

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 30TH - 31ST, 2022 // BOOK OF 2 PETER

THE FIRST LETTER OF PETER

WHO WROTE 2 PETER?

The author of 2 Peter is identified as “**Simeon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ**” (1:1).

- Peter the Apostle authored this letter near the end of his life—he **seems acutely aware of the fact that he’s going to die soon** (1:14), and he wants his teachings to be recorded for **the church in future generations** (1:15).

WHO WAS THE AUDIENCE IN 2 PETER?

Peter’s audience is never addressed specifically, but most likely it was to **the same network of churches as his first letter** (3:1) and was probably also written in the city of Rome.

- Not only were these believers subject to intense persecution; **they were also encountering false teachers and false doctrine** within the church.

BACKGROUND & HISTORICAL SETTING OF 2 PETER

There were two major false teachings Peter was writing to correct:

1. **False teaching about Christ’s return**—mainly that Jesus wasn’t coming back and that divine judgment (“the Day of the Lord”) wasn’t really a thing.
2. **The promotion of immortal living**—since God is love and has given us grace and freedom through Christ, it doesn’t really matter how we live.

WHAT IS 2 PETER ABOUT?

To correct these errors and **encourage true believers**, Peter’s letter emphasizes 3 main points:

1. Believers with **true, living, saving faith in Christ** will grow in **godliness and sanctification**.
2. Christ will **return to judge evil**—there is a coming **day of judgment!**
3. God’s Word and **the gospel message** can be **trusted**.

WHY STUDY 2 PETER?

FALSE TEACHING #1:

“As long as I say that I’m a Christian/pray the magic prayer/get dunked/go to church when I feel like it/_____, I can live any way I want and still go to Heaven.”

- **A Christian is someone who has had their very nature changed and displays the character of Christ.**

FALSE TEACHING #2:

“God is a God of love, grace, and mercy. Hell cannot be real, and God will not judge anyone for their sins.”

- **God is also righteous, holy, and just. Those who refuse to repent and receive Christ’s atoning sacrifice on their behalf will pay the full penalty for their sins and are subject to God’s perfect wrath.**

FALSE TEACHING #3:

“You can’t trust the Bible as God’s inspired word. It may have some truths, but ultimately, it’s just a collection of stories, fables, and mythology.”

- **There is eyewitness testimony given in Scripture that provides compelling evidence for the claims of the Christian gospel. The Bible can be trusted.**

GREETINGS (2 PETER 1:1-2)

There are **two differences** between the introduction in 1 Peter and the one in 2 Peter.

1. Here he refers to himself as “**Simeon Peter,**” which provides a more personal, down-to-earth feel as **he pleads with his readers as a friend and spiritual father**.
2. He adds the term “**servant,**” which contrasts him with **the false teachers who were greedily exploiting those in the church**.

The Christians reading this letter are reminded of a great spiritual reality—**the Christian life begins with faith through the righteousness** of our God and Savior Jesus Christ (vs. 1).

- The faith that has been given to us is “equal to” the faith given to **the apostles and leaders of the early church!**
- There’s no room for **spiritual pride** in Jesus’ church—we’re all desperate and grateful recipients of grace.

Peter’s prayer for these believers is for “**grace**” and “**peace**” to be multiplied to them (vs. 2).

- This multiplication of grace and peace in our lives only comes from one place—**the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord**.
- How do we grow in the **knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord**?
- We read His Word, pray, stay in Christian community, and follow **the Spirit’s guidance**.

Peter is going to use several Greek words for “**knowledge**” (vs. 2, 3, 5).

- One word means to **understand the intellectual truths of our faith (gnosis)**.
- One word means a deeper, **relational understanding and experience of God (epignosis)**.
- God’s desire for us is to **know Him in relationship**, not just in facts or mental constructs.

CONFIRM YOUR CALLING (2 PETER 1:3-11)

The Christian life starts with faith (vs.1-2), and that faith gives us access to divine power.

- Divine power gives us everything required for life and godliness through **knowing God more each day** (vs. 3).
- This “**knowledge**” of God is more than just **intellectual understanding or intuition**—it’s the experience that God’s people have of God Himself.

By Christ’s glory and goodness, He has given us great and precious promises—not least of which is the **sharing in His divine nature** (vs. 4).

- It’s not that we become gods—it’s that we have the power now in Christ to become “**godly**” in our **character and behavior**, which is the opposite of “**the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire.**”

- Our very **nature** has been changed!

Because our **very nature** has been changed and we have divine power giving us everything required for life and godliness, we are to make every effort to “**supplement**” our faith (vs. 5).

- Spiritual growth is not automatic—it involves **cooperation with God** and the application of spiritual diligence and discipline (Philippians 2:12-13).
- We must be intentional to grow in **our knowledge of God and His character** in our lives.
- “**Goodness**”: virtue, excellence, and uprightness. **Tov**, being who we were designed to be.
- “**Knowledge**”: understanding gleaned from personal experience. This is a call to relationship with God.
- “**Self-control**”: self-mastery, self-restraint, and the ability to say no to ourselves.
- “**Endurance**”: steadfastness, the ability to keep doing what is good when circumstances are difficult.
- “**Godliness**”: reverence, piety. The state of being right with God and doing what is right towards other people. Seeking God’s will above all else.
- “**Brotherly Affection**”: love for other believers displayed by affection and kindness towards them.
- “**Love**”: **agapen**, supernatural, sacrificial, and unconditional love towards other people.
- We are to make every effort to **possess these qualities** in “**increasing measure**” (vs. 8).

Being intentional about our spiritual growth keeps us from being “**useless**” or “**unfruitful**.”

- The last thing the world needs is **more people who claim to know Jesus but are unfruitful and useless** in their lifestyle and character.
- Unfruitful Christians are **blind, shortsighted, and have forgotten what they have been saved from** and what they have been saved for (vs. 9).

So, we are to make every effort to **confirm our calling and election** (vs. 10).

- If we are called and elected, then we are born again. **If we are born again**, it shows in the way that we live.
- If you’ve never been saved and regenerated by the Holy Spirit, you can **parrot religious activities** and say all the right things. But you cannot fake genuine godliness and **Christ-like character**.

In pursuing Christ-like character and **spiritual growth, we keep from stumbling** (vs. 10b).

- That doesn’t mean we will never sin; it just means we’ll be **consistent and steadfast in our faith** if growing in Christ is our aim.
- If growing in Christ and the knowledge of Him becomes our lifelong pursuit, our “**entry into the eternal kingdom**” will be glorious and triumphant (vs. 11)!

CLEVERLY DEvised MYTHS (2 PETER 1:12-21)

Peter explains why **he writes about things they have already heard before** (vs. 12).

- Familiarity often breeds indifference—we can grow **immune and inoculate to truths** we have heard our entire lives.
- But it’s right for us to “**wake up**” with reminders of **just what’s at stake (our eternal destiny)** if the basic truths of the Christian gospel aren’t real in our lives.

There is an urgency in **Peter’s tone and in his heart** (vs. 13-15).

- Most likely, **Peter was imprisoned in Rome when he wrote this** and was very aware that his time was growing short.
- Jesus had actually prophesied to **Peter that he would be martyred** (John 21:18-19).
- Do we live with an **urgency and awareness that our time on earth is limited?**

Now Peter turns the sureness of his **apostolic testimony** (vs. 16-18). These aren’t “**myths.**”

- To those who would deny the **deity, glory, and coming return of Christ (thereby contradicting Peter’s teachings)**, Peter provides evidence for the Christian message.
- Peter and the other apostles were “**eyewitnesses of his majesty**” on many occasions. But it’s the **transfiguration of Jesus** that’s mentioned.

In **Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:1-9, and Luke 9:28-36**, Jesus was transformed in glory before Peter.

- Jesus became so **bright in appearance that He shone like the sun** (Matt. 17:2), and the Father’s voice spoke from Heaven, declaring His approval and joy in God the son.
- This is the **eyewitness testimony that Peter (and the other apostles)** were willing to die for. What did **they have to gain** for this testimony?

There is also **the evidence of fulfilled prophecy to confirm the message** of the Christian gospel and the identity of Jesus (vs. 19).

- There are well over **60 distinct O.T. predictions** in regards to Jesus’ life, ministry, and death.
- Not only were some predictions made **1,000 years before Christ was born**, some were made 500 years before crucifixion was ever used as a form for capital punishment (Isaiah 53, Ps. 22:16).

Astronomer and mathematician Peter Stoner picked out **48 prophecies and determined that the probability of one man randomly fulfilling them all is 1 in 10 to the exponent of 157 (1 followed by 157 zeros)**.

- Yet somehow, Jesus fulfilled not just 48, but **at least 60 of these prophecies!**
- We do well to **pay attention to this** as Christ’s presence shines brightly in our hearts like a morning star (vs. 19) until the day dawns.

Even in Peter’s day, enemies of Jesus twisted O.T. prophecies, giving them **personal and bizarre meanings, attempting to exclude** Jesus from their fulfillment.

- But Peter says that **prophecy is not of any private interpretation**; its meaning is evident and **can be confirmed by others** (vs. 20).
- Prophecy about Jesus didn’t come by the will of man, but by **the Spirit of God** (vs. 21).

**TRUTH THAT CAN BE TRUSTED.
TRUTH THAT TRANSFORMS THROUGH POWER.
TRUTH THAT LEADS TO KNOWLEDGE.**