

2 Peter

by Peter Hammond

The book of 2 Peter emphasizes the importance of knowing God and making Him known, and warns against the dangers of false teaching and false prophets.

Topics: "Christian Living", "False Teachings"

Description

Peter Hammond preaches on the importance of being alert, faithful, and fruitful in the Christian faith, emphasizing the need to diligently add virtues like knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. He warns against the dangers of false teachers and the significance of being grounded in the truth of God's Word to combat deception and false teachings. Hammond stresses the need to live holy lives, grow in grace and knowledge, and be steadfast in the Scriptures, reminding believers to know God, make Him known, and be aware of the God of the Word.

Transcript

Who, When and Where?

This is the last Epistle written by the Apostle Peter, written in haste, in AD 67 from Rome, during Nero's persecution. Written shortly before the Apostle Peter's death by crucifixion, upside down. It is similar to the Apostle Paul's last letter, 2 Timothy, which was also written at the same time period, during the aftermath of The Great Fire in Rome, which Nero blamed upon the Christians, as scapegoats, to distract people from his own evil activities.

Why?

This Book is a reminder of Christian Doctrine and Devotion. It is a warning against false Doctrine and false teaching. It deals with worldviews, authority, warnings and threats to the Church. He warns about two types of threats: threats from outside, such as from persecution; and threats from inside, through false teachers, false prophets, false shepherds, those who, through heresy and apostasy, corrupt the church from within. It is the inside threat that is the most serious and dangerous.

Faith and Conduct

To counteract the influence of false teaching, both the Apostle Peter and Paul, recommend to their people sound Biblical teaching. Work your way through the whole Word of God. The Apostle Peter points out that we live in perilous times, when false teaching and apostasy is prevalent. Guard against corruption from

within by Biblical Faith and holy conduct. The emphasis is: Be alert and beware of false teachers! Live each day in the sight of the Master - the Day of Judgement - live in the light of Eternity. Ethics and Morality in the light of the Lord's Coming, the Day of Judgement. We are to know God and make Him known. We are to know the Word of God and know the God of the Word.

Precious Faith in Perilous Times

"Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained like precious Faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Peter 1:1-4. Solus Christus is emphasised right from the beginning, along with Sola Fide and Sola Gratia. Salvation is by the Grace of God alone, received by Faith alone and it is through Christ alone, through His righteousness alone, that we can be made righteous before God. God multiplies blessings. Our Faith is precious and we come to this Faith through knowledge, knowledge of the Word of God and knowledge of the God of the Word. The divine nature of God is ours through the great and precious promises that we receive in the Word of God.

Practical Discipleship

Peter gives nine fruit of the nature of Christ, or nine steps to Heaven: Diligence, Faith, Virtue, Knowledge, Self-Control, Perseverance, Godliness, Brotherly kindness and love. "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness and to brotherly kindness love." 2 Peter 1:5-7. These are very similar to the fruit of the Spirit. These are the steps we need to focus on in our practical walk with God, our daily discipleship.

Do Not Be Barren

"For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1:8-11

Faithful and Fruitful

We need to be faithful to the Word of God and fruitful in the service of God. To be barren or unfruitful is unacceptable. Just as there must be evidence of life through breathing, pulse rate or brain activity, there has to be evidence of life for Faith to be present. It is not right, or possible, for a Christian to become barren in their faith. If a person says they have committed their life to the Lord, but you see no fruit, no progress, or no life, one has to assume that either there is no faith, or it is stillborn. Faith will always lead to fruit. Your creed should lead to your character being transformed, which should lead to your conduct being controlled, which should lead to Godly results.

Be Grounded in the Truth of God's Word

"For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease." 2 Peter 1:12-15

We Are Pilgrims Passing Through

Truth is emphasised. The Word of God is a solid rock foundation for all knowledge. Our body is like a tent. We are pilgrims. We are travelling through. This is not our permanent home. We do not yet have our everlasting resurrected body. Death is putting off this tent, striking camp. At death we move to a permanent Heaven. Everything here is transient. We need to be reminded of these things.

Living Every Day in the Light of His Last Day

In John 21:18-19, Jesus referred to the fact that the Apostle Peter would be taken by others. He would have a violent death, a crucifixion. So for the previous 37 years, the Apostle Peter knew that a violent death was before him. Jesus never told him when. Peter knew he was near to his last day and wrote this letter in great haste. This is a final message, his last Will and Testament to those he has disciples and mentored. We need to be reminded of history, of God's works and Words in providence.

Moved by the Holy Spirit

"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 eyewitnesses 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.' And we heard this voice which came from Heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic Word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." 2 Peter 1:16-21

First Hand Eyewitness Experience

The Apostle Peter had seen Jesus heal the sick. He was there when Jesus raised the dead. He was there when Jesus walked on the water. He heard the Lord calm the storm with a Word. He saw the Lord transfigured on the mountain. He heard the Words of God: 'This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased!' He had seen our Lord Jesus betrayed, falsely accused, judged, flogged, executed, crucified, dead and buried and he had seen the Lord rise from the dead and resurrected three days later. He saw Him when He ascended and heard the Great Commission. He was not talking about something that he had heard third hand from someone else. The Lord Jesus Christ personally chose, selected and called Peter, mentored and trained him and had walked with him for many months through Galilee and Judea. He knew these things from personal experience.

On the Mount of Transfiguration

He refers to what is recorded in Matthew 17:1-8, on the Mount of Transfiguration. He heard the voice of God from Heaven as Jesus was transfigured on the Mountain. Solus Christus comes out here. Christ alone is the only Mediator. He is the only Saviour. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to

the Father, except through Him.

The Day Has Dawned

The prophetic Words were like lights shining in the darkness. Now the day has dawned. The Old Testament prophecies were like candles shining in the dark. Christ has come like the sun rising. He has Risen from the dead. He is ascended on High, He is Alive and He is coming again to judge the living and the dead. Our basis for all knowledge is the revealed Word of God. God's special Revelation. The New Testament has come and it is like the dawn has risen and the darkness has been driven away. We now have the sun shining in all its brilliance.

Built Upon the Rock of God's Word

Chapter 1 is about the need for growth in Faith, the trustworthy prophetic Word, the importance of the Word of God. We need to know the God of the Word, know the Word of God and make Him known.

Beware of Demonic Deception

Chapter 2 is warnings about the hard times, the strong temptations and powerful oppositions, the false prophets and false teachings. Similar to the Book of Jude, in warning about deception from demonic evil sources. "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle and their destruction does not slumber." 2 Peter 2:1-3

Perilous Times and Destructive Teachings

There will be destructive heresies subtly promoted in secret, even within the church. We live in a time of prevalent false teaching: Syncretism, where humanistic ideologies are being merged with Christianity. Some doctrines and words have been distorted to mean something other than originally intended. Liberation Theology is a classic example. Many pervert the grace of God to encourage immorality, using deceptive words to manipulate and distort Biblical concepts to a new meaning. Blasphemy is rife because many in the church do not fear God. Many people think they can get away with anything because the Gospel has been distorted and diluted. So as not to seem intolerant, sin is excused. So as not to be seen as divisive, heresy is tolerated. So as not to be perceived as unkind, judgemental or legalistic, the Law of God is devalued. Many have given over to a new false gospel: "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. God loves you just the way you are. You don't need to change a thing. Just pray this prayer." There are no Scriptures backing this up.

There are however, many Scriptures stating: "Repent, prepare to meet thy God. Fear God. Submit to God. Resist the devil. Take up your Cross. Forsake the world. Deny yourself. Follow Christ. Christ suffered for you and left you an example that you should follow in His footsteps." Today, you may be condemned for just reading the Law of God - more than you will be condemned for committing any of the sins the Bible condemns. The warning here is of false teachers, who from greed and corruption or covetousness, manipulate the meaning of Scripture to try and justify their actions. An example of this today is seen in the prosperity cults. Covetousness can exploit people with deceptive words.

Examples of God's Judgement

"For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the Flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds) - then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord." 2 Peter 2:4-11

Destined to Destruction

Peter refers to history, when God cast the angels who followed Lucifer in his rebellion out of Heaven. Because they sinned, they were judged and without any opportunity for salvation, and were utterly rejected for all eternity. Lucifer is now satan, and the angels that rebelled are now demons, destined for destruction.

Lawlessness Invites Judgement

God also destroyed the entire world in the Flood and saved only 8 people. The vast majority of people were condemned and died in the Flood. The Scripture speaks against cheap grace and easy believism. The Nicolaitans taught that you can sin in the body and be pure in the spirit. Today this lawlessness is called antinomianism. It encourages people to live in rebellion to God, by tattooing and piercing their body, by abortion, vice and evil; and yet still presume to be right with God!

Do Not Turn Back

God judged Sodom and Gomorrah. He reigned fire and brimstone upon these cities and turned them into ashes, destroying many people. God spared Lot and his two daughters. God warned that if you put your hand to the plough, do not look back. Lot's wife looked back and was condemned. We were taught in motorbike training: "Look where you are going. You will go where you are looking!" Look ahead. Plan your way. Keep focused on your goal. Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus.

Do Not Confuse Presumption with Faith

Peter reminds his readers not to be disturbed by all the lawless deeds around us. God knows how to save the righteous. Peter encourages people who are suffering in a world surrounded by all sorts of evil. People presume that God gives us promises without our need to pay any attention to conditions. Everything is about me, myself and I and they speak evil about others.

The Marks of False Teachers

False teachers are characterised by pride, immorality, sensuality, deceptiveness, broken promises and shameful greed. They are corrupt, slaves of depravity, dishonest, proud and deceptive. They are presumptuous, opportunists, covetous, hypocritical, duplicitous, depraved and blasphemous boasters who mouth empty words. "But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand and will utterly perish in their own corruption and will receive the wages

of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices and are accursed children. They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet. These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." 2 Peter 2:12-17

A Solemn Warning

Along with the Book of Jude, 2 Peter is the toughest exposé against false teachers, which every pastor and teacher would do well to read carefully, with fear and trembling, lest any of us corrupt the way of God and become false teachers. Our creed should affect our character, which should affect our conduct, which should affect our conversations. Corruption leads to chaos. The wages of sin is death. If this was relevant to the first century church, it is even more relevant to the 21st century church. The prosperity cult is self-centered. Their god is like a magic genie, who pops out and says, "Your wish is my command!" Instead of us being bondservants of God.

When the Donkey Had More Spiritual Perception than the Prophet

Prosperity is taught on Christian T.V. channels, enticing unstable souls and encouraging covetousness. Balaam was the prophet who accepted payment to place curses upon God's people. He was willing to place financial gain above his calling. Balaam went astray to destruction. Balaam's donkey had more spiritual discernment and good sense than Balaam. How often do our pets have more spiritual wisdom and discernment than many people who claim to be Christians? Some animals have more faith than humans. That is why many birds manage to fly long distances on migration, finding their way across oceans and continents to the same area every year. Through the prophet Jeremiah, God said: "The animals know more than My people do. Learn from the swallow, watch the stork, they know the times and the seasons, but My people do not know." Often animals are more wise than people. False prophets are like dry wells in the desert. What a destructive disappointment!

Great Swelling Words of Emptiness

"For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: 'A dog returns to his own vomit,' and, 'a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire'." 2 Peter 2:18-22

The Allure of False Prophets

Peter warns against those with great swelling words that are empty. Those who forsake the Faith, will find their judgement more severe than those who never responded in the first place. Apostasy is a terrible sin. The Lord compares apostates to a dog who returns to its own vomit and pigs going back to roll in the mud

after just being washed. We are living in a time of prevalent deception, falsehood, false teaching, great backsliding and apostasy. Many people will gather by the dry wells because they are promised health and wealth, something for nothing, cheap, quick, easy solutions like magic. A Faith that costs nothing is worth nothing.

Stir Up the Fire with the Word of God

"Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Saviour, knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.' For this they wilfully forget: that by the Word of God the Heavens were of old and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the Heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same Word, are reserved for fire until the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 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." 2 Peter 3:1-9. This speaks about the need to gather the coals together and reignite the flame. To stir up our minds and hearts. As John Calvin said: "The church should be the fellowship of the flaming heart. A heart aflame in the hand of God. Promptly and sincerely in the service of My God." We must remember the Commandments of God and the lessons of history.

The World that Perished

The first time God judged the world with water. The next time He will judge the world with fire. The world we live in today is not the world God created. That world was destroyed in the Flood. We are living in a fallen world, which is not anything near as great and wonderful and hospitable as the original world God created. Today there are thorns, diseases, earthquakes, droughts and environmental problems that were not part of the world that God created. The world that we now see, has the elements of the world that perished in the Flood.

Why Does God Not End All Suffering?

Some people ask: Why God does not end all the suffering in the world? He can and will, but to do so, He will have to take all the people out of this world. The fact that God has not ended the world yet is a sign of His patience, mercy, love and grace. He is giving us, and others, more opportunity to Repent and to fulfill the Great Commission.

What Manner of Persons Ought You to Be?

"But the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the Heavens will pass away with a great noise and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the Day of God, because of which the Heavens will be dissolved, being on fire and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new Heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." 2 Peter 3:10-13

Hastening the Lord's Return

The next Judgement will not be by the waters of a flood, but by fervent heat, blazing fire and an inferno of God's wrath. We should be living in holy conduct and Godliness in our Faith. God will reward the faithful and judge the wicked. We can speed up the coming of the Lord by fulfilling the Great Commission. The Lord will not return until His Great Commission has been fulfilled. The end will not come until the Church has fully completed the Great Commission. To make disciples of every nation, teaching obedience to all things that the Lord has commanded. There is so much more for us to do by taking the last command of Christ as our first concern. Making Christ's Great Commission our supreme ambition. We should live in the light of eternity and hasten the coming of the Day of the Lord by getting back to the Bible and getting serious about fulfilling the Great Commission. The delay of the Lord's return is evidence of God's patience to us.

Be Steadfast in the Faith and Grow in Grace

"Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation - as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen." 2 Peter 3:14-18

Paul's Writings are Recognised as Scripture

Peter refers again to Scripture and mentions Paul as an Apostle, who according to the wisdom given to Him by God, has written, speaking of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. Here Peter recognises the writings of the Apostle Paul as Scripture.

Summary of 2 Peter

Be alert, be faithful and be fruitful. Give all diligence to add to your faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, Godliness, brotherly kindness and love. Do not be barren and unfruitful in your Faith. Do not be shortsighted. Be even more diligent. Do not stumble, make your calling and election sure. Do not be negligent. Know the truth. Be established in the truth of God's Word. Remember the prophetic Words. Beware of false teachers. Be faithful to the Word of truth. Remember the lessons of history. Be mindful of God's Commandments. Live in the light of eternity. Live holy lives with Godly conduct. Grow in grace. Grow in knowledge. Be knowledgeable and be aware. Be steadfast in the Scriptures. Truth conquers. Far more important than how we begin, is how we end, the race of Faith. We need to have our eyes on the goal. Do not neglect studying and proclaiming the Word of God. Persevere faithfully in the Faith. Where there is life, there should be growth. Know God and make Him known. Know the Word of God. Know the God of the Word.

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