

Background

Church tradition holds that Peter was martyred in Rome around AD 64. If accurate, this epistle was likely composed there between AD 60 and 64—the former being the earliest plausible date Peter would have been familiar with Paul’s collected letters. If 2 Peter 3:1 refers back to the same audience addressed in his first letter, then this message was bound for northeastern Asia Minor, a region encompassing several churches Paul had originally planted (3:15). Alternatively, Peter may have intended it as an encyclical, or general letter, meant for the wider Church.

Set against a cultural backdrop teeming with alluring, libertine cults, the early church faced constant threat from internal false teachers promoting immorality. Corinth notoriously wrestled with these issues, and Romans 6 suggested that Paul was already defending his doctrine against similar distortions in Rome. Paul’s radical declaration that Christians are free from the Law (Galatians 3–5) always carried the inherent risk that listeners might indulge their fallen desires rather than yielding to the Spirit—disregarding his warning that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. It is precisely this dangerous distortion of Christian liberty that 2 Peter seeks to counteract.

Overview

Serving as his final farewell, Peter’s second letter is a urgent warning against false teachers and a passionate call for believers to stand firm in their faith. He reminds the church that a true, saving knowledge of Christ naturally produces godly living, whereas false doctrines inevitably spiral into moral and spiritual destruction.

Addressing doubts about the end times, Peter reassures believers that Jesus will surely return, explaining that God’s perspective on time is vastly different from our own. He urges them to live holy, blameless lives in anticipation of that day, while fiercely defending the divine inspiration of Scripture against scoffers who mock God’s promises. Ultimately, 2 Peter teaches that the church must anchor itself in absolute truth, ruthlessly reject deception, and remain unshakeable until Christ returns.

Key Verse

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:10-11)

Key Truth

While awaiting our Lord’s return, we must stand on His great and precious promises, which provide all we need for life and godliness.

Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless (2 Peter 3:14)