

Second Epistle of St Peter

1 Peter Recap

- Main theme
 - Hope
- To whom?
 - The pilgrims of the Dispersion, Asia Minor
- What was St Peter warning the believers of?
 - That they would face trials and persecution but should stay firm in their faith and focused on Christ & their salvation

4:12,13 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

Second Epistle of St Peter

- Written to all Christians *'To those who through the righteousness of our God and saviour Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours.'*
- Written to the churches that received Peter's first letter (2 Peter 3:1)
- Purpose: to combat heresies from religious sources and false teachers
 - Key theme therefore is TRUTH
- A “farewell” letter containing the final words of a great leader - Peter makes it clear his death is imminent 'I'll soon put this tent [body] aside'

The Neglected Book

- 2 Peter was the last book to make it into the canon due to questions of authorship
- It was a well known practice in the 1st century to attribute books to famous people
- Books such as *The Gospel of Peter*, *The Preaching of Peter* emerged - none of which he could or did write!

- 2 Peter initially questioned because of differing language style (more evident in Greek text)
 - 2 Peter may have first been written in Aramaic because it was a 'last will and testament'
 - The 2 letters had very different purposes, hence the differing styles
 - 1 Peter is about hope, 2 Peter about truth
- **Ultimately, 2 Peter was accepted into the canon and is a legitimate part of the Bible**

Similarity of 2 Peter to the Epistle of St Jude

- Both are:
 - **Warning** about heresies in the church
 - Tell us to be vigilant and focus on building a **Christ-centred** life
 - Remind us that whilst God is indeed a loving and merciful God, He is also severe in His **punishment of those who do not believe**

Direct comparisons

- Jude 1:5 + 2 Peter 2:5 refer to God after He saved His people from the land of Egypt, later destroyed all but Noah and family
- Jude 1:7 + 2 Peter 2:6 refer to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes
- Jude 1:11 and 2 Peter 2:18 warn against following the way of Balaam, son of Beor

Why are there so many close parallels?

- Some say Jude copied Peter, some say vice versa
- A better guess is that both Jude and Peter wrote quoting (though not exactly) the same sermon or doctrine

Value of 2 Peter Today

- Applicable to the 20th century church too
- Addresses laxity of lifestyle based on defection from doctrine
- The young Turks in Peter's time are arguing that the second coming should be reconsidered, not believing Christ returned and furthermore probably wouldn't come again (3:4,9)
- They suggested that the second coming may have been invented by man, not God (1:16) questioning whether the scriptures were even written by God
- The false teachers preached "freedom" to indulge in sexual immorality, drunkenness, sensual excesses in general
 - *Any of the arguments of the false teachers sound familiar?!*

Features of False Teachers

- 'Secretly introduce destructive heresies' 2:1
- 'Denying the sovereign Lord who brought them' 2:1
- 'Bring the way of the truth into disrepute' 2:2
- **'Exploit you with stories they have made up' 2:3**
- 'Follow the corrupt desire of sinful nature' 2:10
- 'Despise authority' 2:10
- 'Bold and arrogant' 2:10
- 'Not afraid to slander celestial beings' 2:10
- 'Like brute beasts' 2:12
- **'Blaspheme in matters they do not understand' 2:12**
- 'Pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight' 2:13
- 'Eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning' 2:14
- 'Seduce the unstable' 2:14
- 'Experts in greed' 2:24
- 'Left the straight way and wandered off' 2:15
- **'Appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature' 2:18**

How Peter addresses the heresies

- “Not so” Peter roars back
- He establishes the truth we received from the prophets and from our Lord
- We need to be firmly established in that truth
- He reminds them that the world as we know it will one day end and we need to be ready

3:10 ‘But the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.’

Combat False Teachers through True Knowledge

- Peter urges us to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ so that we are firm in our faith, knowing the TRUTH and cannot be led away by false teachers
- Doubt is normal, just make sure you search for the truth, asking the right people - then knowing the truth you will be firmer in your faith

Partakers of the divine nature

- Peter says the power to grow is not within us, but from God (1:3,4)
- God allows us to be 'partakers of His divine nature' in order to keep us from sin and help us live for Him
- God allows His Holy Spirit to work in us and empower us with His own moral goodness
- We can enjoy this precious gift if we diligently seek to attain everlasting life with Him

Peter's antidote for spiritual blindness

Keys to everlasting kingdom

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Faith + virtue

+ knowledge + perseverance

+ godliness + kindness

+ love

Seek these diligently and you'll never stumble,
God will supply to you the doors to the
everlasting kingdom in ABUNDANCE

2 Peter 1:8-11

Christ's Second Coming

- In Peter's time, they were doubting Christ's second coming, wondering why He hadn't come yet
- Remember, He doesn't want to see us perish, but rather repent in order to inherit His kingdom

3:8-10 But beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

True Knowledge of God

- Peter urges us to heed the scriptures as a 'light that shines in a dark place.' (1:19)
- Based on apostolic teaching - not man
 - 1:12-18 For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth... For we did **not follow cunningly devised fables** when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were **eye witnesses of His majesty**. For He received from God the Father honour and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory; *"This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."*

In Summary - Know and Grow

- The remedy against falling back is to grow
- “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ”
- True knowledge = powerful weapon against heresy
- Foundation of growth = knowledge of Christ
- As we grow in this, we grow in likeness to Him
- Where there is no growth, there is no life - we cannot afford to be apathetic/ stagnant