



Investigating the Word of God

Second Peter



Gene Taylor

© Gene Taylor, 2006. All Rights Reserved.

An Introduction to Second Peter

The Author of the Book

In his address the writer calls himself “Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ” (1:1). In the epistle Peter testifies to his association with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration (1:16-18).

“While there is abundant evidence from the early Church Fathers that I Peter was accepted as the genuine work of the apostle, for some strange reason this cannot be said of II Peter. It was a long time before this book became fully recognized as the writing of Peter...Why the argument? Quite largely because of the very great differences in the original Greek in the two epistles. I Peter is in good, smooth Greek, with much in style that is close to classical Greek, while II Peter is in rough, terse, broken Greek, more of the common language type...This (Difference in style - GT) has been explained by the fact that, apparently, Silas, Paul’s traveling companion (‘Silvanus,’ I Peter 5:12), wrote I Peter at Peter’s direction, probably using his own style. It is likely that as a traveling companion of the highly-educated Paul, Silas would have had a very proficient use of proper Greek terms and language, the reason for the smoothness of the first epistle. It is apparent, too, that II Peter was written by Peter himself, with no assistant, as no one is mentioned as ever being with him. He likely wrote this epistle in haste, a short while before his death, possibly while in prison, and therefore, with no secretary. Furthermore, it is just the type of Greek to be expected from Peter, a Galilean fisherman.” (William. S. Deal, *Baker’s Pictorial Introduction to the Bible*, 404-405)

Peter was also called Simon, or Simeon (Acts 15:14; 2 Pet. 1:1). He was born in the city of Bethsaida, a fishing village in Galilee (John 1:44). His father’s name was Jonas (Matt. 16:17) or John (John 1:42).

Along with his brother Andrew and his father, Peter was a fisherman at Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 8:14). He resided at Capernaum as did his wife’s mother (1 Cor. 9:5).

His brother Andrew brought him to Jesus who gave him the surname “Cephas” which means “a stone” (John 1:40-42). Harkening to the call of Jesus, he became His constant companion and one of His apostles (Matt. 4:19; Luke 5:10; Matt. 10:2; Mark 3:14-16).

His ardor, earnestness and courage made him a leader among the disciples from the very first. His name always appears first in the list of the Apostles (Matt. 10:2; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13). He, along with James and John, was also one of the three in the inner circle of disciples accompanying Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration and in the Garden of Gethsemane.

His confession of Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God, in Matthew 16 stands in stark contrast to his denial of Him at His trial in Matthew 26.

On the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2, he preached the gospel in its fullness for the first time (vv. 14-41) and continued to preach it (Acts 3:11-26) even though he was put in prison for his preaching (Acts 4:1-22; 5:1-11).

He preached to the first Gentile converts (Acts 9:32 - 10:48). He was imprisoned by Herod Agrippa and miraculously released (Acts 12:1-17). He took a leading part in the Jerusalem conference over circumcision (Acts 15:1-21; Gal. 2:6-10). He had to be rebuked by the apostle Paul for being hypocritical with the Gentile converts (Gal. 2:11-15).

Tradition says that he was crucified “upside-down” in Rome because he said he was unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as Jesus.

Those to Whom the Book Was Written

“It is quite clear that the same persons who received I Peter are addressed here (3:1)...This epistle becomes wider in scope, however, than the former one, for it embraces all of ‘like precious faith’ (1:1) and was doubtless meant to be a general epistle for the whole Christian church.” (Deal, 404)

“The recipients of the letter are not designated as they are in the First Epistle of Peter. However, in 2 Pet. 3:1, there seems to be a reference very definitely to the First Epistle. If this is correctly interpreted, then the destination of the two letters are the same; otherwise, to whom Peter wrote in the second letter is not known.” (Roy Cogdill, *The New Testament Book-by-Book*, 165)

The Time and Place of Writing

“The best scholars generally agree that this epistle likely was written about A.D. 67. It is known that the Roman Emperor Nero died in A.D. 68, and tradition says he ordered Peter’s execution, which must have been shortly before Nero’s death.” (Deal, 404)

“There is no indication where Peter was at the time of writing. Since tradition placed his martyrdom in Rome, he may have been in that city at that time.” (Robert G. Gromacki, *New Testament Survey*, 361)

Why This Book Was Written

“Peter wrote his first epistle to encourage his readers to respond properly to external opposition. His second epistle focuses on internal opposition caused by false teachers whose ‘destructive heresies’ (2:1) can seduce believers into error and immorality. 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.” (*Nelson’s Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts*, 461)

“Perhaps the clearest statement of the exact purpose that Peter had in mind in writing this letter is found in the expression: ‘This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior’ (3:1-2).” (Cogdill, 165)

A consideration of the book itself shows that it was written to:

- Remind his readers of proper doctrine and ethics. (1:12-13)
- Knowing he was about to die (1:14), he purposed to leave a permanent, written record of his teaching so his readers could have it after his death. (1:15; 3:1)
- Encourage growth as a Christian. (1:1-11)

- Explain the imminence of his death. (1:12-15)
- Show how the transfiguration of Christ guaranteed His second coming. (1:16-18)
- Inform that the second coming was not a human-originated concept. (1:19-21)
- Describe the moral and doctrinal characteristics of the false teachers. (2:1-22)
- Explain the delay in Christ's return. (3:1-9)
- Describe the destruction of the universe in the day of the Lord. (3:10-14)
- Elaborate further the doctrinal ignorance of the false teachers. (3:15-16)
- Stimulate vigilance and growth on the part of his readers. (3:17-18)

- Robert G. Gromacki, *NT Survey*

An Outline of Second Peter

I. Salutation (1:1-2)

II. Safeguards Against the Apostasy (1:3-21)

- A. The maturity of believers. (3-11)
- B. The testimony of an apostle. (12-18)
- C. The authority of Scripture. (19-21)

III. Description of the Apostates (2:1-22)

- A. Their methods. (1-3a)
- B. Their judgment. (3b-13).
- C. Their character. (14-22).

IV. Refutation of the Apostasy (3:1-18)

- A. The attack. (1-4)
- B. The defense. (5-18).
 - 1. The past destruction of the world. (5-7)
 - 2. The present delay of God. (8-9)
 - 3. The future destruction by fire. (10-14)
 - 4. The ignorance of the apostates. (15-16)
 - 5. The stability of the readers. (17-18)

Second Peter Chapter One

Keys to This Chapter

Key Passage: Verses 5-8

“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Key People

Simon Peter

Key Words

Precious

Godliness

Virtue

Exceedingly

Partakers

Nature

Diligence

Call

Election

Tent

Negligent

Cunningly

Devised

Fables

Interpretations

Key Lesson

Questions on the Text

1. Who wrote this book? How does he describe himself?
2. To whom was the book addressed?
3. What has God’s divine power given to us?
4. What else, according to verse four, has been given to us?
5. Of what can one become a partaker?
6. List all the things that are to be added to one’s faith?
7. Why, according to verse eight, are these things to be added to one’s faith?
8. What is said of the one who lacks these things?
9. According to verse ten, of what are Christians to be diligent?
10. What, according to verse 11, will be supplied to the diligent one?
11. What did Peter say he had to shortly do? (v. 14)
12. What, according to verse 16, did Peter not follow?
13. Of what was Peter an eyewitness?
14. What did Peter have confirmed to him?
15. Of what is no prophecy of Scripture? How were the holy men of God able to speak?

True - False

- T F 1. God’s divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness.
- T F 2. The Christian has escaped the corruption that is in the world.
- T F 3. An entrance will be supplied into the everlasting kingdom of God to those who stumble.
- T F 4. Peter and the other apostles cunningly devised fables.
- T F 5. No prophecy ever came by the will of man.

Discussion Question

Why is it important that no prophecy of Scripture never came by the will of man?

Second Peter Chapter Two

Keys to This Chapter

Key Passage: Verses 20-21

“For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.”

Key People

Noah

Lot

Balaam

Beor

Key Places

Sodom

Gomorrah

Key Words

Heresies

Blasphemed

Covetousness

Exploit

Oppressed

Tormented

Unjust

Dignitaries

Brute

Carouse

Enticing

Pollutions

Entangle

Key Lesson

Questions on the Text

1. What would false teachers bring in among these Christians?
2. What will their false teachings bring upon the false teachers?
3. What will happen to those who would follow the destructive ways of these false teachers?
4. According to verse four, whom did God not spare when they sinned? What did he do with them?
5. What did God do to the ancient world in the time of Noah?
6. What did God do to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah? Why did He do it?
7. Why was Lot spared when the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed?
8. Out of what does the Lord deliver the godly?
9. For what does God reserve the unjust?
10. According to verse ten, what do false teachers despise?
11. According to verse 12, in what will false teachers perish?
12. According to verse 15, whose way had these false teachers followed?
13. According to verse 18, what were these false teachers speaking?
14. What did these false teachers promise?
15. Of what were the false teachers slaves?
16. According to verse 20, through what does one escape the pollutions of the world?
17. For whom, according to verse 20, is their “latter end worse for them than the beginning?”
18. According to verse 21, what is better than turning from the holy commandment?
19. To what does a dog return?
20. To what does a washed sow return?

Discussion Question

Why is it worse for a person to go back to the world once he has known and obeyed Christ than it is for the one who has never known Him?

Second Peter Chapter Three

Keys to This Chapter

Key Passage: Verse 9

“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.”

Key People

Paul

Key Words

Scoffers

Perdition

Slack

Longsuffering

Dissolved

Unstable

Key Lesson

Questions on the Text

1. Why did Peter write this second epistle to these Christians?
2. Who did Peter say would come in the last days?
3. For what are the heavens and the earth now preserved?
4. According to verse eight, what is one thing that is not to be forgotten?
5. What, according to verse nine, is one thing the Lord is not?
6. Why is the Lord longsuffering?
7. How will the day of the Lord come?
8. What will happen on the day of the Lord?
9. What should people be “since all these things will be dissolved?”
10. According to verse 13, for what should people be looking?
11. To what, according to verse 14, should people give diligence?
12. According to verse 15, what is the longsuffering of the Lord?
13. Who else had written of the longsuffering of the Lord?
14. What were some who were untaught and unstable twisting to their own destruction?
15. In what did Peter desire that his readers grow?

True - False

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| T | F | 1. Scoffers would come in the last days asking, “Where is the promise of His coming?” |
| T | F | 2. The Lord is not willing that any should perish. |
| T | F | 3. Since all these things are going to be dissolved, a person should live it up and do what he wants while he can. |
| T | F | 4. We look for a new heavens and a new earth in which unrighteousness dwells. |
| T | F | 5. When one is led away with the error of the wicked, he falls from his own steadfastness. |

Discussion Question

How can one grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

For additional class books, study guides, and sermon outline books, visit:

 **Centerville Road Church Of Christ**
4015 Centerville Road, Tallahassee, Florida 32308
www.centervilleroad.com