

11. 2 Peter 1 of a Verse by Verse Study of James, 1 Peter, and 2 Peter

Peter claims to be an apostle of the Lord (1:1). Credibility grows with the claim that the writer was an eyewitness to the Lord's majesty at the Mount of Transfiguration (1:16). The claim in the epistle to be the second of two epistles fits the idea of Peter's authorship.

Peter writes to the same people as the former epistle (3:1). This would include "God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." (1 Pet. 1:1). Pontus is an area to the north in Asia Minor that borders on the Black Sea. Galatia signifies the land of Gaul. Galatia was the Roman province that occupied the central portion of Asia Minor. Cappadocia is in Asia Minor to the east of Galatia. Asia refers to the province that occupies the western part of Asia Minor with Ephesus as its capital. Bithynia was to the west of Pontus in northern Asia Minor and bordered the Black Sea. These people all could have been the people spoken of as being scattered abroad in Acts 8:1-4 or at other times of persecution.

2 Peter was written near the close of the apostle's life (1:13). It was after the first epistle. Most scholars place the date around 64 or 65. The first letter was written from Babylon (I Pet. 5:13), and while the second letter may have been, there is no proof.

By design, the epistle warns against false doctrine and false teachers. The way offered to meet false doctrine is through knowledge.

Address and Salutation, 1:1-3

2 Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:

2 Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Peter begins by immediately asserting his apostolic authority [see notes on 1 Peter]: "Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ." *Servant* is a bondservant, a slave, one owned by another. The one who is the bondservant completely gives himself over to the wishes of the master regardless of the cost to self. *Apostle* is the office of an apostle or one sent in this instance by Christ. By designating the office that he held, the apostle assured himself a hearing.

The writer appeals to his readers and identifies with them in the faith by saying to them that they had received a precious faith with us through the righteousness of our God and the Savior Jesus Christ. A *faith* refers to the gospel as a revealed system. It carries the following implication: a system delivered (Jude 3) and obedience to that system (I Pet. 1:22-23). *Precious* refers to its value. It is just as precious to the ones to whom the letter is written as it is to Peter. *In the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ* describes a faith found in the righteousness of God and Christ and nowhere else. The word *righteousness* is the character or quality of being right or just. The former spelling was *rightwiseness*. It refers to an attribute of God who was righteous in providing all men with salvation through the death of Christ.

Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. (1:2). *Grace* is unmerited favor and *peace* includes peace with God, peace with ones fellow man, and peace with oneself. *Abundance* indicates that grace and peace was to increase in great magnitude. *Knowledge* denotes exact or full knowledge, discernment, and recognition. It involves participation by the knower in the object known. The other word for knowledge denotes only a seeking to know or an inquiry. This full knowledge involves an impression, and then beyond this, an expression. One may know about God or the facts involved in the gospel but never come to know God.

Exhortation to Make Your Calling and Election Sure, 1:3-9

3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who

called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

God grants us “everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness” However, they are through knowledge of him that called us. God who has the power to grant also has the power to condition. This knowledge is the full knowledge spoken of above. His glory and goodness called us. Christ suffered and died on the cross and then rose to glory to make possible the gospel. (Phil. 2:5-11; 2 Thes. 2:13-14). The significance of this statement is the fact that all things of importance are through the word of God. Knowledge is the key; therefore, we must study and gain this full knowledge (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Through this glory and virtue, we have great and precious great promises. All the promises of the Christian religion hinge upon the glory and virtue of God and Christ.

Because of this, we have forgiveness of sins and life everlasting. We literally participate in the divine nature. *Participate in the divine nature* refers to that which is from God and is the opposite of that which is of the world. Participants are sharers of that which is from God. A Christian can only escape the world and the lust of the world by relying on the divine nature. *Corruption* signifies the being brought to a worse condition, and corruption is continual in its progress until an individual is morally desolate.

5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.

To obtain this full knowledge, we must add *these things*. *For this very reason* refers to the promises of God in contrast to the corruption of the world. To have these promises and escape that corruption, full knowledge of Christ is essential; for we find that all things are supplied fully in Christ and God.

Peter teaches the necessity of adding to our lives what we now call the Christian virtues (1:5-7). *Make every effort to add* shows that we must strive to add these virtues. God and Christ do not do this for us. To add these virtues requires earnestness and zeal. The first requirement in gaining these things is a sincere desire and a willing mind. We cannot obtain them with an indifferent spirit.

Add is the operative word—the action word. The understood subject is you. We must add each of the virtues.

Faith—Faith is a firm persuasion, a conviction based on hearing (Heb. 1:1; Rom. 10:17). It is the beginning or the starting place in Heb 11:6: “6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

Goodness—To the Greeks goodness denoted the ideal, the characteristics judged the greatest in humankind; therefore, courage, vigor, morality, goodness, etc. Perhaps the essence of complete goodness is the divine nature of verse 3.

Knowledge—This is not the full knowledge used above, but rather the inquiry--the seeking to know. In the case of Christian growth, it is the knowledge of God's will or knowledge of spiritual truth. Paul taught in 2 Tim 2:15, “5 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”

Self-control—This is man's responsibility in relation to what he learns from God's will. Some things he must do; some he must not do. He must subject himself to God's will in all things. It denotes self-government the ability to control.

Perseverance—Perseverance denotes steadfastness, endurance under the trials of life and in the Lord's work. 1 Cor 15:58 teaches, “58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always

give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

Godliness – Godliness is humble reverence and deep piety toward God.

Brotherly kindness – Brotherly kindness is demonstrable love of the brethren as taught in 1 John 5:1-2: "5 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. 2 This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands.

Love – According to Vine's Expository Dictionary, this is full and unqualified love as expressed in *agape* and *agapao*, which are used in the NT:

(a) to describe the attitude of God toward His Son, John 17:26; the human race, generally, John 3:16; Rom 5:8, and to such as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ particularly John 14:21;

(b) to convey His will to His children concerning their attitude one toward another, John 13:34, and toward all men, 1 Thess 3:12; 1 Cor 16:14; 2 Peter 1:7;

(c) to express the essential nature of God, 1 John 4:8.

(from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers). See I Cor. 13; Col. 3:14.

Christians must possess these virtues in increasing measures or they will be ineffective and unproductive. Literally, these words mean *not working*, *barren* and denote inactivity and idleness. The Lord spoke of *unfruitful* branches in John 15:2: "He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful." To not have these things is to be nearsighted and blind, unseeing, and forgetful. He has forgotten that he once obeyed the gospel and was cleansed by the Lord from his sins.

10 Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, 11 and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

However, by doing these things we receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom. We must be the more eager to make our calling and election sure. *Calling* implies an invitation, but as an invitation, it can slip from our grasp. Eph. 4:1-4. The *election* part with the *calling* comes from God. Our duty is to make it sure or secure them. Consequently, if we do these things, we shall never stumble. Paul called for the need to stand firm and hold to the teachings in 2 Thess 2:13-15:

13 But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 14 He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

The "if" makes the statement a condition, and this condition involves doing, obedience (Mt. 7:21). In conclusion, to this part, Peter teaches that God will add the eternal kingdom unto us only if we add these *things* and, therefore, merit the greatest of inheritances.

The Right of the Apostles to Speak, Exhort, and Remind

12 So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. 13 I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, 14 because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. 15 And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.

Peter states his willingness to fulfill his apostolic right to remind. Peter was always ready just as all preachers are to ready. 2 Tim. 4:1-2 emphatically states the mission of preachers, "4 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his

kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.” Even though we—the members of the church—know the truth and are established in it, there is an ever-present need to be reminded by one another lest we fail to fulfill our duty.

The right thing for the preacher is to continue to stir up remembrance as long as he lives. Regardless of the disposition of the hearers or the persecution that others may inflict, preachers should not shirk this responsibility. Peter feels his obligation to the extent that although he knows that his time comes swiftly, they will remember, even after his death.

The statement, *as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me*, shows that the writer of the letter was an inspired man. What he teaches cannot be wrong, but must be right or truth. It is with this authority that Peter turns to the source of the apostles’ authority in the verse follow.

16 We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." 18 We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

The source of their knowledge concerning the power and coming of the Lord did not *follow cleverly invented stories*. In I Tim 1:4, Paul also teaches, “4 nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work – which is by faith.” The word, *follow*, is a word used only in the New Testament by Peter and means to follow up or out to the end (2:2; 2:15). *Cleverly invented* is a phrase meaning to play the sophist; to invent cleverly. *Stories* were myths, stories, and legends that are without basis or fact. Contrast *stories* to the parables of Jesus, in which all the elements were true.

Therefore, the apostles do not rely upon that which comes from another or fictitious stories. In all generations, some claim that Christ, the miracles, the resurrection, etc. are nothing more than mere stories.

Peter begins by saying, “But we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.” The reference here refers to the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt. 17; Mk. 9; Lk. 9). We refers to the others present, James and John. *Eyewitness* is a spectator and eyewitness of a happening or an event. In our own court trails, eyewitness testimony rises to the highest level of proof. John appeals to this same high level of proof:

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life-- 2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us-- 3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you. I Jno. 1:1-3.

The eyewitness account of the transfigured Lord is the greatest of evidence available. Scholars accept this same level of proof as true for historical writings. In fact, less than eyewitness proof is often accepted. Peter’s account has the authoritative back up of the accounts that are given by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in their gospels, which all certify the truth of the statement. All of these men are of known good character and have nothing to gain in anything less than the truth.

Prophecies of Scripture

19 And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

That *we have the word of prophets made more certain* tells us the Christ confirmed the prophecies of the Old Testament. The King James translation says, “We have also a more sure word of prophecy.” The

indication in this translation is that the prophecies offer more sure evidence of the Christian system than does the eyewitness testimony of the apostles. The argument against this translation is the fact that Peter included himself (we) in the statement; therefore, it would be doubtful that he would think the prophecy stronger evidence than his eyewitness to the transfiguration would.

The second view is that expressed in the American Standard and the New International translations: "We have the word of prophecy *made* more sure." Here the meaning is that the transfiguration makes the prophecy more sure or more certain. The prophets of old had prophesied concerning the deity and son ship of Christ, and the transfiguration made this more sure.

The word *prophecy* means literally to speak forth. The scriptures use the word to mean one speaking forth the mind of God. Prophecy is not necessarily the foretelling of the future. Sometimes it is predictive. Sometimes, prophecy means the telling of that which cannot be known by private means, whether past, present, or future. Prophecy is always the revelation of God's will. In this passage, the word of *prophecy* means the writings of the Old Testament prophets.

You will do well to pay attention to it, , points out the importance of the prophecy to us and all men regardless of the weight of other evidence such as the transfiguration. The prophecy is to receive the same metaphoric attention as a light in the dark. *As to a light shining in a dark place* illustrates the illuminating quality of the scriptures. The lamp is the focal point of our attention *until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts*. *Until the day dawns* compares to *rising sun* in Lk. 1:78 where the meaning is the same: "8 because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven 79 to shine on those living in darkness." *And the day star arises* is parallel to Rev. 22:16: "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star." The meaning of the passage assure that Christ enters the heart through the scriptures.

The nature and character of true prophecies of scripture are that they are not of *ones own interpretation*. True prophecies of scripture distinguish themselves from false prophecies that are not scripture, as in chapter 2:1 immediately following in the text. The fact is that true prophecies are scripture and false prophecies are not. As scripture true prophecies are inspired of God according to 2 Tim 3:16-17, "16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." Peter shows that prophecies of scripture literally, spring into being, and thus, no prophecy of scripture springs into being by *private interpretation*. It must be inspired.

For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man sums up the previous statement. Prophecy comes through man but by God's will where the thoughts and words originate. Peter clearly states the how of this prophetic revelation of scripture by saying *men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit*. The *carried along* is the inspiration of God as He moved the prophets to His desired end. God is the source; the Holy Spirit is the force or motivating power; the prophets are the instruments used to reveal God's word. Paul agreed that this is how that by revelation was made known to him the mystery of God's will in Eph. 3:2-5:

2 Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, 3 that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. 4 In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.

The Roman Catholic Church bases a false doctrine on the above passage. They assert that an individual cannot interpret the scriptures privately without the infallible aid of the church. They expect us to understand this passage to prove their point; therefore, they deny in the action the point made. If we cannot understand this passage, then how do we know that this is what it teaches? The real meaning is as expressed in this outline, that private interpretation refers to the one prophesying and not the one who is trying to comprehend the divine message. In Eph. 3:3-5, Paul clearly said that when you read you can understand just as clearly as the apostle, himself, could understand.