

A Study of 2 Peter – Study Guide

Primary Commentary: *Concordia Commentary on 2 Peter and Jude* by Curtis P. Giese, M. Div, PhD.

Authorship and Canonicity of 2 Peter

Regarding this topic Dr. Giese states (in part) the following:

*The authenticity of **2 Peter** is one of the most challenging isagogical* issues in the NT: Internally, the style of **2 Peter** significantly differs from **1 Peter**, and some scholars take this as a reason to doubt Peter's authorship of the second epistle. As for external issues, Green encapsulates the status well: "No book in the Canon is so poorly attested among the Fathers, yet **2 Peter** has incomparably better support for its inclusion [in the Canon] than the best attested of the excluded books." [Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and Revelation]...Eusebius records Origin (ca. AD 185 – 253) as the first to mention the book of **2 Peter** by name. Nonetheless, the merits of **2 Peter** quickly became clear. The church was committed to affirming the canonicity only of those works that deserved to be regarded as Scripture. Two essential criteria were apostolic authorship and content in harmony with the rest of Scriptures. Evaluated by both criteria, **2 Peter** obviously is superior to any pseudepigraph claiming Peter's authorship. This commentary maintains the authenticity of **2 Peter**, both in terms of its authorship by the apostle and its scriptural content.*

***Isagogics** = a branch of theology that is preliminary to actual exegesis [Biblical Interpretation] and deals with the literary and external history of the Bible. Source: Google

In plain English, what is Dr. Giese stating about **2 Peter**? 😊

How do the following verses provide a possible explanation of why **1 Peter** and **2 Peter** have significant differences in style and vocabulary?

What do we learn in **1 Peter 5:12 – 14** regarding the writing of **1 Peter** vs **2 Peter**?

Who was Silas (Silvanus)?

Acts 15:22 – 23, 30 – 32 _____

How does this background information about Silas help support the differences between **1 Peter** and **2 Peter** if Silas (Silvanus) was the scribe for Peter’s first epistle?

How do the following verses help support this hypothesis?

Galatians 6:11 – 12 and **1 Corinthians 16:19 – 24**

2 Thessalonian 1:1 – 2

Dr. Giese in his *Concordia Commentary* also points out that if **2 Peter** is pseudepigraphal [i.e. a forgery by someone claiming authorship of Peter], “the author of **2 Peter** could have been expected to write in a style that more closely resembles the better-attested [and more widely known] letter of 1 Peter.” What are your thoughts on this argument?

Dr. Giese on **2 Peter 1:1** points out that the author identifies himself “with the atypical name Simeon Peter” rather than the typical Greek word for “Simon” as found in the Gospels. The Greek word for Simeon is “only found only in **Acts 15:14** where James refers to Peter in his speech to the Apostolic Council.” How does the author calling himself “Simeon” support the contention that the Apostle, Simon Peter, is the author?

How does **2 Peter 1:12 – 15** provide “internal evidence” that Peter is the author of **2 Peter**?

How does **2 Peter 1:16 – 18** also provide evidence of Peter’s authorship?

The account of the Transfiguration is told to us in the Synoptic Gospels – **Matthew**, **Mark**, and **Luke** – and generally give a very similar description of the Transfiguration. Compare **2 Peter 1:16 – 18** with **Mark 9:2 – 8**. Considering that **Mark** is likely “Peter’s Gospel” with Mark having recorded Peter’s account of the life of Jesus, what differences do you see between the accounts?

How does the fact that there are differences lend weight that **2 Peter** is authored by the Apostle Peter?

How do **2 Peter 3:1** and **2 Peter 3:15** provide additional internal evidence of Peter’s authorship?

As we continue our study of **2 Peter**, be on the lookout for additional evidence of “Petrine Authorship”.

Purpose and Content of 2 Peter

Compare **1 Peter 1:1 – 2** with **2 Peter 1:1 – 2**.

Keeping in mind **2 Peter 3:1**, what part of the world is Peter likely addressing in **2 Peter**? How does this possibly also shed light on **Jude’s** recipients?

What similarities and differences do you see between the opening verses of 1st and 2nd Peter?

What theological point is made about Jesus in verse 1?

Dr. Geise points out that this greeting is unique among the NT greetings in that it extends a blessing of knowledge in addition to grace and peace. What are the differences between having:

Grace _____

Peace _____

Knowledge _____

2 Peter 1:3 – 4 not only has significant theological implications but it also has a tremendous amount of joy, comfort, and wonder packed into it.

What are the theological implications of these two verses?

What about these verses gives us joy, comfort, and wonder?

Let's now read **2 Peter 1:5 – 11**.

What theological and practical shift do we see in these verses compared to the previous two?

What does it mean to “supplement” or “add” to our faith in verse 5?

What is the significance of the progression of virtues in verses 5 – 7?

Based on these verses, whose responsibility is it to obtain these virtues?

By looking again at verses 3 – 4 along with 5 – 10, how do we do this?

How could the last phrase of verse 10 along with verse 11 be interpreted incorrectly that we are at least partially saved by works and how does a correct interpretation in the context of verses 3 and 10 refute that theology?

Let's read **2 Peter 1:12 – 2:3**.

What is Peter's general purpose or what foundation is he laying in verses 12- 21?

How do verses 12 – 15 set the stage in support this purpose or lay down a part of the foundation?

How do verses 16 – 21 support this purpose and complete the foundation of what is to follow?

What action is Peter wanting from the recipients of his Epistle in verse 15 and what does that fully entail for them and for us?

2 Peter 1:19 contains a significant amount of figurative language. What is the meaning of the figurative language and what hope and comfort does this verse give us?

2 Peter 1:19 – 21 is one of the most important selections in the entire Bible that explain how the Bible came to be and that it is God's Word. Verse 21 is a classic memorization text for Lutheran Catechism classes. Let's look a little closer at this section.

How do verses 20 – 21 relate to verse 19?

How do these verses describe how the Scriptures came to be? (Or how did the Holy Spirit interact with the authors of the books of the Bible?)

How did the way people wrote the Bible impact:

how we interpret the Bible?

reflect on the Bible?

act on the Bible? See also **2 Timothy 3:16**.

How does **2 Peter 3:15 – 16** impact what Peter is saying in these verses?

How would you respond to someone saying, “I’m a Christian but there are some things in the Bible that I cannot accept”?

If you are struggling to answer that question, note what some of the examples of what Jesus by examining **Matthew 26:51 – 56, Matthew 19:3 – 6** and **Luke 10:25 – 28**. How do these examples provide a good substance/content to a response as well as a good demeanor in giving the response?

How does Peter “turn the tables” on the “false prophets” [note that Dr. Giese states that the best translation is to call them “false teachers”] in **2 Peter 2:1 – 3**?

What is at the “core” of the teachings (see verse 1) of these heretics and what examples do we have of that occurring today?

What are the results and what is the impact of the teachings of the false teachers?

What descriptive phrase does Peter use to describe the Christian faith and what is the significance of that description?

How is the Christian faith being blasphemed within “the Church” of today (albeit a loose definition of the Church)?

We have already extensively covered the second chapter of **2 Peter** in our study of **Jude** since the second chapter of **2 Peter** borrows and elaborates on **Jude**. Therefore, we will only briefly review those verses.

What general point is Peter making in **2 Peter 2:4 – 10a**?

What general point is Peter making in **2 Peter 2:10b – 16**?

What general point is Peter making in **2 Peter 2:17 – 22**?

As we read Chapter 3 note how Peter's tone changes. Dr. Giese points out that this is the first time in the letter that Peter addresses the recipients as "beloved" as he continues to warn them about the apostates in their midst. Let's start with **2 Peter 3:1 – 7**.

Verse 1 references that this letter is his "second letter". There are many parallel passages or themes between **1 Peter** and **2 Peter**. Compare the verses we just read with **1 Peter 1:13 – 21**. What similar themes do you see between the two selections?

What are the "scoffers" saying in **2 Peter 3:3 – 4**?

How does Peter turn their own argument on them in verses 5 – 7?

Why is the belief that there will be a return of Christ to judge the earth and all people for all of time critical to the Christian faith?

Peter obviously emphasized the historicity and significance of the Flood. What do the following verses that reference Noah or the Flood, tell us about the significance and meaning of the Flood and/or the Second Coming of Christ?

1 Peter 3:18 – 22 _____

To what two things (at least) is the Flood a type?

What do we learn about Baptism in these verses?

Luke 17:22 – 30 _____

Hebrews 11:7 _____

Let's read **2 Peter 3:8 – 13**.

What is the meaning of verse 8 and how could (has) this verse be (been) misinterpreted?

How is verse 9 similar in thought to **1 Peter 3:18 – 20** and what does Christ's "apparent delay" say about God, our salvation, and His love for us?

What point is God making to us in verse 11?
