

Introduction to 2 Peter

Authorship

The most common position among contemporary New Testament scholars is that Peter did not write 2 Peter. It is possible, however, to make a case for Petrine authorship. Below we set forth the key arguments against authorship by Peter, together with responses to those arguments.

External Evidence. The external evidence is generally seen as being the weakest of any New Testament book. Historically, the earliest external reference to 2 Peter was not until the writings of Origen. On the other hand, recent studies have found numerous possible allusions to 2 Peter in the Apostolic Fathers, the literature that bridges the New Testament and the Church Fathers. (See Robert E. Picirilli, "Allusions to 2 Peter in the Apostolic Fathers," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 33 (1988): 57-83.)

Personal Allusions. Some have argued that the personal allusions to Peter in the letter seem strained, and appear to reflect a pseudepigraphist's desire to make the letter appear to have been written by the apostle. This is, however, an extremely subjective judgment, and the allusions to Peter can be read in a way that sees them as natural.

Historical Issues. The reference to Paul and his letters (3:15-16) seems to assume that the corpus of Paul's letters already existed and was already understood as scripture. But the allusion need only be to more than one of Paul's letters, not to the entire *corpus Paulinum*, and his letters may well have been understood as additional scripture from a very early period. 3:1 appears to allude to 1 Peter, and could be a common pseudepigraphist's ploy to give the composition credence. Notably, however, 2 Peter does not reflect themes from 1 Peter, which we would expect if this were an effort by an author to take advantage of an existing canonical book. Some feel the situation of the letter contemplates the existence of the extensive Gnostic systems of the second century, but these allusions are not specific to any known second century system. Some think the expression of 3:4 "since the fathers fell asleep" contemplates the death of the first generation of Christian leaders, but it could just as easily refer to the passing of the historic Jewish patriarchs. Some see the expression "your apostles" in 3:2 as an indication that the author was not one of the apostles, but it could also simply be a reference to those apostles who established the church in Rome.

Literary Issues. There is a strong relationship between chapters 2 and 3 and the letter of Jude, which most scholars believe to have been written after Peter's lifetime. But this presumes a late date for Jude, which has not been established. Further, it could be that the influence goes the other way, that Jude used 2 Peter, or that both relied on a common source.

Stylistic Issues. The style of 2 Peter is very different than that of 1 Peter; further, the author of 2 Peter shows no awareness of the content of 1 Peter. If, however, an amanuensis wrote 1 Peter, this stylistic discrepancy would be immaterial to the authorship question here. The Greek of the letter is considerably poorer than that of 1 Peter, which is consonant with what we would expect from the uneducated Galilean fisherman.

In conclusion, while the author of the letter is not known for a certainty, authorship by Peter himself has not been ruled out.

Manuscript History

The earliest manuscript dates to the late third or early fourth century. The earliest manuscript is:

P72, or P. Bodmer VII+VIII, housed at Cologne, contains portions of three New Testament books. The portions of 2 Peter that have been preserved are 2 Peter 1:1-3:18, and is thus complete. This manuscript has been dated paleographically to the late third or early fourth century AD.

Many other Greek manuscripts have survived, but all date later than the time of Constantine.

Canon

The Muratorian Canon did not include 2 Peter (just as it did not include 1 Peter). Origen accepted the letter, but reports that others in his day did not. Eusebius rejected 2 Peter, but indicated that the majority in his day accepted it. Jerome accepted the validity of the letter. As late as the fifth century some Christians still rejected the letter as canonical, but eventually it came to be widely accepted as authoritative.

Setting

The date of the letter is largely dependent on the conclusion one makes as to authorship. If the letter was written by Peter himself, it dates to just before his death (about AD 64). If written by a disciple or someone else, it could date anywhere from about AD 80 to no later than AD 150. Whenever the letter was written, it was clearly written from Rome. The letter seems to have been intended for all of the Pauline churches located in Asia Minor. Paul had died, Peter was about to die, and he wished to warn the Saints against false teachers that were entering into the flock, and shore up faith in the second coming of Christ.

Outline

- I. Salutation (1:1-2)
- II. Exhortation to Christian Virtue (1:3-21)
- III. False Prophets and Teachers (2)
- IV. The Delay of the Second Coming (3)

Further Readings

Non-LDS Sources

Neyrey, Jerome H. *2 Peter, Jude: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1993.

LDS Sources

Anderson, Richard Lloyd. "Peter's Letters: Progression for the Living and the Dead." *Ensign* 21 (Oct. 1991): 6-10.

Doxey, Roy W. "Accepted of the Lord: The Doctrine of Making Your Calling and Election Sure." *Ensign* (July 1976): 50.

McKinlay, Daniel B. "Temple Imagery in the Epistles of Peter." In *Temples of the Ancient World*, ed. by Donald W. Parry, 492-514. Salt Lake City: Deseret and FARMS, 1994.

Vajda, Jordan. *"Partakers of the Divine Nature": A Comparative Analysis of Patristic and Mormon Doctrines of Divinization*. Provo: FARMS, 2002.

The Second Epistle General of Peter

Chapter 1

Salutation

¹ SIMON Peter,¹ a servant² and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious³ faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:⁴ ² Grace and peace be multiplied⁵ unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,⁶

The Christian's Call and Election

³ According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness,⁷ through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:⁸ ⁴ Whereby⁹ are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these¹⁰ ye

¹ IE from Simon Peter. The GR form used here is not Simon but rather Symeon, which is a more directly Semitic way of writing the name and is evidence that the author had a Jewish background. Peter derives from the GR form of Simon's Aramaic nickname, Kepha, meaning "Rock."

² A KJV euphemism for "slave."

³ ἰσότιμον *isotimon* equally precious, from the roots *iso* (equal) and *timē* (value). IE just as, similar, equal in value.

⁴ It is unclear whether the terms "God" and "Saviour" both refer to Jesus, or whether God is a reference to the Father here. In favor of the former view, the author often confesses Jesus in double terms elsewhere in the letter, and the GR construction suggests that both God and Saviour are meant to refer to the same being. (That is, the Granville Sharp rule holds that in the pattern article + noun + conjunction + noun, where the two nouns [in this case *God* and *Saviour*] are singular, personal and common [IE not proper names], the nouns have the same referent.) In favor of the latter view, God and Jesus are clearly referred to separately in v. 2, which appears to be constructed in parallelism with v. 1, and while Jesus is often called "Lord" in the NT, it is extremely rare for him to be called "God" therein.

⁵ IE lavished upon. The mood of the verb is optative (rare in the NT), expressing a wish.

⁶ In this v. God and Jesus are clearly separate referents (see note on v. 1 above).

⁷ εὐσέβειαν *eusebeian* godliness, piety. The noun is related to a verb meaning "to worship."

⁸ The datives here are ambiguous; they could be taken as in the KJV, "to [his] glory and virtue," or they could be taken as instrumental, "by [his] glory and virtue."

⁹ The reference is back to the "glory and virtue" of v. 3.

¹⁰ IE by inheriting and acting upon these promises.

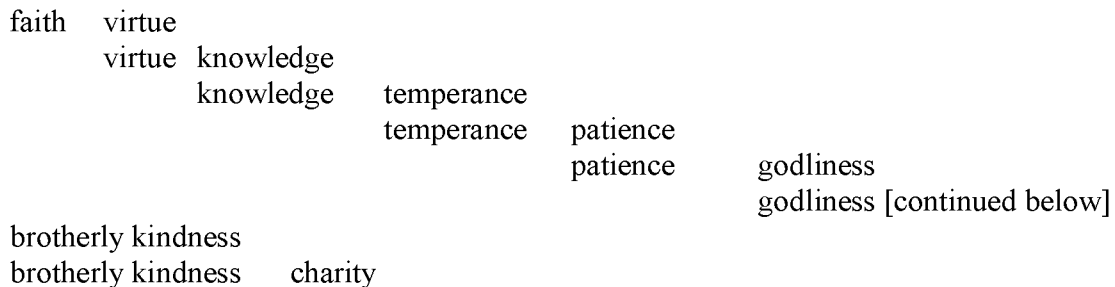
might be partakers¹¹ of the divine nature,¹² having escaped the corruption¹³ that is in the world through lust.⁵ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith¹⁴ virtue,¹⁵ and to virtue knowledge;⁶ And to knowledge temperance;¹⁶ and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;¹⁷ And to godliness brotherly kindness;¹⁸ and to brotherly kindness charity.¹⁹ For if²⁰ these things²¹ be in you, and abound,²² they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful²³ in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁹ But he that

¹¹ κοινῶνοι *koinōnoi* sharers. This GR word is the source (via Latin) for ENG "common."

¹² An allusion to the doctrine of theosis, that we have the potential to become like God and share in his divinity. See the master's thesis by Jordan Vajda at the Graduate Theological Union at the University of California, Berkeley, entitled "*Partakers of the Divine Nature*": A Comparative Analysis of Patristic and Mormon Doctrines of Divinization, originally completed in 1998 and republished by FARMS in 2002.

¹³ In the KJV NT "corruption" usually refers to the impermanence caused by the breakdown of organic matter in this world (often contrasted with the permanence of resurrected bodies); here the word means "inward depravity."

¹⁴ Vv. 5-7 reflect a rhetorical device called a *climax* (from the GR word for ladder), in which the last word in one series is the first word of the next (so "to A add B, and to B add C, and to C add D"). Generally, a climax reflects an upward sweep, with the most important qualities at the top of the ladder. Represented graphically,



In this scheme, faith forms the foundation of these godly qualities, and the highest of them is charity (Christ-like love). Cf. 1 Cor. 13.

¹⁵ IE the finest character worthy of praise; excellence. ENG "virtue" has also a subtle connotation of "manliness" (as it derives from Latin *vir*, "man").

¹⁶ OR self-control.

¹⁷ The same word as used in v. 3.

¹⁸ φιλαδέλφειαν *philadelphian*; thus, the city of Philadelphia is the City of Brotherly Love (the *phil* means "love" and *adelphos* means "brother").

¹⁹ Better, Christ-like love. "Charity" is too narrow a translation.

²⁰ The KJV correctly interprets the GR participle as conditional.

²¹ Referring back to the list of virtues enumerated in vv. 5-7.

²² πλεονάζοντα *pleonazonta* multiply, increase.

²³ A rhetorical device called litotes; the author affirms the positive by negating its opposite. IE to say you will *not* be *unfruitful* is a delicate way of affirming that you *will*

lacketh these things²⁴ is blind, and cannot see afar off,²⁵ and hath forgotten that he was purged²⁶ from his old sins.¹⁰ Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence²⁷ to make your calling and election sure:²⁸ for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:²⁹ ¹¹ For so³⁰ an entrance shall be ministered unto³¹ you abundantly³² into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

¹² Wherefore³³ I will not be negligent to put you always³⁴ in remembrance³⁵ of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth.³⁶ ¹³ Yea, I think it meet,³⁷ as long as I am in this tabernacle,³⁸ to stir you up³⁹ by putting *you* in remembrance;⁴⁰ ¹⁴ Knowing that shortly I must put off⁴¹ *this* my tabernacle,⁴² even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.⁴³ ¹⁵ Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease⁴⁴ to have these things always in remembrance.

Christ's Glory and the Prophetic Word

be *fruitful*. The imagery of being *barren* and *unfruitful* is taken from a woman's incapacity to conceive children, or from a field's inability to yield fruit.

²⁴ Referring again to the list of virtues from vv. 5-7.

²⁵ μυωπαζων *muōpazōn* short-sighted. Cf. ENG "myopic."

²⁶ IE cleansed.

²⁷ OR be zealous.

²⁸ For a doctrinal exposition of this concept, see Roy W. Doxey, "Accepted of the Lord: The Doctrine of Making Your Calling and Election Sure," *Ensign* (July 1976): 50.

²⁹ Note that this v. seems inconsistent with the Reformed doctrine of the "perseverance of the Saints," the idea that the elect are saved no matter what. They must *make* their calling and election sure so that they do not stumble and fall from grace.

³⁰ Not "such an entrance"; rather, something like "for so there shall be richly provided for you an entrance."

³¹ OR provided for.

³² IE richly.

³³ OR so then.

³⁴ IE constantly.

³⁵ OR to remind you.

³⁶ IE the truth that has come to you.

³⁷ OR right, proper.

³⁸ OR tent. The tent as an image for one's physical body, which is either taken on or put off of the spirit, is common in the NT. The expression here means "while I am yet alive."

³⁹ IE rouse, wake you up (as if from slumber).

⁴⁰ This letter has some of the qualities of a *testament*, or farewell address, in which an aged patriarch prior to his demise calls his heirs to remembrance of the covenant.

⁴¹ OR divest myself of.

⁴² IE shortly I must die.

⁴³ Peter here states that Jesus revealed to him his coming death. Some see here an allusion to John 21:18-19.

⁴⁴ ἐξοδον *exodon* lit. departure (cf. Exodus), but here referring to death.

¹⁶ For we have not followed cunningly devised fables,⁴⁵ when we made known unto you the power and coming⁴⁶ of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses⁴⁷ of his majesty.⁴⁸ ¹⁷ For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice⁴⁹ to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.⁵⁰ ¹⁸ And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we⁵¹ were with him in the holy mount.⁵² ¹⁹ We have also a more sure⁵³ word of prophecy;⁵⁴ whereunto⁵⁵ ye do well that ye take heed,⁵⁶ as unto a light⁵⁷ that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star⁵⁸ arise in your hearts: ²⁰ Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private⁵⁹ interpretation. ²¹ For the prophecy came not

⁴⁵ OR cleverly concocted myths. The author here uses *myth* in a negative sense of a story made up by men, something that did not historically happen. It was common at this time for intellectuals to reject the stories of GR mythology as having no basis in reality; the author is going to distinguish the ministry of the Savior from such myths. The apostolic witness is based on eyewitness, not on old fables.

⁴⁶ παρουσίαν *parousian* coming, refers to the Savior's second coming in power. This GR word has come into ENG, Parousia, as a term for the second coming.

⁴⁷ ἐπόπται *epoptai* eyewitnesses, was a term applied in the mystery religions to *initiates*. This suggests there may have been a temple context to the events of the Mount of Transfiguration, which the author goes on to describe below.

⁴⁸ μεγαλειότητος *megaleiotētos* is a word usually reserved for God's majesty.

⁴⁹ The voice was that of the Father.

⁵⁰ The author here describes the events that took place on the Mount of Transfiguration. See Mt. 17:1-5; Mk. 9:2-7; Lk. 9:28-35.

⁵¹ IE Peter, James and John.

⁵² Temples symbolically represent holy mountains, where God reveals himself to men.

⁵³ βεβαιότερον *bebaioteron* more reliable (or, perhaps, the comparative should be taken with superlative force, "very reliable"). If we retain the comparative force of the adjective, it begs the question "more reliable than what?" GR myths? The Mount of Transfiguration? It may be that *because* of the apostolic experience at the holy mount, the word of prophecy (both in the OT and in the NT, including the author's own prophecy of the second coming of Christ in power) should now be understood as more reliable than it would otherwise be.

⁵⁴ Cf. D&C 131:5.

⁵⁵ OR to which.

⁵⁶ IE pay attention to.

⁵⁷ From an oil burning lamp. The light shining in a dark place is *prophecy*, on which we rely until the actual coming again of Jesus Christ, when the day dawns and the prophecy is no longer needed.

⁵⁸ φωσφόρος *phōsphoros* lit. light bringer, a word used to describe Venus, which was both the evening and the morning star, depending on whether it followed the sun's setting or preceded the sun's rising. The Latin equivalent term is *lucifer*, also meaning light bringer. In Christian tradition this word has been applied as a name to Satan, based on Isa. 14:12.

⁵⁹ ἰδίας *idias* one's own, personal. The interpretation of a scripture given it by the group (IE the Church) supersedes any private, idiosyncratic explanation of that scripture.

in old time⁶⁰ by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.⁶¹

Chapter 2

False Prophets and Teachers (Jude 1:4-13)

¹ BUT there were false prophets⁶² also⁶³ among the people, even as there shall be⁶⁴ false teachers among you, who privily⁶⁵ shall bring in damnable heresies,⁶⁶ even denying the Lord⁶⁷ that bought⁶⁸ them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. ² And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom⁶⁹ the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.⁷⁰ ³ And through covetousness⁷¹ shall they with feigned⁷² words make merchandise of⁷³ you:

whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not,⁷⁴
and their damnation slumbereth⁷⁵ not.⁷⁶

⁴ For if God spared not the angels that sinned,⁷⁷ but cast *them* down to hell,⁷⁸ and delivered *them* into chains⁷⁹ of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; ⁵ And spared not

⁶⁰ The allusion is to OT prophecies from ancient times.

⁶¹ True prophecy is not simply a human composition, but rather is always mediated through the Holy Ghost.

⁶² Expressed in GR by a single word, ψευδοπροφήται *pseudoprophētai*.

⁶³ Thus implying that there were true prophets as well as false ones among the people.

⁶⁴ The future tense indicates that this is a prophecy. But in vv. 14-19 and in 3:5 the present tense is used, indicating that false teachers are already present among the flock.

⁶⁵ OR secretly.

⁶⁶ In the NT the word "heresy" is beginning its transformation from its original, neutral meaning of a school of thought, an opinion, to the later, negative meaning of false doctrine.

⁶⁷ δεσπότην *despotēn* typically the master of a household, who has absolute authority over the members of the household, including its slaves.

⁶⁸ The imagery is of a master of a household who has manumitted his slaves. Jesus bought us with his atoning blood. This imagery of being "bought" by Jesus is common in the NT; for instance, the expression "a peculiar people" does not mean a strange or weird people, but rather a people for God's own possession, a purchased people.

⁶⁹ The antecedent is the "many" at the beginning of the v.

⁷⁰ βλασφημηθήσεται *blasphēmēthēsetai* slandered, maligned.

⁷¹ OR unscrupulous greed.

⁷² OR deceptive.

⁷³ OR exploit.

⁷⁴ OR does not lie idle.

⁷⁵ OR sleeps.

⁷⁶ The parallel expression here is a fuller statement of the "swift destruction" mentioned in v. 1.

the old world,⁸⁰ but saved Noah the eighth *person*,⁸¹ a preacher of righteousness,⁸² bringing in the flood⁸³ upon the world of the ungodly; ⁶ And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah⁸⁴ into ashes condemned *them* with an overthrow,⁸⁵ making *them* an ensample⁸⁶ unto those that after⁸⁷ should live ungodly; ⁷ And delivered just⁸⁸ Lot, vexed⁸⁹ with the filthy conversation⁹⁰ of the wicked: ⁸ (For that righteous man⁹¹ dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed⁹² *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds;)⁹³ ⁹ The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations,⁹⁴ and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: ¹⁰ But chiefly⁹⁵ them that walk after⁹⁶ the flesh in the lust of uncleanness,⁹⁷ and despise government.⁹⁸

⁷⁷ The allusion here is to the sons of God who slept with the daughters of men in Gen. 6:1-4, resulting in the giants, mighty men of old.

⁷⁸ τάρταρώσας *tartarōsas* consigned to hell. The text here uses a verbal form of the GR Tartarus, a word for the netherworld that had come into Jewish usage through increasing hellenization (adoption of GR thought and practices) of Israel. The reference to Tartarus occurs only here in the NT (although there are a few references to it in the LXX); it was viewed as being even lower than Hades. The use of this specific word Tartarus appears meant to evoke in the mind of the reader an allusion to a parallel story from GR literature to that of the fallen angels of Gen. 6; IE the Titans who, according to Hesiod, were defeated in war and hurled under the earth into the gloomy Tartarus. Each case is an example of divine punishment of the wicked.

⁷⁹ There is a textual issue here, as some mss. read "pits" in lieu of "chains." The correct reading is uncertain.

⁸⁰ An allusion to the flood.

⁸¹ Note that "person" is in italics and is not lit. present; the GR lit. says "as the eighth." The meaning is that God saved Noah along with seven others. The seven were Noah's wife, their three sons, and each son's wife.

⁸² Although Gen. is silent on the preaching of Noah, a midrashic tradition developed to the effect that Noah cried repentance to the people (to no avail) before the flood came.

⁸³ κατακλυσμὸν *kataklysmōn*, whence we get ENG "cataclysm."

⁸⁴ As recounted in Gen. 18:16-19:29. These two cities became proverbial for their great wickedness.

⁸⁵ καταστροφῆ *katastrophē* ruin. This GR word is the source for ENG "catastrophe." Some mss. omit this word; the textual evidence is about evenly divided, and it is uncertain whether the word was originally present in the text.

⁸⁶ OR example.

⁸⁷ IE after the destruction.

⁸⁸ Not in the sense of "only," but in the sense of "righteous."

⁸⁹ OR in anguish.

⁹⁰ OR debauched lifestyle. "Conversation" is a KJV archaism for conduct, not speech.

⁹¹ IE Lot.

⁹² OR tortured.

⁹³ The allusion is to the events of Gen. 19.

⁹⁴ OR trials.

⁹⁵ OR especially.

⁹⁶ A Hebraism for the way one conducts one's life.

Presumptuous *are they*, selfwilled,⁹⁹ they are not afraid to speak evil of¹⁰⁰ dignities.^{101 11} Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation¹⁰² against them before¹⁰³ the Lord.¹² But these, as natural brute¹⁰⁴ beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not;¹⁰⁵ and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;¹³ And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness,¹⁰⁶ *as* they that count it pleasure¹⁰⁷ to riot¹⁰⁸ in the day time. Spots¹⁰⁹ *they are* and blemishes, sporting¹¹⁰ themselves with their own deceivings¹¹¹ while they feast with you;¹⁴ Having eyes full of adultery,¹¹² and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling¹¹³ unstable souls:¹¹⁴ an heart they have exercised¹¹⁵ with covetous¹¹⁶ practices; cursed children:^{117 15} Which have forsaken the right way,¹¹⁸ and are gone astray, following the

⁹⁷ A Hebraic construction, meaning something like "lustful desires."

⁹⁸ IE authority, here meaning the dominion and lordship of God. The word does not refer to human governments.

⁹⁹ OR arrogant.

¹⁰⁰ OR slander.

¹⁰¹ δόξας *doxas* lit. glorious ones, meaning angels.

¹⁰² OR a slanderous judgment.

¹⁰³ IE on behalf of, emanating from.

¹⁰⁴ ἄλογα *aloga* without reason (with alpha privative). IE the false teachers are irrational, like the animals.

¹⁰⁵ ἀγνοοῦσιν *agnoousin*, a verb consisting of an alpha privative, which provides the negation, and a verb meaning "to know" (whence ENG *know* derives, the GR letter *gamma* coming into ENG as a *k*).

¹⁰⁶ ἀδικούμενοι μισθὸν ἀδικίας *adikoumenoi misthon adikias*. There is a play on words here: in GR one can see that the participle is a verbal form of the noun meaning "unrighteousness" (the basic sense of righteousness in the root *dik* preceded by an alpha privative). When the verb is used in the passive, as here, it means to suffer harm.

¹⁰⁷ ἡδονήν *hēdonēn*, whence we derive such ENG words as "hedonism." Pleasure was considered in ancient GR philosophical systems one of the four cardinal vices (along with desire, fear and grief), and as standing in opposition to reason. The author here is evoking this negative tradition concerning pleasure to make his point.

¹⁰⁸ OR carouse.

¹⁰⁹ OR stains.

¹¹⁰ OR indulging.

¹¹¹ Some mss. here read "love-feasts," assimilating to the form of text given in the parallel passage in Jude.

¹¹² Lit. of an adulteress. IE with eyes for nothing but an adulteress.

¹¹³ δελεάζοντες *deleazontes* enticing. The basic meaning of the verb had to do with baiting and catching, as in fishing, but it was commonly used in a moral sense for enticement by vices.

¹¹⁴ IE people.

¹¹⁵ OR trained.

¹¹⁶ IE greedy.

¹¹⁷ Lit. children of cursing; this is a Hebraism for "accursed children."

way of Balaam *the son* of Bosor,¹¹⁹ who loved the wages¹²⁰ of unrighteousness;¹¹⁶ But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb¹²¹ ass¹²² speaking with man's voice¹²³ forbad¹²⁴ the madness¹²⁵ of the prophet.

¹¹⁷ These¹²⁶ are wells without water,¹²⁷ clouds that are carried with a tempest;¹²⁸ to whom¹²⁹ the mist¹³⁰ of darkness is reserved for ever.¹³¹ ¹¹⁸ For when they speak great swelling words of vanity,¹³² they allure¹³³ through the lusts of the flesh,¹³⁴ *through much* wantonness,¹³⁵ those that were clean¹³⁶ escaped from them who live in error.¹¹⁹ While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption:¹³⁷ for of whom¹³⁸ a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.¹³⁹ ¹²⁰ For if after they have escaped the pollutions¹⁴⁰ of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,¹⁴¹ they are again entangled therein,¹⁴² and overcome, the latter

¹¹⁸ The way or road travelled was a common metaphor for living one's life; going astray was a reflection of wandering off of the right path.

¹¹⁹ The allusion is to the events described in Num. 22-24. The HEB Bible gives Balaam's father's name as Beor, not Bosor as the text here has it.

¹²⁰ Alluding to the money Balak offered Balaam to curse Israel.

¹²¹ ἀφώνον *aphōnon* unable to speak.

¹²² ὑποζύγιον *hupozugion* lit. under the yoke, a word generally used of a beast of burden, especially an ass. Balaam's ass is clearly the referent.

¹²³ As famously recounted in Num. 22.

¹²⁴ OR prevented.

¹²⁵ The GR noun παραφρονίαν *paraphronian* is elsewhere unattested. Based on its roots (*para* + *phrēn* mind) the word appears to mean out of one's mind, lacking rationality.

¹²⁶ Meaning the false teachers.

¹²⁷ An image suggesting that they are empty, without true substance.

¹²⁸ IE a wind storm.

¹²⁹ The antecedent is "these," again referring to the false teachers.

¹³⁰ ζόφος *zophos* darkness, gloom [of the netherworld].

¹³¹ The words "for ever" do not appear in the earliest GR mss.

¹³² IE high sounding but empty bombast.

¹³³ OR entice.

¹³⁴ IE low, sensual desires.

¹³⁵ OR debauchery.

¹³⁶ The KJV follows a later textual variant, ὀντως *ontōs* certainly, but the original text most likely read ὀλίγως *oligōs* barely, only just. The false teachers were targeting those who had only recently left the company of those who live in error; IE recent converts to the Church.

¹³⁷ OR slaves of destruction.

¹³⁸ OR by what.

¹³⁹ The idea is that people become slaves to that which masters them. "Whatever a man is defeated by, to that he is enslaved."

¹⁴⁰ OR filthy things.

¹⁴¹ IE after conversion.

¹⁴² IE in the errors and filthy things of the world.

end¹⁴³ is worse with them than the beginning.¹⁴⁴ ²¹ For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness,¹⁴⁵ than,¹⁴⁶ after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment¹⁴⁷ delivered unto them. ²² But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb,

The dog is turned to his own vomit again,¹⁴⁸

and

the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.¹⁴⁹

Chapter 3

The Promise of the Lord's Coming

¹ THIS second epistle,¹⁵⁰ beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which¹⁵¹ I stir up¹⁵² your pure minds by way of remembrance: ² That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets,¹⁵³ and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:¹⁵⁴ ³ Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers,¹⁵⁵ walking¹⁵⁶ after their own lusts, ⁴ And saying, Where is the promise of

¹⁴³ OR last state.

¹⁴⁴ IE if someone converts to Christianity but then backslides and abandons it, he is worse off than if he had not converted in the first place. This concept is at odds with the Reformed Christian dogma of eternal security, that "once saved, always saved."

¹⁴⁵ In Acts, discipleship of Jesus is often referred to as "the way."

¹⁴⁶ The formula *better...than* is a common form of expressing a wisdom saying.

¹⁴⁷ OR rule [of the community of believers]. *Holy rule* parallels *way of righteousness*.

¹⁴⁸ Prov. 26:11.

¹⁴⁹ The second proverbial saying is unknown in scripture, but appears to have been a common saying that the author's readers would have recognized.

¹⁵⁰ Presumably the implied allusion is to 1 Peter.

¹⁵¹ The relative "which" is plural in GR; the KJV makes this clear in ENG by adding the word "both." Inasmuch as the word is not lit. present in the GR text, the KJV puts "both" in italics.

¹⁵² The verb may be conative: "I am trying to stir up."

¹⁵³ Referring to predictions of Christ's second coming contained in the OT.

¹⁵⁴ OR of the command of the Lord and Saviour given through your apostles. KJV "of us" is an error; the correct text should read "your" (IE the apostles sent to you). IE both the OT prophets and the NT apostles have predicted the coming again of Jesus Christ.

¹⁵⁵ The GR lit. says "scoffers in scoffing," apparently in imitation of a HEB infinite absolute construction meant to intensify the concept. The jeering of the scoffers will be intense.

¹⁵⁶ Metaphoric for living, behaving.

his coming? for since the fathers¹⁵⁷ fell asleep,¹⁵⁸ all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation.¹⁵⁹ ⁵ For this¹⁶⁰ they willingly are ignorant of,¹⁶¹ that by the word of God the heavens were of old,¹⁶² and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:¹⁶³ ⁶ Whereby¹⁶⁴ the world that then was,¹⁶⁵ being overflowed with water, perished:¹⁶⁶ ⁷ But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store,¹⁶⁷ reserved unto fire¹⁶⁸ against the day of judgment and perdition¹⁶⁹ of ungodly¹⁷⁰ men.

⁸ But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing,¹⁷¹ that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.¹⁷² ⁹ The Lord is not slack¹⁷³ concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward,¹⁷⁴ not willing¹⁷⁵ that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.¹⁷⁶ ¹⁰ But the

¹⁵⁷ In the sense of forefathers; although this could allude to the first generation of Christians, more likely the reference is to the patriarchs of the OT.

¹⁵⁸ A euphemism for "died."

¹⁵⁹ The scoffers argue that the universe is immutable, and that there will therefore be no end.

¹⁶⁰ OR for in this; IE in holding to this opinion.

¹⁶¹ OR deliberately ignore the fact.

¹⁶² IE were created anciently.

¹⁶³ OR and an earth was put together out of and through the water. The point is that the heavens and earth did not always exist as they do now; they were brought into existence by God.

¹⁶⁴ The antecedent is intentionally ambiguous.

¹⁶⁵ IE after it had been created.

¹⁶⁶ IE in the flood. So the world has been destroyed once before, and it will be destroyed yet again.

¹⁶⁷ τειθησαυρισμένοι εἰσὶν *tethēsaourismenoi eisin* reserved, kept in the treasury. The participle is related to ENG *thesaurus*, GR for a storehouse (in the case of a thesaurus, a storehouse of words of similar meaning). God kept storehouses or treasuries of things both good and evil. For instance, in Dt. 28:12 God is said to open his good treasury, heaven, to dispense rain. For an example of God's evil treasury, see Dt. 32:34-35.

¹⁶⁸ It was a commonplace in apocalyptic literature that the second destruction of the world would be by fire.

¹⁶⁹ OR destruction.

¹⁷⁰ OR impious.

¹⁷¹ OR let not this one fact escape you.

¹⁷² The author alludes to Ps. 90:4. The point is that divine time is inscrutable from the human perspective. Therefore, the scoffers have no grounds to say that the time for the second coming has passed, unfulfilled.

¹⁷³ OR slow.

¹⁷⁴ OR patient toward us.

¹⁷⁵ OR wishing.

¹⁷⁶ This v. forms part of the battleground between Calvinist and Arminian Christians. Unlike Calvinism with its limited atonement, this v. seems to say that God wants all to be saved, even though not all will be.

day of the Lord¹⁷⁷ will come as a thief¹⁷⁸ in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great¹⁷⁹ noise, and the elements¹⁸⁰ shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.¹⁸¹ ¹¹ Seeing then *that* all these things shall be dissolved,¹⁸² what manner¹⁸³ of persons ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation¹⁸⁴ and godliness,¹² Looking for and hasting¹⁸⁵ unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?¹³ Nevertheless we, according to his promise,¹⁸⁶ look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein¹⁸⁷ dwelleth righteousness.

¹⁴ Wherefore,¹⁸⁸ beloved, seeing that ye look for such things,¹⁸⁹ be diligent¹⁹⁰ that ye may be found of him in peace,¹⁹¹ without spot, and blameless.¹⁹² ¹⁵ And account *that* the longsuffering¹⁹³ of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; ¹⁶ As also in all *his* epistles,¹⁹⁴ speaking in them of these things;¹⁹⁵ in which are some things hard to be understood,¹⁹⁶ which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest,¹⁹⁷ as *they do* also the

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Amos 5:18-20.

¹⁷⁸ κλέπτῆς *kleptēs*, whence we get such ENG words as "cleptomaniac."

¹⁷⁹ OR loud.

¹⁸⁰ The elements could be the classic GR elements of earth, air, fire and water, or they could refer to heavenly bodies.

¹⁸¹ Based on the textual evidence, the last word of the v. was probably εὐρεθήσεται *eurethēsetai* found. Inasmuch as the meaning of this word in the context was obscure, a large number of variant readings appear in the mss. attempting to make sense out of the passage, such as the KJV's burned up, dissolved, laid bare, disappeared, etc. The original word, albeit obscure, appears to have been used in a forensic sense, just as a defendant is "found" by the court to be either guilty or innocent.

¹⁸² Lit. loosed; IE broken apart.

¹⁸³ OR kind.

¹⁸⁴ OR conduct.

¹⁸⁵ OR hastening.

¹⁸⁶ An allusion to Isa. 65:17.

¹⁸⁷ The GR is a plural expression, and refers back to both the new heavens and new earth.

¹⁸⁸ OR therefore.

¹⁸⁹ IE the things mentioned in the previous v.: new heavens, a new earth, and righteousness.

¹⁹⁰ OR eager, zealous.

¹⁹¹ Understood in the Semitic sense (*shalom*), meaning complete or whole. The language uses imagery from the temple sacrifices, and is synonymous with being spotless and unblemished, as expressed in the next few words.

¹⁹² ἀμώμητοι *amōmētoi* unblemished.

¹⁹³ OR patience.

¹⁹⁴ OR letters.

¹⁹⁵ IE the last things, the Day of the Lord.

¹⁹⁶ The author does not elaborate on what specifically the things are in Paul's letters that he sees as being hard to be understood. Modern readers of Paul could probably fill in this lacuna.

other scriptures,¹⁹⁸ unto their own destruction.¹⁷ Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things*¹⁹⁹ before,²⁰⁰ beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.²⁰¹ ¹⁸ But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.²⁰²

¹⁹⁷ OR distort, take out of context.

¹⁹⁸ Note that the author classes Paul's letters as being among the scriptures.

¹⁹⁹ Note that "these things" are in italics, indicating that the words are not lit. present in the GR. The JST clarifies the antecedent to the ENG expression by identifying the object of the verb as the things that are coming.

²⁰⁰ The author having forewarned them.

²⁰¹ IE firmness, stability.

²⁰² The mss. are inconsistent as to whether the letter ends with the word "amen."