

# 2 Peter

## I. Setting

2 Peter is the 20th book of the New Testament and 17th among the Epistles, or letters. They are the primary doctrinal portions of the New Testament.

It is not that the Gospels and Acts do not contain doctrine, but that the purpose of the Epistles is to explain to churches and individuals how to apply the teachings of Jesus.

Jesus' earthly life models ministry. In every area of ministry, we must apply the example of Christ. He was filled with the Spirit, sought to honor God, put a high value on people, and lowered Himself as the servant of all.

Once He ascended to heaven, He poured His Spirit out on believers and the New Testament church was formed. Acts focuses on the birth, establishment, and furtherance of the work of God in the world, through the church.

The Epistles are written to the church, further explaining doctrine.

- A. 2 Peter is part of a section among the Epistles commonly known as "The Hebrew Christian Epistles" and includes Hebrews, James 1 & 2 Peter, 1st, 2nd and 3rd John and Jude.
  - 1. Called Hebrew Epistles because of those to whom the letters were written.
    - a. James – "to the 12 tribes scattered abroad".
    - b. Peter – "to the pilgrims of the dispersion.
    - c. Hebrews – the title, "To the Hebrews" dates back to the 2nd century. Content makes it clear the letter was written to Jewish believers.
    - d. Although not all are so addressed

## II. Date

- A. Tradition states Peter died under Nero's persecution of the church. This took place sometime around 65 AD.
  - 1. 1 Peter must have been written before then, circa 63-64 AD.

### III. Authorship

- A. The authorship of a handful of New Testament books has been questioned. Some of those have only been questioned by those who reject the Bible as the Word of God and call of all it into question. Their arguments are not worth the time it takes to read them. Others have had some question regarding Peter's authorship that we should address.
  1. Eusebius used three categories to describe Christian writings:
    - a. Accepted
    - b. Disputed
    - c. Spurious
  2. He included 2 Peter along with James, Jude, 2 John, and 3 John in the disputed category, Eusebius accepted 1 Peter; had doubts about 2 Peter, and rejected as spurious other supposed writings of Peter (1) the Acts of Peter; (2) the Gospel of Peter; (3) the Preaching of Peter; and (4) the Apocalypse of Peter.
  3. We accept Peter's authorship of this book for the following reasons.
    - a. He signed it in 1:1
    - b. He makes reference to events that only Peter was privy to in 1:16-18.
    - c. He refers to this as being the sequel to an earlier letter, presumably 1 Peter.
    - d. 2 Peter's message is both orthodox and in complete alignment with other New Testament books.
    - e. Much of the content of 2 Peter can be seen in his messages in Acts. It is an orthodox message in theological unity with other New Testament books, with many affinities to Peter's sermons in Acts.
    - f. Because of the early forgeries, Paul admonished the church to beware of certain false epistles (2 Thessalonians. 2:2).

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Peter was written to clarify the church's position on the return of Christ.

4. One of the main themes of 2 Peter is faithful living in difficult times— Peter even tells us of the purpose and motivation behind writing this letter.
  - a. 2 Peter 1:15 *“Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.”*
  - b. Peter knew his time was coming to an end and wanted to do all he could to ensure these believers made it to the end; 2 Peter 1:14 *“ . . . just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.”* (John 21:18-19).

## IV. THE AUTHOR

- A. Because we covered Peter’s identity in our study of 1 Peter, it is unnecessary to repeat that information. We will however, take a few minutes to discover what Peter said about himself in this letter.
  1. Peter uses two words to describe Himself.
    - a. Bondservant - DULOUS - one whose will is given to another.
      - i. This is descriptive of when a person goes from belief in Christ to surrender to Christ.
        - Peter had 4 separate callings on his life
          - John 1 - call to salvation
          - Mark 1 - call to discipleship
          - Mark 3 - call to ministry
          - John 21 - call to return
        - We are all somewhere along the way being called by Christ. If you are saved, He is calling you to discipleship, if a disciple, He is calling you to train for service, if trained, He is calling you to service, and if you have wandered from any of that, He is calling you home.

b. Apostle - one who is sent on a mission. Let's look at who is sent, to whom they are sent, what they are sent to do.

i. Hebrews 3:1 - Jesus is an apostle, sent by the Father to the World.

- The world He came to was broken, ungodly, unappreciative
- To reach the world He humbled Himself, became like us, did not allow His own personal repugnance to sin to keep Him from loving, caring for and reaching out to sinful men.
- To reach the world He remained 100% committed to the ways of God. His personal life and His doctrine never wavered and were without compromise.
- To reach the world He went out; He did not remain in Heaven sending an angelic representative. He did not expect sinners to come to Him, but instead reached out to them. He went where they were and brought them to where He was.
- To reach the world He gave up an awful lot.
  - John 1 - He was with God
  - Philippians 2:6 - Equal with God
- To reach the world, He got beyond His seeming failures.
  - Not everyone was receptive to Him. When he was rejected by some it did not deter Him from continuing to reach out to others.
- To reach the world He did it alone, although as He went and others ultimately joined the cause.
- To reach the world He endured great hardship and Personal suffering.

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- To reach the World He kept His eyes on the prize - Hebrews 12:2.
- But Jesus is not the only apostle. In fact, you may never have thought of Him as one before.

### ii. 1 Peter 1:1 - Peter was an apostle

- Peter was sent by God to the World. He had a pattern in Christ to follow. In addition to all we learn when Christ was sent, we can add:

- To reach the World he had to grow in Christ. In addition to doctrine, Peter had to learn grace, humility, and the true source of power for Christian ministry and service.
- To reach the World Peter had to get passed his own personal prejudices and cultural hang ups. Acts 10.
- To reach the world Peter needed fellowship but had to go it alone.

- Peter and John were close! But Peter had to step forth and open his own mouth.

- To reach the world Peter had to step out in faith confident in the promises of God.
- To reach the world Peter had to add what was lacking in the suffering of Christ.

- Colossians 1:24 *"I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, . . ."*

This refers to all that he personally had to endure to bring Christ to the world.

- Jesus was sent once, Peter was sent over and over to people and places Christ never reached.

- Finally, to reach the world, Peter was sent not just to the unbelieving world, but he was also sent to the Church, to build up those who had placed trust in Christ. Those who exercise faith and now must grow through the reception and practice of the word.

iii. FINALLY - one more SENT

John 17:18 *“As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.”*

- αποστειλω apostello; Strong’s Concordance 575, 4724;  
The verb form of apostle:
  - set apart
  - to send out
- We, like Jesus have been sent from God, to the world and the church.
- We must be willing to humble ourselves, lay aside prejudice and culture, and pay whatever the cost, go wherever the call bringing the uncompromising gospel of Christ accompanied by a fully committed life to the world around us.

## V. RECIPIENTS

### A. What do we know about the audience?

1. They were believers who had obtained precious faith
2. They had become somewhat stagnant in their growth and needed to be exhorted to move forward by:
  - a. Adding 2 Peter 1:5, “. . .*add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge. . .*”
  - b. Be diligent 2 Peter 1:10, “. . .*be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, . . .*”
  - c. Be stirred up 2 Peter 1:13, “. . .*to stir you up and remind you ..*”

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## 3. They were suffering

a. They were perhaps failing to aggressively attempt to complete the mission of fishing for men.

i. Mark 1:17 *“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’”*

## VI. LETTER OF EXHORTATION

A. Peter writes a series of promise filled exhortations to encourage the believers to keep on in Christ.

1. 2 Peter 1:2 *“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, . . .”*

2. 2 Peter 1:8 *“For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

3. 2 Peter 1:10 *“Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble . . .”*

4. 2 Peter 3:18 *“. . . but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever.”*

B. Grace and Peace multiplied

1. This was a common greeting in the Roman and Jewish world; but when used in the New Testament, it is filled with doctrinal significance.

a. Grace speaks of the means of salvation.

b. Peace speaks of the benefits of salvation.

2. Notice that Peter is writing to believers and his message is that God wants to MULTIPLY both grace and peace.

a. Today we define Grace –

i. A way of moving that is smooth and attractive and that is not stiff or awkward

ii. A controlled, polite, and pleasant way of behaving

- iii. Skills that are needed for behaving in a polite way in social situations.
- iv. The Bible defines it as
  - Unmerited divine assistance given to humans for their regeneration or sanctification, or more simply, unearned kindness from God.
  - Grace to help in time of need. Grace is the divine supply that enables us to daily walk with Christ. Peter wants that to be multiplied in us.

b. Peace –

- i. A state in which there is no war or fighting
- ii. An agreement to end a war
- iii. More importantly - a state of tranquility or quiet
  - This is what everyone wants and wants more of
  - He goes on to explain how it is multiplied

c. Multiply –

- i. We multiply grace and peace through the knowledge of God acquired through the pages of His word. Peace is a fruit of daily **READING** and **CLINGING** to the promises of God.
- ii. It comes from the power of God. The power source is the Holy Spirit. The more we tap into and walk **IN** the Spirit, the more peace and grace will be multiplied to us and in us.
- iii. The goal is to partake of the divine nature. Partake means to share in, divine nature means god like. Peter says through the work of the Word and the Spirit we can have lives that resemble that of Christ.
  - He was not stressed in the midst of difficulty. When He did reach the breaking point, He cried out to the Lord who strengthened Him (In the garden, Luke 22:42).

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- He was confident in the plan of the Father, even when the plan was pain-filled.
- He had an ever replenishing strength that came through the baptism of the Spirit.

-we need an initial encounter and a continuous supply or refilling

3. This leads to Peters first in a series of exhortations.
  - a. After discussing MULTIPLICATION Peter now takes us through ADDITION. Faith alone is not enough we need to add it to every area of our lives.
  - b. Faith is crucial. It is the only currency which we can exchange with God.
    - i. Salvation and daily Christian living are contingent upon faith. (1Peter 1:5)
    - ii. Faith is necessary to receive the Word. The Word did not profit them when it was not mixed with faith (Hebrews 4:2).
    - iii. Faith is necessary in prayer - let him who doubts not suppose that he will receive anything from God (James 1:7).
  - c. Faith is necessary for daily walk with the Lord - lean not on your own understanding (Proverbs 3:5)
  - d. Faith is necessary for overcoming temptation - the shield of faith quenches the fiery darts of the devil (Ephesians 6:16)
  - e. Faith is necessary for service - we must lean on the enabling of God.
    - i. The Bible is filled with examples of men and women who accomplished great fetes through faith;
    - ii. BUT IT IS TIME for each of us to work on our own faith stories.
      - We do that by applying the truths and promises of God to every situation we face.
      - We will never have our own story as long as we rely on natural things.

- When you are facing money problems and you worry fret and seek others to aid, without laying it down at the feet of God, applying His word and watching Him work. I grew up in Christ on the faith stories of my pastors, but I had to develop my own.
- FAITH STORIES are only developed through trying times and stepping out in faith
- CCVB has been a 16 year faith story for Kristie and me. Now my kids are developing stories of their own.

#### 4. What do we add to Faith?

- a. Peter's list included 7 essentials that must accompany faith (salvation, Christian living, receiving the Word, prayer, daily walk with the Lord, overcoming temptation, and service). The process of addition takes time. Let's see what God may want to add to our lives today.
  - i. Adding these 7 essential things not only
    - proves our faith is genuine (James)
    - and makes our lives pleasing to God,
    - but also results in a fruit-filled life
      - We can have grace and peace multiplied by knowledge and walking in the Spirit.
      - We can have fruitfulness by adding to our lives and therefore, as says 2 Peter 2:10 we will not stumble.

## V. DOCTRINES

### A. Bibliology

1. In one of the clearest statements in Scripture, Peter declares his view of the Bible (2 Peter 1:16-21).
2. Four words define inspiration:
  - a. Literal - what it says, it means

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- b. Verbal - every word is inspired - Jeremiah 26:2 (do not diminish a word), Jesus in Matthew 5:18 (jots and tittles)
- c. Plenary - the whole Scripture - all scripture is inspired
- d. Inerrant - originals are free from all error, John 17:17
  - i. It is not a series of well-crafted stories. The world is filled with those. Man has always used entertainment as a means to espouse cultural mores.
  - ii. The ancients did it with the constellations
  - iii. The Greeks did it with their mythology; 'fable' is the Greek 'mythos'
  - iv. The Romans picked up where Greeks left off.
  - v. We are doing the same today. TV, movies and written text is the means by which culture is being fashioned.
- 3. Peter says the bible is not a well-crafted human story designed to get us to follow whatever is culturally acceptable.
- 4. Peter viewed the Bible as inspired by God. He believed the bible to be inspired for two reasons:
  - a. First, he saw events with his own eyes. He saw many of the stories unfold before his very eyes.
  - b. Second - prophecy proved what Peter did not see. More sure word - more convincing than what his eyes saw. We did not see, but we have a fuller view of fulfilled prophecy than Peter did.
- 5. Peter saw that the Bible must be interpreted correctly if we are going to benefit from its teaching. He already warned of false teachers.
- 6. Now he declares the bible is not open to private interpretations. That means it does not mean what you want it to mean. It is the job of the Christian to get to know the bible.
- 7. Principles to help uncover the meaning of the Bible
  - a. Normal usage - means what it says.

- b. Context - context will explain meaning.
- c. Correlation - compare scripture with scripture.
- d. Light interprets darkness - obscure text must be interpreted in light of clear text.
  - Hating your brother in light of Scriptures that tell us to love God and love your neighbor.
  - Scripture does not contradict, but compliment as is seen in circumcision on the Sabbath.
  - Some of scripture is hard to understand and takes careful study and contemplation.

*2 Peter 3:15-16 “ . . . and consider 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, 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.”*

- 8. Finally Peter views the Old Testament and the New Testament as equal in authority.
  - a. 2 Peter 3:2 “ . . . that you 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, . . .”
    - To us, it seems New Testament is more inspired  
To them, it seems Old Testament was more inspired  
To Peter and the other apostles, it was same
    - The Apostles are not alone in view of an inspired Bible
    - Jesus, Matthew 5:17-45, quotes Daniel, etc.
    - Psalmist

- B. The Doctrine of False Teachers
  - pseudoprophetes - Strong's G5578, false prophet
  - pseudodidaskalos - Strong's G5572, false teacher

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1. Not all who hold forth the word do it honestly. Some do so with altered motives.

a. 2 Peter 2:3 - covetousness - they are trying to gain: money, power, fame.

b. JESUS called them ravenous wolves (Matthew 7:15)

i. They are more clearly illustrated by the actions of Balaam; he knew the truth, but wanted the money (Numbers 22-24).

ii. Before using the Bible as a tool to manipulate people, we must keep in mind that God has ever been just and will remain so.

iii. Although the false teachers may be charismatic, entertaining and popular, they are like clouds without water. Like swelling words of emptiness.

## C. Doctrine of Devine Judgment

1. God did not spare those who sinned

a. Angels

b. Antediluvian area

c. Sodom and Gomorrah

2. Yet all the while God delivered the righteous

a. Noah

b. Lot

c. Verse 9 - and will deliver the righteous still.

i. This is one of the underlining principles behind the pre-tribulation rapture view.

## D. Doctrine of End Times

1. 2 Peter 3:3 - scoffers will come. They scoff because they ignore what the bible teaches.

2. 2 Peter 3:8 - believers cannot be forgetful of God's mercy.
3. 2 Peter 3:11 - believers must live holy lives.
4. 2 Peter 3:13 - heaven and earth will be replaced with a new one.
5. God delays His return to reach the lost. We must not delay our attempts to reach them.
  - a. What are the most effective means of reaching the lost?
    - i. Mass evangelism - Harvest America Bully Graham Crusade.
    - ii. Church services - in the past year we have seen well over 200 people pray to receive Christ. It would take 5,000,000 years to reach 1 billion.
    - iii. One to one - if each person told 2 people and they each told 2 and so on, it would take only 35 years to reach the whole world.
6. Although God delays His coming the time will run out and He will return.
  - a. What should we be doing?
    - i. Reaching the lost
    - ii. Living exemplary lives
    - iii. Holy conduct and godliness
  - b. What is holiness?
    - i. We must be careful not to define holiness only by what we do not do.
      - Holiness is living in step with what the Bible teaches
      - Holiness is a way of life where we choose to apply the bible to each area of life.
      - Holy thinking - Philippians 4

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- Holy watching –  
Psalms 101:3 *“I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me.”*

Job 31:1 *“I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman?”*

- Holy listening –  
Proverbs 18:8 *“The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body.”*

Therefore, Philippians 4:8 *“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things.”*

- Holy speech - psalms hymns, encouraging words, gospel, worship; nothing corrupt, or foul.
- Holy work - all things without murmuring, heartily to Lord.
- Holy marriage - love wife, honor husband
- Holy home - training children in ways of lord, as you walk and talk and live.