

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter

## Introduction to the Book

- Historical Background

- Author

- Peter is cited as the author in verse 1:1 where the author is named as an apostle of the Lamb.
- The Lord Jesus Christ made clear the imminence of the author's death [1:14] and we know Jesus spoke to Peter about this very thing as they walked along the shore of the Sea of Galilee [John 21:18-19].
- A reference is made to a previous letter [3:1] which we know as the book of 1st Peter and we already established Peter as the author of that letter.
- There are words and phrases found in both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter that are not common to Scripture.
  - The phrase χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη πληθυνθείη (charis humin kai eirēnē plēthunthein) is found only in 1 Pet 1:2 and 2 Pet 1:2 (Grace and peace be multiplied to you).
  - The word ἀπόθεσις (apothesis) is found only in 1 Pet 3:21 (removal) and 2 Pet 1:14 (laying aside).
  - The word ἀρετή (aretē) meaning “moral excellence” or “virtue” is found in 1 Pet 2:9 and 2 Pet 1:3, 5<sub>(x2)</sub> and is found elsewhere only in Phil 4:8.
  - The root words μῶμος (mōmos) and σπίλος (spilos) are combined 1 Pet 1:19 (unblemished and spotless) and again in 2 Pet 2:13 (stains and blemishes) and 2 Pet 3:14 (spotless and blameless).
- This is fairly strong internal evidence that these two letters were written by the same human author.
- There are words and phrases found in Peter's sermons in the Book of Acts and 2nd Peter that are not common to Scripture.
  - The verb κολάζω (kolazō) is found only in Acts 4:21 (punish) and 2 Pet 2:9 (under punishment).
  - The words μισθός (misthos) and ἀδικία (adikia) are combined in Acts 1:18 (price of his wickedness), 2 Pet 2:13 (wages of doing wrong) and 2 Pet 2:15 (wages of unrighteousness).
  - The root words δύναμις (dunamis) and εὐσέβεια (eusebeia) are combined in Acts 3:12 (power, piety) and again in 2 Pet 1:3 (power, godliness).
- Despite this fairly strong internal evidence, some doubted the Apostle Peter's authorship as early as the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. as was noted by Origen.
- This letter was written shortly before Peter's death, so he was not around to verify its authorship.
- The similarities to Jude caused some to doubt Petrine authorship and references to false teachers cause some to date the letter in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.
- In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century Methodius of Olympus and Firmilian both cited Peter as the author.
- In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Athanasius and Augustine both formally affirmed the Apostle Peter as the author.

- Conclusion: The Apostle Peter was the human author of this letter.
  - Peter's given name was Simon.
  - Jesus gave him the name Cephas [John 1:42].
    - Cephas is Aramaic and means stone or small rock.
    - The Greek translation of Cephas is Πέτρος (Petros) which also means a stone or small rock.
    - Peter is the only person in the N.T. known by this name.
  - Peter is fairly central to the first twelve chapters of the Book of Acts.
  - Peter worked in a fishing business with his brother Andrew.
  - Peter was a literate man, but not formally trained in a rabbinical school such as was run by Gamaliel.
  - Jesus appeared to Peter after the resurrection [Luke 24:34; 1 Cor 15:5].
  - Peter had an important role in the first Church council in Acts 15 (A.D. 50) but is not mentioned in the Book of Acts after this.
  - Paul refers to Peter several times in his letters [Gal 1:18; 2:11; 1 Cor 1:12; 3:22; 9:5].
  - Peter died in A.D. 67-68 when, according to Origin, he was crucified upside down.
- Date of Writing
- This letter was written after 1<sup>st</sup> Peter [2 Pet 3:1].
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Peter was written in early A.D. 64 just before the intense persecution of Christians had begun.
  - This letter was written after a collection of Paul's letters had been assembled [2 Pet 3:15-16].
  - This letter was written shortly before Peter's death [2 Pet 1:14].
  - Conclusion: 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter was written in A.D. 67.
- Audience
- 2 Pet 1:1 tells us that Peter is writing this letter to believers.
  - 2 Pet 3:1 tells us that Peter was writing to the same audience that had received the letter of 1<sup>st</sup> Peter.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Peter was written to Jews and Gentiles in the Roman provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia in Asia Minor [1 Pet 1:1].



- **Canonicity**
  - Just as its authorship was questioned, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter was listed among books (James, 2 John, 3 John) whose canonicity was in question.
  - The caution and skepticism of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century was overcome by the careful scholarship of the canonical councils of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.
  - Athanasius and Augustine (4<sup>th</sup> century) both considered 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter to be canonical.
  - The Council of Laodicea (A.D. 372) included 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter in the canon of Scripture.
  - The Council of Carthage (A.D. 397) recognized 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter as having the authority of divine authorship.
  - Jerome included 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter in the Latin Vulgate (ca. A.D. 404).
  - Conclusion: 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter is God-breathed and inspired and belongs among the books of the Bible.
- **Relationship to Jude**
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter (chapter 2, in particular) and Jude are striking in their similarities (see handout).
  - Some have used these similarities as grounds for claims that one author plagiarized the other.
  - Similar claims have been made about the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) purporting that all three were copied from a mysterious document known as “Q”.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter and Jude similarities and differences...
    - The letters were written to address similar problems that had arisen in the churches of the recipients.
    - They were written to different audiences that may not have had access to the other letter at the time.
    - The similarity of the text is merely an indication of a common author – God the Holy Spirit.
    - If the two letters were markedly different, the Bible haters would try to use that to refute their validity.
- **Purpose of the Letter**
  - Peter was concerned about false teaching that had crept into the churches (Antinomianism and the beginnings of Gnosticism).
    - To combat this, Peter described the false teachers and warned these churches to avoid them.
    - He also illustrated the characteristics of a true teacher and challenged the readers to be diligent students of the word of God.
  - Peter knew his time was short, so he reminded these believers to stand firm in the teachings of the faith in which they had been grounded.
    - Peter described the characteristics of a mature believer and encouraged them to grow spiritually in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.
    - Peter wanted these believers to be assured of Jesus Christ’s return and to eagerly anticipate His coming.