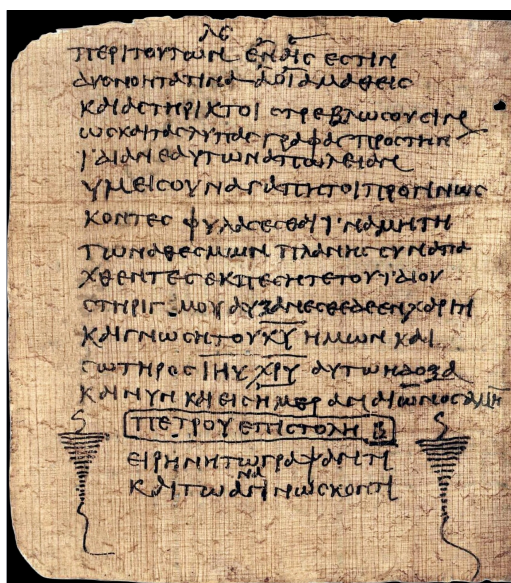


2 PETER

Grow in Grace

AUTHOR	Simon Peter, 1:1, shortly before his death, 1:14. It is the most debated letter in the New Testament, and many scholars think a later follower wrote it. See The Big Question pages.
WRITTEN FROM	Probably Rome, while Peter waited to die.
DATE WRITTEN	About AD 64 to 68, just before Peter was killed under Nero. Critical scholars say about AD 80 to 150.
WRITTEN TO	The same believers as 1 Peter, 3:1, in what is now Turkey.
WHY HE WROTE	To warn against false teachers who mocked Jesus' return and lived for pleasure, and to remind believers to keep growing.
KEY VERSE	2 Peter 3:18. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



THE OLDEST COPY OF 2 PETER

Papyrus 72, copied about AD 300 and found in Egypt. This page holds the end of 2 Peter, 3:16 to 18. In the box is the title, Of Peter, Letter 2. Under it is the same blessing the copyist wrote after 1 Peter: Peace to the one who wrote and to the one who reads. Kept in the Vatican Library. Public domain.

Historical Setting

Peter knows he is about to die, 1:14. Like Paul in 2 Timothy, he writes a farewell letter. Jesus had not come back yet, and some teachers said He never would, 3:4. They turned grace into an excuse to sin, chased money and pleasure, and promised freedom while they were slaves themselves, 2:19. Peter answers with three things: what he saw with his own

eyes on the mountain, what the prophets wrote, and how God has judged and rescued people before.

What Was Going Wrong

- FALSE TEACHERS.** They slipped in quietly and denied the Master who bought them, 2:1.
- GREED.** They used people to make money, 2:3 and 2:14.
- ANYTHING GOES.** They promised freedom but lived as slaves to their desires, 2:18 to 19.
- SCOFFERS.** Where is His coming? Nothing ever changes, 3:3 to 4.
- TWISTING PAUL.** Unstable people distorted Paul's letters, 3:16.
- FORGETTING.** Some forgot they had been cleansed from their old sins, 1:9.

The Idiot Proof Summary

2 Peter is Peter's last word. He knows his time is short, so he says: keep growing, remember what you were taught, and do not fall for teachers who make faith an excuse to sin. Jesus really is coming back. God is not late; He is patient, giving people time to repent. Then everything will change, and righteousness will finally be at home.

2 Peter at a Glance

- CH 1** **GROW AND REMEMBER**
Everything we need, add to your faith, the transfiguration, the sure word of the prophets.
- CH 2** **FALSE TEACHERS**
Fallen angels, the flood, Sodom, Balaam's donkey, the dog and the pig.
- CH 3** **THE DAY IS COMING**
Scoffers, a day like a thousand years, fire, a new heaven and earth, grow in grace.

Where Jesus Shows Up

- 2 PETER 1:1** Our God and Savior Jesus Christ.
- 2 PETER 1:16 TO 17** Peter saw His majesty and heard the Father call Him My beloved Son.
- 2 PETER 1:19** The morning star that rises in your hearts.
- 2 PETER 3:18** Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

What to Watch for in 2 Peter

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES	1:11, 1:17, 1:19
MESSIANIC FORESHADOW	3:6-7
PROPHECIES FULFILLED IN HISTORY	1:14, 2:1-3
END TIMES PROPHECIES	3:3-4, 3:10-13
THE HEART	2:14
MIRACLES	1:16, 1:18, 2:11, 2:16
DEMONIC	2:4, 2:15
NOTABLE	1:3-8, 1:10, 1:20-21, 2:5, 2:9, 2:19-21, 3:9 and 2 more
JESUS SPEAKING	Words in red are Jesus speaking, or God the Father speaking from heaven.

Cool Stuff Most People Miss

PAUL IS SCRIPTURE

Peter is the first writer to put Paul's letters next to the rest of the Scriptures, 3:16.

TARTARUS

2:4 is the only place in the Bible that uses the Greek word for Tartarus, the deepest prison in Greek stories. See What Hesiod Wrote.

THE TALKING DONKEY

Balaam got scolded by his own donkey, 2:16 and Numbers 22:28.

A WASHED PIG

The second proverb in 2:22 is not from the Bible. It comes from an old story called Ahiqar. See its pages.

LAST WORDS

3:18 may be the last words Peter ever wrote: grow.

What Happened Next?

Early writers say Peter was crucified in Rome under Nero, as Jesus had told him, John 21:18 to 19. The church argued for a long time about whether this letter was really his, but by AD 367 it was on the New Testament list of Athanasius of Alexandria, and soon in Bibles everywhere.

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES PROPHECIES FULFILLED IN HISTORY NOTABLE

1

CHAPTER 1 IN 30 SECONDS

Peter's last letter starts with a gift list: God has given you everything you need. Now build on it: goodness, knowledge, self control, endurance, godliness, kindness and love. Peter knows he will die soon, so he says remember this. He saw Jesus shine on the mountain. This is no fairy tale.

A GREETING FROM PETER // 1 PETER 1:1-2

¹Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:

²Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE

³His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. ⁴Through these He has given us His precious and magnificent promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, now that you have escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

⁵For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; ⁶and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. ⁸For if you possess these qualities and continue to grow in them, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹But whoever lacks these traits is nearsighted to the point of blindness, having forgotten

that he has been cleansed from his past sins.

¹⁰Therefore, brothers, strive to make your calling and election sure. For if you practice these things you will never stumble, ¹¹and you will receive a lavish reception into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

¹²Therefore I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are established in the truth you now have. ¹³I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of my body, ¹⁴because I know that this tent will soon be laid aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. ¹⁵And I will make every effort to ensure that after my departure, you will be able to recall these things at all times.

DEBATED THE BIG QUESTION

WHO WROTE 2 PETER?

The Most Debated Letter

2 PETER 1:1 · 1:14 TO 18 · 3:1 · 3:15 TO 16 · JUDE 4 TO 18

WHAT THE LETTER SAYS

The writer calls himself Simeon Peter, 1:1. He says Jesus showed him he would die soon, 1:14. He says he saw Jesus shine on the holy mountain and heard God's voice, 1:16 to 18. He calls this his second letter, 3:1, and calls Paul our beloved brother, 3:15.

SLOW TO BE ACCEPTED

Few early writers quote 2 Peter by name. Origen, about AD 240, said Peter left one letter everyone accepts, and possibly a second, but it is disputed. Eusebius, about AD 325, put it among the books some disputed, though he said many found it useful.

JEROME

About AD 392 Jerome wrote that most people denied the second letter was Peter's because its style is so different

■ **2PE 1:1 [NOTE]** TWO TITLES, ONE PERSON. In 1:1, our God and Savior Jesus Christ, a single Greek the covers both God and Savior, so most scholars read it as calling Jesus God, like Titus 2:13. Granville Sharp made this point famous in 1798. Some read two persons. SIMEON. Some old copies spell his name Simeon, the Hebrew form, Acts 15:14. WHO WROTE IT? See The Big Question pages.

■ **2PE 1:3 [NOTABLE]** God has already given what it takes to live for Him, and even a share in His divine nature.

■ **2PE 1:5 [NOTABLE]** A ladder of seven steps from faith up to love. Keep climbing and you will not be useless.

■ **2PE 1:10 [NOTABLE]** Not to earn it, but to show it is real. Do these things and you will never stumble.

■ **2PE 1:11 [FULFILLS]** His kingdom would be everlasting ← 2SA 7:13 p. -

■ **2PE 1:14 [PROPHECY]** Peter would soon lay aside his body, as Jesus had shown him → HISTORY: 1 Clement 5 and Eusebius Church History 2.25

■ **2PE 1:14 [NOTE]** THIS TENT. Jesus told Peter how he would die, John 21:18 to 19. See Peter's Tomb? and Nero's Circus in 1 Peter, p. -.

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES MIRACLES OLD TESTAMENT QUOTED IN THE NEW JESUS SPEAKING

from the first. Elsewhere he suggested Peter used a different helper to write each letter.

ACCEPTED

Papyrus 72 already copied it about AD 300. Athanasius listed it in AD 367, and church councils at Hippo, 393, and Carthage, 397, did too. After that it stood in the New Testament everywhere.

THE REFORMERS

Erasmus doubted it. John Calvin, 1551, said he could not deny it was Peter's message, and thought a follower may have written it down at Peter's command. Luther kept it with no complaint, though he questioned Hebrews, James, Jude and Revelation.

MODERN SCHOLARS

Many scholars today think someone wrote it after Peter's death, about AD 80 to 150. Their reasons: the Greek is very different from 1 Peter, chapter 2 looks borrowed from Jude, Paul's letters are already a collection, 3:16, and the fathers have fallen asleep, 3:4, sounds like a later generation.

THE OTHER SIDE

Other scholars answer each point: a different helper explains the style, Peter may have used Jude, Paul's letters were copied early, and the fathers can mean the Old Testament fathers. The next page gives every view.

The Case Each Side Makes

2 PETER 1:1 · 1:12 TO 15 · 3:1 · 3:4 · 3:16 · 1 PETER 5:12

PETER WROTE IT

Peter wrote it near his death, about AD 64 to 68, just as it says. Held by most of the church through history and by scholars like Michael Green. Best case: the letter plainly claims to be his, the early church in the end accepted it, and it would be strange for a fake to warn so hard against deceivers.

PETER THROUGH A HELPER

Peter gave the message, and a different secretary wrote it out than the one who helped with 1 Peter, Silvanus, 1 Peter 5:12. Jerome suggested this, and Calvin thought something like it. Best case: it

explains the different Greek and keeps Peter as the true author.

A FAREWELL BY A FOLLOWER

After Peter died, a close follower wrote down Peter's teaching as his last testament, a style of writing readers would have recognized. Richard Bauckham argued this in 1983. Best case: it explains the style and the later details without calling anyone a liar.

A LATER FORGERY

Someone in the 100s used Peter's name to win an argument, and the church was fooled. Bart Ehrman argues this. Best case: it explains why so many in the early church doubted it.

WHY IT MATTERS

If Peter wrote it, we have the last words of Jesus' closest friend. If not, the church still judged that it teaches the faith the apostles taught.

WHAT ALL SIDES AGREE ON

The letter is in every New Testament since the late 300s. Its message is clear either way: grow in faith, reject false teachers, and wait for the Lord's return, because God is patient.

EYEWITNESSES OF HIS MAJESTY // MATTHEW 17:1-13; MARK 9:1-13; LUKE 9:28-36

16 For we did not follow cleverly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. **17** For He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, saying, *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* **18** And we ourselves heard this voice from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. **19** We also have the word of the prophets as confirmed beyond doubt. And you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day

■ 2PE 1:16 [MIRACLE] Peter saw Jesus' glory on the holy mountain and heard God's voice from heaven

■ 2PE 1:16 [NOTE] NOT FABLES. The Greek word is *mythos*, myth. Peter says the gospel is not a made up story like the Greek myths. He was there.

■ 2PE 1:17 [FULFILLS] Declared to be the Beloved Son of God ← PS 2:7 D. -

■ 2PE 1:17 [NOTE] THE FATHER'S VOICE. The red words here are the Father's voice from heaven, as in Matthew 17:5.

PROPHECIES FULFILLED IN HISTORY MIRACLES DEMONIC NOTABLE

dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.²⁰ Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture comes from one's own interpretation.²¹ For no such prophecy was ever brought forth by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

2

CHAPTER 2 IN 30 SECONDS

Fake teachers are coming, and they are greedy, proud and good at sounding spiritual. God judged the fallen angels, the flood world and Sodom, but He rescued Noah and Lot. These teachers are like Balaam, who got scolded by his own donkey. A dog goes back to its vomit, and a washed pig heads straight back to the mud.

DELIVERANCE FROM FALSE PROPHETS // JUDE

1:3-16

¹Now there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves.² Many will follow in their depravity, and because of them the way of truth will be defamed.³ In their greed, these false teachers will exploit you with deceptive words. The longstanding verdict against them remains in force, and their destruction does not sleep.

■ 2PE 1:19 [FULFILLS] Balaam's prophecy: a Star and

Scepter to come out of Jacob ← NUM 24:17 p.-

■ 2PE 1:19 [FULFILLS] Morning light at sunrise ← 2SA 23:4
· MEDIUM p.-

■ 2PE 1:20 [NOTABLE] How the Bible came to be: real men wrote, but the Spirit carried them like wind fills a sail.

■ 2PE 1:20 [NOTE] OWN INTERPRETATION. Catholics and Orthodox often read this as no one may interpret Scripture privately, apart from the church. Most Protestants read it with 1:21: the prophets did not make up their messages; they came from God. The Greek can bear both.

■ 2PE 1:21 [NOTE] TEXT. The KJV says holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Many old copies say men spoke from God.

■ 2PE 2:1 [PROPHECY] There will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them... many will follow their destructive ways → HISTORY: Fulfilled from the 1st century onward — Gnosticism

■ 2PE 2:1 [NOTE] 2 PETER AND JUDE. 2:1 to 3:3 shares a lot with Jude 4 to 18: false teachers, angels, Sodom, Balaam, waterless springs and scoffers. Most scholars think Peter used Jude; some think Jude used Peter, or both used a common source. Peter leaves out Jude's quotes from 1 Enoch. THE MASTER WHO BOUGHT THEM. Arminians say this shows Christ died for everyone, even people who fall away. Calvinists say it describes how these teachers claimed to be bought, or echoes God buying Israel, Deuteronomy 32:6.

⁴For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them deep into hell, placing them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment;⁵ if He did not spare the ancient world when He brought the flood on its ungodly people, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, among the eight;⁶ if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction, reducing them to ashes as an example of what is coming on the ungodly;⁷ and if He rescued Lot, a righteous man distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless⁸ (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)—⁹if all this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment.

¹⁰Such punishment is specially reserved for those who indulge the corrupt desires of the flesh and despise authority. Bold and self-willed, they are unafraid to slander glorious beings.¹¹ Yet not even angels, though greater in strength and power, dare to bring such slanderous charges against them before the Lord.

■ 2PE 2:4 [DEMONIC] God did not spare the angels who sinned but cast them into chains of darkness

■ 2PE 2:4 [NOTABLE] Peter and Jude both seem to know the story in 1 Enoch 6 to 16, where angels sinned with human women and were locked up until the judgment. Genesis 6 does not say this outright, but many Jews in their day believed it.

■ 2PE 2:4 [NOTE] HELL. The Greek verb means sent to Tartarus, the only time it is used in the Bible. See What Hesiod Wrote. TEXT. Some copies say chains of darkness, others pits of darkness; the two Greek words look almost alike.

■ 2PE 2:5 [ALLUDES TO] Refers to ← GEN 7:1; 7:23 p.-

■ 2PE 2:6 [ALLUDES TO] Refers to ← GEN 19:24-25 p.-

■ 2PE 2:7 [ALLUDES TO] Refers to ← GEN 19:16 p.-

■ 2PE 2:9 [NOTABLE] If God rescued Noah and Lot, He can rescue you.

■ 2PE 2:11 [MIRACLE] Angels, though greater in strength and power, do not slander

FROM HISTORY

WHAT HESIOD WROTE*Tartarus, About 700 BC*

HESIOD, THEOGONY 713 TO 735 · 2 PETER 2:4 · JUDE 6

WHY THIS IS HERE

In 2:4 Peter says God cast the angels who sinned deep into hell. The Greek verb is tartaroo, to send to Tartarus. It is the only time this word appears in the Bible. Greek readers knew Tartarus from their oldest stories.

WHO HESIOD WAS

Hesiod was a Greek farmer and poet who lived about 700 BC, around the time of Isaiah. His poem the Theogony tells how the Greek gods were born and how Zeus beat the older gods, the Titans, and locked them away. He did not know the God of Israel.

WHAT HE WROTE

Here is the whole passage, Theogony lines 713 to 735, in the English translation by Hugh Evelyn White, 1914. Cottus, Briareos and Gyes are giants with a hundred hands who fought for Zeus.

THEOGONY 713 TO 735

And amongst the foremost Cottus and Briareos and Gyes insatiate for war raised fierce fighting: three hundred rocks, one upon another, they launched from their strong hands and overshadowed the Titans with their missiles, and hurled them beneath the wide-pathed earth, and bound them in bitter chains when they had conquered them by their strength for all their great spirit, as far beneath the earth as heaven is above earth; for so far is it from earth to Tartarus. For a brazen anvil falling down from heaven nine nights and days would reach the earth upon the tenth: and again, a brazen anvil falling from earth nine nights and days would reach Tartarus upon the tenth. Round it runs a fence of bronze, and night spreads in triple line all about it like a neck-circlet, while above grow the roots of the earth and unfruitful sea. There by the counsel of Zeus who drives the clouds the Titan gods are hidden under misty gloom, in a dank place where are the ends of the huge earth. And they may not go out; for Poseidon fixed gates of bronze upon it,

and a wall runs all round it on every side. There Gyes and Cottus and great-souled Obriareus live, trusty warders of Zeus who holds the aegis.

Why Peter Said Tartarus

2 PETER 2:4 · JUDE 6 · GENESIS 6:1 TO 4 · 1 ENOCH 20:2 · JOB 41:32

A FAMOUS PRISON

To Greeks, Tartarus was the deepest place there is, far below Hades, a locked prison for rebels against heaven, bound in chains and darkness. Homer says it lies as far below Hades as heaven is above the earth.

JEWS USED THE WORD TOO

Jews who spoke Greek borrowed it. The Greek Old Testament uses Tartarus in Job 41:32. The Greek text of 1 Enoch 20:2 says the angel Uriel is set over Tartarus. Josephus and Philo use the word as well.

THE ANGELS WHO SINNED

Peter and Jude 6 both say these angels are kept in chains of darkness until judgment, right before they mention Noah's flood. That matches 1 Enoch 6 to 16, where the angels of Genesis 6 are bound under the earth until the last day. See the 1 Enoch pages, p.~, and Spirits in Prison in 1 Peter, p.~.

WHAT PETER MEANT

Peter is not saying the Greek myths were true. He uses a word his readers knew for the worst prison imaginable, the way we might say someone was sent to Alcatraz.

TARTARUS, HADES OR GEHENNA?

Many teachers say the Bible uses three different words. Hades is the place of the dead. Gehenna is the place of final punishment, Mark 9:43. Tartarus, here, is a holding prison for fallen angels until judgment. Others think the words overlap.

WHAT IT DOES NOT PROVE

Hesiod's Titans are not Peter's angels. The two stories share a picture of rebels locked in a dark prison, not a source.

¹² These men are like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be captured and destroyed. They blaspheme in mat-

THE HEART MIRACLES DEMONIC OLD TESTAMENT QUOTED IN THE NEW NOTABLE

ters they do not understand, and like such creatures, they too will be destroyed.¹³ The harm they will suffer is the wages of their wickedness.

They consider it a pleasure to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deception as they feast with you.¹⁴ Their eyes are full of adultery; their desire for sin is never satisfied; they seduce the unstable. They are accursed children with hearts trained in greed.

¹⁵ They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness.¹⁶ But he was rebuked for his transgression by a donkey, otherwise without speech, that spoke with a man's voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

¹⁷ These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them.¹⁸ With lofty but empty words, they appeal to the sensual passions of the flesh and entice those who are just escaping from others who live in error.¹⁹ They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves to depravity. For a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.

²⁰ If indeed they have escaped the corruption of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, only to be entangled and overcome by it again, their final condition is worse than it was at first.²¹ It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than to have known it and then to turn away from the holy commandment passed on to them.²² Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its

vomit," and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."

FROM HISTORY

WHAT AHIQAR SAID

The Washed Pig

THE STORY OF AHIQAR · 2 PETER 2:22 · PROVERBS 26:11 · TOBIT 1:21 TO 22

TWO PROVERBS

2:22 quotes two sayings. A dog returns to its vomit is Proverbs 26:11. A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud is not in the Bible at all.

WHO AHIQAR WAS

The Story of Ahiqar is about a wise royal adviser in Assyria, under Sennacherib and Esarhaddon, about 700 to 670 BC. He adopts his nephew Nadan and trains him, but Nadan betrays him and has him sentenced to death. Ahiqar hides, is saved, and later scolds Nadan with a long string of sayings that begin, My son.

WHAT HE SAID

Here are Ahiqar's words to Nadan from the Syriac version of the story, in the English translation by J. Rendel Harris, *The Story of Ahiqar*, second edition, Cambridge, 1913, page 125. Thou and thee are old English for you.

THE STORY OF AHIQAR, SYRIAC

My son, thou hast been to me like the swine that had been to the baths, and when it saw a muddy ditch, went down and washed in it, and cried to his companions, 'Come and wash.'

OTHER VERSIONS

The story was copied in many languages. The Armenian and Slavonic versions tell the same picture of a pig taken to the bath that goes right back to the mud.

WHO NOTICED

In his 1913 introduction Harris argued that this saying explains the second proverb in 2 Peter, so the sow that went to the bath.

IN THE BIBLE TOO

Ahiqar shows up by name in the book of Tobit, as Tobit's nephew who served the

■ 2PE 2:13 [NOTE] TEXT. Most copies say reveling in their deceptions. Some old copies say in their love feasts, like Jude 12; the two Greek words differ by one letter.

■ 2PE 2:14 [HEART] False teachers have trained their hearts in greed, like an athlete in training.

■ 2PE 2:15 [DEMONIC] Balaam son of Beor, the hired diviner, loved the wages of wickedness

■ 2PE 2:16 [MIRACLE] Balaam's donkey spoke with a man's voice

■ 2PE 2:19 [NOTABLE] False freedom is the worst kind of slavery.

■ 2PE 2:20 [NOTABLE] Knowing the way and turning back is worse than never knowing it.

■ 2PE 2:22 [QUOTES] Direct ← PROV 26:11 p.~

■ 2PE 2:22 [NOTE] TWO PROVERBS. The dog is Proverbs 26:11. The washed pig is not in the Bible. See What Ahiqar Said.

MESSIANIC FORESHADOW | END TIMES PROPHECIES

king of Assyria, Tobit 1:21 to 22 and 14:10.

FIELD NOTES · ARCHAEOLOGY · CONFIDENCE: HIGH
FOR THE PAPYRUS · THE PIG SAYING IS FROM LATER
COPIES

THE AHIQAR PAPYRUS

2 PETER 2:22 · TOBIT 1:21 TO 22 · JEREMIAH 44:1



Part of the Aramaic Story of Ahiqar on papyrus, from Elephantine, Egypt, 400s BC. Neues Museum, Berlin. Photo Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin, CC BY SA 4.0.

WHAT IT IS

Pieces of a papyrus scroll with the Story of Ahiqar and his sayings, written in Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke. It is the oldest copy of the story known.

HOW OLD IT IS

It was written in the late 400s BC. The scribe reused an older papyrus; under the story, an erased Egyptian customs list from about 475 BC can still be read.

WHERE IT WAS FOUND

On Elephantine, an island in the Nile in southern Egypt, dug up by German archaeologists from 1906 to 1908. It is now in Berlin.

WHO READ IT

Elephantine was home to a colony of Jewish soldiers serving the Persian king. They had their own temple to the God of Israel there. Their letters were found too, including one from about 407 BC asking for help to rebuild that temple. Jeremiah 44:1 speaks of Jews living in southern Egypt in his day.

WHAT IT SAYS

Ahiqar's story and wise sayings, like: Do not let a word go out of your mouth until you have weighed it. Some sayings sound like the book of Proverbs.

WHY IT MATTERS HERE

Jews were reading Ahiqar 500 years before Peter, so his sayings were well known among them. That helps explain

how one of them ended up as a proverb in 2:22.

WHAT IT DOES NOT PROVE

The washed pig saying is not on the surviving pieces of this old papyrus. It is known from later copies of the story, in Syriac, Armenian and other languages. Pigs going back to the mud was also a common picture; the Greek thinker Heraclitus said pigs delight in mud.

3

CHAPTER 3 IN 30 SECONDS

Scoffers ask, so where is He? Peter answers that with God a day is like a thousand years. He is not slow; He is patient, because He wants everyone to repent. The day will come like a thief, with fire, and then a new heaven and earth. Paul says the same, though some of his letters are hard to understand. Keep growing.

THE COMING JUDGMENT // GENESIS 7:1-24; JUDE 1:17-23

¹Beloved, this is now my second letter to you. Both of them are reminders to stir you to wholesome thinking ²by recalling what was foretold by the holy prophets and commanded by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

³Most importantly, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. ⁴"Where is the promise of His coming?" they will ask. "Ever since our fathers fell asleep, everything continues as it has from the beginning of creation."

⁵But they deliberately overlook the fact that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water, ⁶through which the world of that time perished in the flood. ⁷And by that same word, the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being

■ 2PPE 3:1 [NOTE] SECOND LETTER. Most take the first letter to be 1 Peter.

■ 2PPE 3:3 [PROPHECY] In the last days scoffers will come, walking according to their own lusts... the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment → STILL TO COME

■ 2PPE 3:5 [ALLUDES TO] Refers to ← GEN 1:6-9 p.~

■ 2PPE 3:6 [FULFILLS] The flood came suddenly and swept away all who were outside the ark. Jesus said His coming will be like this ← GEN 7:23 p.~

■ 2PPE 3:6 [ALLUDES TO] Refers to ← GEN 7:11 p.~

END TIMES PROPHECIES NOTABLE

kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

THE DAY OF THE LORD // ZEPHANIAH 1:7-18;
MALACHI 4:1-6; 1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-11

⁸ Beloved, do not let this one thing escape your notice: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise as some understand slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance.

¹⁰ But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and its works will be laid bare.

¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to conduct yourselves in holiness and godliness ¹² as you anticipate and hasten the coming of the day of God, when the heavens will be destroyed by fire and the elements will melt in the heat.

¹³ But in keeping with God's promise, we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

FINAL EXHORTATIONS

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, as you anticipate these things, make every effort to be found at peace—spotless and blameless in His sight.

■ **2PE 3:7 [PROPHECY]** In the last days scoffers will come, walking according to their own lusts... the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment → STILL TO COME

■ **2PE 3:8 [ALLUDES TO]** Refers to ← PS 90:4 p.~

■ **2PE 3:8 [NOTE]** A THOUSAND YEARS. See the Big Question page.

■ **2PE 3:9 [NOTABLE]** God waits because He wants everyone to come to repentance.

■ **2PE 3:9 [ALLUDES TO]** Refers to ← EZK 18:23; 33:11 p.~

■ **2PE 3:9 [NOTE]** NOT WANTING ANYONE TO PERISH. Arminians say God wants every person saved and leaves the choice to them. Calvinists say anyone means any of you, God's people, or shows what God desires in general, not whom He chooses. Both agree God is patient and calls all to repent, Ezekiel 33:11.

■ **2PE 3:10 [PROPHECY]** The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up... we look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells → STILL TO COME

■ **2PE 3:10 [NOTE]** TEXT. The oldest copies say the earth and its works will be found, laid bare. Later copies and the KJV say burned up. See Will the Earth Burn?

■ **2PE 3:12 [ALLUDES TO]** Refers to ← IS 34:4 p.~

■ **2PE 3:13 [ALLUDES TO]** Refers to ← IS 65:17; 66:22 p.~

¹⁵ Consider also that our Lord's patience brings salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom God gave him. ¹⁶ He writes this way in all his letters, speaking in them about such matters. Some parts of his letters are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

¹⁷ Therefore, beloved, since you already know these things, be on your guard so that you will not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure standing. ¹⁸ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity.

Amen.

DEBATED THE BIG QUESTION**A DAY LIKE A THOUSAND YEARS**

What Did Peter Mean?

2 PETER 3:8 TO 9 · PSALM 90:4 · GENESIS 2:17 · MATTHEW 24:36

WHAT PETER SAID

With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day, 3:8. He borrows Psalm 90:4, a prayer of Moses: a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes. Then he explains: the Lord is not slow, but patient, 3:9.

THE HISTORY

Early Jews and Christians did a lot with this verse. The book of Jubilees, about 160 BC, and Justin Martyr, about AD 155, said Adam died at 930 within one day of a thousand years, so God's warning in Genesis 2:17 came true. The Letter of Barnabas, about AD 130, and Irenaeus, about AD 180, taught that the world would last six days of a thousand years

■ **2PE 3:14 [NOTABLE]** Live today the way you want to be found when He comes.

■ **2PE 3:15 [NOTABLE]** Peter puts Paul's letters next to the rest of the Scriptures, and admits some parts are hard to understand.

■ **2PE 3:15 [NOTE]** PAUL IS SCRIPTURE. Peter puts Paul's letters next to the rest of the Scriptures, 3:16. They once clashed at Antioch, Galatians 2:11 to 14. Here Peter calls him our beloved brother.

■ **2PE 3:18 [NOTABLE]** The last words Peter ever wrote: keep growing.

each, then a seventh thousand year sabbath.

GOD IS PATIENT

Most teachers say Peter's point is simple: God does not watch the clock like we do. What feels like a long delay to us is nothing to Him, and He waits so more people can repent. Key verses: 3:9 and Psalm 90:2 to 4. Best case: it is the reason Peter himself gives in the next verse.

THE MILLENNIAL WEEK

Six thousand years of history, then a thousand year reign of Christ, Revelation 20:4. Best case: it is very old, held by Barnabas, Irenaeus and many after. Problem: every attempt to count the years to a date has failed, and Jesus said no one knows the day or hour, Matthew 24:36.

DAY AGE CREATION

Some use the verse to say the days of Genesis 1 could be long ages. Young earth teachers answer that Peter is talking about God's patience, not about creation, and that Genesis 1 counts evening and morning.

GOD OUTSIDE TIME

Augustine and many after him taught that God is not inside time at all. A day and a thousand years are the same to Him because He sees all of history at once.

WHAT ALL SIDES AGREE ON

Jesus is coming back. The delay is not God forgetting His promise; it is mercy. Nobody should set dates.

DEBATED THE BIG QUESTION

WILL THE EARTH BURN?

Burned Up or Made New

2 PETER 3:7 TO 13 · ROMANS 8:19 TO 22 · REVELATION 21:1 TO 5 · 1 CORINTHIANS 3:13

WHAT PETER SAID

The present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, 3:7. The heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and its works will be laid bare, 3:10. Then a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells, 3:13.

THE TEXT

The oldest full Bibles, Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, say the earth and its works will be found, which this Bible says as laid bare. Later copies say will be burned up, and the KJV follows them. A few old translations even say will not be found. So one word changes the picture.

BURNED UP AND REPLACED

God will destroy this universe completely and create a brand new one. Some Lutheran teachers after the Reformation taught this, and many Christians today. Key verses: 3:10 to 12 in the KJV, Revelation 21:1, the first earth passed away. Best case: Peter's words are strong, destroyed and melt.

PURIFIED AND RENEWED

Fire will clean this world the way fire refines gold, 1 Peter 1:7, and God will make it new. Irenaeus said the form of this world passes away, not its substance. Calvin and many today agree. Key verses: Romans 8:21, creation itself set free; Acts 3:21, the restoration of all things; Revelation 21:5, I make all things new. Best case: Noah's world was washed by water, 3:6, not wiped from existence.

LAID BARE FOR JUDGMENT

Found or laid bare means every work on earth will be exposed before God, like fire testing each person's work, 1 Corinthians 3:13. Best case: it reads the oldest copies plainly and fits the next verse, what kind of people ought you to be?

PICTURE LANGUAGE

The prophets used falling stars and melting heavens as pictures of God's judgment, Isaiah 34:4. Some, called preterists, think it pointed to the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. Most think it is still future.

WHAT ALL SIDES AGREE ON

Jesus will return, the world will be judged, and God's people will live in a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness is at home. So live holy now, 3:11.