

2 Peter Part I – Study Notes

Introduction

Towards the end of his life Peter lived in Rome, where he served the church along with Silvanus, also known as **Silas** who helped him write his first letter. John Mark was also with him, who wrote the Gospel of Mark, using Peter as his primary eyewitness source.

In AD 200 Tertullian a **Christian** author from **Carthage** in the Roman province of Africa, recalled Peter's death and suggested the Romans crucified Peter upside down.

Jesus had said to Peter when He recommissioned him in **John 21:18** *Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.* Peter lived to an old age at the time of his death. But he still wanted to stay on earth because there was still so much work to be done and so much danger from false teachers. He wanted to be reunited with Jesus and the other Christians who had died, but he also had this passion to protect and strengthen the churches.

Peter was martyred under Nero's reign. Most likely at the **circus** of Nero, which was an arena where many Christians were being tortured and killed. Not long after Peter was martyred, a shrine was built to mark his grave. A series of churches have built upon his grave over the centuries and today St. Peter's Basilica (at the Vatican) rests on the place where Peter was most probably martyred and buried. In the 1950's excavations were done under St. Peter's Basilica and unearthed the remains of a sixty-to-seventy year old male, and some people believe it may be Peter's bones.

Peter wrote his second letter around AD 66, approximately 1 year before his execution. He knew that he was about to die. This was most probably revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. This final letter was sent to churches scattered through five Roman provinces in Asia Minor. Persecution under the insane Nero had accelerated in frequency and severity and many believers had turned away from following Jesus; others were fearful and remained silent about their faith.

Peter's first letter focused on hardships, persecution from civil authorities, unfair treatment by slave owners, and an increasingly hostile pagan society. In this second letter Peter focused on three themes:

In chapter 1 Peter talked about being diligent in nurturing Christian moral behaviour. **How can I grow in grace and escape the immorality of the world?** He urged Christians to become spiritually mature.

In chapter 2 Peter moved from moral corruption to doctrinal compromise, and the judgement of false teachers. He warned of the false prophets that were coming and reminded Christian believers that false teaching brings judgment. These false teachers who claimed to be Christians but were not, had purposefully and strategically infiltrated their way into the Christian community and were bringing false teaching within the church. With Peter's death imminent he knew that the church was in danger of this deception after his departure.

In chapter 3 Peter addressed the issues of the end times and Jesus' return, and his focus shifting to what sort of people we should be in light of Jesus coming back; to anticipate Jesus' return and be ready.

In summary 2 Peter is a letter warning Christians to beware and to be ready. Peter's letter is a written legacy for some of the most pressing concerns facing the church in these last days. This was his last will and testament to Christian believers of every generation. As the Holy Spirit inspired this letter, it remains a timely teaching for us today.

I have used Charles Swindoll's book as a major reference for this letter. Charles uses the word **HOPE** to help us to be aware and ready.

H - Heed what you already know 2 Peter 1:12-13 *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,*

2 Peter 3:1-2 *Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. ² I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Saviour through your apostles. 2 Timothy 1:13-14 *What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.**

Many of us have heard 100's or 1000's of sermons and learned enough truth in our lives to keep us strong and to keep us faithful. For most of us it is not a lack of Biblical knowledge but of personal application. Walking the walk not just talking the talk.

We must never forget the basics of our faith and we need to return to our foundational truths often. There are basic disciplines for every believer in the faith: reading the Word, Prayer, Confession, Fellowship and Worship. These are vitally important for us. I want to encourage us this year to make sure we focus on these.

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Deeper knowledge is not merely intellectual awareness but heart knowledge; an intimate and personal knowledge of God. It is easy to gradually move away from the foundational truths and move into error when we stop living a disciplined life.

O - Open our eyes and ears. 2 Peter 1:3 *His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness*; 2 Peter 3:17 *Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position.* Discernment is a developed skill. Part of growing involves discernment. We should pay close attention to what the preachers and teachers say. We need to look at their own lives; do they live what they say? Do they affirm the authority of Scripture? We cannot replace the truth of Scripture when other people believe they have personal revelation above what the scripture says. The final authority on all things is Scripture.

P - Pursue a godly lifestyle 2 Peter 1:5-8 *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, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, 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.*

2 Peter 3:11 *Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives;*

2 Peter 3:14 *So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.* Throughout the New Testament, whenever the subject of Christ's return or the end times is mentioned, almost without exception the Scriptures emphasize living a pure life.

As we study 2 Peter there must be a desire to put what we hear into action. The truth is that we should eagerly pursue a godly lifestyle. Christianity is not a passive faith. It calls for active participation. It means hard work that results in observable change. I believe that God wants his people here to grow up and become mature in the faith. OCC is to walk the walk, not just talk the talk. Friends we can't compromise with the world. Its standards are not our standards. Its path is the road to destruction. God calls us to live by His standards. It is the narrow way.

E – Expect Christ's return 2 Peter 3:12 *as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.* We need to begin the day with a reminder that Jesus could return today. Don't believe people who say Jesus is not coming back. We must be ready and live godly lives as though Jesus is coming back today. We are to diligently expect His imminent return. The Bible clearly says that Jesus will return when we least expect him to. This should make a major difference in our life and our pursuits; change our attitudes, actions, outlook and worldview.

Overview of 2 Peter

Section	Exhortation to Spiritual Maturity	Denunciation of False Teachers	Anticipation of Christ's Return
Themes	<p style="text-align: center;">Moral Corruption</p> <p>Question - How can I grow in grace and escape defilement?</p> <p>Warning: Be pure (1:2-4)</p> <p>Reminder: (1:12-14)</p> <p>Promise: You will never stumble (1:10)</p> <p>Perspective: Look within</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Doctrinal Compromise</p> <p>Question – what should I expect from false teachers?</p> <p>Warning: Be aware (2:1-3)</p> <p>Reminder: (2:21-22)</p> <p>Promise: The Lord will rescue you (2:9)</p> <p>Perspective: Look back</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Prophetic Question</p> <p>Question- What sort of person should we be in light of Christ's coming?</p> <p>Warning: Be diligent (3:14)</p> <p>Reminder: (3:1-2)</p> <p>Promise: Looking for a new heaven and a new earth (3:13)</p> <p>Perspective: Look ahead</p>
Passage	2 Peter 1:1-21	2 Peter 2:1-22	2 Peter 3:1-18