



The Second Epistle General of Peter

Introduction

I. THE AUTHORSHIP OF SECOND PETER

A. The Proof of Peter's Authorship

1. The opening verse introduces Peter as the author (2 Peter 1:1).
2. Every time thereafter where we read pronouns like *I, my, our, us,* and *we,* we are reminded that the man who opened the letter by introducing himself is still the man setting forth the letter.
3. Note: His given name was Simon (John 1:41). It was changed by Christ to *Peter* (a Greek name) or *Cephas* (a Syriac name), which meant rock or stone (Matthew 4:18; Matthew 10:2; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14; John 1:42).

B. The Timing and Location of Peter's Authorship

1. Timing

- a. From our study of Peter's first epistle, we learned that it was written:
 - (1) After the sacrificial death and victorious resurrection of Christ (1 Peter 1:18-21)
 - (2) After Christ's ascension (1 Peter 1:8; 1 Peter 3:21-22)
 - (3) After the day of Pentecost (1 Peter 1:12) and long enough thereafter for the gospel to have spread to and been believed by the audience (1 Peter 1:22-25)
- b. From a reading of Peter's second epistle, we add
 - (1) It was obviously written after the preceding events, because it was written after Peter's first epistle (2 Peter 3:1).
 - (2) It was written sometime after the beginning of the spoken ministries of the apostles (2 Peter 3:2).
 - (3) It was after the writing of several of Paul's epistles (2 Peter 3:15-16).
 - (4) It was written close, at least in Peter's expectation, to the time of his death (2 Peter 1:14).
 - a) According to *Martyr's Mirror*, in 69 A.D. Peter was sentenced to be crucified by the Emperor Nero.
 - b) While the scripture does not record Peter's death, it does testify that he would be taken and put to death and that his death would be a means by which he might glorify God (John 21:18-19).
 - c) It is supposed that Paul died in the same year, likewise as a martyr. This would have been only a few years over thirty years from the time when Christ was crucified.
2. Location—Peter's first epistle was written during the time in which he ministered in Babylon, but no information is provided as to his location at the time he penned his second epistle.



II. THE RECIPIENTS OF SECOND PETER

A. Considering Peter's First Epistle

1. Their addresses (see Galatians 2:7-9)
 - a. Their lineage
 - (1) They were considered strangers in the lands in which they were scattered (1 Peter 1:1).
 - (2) They were identified as "elect" (1 Peter 1:2) which indicates that they were of Jewish descent (Isaiah 45:4; Isaiah 65:9, 22; Matthew 24:22, 24, 31; Mark 13:20, 22, 27; 2 Timothy 2:10; 2 John 1:1, 13).
 - (3) They were associated with the fathers (typically a reference to the Jewish fathers)—"your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers" (1 Peter 1:18).
 - (4) Multiple references seem to separate them from or distinguish them from the Gentiles (1 Peter 2:12; 1 Peter 4:3).
 - (5) Peter's second epistle, written to the same audience (2 Peter 3:1) states that Paul specifically wrote an epistle to these believers (2 Peter 3:15-16). This was no doubt a reference to the book of Hebrews.
 - b. Their spiritual condition
 - (1) They were saved (1 Peter 1:2-3, 18-19, 23; 1 Peter 2:7, 25).
 - (2) However, they were viewed as newborn babes (1 Peter 2:2).
2. Their locations (see Acts 2:5-11; James 1:1)
 - a. Pontus—Located far north and slightly west of Israel; more specifically, it was located on the southeastern side of the Black Sea
 - b. Galatia—Located west of Pontus
 - c. Cappadocia—Located south of Pontus
 - d. Asia—Located west of Galatia
 - e. Bithynia—Located west of Galatia

B. Considering Peter's Second Epistle

1. Generally, this epistle was written to:
 - a. Those who had obtained like precious faith (2 Peter 1:1)
 - b. Those who had been given all things that pertain unto life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3)
 - c. Those who had received great and precious promises, whereby they could be partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4)
 - d. Those who were to make their calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10)
 - e. Those who had been infiltrated by false teachers (2 Peter 2:1-22)
 - f. Those who had pure minds (2 Peter 3:1)
 - g. Those who were aware of the times (2 Peter 3:11-14)
2. Specifically, this epistle was written to the same audience as Peter's first epistle (2 Peter 3:1).



III. THE BREAKDOWN OF SECOND PETER

A. The Basic Statistics

1. Chapters = three
2. Verses = sixty-one
3. Sentences
 - a. Two asking sentences (2 Peter 3:4, 12)
 - b. Thirty-nine telling sentences
4. Words = 1,553; see below for some key words
 - a. Knowledge (seven times), knowing and known (three times each), know (two times), and knoweth (one time)
 - b. Holy (six times) along with godliness (four times) and godly (one time) as well as righteousness (four times) and righteous (two times)
 - c. Remembrance (four times)
 - d. Corruption (three times)
 - e. Delivered (three times) and deliver (one time)
 - f. Diligence (two times) and diligent (one time)
 - g. Add (one time); While this may seem odd, the word *add* could legitimately be found seven times in 2 Peter 1:5-7.

B. The Theme/Purpose of the Book

1. Peter's first epistle addressed these believers in their infancy and warned them that suffering would follow salvation and precede glory.
2. This epistle gave them instructions for leaving their infancy and moving on to the peak of Christianity.
 - a. The stated purpose is given in 2 Peter 3:1-2—"This second epistle...I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before..."
 - b. The ultimate admonition is found in 2 Peter 3:18—"grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
 - c. The process by which they would achieve this growth is found in 2 Peter 1:5-7, beginning with faith and reaching the pinnacle of charity.
 - d. The pending threat to this growth is addressed in 2 Peter 2:1-22.

C. The Outline of the Book

1. The opening of the epistle (2 Peter 1:1-4)
2. The admonition to growth (2 Peter 1:5-11)
3. The ministry of the apostles (2 Peter 1:12-21)
4. The warning of infiltration (2 Peter 2:1-22)
5. The ministry of the apostles (2 Peter 3:1-2)
6. The warning of infiltration (2 Peter 3:3-7)
7. The admonition to growth (2 Peter 3:8-18)
8. The closing of the epistle (2 Peter 3:18)