

Tuesday Evening Bible Study
Series #9: 1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter
Session #8: 2 Peter, Chapter 3
Tuesday, November 21, 2017

Outline of 2 Peter

- A. Salutation (1:1-2)
- B. Body of the Letter (1:3 – 3:16)
 - a. An Exhortation to Progress and Virtue (1:3-21)
 - i. Peter's Testament (1:3-15)
 - ii. The Grounds of Christian Hope (1:16-21)
 - b. Condemnation of False teachers (2:1-22)
 - i. False Teachers (2:1-3)
 - ii. Biblical Precedents (2:4-11)
 - iii. Denunciations (2:12-22)
 - c. Delay of the 2nd Coming (*parousia*) (3:1-16)
 - i. The Promise of the Lord's Coming (3:1-10)
 - ii. Final Exhortations (3:11-18a)
- C. Doxology (3:18b)

Notes

- The author uses “beloved” (*agapētoi*) numerous times in Chapter 3.
- The “second letter” in verse 1 may refer to Jude, 2 Peter 1, some lost letter. It is less likely to refer to 1 Peter because of the differences in style and content which make it hard to find any direct influence. Nevertheless, the reference presumes that the readers are familiar with a previous letter.
- Talk of the end times (*parousia*) is the main issue. It was believed that the return of the Messiah would happen in their lifetimes, before the end of the apostolic age (see Mark 13:30 & Matthew 10:23), so the delay of the *parousia* gives fuel to the skepticism of the false teachers and “scoffers,” who were teaching that there would be no second coming. Everything is as it was from creation.
- The author refutes that by saying that things, in fact, do *not* remain the same. This has been proven in the ancient scriptures. The world was destroyed by water once, but will be destroyed next time by fire—on the Day of Judgment.
- Verse 9 is a profound argument: God's delay of the Last Judgment is attributed to his mercy (Exodus 34:6), by making it possible for more people to come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and to transform their lives. God has made it easier for all persons to come to know him and enjoy eternal life in his kingdom.
- Ultimately the timing of the Last Judgment is up to God.
- So until then, be on your best behavior.
- The reference to Paul's letters should not suggest that they had achieved canonicity as scripture, but they were certainly well-known, by the time of the writing of 2 Peter.

- The letter ends with a short doxology, but the frequency of formulaic expressions like “our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” speaks to a high Christology (understanding of Jesus the Christ) at a fairly early stage of Christianity.
- 2 Peter is considered a last testament of a famous apostle (like 2 Timothy) and shows some of the struggles within the early church.

Resource

“2 Peter” in *Sacra Pagina*, Daniel J. Harrington, ed. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2008)

Raymond E. Brown, “Second Epistle (Letter) of Peter” in *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997)