

2 PETER

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BACKGROUND

In light of his imminent death ([2 Peter 1:14-15](#)), Peter wanted to prepare his readers for the time when he would no longer be with them. They needed to press on to spiritual maturity, beware of apostasy, and be assured of the Lord's certain coming.

AUTHOR

See [1 Peter: Author](#).

DATE AND LOCATION

A.D. 64-67, shortly after 1 Peter (see [1 Peter: Date and Location](#)).

RECIPIENTS

See [1 Peter: Recipients](#).

PURPOSE

- To remind his readers of God's provisions for salvation and spiritual maturity ([2 Peter 1](#))
- To warn of the dangers of apostasy ([2 Peter 2](#))
- To assure them concerning the Lord's return ([2 Peter 3](#))

UNIQUE FEATURES

- The letter blends severity and tenderness, as Peter contemplated death while seeking to address urgent problems in the church.
- 2 Peter contains key passages on
 - the inspiration of Scripture ([2 Peter 1:19-21](#))
 - false teachers ([2 Peter 2](#))
 - the "day of the Lord" ([2 Peter 3:10-13](#))
- Peter showed that he and Paul had repaired the rift between them, acknowledging Paul's letters to be on the same level as OT Scripture ([2 Peter 3:15-16](#)).

COMPARISON WITH OTHER BIBLE BOOKS

[John 14-16](#) and [2 Timothy](#):

- All are farewell discourses.

2 Thessalonians:

- Both concentrate on the darker side of things to come.

Jude:

- [2 Peter 2](#) warns of false teachers who would come; Jude warns against false teachers who were already there.

OUTLINE

I. GOD'S PROVISION ([2 Peter 1](#))

1. For Christian living ([2 Peter 1:1-11](#))
2. For knowledge of the truth ([2 Peter 1:12-21](#))

II.FALSE TEACHERS ([2 Peter 2](#))

- A. Description ([2 Peter 2:1-3](#))
- B. Their doom, our salvation ([2 Peter 2:4-9](#))
- C. Description ([2 Peter 2:10-22](#))

III.CHRIST'S CERTAIN RETURN ([2 Peter 3](#))

- A. False teachers' denial of his return ([2 Peter 3:1-7](#))
- B. The day of the Lord ([2 Peter 3:8-13](#))
- C. Living in light of the day of the Lord ([2 Peter 3:14-18](#))

TIMELINE

A.D. 26-27:	Peter called, follows Christ
A.D. 29:	Peter's great confession
A.D. 30:	Peter denies Christ, repents, preaches at Pentecost
A.D. 40:	Peter leads Cornelius to Christ
A.D. 64-65:	Peter writes 1 Peter & 2 Peter
A.D. 67-68:	Peter & Paul martyred?

[2 Peter 1:1-2](#) *"The same precious faith."* Describing himself as a servant and missionary, and addressing those "who share the same precious faith," Peter urged them to abound in the knowledge of Christ.

2 Peter 1:3-11 *Victory virtues.* Since God has made all the necessary provisions for our spiritual maturity (2 Peter 1:3-4), we are to try our best to incorporate godly qualities into our lives (2 Peter 1:5-8). Our election by God for salvation is a sure thing, but we can experience it to the full in this life only as we consistently practice godliness (2 Peter 1:9-11; see exposition on 1 Peter 1:1-2).

2 Peter 1:12-15 *"Now, a few words before I go . . ."* Peter knew he would soon die a martyr's death, as Christ had predicted (see John 21:18-19). He was writing this second letter to help ensure that, after his death, his disciples would remain faithful to Christ. He spoke of his death as a departure (2 Peter 1:15; compare Luke 9:31). Moses (see Deut. 4:22) and Paul (see 2 Tim. 4:6) had similar premonitions of death.

2 Peter 1:16-21 *A word more sure.* The truth Peter had proclaimed was not mere hearsay; he had been an eyewitness of Christ's life and teachings (2 Peter 1:16) and was one of the privileged three to witness the Transfiguration (2 Peter 1:17-18; see Matthew 17:1-8). As memorable as that experience was, however, Peter seemed to treasure it mostly because of how it confirmed the written words of Scripture (2 Peter 1:19-21).

Scripture should never be interpreted lightly or out of context as a proof text. It is the inspired Word of God and should be handled with utmost care. Bible authors were "moved" by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21) as a sailboat is carried along by the wind. They did not go into a trance but were fully alert as God spoke to them (see *Inspiration*).

The same Holy Spirit who originally gave the Word desires to teach it both to and through God's people today (see John 14:26; John 16:13-14; 1 Cor. 2:9-16).

On "until the day dawns" (2 Peter 1:19), compare Malachi 4:2 and Rev. 22:16.

2 Peter 2:1-3 *False teachers past and present.* Even as God's faithful prophets were recording his Word, there were (and still are) many false prophets, some of whom deny Christ's deity. Many fall victim to them, but they will one day be judged.

2 Peter 2:4-9 *He saves some while judging others.* Even as God judges false teachers (2 Peter 2:4-8), he will surely rescue the righteous (2 Peter 2:9). This can be seen in the way he

- saved Noah while judging the world with water (2 Peter 2:5)
- saved Lot while judging Sodom with fire (2 Peter 2:6-8)

2 Peter 2:4 may refer to

- all the angels who sided with Lucifer in his great revolt (see Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Rev. 12:3-4)
- or, more specifically, the angels who some scholars believe are described in Genesis 6:1-5 (see Jude 1:6)

It would be hard to conclude from Genesis 13-14, 19 that Lot was "righteous" (2 Peter 2:8); however, "the Lord knows those who are his" (2 Tim. 2:19). Through his selfish and wrong choice concerning where to live, Lot subjected himself to being distressed and sickened by Sodom's moral depravity.

2 Peter 2:10-16 *Just like brute beasts.* Apparently with certain false teachers in mind, Peter described them as lustful, greedy, and insolent ([2 Peter 2:10-11](#)). In intellect and lifestyle, they were little more than animals ([2 Peter 2:12-14](#)). They were like Balaam, the false prophet who was rebuked by the very donkey he was riding (see [Numbers 22:28-30](#); [Jude 1:11](#); [Rev. 2:14](#)).

2 Peter 2:17-22 *Just like hogs and dogs.* Like "dried-up springs of water," these false teachers' words were empty of meaning; they enslaved immature believers ([2 Peter 2:17-18](#)). They promised their converts freedom while they themselves were slaves of depravity ([2 Peter 2:19](#)). It would be better for these false teachers to have never been born, than to have known the truth and rejected it ([2 Peter 2:20-22](#)).

Some see [2 Peter 2:20-21](#) as an indication that Christians can lose their salvation. However:

- The harsh language would suggest otherwise: Nowhere in the Bible does God call a believer a pig or a dog—animals despised in ancient times ([2 Peter 2:22](#)).
- A preponderance of other Scriptures assure the believer that salvation cannot be lost (see exposition on the following: [§John 10:22-30](#); [§Ephes. 1:13-14](#); [§Hebrews 6:4-12](#); [§1 Peter 1:3-5](#); however, see also exposition on [§ Hebrews 10 Hebrew 10:26-31](#)).

2 Peter 3:1-7 *They forget the Flood, but they'll see the fire!* Just as the prophets had warned, Peter again warned that many "scoffers" and false teachers would arise in the last days ([2 Peter 3:1-3](#)). Pointing to the ancient unchanging laws of nature, they would ridicule the very notion of Christ's second coming—conveniently forgetting God's other miraculous deeds, such as the Flood ([2 Peter 3:4-6](#)). Since God had already judged the world once, no one should doubt that he'll do it again: Just as he destroyed it with water, he will someday destroy it with fire ([2 Peter 3:7](#)).

2 Peter 3:8-13 *From mercy to meltdown to Millennium.* When will God next destroy the world? We cannot say, for our human concept of time means nothing to God, who created and controls time ([2 Peter 3:8](#)). The only reason God *delays* judgment is to give as many as possible the opportunity for salvation ([2 Peter 3:9](#)). When judgment does come, it will be final and catastrophic, with the very elements of nature melting in "fire" ([2 Peter 3:10](#)). In light of this certain judgment, we should live in holiness as we await the better world that will follow ([2 Peter 3:11-13](#)). Concerning "the day of the Lord" ([2 Peter 3:10](#)) and the day of God ([2 Peter 3:12](#)), see [Isaiah: Background](#) and exposition on [§Isaiah 2:5-4:1](#).

2 Peter 3:14-18 *"Be holy and hopeful, like Paul said."* As we look forward to Christ's return, we should live in peace and holiness and hope of salvation, as Paul also urged us to do ([2 Peter 3:14-16](#)). If we keep growing spiritually, we will avoid falling away from our faith ([2 Peter 3:17-18](#)). Note Peter's statements concerning Paul:

- He and Paul continued to be good friends following their confrontation in Antioch (see [Galatians 2:11-14](#)).
- He attested to the divine inspiration of Paul's writings.
- He admitted that some of Paul's writings were "hard to understand," and noted that some in his day (as in our day) deliberately misinterpreted those and other Scriptures. Yet with the Holy Spirit's help (see [John 16:13](#)), we can understand even Paul ([2 Peter 3:18](#)).

