

## 2 Kefa ~ An Introduction

In my last post, we completed our study of **1 Kefa**. In this post, we begin our study of **2 Kefa**. Before we start going verse by verse, let me share some background material from various commentaries to get us started, and then look at **2 Kefa 1:1-2**.

### Introduction to 2 Kefa

**Second Kefa** emphasizes practical **Messianic** living. As the **Messianic** movement gained steam, **Messianic communities** began to encounter more false teachers in their midst. **Kefa** cautioned **Believers** to beware of false teachers with their bogus doctrines and lascivious lifestyles. Against this view, **2 Kefa** argues that the **Day of the Lord** is undoubtedly coming and that **Believers** should live in light of this truth.

The temptation to a sinful lifestyle so concerned **Kefa** that he followed up with this one shortly after his first letter. **Kefa** also warned against denials of **Yeshua's** return with its accompanying judgment. He urged his readers to make every effort to grow in the Messianic faith's knowledge and practice.

### Authorship & Date

Regarding authorship, **2 Kefa** is one of the most disputed letters in the **Brit Hadashah**. The style differs so much from **1 Kefa** that the same person could not have written both unless he were purposely trying to alter his style. But **Kefa** could have given literary freedoms to a different scribe (**1 Kefa 5:13**) for each, with the second being more accustomed to a bombastic style. The attestation for **2 Kefa** is weaker than that for most other **Brit Hadashah** books but more substantial than that of early **Messianic** books that did not become part of the canon for the **Brit Hadashah**.

The author of **2 Kefa** plainly identified himself as the emissary **Kefa**:

**From: Shim'on Kefa, a slave and emissary of Yeshua the Messiah. To: Those who, through the righteousness of our God and of our Deliverer Yeshua the Messiah, have been given the same kind of trust as ours: ~ 2 Kefa 1:1 (CJB)**

The letter contains several personal allusions to **Kefa's** life. He mentioned that his death was close (1:14), described himself as an eyewitness of the transfiguration of **Yeshua** (1:16–18), quoted the words of the voice from heaven at this event (1:17), indicated that he had previously written to the letter's recipients (whom he called "dear friends" in 3:1), and also called **Sha'ul** "our dear brother" (3:15). This suggests that the author was close to **Sha'ul**. Such references point to **Kefa** as the author.

Many contemporary scholars, however, reject **Kefa** as the author of this letter. They argue the following:

1. The personal references to **Kefa's** life are a literary device used by someone who wrote under the emissary's name to create the appearance of authenticity.
2. The style of Greek in **2 Kefa** is different from that of **1 Kefa**.
3. The reference to **Sha'ul's** letters as a collection (3:15–16) points to a date later than **Kefa's** lifetime.
4. **Second Kefa** was dependent upon Jude. If this is true, **Kefa's** authorship is problematic.

In response to these objections, one should consider the following:

- A. The early church soundly rejected the practice of writing under an apostolic pseudonym, regarding it as an outright forgery.
- B. **Kefa** may have had help in writing **1 Kefa 5:12** and not in writing **2 Kefa**, a situation that would lead to different styles in his Greek.
- C. Rather than the whole collection, **Kefa** may have referred only to those **Pauline** letters that were known at the time of writing.
- D. **Kefa** may have borrowed some from **Jude**, or both may have used a common source.

All of this evidence suggests that **2 Kefa** should be accepted as authentic. <sup>1</sup> As for me, I am persuaded by those who originally compiled the canon as to its authenticity.

If **Kefa** authored **2 Kefa**, it must have been composed by the mid-60s CE, when he was martyred in Rome. <sup>2</sup>

## Structure

*To: Those who, through the righteousness of our God and of our Deliverer Yeshua the Messiah, have been given the same kind of trust as ours:*

**Second Kefa** is a general letter with a typical salutation, main body, and farewell features. Its style is that of a pastoral letter, driven by the recipients' needs, rather than some formal treatise.

After the greeting, **Kefa** reminds his audience of their **Messianic** identity - as those saved from their sins by **Yeshua** - and calls them to be godly people who live as if **Yeshua's** return is a reality (1:3-21). **Kefa** then warns about false teachers motivated by greed and lust rather than by love for God (2:1-22). Much of this section and the start of the next section have strong similarities with the letter of **Jude** (compare **2 Kefa** 2:1-18; 3:1-3 with **Jude** 4-18). There are several explanations for these overlaps: **2 Kefa** relies on **Jude**, **Jude** relies on **2 Kefa**, or both **Jude** and **2 Kefa** rely on a common source (perhaps oral tradition).

**Kefa** then offers an additional argument against false teaching, assuring his readers that **Yeshua** will surely come again (2 Kefa 3:1-13). The letter closes with a final instruction for the **Believers** to depend on what they know to be true, refusing to be led astray by the false teachers (3:14-18).

In my next post, we will explore **Confirming Your Calling and Election** in **2 Kefa 3-15**.

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<sup>1</sup> CSB Study Bible: Notes.

<sup>2</sup> Faithlife Study Bible.