

2 PETER

Introduction

Author. The writer identifies himself in the first verse of the epistle as Simon Peter. He claims to have been an eyewitness at the transfiguration (1:12-15) and asserts that this is his second letter to his readers (3:1). Many have doubted the authenticity of this letter as opposed to 1 Peter on the difference between their styles. If however, the reference to Silas as Peter's amanuensis in 1 Peter 5:12 is considered, and the fact that no such statement is made in 2 Peter, this may account for the difference in style. The letter claims to be the work of Peter and there is little reason to doubt the statement.

Date. This letter was written as Peter saw the end of his life in sight (1:12-15) and after he had written a previous letter (3:1-2). If Peter was martyred in 67 or 68 A. D. during the reign of Nero, then a date of 65 or 66 A. D. would be reasonable.

Occasion. Since this is a second letter, and the first was written to those believers scattered in Bithynia and Asia Minor, this work must have been written to the same audience. Whereas Peter's major concern in his first letter was persecution from *without*, his sights now seem to be directed toward the future danger of the Church from wolves which come from *within*. This letter warns of false teachers and scoffers whose devilish work might be more subtle than Nero's sword.

Message Statement. *A thorough knowledge of the Word of God will produce Christian character and protect from false teaching.*

Argument

- 1A INTRODUCTION 1:1-2
Peter identifies himself first as a servant and then an apostle in the introduction. Although his address is general at this point, his references to "dear friends" (3:1, 14, 17) indicate that he knew the recipients.
- 1B FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS 1:3-21
Before discussing problem areas of false teachers (chapter 2) and scoffers (chapter 3), Peter lays down a foundation of positive theology. He exhorts Christian growth on the twin foundations of divine power and the knowledge of God. Peter then expounds on the source of knowledge of God.
- 1B The Christian Growth Which Comes From a Knowledge of Him 1:3-11
The power and knowledge of God are the enablement of the Christian for growth. These are the means by which he can escape the corruption of the world. Peter's motivation for this kind of growth in virtue is the security which it produces both now and in heaven. The security which growth provides for today is that the believer will not fall and in the future will be received into glory with a rich welcome.
- 2B The Basis of Christian Knowledge 1:12-21
The basis of Christian knowledge is revelation from God. Peter considers this word the indispensable ingredient for knowing the will of God.

- 1C Peter's reason for writing Scripture 1:12-15
The purpose for Peter writing in the first place is so that the believers will have a permanent source of encouragement after his demise. Although in the first century believers had the luxury of interrogating one of God's proxies, the apostles, after their passing, the only lasting source of revelation was the written word of God.
- 2C Peter's basis for his message 1:16-21
Peter's message is based upon his own eyewitness account of the life of the Lord. He states, however, that an even surer foundation than an eyewitness account is the written word of God itself (1:19). Thus, the Word of God is more reliable than the best testimony of men.
- 1C FALSE TEACHERS 2:1-22
Peter warns his flock as a good shepherd of the dangers which will arise after he is gone. As Paul warned the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:29 *I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock*), so also Peter warns his flock of the certainty of false teachers.
- 1B Their Appearance Predicted 2:1-3a
The coming of false teachers is just as certain as the appearance of false prophets were in the Old Testament. The motives of these will be to exploit believers.
- 2B Their Condemnation Assured 2:3b-9
Peter mentions the judgments of the flood and of Sodom and Gomorrah as testimony to the fact of God's destruction of the wicked.
- 3B Their Character Described 2:10-22
In the boldest strokes of the epistle Peter waxes eloquent about the character of false teachers. They are bold, arrogant, blasphemers, adulterers and are experts in greed. These are people who have had some familiarity with the gospel message, have forsaken it and have ended up worse than they were at first. They seem to reflect the situation of the generation which rejected the Messiah (Matthew 12:45).
- 1D FUTURE THINGS 3:1-16
As particularly emphasized in his first letter, Peter's hope is set upon the second coming of Christ. This is a purifying hope even though the coming may seem delayed.
- 1B Peter's Purpose in Writing 3:1-2
For a second time in the letter Peter states his purpose in writing: to remind and stimulate his readers of the words of Scripture (1:12-15). The word given through the apostles is put on equal footing with the word spoken by the prophets, giving evidence of Peter's view of the inspiration of the apostles' writings.
- 2B The Coming of Those Who Scoff at His Coming 3:3-7
Just as surely as Jesus will come, so also those who scoff at the prospect will also come. These wicked men will also deliberately deny the creation of the world by God.
- 3B The Reason for His Delay 3:8-10
The delay of the Lord is not an indication of a broken promise, however. It is the indication of a merciful God who is allowing men more opportunity to repent. When He does come, though, the judgment will be total.
- 4B The Implications for Believers of His Coming 3:11-16
The prospect of Jesus' coming ought to first of all be a purifying hope for the believer. This truth is confirmed in Paul's writings as well as other scriptures. By this statement, Peter puts the writings of Paul on a par with the rest of the inspired Word.
- 1E CONCLUSION 3:17-18
Peter quickly concludes the letter to his flock. In so doing he ties together threads of thought from both the first and second chapters. He warns them again of the error of false teachers (2:1-21) and encourages them not to fall from their secure position (1:10).

