

Title: Fanning the flame of Truth: An Introduction to 2 Peter (Part 2)
Passage: 2 Peter 1:1a
Theme: Introduction to 2 Peter
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{{Read Passage}}

I. Fanning the Flame: An Introduction to 2 Peter

We've been away from this letter for a few weeks so I think it would be expedient to review some of the ground we tread back on April 11.

A. The Author - Issues of Authorship (1:1a)

B. The Audience - Issues of Readership (1:1b)

C. The Atmosphere - Issues of Circumstance

D. The Abstract - Issues of Content

E. The Address - Opening Greeting (1:2)

I hope to not only review up until the point we left off last time, but to set t/stage for vv. 3-11 (that's going to be a trek thru a tremendous portion of this short epistle).

A. The Author (who wrote 2 Peter?)

Writer introduces himself in t/1st 2 words of t/text (Eng./Grk) as ==>
Simon Peter . . .

Lest there be any doubt, he adds ==>

. . . a slave and an apostle of Jesus Christ . . .

1. Yet - many critics maintain that it wasn't the Apostle Peter who wrote this letter but another anonymous author who simply borrowed Peter's name for effect

Kummel representing t/majority of liberal scholars, writes: "*Peter cannot have written this Epistle.*"

a. Kummel's contention in that regard is not without basis

Even conservative scholars agree that 2 Peter was among t/last books to be received by t/early CH as genuine.

New Testament commentator JND Kelly wrote that ==>

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

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

(1) 2 Peter is considered the weakest attested letter in the 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 t/apost. Peter) is not as strong as other N.T. books.

(a) But that's not a bad thing

Remember t/letters of t/N.T. didn't just fall from t/sky into a single compilation. They were individually circulated among t/CH's across t/Roman Empire & eventually came to be recognized & collected as Scripture.

It's not what t/pop. conspiracy theorists would have you believe – that t/CH was a top-down centralized power structure in Rome or Jerusalem that controlled what books would be read & accepted. The early CH was de-centralized! That's a good thing!

It was a miracle of God's providence that brought all of those separate writings dispersed far and wide into one unified whole which we today call t/27 books of t/N.T. As God has done t/o history – he used ordinary men to do so.

It's not unlike how he used Luke to compile t/Gospel that bears his name along w/the book of Acts.

Lk 1:1-3 **Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order . . .**

As for Peter t/Apostle – forgeries in his name were not uncommon. But if we compare 2 Peter to those that we know are pseudonymous we find that there is no comparison.

One N.T. scholar notes 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."

Early CH Father Origen - who was only a few centuries removed from t/Apostles themselves - referred to Peter **"sounding aloud with the two trumpets of his epistles."** He also mentions doubts about it, but uses it at least 6 times w/o hesitation. [*citations occur in Rufinus' Latin translation which is sometimes not completely accurate] –Guthrie

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."

2. The Apostle Peter

a. In the original text it's "Simeon Peter"

Simeon was t/Hebrew form of t/more common Simon (Greek). We also find him named "Simon Barjona" (Simon son of Jonas/ John).

b. John 1:44 tells us that Peter was from Bethsaida

Bethsaida a town on the N shores of Galilee, near the Jordan river. Bethsaida = is Aramaic for 'house of fishing' (Peter was a fisherman by trade).

c. Peter was married

Mark speaks of Jesus healing his mother-in-law & Paul notes Peter's being married in 1 Cor. 9:5.

d. It was Peter's brother Andrew who introduced him to Jesus as the Messiah Turn to John 1 (1:35-42).

Κηφας was Aramaic for 'rock' or 'stone' The Greek word for rock or stone was Πέτρος (from which we get our English form "Peter").

e. Peter was one of first disciples called by Jesus & he stands out as a clear leader among the Apostles

Each time we see a list of t/12 Apostles in t/Gospels – such as in Matthew & Luke – Peter's name is first on t/list (prominence).

Gospel writers tell us more about Peter than any other person o/s of X.

(1) He served as spokesman for the twelve

It would be P. who would ask for J. to explain t/meaning of a certain parable // asked how often a bro. or sis. may sin against him & yet be forgiven. // who answered t/question "Who do you say that I am" w/his great confession recorded in Matt. 16:16==> "Thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God." // asked about t/withered fig tree // to whom t/Jews went to inquire if J. paid his taxes // who answered when J. asked who had touched him in t/crowd.

Peter along w/James & John) formed t/inner circle of Jesus' closest associates His earthly ministry.

f. Peter was also known for his blunders

"The Apostle with the Foot-Shaped Mouth" He was compulsive, outspoken, & brash. He lips would get ahead of his brain. Those are some of t/things we love about him.

Jesus was going for a walk one day & Peter wanted to join him. Problem was that Jesus happened to be out walking on t/water!

Peter sees him and says:

"Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

(I don't know if he thought about what might happen if it wasn't him!)

And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus.³⁰ But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

Then we have, in Mark 14==>

27 And Jesus *said to them, “You will all fall away, because it is written, ‘I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP SHALL BE SCATTERED.’”28 “But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.”29 But Peter said to Him, “*Even* though all may fall away, yet I will not.”30 And Jesus *said to him, “Truly I say to you, that you yourself this very night, before a cock crows twice, shall three times deny Me.”31 But *Peter* kept saying insistently, “*Even* if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!”

Peter who outran John to the tomb // who stripped off his outer garment and dove into the sea to see Jesus after t/Res.(John 21:7) // Who said at the MOT "*Isn't it great that we're all here: why don't I put up some tents?*"

It was Peter tho drew his sword & cut t/ear off of t/HP's servant, Malchus. // Whom J. referred to as a "Satan" (adversary) for his insistence that Jesus not go to Jerusalem to die.

(1) Safe to say that the low point of his life was when Jesus' words of Peter's denial were fulfilled

(a) We read about that in Luke 22:54-62

54 And having arrested Him, they led Him *away*, and brought Him to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance.55 And after they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them.56 And a certain servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight, and looking intently at him, said, “This man was with Him too.”57 But he denied *it*, saying, “Woman, I do not know Him.”58 And a little later, another saw him and said, “You are *one* of them too!” But Peter said, “Man, I am not!”

59 And after about an hour had passed, another man *began* to insist, saying, “Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too.”60 But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about.” And immediately, while he was still speaking, a cock crowed.61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, “Before a cock crows today, you will deny Me three times.”62 And he went out and wept bitterly.

Peter never forgot that moment. It was a reminder not only of how he could do nothing on his own, but also a reminder that he was so unworthy.

Wonderful encouraging truth is that God is there as a tender Father ready to forgive. So we see that in Mark 16:7 as God speaks through a young man at t/tomb following Jesus’ Res. (man was actually an angel) sensitive to Peter’s feelings & failures, t/message was ==>

“But go, tell [the] disciples and Peter, ‘[Jesus] is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He said to you.’”

Peter, marked out for special recognition as if Jesus were saying, “*you failed, but I knew you would & I not only have forgiven you but I’m going to use you in ways you can’t even imagine.*”

Luke 22:31-32 31 “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat;32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

Same is true for us when we fail // sin // Satan & his cohorts attack us. We have Jesus praying for us, forgiving us, restoring us.

(2) In a wonderful touch – classic passage – turn to John 21

(a) Sum up context . . .

(b) Note verse 9 “charcoal fire”

Charcoal used in these fires put off a particularly strong odor. Interesting that t/only other place where we see this phrase “*charcoal fire*” used is earlier in John, 18:18, and it’s mentioned right after Peter’s 1st denial. Right after Peter's denial of Jesus we read there ==>

Now the slaves and the officers were standing *there*, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

i. You know certain smells imprint themselves on our minds

Like songs – all it takes is for Frankie Valle's "My Eyes Adored You" to come on t/radio and I'm back in Jr. High ("Carried your books from school Playin' make-believe you're married to me; You were fifth-grade, I was sixth When we came to be"). Or "All Out of Love" by Air Supply & I'm back at Tempe H.S. dance! (where I awkwardly stood off in t/shadows being all out of love).

There are smells that do the same sort of thing.

You have a C.F. there at t/time of Peter’s worst failure in his life // have same thing here in John 21 (no doubt t/odor from that fire brought Peter right back in time to his denying t/Lord whom he so loved).

Then you have Jesus in v. 15 (vv. 15-17) . . .

Three times Peter denied his Lord. Three times Jesus asks him, “*Do you love me?*” Then, verse 18, a prediction of Peter’s death . . .

(3) But what happens when you turn the page over to the book of Acts?

You have a different Peter! The "Rock" began to live up to his name!

After the ascension of JC to God's right hand, Peter became leading spokesman for t/CH. He initiates t/replacement of Judas (Acts 1:15). He preaches first post-Pentecost sermon in Acts 2 with result that 1000s come to believe in JC for salvation. He confronts t/Jewish leaders w/boldness (4:8-20). He unwavering disciplines erring CH members (Acts 5:1-11)

He becomes a miracle worker whom God used to open the doors of the CH to t/Samaritans (Acts 8) and the Gentiles (Acts 10).

Peter dominates the first half of the book of Acts up until the arrival of the Apostle Paul.

He still has his moments (we all do). Galatians 2 – Paul tells of how he had to confront Peter in Antioch for his hypocrisy.

But he finishes well. According to history, Peter watched as his wife was being crucified. He encouraged her, "Remember the Lord." When it was his turn to mount the cross, he declared that he was unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as His Master, but wished to be crucified upside down. He was thereby martyred sometime around AD 67 or 68.

g. Peter was an Apostle – apostle in the sense of office
(Nate & I were talking about this t/other day)

Word "apostle" comes from t/Grk word "αποστολος." It's transliterated not translated. IOW - what we have is a phonetic equivalent.

The word translated means, "one sent out" (on a mission). The verb αποστειλλω = "to send someone / thing out." Used that way in Acts 15:22 - of t/men who were sent to Antioch w/Paul & Barnabas to address t/Judaizers.

(1) It's a word used in two different senses: Function and Office

(1) Function

Similar to t/word "deacon" which is also a transliterated word. Word means "servant" & it's used in that simple sense. We are all "deacons" in t/sense that we are all to be servants. Then there's t/office of deacon. Same w/Apostles

In sense of function, we could use αποστολος in a contemporary setting. A Xn missionary is an αποστολος - a messenger sent on a mission==>

Rom. 16:7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

2 Cor. 8:23 As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, they are messengers (αποστολοι) of the churches, a glory to Christ.

PHI 2:25 But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger (αποστολος) and minister to my need;

That's being an apostle in gen. sense of function - a messenger. When Peter says that he is ==>

...an Apostle of Jesus Christ...

He means much more than a messenger in a general sense of t/word. He's referring to himself in sense of ==>

(b) Office

In sense of "office" Apostles were unique to 1st c.

Are some groups that claim to have apostles in sense of "office" today:
Some w/i charis./pent. movt. There are t/Mormons & in a sense even RCC.

I shared this during our intro. to 1 Peter which has been more than a few years ago ==>

(2) At least Six reasons why we cannot have apostles today

i. The church was built on the foundation of the Apostles
(Ephesians 2:19-20)

That foundation has been (past-tense) laid and is now being built upon.

ii. Apostles were required to be eyewitnesses of the resurrection

Seems to be a requirement for t/replacement of Judas in Acts 1:22.
Something Paul appeals to in def. his apostleship in 1 Cor. 9:1

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?

iii. An apostle had to be uniquely chosen by Jesus Christ

Acts 1:24-25; Also see Galatians chapter 1 (was something Paul constantly alluded to – his being appointed an Apostle by Christ Himself).

iv. Apostles were authenticated by sign miracles

2 Cor. 12:11-12 - . . . for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody. 12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.

Heb 2:3-4 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

v. Apostles were men of great (absolute) authority {summarize}

1 Co 5:3 – For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

In t/book of Phm Paul writes -- Therefore, though I have enough confidence in Christ to order you to do that which is proper, yet for love's sake I appeal to you.

Rem.: a key test of NT canonicity was whether t/book was written by an Apostle or by one of his close associates. In that sense, t/Apostles were t/antecedents of promises such as those found in John 14:26 & 16:13 {summarize}

Jn 14:26 -- “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

Jn 16:13 -- “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

This is why cultic & apostate groups love to claim their apostles. It takes t/authority away from t/individual believer & puts it into t/hands of men who say things like, *"We've got t/restored truth of the Gospel!"*

Or "*Don't read t/Bible and interpret it yourselves, our Magisterium will tell you what is true.*"

God's Word is finalized & complete. It is that "**sure word**" to which we "**do well to pay attention to as a lamp shining in darkness**" (1:19).

vi. Apostles have an eternal and unique place of honor

Rev. 21:14 speaks of t/city walls in t/New Jerusalem that had 12 foundation stones w/the names of t/12 apostles upon them.

Wayne Grudem points out, t/uniqueness of Apostles is suggested by fact that phrase "of Jesus Christ" is connected to no other office in the NT. Nowhere do we find "Teachers of Jesus Christ" or "Prophets of Jesus Christ" or "Evangelists of Jesus Christ."

Now go back to verse 1==>

3. Look at his self-description:

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

a. I am impressed by the fact that he puts the word δουλος (slave) before the word αποστολος (apostle)

Peter ID's himself first as a slave of X, then as His apostle

(1) What a mark of humility!

(2) We live in an age where we have all sorts of Christian celebrities!

If ever someone qualified to be a "Xn celebrity" it was Peter. He knew that all he had was a result of God's grace. Enough to be slave of X.

Doesn't matter how much we know // how greatly others may 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.

(3) We are dead to the world and alive to the Master

Dead to t/world = dead to our selves. Not I but X in me!

A friend of mine forwarded me a quote that's relevant in that regard. It's entitled "Dying to Self".

When you are forgotten, neglected, or purposely ignored and you don't sting and hurt with the insult of the oversight, but your heart is happy, being counted worthy to suffer for Christ, THAT IS DYING TO SELF.

When your good is evil spoken of, your wishes are crossed, your advice disregarded, your opinion ridiculed, and you refuse to let anger rise in your heart, or even defend yourself, but take it all in patient, loving silence, THAT IS DYING TO SELF.

When you lovingly and patiently bear any disorder and irregularity, or any annoyance; when you stand face to face with waste, folly, extravagance, spiritual insensibility, and endure it as Jesus endured, THAT IS DYING TO SELF.

When you are content with any food, any offering, any climate, any society, any clothing, and any interruption by the will of God, THAT IS DYING TO SELF.

When you never care to refer to yourself in conversation, or to record your own good works or itch after praise; when you can truly love to be unknown, THAT IS DYING TO SELF.

When you can see your brother prosper and have his needs met and can honestly rejoice with him in spirit and feel no envy, nor question God, while your own needs are far greater and in desperate circumstances. THAT IS DYING TO SELF.

When you can receive correction and reproof from one of less stature than yourself and can humbly submit inwardly as well as outwardly, finding no rebellion or resentment rising up within your heart, THAT IS DYING TO SELF.

It's also t/attitude we adopt as slaves of a single Master.

A. The Author - Issues of Authorship (1:1a)

B. The Audience - Issues of Readership (1:1b)

1. Peter writes ==>

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

You see t/equality (humility) also ==>

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

"We're not only slaves together; we have t/same faith, the same righteousness in Christ."

We're all equal in that regard. My salvation isn't greater than yours, is it? Not like we're talking about stained glass piety where you deem some men more worthy of heave than others. None of us is worthy!

- * We all started at the same level – spiritually bankrupt.
- * We all have t/same salvation – solely through faith in X.
- * We all have t/same righteousness – the perfect right. of X.

X is not divided; thus I cannot possibly have a salvation grounded in him that is different than yours in quality or extent!

Acts 11:17 “If God therefore gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?”

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

According to 1 Peter 1:1 Peter's letter was directed to Pontus; Galatia; Cappadocia; and Asia – wasn't t/continent Asia that we think of, but a single province E. of t/Aegean Sea, an indep. K.D. whose last king, Attalus t/3rd gave it to Rome as a gift in 133 B.C.

We're talking about areas in and around Asia Minor / Modern Turkey.

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

b. As a footnote

When Peter writes ==>

. . . the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

He's clearly affirming our Lord's t/full deity – that JC is God.

We have what has come down to us as the "Granville Sharp Rule."
Upshot is that this passage is framed like Titus 2:13 and t/rule is that both passages have one person in view.

. . . the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Tit 2:13 **looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;**

Lenski in his commentary writes ==>

The use of the one article would say that but one person is referred to, namely, "Jesus Christ, our God and Savior" . . . The effort to find a reference to two persons, God and Christ, is nullified linguistically by the use of but one article in the Greek. There is nothing more to say. The deity of Christ stands forth here as a mountain that no false'faith can plunge into the sea. . . The very name "Jesus" = "Savior." All that the Scriptures mean by . . . "salvation," lies in the title "Savior." He is the Rescuer who rescues us from sin and damnation and places us into complete eternal safety. The fact that he is very God is added not only to indicate his power as Savior — which, of course, it does — but also because of so much that follows in this letter, all of which rests on his deity. [Lenski, 252-53]

So much for ==>

A. The Author - Issues of Authorship (1:1a)

B. The Audience - Issues of Readership (1:1b)

What about ==>

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 of Truth.*

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.

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B. The Audience - Issues of Readership (1:1b)

C. The Atmosphere - Issues of Circumstance

D. The Abstract - Issues of Content

1. A reading through 2 Peter

This isn't something I'd ordinarily do, but this letter is only 3 chapters, so there's really no better way to get a handle on what's in it than to read through it.

Leaves us w/one last point ==>

E. The Address - Opening Greeting (1:2)

Next time.