

Lesson 6—Confirming Your Call, 2 Peter:1-21

Introduction

Authorship: You may remember the introduction to 1 Peter and how his authorship was disputed by some. That is even more so with 2 Peter. **Q: What argument is given for the author being the Apostle Peter himself?** A: 1) Difference in style between first and second letter could be that Peter once again used a scribe, but for this letter, it was someone other than Silvanus, or that he may have written this letter himself. 2) If one considers the overall similarities of this letter and the first, and balances them against the differences, it's highly likely that Peter is the author of this letter as well. 3) While some argue that Peter would not stoop to borrow “thoughts and expressions” from persons “less prestigious” than himself, that attitude assumes a pride in Peter that does not fit as someone who was chosen to lead the Church and is doing his best to follow Christ's example. 4) The author's mention of St. Paul's letters being circulated (3:16), lead some to believe that that would place the dating of this letter past Peter's death. However, Paul asked that his letters be circulated during his lifetime. This would place the dating correctly as Peter being the author.

ICSB commentary states that, “On balance, Peter's authorship of 2 Peter has more in its favor than the modern theory of pseudepigraphical [*falsely claimed*] authorship,” and additionally points to the fact that 2 Peter was included in the canon despite the fact that there were several other letters purported to be written by Peter that were not. So, once again, as with the first letter, we can trust that Peter is most likely the author of this letter by the tradition of the Church than to dispute the fact that he was not.

Date: Dating depends entirely on authorship. If Peter was author, it was obviously written before he was martyred in the 60's. Another author using Peter's name? From 80's to as late as 140.

Origin and Destiny: Most likely origin Rome. **Q: Why?** A: Because it's the origin of 1 Peter, believed to be written in the 60's, and there is no evidence that he left that city between then and when he was martyred. **Q: Recipients?** A: Christian communities in northern Asia Minor—modern day Turkey.

Themes and Characteristics: **Q: Why was the letter written?** A: To combat the attacks made by false teachers challenging the teaching of the Apostles. **Q: How does Peter do this?** A: According to **ICSB**, Peter does so offensively and defensively. Offensively, by attacking first the claims of these false prophets—the most egregious being their denial of Jesus' return to judge the world since he had not yet returned. As well as by attacking the behavior of these heretics, comparing them to fallen angels, the sinful generation of Noah's day, and even the citizens of Sodom. Defensively, by reminding his readers of what they had been taught by the Apostles, and encouraging them to live by those teachings. Also, by encouraging them to learn more about God and his teachings, and to live virtuously through the graces given through Jesus Christ.

Read 2 Peter, 1:1-11.

Q#1.

In **Q#2**, Dr. Wright explores the wider meaning of Peter's direction to “run away from”—or as the **ICSB** says, “escape from the corruption that is in the world.” He says “shun” is a common translation, and also literally running away. He also expands on the word “lust.” Read and answer **Q#2-4**.

Before we answer the next question, let's look over this classification of virtues/graces in vs.5-7. **Q: Which of these would you define as something you receive as a gift/grace, which would you define as something you choose to do, and which are both?** Discuss. **Q#5. Q#6-7.**

Read 1:12-21.

Q#8-9. In the **ICSB** commentary for 1:14, they cite John 21:18-19 as the moment when Jesus reveals to Peter that he would die as a martyr in his old age. This passage follows the dialogue Jesus and Peter have when Jesus asks Peter three times, *"Do you love me?"*

Then Jesus says, *"Amen, amen, I say to you when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."* He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, *"Follow me."* The commentary also remarks that some people think that there may have been a "personal revelation from Christ that is not recorded in the NT" regarding the time of Peter's death.

Q#10-11. We're told that this is the only place outside of the first three gospels that the Transfiguration is mentioned. **Q: Why does Peter feel it necessary to mention it now?** A: He insists that the event of the Transfiguration is the true testimony of the three Apostles who were there—not some "cleverly devised myths." This implies that the false teachers, who are trying to undermine the faith of the new Christians, must have been discounting the truth of this testimony. There must have been a strong temptation to think that the Transfiguration was a made up story since Jesus had not yet returned. As Wright mentions on pg.107, *"nobody had ever imagined..."*

The fact that Moses and Elijah were manifested at the Transfiguration shows that the books of the OT and the prophecies that they contain all point to Jesus.

Q#12. In the paragraph below this question, Dr. Wright reinforces this truth that all scripture—even the ancient books—point to Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As Peter writes, *"You will do well to pay attention to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."* (vs.19) See **ICSB** note on 1:19.

In vs.21, Peter reminds his readers that scripture, although written by man, was inspired by the Holy Spirit—it is the Word of God, not something made up by men. Scripture can be trusted. It is true. In the final sentence for this lesson in **ECL** on pg.108, we are reminded that we need to have faith in both holy scripture and the Son of God to maintain the joy we have within that is based on the knowledge that Jesus will return and fulfill the promise of our own Resurrection and an eternity spent with God in his kingdom. This is the point of the first chapter of 2 Peter—to remind the Christians in the community(-ies) that initially received this letter, and all the following generations that have read it, of the truth of the teaching from the Apostles—the first witnesses and teachers of the Good News—in order to undo the damage done by the false teaching of those who were planting doubt in the hearts and souls of the Christians, attempting to corrupt their faith.

Next week, March 16, we'll discuss Lesson 7, "False Prophets," 2 Peter 2:1-22.