

TITLE: Fanning the Flame: An Introduction to 2 Peter (Part 1)
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{{Read Passage}}

By way of intro. to this letter ==>

For t/sake of alliteration we will let the letter “A” guide us.

Three things ==>

A. The Author (who wrote 2 Peter?)

Modern Objections to Petrine Authorship/Date and Place of Writing

B. The Audience (to whom was the letter written?)

C. The Atmosphere (what were circumstances of t/letter?)

I. Fanning the Flame: An Introduction to 2 Peter

A. The Author (who wrote 2 Peter?)

As far as who wrote the letter, we read in t/first verse==>

Simon Peter, a slave and an apostle of Jesus Christ . . .

Following t/customary way of writing letters in t/1st c. t/opening verse claims that the letter was written by “Peter” - Particularly - (ΣΙΜΩΝ ΠΕΤΡΟΣ) - Simeon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ. The writer clearly identifies himself as “The Apostle Peter.”

This would clearly indicate what we call==>

1. Petrine Authorship

We are talking about The Apostle Peter, t/central figure among t/12 while during Jesus' earthly ministry.

a. There's no doubt about Peter's prominence

Each list of apostles in Gospels places his name first (Matt. 10; Mark 3; Luke 6). Next to JC t/Gospel writers give us more infor. about Peter than any one else.

After t/resurrection & ascension of JC, Peter became leading spokesman for t/early CH. He initiated t/replacement of t/fallen pseudo-Apostle Judas (Acts 1:15). He preached the 1st sermon recorded by t/early CH in Acts 2 w/result that 1000s came to believe in X for salvation. He dominates the first half of t/book of Acts up until t/arrival of TAP. God used him to open t/door of t/gospel to the half-breed Samaritans in Acts 8, as well as t/Gentiles in Acts 10.

Any letter coming to you by Peter was a letter w/some serious authority behind it!

Why - If you were to compose a spurious letter (forgery) in the 1st or 2nd c. there is no better name to use than Peter's, and many did just that (*Gospel of Peter; Apocolypse of Peter, Acts of Peter, and others*).

2. Modern critics, almost to a man, believe it to be a pseudonymous letter (a forgery)

Kummel writes: "Peter cannot have written this Epistle."

Even conservative scholars admit that 2 Peter is considered the most poorly attested letter in t/N.T. IOW - the support for it having been written in t/first c. by t/man who claimed he wrote it (in this case TAP) is t/weakest of any N.T. book.

New Testament commentator JND Kelly wrote that ==>

"No N.T. document had a longer or tougher struggle to win acceptance than 2 Peter."

That it's the weakest doesn't mean that there's not good evidence supporting its genuineness. Not anymore than saying the weakest starting linebacker in the NFL is a wimp!

"E. M. B. Green takes from Westcott the point that while no book of the New Testament is as poorly attested in the early church as 2 Peter, this epistle "has incomparably better support for its inclusion than the best attested of the rejected books." This is perhaps as far as we can go along this line. Those who reject Petrine authorship will point to the weakness of the attestation; those who accept it point out that no noncanonical book has as much acceptance."

Origin, whose life spanned the 2d and 3d centuries, referred to Peter "sounding aloud with the two trumpets of his epistles." Very early recognition. He also mentions doubts about it, but uses it at least six times w/o hesitation. [*citations occur in Rufinus' Latin translation which is sometimes not completely accurate] –Guthrie

Eusebius, who lived early in the 4th c., said that Peter left "one acknowledged letter and perhaps also a second, for this is disputed."

There's also evidence for the canonicity of 2 Peter from as early as Clement of Alexandria and Polycarp. [Guthrie]

Jerome (d. AD 420) accepted it but also noted that doubts existed over its authenticity based on differences in style to 1 Peter. He believed that the differences were a result of 2 different amanuenses

Guthrie in his N.T. Introduction ==>

"It would seem a fair conclusion to this survey of external evidence to submit that there is no evidence from any part of the early church that this epistle was ever rejected as spurious, in spite of the hesitancy which existed over its reception."

3. Sum up the arguments against Peter having actually written the letter along four lines:

a. The relationship between 2 Peter and Jude

Norman Perrin writes==>

"2 Peter is based on Jude 4-16. This evidence makes it impossible for the apostle Peter to have written it, and it is universally recognized as pseudonymous. . . . a date about AD 140 would be appropriate."

b. The differences in literary style and vocabulary between 1 and 2 Peter

c. The words of 3:15-16 where Peter calls Paul's letters "Scripture"

d. The reference in 3:4 where he says that ever since the fathers died all things continue

Criticism is of his use of the word "Fathers" to refer to deceased Christians.

4. We're talking about issues that relate not only to the genuineness of the letter, but also to the question of canonicity

a. What do we mean by "canonicity?"

Word "canon" (Hebrew *kaneh* (a rod); Greek *kanon* (a reed) - referred to a unit of measure such as a stick (yard stick). It came to be generally used of any standard of measure.

As it relates to Scripture, canon/canonicity refers to t/authenticity of t/books themselves. When we speak of our canon of Scripture we are referring to the 39 books of the O.T. and the 27 books of the New. A total of 66 books contained within our English Bible, no more, no less.

As for the N.T. – the earliest sort of list of the books that are considered part of it comes from what's called "The Muratorian Canon" which dates to 150 AD.

The Muratorian Canon lists 1) Four Gospels; 2) Acts; 3) 13 of Paul's letters; 4) Two (maybe three) letters of John; 4) Book of Jude; 4) Book of Revelation. We don't find James, Hebrews, 1 and 2 Peter. But that's not really cause for concern because the copy we have of t/MT isn't complete (sections missing).

Brian Edwards writes ==>

"In addition to the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and thirteen letters of Paul were all accepted without question from the earliest records known today. Apart from James, Jude, 2 and 3 John, 2 Peter, Hebrews and Revelation all other new Testament books had been universally accepted by AD 180. Only a few churches hesitated over these seven." [Brian Edwards, Why 66 Books? DVD]

AD 240 Origen of Alexandria - All 27 (exclusively referred to as Scripture)

AD 367 Athanasius has the first list identical to ours, calling them ==>
". . . the fountains of salvation, that whoever thirsts, may be satisfied by the eloquence which is in them. In them alone is set forth the doctrine of piety. Let no one add to them, nor take anything from them."

This was the first list, but we know that before this time these books were accepted by the churches.

b. The canon came together under t/providential working of God
He worked through history by showing that only His Word is θεοπνευστος as we see in 2 Timothy 3:16. Only his written word is God-breathed"

We call this The Self-Authenticating Nature of Scripture. Why no church creates t/Canon. The CH can only recognize what God has inspired.

Greg Bahnsen writes ==>

"Accordingly, the canon is not the product of the Christian church. The church has no authority to control, create, or define the Word of God. . . . When we understand this, we can see how erroneous it is to suppose that the corporate church, at some council of its leaders, voted on certain documents and constituted them the canon. The church cannot subsequently attribute authority to certain writings. It can simply receive them as God's revealed word which, as such, always has been the church's canon. Authority is inherent in those writings from the outset, and the church simply confesses this to be the case." [The Concept and Importance of Canonicity]

We don't make t/WOG authoritative // relevant. It is what it is!

Indeed, God worked providentially through a historical process, secondary means, to gather together t/books of the Bible.

We see that in how Luke did research in composing his Gospel along w/the book of Acts. The fact that he did painstaking study doesn't negate God's sovereignty in directing that research to include all that He decreed would be there.

Same with 2 Peter (or any letter of t/N.T. for that matter). Remember, one of the key criteria for t/recognition of a book to be sacred Scripture is that it came through the hand of an Apostle.

Because of this, any letter proposed as coming from TAPeter went through much greater scrutiny. There was a healthy sense of skepticism, the idea that, "*Let's be absolutely sure.*"

And in time, 2 Peter was embraced as a legitimate, God-Inspired and inerrant book of the N.T.

5. What of the arguments that skeptics give against Petrine authorship? What do we make of these?

I love Thomas Schreiner's statement in his exegetical commentary on 2 Peter that the criticisms have as much to do with the bias of the critic as they do the actual evidence. He goes on to say that one does not have to sacrifice his intellect in order to contend that Peter wrote 2 Peter.

a. As far as the relationship between 2 Peter and Jude?

Norman Perrin writes==>

"2 Peter is based on Jude 4-16. This evidence makes it impossible for the apostle Peter to have written it, and it is universally recognized as pseudonymous. . . . a date about AD 140 would be appropriate."

There's no need to go there. There's no evidence that Peter used Jude (may have been t/other way around – Jude may have used Peter). There's no reason why t/close relation between t/two letters would imply that either is fictitious. Really a poor argument.

b. The differences in literary style and vocabulary between 1 and 2 Peter

(1) This argument is the most weighty of them all

There is no doubt that there's a significant difference in style and vocabulary.

The celebrated N.T. commentator R.C.H. Lenski outlines some of those differences:

"First Peter has 361 words that are not found in Second Peter, and Second Peter has 231 words that are not found in First Peter."

2 Peter also has many words used only once in the N.T. Proportionately more than any N.T. book. Some of the words are not found anywhere in all of Greek literature.

We see the same sort of accusations leveled against other N.T. book. Fact of t/matter is, the content is different. We use different words to address different circumstances. If you were writing an email to friend addressing a particular topic. And 5 years later wrote a letter to the same group addressing a different topic, we'd expect differences. Esp. in light of t/fact that 2 Peter is so short. Hard to press differences in style too much.

So Lenski also states ==>

"As far as [these] grammatical differences are concerned, what Jerome called difference in style, this has for a long time been recognized as an

exaggeration and as altogether insufficient for assuming that different writers composed the two epistles. They present not only differences but also marked similarities. In both epistles there is a fondness for repeating a word that has just been used, a feature that is found also in James. Again, in both epistles there is a fondness for plural abstract nouns. In both epistles the main thought is not stated at once and then elaborated; the main thought is approached gradually, after due preparation. Thus Bigg writes: "So far we may agree with Weiss that no document in the New Testament so like First Peter as Second Peter."

(2) Differences can also be accounted for by the use of a different secretary

Remember it was common in the day to use what is called an amanuensis. That was a scribe who wrote what was dictated or given to him.

Dictation was a common practice.

Ro. 16:22 I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.

Secretaries would often aid with style and grammar. In some cases the scribe would be given a bare outline to work with and the author would check over the work when it was completed.

Peter may have used Silas to write 1 Peter ==>

5:12 Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard him), I have written to you . . .

It's possible, although from what I understand It's more likely that Silas carried the letter, rather than wrote it.

It's also possible that Peter used an unnamed amanuensis. Or that he wrote 1 Peter but used an secretary for 2 Peter!

John Calvin regarded it as having been written by a disciple under Peter's direction (he was too old and infirm to write it himself).

All of this taken into consideration, the differences in style are not out inexplicable. In fact, they would be expected.

c. Some critics have appealed to 3:15-16 where Peter calls Paul's letters "Scripture"

Argument being that this was too early for any recognition of, or collection of, TAP's letters as part of the canon.

We can't go beyond what Peter is saying. He's not saying that ALL of Paul's writings were collected, only some of them.

That Peter refers to them as γραφας Scriptures is no shock. They were! Paul recognized that he spoke with an authoritative prophetic voice:

1 Co 14:37 **If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment.**

Paul's writings follow in the vein of the prophetic voice of the OT. Since we believe in t/inspiration of Scripture, it would be no surprise that the HS would move Peter to affirm this as being true.

We could add that Peter's reference to Paul's writings as 'difficult to understand' (3:16) would seem like a strange insertion by a writer pretending to be Peter.

Also that he calls Paul "our dear brother" (3:15). There's a touch of intimacy and familiarity.

Lastly, what of ==>

d. The reference in 3:4 where he says that ever since the fathers died all things continue

Critics say that Peter wouldn't have said this because in t/1st c. Xn leaders weren't referred to as "fathers", that sort of language came later. False assumption. That this refers to Christians of the first c. and not to the Jewish Patriarchs of t/O.T.. That's the common understanding of the term and there's no reason not to understand it in that way in 3:4.

6. I don't want to belabor the point, but there are other issues the skeptics raise

a. The fact that 1:1 says ==>

Simon [Simeon] Peter . . .

Only other place this title is used is in Acts 15:14. However, why would a writer other than Peter use this? If you were forging a second letter, you would use the same form as in the first. That is, you would simply say, "Peter, an Apostle of JC". In fact, there are clues in t/context as to why Peter uses "Simon" with his name that we will see later.

b. The writer knows that his death was near (1:14)

Not unusual given Peter's advancing age and the persecutions that would have been acute by that time.

Jn 21:18 "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself, and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God.

c. Peter refers to the Transfiguration Account (1:17-18)

2 Pe 1:17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, “This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased”— and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

(1) Peter is talking about his experience recorded in Matthew 17
Matthew 17:1-5 1 And six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves. 2 And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. 3 And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. 4 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” 5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!”

It's no shock that Peter would refer to this. It was a tremendous experience. But look at WHY he uses it {cite 1:15-19}

We can add that his account of the transfiguration differs somewhat is from that found in the Gospels (obviously wasn't an account that was just copied over).

We are faced with the only conclusion that can be safely reached: That Peter, the Apostle, the real deal, wrote this letter.

"Second Peter has been called a second-century forgery. Second Peter would be a senseless forgery. It would also be a forgery that was so well done that only Peter himself could have executed it." [Lenski]

7. Look at his self-description:

Simeon Peter, a slave and an apostle of Jesus Christ . . .

a. He uses what we may call his full name: (Simon Peter) I think for two reasons

(1) First, he was advanced in age and his death was near

Cf. 1:14. This letter is an obituary of sorts.

(2) More importantly - this is his Jewish form of address

(a) He writes as a Jew to Gentiles

And he, as a privileged Jew, places himself in humility on the same level as his average, everyday Gentile readers.

Simeon Peter, a slave and an apostle of Jesus Christ . . .

Note that he puts the word δουλος (slave) before the word αποστολος (apostle). What a reminder of humility!

No matter who we are, we are alike "slaves" of Christ. Doesn't matter how educated we are // how greatly others think God has used us // if we are celebrated in Xn circles. The great equalizer is that we are all slaves, and slaves w/o rank.

This word is best translated "slave" rather than "servant" or "bond-servant." Perhaps we shy away from translating the word this way because of the negative connotation that slavery has for us.

But there's no negative in being X's slave, is there?

1 Cor. 7:22 For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave.

If you are a real Xn // born again ==> you are a slave of JC.

God redeemed you out of the marketplace of sin, purchasing you w/the blood of His Son. He called you out; you are His. You now live to serve not yourself but Him.

One writer puts it this way ==>

"Because we are bond-slaves, the Lord Jesus Christ has the right to expect continual service out of us. In the ancient world the slave had no holidays, no working hours settled by agreement, no leisure. All his time belonged to the master. So it is with those of us who are Christians. We have no right to compartmentalize our lives. All of our time, talent and treasury belong to our Master." [Fickett, 156]

We are those who submit our wills to Christ's. As our Master prayed to t/Father, "Not my will, but thine be done!" That should resonate w/i our hearts! Does it yours? If it does, it is a sure sign of your calling and election.

He writes ==>

. . . to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

B. The Audience (to whom was the letter written?)

1. Briefly: We can assume that the readers are much the same as those of 1 Peter See that in 3:1 . . .

a. Turn over to 1 Peter 1:1

These 5 names represent 4 Roman Provinces - all areas S. of the Black Sea in Asia Minor roughly in/around modern day Turkey.

Pontus was far N. on Black Sea. Jews from Pontus were in Jerusalem during Pentecost (Acts 2:9). Pontus was also home of Aquila & Priscilla who came to faith in X while in Rome ministered w/Paul.

Galatia was in central Asia Minor & contained towns of Derbe, Lystra, & Iconium where Paul ministered several times (hence his letter by that name).

Cappadocia: Eastern section of Asia Minor. Also mentioned in Acts 2:9 in connection to t/Jews who had traveled to Jerusalem for Pent.

Asia. Not t/continent as we think of it today, but a single province E. of t/Aegean Sea). It was an independent K.D. whose last king, Attalus the Third, gave it to Rome as a gift in 133 B.C.

Asia included most of W. Asia Minor & contained such subdivisions as Mysia, Lydia, Caria, and much of Phrygia. This province was also the site of extensive ministry by Paul on this 3rd Missionary Journey.

Acts 19:10 says, "all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks."

Bithynia, which along with Pontus were 2 regions that made up a single province known as "Pontus & Bithynia."

In each of these 5 areas there were many churches. Area of some 300,000 miles.

Again, since Peter refers to 2 Peter as t/"2nd letter" we believe that this same audience is intended.

2. We know that Peter wrote his first letter from Rome – What about 2nd Peter?

Quick answer is, "We don't know exactly where Peter was when he wrote 2 Peter." If we date the letter between 65-68, just before Peter's death, he was likely in Rome.

According to tradition, Peter had to watch as his wife was being crucified. He encouraged her with the words, "Remember the Lord." When it was his turn to mount the cross, he reportedly declared that he was unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as His Master, but should rather be crucified upside down, which, again according to trad., he was (sometime during AD 67 or 68).

Peter writes to Gentiles. We know that they were suffering (from 1 Peter – no change here – would have only gotten worse – Nero AD 64).

Why? What was ==>

C. The Atmosphere (what were circumstances of t/letter?)

2 Peter is a brief letter (3 chapters) and the content that's in those 3 chapters varies. But safe to say that the general theme of t/letter is expressed in 1:12-13 {cite}. *Fanning the Flame*.

The flame of truth in a regenerate heart results in a sure calling and election. Results in standing the test of rejecting false teaching and suffering through the eventual and inevitable persecutions and sufferings of this life. Perseverance.

**1. Foundationally this is grounded in the righteousness of Christ
... received a faith of the same kind as ours, in the righteousness of
our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.**

I want to pick it up there next time. But this is a good place to transition from the preaching of God's Word to the celebration of t/Lord's Table.

This is the Gospel – the faith that is grounded in the righteousness of Christ alone.

Paul writes in Philippians 3 ==>

. . . I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

John 14:6

John 3:3. ==> The work of the H.S.