

Introduction To First & Second Peter

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Introduction:

- I. The two letters written by Peter are often classified as “general epistles,” primarily because they are not written to any specific person or congregation.
- II. Even though authorship and date questions have sometimes clouded the value of these letters in some minds, both have been recognized for centuries as extremely valuable and practical, even by many of those who raised the objections.
- III. In this introduction, we will discuss four specific areas in both epistles:
 - A. Authorship.
 - B. Place & date of writing.
 - C. Recipients.
 - D. Purpose & message.
- IV. Hopefully this background material will prove helpful as we proceed into a more detailed study of the contents of the letters themselves.

First Peter:

I. Authorship.

- A. Early on, Peter’s authorship was unquestioned and unopposed.
 1. “This epistle was universally recognized as a work of the Apostle Peter.” (Thiessen, 278)
 2. “From the earliest days of the church, the acknowledgment of Peter as the author was universal and unquestioned.” (Hamilton, xxi)
 3. “... from the earliest time the letter circulated in the church, it was known and accepted as a letter written by Peter.” (Grudem, 21)
 4. “Indeed, there is no ancient writing whatever of which there is more certainty in regard to the authorship.” (Barnes, 101)
 5. “With few exceptions, the Fathers believed that this letter was written by the apostle Peter and sent to Jewish Christians in the Diaspora ... and believed that the letter had been sent from Rome.” (Bray, 65)
- B. However, in more “modern” times, some textual critics have challenged Peter’s authorship
 1. “It was not until the nineteenth century that his authorship was questioned by rationalistic scholars.” (Hamilton, xxi)
- C. The main arguments *in favor of* Peter as the author of the epistle.
 1. External.
 - a. Outside of the book itself, in the N.T., 2 Peter is described as “*the second letter I am writing to you.*” (2 Peter 3:1)
 - b. Outside the N.T., the evidence is impressive, with numerous references to the book in the writings of the “church fathers.”
 - 1) Polycarp, who died in AD 155, quotes from 1 Peter several times in his *Epistle to the Philippians*.
 - 2) Papias (died in AD 130) is referenced by Eusebius as “using quotations” from 1 Peter.

- 3) Irenaeus quotes Peter by name in his work, *Against Heresies*, written between AD 182 & 188.
- 4) 1 Peter is either quoted directly or alluded to by Clement of Alexandria (who quotes from every one of the five chapters in 1 Peter), the author of *The Shepherd of Hermes*, and Tertullian as well.
- 5) Eusebius (AD 260-340) lists First Peter in his *homologoumena*, and “includes 1 Peter among those books everywhere recognized as belonging to the New Testament. Wherever it was circulated, it was accepted as genuine.” (Grudem, 23)

2. Internal.

- a. Peter is identified in the book itself as the author (1:1).
 - b. He describes himself as a “*witness of the sufferings of Christ*” (5:1).
 - c. He gives what appears to be an “eye-witness” account of events involved in the trial and crucifixion (2:23-24; cf. Matt. 26:58, 67-69; Mark 14:54; Luke 22:54, 61).
 - d. His identification of Mark as “*my son*” (5:13) agrees with the almost unanimous external testimony that Mark was closely associated with Peter in his final years, and was with him at his death in Rome (“*Babylon*,” 5:13).
 - e. There are several striking similarities to the language of the letter and some of Peter’s speeches recorded in the book of Acts. A few of many examples:
 - 1) “*... the just for the unjust.*” (Acts 3:14 & 1 Pet. 3:18)
 - 2) Christ’s suffering & sacrifice predestined. (Acts 2:23; 4:28 & 1 Pet. 1:20)
 - 3) Christ’s sacrifice foretold by O.T. prophets. (Acts 3:18 & 1 Pet. 1:11)
 - 4) O.T. passage quoted regarding stone rejected by builders and becoming the chief cornerstone. (Acts 4:11 & 1 Pet. 2:4, 7)
 - 5) The judgment of “*the living and the dead.*” (Acts 10:42 & 1 Pet. 4:5)
 - 6) God is described as One who “*shows no partiality.*” (Acts 10:34 & 1 Pet. 1:17)
- D.** Based on this abundance of evidence, it would seem there could be no doubt that the epistle was indeed written by the apostle Peter.
- E.** However, there are some objections raised to Peter’s authorship. The four following are summarized by Grudem (25).
1. That the Greek is too good for Peter.
 - a. “First, there is the quality of the Greek, some of the finest Greek in the whole NT.” (Davids, 4)
 - b. “It is argued that the polished and rather elegant style of the letter could not have been written by a Galilean fisherman such as Peter, a man who was called ‘uneducated’ in Acts 4:13.” (Grudem, 25)
 2. That 1 Peter reflects a time after Peter had died.
 - a. The persecution of which Peter speaks so frequently was of a type – intense and widespread – that did not appear until the days of the emperors Domitian (AD 81-96) or Trajan (AD 98-117).
 - b. Peter died during the reign of Nero during a local persecution of Jews & Christians between AD 64 & 68.

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3. 1 Peter is said to be too Pauline in theology, too dependent on Paul's writings, to have come from Peter.
 4. That the author of 1 Peter shows no evidence of familiarity with the earthly life of Jesus.
 - a. Note: We will add a 5th objection, not mentioned in Grudem that is also frequently raised to Peter's authorship.
 5. How did Peter come in contact with those to whom he addressed this letter?
 - a. The provinces named (1:1) fall more naturally into the territory known to have been evangelized by Paul or those converted & sent out by Paul.
 - b. The book of Acts restricts Peter's work primarily to the areas of Judea and Samaria, and mostly among the Jews.
- F.** These five objections pose only a minor problem when considering the authorship of 1 Peter, and can be answered fairly easily.
1. The quality of the Greek text.
 - a. Even if Peter was "uneducated," he would have had a fundamental knowledge of Greek as demonstrated by his use of the Septuagint (LXX).
 - b. It is possible that the book was the work of an amanuensis – cf. "*Through Silvanus.*" (5:12)
 - c. For a more detailed discussion, see Grudem (25-31).
 2. The intensity of the persecution.
 - a. The allusions to persecution throughout the book **do not necessarily** imply a widespread, state-sponsored persecution.
 - b. It could just as easily refer to the numerous **local** persecutions that were occurring throughout the N.T. world within the lifetimes of Peter and Paul.
 - c. Perhaps as a witness of Nero's persecution in Rome, Peter wanted to warn others elsewhere about what they might soon be experiencing themselves.
 3. Is 1 Peter too Pauline?
 - a. It would not be surprising, considering **when** the book was likely written, that Paul & Peter would be thinking and expressing themselves more and more alike.
 - b. There are several reasons for this:
 - 1) The completion of the Holy Spirit's work in revealing the entire message.
 - 2) The fact that, at least according to early tradition, Paul and Peter were in Rome together for at least some period of time prior to their deaths.
 - 3) The fact that two of Paul's known companions (Mark & Silvanus, assuming that this is Silas) are also closely associated with Peter's work in Rome.
 4. 1 Peter shows no familiarity with the earthly life of Jesus.
 - a. "The primary weakness of this objection is a failure to give due weight to the difference between a gospel and a brief letter." (Grudem, 32)
 - b. Even though he does not give details of the earthly life of Jesus, Peter does invoke the example of Jesus in suffering & enduring persecution (2:21-23; 3:18; 4:1-2,13; 5:1)
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5. Peter's association with those to whom he addresses the letter.
 - a. We know very little about Peter's travels after Acts 15, which dates to about AD 49-50.
 - b. It seems that he was not in Jerusalem when Paul arrived in Acts 21 (approx. AD 56-57).
 - c. The traditional date for Peter's death is AD 66-68, which would leave 10-12 years unaccounted for -- plenty of time for him to have traveled through and preached in these provinces.
 - d. It is also possible that, even if Peter had never visited these areas, he came to know these Christians through his close association with Mark and Silas.
- G. "In conclusion, the objections to authorship by Peter remain unpersuasive. There is no compelling evidence to keep us from accepting what the early church universally believed and what the letter itself clearly states, that 1 Peter was written by Peter the apostle." (Grudem, 33)

II. Place & Date of Writing.

A. Place.

1. ***"She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does my son, Mark."*** (1 Pet. 5:13)
2. There are three possible interpretations for the location of this ***Babylon***:
 - a. O.T. Babylon on the Euphrates in Mesopotamia.
 - 1) The most literal interpretation.
 - 2) No evidence in N.T. of any visit there by an apostle or any others.
 - 3) The ancient city itself was still in ruins in N.T. times – Strabo, who died in AD 19, writes: "The greater part of Babylon is so deserted that one would not hesitate to say ... 'The Great City is a great desert.'" (Quoted in Grudem, 33)
 - 4) Interestingly, Hamilton (Truth Commentary Series) is the only commentator I encountered who took the position that this is the likely location of the writing of the book. (xxxv - xxxvi)
 - b. Babylon near Memphis in Egypt.
 - 1) In fact there was a Jewish colony there in the middle of the first century.
 - 2) Tradition also connects Mark with Egypt.
 - 3) No tradition, however, connects the name of Peter with this colony.
 - c. A pseudonym for Rome.
 - 1) This was the generally accepted view of the early church.
 - 2) The name is almost certainly used elsewhere in the N.T. in reference to Rome (cf. Rev. 16:19; 17:5, 9; 18:2).
 - 3) There is abundant evidence from the writings of the church Fathers that Peter was in Rome for several years prior to the end of his life, and that he died as a martyr there.

- 4) Most modern commentators – including J.N.D. Kelly, Peter Davids, Lenski, Simon Kistemaker, Alford, Barnes, and Thiessen – place the writing of the book at Rome.
 - 5) This in spite of the curious quote in Hamilton that “there is no real substantial evidence that Peter was ever in Rome.” (Second Peter, xxi)
 - 6) We might just as easily point out that there is “no real substantial evidence” – in fact, none at all except for this verse – that Peter was ever in Babylon on the Euphrates!
3. Since the book itself gives us no other clues as to the location of its composition, perhaps it is safest to conclude, with Lenski that “the place cannot be determined.” (Quoted in Hamilton, Second Peter, xxi)

B. Date.

1. If the book was written by the apostle Peter, then we have a fairly definite “last possible” date for the writing -- his death sometime between AD 66 & 68.
2. We can also assume that Nero’s persecution (AD 64-68) was already well underway.
3. Those dates will provide us with a good “ballpark” figure for the writing of the letter -- sometime between AD 64 & 68.
4. “One would like to be more sure of the date, but given the data we have available, one cannot be more precise than this.” (Davids, 11)

III. Recipients.

- A. One of the easier introductory matters concerns the recipients, who are clearly identified in 1:1 – ***“To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen.”***
- B. These cities represent many of the centers of Christian influence in Asia Minor.
 1. “We do not know who first preached the gospel there nor when it happened (unless Acts 2:9 gives a clue), and we have no record of Peter’s ever having traveled into that area.” (Davids, 8)
 2. It is possible that Peter learned about the work in Asia Minor from Silvanus and Mark, past traveling companions of Paul’s.
 3. Grudem (37-38) and Davids (8) both argue that the places are named “in the order in which a messenger [sent out from Rome, GCK] might visit them.”
- C. The only real question is whether these were primarily Jewish Christians, or Gentile Christians, or a mixture of both.
 1. Where they primarily Jewish?
 - a. This view is based on:
 - 1) The Jewish overtones of 1:1.
 - 2) The heavy use of the O.T. by the author.
 - b. Apart from the fact that there is no evidence of any totally Jewish Christian churches in these provinces, there are several references within the epistle which argue that the audience came from a pagan background.
 2. Where they primarily Gentiles?

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- a. This view is based on internal references
 - 1) “Perhaps the most unusual thing about the Christians to whom Peter wrote is that they were largely Gentiles, as 1:4, 1:18, 2:9-10, 2:25, 3:6, and 4:3-4 show.”
(Davids, 8)
 - b. The problem with this view is that there were several strong Jewish communities in the provinces, and it is doubtful that any of the churches here would be completely Gentile in make-up.
 - c. Further, if Paul’s converts evangelized the region, they may well have taken up his *modus operandi* of going to the Jew first, then to the Greek.
3. Were they a racially mixed group?
- a. Like all of Paul’s churches, these too were undoubtedly predominantly Gentile with a Jewish element as well.
 - b. The references to their pagan background would be appropriate if the majority were Gentiles, and the heavy use of the O.T. would make perfect sense if some were Jewish.
4. “The readers are therefore best thought to be mixed congregations of Jewish and Gentile Christians.” (Grudem, 38)

IV. Purpose & Message.

- A. The idea of “suffering” occurs 26 times in some form in the book’s five chapters.
- B. Peter writes to encourage these saints who are suffering in the midst of persecution, whether it was just beginning or if it had been going on for some time.
- C. How does he encourage them in their suffering?
 - 1. He reminds them that they are saved – that salvation of one’s soul was of the utmost importance (ch. 1).
 - 2. He reminds them that they are a special people (ch. 2).
 - a. Separate by a new birth (1:23 - 2:5).
 - b. Separate by belief (2:7) – what they believed made them different from others.
 - c. Separate by behavior (2:11).
 - d. Separate with Christ as the ultimate example (2:11-25).
 - 3. He reminds them that they are to be submissive, using three important areas of their lives as illustrations. (ch. 3).
 - a. In their marriages (3:1-7).
 - b. In their relationships with other people (3:8-17).
 - c. In following the example of Christ to proclaim these truths to all others (3:18-22).
 - 4. He reminds them that they are a people destined to suffer (ch. 4).
 - a. Suffering is to be expected – Christians should expect persecution just as Christ was persecuted (4:1-6).
 - b. There are some things that can help Christians to deal with persecution (4:7-11).
 - c. Suffering can be endured (4:13-19).

5. He reminds them to be steadfast (ch. 5).
- D.** “It is apparent from the epistle that Christians in Asia Minor had experienced persecution (1:6), and more suffering was on the way (4:12-19). Throughout the epistle Peter encourages them to remain steadfast (1:13; 4:16; 5:8, 9). He reminds them of their blessings and duties that are incumbent upon them as God’s ‘elect’ (1:2), ‘His own special people’ (2:9). (Copeland)
- E.** “Christians today should study 1 Peter carefully and take heart in the midst of their sufferings which may be more subtle and mental than it is physical persecution. But whatever the kind of suffering we undergo, we need to look to Christ as the great example of suffering and the final triumph following it. The view of suffering presented in the epistle is not one that depresses but rather one that brings joy and happiness because one who suffers as did Christ can look to the same outcome.” (Hamilton, xxxix)

Second Peter:

I. Authorship.

- A.** Just as 1 Peter is one of the most widely & readily accepted of the N.T. epistles as to date and authorship, so 2 Peter is one of the most challenged – even though it begins with the claim to have been written by “*Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ.*” (1:1)
- B.** In fact, this dispute prevented 2 Peter from being accepted into the N.T. canon until a later date, primarily because of doubts about authorship.
1. “This epistle has had a very rough passage down through the centuries. Its entry into the Canon was precarious in the extreme.” (Green, 13)
 2. “The Second Epistle of Peter comes to us with less historical support of its genuineness than any other book of the New Testament.” (Thiessen, 287)
 3. “Scarcely anyone nowadays doubts that 2 Peter is pseudonymous, although it must be admitted of the few who do that they defend their case with an impressive combination of learning and ingenuity.” (Kelly, 235)
 4. 2 Peter “was not written by the author of 1 Peter, whom we have every reason to believe to have been the Apostle St. Peter himself We conclude, therefore, that the second Epistle is not authentic.” (Mayor, cxxiv)
 5. “The language alone makes it improbable that Peter could have written 2 Peter ... The relationship of 1 and 2 Peter is ambiguous in its relevance to the question of Petrine authorship, but certainly Peter cannot be the real author of both letters.” (Bauckham, 158-159)
 6. “... Eusebius himself rejected 2 Peter as canonical, as did the majority of the Greek Fathers who examined the matter at all seriously. The result is that the letter is seldom quoted in their writings.” (Bray, xix)
- C.** The controversy over authorship began early, and was clearly defined by the time of Eusebius.
1. “As to the writings of Peter, one of his epistles called the first is acknowledged as genuine. For this was anciently used by the ancient fathers in their writings, as an undoubted work of the apostle. The second Petrine epistle we have been taught to regard as uncanonical, though many have thought it valuable and have honored it with a place among the other Scriptures These then are the works attributed to Peter, of which I acknowledge only one as genuine and recognized by the early Fathers.” (Eusebius, 83 [Book III, ch. 3])

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2. The book was considered second-class scripture by Luther, only reluctantly accepted by Calvin, and completely rejected by Erasmus.
- D.** In spite of this, the evidence in favor of Peter’s authorship of 2 Peter is not as weak and insignificant as it might seem.
- E.** First of all, the **internal** evidence for Peter’s authorship is not insignificant.
1. He claims to be the author in the book.
 - a. Directly (1:1).
 - b. Indirectly (3:1).
 2. He seems to make direct reference to what Jesus had told him about his death (1:14).
 3. He claims to have been an “*eye-witness*” of the things about which he was writing (1:16-18)
- F.** The argument against the authenticity of 2 Peter turns on three main “problems,” which we will consider briefly below:
1. The problem of external attestation in the early church;
 2. Stylistic and literary problems with 1 Peter and Jude;
 3. Historical and doctrinal problems that seem to indicate internal inconsistency and a late date.
 - a. Note: For the sake of time and space, the section below is only a rough distillation of the discussion of these questions by Michael Green in his Tyndale commentary on 2 Peter, pp. 13-16. You might also want to check out Green’s considerably more detailed discussion of the question of authorship in a monograph entitled *2 Peter Reconsidered* at the following link:
http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/2peter_green.pdf
- G.** The first major argument against the authenticity of 2 Peter is its poor attestation among the early church Fathers.
1. It is certainly true that 2 Peter has less support in the Fathers than any other N.T. book.
 2. However, despite 2 Peter’s difficulties, it still has significantly more support for its inclusion in the canon than the best of those books which have been rejected.
 3. Origen (c. 182–251) is the first to cite 2 Peter by name at the beginning of the third century.
 - a. Despite the fact that he recognizes that some had doubts about the epistle, he himself did not.
 - b. He quoted the epistle six times and clearly regarded it as Scripture.
 - c. It is evident that he considers 2 Peter as equal in authority with 1 Peter by saying that “Even Peter blows on the twin trumpets of his own Epistles.”
 4. Eusebius (c. 265–339) makes it clear that the majority of the church accepted the epistle as authentic although he himself had some reservations about it.
 - a. He mentions that his doubts stem from the fact that writers he respected did not affirm its canonicity and that it was not to his knowledge quoted by the “ancient presbyters.”
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- b.* Despite his reservations he lists 2 Peter along with James, Jude, 2 and 3 John as “the Disputed books which nevertheless are known to most.”
 - 5. Church Fathers subsequent to Origen, such as Jerome, Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianus and Augustine, all acknowledge the canonicity of 2 Peter.
 - a.* Even though Jerome was a main proponent of 2 Peter’s authenticity, he recognized the significant stylistic divergence with 1 Peter.
 - 1)* He sought to account for this divergence by suggesting that Peter used a different amanuensis.
 - b.* After Jerome’s time, there were no further doubts concerning 2 Peter’s place in the NT canon.
 - 6. As far as canonical lists are concerned, we find 2 Peter absent from the Muratorian Fragment (c. 180), one of the earliest extant lists in church history.
 - a.* Although this may seem to be substantial evidence against the epistle’s authenticity, it is important to note that 1 Peter, James, and Hebrews were also excluded.
 - b.* Furthermore, although this list omits 2 Peter, by no means does it regard it as spurious; silence does not equal rejection.
 - 7. 2 Peter was recognized as fully canonical by the Council of Laodicea and by the time of the church councils of Hippo and Carthage in the fourth century.
 - a.* 2 Peter’s full acceptance into the canon of the church by the fourth century is confirmed by its appearance in various early manuscripts of the New Testament.
 - b.* The Bodmer papyrus dates to the third century, and it contains the oldest copies of 1 and 2 Peter.
 - c.* In addition, 2 Peter finds a firm canonical home with its appearance in some of the most important manuscripts:
 - 1)* Codex Sinaiticus (4th century);
 - 2)* Codex Vaticanus (4th century);
 - 3)* Codex Alexandrinus (5th century)
 - d.* “Such, broadly speaking, is the external attestation. We have no positive evidence that it was ever rejected as spurious anywhere in the Church; though unknown in many places, the recognition it enjoyed was considerable and primitive.” (Green, 15)
 - H.* The second major argument against the authenticity of 2 Peter is the stylistic and literary problems between the book and 1 Peter & Jude.
 - 1.* Note: Again, for the sake of time, we will only consider a summary of Green’s arguments, and even then only some of those involving the differences between 1 & 2 Peter (omitting Jude). See Green, pp. 16-34, Bauckham, pp. 131-151, and the monograph referenced above, for more detailed discussions of these questions.
 - 2.* Bauckham observes that in comparison to 1 Peter, the author of 2 Peter is “fond of rather grandiose language.” (Bauckham, 137)
 - 3.* J. N. D. Kelly says that the author of 2 Peter is “at times pretentiously elaborate.” (Kelly, 228)
 - 4.* There seems to be a definitive difference between the “dignified” style of 1 Peter and the “high-sounding words” of 2 Peter.
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5. This is seen in many rare and unusual words used in 2 Peter.
 - a. Out of the 399 words in 2 Peter, 57 are found only here in the N.T.
 - b. Although that is the highest percentage of one-time usage in the N.T., it is interesting to note that out of the 543 words in 1 Peter, 63 appear only in that book.
 - c. Thus, both epistles appear similar in this respect.
 6. There would also appear to be a significant difference in the vocabulary of the two books.
 - a. Many of 1 Peter's commonly used words do not appear in 2 Peter.
 - b. 1 Peter has 543 words, 2 Peter has 399 words, and they have only 153 in common.
 - c. Consequently, of the words used in 2 Peter, 38.6% are shared by both epistles whereas 61.4% are unique to 2 Peter.
 - d. It is precisely these types of figures that many critics of 2 Peter find most compelling.
 - e. However, though the high degree of divergent vocabulary certainly must be admitted, statistics like these are not compelling because we see approximately these same figures when we compare other N.T. epistles by the same author.
 - 1) 1 Timothy and Titus:
 - a) 1 Timothy has 537 words, Titus 399, and they have only 161 in common.
 - b) Thus, of the words used in Titus, 40.4% are shared by both epistles and 59.6% are unique to Titus.
 - 2) When comparing 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians (both commonly held to have been written by Paul) we see that:
 - a) Of the words used in 2 Corinthians, 49.3% are shared by both epistles, whereas 50.7% are unique to 2 Corinthians.
 - b) These figures are not significantly different from those of 1 and 2 Peter.
 - f. Thus the linguistic argument against 2 Peter proves to be less than conclusive.
 7. After examining these general arguments from vocabulary and style two critical observations are in order.
 - a. First, these type of arguments for pseudonymous authorship often fail to consider the different purposes of the two epistles.
 - 1) 1 Peter deals with the church facing persecution.
 - 2) 2 Peter is battling false teachings.
 - 3) One would expect an entirely different tone, attitude, vocabulary and disposition.
 - b. Second, another difficulty with these types of arguments is seen in the fact that Peter's writing style is not so easily defined or identified as some other N.T. authors.
 - 1) Peter's "style" is difficult to determine, because we have so little in the N.T. that is written by him.
 - 2) Can we really assume that the 543 different vocabulary words in his first epistle really capture the fullness, breadth and potential of Peter's style?
 - 3) Thus it seems that many of the stylistic arguments against 2 Peter are not as weighty as they might seem at first.
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8. Green and others also argue that there are a number of significant **similarities** between 1 & 2 Peter, including a number of parallels in the use of language and ideas.
 - I. The third major argument against the authenticity of 2 Peter is the perceived historical and doctrinal problems that seem to indicate internal inconsistency and a late date.
 1. The fact that the author identifies himself as **Simon Peter** in 2 Peter, rather than the simpler **Peter** in 1 Peter.
 - a. It is alleged by the critics that the addition of “Simon” is simply an pseudonymous device designed to give the illusion that this is the Simon Peter of the Gospels where this double name is mostly used.
 - 1) However, if the author used the first epistle as a model and was trying to convince the readers that he was the same author of the previous letter, then why make such an obvious (and therefore risky) change?
 - b. Secondly, and even more problematic, is the use of the Hebrew form of the name rather than the more common form found in the N.T.
 - 1) This is a much older form of the name and is used in reference to Peter only one other time in the New Testament (Acts 15:14).
 - 2) If the pseudonymous author wanted to promote an aura of authenticity, then why would he not use the name as it appears most commonly in the Gospels?
 - 3) Furthermore, this older name does not appear in any of the Apostolic Fathers nor in any of the pseudo-Petrine literature of the time period.
 - 4) It is difficult to imagine that this author would have known of a name for Peter which was no longer used in his day.
 2. The mention of the transfiguration (1:17–18) is considered by many scholars to be yet more evidence of a pseudonymous author.
 - a. We are told that it was common for the authors of pseudonymous works to include references to events in the lives of the authors they are trying to imitate in order to bring an illusion of authenticity.
 - b. The event is mentioned almost incidentally, which would be perfectly natural if Peter was the author, but inexplicable if he was not.
 - c. The author seems to be implying that he had been an eyewitness of these things.
 3. The reference in 2 Peter 3:16 to “**all**” of Paul’s letters as **scripture**.
 - a. Some see this as pointing to a late date because all of Paul’s letters were not in circulation nor were they considered as a corpus of scripture until after the life of Peter.
 - b. However, we have no need to understand “**all**” in 3:16 as referring to anything more than all the letters of Paul that were known to Peter at the time the epistle was written.
 - c. It need not be surprising that Peter would consider Paul’s works to be on par with O.T. Scripture.
 - d. Paul claimed that authority for his own writing (2 Thess. 3:14; 1 Cor. 2:16; 7:17; 14:37–39).

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- e. Peter, of all people, would certainly have understood that the prophetic/apostolic witness was the revelation of God (2 Pet. 1:19–21).
 - 4. Another suggested historical problem is that “*fathers*” (3:4) would refer to the fact that first-generation Christians have died, thus pushing the date of the epistle to the end of the first century.
 - a. Nowhere else in the N.T. or in the Apostolic Fathers is this word used to refer to Christian “Fathers,” but is consistently used to refer to Jewish patriarchs.
 - b. “Those that wish to maintain that ‘the fathers’ are O.T. patriarchs or prophets have the weight of usage on their side.” (Bauckham, 290)
 - 5. One final historical problem we will consider is that in 1:14 the author mentions how his death is imminent.
 - a. This seems to be a clear reference to John 21:18 where Christ told Peter how he would die.
 - b. Since the book of John was not written until late in the first century, this reference would date 2 Peter later than the life of Peter.
 - c. But, this connection need not demand a literary dependence.
 - d. If the author was Peter, he certainly heard Christ’s words with his own ears and there is nothing unusual about his reference to them.
 - J. Although we may not agree with every argument that seems to support the claims of Peter as the author of 2 Peter, we certainly must conclude that the case for 2 Peter’s pseudonymous authorship is at the very least argumentative and incomplete.
 - 1. “There are problems with the authenticity of 2 Peter from the standpoint of the tension between the scarcity of its external evidence and of the early acceptance of the book in the first and second centuries. However, these problems do not appear to be so overwhelming as to put in jeopardy the authenticity of the book.” (Hamilton, xix)
 - 2. The case against the Epistle does not, in fact, appear by any means compelling. It cannot be shown conclusively that Peter was the author; but it has yet to be shown convincingly that he was not.” (Green, *2 Peter Reconsidered*, Internet)

II. Place & Date of Writing.

- A. Assuming that Peter is, indeed, the author of 2 Peter, we reach basically the same conclusions about the place of origin and date of writing as with the first letter.
- B. Place.
 - 1. “We are almost completely in the dark about the origin of this letter.” (Green, 35)
 - 2. It is probably not too unsafe to conclude that the book would have been written from the same location as the first – *Babylon*. (cf. 1 Pet. 5:13), which we concluded was a pseudonym for the city of Rome.
 - 3. The issue turns on a statement in 3:1 – “*This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you.*”
 - 4. If this is a reference to 1 Peter, then the letter most likely was written from the same location.
- C. Time.

1. The question of “place” also answers the question of “time.”
2. The same “ballpark” figure of AD 64-68, sometime very near the end of Peter’s life, would be a likely guess, and certainly as close as we can come with the information we have at hand.

III. Recipients.

- A. This letter is addressed ***“To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood”*** (1:1-2).
 1. More specifically, the letter was intended for the same readers as Peter’s first letter – ***“This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder”*** (3:1).
 2. These were Christians from Asia Minor – ***“To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen”*** (1 Pet. 1:1).
- B. Green (35-36) believes that some language in the second letter might suggest that this letter was intended for a wider, primarily Gentile audience.
 1. ***“Your apostles”*** (3:2).
 2. ***“A faith of the same kind as ours”*** (1:1).
 3. ***“Having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust”*** (1:4).
 4. “It is hard to imagine that the Epistle would have contained no specific O.T. citations (though there are a great many allusions) if the recipients were primarily Jews. It is probable that a mixed community is nearest the truth; they are people to whom the author had personally written and ministered (i.16, iii.16). It is impossible to be more precise than this.” (Green, 36)

IV. Purpose & Message.

- A. From the contents of the Epistle, we conclude that Peter wrote for three primary reasons:
 1. To stir up his readers by way of reminder to growth in Christian character (1:5-15; 3:18);
 2. To encourage them to a patient expectation of the Lord’s return (3:1-14);
 3. To warn them against being ***“carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness”*** (3:17).
- B. Heretical teaching was being done in various areas such as:
 1. The deity of Jesus.
 2. The final coming of Jesus.
 3. The final judgment & the end of the world.
- C. “Knowing his death is imminent (1:13-14), Peter wanted to ensure that his readers remain established in the truth (1:12), and be mindful of both the words spoken before the prophets and the commandments given by the apostles, especially in regards to the promise of the Lord’s return (3:1-4).” (Copeland)

Conclusion:

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- I.* As we mentioned at the very beginning of this study, in spite of various objections raised to these two books in regard to authorship and date, they remain extremely valuable to those of us today who experience the same challenges and obstacles to our faith as did those who were living in the first century.
 - II.* In a time of persecution from without (1 Peter) and false teaching from within (2 Peter), these letters serve to focus the attention of the readers -- both then and now -- on the soul-saving truth of God's word, giving knowledge needed to endure such stormy times and continue on faithfully to the end.

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