



**Bible Study**

# **2 Peter**

## **2 Peter 1**

In his second letter, Peter describes himself as a servant and an apostle. This is important because, whatever role we have in ministry, we are still servants of Jesus Christ. Peter speaks of the very great promises of God and he warns us about false prophets and the emptiness of living a shallow Christian life. He urges us to look forward to the return of the Lord Jesus, that we might be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

In this first chapter, Peter speaks of God's divine power and the importance of growing our faith and confidence in the very great and precious promises of God!

### **Divine Power**

The faith imparted to us by God's divine power, is the same for all believers. This faith is received when we see the righteousness of God in Jesus and we put our trust in him. Our faith comes from a revelation bestowed upon us by the grace of God and true faith will always result in a changed life.

### **Great and Precious Promises**

The very great and precious promises of God encourage us that we can be like Jesus, because we have received a new nature. We have been freed from this corrupt world and our own evil desires, by what God has spoken over us.

### **Growing and Maturing in Faith**

Having trusted Jesus for salvation, we need to grow and mature in our faith. This means that we must add purity and integrity, knowledge of God and His word, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. Peter is telling us that true faith in Christ must produce Christ-like character, which enables us to be fruitful in our lives.

Such faith in Christ will bring us assurance and confidence as we live our lives waiting for the day when we will enter Christ's presence to live with him forever!

### **Peter's Commitment**

Peter is determined that, for as long as he lives, he wants to remind believers of the quality of life that they can have in Christ and the need for this to be evident to other men and women. Peter is concerned that God's people should remember these important things after he has gone and he is challenging the short-sightedness of those who settle for a shallow faith which takes no responsibility for righteous living and makes them ineffective and unproductive in their Christian life.

## **Peter's Revelation of Jesus**

Peter was committed to sharing truth that came out of his encounters with Christ. He mentions the time when they were on the mountain, when Jesus was transfigured before him, James and John. He saw the glory of Jesus and he heard the voice of God the Father from Heaven, which affirmed who Jesus really is. Peter declares that a prophetic word is like a light shining in a dark place. God sometimes speaks directly and sometimes through His prophets. True prophetic words come from the heart of God and through the power of the Holy Spirit, bring the hearers into the very presence of God!

### **Points to Consider:**

1. How careful are we to maintain a spirit of serving, regardless of whatever title we are given and ministry that we have?
2. How precious do we regard the gift of faith that God has bestowed upon us?
3. What precious promises encourage us to understand that we can have victory over sin and temptation?
4. Consider the qualities that Peter speaks of in verses 5-7. Are these qualities evident in our lives?
5. How committed are we to reminding other believers of the very great and precious promises of God?
6. Can you recall experiences of Christ that have changed your life?

## **2 Peter 2**

Peter turns his attention in this chapter to the dangers of false prophets and teachers and the damage that they can do. He reminds his readers of times in the past, when God's judgement came because of false teaching, as well as God's deliverance for those who rejected false teaching and remained faithful to Him. There are dangers outside the church but we must also be aware of the dangers that can be created by those who have infiltrated the church.

### **False Prophets and Teachers**

Sadly, within the church, there can be people who sow heresies and who deny the true Lordship of Christ. These people know nothing of the qualities that Peter has described in the first chapter of this letter. False teachers are destructive, selfish and corrupt. They want to control for their own benefit and they care nothing for the body of Christ. Peter makes it very clear that their downfall is inevitable!

### **God's Judgement**

Peter reminds us that angels who sinned were cast into hell and darkness to await their final judgement when Jesus returns. He refers to the time of Noah, a herald of righteousness who proclaimed the judgement of a flood that would come upon the ungodly but, when the flood came, Noah and his family were saved. Peter also speaks of the condemnation of Sodom and Gomorrah and the way that those cities were destroyed. That was a really awesome judgement but there was mercy and deliverance for Lot, Abraham's nephew, because Lot remained righteous in the midst of a wicked people. The people of that time were full of lust and despised authority but God saw Lot's torment and rescued him. The Lord will also protect us, when we are faced with a society that rebels against God's laws.

### **The Ungodly**

Peter describes the ungodly as those who blaspheme the righteous, live by sinful instincts, and enjoy deceitful pleasures. Their eyes are full of adultery and like Balaam they seek corrupt ways to satisfy their greed. They are treacherous slaves to sin, who entice others and seek to lead them astray.

### **The Unrepentant**

The people who Peter describes may sometimes find a knowledge of the Lord Jesus but a lack of true repentance means that they easily fall back into a sinful lifestyle. Their situation is then worse because, despite knowing the truth and the right way to live, they wilfully choose to go back to a life of sin. Peter makes the very profound statement that it would

have been better for such people not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then reject it. He compares them to a dog that returns to its own vomit or a sow that is washed but then returns to wallow in the mud.

**Points to Consider:**

1. There can be falsehood within the church. What are the characteristics of a false teacher and how can we discern falsehood and deal with it?
2. The reality of God's judgement is clearly described. How will God's final judgement be revealed?
3. How confident are we of God's protection, even when we live amongst deeply sinful people?
4. How can we avoid falling back into sinful habits?
5. Peter describes a sinful world. How similar is it to our world today?

## **2 Peter 3**

Peter explains to those who read his letters, that his aim is to remind them of valuable truths. He refers to Old Testament prophets and the hope that God will bring everything to a conclusion when Jesus comes again. Once again, he encourages godly living and growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Prophets and Scoffers**

True prophets bring the word of God, regardless of their own popularity. They declare the power of God in creation and the coming judgement that God will bring.

Scoffers are only interested in themselves and following their own evil desires. They ignore what God has done in the past and they try to destroy faith by creating doubt about the Lord's promises. They are deliberate in their plans and schemes, believing that they will never be made accountable for their words and actions.

### **God's Timing**

God's timing is not our timing. He is the God of eternity and, to Him, one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. We are so bound to this earth that we find it difficult to contemplate eternity and understand that God is simply being patient with us. He is not being slow, He has a real purpose in His plans and He does not want anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance and salvation. Eternal judgment is something that the loving heart of God wants us to escape!

### **The Day of the Lord**

This Day is coming and there is a strong finality about this time, which will involve us personally as well as the current creation. This Day will come suddenly and with a great demonstration of God's power. The heavens and the earth will all be burned up and every action will be uncovered. The Bible speaks of this Day in many places and the theme is consistent: God will bring everything to a conclusion and a new heaven and a new earth will be created, where righteousness will dwell forever!

### **Living Holy and Godly Lives**

We ought to be people who believe the promises of God and look forward to the Day of the Lord, making every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him, by living holy and godly lives. We must be prepared and ready for this Day and, in fact, we can make it come sooner by reaching out to the nations. Jesus taught that when the Gospel has been preached to all nations, then the end will come.

## **Paul's Letters**

Peter acknowledges his fellow apostle, Paul, and affirms that Paul's writings come from the wisdom given to him by God. Paul's teaching should, therefore, be respected and accepted. Peter is aware that some find Paul's letters and particularly, his teaching on end times, difficult to grasp and he warns about ignorant and unstable people who distort Paul's teaching and other Scriptures, to their own destruction. Peter urges us not to be deceived by the error of lawless men, which might undermine the hope that we have in Christ.

## **Growing in Grace**

Peter's closing statement urges us to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Having personally encountered Christ, this is the beginning of a life which grows and deepens our relationship with him. To him be all the glory, now and forever!

## **Points to Consider:**

1. How can we discern between the prophet and the scoffer?
2. What is important for us to learn regarding the timing of God and what is God's purpose in delaying final judgment?
3. In what way should we live our lives, as we wait for the Day of the Lord?
4. Do we accept all of Scripture, including the parts that we find difficult to understand?
5. Are we growing in in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?