

INTRODUCTION:

1. **AUTHORSHIP** – The Apostle Peter has long been regarded as the author of the epistles bearing his name, and although there is no credible challenge there has been considerable controversy that has followed this particular epistle. Though the theology is definitely “Petrine,” its circulation seems to have been more narrow, causing some to question its authorship. Also 2 Peter was not well known in the first century AD, and it was little known in the second century. However, from the third century on, church leaders have made mention of the epistle and supported authorship by Peter. Though Eusebius had limited support for Peter’s authenticity; early church fathers Jerome, Athanasius, Augustine, the Council of Laodicea, and the Council of Carthage all supported its originality. Suffice it to say that while this remains the most contested piece of the Canon of Scripture for some scholars, the weight of evidence is well tilted in favor for it rather than in opposition to it. Also there is no other credible author referenced for 2 Peter, and the fact remains that its content is important for the church.

2. **DATE OF COMPOSITION:**

Dr Gary Tuck observes, “that [Peter’s] physical death was traditionally placed at or about 67 or 68 AD, about the same time as Paul’s death. Peter was aware his death was imminent in his epistle (1:14), and he [also] refers to Pauline epistles (3:15f)” that were already in circulation in the churches. Thus, a composition date of 66 or 67 AD fits the context well. It would appear that 2 Peter was written about a year or even two years later than 1 Peter.

3. **PURPOSE AND DESTINATION FOR WRITING:**

- a. Dr Gary Tuck sums up Peter’s intent quite well in his New Testament Bible Survey course materials “The Arguments of the Books of the New Testament with Introductions and Outlines.” One of Dr Tuck’s driving principles in his various classes has been... “No matter how smart we think we are, the point of coming to the Bible is not our analysis and mastering of it, but rather it’s analysis and mastering of us; with our concomitant submission to it and transformation by the work of the Spirit [through it]. The [resultant] call to service is outreach [preaching] and discipleship [teaching].”
- b. In applying this standard to Peter’s epistle, Dr Tuck reveals the following:
“Peter is clearly absorbed with his pastoral responsibility in view of his impending death. Realizing that the age of the Apostles will soon pass (barring the rapture), he means to leave a statement for those Christians to whom he will have no other opportunity to minister, including succeeding generations. His negative focus is [upon] false teachers who deny the Lord’s return and final judgment, [who] advocate a godless lifestyle, capturing the unwary in their web. Positively, Peter calls for diligence to progress in sanctification [becoming increasingly Christ-like], especially in light of the Lord’s unannounced [pending] return.”

4. STRUCTURE:

a. Outline #1 – Zondervan’s Archeological Study Bible:

- i. Introduction – 1:1-2**
- ii. Knowing God – 1:3-21**
 - 1. Know your calling – 1:3-11**
 - 2. Know the Scriptures – 1:12-21**
- iii. Warning against false teachers – 2:1-22**
 - 1. Their coming predicted – 2:1-3a**
 - 2. God will judge them – 2:3b-9**
 - 3. Some common characteristics – 2:10-22**
- iv. The fact of Christ’s return – 3:1-16**
 - 1. Peter’s purpose in writing restated – 3:1-2**
 - 2. The coming of scoffers – 3:3-7**
 - 3. The certainty of Christ’s return – 3:8-10**
 - 4. Exhortations based on the fact of Christ’s return – 3:11-16**
- v. Concluding remarks – 3:17-18**

b. Outline #2 – Dr Gary Tuck:

- i. Salutation – 1:1-2**
- ii. Growing in the Christian Life – 1:3-21**
 - 1. The Call to Grow – 1:3-11**
 - a. The Basis of Growth – 1:3-4**
 - i. The list – 1:5-7**
 - ii. Their Value – 1:8-9**
 - b. The Seriousness of Growth – 1:10-11**
 - 2. The means of Growth – the Scriptures – 1:12-21**
 - a. The Value of Scripture – 1:12-15**
 - i. The Mortal Witness of the Apostle – 1:12-14**
 - ii. The Undying Testimony of the Word – 1:15**
 - b. The Trustworthiness of the Message – 1:16-21**
 - i. Eye-witness report – 1:16-18**
 - ii. Scripture – 1:19**
 - iii. Its Divine Source – 1:20-21**
- iii. Be aware of false teachers – 2:1-22**
 - 1. False prophets and teachers – 2:1-3**
 - a. Their rise – 2:1**
 - b. Their following – 2:2**
 - c. Their methods – 2:3a**
 - d. Their end – 2:3b**
 - 2. God judge’s deceptive leaders – 2:4-9**

- a. God's past judgements – 2:4-8
 - i. Angels – 2:4
 - ii. The world of Noah's day – 2:5
 - iii. Sodom and Gomorrah – 2:9
- b. Assurance of God's future judgments – 2:9
- 3. False teachers and leaders described – 2:10-22
 - a. Character – 2:10-17
 - i. Irreverent – 2:10-11
 - ii. Ignorant – 2:12
 - iii. Perverted – 2:13-14
 - iv. Covetous – 2:15-16
 - v. Barren wasteland – 2:17
 - b. Appeal – 2:18-19
 - c. Regression – 2:20-22
- 4. Anticipating our Lord's Return – 3:1-18
 - a. Necessary reminder – 3:1-2
 - b. The problem of mockers – 3:3-7
 - i. Their skepticism – 3:3-4
 - ii. Their ignorance – 3:5-7
 - c. The certainty of judgment is coming – 3:8-10
 - i. Our Lord's patience – 3:8-9
 - ii. Our Lord's unannounced return – 3:10
 - d. Exhortations in light of the judgment that is coming – 3:11-13
 - i. Holiness – 3:11
 - ii. Expectancy – 3:12-13
 - e. Exhortations in light of our Lord's delay – 3:14-18
 - i. Peace – 3:14
 - ii. Appreciation of redemptive Grace in His delaying – 3:15-16
 - iii. Steadfastness – 3:17
 - iv. Growth in Grace – 3:18
- 5. **THEMATIC DEVELOPMENT** – Dictionary of the Later New Testament in the article on 2 Peter written by R.J. Bauckham, he identifies the following theological themes:
 - a. 2 Peter is essentially a farewell discourse written in the form of a letter shortly before Peter's death – 1:12-15. Peter is taking care to make sure his congregation is firmly grounded in and reminded of his teachings as he prepares for his absence from this church community.
 - b. 2 Peter has a unique combination of Hellenistic [Greek] religious language and Jewish eschatological [End Times] ideas and imagery.

- i. **2 Peter 1:3-11** – summarizes Peter’s teaching in a passage that is distinctively Hellenistic in its religious and ethical terminology, while 1:5-7 focuses on ethical terms drawn from Hellenistic moral philosophy, including the promise of escaping corruption and sharing the divine nature. These passages are carefully placed in the context of Christian ideals of faith and love that give it Christian clarity of meaning.
 - ii. **2 Peter 3:3-13** – focuses on concepts and imagery of Jewish cosmic eschatology [apocalypse]. Focusing hope on the eternal rather than the temporal as a means of defusing the false teachers attempts to subvert Christian moral and ethical doctrine.
 - c. **These typically uncharacteristic bedfellows [Hellenistic and Jewish ideas] help prepare this congregation for their post-apostolic sojourn, as first Peter and then Paul would soon be martyred. This is not syncretism [the mixing of faiths], but the clarification of faith for a post-apostolic period in a Gentile Pagan culture where Hellenistic and Gnostic mysticism had already begun to compromise the Gospel and also where moral/ethical practices began to compromise Christian character. Christian Eschatology focusing on the “Triumph of God’s righteousness over all creation was inserted to refocus their moral/ethical values.**
 - d. **Part of the problem for many of these churches was because the Christian movement started out primarily comprised of Messianic Jews. It was becoming increasingly Gentile Christian converts who lacked Jewish Biblical grounding. Thus they needed to remain vigilant against the tendency of Hellenistic syncretism leading them astray.**
 - e. **Bauckham finds this theological approach more helpful in interpreting 2 Peter, rather than seeing this epistle through the lens of a “proto-Catholicism” as some scholars have argued. Although Peter and Paul held some differences in their theology, however at their core values they were very closely aligned.**
- 6. EXEGETICAL MESSAGE OF 1ST PETER – Dr Gary Tuck – follow along in the text as each passage is explained:**
- a. **1:1a** – The introduction mirrors 1 Peter’s intro, with the exception of the addition “and servant.” This is not insignificant, especially with his death being eminent and his apostolic position being subordinate to his servant position. This is a reminder for his congregation of what apostolic leadership looks like... serving others for Christ’s sake.
 - b. **1:1b** – Imputed or accredited righteousness is a gift of Grace, the same as Peter inherited. It is an unearned gift that we receive by Grace. Paul added to this thinking, “that no one may boast.”
 - c. **1:2** – Grace and peace with God are the result of this amazing gift, given in abundance. Peter is reminding his congregation this is not a marginal transaction. These two verses set up the next section, it is unfortunate that we often blow by these words looking for something weightier... when these are in fact the weightiest!
 - d. **This first chapter is a positive statement on Christian discipleship and growth. The second chapter is a negative statement against the false-teachers who are leading the faithful away.**

- e. 1:3-4 – Stipulates that God has already supplied all that is required for a believer’s growth in Sanctification.
- f. 1:5-7 – It is now incumbent upon each believer to apply themselves diligently to the cultivation of Christian virtues.
- g. 1:8-11 – In this way our ultimate salvation is assured. This line of reasoning reinforces the understanding that each person has a part to play in working out their salvation – James 2:21-26. Christian faith was not a “get out of hell free card,” nor was it a means to work our way into heaven. The apostles did affirm that we do have a part to play in cooperating with the Spirit in His goal of sanctifying us. We can help or inhibit the Spirit’s work which helps explain why some believers mature quickly, while others remain in an infant or child-like faith.
- h. 1:12-15 – Peter acknowledges that this teaching is not new, but he was most likely intent on remind his congregation of their individual responsibility to continue to work out their faith.
- i. 1:16-18 – Peter speaks of his witness of the Theophany at the Mount of Transformation. A Theophany is an event where God enters history and reveals Himself in word or in person. Suffice it to say, if you had witnessed such an event your life would be forever changed. I refer to these sort of actions as “Threshold events” that change you fundamentally. For more on this topic go to the following AD link - <http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/3-leadership-dev/LD%20-%206.5%20-%20On%20Developing%20a%20Spirit%20Driven%20Life.pdf> .
- j. 1:19-21 – Knowledge of the Word of God is foundational for Christian Spiritual growth; it is an indispensable component of discipleship. Spiritual life experiences validate in our hearts what God is transforming in our minds through His Word – Romans 2:2. The Scriptures are a gift from God, and I view the Bible as a combination of a long introduction of who God is and love letter from our Creator. Through the two, the Word and Spiritual life experiences, we mature as disciples. In these Scriptures we learn of God’s promises to us, and discover His amazing love for us. Knowing this enables us to remain vigilant and obedient.
- k. 2:1-3 – These false teachers are described so the true believers will understand how to identify them and refute their mistruths. It was common in the ancient world for traveling philosophers and entertainers to pass through communities being paid for their services. Unwary listeners were easily led astray.
- l. 2:4-9 – These false teachers had their own interests at heart, not caring for God or His people. Their judgment is sure while the security of God’s people who remain steadfast is secure. As proven in the past, God’s righteous judgment will prevail.
- m. 2:10-17 – The character and motives of these false teachers is revealed in graphic form.
- n. 2:18-19 – The deceit and carnal appetites of these false teachers are revealed.
- o. 2:20-22 – Some of these false teachers were once part of the faith community, but for their own reasons they have betrayed the true faith in favor of their own purpose and pleasure. To have known the truth and abandoned it is worse than never having known it at all.
- p. 3:1-2 – In contrast, Peter’s words are true and reliable. They are encouraged to hold to them.

- q. **3:3-7** – Truth is clearly known, and the logic of those who would mislead the saints is not conditioned by human time-tables. God in the fullness of time will bring about His plans for humanity as He has done before.
- r. **3:8-10** – God’s delay is a positive thing, but the end will certainly come as God decrees. The end will come suddenly, and judgment exacted without warning.
- s. **3:11-13** – With the end coming, Peter asks, “What kind of people should you be?” The onus is upon the people to act now as if they expected the end to come immediately. There are many who ignore prudent action in preference of enjoying life on their own terms. What they worship and the rules they follow are of their own making and are not acceptable to God.
- t. **3:14-18** – The Lord is displaying patience in His not immediately enacting the end of the world, which means that more may come to faith. This is a good thing. Paul and Peter are witnesses of the same truth, which the church now also knows. So we’re challenged to remain vigilant, and keep up our defenses against these false teachers. Use the time remaining to grow in grace and knowledge in advancing the cause of Jesus and the Kingdom of God.
- u. Peter concludes his epistle with a rephrasing of 1:1-2 – a call to remain faithful and true, and to grow in grace and knowledge.