

2 PETER

(All exegesis by Duane Watson unless otherwise noted.)

- INTRO -- Author unknown -- not Peter. Four reasons why it's not Peter: 1) Written as a farewell address, a genre in Jewish literature predominantly pseudonymous. 2) Second coming is "coming" (parousia), whereas in 1 Peter it's "revelation" (apokalypsis). 3) Author was a strongly Hellenized Jewish Christian with a rich Greek vocabulary, skilled in the art of Greco-Roman rhetoric. 4) Author was conscious that he lived in the post-apostolic era. /// Probably written after the first generation Christians died, so 80-90 CE or later. Written to counteract the doctrine of the "false teachers" which was based on eschatological skepticism, the idea that the parousia was a myth, thereby introducing antinomianism. (Antinomianism: the theological doctrine that by faith and God's gift of grace through the gospel, a Christian is freed not only from the OT law of Moses and all forms of legalism, but also from all law, including the generally accepted standards of morality prevailing in any given culture. Or, in layman's words, "Once you're saved, you're saved no matter what you do.")
- 1)1:1 – Other references where Jesus is called God: Romans 9:5. Titus 2:13, John 1:1, Hebrews 1:8. But it can also be translated "of God and of our Savior..."
 - 2a) 1:1-3 – Knowledge of Christ frees us from the corruption of sin. To be a Christian is to be the recipient of great promise, including becoming immortal, and escaping the world of sin. Christian virtues allow us to experience eternal life. When *agape* love is present, all other virtues are present also. When love is present, this makes our faith productive for God's kingdom. All of the Christian life is a gift of everything needed for living that life.
 - 2b) 1:12-15 – This passage indicates that the writer (Peter?) is near death, his soul about to leave the temporary "tent" of his body. He reminds his hearers/readers that 1:3-11 contains all they need to remain faithful to Christ. /// Peter's reminiscences were the chief source of Mark's gospel.
 - 3) 1:16 -- The word "coming" in Greek is "parousia," which actually means a visit to a city by a god, a ruler, or a VIP to dispense rewards or mete out judgment. For Christians it has come to mean a "second coming" of Christ.
 - 4) 1:17b-18 -- Drawn from Psalm 2:7 which reads, "today you are my son and I am your Father," which was thought to be originally used for the coronation of a king and later became messianic. Vs 17b is quoted by Matthew in Matt 3:17-18, vs. 18 referring to the transfiguration in Matt 17:2 and elsewhere.
 - 5) 1:19 – The morning star rising was the symbol of resurrection victory over death. See Rev 22:16. Also Numbers 24:17 – "...a star shall come out of Jacob..."
 - 6) 1:20-21 – An extremely important thing to remember when reading the scriptures without an interpretation by scholars!
 - 7) – **Chapter 2** -- This entire chapter and its counterpart, the Book of Jude, refers specifically to the antinomian errorists of the time -- c 100 AD. In 2:1, the switch from "false prophets" to "false teachers" indicates that the opponents themselves did not claim prophetic inspiration for their teaching. Ironically, they will be subject to the very judgment that they deny. We are reminded by 2 Peter that there are within the church interpretations, doctrines, and practices that not acceptable to God, that are at variance with the true nature of God, the Jewish heritage, with the apostolic proclamation of the gospel, and also with subsequent Christian tradition.
 - 8) 2:4 -- The Jewish tradition about the "watchers," the Nephilim (Gen 6:1-5), who had sex with human women. They were cast into Hell -- Tartarus in Greek mythology, the lowest part of the underworld - and kept in chains by the Greek gods. See 2:17 where the false teachers are also kept there "in

deepest darkness.”

- 9) 2:10-11 – V 10a is an elaborate proof of 3b – divine judgment as not been asleep. The three examples are part of a traditional scheme of affirmation of the judgment of the wicked and salvation of the righteous. The false teachers are probably slandering evil angels, not good angels, saying that they have no power over them. Good angels are more powerful than the evil angels -- and the false teachers -- but are not so bold as to slander them. See Jude 8-9 where Michael will not pronounce judgment on Satan but asks God to do so.
- 10) 2:15-16 -- In the NRSV and the New American Bible, Bosor (Beor in the story in Numbers 22-24) is a play on words: in Hebrew: “bäsär” is “flesh,” so Balaam is “son of the flesh.” The “wages of doing wrong” was the money Balaam expected to get from Balak for cursing Israel. The writer leads us to conclude that the false teachers, like Balaam, are less rational than an irrational ass!
- 11) 2:17 – These metaphors rely on the traditional imagery of religious teaching as being the sustainer of the spiritual. Life just as water is the sustainer of the natural life.
- 12) 3:7 -- This “word” may be Deut 32:22, Isa 66:15, and/or Zeph 1:18.
- 13) 3:8-13 -- This is a rework of Psalm 90:4, then Habbakuk 2:13, the latter a central passage in Judaism’s reflection on the problem of the delay in God’s judgment. God is delaying the parousia so that all will have time to repent. But, it will come. Then, finally in Vs. 10, Isa 34:4, it is written that it is the heavenly bodies that will be destroyed. But then in Vs. 13, it is clear that all of creation will be destroyed.