

# Second Peter Chapter One

## Introduction to Second Peter

1. Authorship:
  - a. The claim to Petrine authorship is stronger in this epistle than in First Peter.
  - b. The writer calls himself Simon Peter (1:1) and identifies himself as a witness of the transfiguration (1:16-18); he places himself on a level with the apostle Paul (3:15), identifies himself as a writer of a previous epistle (3:1), and recalls the Lord's prediction concerning his death (1:14).
  - c. Yet Second Peter has historically been the most contested book of the N.T. canon, its authenticity being denied by scholars ancient and modern.
  - d. Critics claim that Second Peter is the literary product of a second century (c. 150AD) author (a forger) who cleverly sought to gain acceptance for his work under the name of Peter.
  
2. Authenticity:
  - a. By the end of the fourth century AD the epistle was acknowledged as canonical by the Council of Laodicea (363) and the Third Council of Carthage (397); further, it was admitted into the Vulgate by Jerome (340-420), who expressed doubts based on the difference in style between the two Petrine epistles.
  - b. Eusebius, in his famous *Ecclesiastical History* (324), recorded his doubts concerning Second Peter when he wrote: "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. But that which is called the second, we have not indeed understood to be embodied with the sacred books, yet as it appeared useful to many, it was studiously read with the other Scriptures." And later on in the same book, he says, "Among the disputed books although they are well known and approved by many, is reputed, that called the epistle of James and that of Jude, also the Second Epistle of Peter, and those called the Second and Third of John (III. 25)."
  - c. Origen's (185-253) testimony is somewhat ambiguous. He is the first one to distinguish the two epistles ascribed to Peter. In his *Commentary on John* (V. 3) he writes, "And Peter, on whom the Church of Christ is built, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, left only one epistle of acknowledged genuineness. Suppose we allow that he left a second; for this is doubtful." There are several passages where Origen expressly quotes Second Peter without indicating any doubt.
  - d. The evidence from the third century shows that although there was widespread doubt as to its authenticity, there was a general willingness to respect its contents. Although mentioned with questions, Peter's name is the only name associated with it.
  - e. No existing writings for the *second* century make any express quotations from Second Peter. It is not contained in the Old Syrian Version (c. 200), nor does it appear to have been in the Old Latin Version (before 170), but this is incomplete and also does not list First Peter.
  - f. The most important piece of evidence for the use of Second Peter in the second century is found in the *Apocalypse of Peter* (120-140AD). It contains some striking coincidences with

Second Peter. It is concluded that this pseudo book is dependant upon Second Peter, rather than vice versa.

- g. The earliest and most important piece of evidence, taking us into the *first* century, that we can point to is the epistle of Jude. The basis for this position is that Second Peter is prior to Jude.
3. The Occasion:
    - a. The occasion for Second Peter was the outbreak of heretical teachings within the assemblies addressed in First Peter.
    - b. The false teaching was characterized by antinomianism (a perversion of grace).
    - c. The false teachers denied the Lord (2:1), were daring and irreverent (2:10b,12), and scoffed at the promise of the Lord's return (3:3,4).
    - d. They lived immoral lives (3:3), seduced unstable souls (2:14,18), and caused the way of truth to be maligned (2:2).
    - e. They were characterized by insubordination to established authority (2:10c,12).
  4. The Date and Place:
    - a. It cannot be dated later than 68AD, the year of Nero's death.
    - b. It was written after First Peter, and near the end of Peter's life (1:14).
    - c. Since Peter died before Paul, the approximate date is 65AD.
    - d. It is generally held that Second Peter, like First Peter, was written from Rome.
  5. The Purpose of Second Peter:
    - a. It is a warning against falling victim to heresy (3:17).
    - b. It is a call to continued spiritual growth, the antidote to false teaching (1:11,12; 3:18).
  6. The Characteristics of Second Peter:
    - a. The keynote of Second Peter is knowledge. The words *know* or *knowledge*, in their varied forms, occur sixteen times in this epistle. Six times the intensive form, signifying *full-knowledge*, is used.
    - b. True knowledge is the believer's safeguard against all heresy. Believers today are confronted with a plethora of heretical cults and doctrines of demons.
  7. Style:
    - a. First Peter is generally smooth Greek, while Second Peter has a certain roughness of style and is more labored and awkward Greek.
    - b. To attempt to establish authorship solely on the basis of style is always precarious. A man's style varies with his mood, his subject, his purpose, and his sources.
    - c. This difference in style between the two epistles may perhaps be accounted for by the assumption of Peter's use of an amanuensis for First Peter (Silvanus).
    - d. Silvanus may have had a hand in the shaping of the language of First Peter, but Second Peter may well be Peter's own writing, since no mention is made of a scribe.
    - e. A weighty argument in favor of the authenticity of Second Peter is its acknowledged superiority to all other known pseudonymous writings. Farrar remarks, "Who will venture to assert that any Apostolic Father – that Clement of Rome, or Ignatius, or Polycarp, or Hermas, or Justin Martyr – could have written so much as twenty consecutive verses so

eloquent and so powerful as those of the Second Epistle of St. Peter (Farrar, F.W., *The Early Days of Christianity*, New York: Cassell & Company, Ltd.).”

8. Summary:

- a. Second Peter was slow to receive recognition within the Church.
- b. Second Peter competed with a flurry of pseudo Petrine books on into the second century (Gospel of St. Peter, Apocalypse of Peter, etc.).
- c. If Second Peter were the product of a forger, then that person had to assume a certain amount of misrepresentation. “The real author of any such work had to keep himself altogether out of sight, and its entry upon circulation had to be surrounded with a certain amount of mystery, in order that the strangeness of its appearance at a more or less considerable interval after the putative author’s death might be concealed (Journal of Theological Studies, ii. 19, by Moffatt).”
- d. Such a work is termed a “pious fraud” and merits no place in the N.T. canon.
- e. The conservative view eliminates all implications of deception in the personal references in the epistle, and furnishes the best and least confusing solution to the problem.
- f. We concur with Ebricht: “When we discover an epistle which has the dignity and originality and high ethical character of Second Peter, in which are no anachronisms that the most searching investigation can discover, and in which are found no absurd miracles or foolish legends or heretical teaching contrary to the spirit and character of Peter, but in which there are touches that remind one of the fiery apostle described in the Acts and the Gospels, and in the very body of which there are claims of Petrine authorship, and which commended itself in the course of years to the general body of Christians when tested in the crucible of experience, then it is a fair conclusion that we have here a genuine message of the Apostle-Preacher Peter, and the world of the twentieth century can profit greatly by heeding his threefold message (*The Petrine Epistles, A Critical Study of Authorship*, The Methodist Book Concern, 1917).”
- g. Denial of Petrine authorship presents us with “an insoluble psychological riddle” in the words of Fronmuller: “Is it possible that a man animated through and through with the spirit of Christianity, who expressly renounces all cunning fabrications, should have set up for the Apostle Peter, and have written this Epistle in his name? Intentional fraud and such illumination – who is able to reconcile them? (“The Second Epistle General of Peter”, *Lange’s Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, p. 5).”

## Greetings (vv.1,2)

## The Author and His Equals (v.1)

**VERSE 1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ** (Συμεὼν Πέτρος δοῦλος καὶ ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [*n.m.s., Peter's Aramaic name, + n.m.s., his nickname given to him by Jesus, + n.m.s., doulos, slave, servant, + n.m.s., apostolos, apostle, + gen./relationship m.s., Iesus Christos*]), **to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours** (τοῖς λαχοῦσιν πίστιν ἰσότιμον ἡμῖν [*def.art.w/aor.act.pt.dat.m.p., λαγχάνω, lagchano, receive; allocate; cast or draw lots; 4X: Lk.1:9; Jn.19:24; Acts.1:17, + acc.f.s., pistis, faith, + adj.acc.f.s., ἰσότιμος, isotmos, equal in honor or privilege; 1X; compound from time/honor & equal, + pro.dat.p., ego, "as ours"*]), **by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ** (ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [*prep. w/instr.f.s., dikaiosune, righteousness, + def.art.w/gen.m.s., theos, + pro.gen.p., ego, "our", + conj. + gen.m.s., σωτήρ, soter, savior, + gen.m.s., Iesus Christos*]):

**ANALYSIS: VERSE 1**

1. Peter introduces himself as “Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ”.
2. In First Peter he calls himself simply, “Peter, apostle of Jesus Christ”.
3. A forger would hardly have added “Simon” and would have scarcely added “slave” to “apostle”.
4. He would have copied the introduction of First Peter.
5. “Simon” is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew “Simeon”.
6. “Peter” was the nick-name he received from the Lord and the name by which he was called by the Christian community (Mt.4:18; 16:16-18; Lk.5:8; 7:40; 22:31; Jn.1:40; 6:8,68; 13:6,9,36; 18:10,15,25; 20:2,6; 21:2,3,7,11,15; Acts.10:5,6,18,32; 11:13; Gal.2:7,8; 2Pet.1:1).
7. Peter intends to emphasize his Jewish antecedents.
8. When he designates himself “slave of Jesus Christ”, as Paul does at times, he does not refer to his office, for “apostle” does that.
9. “Slave” places Peter on the same level with his readers as being one who, like his readers, submits to the directive will of the divine Master who bought him (i.e., out of the slave market of sin), and them, to be His own (1Cor.6:20; 7:23).
10. The connotation of *doulos* is not involuntary service but unconditional submission to Jesus Christ the Master.
11. The background is the institution of slavery within the Roman world.
12. “Apostle” fortifies the readers against the heretical antinomians who mock at the Lord’s glorious Parousia.
13. Peter is one of those slaves who the Lord has commissioned an “apostle of Jesus Christ” and who is responsible to shepherd the flock of God during his time on earth.
14. By writing this letter he is providing a deterrent to the growing apostasy and a polemic for those who are sincere in their faith.

15. Liberal critics tell us that somebody living in the second century impersonated Peter with no wrong intention, but only to magnify Peter, and that we should not speak of a forger since our present ideas about such things differ entirely from the notions of the second century.
16. These critics would be right provided the impersonator of Peter indicated that he was impersonating with harmless intent.
17. Compare the greeting found in First Peter, even those greetings found in all the N.T. letters; they are all alike.
18. If the opening nominative in any one of them is intended as a harmless impersonation of the person named, that fact is hidden, completely hidden.
19. The name for such an action is forgery.
20. The moral sense of all ages resents it as forgery, and not merely literary forgery, but as forgery of the WOG!
21. Smith's *Bible Dictionary* calls it "Satanic".
22. The dative designates the readers in regular letter form: "To those who have received a faith of the same kind/value as ours".
23. Peter did not add the name of some geographical locale (for reasons not known to us) as he did in First Peter.
24. This dative reads as though all who have such faith are addressed, yet students agree that Peter wrote to Christians in some unspecified locality.
25. With this dative he describes them as people who have received/obtained faith that is just as valuable and viable as that which "we" have obtained.
26. This general circular epistle is addressed to Christians who have obtained the same kind of doctrinal instruction as has Peter and the Christians who are with him at Rome.
27. It is important to Peter that they recognize that the doctrinal integrity ("faith") that is their allotment is valued just as highly as that of the Christian community at Rome.
28. The verb "received" is an aorist active participle of λαχάνω (*lachano*), which means to obtain by allotment.
29. The verb is used 4X in the N.T.: Lk.1:9; Jn.19:24; Acts.1:17; 2Pet.1:1.
30. In Acts it is used of Judas Ischariot's selection as one of the original twelve apostles.
31. Here it is used of the character and content of the doctrinal faith among the Christians at Rome as well as that of the original recipients.
32. God values the doctrinal integrity of the recipients just as highly as He does that of Peter and the Roman Christians.
33. The readers are to do the same.
34. The implication, as the body of the letter shows, is that the readers must preserve and guard this faith in the face of contradictory propaganda.
35. This letter is designed to fortify that faith having been previously received.
36. There is no distinction between what Peter and company possess and what the readers have heard; there is equality of content.
37. The adjective "the same kind" (ἰσότημος *isotimos*; 1x) means of the same value (cp. Acts.11:17, where the adjective accusative feminine singular of ἴσος [*isos*, equal] occurs).
38. "Faith" here refers to the object of their hearing, not the means of assimilation.
39. This issue is settled at the outset; nothing further needs to be said.
40. The Jewish apostle takes his Gentile readers into the Word of prophecy and fortifies them so that they may be fully prepared for the Lord's coming and the end of all things.
41. The phrase "by the righteousness" (ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ) means that the faith they obtained was righteous, as God is +R.

42. The phrase could be translated “on the basis of righteousness”.
43. Their faith is built on the bedrock of God’s perfect Righteousness.
44. What these Christians obtained over the course of their Ph2 is righteous, as God is righteous.
45. This phrase is followed by the grand genitive “of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ σωτήρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ).
46. The single definite article (τοῦ) serves both the nouns “God” and “Savior”, indicating that “God and our Savior” is one and the same person.
47. The effort to find a reference to two persons, God and Christ, is nullified linguistically by the use of but one article in the Greek (Granville Sharp construction).
48. The deity of Christ stands forth here as a bulwark against all heresy to the contrary (cf. 2:1).
49. The N.T. writers deliberately annexed for their divine Master the phraseology of Ptolemaic and Imperial times that was ascribed to some of their worst men.
50. The Roman emperors allowed the terms ὁ Θεός and ὁ Κύριος and Σωτήρ ( a divine person that saves) to be used of themselves as pagan titles.
51. The language here, along with the historical setting, asserts that Jesus Christ was regarded not only as Savior but as God.
52. Paul applies Σωτήρ to Christ as well as to God (cp. the word of the angel in Lk.2:11).
53. The very name “Jesus” means “Savior”.
54. He is the Rescuer who rescues us from sin and condemnation and places us into complete eternal security.
55. The fact that He is fully God is added to indicate His power as Savior.
56. The pronoun “our” indicates a bond or relationship that believers possess based on the perfect Righteousness of God.
57. In summary, the recipients are assured by none other than that Jewish apostle, Peter, that their understanding of the POG is of equal value to that of Peter and the Christians who are with him.
58. Therefore, they are not to give in to the bastardized version of Christianity that rivals what they have previously been taught.

#### The Wish (v.2)

**VERSE 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you** (χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη πληθυνθείη [*n.f.s., charis, grace, + conj. + n.f.s., eirene, peace, + aor.pass.opt.3.s., πληθύνω, plethuno, multiply; cp. 1Pet.1:2; Jude.2*]) **in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord** (ἐν ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν [*prep.w/loc.f.s., epignosis, full knowledge, + def.art.w/gen.m.s., theos, God, + conj. + gen.m.s., Iesus, + def.art.w/gen.m.s., kurios, + pro.gen.p., ego; “our”*]);

**ANALYSIS: VERSE 2**

1. The greeting is in three parts: the author (v.1a), the recipients (v.1b), and the optative of wish.
2. We find the optative of wish in First Peter and Jude.
3. “Grace” refers specifically to grace orientation as it is connected with “the knowledge (*epignosis*) of God and of Jesus our Lord”.
4. This same aspect of grace is found at the end of the letter in the command to “grow in grace and knowledge” (*gnosis*).
5. Peter’s wish is that the recipients expand their capacity for God’s grace.
6. “Peace” refers to inner peace.
7. Inner peace is what Jesus promised His disciples in Jn.14:27 and 16:33.
8. It is activated via prayer (Phil.4:6,7).
9. It is fed through GAP.
10. The verb “be multiplied” in the present form (aor.pass.opt.) also occurs in the greetings of First Peter (1:2) and Jude (2).
11. The multiplication (or increase) of grace orientation and the relaxed mental attitude is accomplished through knowledge.
12. Hence, the importance of verse-by-verse teaching under face-to-face instruction.
13. The knowledge Peter has in mind is the true or full knowledge “of God and of Jesus our Lord”.
14. As in v.1, faith (BD) is obtained “on the basis of” righteousness, so here grace and peace are “on the basis of” knowledge.
15. Faith in v.1 and knowledge in v.2 both refer to the content of the WOG.
16. With Peter’s wish regarding the *epignosis*, compare Paul’s prayer in Eph.1:16-23 (espec. v.17), Phil.1:9, and Col.1:9,10
17. *Epignosis* means a full or accurate understanding of a subject (cf. Rom.3:20; 10:2; Eph.1:17; 4:13; Phil.1:9,10; Col.1:9,10; 2:2; 3:10; 1Tim.2:4; 2Tim.2:25; 3:7; Ti.1:1; Philm.1:6; Heb.10:26; 2Pet.1:2,3,8; 2:20).
18. *Gnosis* sometimes refers to false information, while *epignosis* is always used in the N.T. of correct information.
19. So *epignosis* is knowledge that is understood and accurate.
20. This knowledge is about/concerning God and His Son; that is the thrust of the subjective genitive (as in “love of God”; here X loves God, or in our verse X knows God).
21. This knowledge is the counter to the assault of the pseudo-teachers who are bothering the recipients.

**All We Need is *Epignosis* (v.3)**

**VERSE 3 seeing that His divine power** (Ὡς αὐτοῦ τῆς θείας δυνάμεως [*particle/temporal, hos; “seeing that”, + pro.gen.m.s., autos; “His”, + def.art.w/adj.gen.f.s., θεῖος, theios, divine nature; 3X: Acts.17:29; 2Pet.1:3,4, + gen.f.s., dunamis, power*]) **has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness** (δεδορημένης ἡμῖν πάντα τὰ πρὸς ζώην καὶ εὐσέβειαν [*pf.dep.pt.gen.f.s., δεωρέομαι, deoreomai, bestow upon; 3X: Mk.15:45; 2Pet.1:3,4, + adj.acc.nt.p., pas, all, + def.art.acc.nt.p.w/pas, + “everything”, + prep., pros, w/acc.f.s., zoe, life, + conj. + acc.f.s., eusebeia, godliness*]), **through the true knowledge** [διὰ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως

[*prep.w/def.art.w/gen.f.s., epignosis, knowledge*] **of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence** (τοῦ καλέσαντος ἡμᾶς ἰδίᾳ δόξῃ καὶ ἀρετῇ [*def.art. w/aor.act.pt.gen.m.s., kaleo, call, + pro.acc.p., ego; “us”, + adj.dat.f.s., idios, one’s own, + dat.f.s., doxa, glory, + conj. + dat.f.s., arete, moral excellence, goodness; 5X: Phil.4:8; 1Pet.2:9; 2Pet.1:3,5*]).

### ANALYSIS: VERSE 3

1. The next two verses are linked syntactically with v.2.
2. Verses 3 and following read like an elaboration of the thought of v.2.
3. Note the repetition of “knowledge” in verses 2 and 3.
4. So vv.2-4 constitute one long sentence in the Greek.
5. These three verses prepare the ground for the exhortation in vv.5-7.
6. Verse 3 begins with the particle/conjunction ὡς (*hos*) introducing discourse.
7. “*Seeing* that” brings out the thought well.
8. “His divine power” refers, from v.2, to the Omnipotence of Christ who, as God, supplies to positive volition everything necessary to achieve Ph2 sanctification (maturity adjustment).
9. The noun “divine” (here with the def.art., θεῖον) refers to God by nature, or essence (cp. Acts.17:29; 2Pet.1:4).
10. The attribute that is in the foreground is Omnipotence, as seen in the noun “power”.
11. “Has granted” is the main verb (pf.dep.pt.gen.f.s.) and acts as a genitive absolute.
12. The genitive absolute participial construction is circumstantial (adverbial) and temporal.
13. It occurs with a noun in the genitive case with a definite article (anarthrous).
14. The perfect tense here is used of the present state of affairs resulting from a past action.
15. The perfect tense is used less frequently than the present, aorist, future, or imperfect; when it is used, there is usually a deliberate choice on the part of the writer.
16. The perfect tense combines in itself, so to speak, the present and the aorist in that it denotes the continuance of completed action.
17. God, in the divine decrees (past), “has granted to us” the essentials necessary for “life and godliness” (present action).
18. Here, the perfect emphasizes the completed action of a past process from which a present state emerges.
19. It should here be translated in English as a present perfect (this usage is common).
20. In summary, like the same finite verb of v.4 (pf.dep.ind.), the perfect participle “has granted” implies that the past act of granting continues its effect to the present day and forward.
21. The verb δεωρέομαι (*deoreomai*) is a derivative of the noun δῶρημα (*dorema*, gift): to make a gift.
22. That is exactly what Christ’s power has done.
23. In the verb “has made us a present”, there lies the very thought of grace.
24. The direct object of the verb is the acc.nt.pl. of the adjective “everything”, or “all things” (πάντα).
25. “Pertaining to” is the pronoun πρὸς (*pros*) with the accusative, which means “with reference to” something.
26. “Life” and “godliness” share a single definite article (Granville Sharp construction).
27. Therefore, there is a certain equality shared by the two concepts.
28. “Life” refers to our existence as God’s children during our stay on this earth.
29. God has granted us temporal life and eternal life.
30. This includes everything required to sustain both spiritual and physical life.



31. Our allotment of living grace is included in Christ's gifts to us.
32. Protection and preservation are included in this encompassing "all things".
33. It includes many above-and-beyond blessings of Ph2, which is the reward of faithfulness.
34. "Godliness" (εὐσέβεια, *eusebia*) defines the Ph2 (or after-salvation) goal.
35. "Godliness" denotes a particular manner of life characterized by respect for the directive will of God.
36. The term occurs 15X in the N.T.: Acts.3:12; 1Tim.2:2; 3:16; 4:7,8; 6:3,5,6,11; 2Tim.3:5; Ti.1:1; 2Pet.1:3,6,7; 3:11.
37. The term points to behavior.
38. "Godliness" is used as a synonym for the maturity adjustment with emphasis on *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi* (cf. 1Tim.4:8).
39. Godliness (adjustment to BD) is the key that unlocks the door to Ph2 and Ph3 blessing.
40. And *epignosis* ("true knowledge") is the means by which believers become familiar with "the all things" granted "us" in Christ under the divine decrees.
41. *Epignosis* refers in the N.T. to knowledge that is complete and accurate.
42. This noun is repeated from v.2 (it is the means by which we come into our Ph2 allotment).
43. The pronoun δία (*dia*) with the genitive is correctly rendered "through".
44. In this instance we have a genitive of means.
45. *Epignosis* informs us both as to "the what" as well as "the how" of our Ph2 inheritance.
46. It also informs as with respect to our Ph3 inheritance.
47. First comes *epignosis*, then comes godliness, then comes the "all things" of our Ph2 allotment.
48. Ignorance and unwillingness to apply short-circuit these blessings.
49. The source of this knowledge is "the One who called us", which makes *epignosis* so solid and reliable.
50. Our call is through *epignosis* gospel.
51. The doctrine of calling refers to our initiation into God's plan.
52. God is the source of our *epignosis*.
53. Peter says we were called "by His own glory and excellence".
54. The phrase is clearly instrumental: "by His own glory" (means), and not "to His own glory", etc.
55. God's glory refers to His divine attributes, which are all operative in our salvation.
56. The noun translated "excellence" (ἀρετή) means a good quality of any kind (cf. Phil.4:8; 1Pet.2:9; 2Pet.1:3,5).
57. Here, it refers to God's moral goodness and uprightness.
58. There was no compromise of any of God's moral attributes when He called us to salvation.
59. Grace is not a compromise of +R and Justice.
60. The thrust of what Peter has to say here about God's gifts to believers is of utmost importance against the occasion for this letter.
61. How can his readers, who have this *knowledge* and this call, ever entertain the pseudo *gnosis* of the antinomian teachers?
62. This knowledge, and this knowledge alone, when learned and applied, will ensure their successful entrance into the kingdom of God (cf. v.11).