

Through the Bible Book by Book

New Testament

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SECOND PETER

Theme: First Peter deals with a danger without the church - persecutions; Second Peter, with one within - false doctrine.

The first was written to encourage; the second, to warn. In the first, Peter is seen fulfilling his commission to “**strengthen the brethren**” (Luke 22:32); in the second he is seen fulfilling his commission to shepherd the sheep, leading them past lurking and insidious dangers, to walk in the paths of righteousness (John 21:15-17).

In the second Epistle, the writer gives a graphic description of the false teachers who would threaten the faith of the Church, and as an antidote to their false doctrine and tainted life, he exhorts the Christians to avail themselves of every means for growing in grace and in the experiential knowledge of Jesus Christ. The theme may be summed up as follows: a full experiential knowledge of Christ is the stronghold against a false teaching and an unholy life.

Why Written: To give a prophetic picture of the apostasy of the last days, and to urge upon Christians that preparedness of heart and life which alone can fit them to meet its perils.

When Written: Probably A. D. 66.

Contents:

I. Exhortation to Growth in Divine Grace and Knowledge. Ch. 1.

II. Warning Against False Teachers. Ch. 2.

III. Promise of the Lord’s Coming. Ch. 3.

I. Exhortation to Growth in Divine Grace and Knowledge. Ch. 1.

1. Salutation (vv. 1, 2). The grace and peace that Peter asks for the saints should issue in experiential knowledge of God and of Christ.

2. The basis of saving knowledge - the promises of God (vv. 3, 4).

3. The growth in experiential knowledge (vv. 5-11).

There is no standstill in Christian experience, there must be either progress or falling back. The believer has a foundation, faith; but he must be continually building on that foundation a superstructure of Christian character and virtue.

Notice -

(a) The result of this spiritual “addition” (v. 5): fruitfulness in experiential knowledge of Divine things and the acquiring of an abundant entrance into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus (vv. 8, 10, 11).

(b) The result of neglect of spiritual growth - spiritual blindness and backsliding (v. 8).

4. The sources of saving knowledge:

(a) The testimony of the apostles who were eye witnesses of Christ’s glory (vv. 12-18).

(b) The testimony of the prophets (vv. 19-21).

“Moreover the apostle appeals to the inspiration of the prophets in the confirmation of his teaching: **‘no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.’**

“He recognizes this as a primary truth, that prophecy is not of one’s own origination, nor is it to be tied up to the times of the prophet. The prophecy was brought to him as it is brought to us. Peter and his fellow believers did not follow cunningly devised fables; they were borne along in their prophetic utterance by the Holy Spirit.”

II. Warning Against False Teachers. Ch. 2.

1. The conduct of false teachers (vv. 1-3).

They will stealthily and cunningly introduce fatal heresies, even denying the Lord Himself. Covering their true motives with plausible arguments they will lead many astray.

2. The certain doom of these false teachers as set forth by ancient examples of retribution (vv. 4-9).

3. The character of these false teachers (vv. 10-22).

The apostle probably has in mind the future rise of Gnostic sects, who combined tainted morals with tainted living.

The following sects arose in the second century:

- The Ophites, who worshiped the serpent of the Garden of Eden as their benefactor;
- The Cainites, who exalted as heroes some of the vilest characters of the Old Testament;
- The Carpocratians who taught immorality;
- The Antitactae, who regarded it as a duty to the supreme God to violate the Ten Commandments on the ground that they were promulgated by a wicked mediating angel.

III. Promise of the Lord's Coming. Ch. 3.

1. Scoffers and the promise of the second coming (vv. 1-4).

“Presumptuous skepticism and lawless lust, setting nature and its so-called laws above the God of nature and revelation, and arguing from the past continuity of nature’s phenomena that there can be no future interruption to them, was the sin of the antediluvians (those living before the flood), and shall be that of the scoffers in the last days.”

2. Answers to their objections (vv. 5-9).

(a) “They obstinately shut their eyes to the Scripture record of the Creation and the Deluge; the latter is the very parallel to the coming judgment of fire . . . ‘**All things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.**’ Before the flood the same objection to the possibility of the flood might have been urged with the same plausibility: the heavens and the earth have been from old. How unlikely then that they should not continue so! But, replies Peter, the flood came in spite of their reasonings; so will the final conflagration of the earth come in spite of the scoffers of the last days.”

(b) God’s delays are due to His mercy.

3. The certainty, suddenness, and effects of the Lord’s coming (vv. 10-13).

The “**day of the Lord**” here mentioned refers to a whole series of events beginning with the premillennial advent and ending with the destruction of the wicked and the final conflagration and general judgment. “As the flood was the baptism of the earth, eventuating in a renovated earth partly delivered from the curse, so the baptism by fire shall purify the earth so as to be the renovated abode of the regenerated man wholly delivered from the curse.”

4. Concluding exhortations:

(a) To live blamelessly in the light of their great Hope (v. 14).

(b) To remember that reason for the Lord’s delay is to give men an opportunity to repent (v. 15).

(c) To beware of being led astray by false doctrine (v. 17).

(d) To grow in grace (v. 18).

~ end of II Peter ~

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