

1 Peter – Who, What, Why, When?

◆ **Written by whom?**

- The apostle Peter, because:
 - The letter itself claims to be authored by Peter
 - The early church strongly received it as coming from Peter
 - There are no evidences of a later writer claiming to be Peter
 - The content and tone are fully consistent with the times of the apostles

◆ **Written when and where?**

- Probably AD 62-64, shortly before Nero's great persecution. 5:13 says it is written from 'Babylon', which is most likely a code word for Rome.

◆ **Written to whom?**

- It is addressed to 'God's elect'. These Christians were from both Jewish and Gentile backgrounds, though a majority of the Christians had most likely been converted from paganism. The cities named in verse one are all places in northern Asia Minor or modern Turkey.

◆ **What form?**

- This letter is written in a normal letter form of the New Testament world. It was probably intended to be read aloud to a congregation, studied, then passed on to another congregation.

◆ **What's it about?**

- Two major themes: The sufferings of the Messiah and the coming Glory of the Messiah. Peter emphasizes the godly life of submission and good deeds in the middle of suffering. By these noble and good deeds, Christians glorify God, sustained by the all powerful Christ.

◆ **Written for what purpose?**

- 1 Peter is a warm, encouraging pastoral letter. It is addressed to Christians scattered over a wide area who share a common faith and face common problems. They were struggling to live for God in the middle of a society ignorant of the true God. The immediate future for these believers was an increase in conflict with the world. Peter wanted them to know that God would provide the grace to enable them to grow into maturity.

Simon Peter

According to the four gospels, Peter was the leader and spokesman for the early disciples. His original name in Hebrew was 'Simeon', but he is also called Simon and Cephas.

Peter was one of the first disciples called into Jesus' service, introduced to Jesus by his brother Andrew. Andrew himself was a disciple of John the Baptist. Peter was a fisherman from Bethsaida. He had a home in Capernaum and was married. He evidently had a strong country accent.

Peter quickly became the leader of the twelve disciples, and was one of the inner three along with James and John. He was given a special commission by Jesus (John 21:15-19).

While Peter was recognized by the early church as an important leader, we only have two letters that bear his name. According to tradition, Mark became the interpreter of Peter and put into writing the things preached by Peter in his own book.

1 Peter – Chapter 1– Scripture Questions

1. How does Peter describe the people to whom he wrote this letter? (vs. 1-2)
2. What did God give us in mercy? (vs. 3)
3. Through faith we are shielded by God’s power until _____. (vs. 5)
4. What happens to our faith when it is refined through the fire of suffering? (vs. 7)
5. Why are we filled with ‘inexpressible and glorious’ joy? (vs. 9)
6. What were the prophets searching intently to discover? (vs. 11)
7. What things are we to do to live holy lives? (vs. 13-16)
 1. Prepare our minds for _____
 2. Be self-_____
 3. Set our hope fully on the _____ given by the revealed Christ
 4. Do not _____ to evil desires
 5. Be _____ in all we do.
8. We are to live our lives on earth as _____. (vs. 17)
9. With what are we redeemed? (vs. 19)
10. When was Christ chosen to be our sacrificial lamb? (vs. 20)
11. Through Christ we believe in _____, who raised Christ from the _____ and glorified him—so our faith and hope are in God. (vs. 21)
12. What should we do, now that we are purified by obeying the truth, born again through the living and enduring word of God? (vs. 22)

1 Peter – Chapter 1- What Did It Mean to Them?

This was a letter to well-loved Christians, meant to help them live in a world that misunderstood and persecuted them. Peter (and the other followers) firmly believed that their world was based on God's supreme power. People who lived in this world were subjected to the pressure of the devil, who "prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour". What was new was Peter's understanding of the end times. Since Jesus had come as Messiah, God's plan was on the way to being fulfilled. The teachings of the prophets, especially those about the messianic sufferings and the following messianic glory, are fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Peter regularly uses Jesus as 'Jesus Christ', 'Lord', and 'Messiah', emphasizing his belief in Jesus' fulfillment of all these prophecies. Peter's letter emphasizes the life of submission and good deeds necessary in order to be faithful witnesses.

Peter calls his readers 'God's elect'. In biblical teaching, election is a fairly frequent topic, and it is a foundation of spiritual blessing. We should not feel threatened by this idea: it is always presented as a reason to be comforted and encouraged. Here, the word "elect" reminds the scattered Christians that God had a certain and gracious purpose for them. They belonged to God, and were residents of the heavenly kingdom.

Another topic is that of 'sanctification'. For Peter, this was the process of using the Spirit to purify the Christians, and giving them tasks of service. The goal of election and redemption is obedience to Jesus, and the resulting salvation of the world. The idea of salvation is of intense interest to Peter. He speaks of it as a 'new birth', and this new birth is due to the work of the Holy Spirit. The whole idea of inheritance is very important in the Bible: it focuses on family connections. God's people, those who are saved by the work of the Holy Spirit, are called 'shielded'. God is continually active in the lives of believers, and the believers respond with obedient service to Him.

Because the Christian life on this planet is temporary, we must carefully live as people who have been freed from sin, freed from separation from God. Even the angels are watching carefully to see how we use this gift. The basis for our faith and hope in God is Jesus' resurrection. His glorification at God's right hand is the promise of the hope that we have in eternity.

In the last section, Peter adds a command to love. He gives two reasons for Christians to love one another: first, they have been purified by obeying the truth of the Gospel. By their repentance and obedience, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, Christians are able to love all people with a self-sacrificing desire that shows in concrete acts. Second, they have been born again. The 'seed' that gives this new birth is the life-giving message about Jesus' death and resurrection. God's word is alive and it gives life; it lasts forever because the God who speaks it is the eternal, faithful, powerful One who keeps his promises. With this power behind us, we are able to love as he loved us.

5 1 Peter – Chapter 1 - Application Questions

1. Verse 13 says, “Prepare your minds for action.” What kinds of action is he talking about? What kind of action needs to take place in you next? What kinds of action need to take place next in our Church?
2. Verse 13 also says, “Be self-controlled.” What does this mean? How controlled is too much? What if I don’t think someone is self-controlled enough?
3. Verse 14 says, “Do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.” What kind of evil desires is he talking about? What kind of activities are off-limits for Christians? Is something that’s OK for me not OK for you?

6

1 Peter – Chapter 2– Scripture Questions

1. Of what are we to rid ourselves? (vs. 1)
 1. _____ 4. _____
 2. _____ 5. _____
 3. _____
2. What should we crave, and why? (vs. 2)
3. As living stones, we are built into a spiritual house. What is the purpose of this building? (vs. 4-6)
4. What happens to those who do not believe? (vs. 7, 8)
5. What kind of people are we now? (vs. 9, 10)
6. How are we supposed to live among unbelievers? (vs. 11, 12)
7. We are supposed to _____ ourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority. (vs. 13)
8. Show proper _____ to everyone: love the brotherhood of _____, fear _____, honor the _____. (vs. 17)
9. To whom should employees submit themselves? (vs. 18)
10. How did Christ respond to unjust treatment? (vs. 23)
11. Why did Christ bear our sins in his body on the Cross? (vs. 24)
12. We were like sheep going _____, but now we have returned to the _____ and _____ of our souls. (vs. 25)

Verse 8 speaks of 'destiny' of those who disobey. Here are some of the ways this is understood:

1. Out of all the people in the world, it is inevitable that some of them will fall and be lost.
2. God knew from the beginning that some specific people would be unbelievers.
3. If people refuse to believe, it will result in eternal destruction.

In ancient buildings, the cornerstone was the most important, central piece of the building. It was the piece that determined the shape and direction of the entire building. All other stones were laid in relation to this first, all-important stone.

1 Peter – Chapter 2 - What Did It Mean to Them?

In this next section, Peter uses different images to describe how Christians should live. He uses the idea of ‘stripping off’ dirty clothes, then compares Christians to babies. Next, he talks about the idea of stones in the temple. Finally, he calls believers priests, chosen people.

Peter begins with a description of vices that must be removed from lives of Christians. These type of lists were common in the ancient world, and in the New Testament. It isn’t enough, however, to simply stop doing bad things. Good habits must be created, and the best way to do this is to continually nourish one’s self with ‘milk’, which was most likely a reference to the Word of God. This causes the ‘newborn’ Christians to grow and mature as they are taught about Christ and God the Father.

The idea of Christ as a rock or stone was an accepted messianic title among the Jews, as well as Christians. God’s raising of Jesus from the dead shows his value as the “living Stone”. The new construction that Peter sees is that of Jesus’ church, and this indwelling of all believers is the replacement for the old Temple.

Peter states now something that was new and startling: every Christian is a part of a new priestly order. All Christians have immediate access to God, they serve him personally, they minister to others, and they have something to give as his servants. Specifically, the church is supposed to make God and his mercy known to the world.

The next section deals with practical implications of what it means to be God’s people in a hostile world. We are in this world, but not of it: our true home/destiny is the coming Kingdom. So, our values are from eternity. The desires of the body are not sinful or wrong in themselves, but they are perverted by sin. Peter was probably referring to participation in pagan immorality.

Peter directly addresses the relationship Christians are to have with civil authorities. He sees this in light of Christ-like submission. Reminding his readers of the way Christ responded to authorities, he calls us to be like Christ. While we do have freedom in Christ, we are not supposed to use this freedom as a cover for wickedness, and this includes being obedient to the laws of the land.

Lastly, Peter speaks to the behavior of slaves. This was a common situation in these times: sometimes people sold themselves for a period of time in order to make money (similar to contractors today). Again calling on the example of Christ, slaves are told to be submissive to their owners, even if those owners are harsh. Those who are innocent are following in the steps of Jesus.

1 Peter – Chapter 2 - Application Questions

1. Non-Christians can respect Christians who are good citizens, but sometimes being good citizens means we should push back against bad laws. In past years, The Legal Liberty Institute brought a lawsuit against the Plano school district in a case involving a child who included the story of the origin of candy canes in a Winter Party goodie bag. If the Christian parents knew it was against school policy, were they being bad citizens to break the rules?
2. In Peter's time, Christians were accused of many things. Of what are Christians accused today?
3. We are to obey the government—unless it goes against God's law. What are some specific examples of government going against God's law?
4. How, exactly, can you 'rid yourself' of things like malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander?

In Peter's time, non-Christians accused believers of many things, among them: (1) Disloyalty to the state or to Caesar; (2) Upsetting business; (3) Fortunetelling; (4) Teaching against slavery; (5) Not participating in local festivals because of 'hatred of mankind'; (6) Holding antisocial values; and (7) Being atheists because they had no idols.

9 1 Peter – Chapter 3– Scripture Questions

1. How are Christian wives effective in their own households? (vs. 1, 3)
2. Where is true beauty found? (vs. 4)
3. Christian women are daughters of Sarah if they do what is _____ and do not give way to _____. (vs. 6)
4. Husbands should treat their wives with consideration and _____, as joint _____ of the gracious gift of life. (vs. 7)
5. We are to: (vs. 8, 9)
 - Live in _____ with one another
 - Be _____
 - Love as _____
 - Be compassionate and _____
 - Repay evil and insult with _____
6. What must we do if we love life and want to see good days? (vs. 10-12)
7. What should we be prepared to do? (vs. 15)
8. Why did Christ die? (vs. 18)
9. What does the salvation of Noah and his family symbolize? (vs. 21)
10. How does baptism save us? (vs. 21)
11. Where is Christ now? (vs. 22)

1 Peter – Chapter 3 - What Did It Mean to Them?

The Christians to whom Peter was writing had lost a great deal: their cultural communities, their religious communities, and, in many cases, their extended families. There were a great many questions about how they were supposed to live without these social constructs. In the following discussion, Peter uses both common cultural and spiritual understandings of how the households of believers should operate. While our cultural systems for households has changed, the basic principles of service and the Golden Rule have not changed. Peter shows his readers how their faith will be reflected in their relationships with one another.

Relationships between spouses is meant to be influenced and motivated by an awareness of the believer's relationship with God through salvation from Jesus. Service to one another is more important than status. 'Beauty' is found in a value system that reflects commitment to serving God. Decisions about how to treat one another are based on understanding of our own value before the Creator. Our values should be the opposite of what many in our culture hold to be important: materialism, self-assertion, and sex obsession.

Peter also addresses relationships in community. He lists five virtues: harmony, sympathy, love as siblings, compassion, and humility. Peter considers these virtues as something that all people united in Christ should strive to develop.

These virtues are valuable as the believers learn to deal with neighbors who are hostile. Christ is held up as the pattern to follow. While a natural, or human, response to hostility is to push back or be hostile in return, we should respond with grace and blessing. This 'blessing' is more than just speaking well of enemies. It goes beyond this into active prayer and intercession. We must desire not revenge but for God to grant the gift of repentance to those who do not know him. Because grace has been give to us, we must extend it to everyone else.

We should desire life in its goodness. To achieve this, we need to guard our ways and our tongues, overcoming evil with good. Because we respect and love the Lord, we are called to actively seek peace. These efforts may fail; suffering and unjust treatments may happen (as they did to Peter's readers). However, even if this suffering does occur we can know that we belong to God and his kingdom. We can hold to the promises of future vindication. When the center of a person's life is in a good, right relationship with God, they will be able to respond properly to anything that happens in their lives.

While the last section has had many different interpretations over the last two thousand years, the primary meaning is this: Christ died in the body but was made alive by the Spirit. He was raised from the dead, and now has power and authority in heaven as well as on earth. Angels, demons, and powers on earth are under him. Therefore, the oppressed Christians in Asia Minor to whom Peter was writing could be certain that they did not need to fear anyone or anything.

11 1 Peter – Chapter 3 - Application Questions

1. What does it mean to be loyal or submissive?
2. Is it possible to be too loyal? What are some examples of appropriate loyalty and submission for husbands and wives? What are some examples of inappropriate loyalty?
3. The list of expected behaviors reads like a list of Boy Scout attributes. Is this realistic? Why or why not?
4. How important is it to be baptized? Why do we do baptism the way we do it?
5. For personal reflection: why do you believe in Jesus? Write a sentence or two to 'explain the hope you have within you'.

1 Peter – Chapter 4 – Scripture Questions

1. When is a person done with sin? (vs. 1)
2. How does Peter describe the pagan way of living? (vs. 3)
3. What do worldly people think about Christians who give up their former lifestyles? (vs. 4)
4. At the end of their lives, to whom will unbelievers have to answer for the way they lived? (vs. 5)
5. What is near? (vs. 7)
6. Why should believers love one another deeply? (vs. 8)
7. What should we offer without grumbling? (vs. 9)
8. What should we use to serve others? (vs. 10)
9. What should not surprise us? (vs. 12)
10. When are we blessed? (vs. 14)
11. We should NOT want to suffer because we were _____ or _____. (vs. 15)
12. How should we feel if we are mistreated because of our faith? (vs. 16)
13. How should we deal with it if we undergo suffering? (vs. 19)

1 Peter – Chapter 4 - What Did It Mean to Them?

The opening of this chapter is a clarion call to focus. The innocence of Jesus in the face of evil is our example: if our own lives (opposed to evil) involve suffering, then we accept that suffering as the cost of pursuing the goal. This commitment to living righteously means that we have ceased from sin as a way of life, not that we have been able to stop sinning. Now, we live under the rule of the will of God.

Many of Peter's readers had once been practicing pagans. They had evidently been 'devout' enough that their friends and families were stunned at the life changes. The suffering of the believers was not political but community/family centered. Peter points out that God will be the one who judges the non-believers.

The phrase "The gospel was preached even to the dead" is difficult, with many different understandings and translations. One way to think of it is that Peter was referring to people who were physically dead but had heard the gospel preached to them before they died. Even though they would still have to answer to God for their physical sins, they would be alive in a redeemed relationship after their physical death. Peter's readers were no doubt concerned about their friends and family who had died, wondering if they would be saved.

Due to Peter's Jewish background, 'the end of all things' would have meant the end of the present world order. 'Is at hand' reflects how much the Christians longed for the current world order to end and the eternal world order to begin. This anticipation was common in all the New Testament writings. Peter used this longing as a way to encourage upright living and responsible service to God through service to others. 'Love for one another' was essential; it did not look for sins and weaknesses, but looked instead for opportunities to help and encourage. They were to use any ability/gift/grace they had in the spirit of love so that God would be glorified while they waited.

Lastly, Peter explains the presence of trials as inevitable in the life of Christians in a non-Christian world. They shouldn't be surprised at the reactions of those around them, but should be motivated to stay away from evil and to give themselves to good behavior, committed to the Creator who can be trusted to be faithful to them.

14 1 Peter – Chapter 4 - Application Questions

1. Everyone suffers at times in life. What should our attitude and behavior be like during these times?
2. Have your past sufferings or difficulties ever been a help to someone else later? How?
3. Non-Christians think Christians are crazy for missing out on their “fun”. What do we say to these kinds of comments? Is there anything constructive we can say?
4. “Love covers a multitude of sins” – what does this look like in practical application? How can we love people yet still help them out of sin?

1 Peter – Chapter 5 – Scripture Questions

1. On what basis did Peter appeal to the elders of the churches? (vs. 1)
2. How were the elders to care for those under their oversight? (vs. 2, 3)
 - a. Not because they must, but because they were _____.
 - b. Not greedy for money, but eager to _____.
 - c. Not lording it over believers, but being _____ to the flock.
3. What will be the reward from Jesus, Chief Shepherd, to those who serve well? (vs. 4)
4. Why should we all ‘clothe ourselves in humility’? (vs. 5)
5. We humble ourselves under God’s hand that he may _____ us up in due time. (vs. 6)
6. Why can we safely cast all our cares on God? (vs. 7)
7. What kind of behavior does Peter encourage? (vs. 8, 9)
 - A. Be self-_____ and _____.
 - B. Resist the _____, standing _____ in the faith.
 - C. Remember that others throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of _____.
8. If we stand firm in the face of suffering, the God of all grace will do what for us? (vs. 10)
9. What was Peter’s purpose in writing this letter? (vs. 12)
10. How did Peter wish them to greet one another? (vs. 13)

16 1 Peter – Chapter 5 - What Did It Mean to Them?

The last section of this letter deals with ethical questions. While the congregations were not new (they evidently had elders appointed), there was still some uncertainty about the internal structures. We must remember that the Church was still young, and that in many ways they were only beginning to construct ways to 'do' church.

To begin with, Peter empathized with the church leaders. He wanted them to care for God's flock because they want to please God, spontaneously and tenderly showing them the best way. This will earn God's commendation and reward. This instruction guarded against authoritarian behavior, which might have been a result of people leading the way they remembered former religious leaders behaving.

Next, Peter addresses the younger people in the congregation. Younger people should follow the leaders, but all should be honest and not pretend to be something they are not—God delights in plain people. God has his hand in our lives. We can live confidently in his care. Peter does not want them to be beaten down, but he does want them to respect their leaders.

Peter is still direct and action oriented. He tells his readers to stay alert and levelheaded. He wants them to watch out for the devil's tricks, and to remember that Christians everywhere deal with the same type of problems. It is necessary to keep a firm grip on faith, and keep in mind that it won't be long before God makes all his great and glorious plans happen.

The closing mentions specific people known to the readers. The cryptic reference to 'she who is at Babylon' most likely refers to the church in Rome, the city that Peter was probably in while he wrote. Early church history believed that John Mark was with Peter in Rome, serving as his companion and interpreter.

1 Peter – Chapter 5 - Application Questions

1. What does it mean to be a leader of the church? What do you think those people should do?
2. When does a person move from ‘younger’ to ‘elder’? How does this change happen?
3. How can I cast all my anxiety on God when he doesn’t seem to be doing anything about the things causing the anxiety?
4. Peter warns the Christians that just because God is king doesn’t make them immune to attacks from Satan. How does Satan attack us today?

1 Peter – The Old Testament in the New

New Testament Text	Old Testament Text	Subject
Pe 1:16	Lev 11:44-45	Holiness commanded
Pe 1:24-25	Isa 40:6-8	Eternity of the word
Pe 2:6	Isa 28:16	Trust in the cornerstone
Pe 2:7	Ps 118:22-23	Rejected cornerstone
Pe 2:8	Isa 8:14	A stone on which people stumble
Pe 2:9	Isa 43:21	Declaring God's praise
Pe 2:10	Hos 1:6, 9	Once, not God's people
Pe 2:10	Hos 2:23	Now God's people
Pe 2:22	Isa 53:9	Sinless servant
Pe 2:24	Isa 53:4	Taking out infirmities
Pe 2:25	Isa 53:6	Like sheep gone astray
Pe 3:10-12	Ps 34:12-16	Turn from evil
Pe 3:14-15	Isa 8:12-13	Do not fear
Pe 4:8	Pr 10:12	Love covers sin
Pe 4:18	Pr 11:31	Receiving due reward
Pe 5:5	Pr 3:34	Grace for the humble

2 Peter – Who, What, Why, When?

◆ **Written by whom?**

- The apostle Peter. Identification rests on these considerations:
 - The letter itself claims to be authored by Peter
 - The writer speaks of himself as an eyewitness of the Transfiguration
 - The writer claims this to be the second letter written.
 - While there was some debate about authenticity, by 315-318 AD it was accepted as Scripture.

◆ **Written when and where?**

- Probably written towards the end of Peter's life, between 65 and 68 AD. Peter was imprisoned in Rome by the emperor Nero, and he knew the end of his life was near.

◆ **Written to whom?**

- It is not specifically addressed, but was sent to Christians in various places.

◆ **What form?**

- Normal letter, written to various Christians and meant for distribution.

◆ **What's it about?**

- Peter knew that his time was short. He wanted to warn God's people of coming dangers and to encourage them to hold fast to the basic truths of the faith. False teachers were leading believers back into sin. Based on the similarity to a letter from Jude, Peter had most likely seen his letter.

◆ **Written for what purpose?**

- 1 To stimulate Christian growth
- 2. To combat false teaching
- 3. To encourage believers to watch for Jesus' return

2 Peter – Chapter 1– Scripture Questions

According to false teachers of Peter's time, knowledge made self-control unnecessary; according to Peter, Christian knowledge leads to self-control.

1. What have we been given by God's power? (vs. 3)
2. What have we been given by the glory and goodness of Jesus? (vs. 4a)
3. Why were we given these great and precious promises? (vs. 4b)
4. List the virtues that we should make every effort to add to our faith: (vs. 5-7)

1. _____	5. _____
2. _____	6. _____
3. _____	7. _____
4. _____	
5. If we practice these qualities and grow in spiritual maturity, they will keep us from being _____ and _____ in our knowledge of Jesus. (vs. 8)
6. What will happen if we do these things? (vs. 10, 11)
7. Why did Peter think it was right to remind them of things they already knew? (vs. 13-15)
8. Peter did not make up clever stories about Jesus. He had been an _____ to his majesty. (vs. 16)
9. What did Peter hear when he was on the sacred mountain? (vs. 18)
10. From where does prophecy have its origin? (vs. 21)

21 2 Peter – Chapter 1- What Did It Mean to Them?

According to church tradition, around AD 65 Peter was imprisoned in Rome, and according to this letter he believed his life would soon be over. He wanted to write one more time to Christians, confirming what they had already been taught about Jesus. There were false teachers in their midst, proposing that, since Jesus had not returned, he never would come back. Since they didn't expect any future judgment, they were living immoral lives.

Peter reminds them (and us) that God has given us all we need for living, including promises that change us and take us away from the disaster of sin. Because of his salvation, we should work hard to develop mature spiritual muscles: good character, spiritual understanding, alert discipline, passionate patience, reverent wonder, warm friendliness and generous love. Each of these qualities fit into and develop the others, earning us rich rewards from Jesus in his kingdom.

Peter reminds them of things they know so that after he is gone they won't have any trouble remembering what is important. He didn't make things up, but told them what he had seen himself with his own eyes and heard with his own ears.

There was also evidence from the prophets, and they wrote with the inspiration of God behind them. When Jesus comes back, we will have his evidence, too.

2 Peter – Chapter 1 - Application Questions

1. What ‘exercises’ can we do to develop the spiritual muscles Peter lists?
2. How can we tell if we are being ‘effective’ and ‘productive’ in our spiritual lives?
3. Peter heard God’s voice on a mountain. Can you remember hearing anything that made a huge impact on your life? Can you share it with us?
4. How can you tell if someone is speaking from God, ‘carried along by the Holy Spirit’, and not just making up ‘cleverly invented stories’?

2 Peter – Chapter 2 – Scripture Questions

1. What do false teachers do secretly? (vs. 1)
2. What happens to the truth when false teachers are present? (vs. 2)
3. What kind of stories do false teachers tell? (vs. 3)
4. What did God do to the ungodly: sinning angels, ungodly people, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah? (vs. 4-6)
5. What kind of men do things that angels would not? (vs. 10, 11)
6. These men are like _____ to blaspheme the way they do. (vs. 12)
7. They have eyes full of _____, they never stop _____, they _____ the unstable, they are experts in _____. (vs. 14)
8. Who was rebuked by a dumb animal? What kind of animal? (vs. 15, 16)
9. These false teachers promise _____ though they are themselves are _____ (vs. 19)
10. They knew the way of righteousness but turned their _____ on it. (vs. 21)
11. These false teachers are like what animals? (vs. 22)

The word translated as ‘sent them to hell’ is **tartaroo**, which literally means ‘to hold them in Tartarus’. This was considered, by the Greeks, to be a place under the earth that was lower than Hades where divine punishment was meted out. This idea was also found in nonbiblical Jewish literature.

2 Peter – Chapter 2 - What Did It Mean to Them?

This chapter hones in on the problem with false teachers. Peter rejects their trickery, their desire for money, and their sexual immorality. These teachers were popular, but destined for hell. They were adding destructive teachings (made up by them) to the congregations they preyed on. Their behavior (and the behavior of those who fell under their influence) had the potential to bring public shame on the churches.

Peter speaks of the false teachers as ‘denying the Lord who bought them’. This has caused confusion over the years: is Peter saying that once someone has become a Christian, they can then lose their salvation? In my opinion, verse 1 says that Christ “bought” the false teachers, but it does not mean that they were saved. Salvation in the NT sense doesn’t happen until the Holy Spirit regenerates the heart of one who believes in the truth. In other words, Christ crucified is the sacrifice for the sins of the world. However, the wrath of God is on ALL sinners until they believe and are regenerated by the Holy Spirit. So these teachers (and anyone who pretends to belief) are never truly saved.

There are three examples of those who will be condemned: angels who fell (most likely those from Genesis 6), those who died in the Flood because they would not follow Noah’s righteousness, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Peter’s description of Lot is a little odd. From reading his story in Genesis, Lot doesn’t seem like an upstanding person. He seemed worldly and weak, and had to be dragged out of town. Peter may have assumed that his heart was righteous since he was saved from the general destruction.

Peter’s final description of the false teachers vividly contrasts them with Christ and his teachings. They are springs without water, Christ is a spring of water from eternal life. They give nothing because they have nothing to give; they are unstable as mist, and the blackest darkness is reserved for them. Christ gave life everlasting, stable and dependable. Christ is our light, and when we are with him we are always in that light.

25 2 Peter – Chapter 2 - Application Questions

1. How can we tell who the false teachers are? Don't they seem to be OK at first?
2. How do we know when something is too good to be true?
3. How can we be careful without being cynical - mistrusting everyone?
4. God knows how to rescue godly people, but sometimes doesn't. Why?

2 Peter – Chapter 3 – Scripture Questions

1. Why did Peter write to the believers, and what did he want them to remember? (vs. 1, 2)
2. What did the ‘scoffers’ (unbelievers) say about the Second Coming of Christ? (vs. 3-4)
3. How does Peter describe time from God’s point of view? (vs. 8)
4. Why is God patient? (vs. 9)
5. If we believe that the end is coming, on what should we focus? (vs. 11)
6. To what do we look forward? (vs. 13)
7. We are to make every effort to be found _____, _____, and at peace with him (Jesus). (vs. 14)
8. What danger comes from distorting or misusing Scripture? (vs. 16)
9. We are to be on our guard so that we may not be carried away by the error of _____ men. (vs. 17)
10. In what should we grow? (vs. 18)

2 Peter – Chapter 3 - What Did It Mean to Them?

Peter encourages his listeners to pay attention to the things they have been taught, by apostles and the prophets. They are not to listen to people who sneer at faith, who say that because Jesus hasn't come back yet that he is never coming back. These false teachers ignore the times God has involved himself directly in the world, and they don't understand that God is patient so that everyone who CAN be saved WILL be saved.

There is no question that the believers to whom Peter was writing had expected Jesus to return much sooner. Peter reminds them that when (not if) Jesus comes back, it will startle everyone. So, since it is impossible to know when it will happen, everyone needs to live their lives as well as possible, doing their utmost to be as much like Jesus as possible. God is waiting patiently!

Peter ends with practical instructions: stay sharp, stay on guard. Don't be fooled by fakers. Practice what is known and study Scripture (both old and new) so as to become more and more mature. Remember that there will be a time of reckoning, a time of judgment. The Christian goal is to know Christ fully, more closely, and to become more and more like him.

Finally, Peter points his readers to the new age, "the day of the Lord", when Christ will be seen in all of his glory.

28 2 Peter – Chapter 3 - Application Questions

1. It's been a long, long time since Jesus promised to come back. How can we possibly keep ourselves alert to his coming?
2. The end of the world sounds like a scary time. How much attention should we give to the possibility of everything going up in smoke—soon?
3. Peter seems to say that we can 'speed the coming' of Jesus (vs. 12). How do you think we can do this?
4. Peter teaches that twisting and misusing the Scripture can ruin people. What is the best way to avoid this problem?