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Article 61: Second Peter at a Glance

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SECOND PETER AT A GLANCE

This book, Peter's final epistle, exhorts all believers to personally apply those divine virtues available to us, compares the transfiguration of God's Son with the correct interpretation of God's Word, warns against false teachers, contrasts three worlds (the ancient world, the present one and the future one), concluding with a ringing challenge to live holy and godly lives in light of the divine plan to destroy this present heaven and earth and to create new ones!

BOTTOM LINE INTRODUCTION

THE FINAL WORDS OF A FORMER FISHERMAN:

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen" (3:18).

FACTS REGARDING THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK

1. Who? **Peter**. He was a former fisherman (Lk. 5:1-9) and brother of Andrew (Jn. 1:40), who would become the unofficial spokesman for the twelve apostles. He authored the two epistles that bear his name.
2. What? The books of 1 and 2 Peter.
3. When and where?
 - a. 1 Peter 64 A.D., from Babylon.
 - b. **2 Peter** 65 A.D., from (?) Babylon.
4. Why?
 - a. 1 Peter: to comfort suffering Christians.
 - b. 2 Peter: to warn and challenge Christians concerning the future.
5. To whom?
 - a. 1 Peter: scattered Christians.
 - b. **2 Peter**: scattered Christians.

KEY EVENTS

1. Exhortation to grow in the knowledge of God and the scriptures
2. Facts about false teachers
3. Contrasting the ancient world, the present world, and the future world

KEY INDIVIDUALS

1. **Peter**, brother of Andrew, former fisherman, apostle of Jesus, and author of 1 and 2 Peter
2. **Noah**, Old Testament builder of the Ark, referred to here to illustrate God's wrath and stern judgment upon unrepentant sinners

3. **Lot**, Old Testament nephew of Abraham, used here to illustrate the tragic price the believer must pay for worldly compromise
4. **Balaam**, greedy Old Testament prophet, used here to illustrate the characteristics of a false teacher
5. **Paul**, author of at least 13 New Testament books, referred to here in reference to those great salvation concepts as found in those epistles

KEY PLACES

1. **Mt. of Transfiguration:** probable reference to Mt. Hermon where Jesus was transfigured (Mt. 17), referred to here by Peter to emphasize the importance of the written Word of God
2. **Sodom and Gomorrah:** wicked cities of the Plains (near the Dead Sea), destroyed by God, and referred to here by Peter to illustrate the divine hatred of apostasy
3. **The pre-flood world:** filled with unbelievers who ridiculed God's warning regarding the flood judgment
4. **Present world:** filled with unbelievers who ridicule God's warning regarding the coming fire judgment
5. **Future world:** to become the place of ultimate righteousness and peace

UNIQUE FEATURES

1. This epistle contains the only interconnective reference from one apostolic epistle to another. In other words, Peter refers to Paul's writing (3:15-16).
2. It is very similar to the book of Jude. Out of 25 verses in Jude, no less than 19 are reiterated in some fashion in 2 Peter.
3. The theme of 1 Peter is suffering, while that of 2 Peter is full knowledge. It appears some 16 times with cognate words.
4. It is the only biblical book which begins and concludes by stressing the importance of knowing God (1:3; 3:18).
5. Second Peter was (at first) the most disputed of all the New Testament books in regard to its place in the second canon.
6. The Greek word signifying an exodus (translated departure in the KJV) is found on only two occasions in the New Testament:
 - The first (Lk. 9:31) is in reference to Jesus' departure or death.
 - The second (2 Pet. 1:15) is in reference to Peter's death.
7. This epistle has more to say regarding false religious teachers than any other New Testament epistle (2:1-3:4).
8. It contains the only scriptural passage assuring us regarding Lot's salvation (2:7, 8).
9. It provides the most concise graphic summary description in regard to the future purging of the present heavens and earth (3:10-12).
10. It records the first of two New Testament verses promising the creation of a new heaven and earth (3:13). The other passage is Rev. 21:1.
11. The book of 2 Peter may be compared to 2 Timothy, in matters of both authorship and content. For example:

- One (Paul) was the official messenger to the Gentiles, while the other (Peter) was God's spokesman to the Jews (Gal. 2:7-8).
 - Both played important roles in the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15).
 - Both healed a lame man (Acts 3:1-8; 14:8-12).
 - Both dealt with satanic pretenders.
 - a. Peter confronted Simon the sorcerer at Samaria (Acts 8:9-24).
 - b. Paul confronted Bar-jesus the sorcerer at Salamis on the Isle of Cyprus (Acts 13:5-11).
 - Both were released from prison miraculously.
 - a. God sent an angel to free Peter (Acts 12:5-10).
 - b. God sent an earthquake to free Paul (Acts 16:25-29).
 - Both raised the dead.
 - a. Peter raised Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:40).
 - b. Paul raised Eutychus from the dead (Acts 20:12).
 - Both received heavenly visions to minister to the lost.
 - a. Peter saw his vision at Joppa (Acts 10:9-23).
 - b. Paul saw his vision at Troas (Acts 16:8-10).
 - Both authored New Testament books.
 - a. Peter wrote two epistles.
 - b. Paul wrote 13 (and possibly 14) epistles.
 - Both wrote key passages on the subject of biblical inspiration.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:19-21).
 - Both knew they would die as martyrs for Christ.
 - a. Peter's testimony— *"Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me"* (2 Pet. 1:13-14).
 - b. Paul's testimony— *"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith"* (2 Tim. 4:6-7).
 - Both were honored by a personal appearance of the resurrected Christ.
 - a. Paul (Acts 9:5).
 - b. Peter (1 Cor. 15:5).
12. The book of 2 Peter is the only biblical book which discusses God's sovereign dealings with the former, present, and future worlds.
- The former world—Destroyed by the great flood (3:4-6).
 - The present world—To be destroyed by a great fire (3:7-12).
 - The future world—To be created in righteousness (3:13-14).

13. This epistle is the only New Testament book after the four gospels to mention Christ's transfiguration (1:16-18).

COMPARISON WITH OTHER BIBLE BOOKS

1. John 14-16 and 2 Timothy:

- All are farewell discourses.

2. 2 Thessalonians:

- Both concentrate on the darker side of things to come.

3. Jude:

- 2 Peter 2 warns of false teachers who would come; Jude warns against false teachers who were already there.

TITLES FOR AND TYPES OF JESUS

1. Jesus Christ (1:1a)
2. Our Savior (1:1b)
3. Jesus our Lord (1:2)
4. The Lord Jesus Christ (1:8)
5. God's beloved Son (1:17)
6. The day star (1:19)
7. The Lord (2:1)
8. Lord and Savior (2:20)