

A LIVING HOPE...



...A SURE SALVATION

Biblical Studies In
1st & 2nd Peter

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A LIVING HOPE...A SURE SALVATION

Biblical Studies In 1st & 2nd Peter

Lesson 1 – General Introduction

Overview

It is often said that some are well qualified to teach and encourage others because of the many mistakes they have made and from which they have recovered. They have learned from experience what was utter failure and how to rebound to great success.

Peter is such an example. Never was there a disciple of Jesus Christ more impetuous or misguided by raw ambition & zeal than he. He had to learn “the hard way” the kind of righteousness required in the Lord’s kingdom. At times, he was his own worst enemy. Notice these “less-than-memorable” moments in his dealings with Christ:

- ◆ his rebuke of Jesus going to Jerusalem to suffer (Mt. 16:21-23)
- ◆ his excited notion of putting Moses & Elijah on par with Jesus (Mt. 17:1-8)
- ◆ his observation that he had done what others had refused to do (Mt. 19:27)
- ◆ his refusal to let Jesus wash his feet & his failure to grasp the event (Jn. 13:6-9)
- ◆ his defense of Jesus through carnal means (Jn. 18:10-11)
- ◆ his denial of Jesus after his defiant profession of allegiance (Lk. 22:33-34, 54-62)
- ◆ his worrying about others instead of his own duties to God (Jn. 21:15-21)

However, he rose from these failures to be a great apostle and a “pillar in the church” (Gal. 2:9). Jesus must have seen Peter’s potential in his undeveloped character when He changed his name from “Simon” to “Peter” in Mt. 16:18 [“*Petros*” = a detached, but large fragment of rock]. One writer comments that earlier in his life, Peter was more like “shifting sand” than a rock.

Peter exemplifies what it means to develop the depth of character needed to faithfully follow Christ, even though you have previously failed, and especially through tribulations. He knew first-hand that for one to enjoy the salvation promised by God, one must acquire a knowledge of the ways of God through patience and steadfast hope. That seems to be the collective theme of his two epistles.

In 1st Peter, he stresses our being begotten to a “living hope” to “obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (1:3-4). In 2nd Peter, the apostle urges us to add “patience” (endurance) to our character (1:6) while growing “in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (3:18). As a disciple young in faith, he was much like us. As a mature, inspired apostle, he was grounded in the will of God. Succinctly, studying these epistles will help the Bible student grow in his/her faith while remaining steadfast in the face of trials.

We are all in constant need of these reminders (cp. 2 Pet. 1:13; 3:1). Children of God are to have a constant hope of their inheritance in heaven, and live accordingly. Peter reviews

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such important themes in his two letters. The following examples illustrate this:

- ♦ we have been begotten to a living hope of our inheritance (1 Pet. 1:3-4)
- ♦ we must remain faithful through trials (1 Pet. 1:6-7; 4:12-19)
- ♦ we should offer continual sacrifices as priests of God (1 Pet. 2:5-12)
- ♦ we must honor all our human relationships (1 Pet. 2:13-20)
- ♦ we must develop strong Christian character (2 Pet. 1:4-11)
- ♦ we must endure mockers and false teachers (2 Pet. 3:3-5, 17)
- ♦ we must be the “right sort of people” in view of judgment (2 Pet. 3:10-13)

Authorship

Both 1 Pet. 1:1 and 2 Pet. 1:1 state that Simon Peter is the author. Based on 1 Pet. 5:12, it appears that Peter dictated the first letter to a brother named Silvanus. No such mention is made with regards to the second epistle, so he could have written it himself.

We know the following about Peter from the Scripture:

- ♦ he was the son of Jonah, or Jonas (Mt. 16:17)
- ♦ he was from the city of Bethsaida (Jn. 1:44)
- ♦ along with James, John, and his brother Andrew, he was a commercial fisherman, primarily on the Sea of Galilee (Mt. 4:18-21)
- ♦ he was a married man (Mt. 8:14)
 - it is inferred his wife accompanied him on preaching trips (1 Cor. 9:5)
- ♦ he had little, if any, formal education (Acts 4:13)
- ♦ he was one of the original 12 apostles hand-chosen by Jesus (Mk. 3:13-19)
 - in all the lists of the apostles, he is always the first one mentioned (Mt. 10:4; Mk. 3:16; Lk. 6:14; Acts 1:13)
- ♦ he was one of the closest disciples of the Lord, along with James & John
 - they witnessed Jesus’ transfiguration (Mt. 17:1ff)
 - they were with the Lord in His agony in Gethsemane (Mt. 26:37)
- ♦ he preached the first gospel sermon when the church began (Acts 2:14-40)
- ♦ the final mention of Peter is at the “Jerusalem Conference” (Acts 15:6-11)

Human tradition ascribes other events to Peter’s life, but these are only speculative. Many teach and believe that Peter was crucified, and in his crucifixion requested that he be impaled upside down. While it is possible that Jesus alludes to a violent death for Peter in Jn. 21:18, we have no reliable information confirming his death in such a fashion. Of course, the most perverted tradition has Peter becoming the first Pope. Besides distorting Mt. 16:18, there also is no evidence that Peter was ever in Rome.

Time & Place of Writing

Textually, we know Peter wrote 1st Peter from “Babylon” (5:13). No such mention is made in his second letter, so we can only assume it was written from the same place.

There are many interpretations about “Babylon.” Some take it to be figurative as a reference

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to Rome or Jerusalem. However, it seems more plausible to accept it as literal Babylon, the ancient site along the Euphrates River. This would be in harmony with the cities listed in 1:1 which were also in ancient Asia Minor.

As for a date, this cannot be fixed for certain. However, some Bible writers do suggest a range that provides a reasonable time frame for Peter's letters:

- ♦ at the time Peter wrote the first epistle, John Mark was with him (5:13)
- ♦ we know Mark was with Paul during his first Roman imprisonment (Col. 4:10)
 - this would have been somewhere around 63-64 A.D.
- ♦ we also know Mark was with Timothy in Asia Minor when Paul wrote his last letter shortly before his death (2 Tim. 4:11; cp. 1 Tim. 1:3)
 - this would have been somewhere around 67-68 A.D.
- ♦ it is therefore concluded that Mark journeyed to Babylon and was with Peter when he penned these letters
 - thus, the range of 63/64 to 67/68 A.D. is used to date Peter's two epistles

Purpose

Peter states he wrote the first epistle "exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!" (1 Pet. 5:12). Additionally, he says he penned the second letter to "stir up your sincere mind by way of reminder" (2 Pet. 3:1).

These letters are not addressed to any specific churches or saints by name. Rather, they are general in nature, and address such themes necessary to successfully live the Christian life. Notice the topics suggested below as possible outlines:

1st Peter

- ♦ Salvation: Attainment of Believers (1:1 - 2:10)
- ♦ Submission: Appeal to Believers (2:11 - 3:12)
- ♦ Suffering: Attitude & Actions of Believers (3:13 - 5:14)

2nd Peter

- ♦ The True Knowledge in Which to Grow (1:1-21)
- ♦ The False Teachers Who Were to Come (2:1-22)
- ♦ The Sure Promise in Which to Hope (3:1-18)

- New Testament Books Outlined
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Lesson 2

The Salvation Of Believers

1 Pet. 1:1 – 2:12

Introduction

Recipients of great things, if they are not careful, can easily forget their benefactors. If that happens, it usually is a sign of ungratefulness and selfish living. We are recipients; God is our Benefactor. In opening his first letter, the apostle Peter eloquently describes all that God has done for us (1 Pet. 1:3-12). He has looked on us in mercy (1:3). He has given us an inheritance (1:4). He has saved our souls with His redemptive plan schemed long ago (1:9-12). 1 Pet. 1:13 - 2:10 teaches how we are thus indebted to Him because of His goodness. We are not to be conformed to our former lusts (1:14). We are to be holy (1:16). We are to love our brethren (1:22). We are to long for His revealed word (2:2). We are to offer ourselves in spiritual sacrifices, being a royal priesthood (2:5,9). Indeed, the salvation of believers in God is the most precious and valuable of gifts to humanity.

1. How did Peter describe himself as he begins the letter? (1:1) To whom did he write? (1:1) Using a Bible atlas, try locating the areas he mentions.
2. How does Peter refer to his readers? (1:1) What is significant about this? (cp. 2:11; Heb. 11:13) Thought question: do you think these were Gentile or Jewish Christians, or a mixture of both?
3. At the end of 1:1, Peter also identifies his readers as the “elect” or “chosen.” Be prepared to define what this means, especially in light of Calvinistic error. Use other passage(s) to support your answer.
4. Research question: using 1 Pet. 1:2, and other supporting passages, show how the entire Godhead is involved in man being “chosen” for redemption.

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5. How does Peter begin to extol or praise God in 1:3-5? What particularly does he mention in v. 3? How would Peter personally know the importance of regaining a “living hope”? What terms are used to describe our inheritance in v. 4? What else does God do for His elect believers? (1:5)

6. What other benefits are ours because of our living hope? (1:6-7) In what sense does Peter describe these “trials”? (cp. 2 Cor. 4:16-18) What is the benefit of experiencing such tests? (v. 7a; cp. Jas. 1:2-4) What happens at the end of such trials? (v. 7b)

7. What else does faith in God allow the chosen believer to do? (1:8; cp. Jn. 20:29; 2 Cor. 5:16) What is the final outcome of such faith? (1:9) How does v. 9 complete the thought begun back in v. 2?

8. How does the apostle further describe this “salvation” in 1:10-12? What did the prophets do? (vv. 10-12a; cp. Dan. 7:13-16) Concerning what did they prophesy? (v. 10b; cp. Jn. 1:17)

9. What did they seek to know? (1:11; cp. Acts 1:6-8) Who is the “Spirit of Christ”? (1:11; cp. Rom. 8:9; Gal. 4:6) What did He reveal? (1:11; cp. Isa. 53:3-12; cp. Acts 3:18; 26:22-23; Lk. 24:25-27) *Thought question*: how does this verse help support the pre-existence and deity of Christ?

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10. What was revealed to these prophets? (1:12) How are their prophecies connected to gospel preaching? What other “interested parties” does Peter mention in v. 12? *Thought question:* think about this verse along with Lk. 15:10 & Heb. 1:14, and summarize the interest of angels in man’s salvation.

11. In beginning to address our obligations to the God who saved us, what 3 things does Peter say we are to do? (1:13) What is meant by the expression, “gird up the loins of your mind” [NKJV] and why would this be the best place to begin? (cp. Prov. 4:23; 23:7; Mt. 12:34-35; 15:18)

12. How are believers to be seen? (1:14a) Compare to Eph. 2:3 and be ready to discuss the differences. To what part of our life are we to refrain? (1:14b; cp. Rom. 12:2) How would these be times of ignorance? Particularly, why would this passage not refer to Jewish Christians? (cp. Rom. 3:1-2)

13. Not only are we not to return to our lustful lifestyles, but in what direction are we to be changed? (1:15; cp. 1 Thess. 4:3, 7) Be able to provide a good definition of “holy.” Why are we to live in such a way? (1:15a, 16) Where is this quotation found in the Old Testament?

14. In what two ways is God portrayed in 1:17? What does Peter tell us about God as Judge? Given these truths, what should be our response? (cp. Lk. 12:4-5) Again, what does Peter emphasize about our physical lives on earth? (cp. 1:1; 2:11)

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15. If 1:16 admonishes holiness based on God's holy character, and if 1:17 encourages holiness based on God's role as our Judge, then in what way does Peter exhort holiness in 1:18-19? *Thought question:* what would such holiness seen in the believer show on his/her part?
16. What does "redeemed" mean? (1:18) Our redemption is not based upon what things? (cp. Psa. 49:6-7) Upon what is it based? (1:19) How does Peter characterize that lifestyle from which we were ransomed? (1:18b)
17. How is Christ's blood described? (1:19; cp. Lev. 4:32; 22:17-22) *Thought question:* what "transition of thought" do you see from 1:18 to 1:19?
18. How is Christ Himself described in 1:20? (cp. 2 Tim. 1:9-10; Rev. 13:8) Based on this characteristic of Him, how does that benefit His followers? (1:21; cp. 1:3)
19. What action on the part of believers in Christ is discussed in 1:22-23? Having already discussed God's part in saving man in 1:3-12, how does Peter emphasize the "human element" in man's salvation in 1:22? What kind of love is enjoined upon us? (1:22b)
20. What makes our salvation, our love for brethren possible? (1:23) What terminology does Peter use to describe our relationship? (cp. 1:3; Jn. 3:3, 5) How does Peter describe the word of God? (1:24-25a) How does he sum up his exhortation in 1:25b?

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21. Because of our regeneration (1:23), what are we instructed to do? (2:1) What do you think is meant by the phrase "...putting aside..."? Be prepared to discuss the meaning of each of the 5 items Peter mentions in 2:1.
22. Having already used the metaphor of a new birth (1:3, 23), how does Peter use it again, and what image does he portray? (2:2) How is God's word described? What does partaking of it produce? Be able to connect this back to what was taught in 1:9.
23. What do you think is the apostle's point in 2:3?
24. From the figure of milk, what image does Peter begin to develop in 2:4? How is Jesus described? In what sense(s) is He a "living" stone? How was He viewed by men? By God?
25. Likewise, what are followers of Christ called in 2:5? What eventuates from following Him? What do you think is this "spiritual house"? (Use other passage(s) to support your answer.)
26. How does Peter show this is according to God's plan? (2:6) Where is this found in the O.T.? *Thought question:* What is "Zion"? Why will the one who puts his trust in Christ not be "disappointed" or "put to shame"?

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27. Because this “Stone” is precious (v. 6), how do believers benefit? (2:7a) In what sense does Peter use the term “believe”? What about those who do not believe? (2:7b-8) To not believe is equivalent to what condition?
28. Be able to define “a stone of stumbling” and “a rock of offense.” (2:8) How would Peter painfully know the meaning of a “rock of offense”? (cp. Mt. 16:23)
29. Why do some stumble at the word? (2:8b) Be able to explain why this does not teach what Calvinists would assert.
30. In contrast again, how does the apostle describe followers of Christ? (2:9) Where else is this contained in the Scripture? Be prepared to describe the following, using other supporting passage(s):
- a chosen race _____
 - a royal priesthood _____
 - a holy nation _____
 - a people for God’s own possession _____
31. What is the expressed purpose for our being blessed? (2:9b; cp. Eph. 5:8; 1 Jn. 1:5,7)
32. How else does Peter describe those who are God’s people? (2:10) From where does he quote? How does Paul use the same passage elsewhere? (cp. Rom. 9:25-26)

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33. To what description does Peter return in referring to his readers? (2:11a; cp. 1:1) What does he urge us to do and why? (2:11b) *Thought question:* how would such conduct reflect the salvation he has been discussing?
34. What else does the apostle admonish in 2:12a? What is the “assumed” behavior of unbelievers? (cp. 4:4; Jn. 15:18; 17:14; 1 Jn 3:13) If the Christian sets the right example before unbelievers, what will hopefully result? (2:12b) What do you think is the “day of visitation”?

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Lesson 3

The Submission Of Believers

1 Pet. 2:13 – 3:12

Introduction

Those who have been saved have truly learned what it means to submit. Jesus plainly teaches the only way to see heaven is to submit to the Father's will (Mt. 7:21). No one will ever enjoy the fruits of salvation without yielding the will of self to a higher authority.

The first section of 1st Peter is purely *doctrinal*, discussing God's salvation for man and how man comes to gain and keep it (1:1 - 2:12). Beginning here, the rest of the epistle is purely *practical*, dealing with how we may apply what we have learned about the destiny God has for us as His people. Submission must take place when one comes to the Lord, and it must continue all throughout our lives in serving Him. It touches civil responsibilities (2:13-17), secular duties (2:18-25), personal relationships (3:1-7), and dealings among brethren (3:8-12). The way to heaven is, as we sometimes sing, "*None of self, and all of Thee.*"

1. What is the first area in which Peter directs our submission? (2:13-14) How were early saints slandered in this regard? (cp. Acts 17:7) What do you think "for the Lord's sake" means? (cp. Mt. 22:21) Is this "allegiance" unconditional? (Acts 4:18-20; 5:29)
2. When we obey God by submitting to civil rule, what is the desired result? (2:15) To what do you think this refers?
3. How are we to act? (2:16-17) Though free, yet what are we still? Can our freedom be abused, misused? (cp. Gal. 5:1,13)
4. Who does Peter next address beginning in 2:18, and how does he instruct them?
Thought questions: although slavery is no longer a part of our culture, how might we still apply these verses? How might Col. 3:22-24 help in coping with "unreasonable" employers or supervisors?

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5. With what is God pleased in this area? (2:19) How does Peter logically point out why God would be pleased with our secular submission? (2:20)

6. What bearing does 2:21-25 have on our need to submit secularly?
 - a) What is meant by "For you have been called for this purpose?" (v. 21; cp. Acts 14:22; 2 Tim. 3:12; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; Phil. 1:29)

 - b) What role of Christ is emphasized in v. 21?

 - c) How is He described in vv. 22-23a?

 - d) Why was He able to endure unjust suffering? (v. 23b)

 - e) For what purpose did Christ suffer unjustly? (vv. 24-25) What application(s) can we make with respect to the suffering we might endure unjustly?

7. Who does Peter next address beginning in 3:1, and what are his instructions for them? How do we know this verse is thematically connected with the previous ones? What is the goal of these believing wives, and how will it be accomplished? (3:1-2)

8. How does Peter begin to describe their "chaste and respectful behavior" in 3:3-4? What comparison is made, and upon what is the emphasis to be placed?

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9. How does Peter further prove the importance of what he instructs wives to do? (3:5) Specifically, who does he use as an example, and what results when women follow her today? (3:6; cp. Gal. 3:7)

10. Who does Peter next address in 3:7, and what are his instructions for them? Though the husband leads his family, in what way does he show submission? What consequences result when he fails these duties? *Thought question:* what do you think is meant by the phrase, "as with a weaker vessel,..." [NASV]?

11. It appears that Peter next addresses the brethren in general in 3:8-9. What 5 duties need to be found among brethren in their dealings with each other?

12. What does Peter stress in 3:9a? Rather than give in to sinful dispositions or actions, what is the Christian to do instead and why? What other N.T. passages teach this?

13. How does Peter further offer proof of our "calling"? (3:10-12) From where does he quote?

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Lesson 4

The Suffering Of Believers

1 Pet. 3:13 – 5:14

Introduction

Following our outline of Peter's first letter, *salvation* in Christ leads to *submission* in all our relationships. That will necessarily lead to the apostle's third and final main topic: *suffering*. If we live our lives for the Lord, we will yield ourselves in every respect. And that will result in suffering at the hands of an unbelieving world (cp. 2 Tim. 3:12). This last section, the largest in the letter, reminds us that "Christ suffered in the flesh" and teaches us to "arm ourselves with the same purpose" (4:1). The Holy Spirit's words through Peter aid us in overcoming those times when we are maligned for not "running with the crowd" (4:4), and help us not feel ashamed, but rather glorify God (4:16). We know in the end, God will be pleased with us if we are faithful (5:10).

1. Based upon how God is described in 3:12, what comforting truth is offered in 3:13? In what does this verse encourage us?
2. To guard against us having false hopes of never experiencing difficulties, what does Peter say in 3:14? What had Jesus already taught? (cp. Mt. 5:10) From what O.T. passage does Peter quote?
3. Instead of being intimidated into inaction, what are we to do? (3:15) Define the following terms:

sanctify _____

defense (answer) _____

meekness & fear _____

4. Why the admonition to "keep (have) a good conscience" in conjunction with being ready to answer for our faith? (3:16a) What eventually results when we live in harmony with what we espouse? (3:16b)

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Lesson 4

5. How does Peter complete this discussion in 3:17?

6. As in 2:21-25, how does the apostle use Christ as an example? (3:18-19) What do you think is being taught in v. 19? Use other passage(s) to support your answer. *[Note: this passage has been debated for decades and is the cause of much religious confusion.]*

7. What seems to be the main idea presented in 3:20? How might it offer an explanation of v. 19? What is the application made in 3:21? *Thought question:* try to thematically link 3:18-22 in the context of believers suffering for the cause of Christ.

8. "Therefore," what are we encouraged to do? (4:1a) What do you think is the meaning of 4:1b? (cp. Rom. 6:7)

9. How is 4:2-3 connected to the exhortation in 4:1? *Thought question:* in what particular way can we use 1 Pet. 4:3b?

10. For what specific reality does Peter prepare believers in 4:4? What words of comfort enable us to endure the judgments from unbelievers? (4:5) Regarding "the dead", what reminder is given in 4:6?

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Lesson 4

11. To what event do you think Peter refers in 4:7a? *[Hint: the most likely answer would be connected to this theme of suffering]* What were his readers instructed to do as a result? (4:7b-11) How would these "duties" and "gifts" help Christians with the trials to come? What was to result from performing such? (4:10b)

[The "fiery trial" of 4:12 might be the "end of all things" from 4:7]

12. What encouragement does Peter offer in 4:12? (cp. 1 Jn. 3:13) Why are Christians subjected to such? Why is such treatment not "strange"? (cp. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:12)
13. Why are we to rejoice at such sufferings? (4:13) Be able to explain, "To the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ,..." *[NASV]* Does 4:14 offer any proof that we are living acceptably before God in the face of such trials?
14. What kind of suffering is prohibited, and what kind of suffering is encouraged? (4:15-16) How would Peter personally know the joy behind this? (cp. Acts 5:40-41)
15. How does Peter style the present trials upon the early Christians? (4:17) If they were undergoing such, what is implied about those outside the kingdom of Christ? How does he illustrate his point? (4:18)
16. How does Peter encourage disciples of Christ to endure such trials? (4:19; cp. 2:23)

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Lesson 4

17. Whom does Peter address in 5:1a? Upon what 3-fold basis does he address them? (5:1b) What is his admonition to them? (5:2-4) Do you see any connection to the previous verses or to the theme of endurance in the face of sufferings?
18. *Thought question*: how is the “sponsoring church” arrangement found among institutional brethren a violation of 1 Pet. 5:2?
19. Who else is addressed in 5:5, and to what are they encouraged? Why are we instructed to be humble? From where does Peter quote? What results from showing humility in this life? (5:6) When suffering brings anxious moments, what should believers do? (5:7)
20. Besides being humble, what else should suffering saints do and why? (5:8) What does Peter instruct us to do about the devil? (5:9; cp. Jas. 4:7) What will it take to resist him? What comforts us when we try to resist him?
21. How does Peter style the saints’ sufferings? (5:10a) What will happen after we have been tested? (5:10b) Because God is the Source of all that sustains us in enduring our trials, what is ascribed Him? (5:11)
22. How does Peter close out his first letter? (5:12-14)

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Lesson 5

Introduction To 2nd Peter

Overview

Peter's first epistle offered a living hope to followers of Jesus Christ, a hope that must remain steadfast in the face of suffering (cp. 1:3; 4:12-16). His second letter focuses on knowledge of the will of God, a knowledge that must remain sharp in the face of false teachers and their pernicious doctrines (cp. 2:1; 3:3, 17-18).

Lest we think the two epistles are not related in their respective themes, we must remember that for us to enjoy the hope of the eternal home God has provided for us, we must give ourselves fully to acquiring such knowledge. One cannot be obtained without the other.

In the first chapter of his second letter, the apostle Peter affirms the existence of the absolute truth of God. He describes the process of how one goes about developing the character necessary to achieve a knowledge of this truth (1:2-11). He declares this truth to be based on both eyewitness testimony (1:16-18) as well as on the words of prophets (1:19-21).

Secondly, Peter reminds us of the existence of false teachers and their evil attempts at substituting human words for Divine words. Also, he reveals the destruction from God that awaits them as well as the means by which they attempt to gain their following (2:1-22).

Finally, Peter proclaims the certainty of the Lord's second coming which will usher in a new order of things (3:3-13). Because the things of which he speaks are unalterable truths, he asks and answers the question, "...what sort of people ought you to be...", "...since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless, and blameless,..." (3:11, 14).

By his own admission, much of what Peter has to say in his final epistle are things his readers already know (1:12). This is not pointless, but serves to keep his readers sharp and focused on what is truly important. Teachers review their students all the time in secular education; why not all the more in our spiritual development?

Having no specific information as to when or from where he wrote his second epistle, we can only assume Peter penned 2nd Peter shortly after he wrote 1st Peter (somewhere around 63 – 68 A.D.), and composed it from the same location – Babylon (cp. 1 Pet. 5:12).

Audience

Though the greetings in both letters are not the same, we know Peter wrote the second epistle to the same group addressed in his first one (3:1). It was addressed to saints living in Asia Minor (cp. 1 Pet. 1:1), and by God's providence, it is preserved for saints living today.

Purpose

The apostle wanted to remind his readers of some very important things (1:12-15; 3:1). Judging from his comments in 1:13-15, Peter may have seen this as his last opportunity to write to these brethren. Even after his departure, he wanted his readers to always refer to such writings to help them in living for the Lord.

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Lesson 5

Theme

In a word...*knowledge*, a working knowledge, especially in the face of threatening false doctrines. The only way for God's children to overcome any false teacher and his doctrine is to have a solid understanding of the Lord's doctrine handed down through the apostles. Peter devotes a large portion of his second epistle to a description of false teachers, their doctrines, and how they entice people to follow them. Among the false doctrines Peter deals with in the letter are...

- the denial of Jesus as the Messiah (2:1)
- sensuality in the name of religion (2:1, 10, 18)
- disrespect of civil authority (2:10)
- repudiation of the what the apostles taught re: the second coming of Christ and the end of the world (3:3-10)

Please refer to the outline we will be using on p. 3

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Lesson 5

The True Knowledge In Which To Grow

2 Pet. 1:1-21

Introduction

In opening his second letter, the apostle Peter instructs us in our responsibilities in which to grow in God's grace, "seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence" (v. 3). In this chapter, Peter emphasizes how we can become a "well-rounded Christian" by adding certain traits to our Christian character (vv. 5-11). Afterwards, he reviews the "credibility" of this truth that should mold us into what God desires: it is based on eyewitness testimony and the prophetic utterances (vv. 16-21).

1. How does Peter describe himself as he opens the second letter? (1:1a) How does he describe those to whom he writes? (1:1b-2)

2. What important truth is stated in 1:3, and why would a knowledge of this verse be so important in religious discussions with friends? How does this verse also show how we gain all things that pertain to life and godliness?

3. What has God granted to us? (1:4a) With what hope in mind did God grant them? What do you think "become partakers of the divine nature" means? Upon what condition must we meet in order to enjoy what God has planned for us? (1:4b)

4. In 1:5-7, Peter lists "virtues" or "traits" the Christian is to use to build his spiritual character. In the spaces provided, list them in order and be prepared to explain what each means. Also, do you see any "progression" as one trait goes to the next?

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

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d) _____

e) _____

f) _____

g) _____

h) _____

5. What is the implication of Peter's words in 1:8a? What benefit comes from having such character traits? (1:8b, 10-11) What is the sad result if we don't possess them? (1:9)

6. *Thought question:* how could 1:10-11 be used to refute the Calvinistic idea of one being called of God? Use other passage(s) to corroborate your answer.

7. What attitude of Peter is expressed in 1:12, and how can we apply it today? (cp. 3:1-2) What else may have been weighing heavy on Peter's mind as he wrote this second epistle? (1:13-15)

8. What is the first "credible source" Peter mentions as proof of the truthfulness of his writings? (1:16-18) To what does he compare it? To what particular event does he refer and where is it recorded in the Scripture?

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9. What is the second “credible source” Peter mentions as proof of the truthfulness of his writings? (1:19-21) How does the apostle’s statement “And so we have the prophetic word made more sure,…” [NASV] help connect these 2 “credible sources” of information?

10. What is Peter’s admonition about such prophecy? (1:19; cp. Rom. 15:4) Using a common Biblical metaphor, how does he describe the effects such prophecy can have? (cp. Jn. 8:12; 3:19-21; 1 Jn. 1:5-7)

11. What is Peter’s emphasis in 1:20-21? How are these verses commonly misunderstood?

12. Comment on how the following passages either harmonize or help explain what Peter is saying in these 2 verses: Ex. 4:10-12; 2 Sam. 23:2; Jer. 1:9; 1 Cor. 2:7-13.

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Lesson 6

The False Teachers Who Were To Come

2 Pet. 2:1-22

Introduction

Peter devotes the second chapter of his second letter to an exposition on false prophets. He gives detailed descriptions of them, their pernicious ways, the damaging effects of their error, and the doom that awaits them. God has always been opposed to false teachers and those who do evil (vv. 3b-8), and those who would “exploit you with false words” will suffer the same awful fate every other opponent of God has through the ages. The solution to the crisis of false teachers has already been given: be diligent in forming a strong Christian character (1:5-11), and pay attention to the writings God has given through His servants (1:19-21).

1. How is 2:1 a contrast to what Peter just got through discussing in 1:19-21? Where else in the New Testament do we read of similar warnings about false teachers?
2. How does Peter describe these false teachers, how they operate, and the effects of their error? (2:1-3a) How would Peter painfully know the danger of “denying the Master”?
3. What is already determined about such teachers? (2:3b) *Thought question:* be able to explain “judgment from long ago is not idle” (NASV).
4. Be prepared to discuss the 3 examples Peter cites as proof of the certainty of God’s punishment upon the wicked (2:4-8) What purpose do these verses serve in the chapter’s overall context?

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5. What conclusion does Peter offer in 2:9, and how would it bring comfort to the readers of his second epistle?

6. Returning to the false teachers in 2:10-19, how does Peter further describe them? (2:10; cp. Jude 8) What particular attitude is mentioned in v. 10b, and how is the depths to which they have fallen illustrated? (2:11; cp. Jude 9)

7. To what does Peter liken these false teachers in 2:12a? What awaits them because of their conduct? (2:12b-13a) What statement in 2:13 especially highlights their depravity? (cp. Jn. 3:19-20) How else does Peter describe them? (2:13b)

8. What do you think is meant by the phrase "having eyes full of adultery..."? (2:14a) Upon whom did they prey and why? (2:14b)

9. What have these false teachers done? (2:15a; cp. vv. 1, 20-22) In what sense did they follow the example of Balaam? (2:15b; cp. Num. 22) How was Balaam shown his error? (2:16) *Thought question:* what do you think Peter hopes to gain by mentioning Balaam's rebuke from the donkey?

10. Having given his readers several good descriptions of such false teachers, how does Peter emphasize the worthlessness of what they taught? (2:17-19) What metaphors are particularly emphatic in v. 17?

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11. Basically, how did these false teachers operate? (2:18) What did they hypocritically promise? (2:19) How did the apostle Paul address this in Gal. 5:13?

12. What principle found in Jn. 8:34 and Rom. 6:16 did these false teachers overlook?

13. To whom does "they" refer in 2:20? What is implied about these false teachers in 2:20-22?

14. From where does Peter quote in 2:22? *Thought questions:* in what way are these verses helpful in talking with friends & family about salvation? What other passage(s) could be used to corroborate these verses?

15. What truth is taught in 2:20b-21a? Use Mt. 12:43-45 & Lk. 12:47-48 in your answer.

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Lesson 7

The Sure Promise In Which To Hope

2 Pet. 3:1-18

Introduction

Peter concludes his second and final epistle by exhorting his readers toward the sure promises of God, promises that should be believed because of the certainty of His word. False teachers, or “mockers,” try to malign God by mischaracterizing Him and what He has said. Peter gives his final exhortation by “stirring up our sincere minds” in reminding us of unalterable truths that silence any and all detractors. God will send His Son again (vv. 4, 10a), and His return will bring on the destruction of the world (vv. 7, 10b, 12). Both these events will usher in the “new heavens and the new earth,” or eternity (v. 13). For this we should eagerly seek and anticipate (v. 14). The only way to get there from here is to grow in our knowledge in order to avoid apostasy (vv. 17-18).

1. How does Peter restate the purposes for which he has written his two letters? (3:1-2) Whom does he reference in v. 2? *Thought question:* do you think these would be Old or New Testament prophets? Use other passage(s) in your answer.
2. When are the “last days”? (3:3a) What will happen in those days, and why would such men be mocking? (3:3b)
3. What was the content of their mockings? (3:4) How did they come to conclude this? *Thought question:* using other passages, what reasons have believers been given that the Lord will indeed come again?
4. What was the problem with the mockers’ thinking? (3:5) In 3:5-9, Peter gives 3 answers to the mockers’ error. Using these passages, give the 3 answers and comment in the spaces provided. Use other verses to corroborate:

vv. 5-7 _____

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v. 8 _____

v. 9 _____

5. *Thought question:* examining 3:6 and 3:10 together, how would these passages refute the Watchtower Witnesses and others who espouse premillennialism?

6. How will the “day of the Lord” come? (3:10) What is meant by such an expression, and where else is this metaphor used in the New Testament? Describe the events surrounding this great day.

7. What is Peter’s admonition in 3:11? Given these truths about the earth and its eventual destruction, what other New Testament passages exhort us in a similar way?

8. Considering 3:12, how are saints to view these future events? *Thought question:* when these future events become reality, how will the saint feel? The mocker?

9. What is the mindset of those who believe in God and His word? (3:13) Where else in the Scripture do we read of “new heavens and a new earth”? What will characterize this new realm?

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10. Given all these “certainties” from God, disciples of the Lord will show they live by hope. In 3:14-18, what four things will children of God do that will demonstrate this hope is within them? (Hint: notice all are “action” verbs, signifying the doing of something)

a) v. 14 _____

b) vv. 15-16 _____

c) v. 17 _____

d) v. 18 _____

Appendix

Copies of overhead charts used in teaching this class.

The Elect Of God 1 Pet 1:1

Why An Unconditional Election Is False

- ❶ Salvation is conditional Mt 7:21 Lk 13:3
- ❷ It portrays God as arbitrary, maybe even cruel
- ❸ It negates human responsibility; man is reduced to a mere puppet
- ❹ God's invitations become void Mt 11:28-30
- ❺ God is made a respecter of persons 1 Pet 1:17

The Certainty Of Our Inheritance
1 Pet 1:4

- ❶ It is imperishable (will not corrupt, perish)
cp. Mt 6:19-20 Rom 1:23 1 Cor 9:25 15:52
- ❷ It is undefiled (pure, free from contaminants)
cp. Heb 13:4 Jas 1:27
- ❸ It will not fade away (not bound by time; will not lose its luster or beauty)
- ❹ It is reserved in heaven (safely prepared, kept)
cp. Mt 27:36 Eph 4:3 2 Pet 2:4,9,17 3:7

The Elect Of God 1 Pet 1:2

True Biblical "Election" From This Verse

- ❶ God The Father chooses based upon His foreknowledge cp. Rom 8:29-30
- ❷ God The Spirit sanctifies through His work
cp. Jn 17:17
- ❸ God The Son sprinkles (cleanses) through His sacrifice cp. Heb 9:11-14 10:19-22 1 Jn 1:7

Compare 2 Thess 2:13-14

"WHAT SHALL WE DO?"

1 Pet 1:13

God has planned our salvation and brought it about (vv. 2-12). What does He expect of us?

- ❶ "Gird up the loins of your mind"
- gathering up mental resolve cp. 2 Cor 10:5
- ❷ "Be sober *in spirit*"
- temperance in calmness cp. 1 Pet 4:7 5:8
- ❸ "Rest your hope fully"
- unwavering confidence, faithfulness to the end

Appendix

Copies of overhead charts used in teaching this class.

EXHORTATIONS TO HOLINESS

1 Pet 1:15-19

We should live holy lives because...

- ① ...God is holy, and instructs us to be vv. 15-16
- ② ...God is the impartial Judge, and will judge us based upon our work v. 17
- ③ ...we have been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ vv. 18-19
 - this shows gratitude on our part

The People Of God

1 Pet 2:9

Obedient believers in Christ are...

- ① ...a chosen race → selected by God, called to Him
cp. 2 Thess 2:13-14
- ② ...a royal priesthood → empowered to officiate in worship;
royal because of the King cp. Rom 12:1
- ③ ...a holy nation → a group set aside for sacred purposes
cp. 1:15-16 2 Cor 7:1
- ④ ...God's own possession → belonging solely to God, as
a prized possession cp. Titus 2:14

The Newborn Babe 1 Pet 2:1

What Is To Be "Put" Or "Laid" Aside?

- ① Malice → An evil desire; esp. to injure another
- ② Guile → "To catch with bait;" craftily deceive
- ③ Hypocrisy → Deceptive actions and attitudes
- ④ Envy → Unhappiness at others' good fortunes
- ⑤ Slander → Defamatory words about others



These all prevent the love
commanded of us in 1:22

SUBMISSIVE SOJOURNERS

1 Pet 2:13 - 3:12

- ① In civil responsibilities 2:13-17
 - It is "for the Lord's sake" cp. Mt 22:21
 - It is the will of God cp. Rom 13:1-2
- ② In secular duties 2:18-20
 - It is commendable before God to patiently endure suffering when doing good
 - It follows Christ's example 2:21-25

Appendix

Copies of overhead charts used in teaching this class.

SUBMISSIVE SOJOURNERS

1 Pet 2:13 - 3:12

- ③ In personal relationships 3:1-7
 - It is to win the unbelieving spouse vv. 1-2
 - It is precious in the sight of God vv. 3-4
 - It aids in understanding the wife v. 7
- ④ Among the brethren 3:8-12
 - It produces "like minds" v. 8 cp. Phil 2:1-4
 - It maintains contact with God vv. 9-12

Enduring The "End Of All Things"

1 Pet 4:7-11

In What "Duties" Were Saints To Engage To Persevere During Their Sufferings?

- ① Personal v. 7 (sobriety, prayer)
- ② Non-Miraculous vv. 8-9
(fervent love & hospitality towards others)
- ③ Miraculous vv. 10-11 (speaking, using other gifts)

What application is there for Christians living & suffering today?

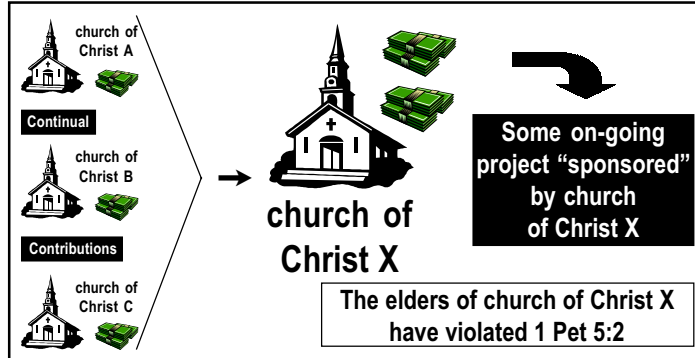
ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

1 Pet 4:3-4

What Sins From Saints' Prior Living Have Been Indulged In "Enough"?

- ① Sex → sensual, lascivious living
- ② Alcohol → that which removes sobriety
 - even "social drinking"
- ③ Idolatry → anything that replaces God

Liberal Abuse of 1 Pet 5:2



Appendix

Copies of overhead charts used in teaching this class.

What God Does Through Sufferings

1 Pet 5:10

- ❶ Perfects - to mend, repair, eliminate any deficiency cp. Mt 4:21
- ❷ Confirms - to make fast, fix or support that which totters cp. Lk 22:32
- ❸ Strengthens - to impart strength in order to resist attacks
- ❹ Establishes - to lay a foundation, to make more stable cp. Lk 6:47-48

MAN
(Imperfection)
Notice v. 8a

CHRIST
(Perfection) cp. 1 Pet 2:21

Note: This slide serves as an overlay to the previous one.

A "WELL-ROUNDED" CHRISTIAN

2 Pet 1:5-11

<p>LOVE 1 Cor 13:1-8; 1 Thess 3:12</p>	<p>MORAL EXCELLENCE 1 Cor 16:13</p>
<p>BROTHERLY KINDNESS Rom 12:10; 1 Pet 1:22</p>	<p>KNOWLEDGE Rom 10:1-3; 1 Cor 8:1-2</p>
<p>GODLINESS 1 Tim 2:2; 4:7-8</p>	<p>SELF-CONTROL 1 Cor 9:25-27; Gal 5:23</p>
<p>PERSEVERANCE 1 Cor 15:58; 2 Cor 11:23-28</p>	
<p>FAITH Rom 10:17; Heb 11:6</p>	

Judgment Is Not Idle

2 Pet 2:3-9

God's *punishment* against sin is certain

- ❶ Angels who sinned were cast down v. 4
cp. Jude 6
- ❷ Ungodly antediluvian world was destroyed in the flood v. 5
- ❸ Sodom & Gomorrah were condemned vv. 6-8
cp. Gen 13:13 Jude 7

Appendix

Copies of overhead charts used in teaching this class.

Judgment Is Not Idle

2 Pet 2:3-9

God's *deliverance* of the faithful is certain

- ❶ Angels are outside God's grace Heb 2:14-16
- ❷ Noah was "preserved" because he was obedient and faithful v. 5 cp. Gen 6:22
- ❸ Lot was "rescued" because he was righteous v. 8

Application: God can deliver us from the temptations of false teachers while committing them to certain punishment v. 9

The Error Of Premillennialism

2 Pet 3:6,10,12

The First "Destruction"

v. 6



"Old" Earth
Pre Flood



"New" Earth
Post Flood

The Last "Destruction"

vv. 10,12



Present
Earth Now



No Earth
Post Fire

The flood did not "destroy" or annihilate the earth...it still existed after the waters receded (Gen 8:13ff; 9:1)

Not a pattern.

The fire will annihilate the earth, leaving nothing for an earthly kingdom (1 Thess 4:16-17)

The Error Of "Once Saved, Always Saved" 2 Pet 2:20-22

- ❶ Those who escape the world's defilements can again be entangled in them v. 20
- ❷ Those who know the way of righteousness can turn away from it v. 21
- ❸ Those who have been saved can again return to the filthiness of sin v. 22
- ❹ Other passages: Mt 13:20-22 Acts 8:9-23
Heb 6:4-6 Mt 12:43-45 Lk 12:47-48