

# 2 Peter

**AUTHOR:** Peter

**TIME WRITTEN:** Shortly before A.D. 64

**POSITION IN THE BIBLE:**

- 61st Book in the Bible
- 22nd book in the New Testament
- 17th of 21 epistle books
- 60 have preceded it. 5 to follow it.

**CHAPTERS:** 3

**VERSES:** 61

**WORDS:** 1,559

**KEY WORD:** Guard Against False Teachers

**TWO KEY PASSAGES:**

1. **2 Peter 1:20-21** - “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,  
21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”
2. **2 Peter 3:9-11** - “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.  
10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.  
11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness.”

**KEY CHAPTER:** 2 Peter 1

1. The Scripture clearest in defining the relationship between God and man on the issue of inspiration is contained in 1 Peter 1:19-21.
2. Three distinct principles surface:
  - a. That the interpretation of Scriptures is not limited to a favored elect but is open to all who “rightly divide the word of truth” (**2 Timothy 2:15**).
  - b. That the divinely inspired prophet did not initiate the Scripture himself.
  - c. That the Holy Spirit (not the emotion or circumstances of the moment) moved holy men.

**OBSERVATIONS ABOUT 2 PETER**

1. 1 Peter deals with problems from the outside. 2 Peter deals with problems from the inside.
  - a. Peter writes to warn Christians about the false teachers who are peddling damaging doctrine.

Did not the apostle Paul have to do the same?

- b. He begins by urging them to keep close watch on their personal lives.
  - c. The Christian life demands:
    1. Diligence in pursuing moral excellence.
    2. Knowledge.
    3. Self-control.
    3. Perseverance.
    5. Godliness
    6. Brotherly kindness
    7. Selfless love.
  - d. By contrast, the false teachers are:
    1. Sensual.
    2. Arrogant.
    3. Greedy
    4. Covetous
  - e. False teachers scoff at the thought of future judgment and live their lives as if the present would be the pattern for the future.
  - f. Peter reminds them that although god may be long suffering in sending judgment, ultimately it will come.
  - g. In view of that fact, Christians should live lives of:
    1. Godliness.
    2. Blamelessness.
    3. Steadfastness.
2. In spite of arguments to the contrary, we strongly believe that Peter authored this epistle.
- a. **2 Peter 1:1** - "Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ."
  - b. **2 Peter 3:1**- " "Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder).
  - c. The writer refers to the Lord's prediction about the apostle's death in **2 Peter 1:14** - "Knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me."
    1. In **John 21:18-19**, Jesus had said this to Peter: "Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.  
19 This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, Follow Me."
  - d. In **2 Peter 1:16-18**, the author says that he was an eyewitness of the transfiguration of Christ.
 

"For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

18 And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain."

1. The “we” would be inclusive of Peter, James, and John.
3. Concerning the epistle:
  - a. It appears from 3:1 that Peter had the same readers of Asia Minor in mind when he wrote 2 Peter.
  - b. The epistle is written to:
    1. Expose the dangerous and seductive work of false teachers.
    2. To warn Christians to be on their guard so that they will not be “led away with the error of the wicked” **3:17**
    3. To exhort the readers to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” **3:18** Growth into Christian maturity is the best defense against spiritual counterfeits.
  - c. Was probably written from Rome just before the apostle’s death. 1:14
    1. Peter’s martyrdom took place between A.D. 64 and 66.
    2. Thus, Peter was killed in Rome some two to four years before Paul’ beheading there.
4. Apart from the first verse of his epistle, Peter employs the title “Lord” every time he names the Savior

## **SUMMARY OF 2 PETER**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

- A. Peter wrote his first epistle to encourage his readers to respond properly to external opposition.
- B. His second epistle focuses on internal opposition caused by false teachers whose “destructive heresies” (2:1) can seduce believers into error and immorality.
- C. While 1 Peter speaks of the new birth through the living Word, 2 Peter stresses the need for growth in the grace and knowledge of Christ.
- D. The best antidote for error is a mature understanding of the truth.
- E. There are three major sections in the book:
  1. Cultivation of Christian Character. (1)
  2. Condemnation of False teachers. (2)
  3. Confidence of Christ’s return. (3)

### **CULTIVATION OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. (1)**

- A. Peter’s salutation (2:1-2) is an introduction to the major theme of chapter 1, that is, the true knowledge of Jesus Christ.
  1. The readers are reminded of the “great and precious promises” that are theirs because of their obedience to Christ. 1:3-4
  2. They have been called away from the corruption of the world to conformity with Christ, and Peter urges them to progress by forging a chain of eight

Christian virtues from faith to love (1:5-7). We call them the Christian graces.

- |                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| a. Faith        | e. Perseverance       |
| b. Virtue       | f. Godliness          |
| c. Knowledge    | g. Brotherly kindness |
| d. Self control | h. Love               |

3. If a Christian does not transform profession into practice, he becomes spiritually useless, perverting the purpose for which he was called. 1:8-11

B. The letter was written not long before Peter's death (1:14) to remind Christians of the riches of their position in Christ and their responsibility to hold fast to the truth. 1:2-21

1. Peter knew that his departure from this earth was imminent, and he left this letter as a written legacy.
2. As an eyewitness of the life of Christ (he illustrates this with a portrait of the Transfiguration in 1:16-18).
4. Peter affirms the authority and reliability of the prophetic word.
4. The clearest biblical description of the divine-human process of inspiration is found in **1:21** ' "but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

### **CONDEMNATION OF FALSE TEACHERS. (2)**

A. Peter's discussion of true prophecy leads him to an extended denunciation of false prophecy in the churches.

1. These false teachers were especially dangerous because they arose within the church and undermined the confidence of the brethren. 2:1-3
2. Peter's extended description of the characteristics of these false teachers (2:10-22) exposes the futility and corruption of their strategies.
3. Their teachings and life-styles reek of arrogance and selfishness, but their crafty words are capable of enticing immature believers.

### **CONFIDENCE OF CHRIST'S RETURN. (3)**

A. Again Peter states that this letter is designed to stir up the minds of his readers "by way of reminder." **3:1**

1. This very timely chapter is designed to remind them of the certain truth of the Lord's return in contrast to the mockers who deny the doctrine of the second coming of Christ.
2. These scoffers will claim that God does not powerfully intervene in world affairs, but Peter calls attention to two past and one future divinely induced catastrophic events. 3:1-7
  - a. The Creation.

- b. The Flood.
  - c. The dissolution of the present heavens and earth.
- 3. It may appear that the promise of Christ's return will not be fulfilled, but this is untrue for two reasons:
  - a. God's perspective on the passing of time is quite unlike that of men. 3:9
  - b. The delay in the Lord's second coming is due to God's patience in waiting for more individuals to come to a knowledge of Christ. 3:9
- 4. Nevertheless, the day of consummation will eventually come.
- B. In light of this coming day of the Lord, Peter exhorts his readers to live lives of: 3:14-18
  - 1. Holiness.
  - 2. Steadfastness.
  - 3. Growth.
- C. Peter mentions the letters of Paul in **3:15-16** - "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation-- as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,  
16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures."
- D. After a final warning about the danger of false teachers, the epistle closes with:
  - 1. An appeal.
  - 2. A doxology.