Peter appears to quote from none.
 3. Jude appears to definitely allude to 2 Peter 3:1-3 in Jude 1:17-18. The word for "mockers" is *empaiktes*, and appears only in Jude 1:18 and 2 Peter 3:3.
- C. 2 Peter then appears to have been written shortly after 1 Peter and before Jude which would place in the year A.D. 66-67.

IV. Purpose and Plan⁵

- A. To stir up the believers to beware of false teachers.

³ Thiessen, p. 290.

⁴ Thiessen, pp. 290-291.

⁵ Thiessen, p. 291.

- B. To encourage the believers in the expectation of the Lord's return.
- C. To give the readers an understanding of the only sure antidote to heresy and false teaching, that being the true, deep knowledge of the Word of God.

V. A Basic Outline⁶

- A. Introduction - 2 Peter 1:1-4.
- B. The Exhortation to Develop the Christian Graces - 2 Peter 1:5-11.
- C. The Ground for Peter's Authority to Exhort and to Teach - 2 Peter 1:12-21.
- D. The Warnings Against False Teachers - 2 Peter 2.
- E. The Admonitions in the Light of the Certainty and Imminence of the Lord's Return - 2 Peter 3.

VI. Chapters To Remember

2 Peter 1	Christian Graces
2 Peter 2	Beware of False Teachers
2 Peter 3	The Day of the Lord

VII. Points and Peculiarities

1. 1 Peter's main theme is that of *suffering*, 2 Peter is that of *false teachers and false teaching*.
2. 1 Peter's emphasis is on *consolation*, 2 Peter's emphasis is on *warning*.
3. The word "know" and its cognates appear some sixteen times in 2 Peter. In six of these, Peter uses the word *epignosis*, which means a deep spiritual knowledge. The only true antidote to false teaching is real spiritual knowledge.

VIII. A Closer Look

- A. 2 Peter 1
 1. Our Sufficent Spiritual Resources - 2 Peter 1:3-4.
 2. Growing in the Christian Graces - 2 Peter 1:5-11.
 3. Peter's Authority - 2 Peter 1:12-15.
 4. A More Sure Word of Prophecy - 2 Peter 1:16-21.
- B. 2 Peter 2
 1. Beware of False Teachers - 2 Peter 2:1-22
- C. 2 Peter 3
 1. Looking for Christ - 2 Peter 3:1-8.

⁶ Thiessen, p. 292.

2. The Reason God is Longsuffering - 2 Peter 3:9.
3. A New Heaven and Earth - 2 Peter 3:10-18.