



The Book of Second Peter

Peter Confronts And
Encourages Believers

Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger

2 Peter

OVERVIEW:

Second Peter is a letter of warning—from an authority none other than the courageous, experienced, and faithful apostle. And it is the last communication from this great warrior of Christ. Soon thereafter he would die, martyred for the faith.

Previously Peter had written to comfort and encourage believers in the midst of suffering and persecution—an external onslaught. But three years later, in this letter containing his last words, he wrote to warn them of an internal attack—complacency and heresy. He spoke of holding fast to the nonnegotiable facts of the faith, of growing and maturing in the faith, and of rejecting all who would distort the truth. To follow this advice would ensure Christ-honoring individuals and Christ-centered churches.

After a brief greeting (2 Peter 1:1), Peter gives the antidote for stagnancy and shortsightedness in the Christian life (2 Peter 1:2-11). Then he explains that his days are numbered (2 Peter 1:12-15) and that the believers should listen to his messages and the words of Scripture (2 Peter 1:16-21).

Next, Peter gives a blunt warning about false teachers (2 Peter 2:1-22). They will become prevalent in the last days (2 Peter 2:1-2), they will do or say anything for money (2 Peter 2:3), they will spurn the things of God (2 Peter 2:2, 10-11), they will do whatever they feel like doing (2 Peter 2:12-17), they will be proud and boastful (2 Peter 2:18-19), and they will be judged and punished by God (2 Peter 2:3-10, 20-22).

Peter concludes his brief letter by explaining why he has written it (2 Peter 3:1-18)—to remind them of the words of the prophets and apostles that predicted the coming of false teachers, to give the reasons for the delay in Christ's return (2 Peter 3:1-13), and to encourage them to beware of heresies and to grow in their faith (2 Peter 3:14-18).

Addressed to those who “have received a faith as precious as ours,” 2 Peter could have been written to us. Our world is filled with false prophets and teachers who

claim to have the truth and who clamor for attention and allegiance. Listen carefully to Peter's message and heed his warning. Determine to grow in your knowledge of Christ and to reject all those who preach anything inconsistent with God's Word.

THE BLUEPRINT

While Peter wrote his first letter to teach about handling persecution (trials from without), he wrote this letter to teach about handling heresy (trials from within). False teachers are often subtly deceitful. Believers today must still be vigilant against falling into false doctrine, heresy, and cult activity. This letter gives us clues to help detect false teaching.

Guidance for growing Christians (2 Peter 1:1-21)

This letter is from Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ.

I am writing to all of you who share the same precious faith we have, faith given to us by Jesus Christ, our God and Savior, who makes us right with God.

[2] May God bless you with his special favor and wonderful peace as you come to know Jesus, our God and Lord, better and better.

[3] As we know Jesus better, his divine power gives us everything we need for living a godly life. He has called us to receive his own glory and goodness! [4] And by that same mighty power, he has given us all of his rich and wonderful promises. He has promised that you will escape the decadence all around you caused by evil desires and that you will share in his divine nature.

[5] So make every effort to apply the benefits of these promises to your life. Then your faith will produce a life of moral excellence. A life of moral excellence leads to knowing God better. [6] Knowing God leads to self-control. Self-control leads to patient endurance, and patient endurance leads to godliness. [7] Godliness leads to love for other Christians, and finally you will grow to have genuine love for everyone. [8] The more you grow like this, the more you will become productive and useful in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. [9] But those who fail to develop these virtues are blind or, at least, very shortsighted. They have already forgotten that God has cleansed them from their old life of sin.

[10] So, dear brothers and sisters, work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen. Doing this, you will never stumble or fall away.

[11] And God will open wide the gates of heaven for you to enter into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

[12] I plan to keep on reminding you of these things—even though you already know them and are standing firm in the truth. [13] Yes, I believe I should keep on reminding you of these things as long as I live. [14] But the Lord Jesus Christ has

shown me that my days here on earth are numbered and I am soon to die. [15] So I will work hard to make these things clear to you. I want you to remember them long after I am gone.

[16] For we were not making up clever stories when we told you about the power of our Lord Jesus Christ and his coming again. We have seen his majestic splendor with our own eyes. [17] And he received honor and glory from God the Father when God's glorious, majestic voice called down from heaven, "This is my beloved Son; I am fully pleased with him." [18] We ourselves heard the voice when we were there with him on the holy mountain.

[19] Because of that, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets. Pay close attention to what they wrote, for their words are like a light shining in a dark place—until the day Christ appears and his brilliant light shines in your hearts. [20] Above all, you must understand that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophets themselves [21] or because they wanted to prophesy. It was the Holy Spirit who moved the prophets to speak from God.

Danger to growing Christians (2 Peter 2:1-22)

But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach their destructive heresies about God and even turn against their Master who bought them. Theirs will be a swift and terrible end. [2] Many will follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality. And because of them, Christ and his true way will be slandered. [3] In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money. But God condemned them long ago, and their destruction is on the way.

[4] For God did not spare even the angels when they sinned; he threw them into hell, in gloomy caves and darkness until the judgment day. [5] And God did not spare the ancient world—except for Noah and his family of seven. Noah warned the world of God's righteous judgment. Then God destroyed the whole world of ungodly people with a vast flood. [6] Later, he turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into heaps of ashes and swept them off the face of the earth. He made them an example of what will happen to ungodly people. [7] But at the same time, God rescued Lot out of Sodom because he was a good man who was sick of all the immorality and wickedness around him. [8] Yes, he was a righteous man who was distressed by the wickedness he saw and heard day after day.

[9] So you see, the Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their trials, even while punishing the wicked right up until the day of judgment. [10] He is especially hard on those who follow their own evil, lustful desires and who despise authority. These people are proud and arrogant, daring even to scoff at the glorious ones without so much as trembling. [11] But the angels, even though they are far greater in power and strength than these false teachers, never speak out disrespectfully against the glorious ones.

[12] These false teachers are like unthinking animals, creatures of instinct, who are born to be caught and killed. They laugh at the terrifying powers they know so little about, and they will be destroyed along with them. [13] Their destruction is their reward for the harm they have done. They love to indulge in evil pleasures in broad daylight. They are a disgrace and a stain among you. They revel in deceitfulness while they feast with you. [14] They commit adultery with their eyes, and their lust is never satisfied. They make a game of luring unstable people into sin. They train themselves to be greedy; they are doomed and cursed. [15] They have wandered off the right road and followed the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved to earn money by doing wrong. [16] But Balaam was stopped from his mad course when his donkey rebuked him with a human voice.

[17] These people are as useless as dried-up springs of water or as clouds blown away by the wind—promising much and delivering nothing. They are doomed to blackest darkness. [18] They brag about themselves with empty, foolish boasting. With lustful desire as their bait, they lure back into sin those who have just escaped from such wicked living. [19] They promise freedom, but they themselves are slaves to sin and corruption. For you are a slave to whatever controls you. [20] And when people escape from the wicked ways of the world by learning about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and then get tangled up with sin and become its slave again, they are worse off than before. [21] It would be better if they had never known the right way to live than to know it and then reject the holy commandments that were given to them. [22] They make these proverbs come true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and "A washed pig returns to the mud."

Hope for growing Christians (2 Peter 3:1-18)

This is my second letter to you, dear friends, and in both of them I have tried to stimulate your wholesome thinking and refresh your memory. [2] I want you to remember and understand what the holy prophets said long ago and what our Lord and Savior commanded through your apostles.

[3] First, I want to remind you that in the last days there will be scoffers who will laugh at the truth and do every evil thing they desire. [4] This will be their argument: "Jesus promised to come back, did he? Then where is he? Why, as far back as anyone can remember, everything has remained exactly the same since the world was first created."

[5] They deliberately forget that God made the heavens by the word of his command, and he brought the earth up from the water and surrounded it with water. [6] Then he used the water to destroy the world with a mighty flood. [7] And God has also commanded that the heavens and the earth will be consumed by fire on the Day of Judgment, when ungodly people will perish.

[8] But you must not forget, dear friends, that a day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. [9] The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise to return, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake.

He does not want anyone to perish, so he is giving more time for everyone to repent.

[10] But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and everything in them will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be exposed to judgment.

[11] Since everything around us is going to melt away, what holy, godly lives you should be living! [12] You should look forward to that day and hurry it along—the day when God will set the heavens on fire and the elements will melt away in the flames. [13] But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world where everyone is right with God.

[14] And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to live a pure and blameless life. And be at peace with God.

[15] And remember, the Lord is waiting so that people have time to be saved. This is just as our beloved brother Paul wrote to you with the wisdom God gave him— [16] speaking of these things in all of his letters. Some of his comments are hard to understand, and those who are ignorant and unstable have twisted his letters around to mean something quite different from what he meant, just as they do the other parts of Scripture—and the result is disaster for them.

[17] I am warning you ahead of time, dear friends, so that you can watch out and not be carried away by the errors of these wicked people. I don't want you to lose your own secure footing. [18] But grow in the special favor and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To him be all glory and honor, both now and forevermore. Amen.

MEGATHEMES

THEME: Diligence

EXPLANATION:

If our faith is real, it will be evident in our faithful behavior. If people are diligent in Christian growth, they won't backslide or be deceived by false teachers.

IMPORTANCE:

Growth is essential. It begins with faith and culminates in love for others. To keep growing we need to know God, keep on following him, and remember what he taught us. We must remain diligent in faithful obedience and Christian growth.

THEME: False Teachers

EXPLANATION:

Peter warns the church to beware of false teachers. These teachers were proud of their position, promoted sexual sin, and advised against keeping the Ten Commandments. Peter countered them by pointing to the Spirit-inspired Scriptures as our authority.

IMPORTANCE:

Christians need discernment to be able to resist false teachers. God can rescue us from their lies if we stay true to his Word, the Bible, and reject those who distort the truth.

THEME: Christ's Return

EXPLANATION:

One day Christ will create a new heaven and earth where we will live forever. As Christians, our hope is in this promise. But with Christ's return comes his judgment on all who refuse to believe.

IMPORTANCE:

The cure for complacency, lawlessness, and heresy is found in the confident assurance that Christ will return. God is still giving unbelievers time to repent. To be ready, Christians must keep on trusting and resist the pressure to give up waiting for Christ's return.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door.

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*.

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