

## 2 Peter

- 2 Peter 1
  - Probably written to Turkish Christians, since Peter mentioned that this was his second letter (3:1) to this audience. So, we may assume that the audience was familiar with the previous letter and its subject: the good news and how to draw people to it.
  - The theme of this letter is to equip Christians to withstand attractive opposition through the power of the Spirit.
  - (1:1) Bondservant and apostle
    - These are opposing attitudes, reconciled in spreading good news
    - Slavery was distasteful to both Jews and Greeks. 1 Peter 2:13 – 25 contrasts living as free people in an oppressive society, both to government and earthly masters, while also slaves of God, as a means of attracting people.
    - Leadership through service (1 Peter 5:1 – 7) is an identifier of the Kingdom. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers were given by God to build up the body until it could maintain itself (Ephesians 4:7 – 16). Peter introduced himself as a slave with a certain gift (1 Peter 4:10 – 11), not as an authority figure.
    - “Like precious faith” furthers the idea that Peter considered his faith to be on par with that of his audience. He just had a different gift. All received sufficient faith (Romans 12:3 – 21, 2 Corinthians 2:14 – 3:6).
  - (1:2 – 4) The means by which we obtain grace and peace are:
    - “Of God” and “of Jesus” are used three times in 1:1 – 2, each in the same part of speech. So, the knowledge appears to “belong to” God rather than being “about” God. Grace and peace come when one is “in” the knowledge that is given by God (1 Corinthians 2:9 – 12, Ephesians 1:17).
    - At the same time (1:3), through this same miraculous knowledge, we have been given everything about how to live godly in this present age, being attracted to it by His parade of character traits and applications of those traits to life on earth.
    - Contained in this miraculous knowledge are many promises (1:4) that result in our transformation into the character of Jesus.
    - The theme and motivation: “having escaped.”
  - (1:5 – 11) Participate in the miraculous transformation process, don’t hinder it.
    - All of these character traits are desirable but unattainable at Jesus’ level. Our expectation to achieve them is by promise while we are inside the knowledge of God. Expectation based on a promise is faith. Our diligence is not in trying harder (e.g., Romans 7), which has not worked in the past.
    - The down payment is observing our own development (2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5, Ephesians 1:13 – 14, Galatians 3:2 – 7, 1 John 4:13), through which we are assured that we are useful to the Master while inside the knowledge that belongs to Jesus.
    - If we do not see development, Peter does not cite a lack of diligence but a lack of remembering. Our past attempts to be virtuous should not raise feelings of guilt but remind us that trying harder is useless. Instead, return to the promises and get out of the way.
    - Legitimate confidence may be obtained (Hebrews 4:16, Ephesians 3:12, 1 John 4:17, 5:13)
  - (1:12 – 21) Remember the evidence

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- Reminders do not imply ignorance. 1 John repeats “we know we have eternal life if” at least eleven times. Reminders contrast potential deceit with truth.
- Myths versus eye-witness testimony (1:16 – 18). Much of Christianity today has lost the distinction, incorporating unprovable stories into doctrine (e.g., the pseudepigrapha and stories of uncertain origin).
- Prophets spoke by the power of the Spirit (miraculously), not from their own good ideas. Many sincerely believe that they speak for God, but they have no evidence.
- Keep focused on the evidence until you possess the promised miraculous knowledge (“until the day dawns” means “until the light comes on.”) and until you have the character of Jesus (“the morning star rises in your hearts”).
- 2 Peter 2 – Fake Christians are a stark reminder to focus on Jesus
  - This terrible reminder was delivered to the early church. We have no new problems.
  - Labeling those with whom we disagree with one or more of these negative descriptions is self-justification. Instead, we must figure out what went wrong while not assuming ourselves to be right.
  - Positive focal points:
    - Chapter 1
      - Like precious faith
      - Divine power has given to us all things
      - Great and precious promises
      - Partakers of the divine nature
      - Escaped the corruption of the world
      - Neither barren nor unfruitful
      - Entrance supplied abundantly
    - (2:1) The Lord who bought us
    - (2:5) But saved Noah
    - (2:7) Delivered righteous Lot
    - (2:9) God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation. See 1 Corinthians 10:13.
    - (2:20) Escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord
  - (2:1 – 3) Destructive ways
    - Old Testament history documents how easily people who have seen the power of God can be misdirected.
    - Secretly: Bad teaching taught badly is easy to avoid. Only artistic bad teaching sells.
    - Destructive: What is being destroyed?
      - (2:1) Denying the Lord who bought them (See next bullet point)
      - (2:2) The way of truth is spoken against
      - (2:11 – 12) Speaking harshly
      - (2:13 – 14) Calling bad behavior good.
    - Denying the Lord who bought them: How?
      - (1:9) Forgotten that he was cleansed
      - (1:16 – 21) Evidence
    - Bring on themselves swift destruction
      - In the examples that follow, how long did the righteous wait?

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- In Israel, how well were false prophets accepted?
- (2:4 – 11) Examples of God handling His opposition
  - Angels who backed the wrong leader are already chained.
  - All but eight people drowned
  - Two angels rescued Lot and family from Sodom
- (2:12 – 22) Description of the natural
  - Made to be destroyed
  - Speak evil of things they do not understand
  - Self-deceived
  - Cannot cease from sin
- How do they succeed?
  - Exploit through covetousness (2:3, 14, 15)
  - Harsh speech (2:10, 11, 12)
  - Despise authority (2:10)
  - If it feels good, do it (2:13, 14, 18, 19)
  - Persuasive (2:17 – 18)
  - Lacking substance (2:18)
- (2:21) Why would it be better if they had never heard? Because the gospel, once rejected, is unlikely to be accepted again. The evidence and logic have been counted as insufficient. God does not have a better appeal, so nothing remains to convince them. See Hebrews 6:4 – 8, Matthew 12:31, Mark 3:29.
- 2 Peter 3 – Hastening the day of the Lord
  - (3:1 – 9) Encouragement
    - (3:1 – 2) Remembering the messages of prophets and apostles “stirs.” The Scriptures remind us of the evidence on which faith is based.
    - (3:3 – 6) Scoffing has a known motivation but is short on logic.
      - A common fault: everything has always been as it is now (e.g., radiocarbon dating, erosion, climate change)
      - Ridicule is the tack of the inferior intellect
      - On a Biblical scale, what has changed that people often miss?
    - (3:7 – 9) God does not get His way very often
      - If God does not need to account for free will, His plans are executed cleanly, as in His choice of the method of the destruction of the universe.
      - God is patient. The permanent new heaven can wait until all have their chance.
      - Note that God’s promises do not require the suspension of free will.
  - (3:10) Judgment
    - Without notice; as a thief in the night (also Matthew 24:36, Mark 13:32, 1 Thessalonians 5:2 – 3)
    - “Both the earth and the works that are in it will be found.” Found: discovered, revealed.
  - (3:11 – 13) Response to the promise of Judgment
    - The purpose of holy conduct and godliness is to attract people to the gospel. Without it, people will not believe what we say
      - “That the world may believe that Thou sent Me” (John 17:20 – 23)
      - Malice and wickedness spoils sincerity and truth (1 Corinthians 5:8)

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- Displaying the power of God (2 Corinthians 4:7)
- Everyone who has this hope purifies himself just as He is pure (1 John 3:3)
- Inconsistent behavior causes the name of God to be blasphemed (Romans 2:24, Isaiah 52:5, Ezekiel 36:22)
- We hasten the coming of the Lord by not delaying (as did Jonah) the message, but quickly reaching all the willing hearts so that we can all go home. Note that my delay, while a black mark against me, is not likely to result in the loss to another. God will send someone else (or will send me again after partial digestion).
- New Heaven and new earth
  - Revelation 21:1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.
  - Isaiah 65:17 For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.
  - The old dwelling of God needs renovation. Satan and his angels formerly had free access. A war happened there (Revelation 12:7 – 9), after which Jesus cleansed the furniture with His blood (Hebrews 9:11 – 12). Spirits can still choose to leave, as they have left before. According to 1 Corinthians 15:26, when physical death (the illustration of separation of a spirit from God) is destroyed, there can be no more flunking out of God's presence.
- (3:14 – 18) Look forward to the end
  - Therefore be both diligent and peaceful, which is a difficult combination.
  - God's patience means I have to wait, but it is good for others.
  - Unbelievers have distorted the gospel since the start.
  - Avoid deception by growing in grace and knowledge
    - While one can gain more knowledge, gaining more grace is hard to imagine.
    - Perhaps the idea is to grow "inside" grace and knowledge. Godly growth occurs when we focus on the grace of God and on the understanding He has promised.
    - Grace extends to more than forgiveness, encompassing gifts (Romans 12:6, Ephesians 4:7) and promises.
    - Perhaps this is a re-statement of 1:2 – 8.