

Peter's Second Letter

Memory Verse: *“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”* 2 Pet. 3:9 (ESV)

Background Helps:

Peter writes this second letter shortly before his death (1:12-15) and apparently to the same audience as his first letter (3:1)—see 1 Peter 1:1 and Forecast week #1.

Lesson Helps:

Alternative lesson aims and plans:

- I. My students will learn about the second coming of Christ, so that they will be ready for his return.
Your lesson outline:
 - A. The certainty of his return
 1. The Transfiguration of Christ (2 Pet. 1:16-18). The transfiguration was a preview of the glory that will be Christ's at his second coming. Retell the story of Christ's Transfiguration and Peter's role in it. (Illustration: Use the example of previews of coming TV shows.)
 2. The prophecies of Scripture (2 Pet. 1:19-21). The divine origin of the prophecies concerning Christ's return ensure that they are true—he will come back.
 3. Noah's flood (2 Pet. 3:3-7, 10-13). Although some mock the idea of a *future* day of judgment, Noah's flood, a *past* cataclysmic event which also was judgment from God, shows that God is able and willing to bring about a future judgment by fire.
 - B. Preparation for his return
 1. Repent (2 Pet. 3:8-9, 15). The reason why God is patiently waiting and why Jesus has not yet come is to give others the opportunity to repent.
 2. Lead a godly life (2 Pet. 3:11, 14).

The event-orientation of this lesson (Transfiguration, Noah's flood, second coming of Christ) makes it usable in children's as well as adult classes.

- II. My students will learn about the cosmic history of planet earth, so that they will be ready for the return of Christ. This lesson is geared mainly for teens and college age and is based on 2 Peter 3:3-15. Notice Peter's account of the cosmic history of the world:
 - Creation (v. 5)
 - Past judgment by flood (v. 6)
 - Future judgment by fire (v. 7, 10-12)
 - New creation (v. 13)

Notice that Peter prophesies the skepticism of the last days (vv. 3-4) and the idea of uniformitarianism: “all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation” (v. 4), a view prevalent in modern science which undergirds the theory of evolution. Among other things, you might discuss the implications of this passage for science, especially the theory of evolution. (Do some background reading and study before coming to class! Or, ask several students to prepare some thoughts in advance.) Be sure to make practical application of Peter's cosmic history, just as he does in vv. 8-9, 11-12, and 14-15.

This same passage could also be used in children's classes, the teacher telling the story of creation, the past judgment by flood, the future judgment by fire, and the new creation. Children also should be urged to prepare for Christ's return as Peter indicates in 3:8-9, 11-12, 14-15.

Home Assignment:

 Read

 Memorize

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