

Abounding Grace Christian Church

A Study of the Second Epistle of Peter – Part 1

I. Introduction: Today we begin a series of study through the Second Epistle of Peter. In Peter's first letter, he deals primarily with the subject of Christian suffering through trials and persecution. In this letter, Peter deals with the need for believers to grow in the knowledge of Christ and warns them of the problem of false teachers and the dangers of their doctrine. As we study this letter, we will discover how relevant it is to our modern day. We are living in a day of great deception and false teaching is rampant, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, Peter shows us how to be discerning and recognize the falsehoods being propagated today. I believe both our spiritual and natural lives will be enhanced during this study and we will grow more in our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Some Background.

Peter is believed to have been killed by Nero, who actually killed himself in A.D. 68. This letter was probably written by the Apostle Peter somewhere around A.D. 66-67. Peter is believed to have written this letter just a short time before he was put to death. Tradition says that he was crucified and that he requested to be crucified upside down as to not in any way resemble Jesus on the cross. Another important thing to know about this letter is that it was written to the same people who received Peter's first letter (cf. 3:1). This means he was writing mainly to Gentile churches of "Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (I Peter 1:1). These were in various parts of Asia Minor which is basically modern-day Turkey.

III. A Basic Outline of Second Peter.

- A. Salutation: the spiritual resources of a Christian - 1:1-4
- B. Essential Christian virtues - 1:5-15
- C. Christ's divine authority - 1:16-21
- D. False prophets and teachers - 2:1-22
- E. Christ's return - 3:1-18

IV. Exposition of Chapter One.

A. **Verse 1 – "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 Savior Jesus Christ:"**

1. "Simon Peter..." – The name "Simon" is literally "Simeon", (means "heard": cf. Genesis 29:33). This is Peter's Hebrew name given to him at birth. The name, "Peter" was given to him by Jesus which means; "a detached but large fragment of rock,"¹ Kenneth Wuest explains further: "The name 'Peter' is the English spelling of the Greek *petros* (πέτρος) which is the word chosen by the Holy Spirit that would adequately translate the meaning of the Aramaic 'Cephas.'"² (cf. John 1:42; I Corinthians 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5; Galatians 2:9).
 - a. Peter was a fisherman by trade - Luke 5:10.
 - b. Peter was called by Jesus - Matthew 4:18-20.
 - c. He witnessed Jesus performing many miracles - Matthew 8:14,15; Luke 5:4-8; John 21:2-6.
 - d. He was known for being impulsive - Matthew 14:28,29; Matthew 16:22; John 13:6-8; John 18:10.
 - e. He was both commended and rebuked – Matthew 16:17-19; John 21:20-22.
 - f. He denied that he knew Jesus - Matthew 26:69-75.
 - g. He was reinstated by Jesus in front of other disciples - John 21:15-17.
 - h. Peter was used to perform miracles and experienced Miracles - Acts 3:2-8; 5:9,10,15,16; 9:34,40; 12:1-11.

2. "...a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ,..."

¹ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 11 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 13.

² Ibid.

- a. **“...a bondservant...”** - The Greek word is **“doulos”** which literally means; **“slave.”** A slavery undertaken voluntarily out of love. Kenneth Wuest writes: **“one who was bound to his master in chords so strong that only death could break them, one who served his master to the disregard of his own interests, one whose will was swallowed up in the will of his master.”**³ (cf. I Corinthians 6:19-20; II Corinthians 5:14-15).
- b. **“...apostle of Jesus Christ...”** -- The word **“apostle”** means; **“one who is sent forth to represent another.”** Dr. Bob Utley adds;

“The term ‘apostle’ comes from the Greek verb ‘I send’ (apostellō). Jesus chose twelve of His disciples to be with Him in a special sense and called them ‘Apostles’ (cf. Luke 6:13). This term was often used of Jesus being sent from the Father (cf. Matt. 10:40; 15:24; Mark 9:37; Luke 9:48; John 4:34; 5:24, 30, 36, 37, 38, 40, 57; 7:29; 8:42; 10:36; 11:42; 17:3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25; 20:21). In Jewish sources it was used of someone sent as an official representative of another, similar to ‘ambassador’ (cf. 2 Cor. 5:20).”⁴

3. “...To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:”

- a. **“...who have obtained like precious faith with us...”** – This is understood as meaning that all believers have the same kind of faith. The New American Standard Bible reads: **“To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours,...”** The word **“precious”** means; **“pertaining that which is of equal significance or value—‘equal to, of the equivalent kind as”**⁵
- b. **“...by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:”** – The word **“righteousness”** in this context is referring to **“...justice, or the virtue which gives each one his due; it is said to belong to God and Christ, as bestowing upon all Christians impartially, 2 Pet. 1:1; of judicial justice,”**⁶

“I am writing to you who share the same precious faith we have. This faith was given to you because of the justice and fairness of Jesus Christ, our God and Savior.” – II Peter 1:1b – New Living Translation

- c. **“...of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.”** – The word **“Savior”** is found five times in this relatively short letter (**1:1, 11; 2:20; 3:2, 18**) and means; **“savior, deliverer; preserver”**.⁷ Warren Weirsbe adds the following:

“Peter reminded his readers that Jesus Christ is the Saviour by repeating this exalted title in 2 Peter 1:11; 2:20; 3:2, 18. A savior is ‘one who brings salvation,’ and the word *salvation* was familiar to the people of that day. In their vocabulary, it meant ‘deliverance from trouble,’ particularly ‘deliverance from the enemy.’ It also carried the idea of ‘health and safety.’ A physician was looked on as a savior because he helped deliver the body from pain and limitations.”⁸

Kenneth Gangel asserts the following about this phrase:

“The grammar here clearly indicates that ‘God and Savior’ are one Person, not two (i.e., there is one Gr. article with two substantives). This passage ranks with the great Christological passages of the New Testament which plainly teach that Jesus Christ is coequal in nature with God the Father (cf. Matt. 16:16; John 1:1; 20:28; Titus 2:13).”⁹

- 1) There are other places in the New Testament where Jesus’ Deity is affirmed (cf. John 1:1; 8:57–58; 20:28; Romans 9:5; Philippians 2:6; II Thessalonians 1:12; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8-9; and I John 5:20)

³ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 11.

⁴ Robert James Dr. Utley, *The Gospel according to Peter: Mark and I & II Peter*, vol. Volume 2, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International, 2000), 274.

⁵ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 588.

⁶ Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti* (New York: Harper & Brothers., 1889), 150.

⁷ Ibid., 612.

⁸ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 436.

⁹ Kenneth O. Gangel, “2 Peter,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 863–864.