

# 2 Peter

## IGNATIUS CATHOLIC STUDY BIBLE QUESTIONS

### Welcome

“You are approaching the ‘word of God’. But for thousands of years, ... the Word of God has been approaching you.”

The following guide is provided to enhance your reading of the Second Letter of Saint Peter using the *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*. If you are new to this resource or to reading the Bible, we recommend you read the general Introduction before you begin. It explains what it means that Scripture is the Word of God as well as how we understand and interpret it as Catholics. It also introduces the special features of the Study Bible and tells how they can enrich your reading and study. Additionally, the *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles* will provide valuable context for your reading.

A simple rhythm of prayer followed by reading and reflection is offered below to guide you through the book one chapter at a time. Questions draw attention to key footnotes and word studies to lead you into a deeper understanding of what you read and then prompt you to consider how to apply what you have learned. For a deeper dive, take advantage of additional features as you go: not just the other footnotes but also cross-references to Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* that are provided above the footnotes as well as any maps, charts, or essays that are not touched on in the questions.

Don't miss these helpful icons as you read! They highlight footnotes that pertain to the Church's criteria for interpreting Scripture (see CCC 112–14):



### Be attentive to the content and unity of Scripture

Notes marked with a Bible icon connect Old Testament passages and New Testament mysteries, fostering appreciation for God's unified plan.



### Read Scripture in light of the Church's living tradition

This icon marks notes drawn from the Holy Spirit's guidance of Church teaching and the spiritual senses of scripture. Here you'll find official teaching as well as interpretations from Fathers, Doctors, and saints of the Church.



### Be attentive to the “analogy of faith”

Explore notes marked with an icon of keys to learn how the mysteries of faith, revealed in Scripture and defined by the Church, clarify and connect with one another in a unified, coherent way.

May God bless you as you read his word!

of God,\* did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,<sup>7</sup>but emptied himself,<sup>†</sup> taking the form of a servant,<sup>‡</sup> being born in the likeness of men.<sup>§</sup>And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.<sup>¶</sup>Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name,<sup>||</sup>that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,<sup>|||</sup>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 Therefore, obeyed, so now much more in salvation with f work in you, bo pleasure.  
14 Do all thi tioning,<sup>15</sup>that y children of God crooked and per

2:9–11: Rom 10:9; 14:9; Eph 1:20–21. 2:13: 1 Cor 15:10. 2

**2:7 emptied himself:** The Greek verb *kenōō* means “empty out” or “render void”. The idea is, not that Christ divested himself of divinity when he united himself with humanity, but that he restricted his rightful exercise of certain divine abilities during his earthly life and accepted certain limitations of the human condition. In effect, the Son of God made himself poor in order to make us rich with his grace (2 Cor 8:9) (CCC 472). • Christ emptied himself by compressing the glory of his Godhead within our smallness. What he always was remained perfect and incomprehensible, but what he assumed was in proportion to the measure of our nature (St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Apollinarius*).

**2:8 death on a cross:** The ultimate indignity. Death by crucifixion was the most awful and degrading form of criminal execution in the ancient world. The Romans reserved it for slaves and insurrectionists. See note on Mk 15:24.

**2:9 exalted him:** By raising him from the dead, enthroning him in heaven, and clothing his humanity with divine glory. A similar destiny awaits all who humble themselves as Jesus did (3:21; Lk 14:11).

**2:10 every knee should bow:** An allusion to the divine oath in Is 45:23. • Yahweh swore that all peoples, to the very end of the earth, would acknowledge his Lordship and bow before him in homage. Paul moves Christ into the center of this prophecy as the divine Lord destined to be revered by all. **heaven ... earth ... under the earth:** The three principal realms in the world view of ancient Israel (Ex 20:4). Homage will come from all creatures great and small—the angels and saints above, the family of man and beasts spread over the earth, and the dead and the demons of the underworld.

**2:11 confess:** I.e., acknowledge. Included in this open dec

serious that we pur sense of awe at ser the prospect of sinn Encouragement con readers that God's g desire (intention) at 21; CCC 308) (CC “work”, he address and trembling”, he good deeds were th not boast of your g within you (St. Augu **2:15 pervers** • Deuterono poetic lawsuit that and ingratitude du

*A Thing to Harpagmos (G in the Greek O Occurrences of “robbery”. Its considerable d the leading vi (1) Some, like “something sel*

## Prepare

Read the Introduction to 2 Peter, paying particular attention to the *Destination* and *Themes and Characteristics* of the book. What one thing stands out to you, that you would like to remember?

Read the Outline of 2 Peter to get an overview of the book. What are its major divisions?

## Pray

Use the following questions to guide your reading of 2 Peter, going at a pace that is comfortable to you. Before you begin each new section, pray simply for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit:

*Come, Holy Spirit, open my heart to hear and receive these words as what they truly are, the Word of God. Enlighten my understanding and give me grace to put what I read into practice in my life. Amen.*

## Read and Reflect

Read and reflect on 2 Peter as follows:

- Pray before you read
- Read a section of biblical text by itself
- Read the text again, referring to the notes that accompany the text
- For deeper understanding and to aid in applying what you read, answer the questions that follow. The references at the top of each numbered question correspond to particular notes.

At the end of each chapter, review what you have written and linger where you feel drawn, asking the Lord to speak to your heart and into your life. What do you hear? Respond in prayer and ask his help to live what you hear in your attitudes and actions this week.

# STUDY QUESTIONS

## Chapter 1

### *For understanding*

1. **1:4.** What is the aim of Christian living, according to this verse? What does Peter mean by saying that we are “partakers of the divine nature”? How does Paul describe this participation in God’s life? On what truth is this doctrine grounded?
2. **1:20.** Who is able to interpret the meaning of OT prophecies? How is this proper understanding communicated to the Christian faithful?
3. **Word Study: Moved (1:21).** How is the term translated “carry”, “bring”, or “move” used in the New Testament? How does Peter use it here? How does he apply it to the inspiration of the Prophets?
4. **1:21.** What does Peter affirm about prophetic inspiration? What might Peter’s stress on this point suggest about his concerns? What, for example, did the Ebionites believe?

### *For application*

1. **1:3.** According to this verse, what resources do you have to become a saint? What does “knowledge of him” mean?
2. **1:5–9.** How do the characteristics in vv. 5–7 build on one another? According to v. 8, what makes you an effective disciple of Christ? According to v. 9, what makes you an ineffective disciple? How many of these characteristics do you think you need, and how might you acquire them?
3. **1:16–18.** What ensures that Christianity is a historically based religion? How can you be sure that the claims about Jesus Christ are true? Why would you still need faith, even if all the details of Jesus’ life could be historically and scientifically verified?
4. **1:20–21.** If “no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation”, how are you to apply Scripture to your daily life? How might the Church’s interpretation of Scripture help you in doing this? Why is it a good idea to spend some time in prayer both before and after reading Scripture?

## Chapter 2

### *For understanding*

1. **2:1–22.** In these verses, about what does Peter warn Christians? From what other work, according to scholars, is Peter drawing in these verses? Does the answer have any bearing on the authorship of the letter?
2. **2:1.** Give some possible meanings of the Greek term *hairesis*. What does Peter have in mind?
3. **2:4.** To what is the reference to “the angels” probably an allusion? What does “hell” mean here? What OT background does Peter seem to have in mind?
4. **2:15.** What is “the way of Balaam”? To what incident in Numbers does this expression refer? In what way is the figure of Balaam a prototype of Peter’s opponents?

### *For application*

1. **2:1–3.** What is heresy? Why does Scripture consider heresy destructive? How might heresy be allied with “licentiousness”? Can you think of any examples?
2. **2:4–10.** What kinds of sinful behavior are included in the examples Peter provides in these verses? (Hint: Look at v. 10.) Why do you think he singles these out for special condemnation? For example, what kinds of damage can they do to a community or a parish?
3. **2:11–16.** Peter now turns his attention to those who *actively revile* authority (not merely despise it). What sins does he connect with persons who revile proper authority? Why these? Following up on the previous question, what kinds of damage can such sins do to a community or a parish?
4. **2:19–21.** What kinds of freedom do licentious people promise? What do they actually deliver? Why would it be better for such people never “to have known the way of righteousness” than to have embraced righteousness and then to have turned their backs on it?

## Chapter 3

### *For understanding*

1. **3:3–5.** Who are the “scoffers” in these verses, and what is the target of their skepticism? What argument do they produce to prove that the apparent delay in Christ’s return will never happen? How does Peter answer it?
2. **3:8–13.** What does Peter foresee in these verses? To what is it a prelude? Why did the Prophets often paint scenes of cosmic disaster, and what are some examples? How does Peter use apocalyptic language differently from the Prophets?
3. **3:10.** For Peter, what is the “day of the Lord”? How is this expression used in the OT? What does the simile “like a thief” actually mean, and from where does it come?
4. **3:16.** What do some interpreters think about the “letters” of Paul mentioned here? Is there sufficient evidence to support the claim? Who, especially, might be liable to misinterpret Paul’s letters? Explain.

### *For application*

1. **3:3–4.** Have you ever faced the temptation to become one of the “scoffers” about whom Peter is talking? Have you ever entertained doubts about the Second Coming of Jesus? For example, do you respond with hope or with cynicism when reminded that Jesus will come soon?
2. **3:8–9.** How does the Lord’s sense of time apply to the way you view events in your own life? If, as Peter suggests, the Lord is willing to take time with you, how willing are you to allow him time, even if it means temporary suffering?
3. **3:11–12.** How can the holiness of the Church—which includes your own holiness—hasten the coming of the Lord? How much do you *want* that coming to be hastened?
4. **3:18.** Since Peter’s encouragement to “grow in the grace and knowledge” of God follows his warning not to be taken in by misinterpretations of Scripture—especially of St. Paul, who is the subject of much ideological dispute nowadays—what can you do to avoid being misled? How would a sound reading of St. Paul in particular help you to grow in grace and knowledge?