

God's Amazing Book

Journey Through the New Testament

KNOWING AND GUARDING THE TRUTH

A Quick Look at the Second General Epistle of Peter

Peter is quick to remind us that the believer can and will conquer through conflict. Times may be harsh and corruption rampant, but those whose faith rests in the Lord will not only survive, they will be victorious. – Charles Swindoll

The best defense is a strong offense. Peter illustrated that axiom by calling his readers to a life of maturity as the best safeguard against the inroads of apostasy. – Robert Gromacki

2 Peter is a sobering reminder that the Christian faith always seems merely one generation from extinction! Knowing and guarding the truth are as important as seeking to live it. – Irving Jensen

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. The best antidote for error is a mature understanding of the truth.¹

2 Peter is a “farewell speech” sent as a letter urging Christian growth and perseverance in light of some false teachers who both deny the second coming of Christ and live boldly in sin. [Gordon Fee]

Fast Facts on 2 Peter

Written by? Peter

Written to whom?

Christians who were scattered, persecuted, and maligned.

Written when? A.D. 65-66

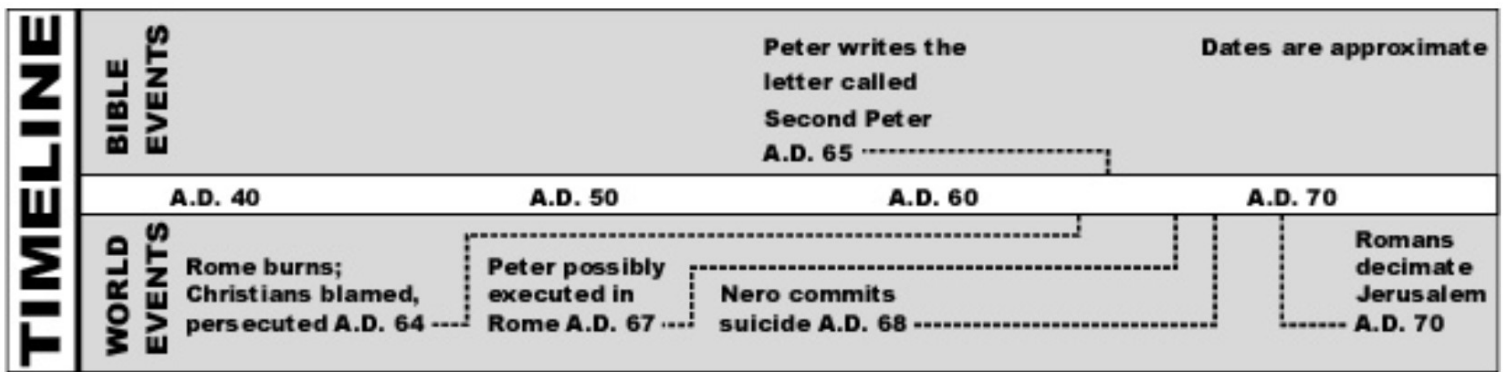
Written why? To warn against false teaching, doctrinal error, and moral compromise as we live in the last days.

THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT 2 PETER²

1. The authorship and canonicity of 2 Peter combined have been challenged and attacked perhaps more than any other New Testament book.
2. Only 2 Peter and Jude contain New Testament references to the fall of angels (see 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6).
3. **2 Peter contains one of the two main statements on the inspiration of Scripture (2 Peter 1:20-21).**
4. 2 Peter is the only New Testament book that describes how the heavens and earth will pass away (3:10-13).
5. **Peter is the only New Testament writer to refer to the inspired writings of another New Testament writer, Paul (3:15-16).**
6. There are similarities and parallels between 2 Peter and Jude, and Jude probably borrowed from Peter’s writing.
7. After the first verse, Peter always uses the title of “Lord” in every reference to Jesus.
8. In 2 Peter, one entire chapter out of three is devoted to the subject of false teachers (ch. 2).
9. **In this second epistle, Peter refers to his experience on the Mount of Transfiguration (1:16b-18).**

¹ Nelson’s Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1996).

² Jeff Lasseigne, Highway 66 (Santa Ana, CA: Calvary Chapel Publishing, 2004)



Source: Stephen Miller³

LIFE LESSONS FROM 2 PETER⁴

1. You are commanded to grow in your knowledge of God.
2. Your growth combats spiritual laziness and deception by the enemy.
3. Do not fail to heed the warnings of Scripture.
4. Each day that the Lord delays His return is to be a day devoted to holy living and diligent service.
5. Put more stock in the Word of God than in any other "experience" (visions, dreams, voices, etc.)

PETER – The Apostle with the Foot-Shaped Mouth

Strengths and accomplishments:

- Became the recognized leader among Jesus' disciples – one of the inner group of three
- Was the first great voice of the gospel during and after Pentecost
- Probably knew Mark and gave him information for the Gospel of Mark

Weaknesses and mistakes:

- Often spoke without thinking; was brash and impulsive
- During Jesus' trial, denied three times that he even knew Jesus
- Later found it hard to treat Gentile Christians as equals

Lessons from his life:

- Enthusiasm has to be backed up by faith and understanding, or it fails
- God's faithfulness can compensate for our greatest unfaithfulness
- It is better to be a follower who fails than one who fails to follow

A Suggested Outline of 2 PETER

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|----------------------------------------------|---------------|
| I. Cultivation of Christian Character | 1:1–21 |
| A. Salutation | 1:1, 2 |
| B. Growth in Christ | 1:3–14 |
| C. Grounds of Belief | 1:15–21 |
| II. Condemnation of False Teachers | 2:1–22 |
| A. Danger of False Teachers | 2:1–3 |
| B. Destruction of False Teachers | 2:4–9 |
| C. Description of False Teachers | 2:10–22 |
| III. Confidence of Christ's Return | 3:1–18 |
| A. Mockery in the Last Days | 3:1–7 |
| B. Manifestation of the Day of the Lord | 3:8–10 |
| C. Maturity in View of the Day of the Lord | 3:11–18 |

[NELSON'S COMPLETE BOOK OF BIBLE MAPS & CHARTS]

Contrasts of Peter before and after Pentecost:

Matt. 26:58, 69–74	Once coward, now courageous
John 18:10	Once impulsive, now humble
Matt. 16:21, 22	Once ignorant, now enlightened
John 21:21, 22	Once questioning, now submissive
Matt. 26:33, 34	Once boastful of self, now boastful of Christ
Matt. 14:28–31	Once timid and afraid, now fearless

³ Stephen M. Miller and Paul Gross, *How to Get into the Bible* (Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1998), 435.

⁴ Jim George, *The Bare Bones Bible Handbook*