

## Introduction to 2 Peter

- **Authorship.** If the arguments against Petrine authorship are in fact conclusive, this provokes questions about who may have written 2 Peter and about the letter's place and contribution to canon and to tradition. The option of reading it "as though it had been written by Peter" seems somewhat facile if the arguments of the letter's discontinuity from 1 Peter are to be taken seriously.
- **Christian faith in a transitional period.** Many suggest that the letter reflects a culture where the shifts from a Jewish to a Hellenistic atmosphere and from an apostolic to a postapostolic culture were being felt. If this is the case, interpreters need to evaluate how 2 Peter should be read against other, subsequent cultural shifts. One rightly asks, for example, whether the letter's posture of retrenchment or caution is too pronounced.
- **Reading 2 Peter as a "testament" of the Apostle Peter.** Some interpreters identify the genre of 2 Peter as a testament, the final words and exhortations of a revered figure. This becomes impossible, of course, if one accepts the view that the letter was not written by Peter, but by someone else, perhaps even decades after the apostle's death.
- **References to other texts.** The letter directly refers to the writings of Paul in 3:15–16, and it also alludes to familiar biblical themes and motifs. These are intriguing but do not combine to provide a clear idea of what the author's sources might have been. Recognized affinities to other early Christian literature are also not conclusive to most readers in suggesting a date or setting.

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