

The Letters of Peter

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Authenticity of the Letters

Authenticity of 1 Peter

- Denied by many liberals
 - Accepted by some
- Usual objection
 - Sounds too much like Paul
- Problems (for liberals)
 - If Peter & Paul are so similar and have the same views about Jesus, then hard to have split between them, or between them & Gospels
 - If Peter, Paul & Gospels too much alike, hard to propose they are wrong!

Authenticity of 1 Peter

- Apostolic unity is hard on liberal theories.
- Conservative liberals say Peter's view is new, not going back to Jesus.
- 1 Peter was recognized early in church.
- Evidence for its use widespread.
- Authorship in antiquity not doubted within the church.

Authenticity of 2 Peter

- Universally rejected by liberals
- Their arguments:
 - Style is different from 1 Peter.
 - Refers to Paul's letters as scripture, so late.
 - Copied from Jude's letter.
 - No early references to 2 Peter.
- These arguments are answerable.

Style of 2 Peter

- Yes, it differs from style of 1 Peter.
- 1 Peter may have been written with help from Silas/Silvanus (see 1 Pet 5:2).
- If this is Paul's Silas, he probably had better Greek language ability than Peter.
- Neither letter is bad Greek, though.
- No book is closer to 2 Peter than 1 Peter.

Reference to Paul

- Only a problem if Paul & Peter enemies.
- This is not the view of Acts & Paul's letters.
 - Peter recognized Paul's ministry to Gentiles.
- Peter would surely have known of Paul's letters, as their ministries overlapped in both time and space.

Reference to Paul

- But Peter implies Paul's letters are scripture.
- Did the Apostles expect more scripture?
 - Jesus said the Holy Spirit would teach them.
 - They were given authority to "bind & loose."
 - Rabbinic term for rule-making & abrogating
 - So, if the Lord didn't return right away, they would expect to write it themselves.

Resemblance to Jude

- 2 Peter does resemble Jude in places
- Possibilities:
 - 2 Peter copied Jude, so prob late, hoax.
 - Jude copied 2 Peter, so 2 Peter early.
 - Both copied another source.
- Actually looks like Jude copied 2 Peter
 - See our discussion under Jude

Lack of Early Attestation

- Should not be over-emphasized.
- Yes, no other book in NT canon so poorly attested.
- But no other book outside NT so well-attested.
- Some book in NT has to be last in attestation!

Lack of Early Attestation

- Possible explanations:
 - 2 Peter did not exist until late (c130 AD).
 - It existed but was not mentioned.
 - It did not have as wide circulation as 1 Peter.
- It did not exist till late.
 - Liberals favor this, but a problem here.
 - How get in canon so late?
 - Plenty of competitors by mid-2nd century

Lack of Early Attestation

- It existed but was not mentioned.
 - A statistical fluke
 - We know the Apostolic Fathers did not quote from every book they viewed as canonical; see under NT Canon.
- It didn't have as wide circulation as 1 Peter.
 - Location of recipients not given in 2 Peter.
 - Perhaps a smaller subgroup of 1 Peter's recipients.

Lack of Early Attestation?

Some possible allusions to 2 Peter:

- 1 Clement 11 refer to 2 Peter 2:6-9?
 - Piety of Lot, God rescues godly, punishes others
- Ps-Barnabas 15 - "day of Lord shall be as 1000 years"
 - Psalm 90:4 has same times, but opposite order
 - 2 Pet 3:8 is very close in the Greek.
- Jude quoting 2 Peter?
 - See discussion under Jude

Date of the Letters

Date of 1 and 2 Peter

- If genuine, then written before Peter's death
 - Martyred in Nero's reign; Nero's suicide AD 68
- 1 Peter before 2 Peter
 - "This is the 2nd letter I am writing" – 2 Pet 3:1
- 1 Peter sounds like persecution going on.
 - Written to warn of change in Roman policy?
 - If so, then probably not before fall AD 64
- 2 Peter probably close to his death, but Peter not yet in prison.
- So both letters in range AD 64-68.

First Peter

Written from "Babylon"

- Ancient city?
 - City gone, but area still called "Babylon"
- Near modern Cairo?
 - Also called "Babylon" in NT times
- Figurative for Rome?
 - Rev 17:9 refers to Rome as "Babylon."
 - Peter may have used term for OT enemies.
 - May be used to hide Peter's location.

Recipients of 1 Peter

- Written to Asia Minor (all but 2 south provinces)
 - Areas where Paul had ministered
 - Perhaps Peter had also ministered here.
 - Perhaps he is warning Paul's churches.
- Recipients seem to be mainly Gentiles rather than Jews.

Main Theme

To encourage Christians in persecution:

- See references to persecution:
 - 1:6-7 – "distressed by trials... tested by fire"
 - 4:4 – verbal abuse
 - 4:12-13 – "fiery ordeal... testing..."
 - 4:16 – "suffers as a Christian"
- Sounds like organized persecution, probably Nero's

Peter's Encouragement

- Look back to Christ's suffering
 - We share in it in some way
 - 1:11 – predicted by prophets
 - 2:21f – serves as our example
 - 3:17f – suffer for doing right
 - 4:1 – prepare to suffer as Christ did
 - 4:13 – share sufferings of Christ

Peter's Encouragement

- Look forward to Christ's coming:
 - 1:3f – "a living hope... imperishable inheritance"
 - 3:22 – Jesus has already gone to heaven
 - 4:7 – "the end of all things is at hand..."
 - 4:13 – will rejoice at his coming

A Second Theme

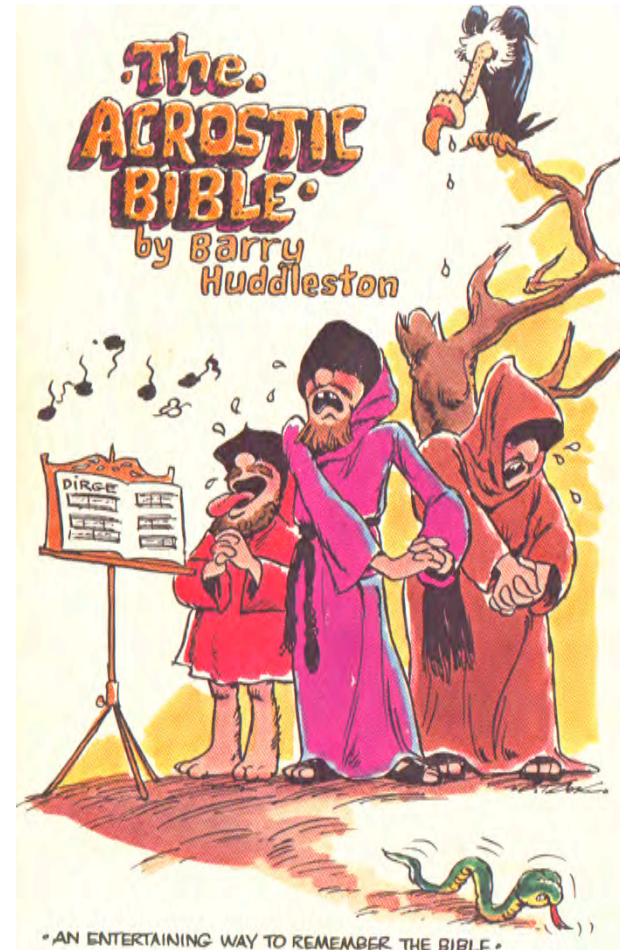
- Peter exhorts believers to holy living
 - 1:13ff – "gird up your minds for action..."
 - 2:12ff – "keep your behavior excellent..."
 - 4:1ff – "live no longer for the lusts of men..."

Topical Outline

- Address & greeting (1:1-2)
- Thanksgiving (1:3-12)
- Implications of salvation (1:13-2:10)
- Christian relationships (2:11-3:12)
- Suffering & the will of God (3:13-22)
- Holy living (4:1-11)
- The fiery trial (4:12-19)
- Address to elders (5:1-4)
- General address & benediction (5:5-11)
- Personal comments & greetings (5:12-14)

Huddleston's Acrostic

- **T**rials prove your faith.
- **R**espond as Christ did.
- **I**nnocent conscience quiets foes.
- **A**ttitudes pleasing to God
- **L**eaders to serve humbly



Argument of 1 Peter

A condensed, explanatory
paraphrase

Second Peter

Recipients of 2 Peter

- Address is very general:
 - "Those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours"
 - All Christians intended, or some partial group?
 - Some overlap with recipients of 1 Peter, as 2 Pet 3:1 says "this is the 2nd time I've written you."

Main Themes of 2 Peter

- Growth (chapter 1)
- Apostasy (chapter 2)
- Second coming (chapter 3)

Topical Outline

- Salutation (1:1-2)
- Truth of Christian faith attested (1:3-21)
 - Personal experience (3-11)
 - Eyewitness testimony (12-18)
 - Fulfilled prophecy (19-21)
- Condemnation of false prophets (2:1-3:10)
- Duties of believers (3:11-18)
- Benediction (3:18)

Topical Outline

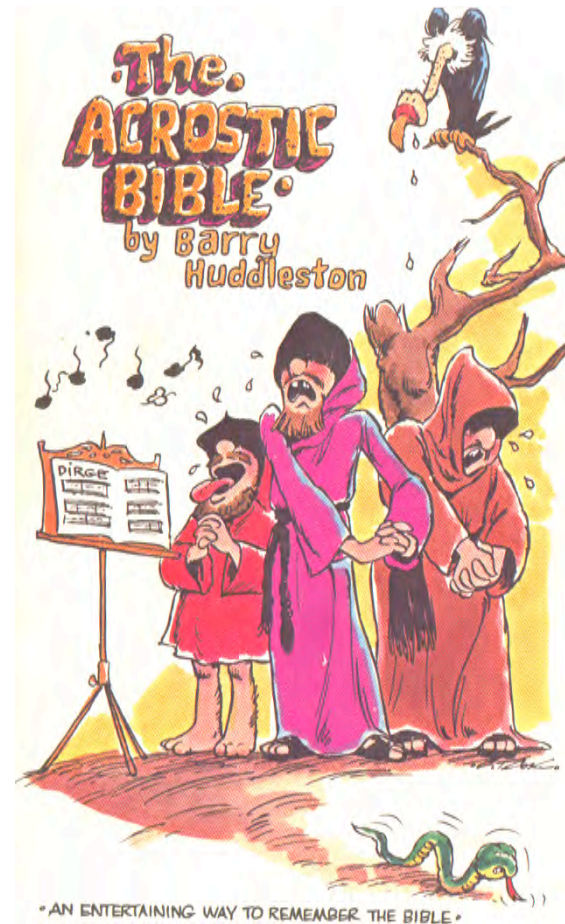
- **Condemnation of false prophets (2:1-3:10)**
 - Share judgment with OT false prophets
 - Unrestrained sinners
 - Lead to slavery
 - Doubt 2nd coming
 - Pictured by flood
 - Delayed by God's mercy
 - Certain to come

Topical Outline

- Duties of believers (3:11-18)
 - Be holy
 - Recognize God's patience
 - Watch out for deception
 - Grow in grace
- Benediction (3:18)

Huddleston's Acrostic

- **A**dd virtues to faith
- **D**eeds of false teachers
- **D**iligence before Lord's return



The End