

Study of Second Peter – Mto wa Mbu Bible School

Introductory Thoughts

Who wrote this letter?

The Apostle Peter is the author of this book, as he claims in 1:1.

- In 1:14, he mentions that Jesus told him how he would die. Jesus can be seen doing this in John 21:18-19.
- In 1:16-18, he says that he was with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. We can confirm that Peter was there in Matthew 17:1-9.
- In 3:1, he mentions that this is his second letter to write, referencing the book of 1 Peter. In 1 Peter 1:1, he also claims authorship of that book.

To whom did he write this letter?

There are two verses that give us this answer.

1. 1:1 tells us that the letter is written to Christians.
2. 3:1 tells us that the letter is written to the same people to whom 1 Peter was written. According to 1 Peter 1:1, the letter is written to congregations of Christians in modern-day Turkey.

However, we know that these words are applicable to us today, also. See 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

What were the circumstances surrounding the writing of this letter?

Secular history tells us that Peter died during the persecution of Nero in the Roman Empire. The story is told that he was crucified upside down because he felt unworthy to die in the same way that the Lord died. This is, however, not inspired history.

In 1:13-14, Peter says that he would be put to death soon. Since Nero died in 68 AD, that would put Peter writing this letter in the years leading up to that year.

Regardless, Peter wrote this shortly before he died. It is worth noting that Peter knew his death was not far off when he wrote this.

Why did he write this letter?

Peter writes this book to remind the Christians of a few things before his execution. This will be the main outline of the study of this letter.

In 1:12-15 and also in 3:1, he says that his purpose is to “stir up the brethren by way of reminder.”

The main things that Peter wants to remind the Christians of will be covered in this study.

What are the key verses of this letter?

I believe that the key verses of 2 Peter are 3:17-18. This passage makes the statement that we should watch for false teachers and grow so that they will not lead us away.

In time, this study will cover that these verses say everything that he wants to tell Christians before he is killed.

What are the main things that Peter wants to remind Christians of before his death?

There are four main ideas that Peter wanted to stress to Christians before his death. These serve as the general outline of the letter that we will follow.

1. Remember to grow your faith (1:3-11).
2. Remember the Scriptures (1:12-21).
3. Remember to know all about false teachers (2:1-22).
4. Remember the LORD’s promise to return (3:1-13).

The final few verses are his last admonition to the Christians, as he knew he would likely not speak with them again.

Study of the Letter

Peter's introduction – 1:1-2

1:1a

- It is interesting to note that Peter immediately refers to himself as a servant, or slave, of Jesus Christ. This is a stark contrast to how many view him today.
- However, he does mention that he is also an apostle, reminding us that he saw and worked with Jesus Christ, firsthand.

1:1b

- He then immediately follows this by saying that he is writing to people who have reached equal status with him, as Christians. There are no top-, middle-, and lower-class ranks of Christians. We all can obtain this same faith that Peter had obtained.
- We have this opportunity only through Christ. His righteousness gives us the hope that we can be saved.

Do we ever lose sight of this? Do we think that we are better Christians than other people? Let us not be fooled into thinking this way! We are all sinners. Romans 3:23 (and context).

1:2

- This mention of the *knowledge* of GOD and Jesus Christ is a foreshadow to the things that will be discussed throughout this letter.
- We can grow in grace and in peace by growing our knowledge of the LORD.

Remember to grow your faith – 1:3-11

Peter quickly moves into his letter to these Christians by talking about Jesus and the grace that He gives to us.

1:3a

- I am immediately reminded of passages where the LORD promises to give us everything that we need (Matthew 6, et al). Peter says that Christ has given us everything dealing with life and godliness.

1:3b

- But how do we access all of these things? We access them through the knowledge of Christ.
- This knowledge isn't just a superficial knowledge (e.g. who He is, what He did, etc.); it is a deep understanding of Him and a commitment to always be repentant.

1:4a

- Through this knowledge of Him, He is offering us many great blessings, including eternal life, but the word 'partakers' is interesting here. We must be partakers in the blessings that He offers to us.
- If there are partakers, then there must be those that will not partake.
- Matthew 7:21

1:4b

- This last phrase is a quick reminder of how wicked this world is. We must always be on guard that we aren't slipping into the world's view of what we should be like.
- This reminds me of the story of Lot. He pitched his tent near Sodom, but before long he was sitting in the gates with the city leaders.

1:5a

- "For this reason" is referencing all of the things discussed regarding Jesus Christ in the preceding verses.
- These preceding verses told us that by coming to know more about Christ, we have access to all the blessings He offers, like eternal life, peace in this life, and the ability to be a partaker in His Kingdom.

- But they also tell us that we will not receive these blessings if we do not escape the evil that is in this world.
- “Make every effort” implies that you should do this with all your strength. Do not let *anything* hold you back from taking care of what he is about to suggest.

Here, Peter lists several qualities that we are to manifest in our lives. Are we working on these daily? We should be!

1:5b

- We should add virtue to our faith.
- There are many definitions and translations of this word. Some write it as ‘excellence’. Some write it as ‘courage’.
- I tend to believe that it means the courage to act on your faith or the ability to act on our faith. If we have faith, but do not have the courage to act on it, then what good is it?

1:5c

- Also, we should “make every effort” to add knowledge to our virtue.
- We must understand how to apply our courage to our faith. We must understand and know our LORD and what He expects of us.

1:6a

- We must put forth effort to add self-control to our knowledge.
- This is a Greek term used of athletes who were training. They disciplined themselves not to do certain things, because they were training their bodies.
- In the same way, we are to train our bodies and minds to live holy lives. This takes the effort to have self-control.

1:6b

- We then add to our self-control, steadfastness. This word means the patience or endurance of not giving in to sin.
- Not only are we to have self-control, but we must make sure that we are ready to have that self-control for a long time, the term of our natural lives!
- We are to always make sure that we hold to our faith and our knowledge of GOD. If we do, no matter the cost, we will be rewarded.
- Revelation 2:10b. This verse doesn’t mean to be faithful until the last day that you are alive. Look at the context! It means to be faithful *even if it means that you will die for your belief!*

1:6c

- We then add to our steadfastness, godliness.
- This means to live in godliness is to live with reverence to GOD and His wishes for our lives.
- Have reverence for GOD. Moses was told to take off his sandals in front of the burning bush because he needed to respect the LORD!

1:7a

- While living reverently, we are to increase our brotherly affection toward others.
- In essence, Peter says that to really live reverently and with respect to GOD requires us to treat those around us the way we would treat our brother.
- Be kind to others, do good to others, be willing to help anyone around you that might need your help.

1:7b

- Last, we should perfect this brotherly affection by increasing our love for others. Oh, what a topic this is! We could study for days on this topic. We’ll only make a couple quick points here.
- Love is not a feeling; it is an action. It is something that we do.
- 1 Peter 4:8. “Love covers a multitude of sins.” This doesn’t mean we can sin as long as we are loving others. It means that if we truly are loving others, then we will be able to forgive their sins against us.

1:8

- This doesn't mean that we will not be able to fall away from GOD. We can fall away if we leave our first love. But if we are working to increase these qualities in our lives, then it will be highly unlikely.
- Notice also that we these qualities must be *increasing*. If we aren't growing, then we're dying.

1:9

- The man that doesn't have these qualities is said to be nearsighted. This means that he is not paying attention to the future! He isn't focused on what is to come.
- Luke 14:25-33 discusses the cost of discipleship. If we don't think about the future when we become Christians, then we aren't being wise.
- If we don't have these qualities, then we aren't paying attention to the future! This is because we have forgotten that we were forgiven of all of our sins! He has forgotten the joy and happiness that came with his baptism.

1:10-11

- 'Therefore' is referencing the previous verse that discusses not having these qualities and being nearsighted.
- We should be working hard to that we are not nearsighted.
- If we can make our salvation 'sure', then that must mean that it is possible for our salvation to be unsure! Once we receive salvation, we can lose it!
- 1 Corinthians 10:9-13 discusses the fact that we must be careful lest we fall away from the LORD.
- If we practice these things, they keep us on the straight path, otherwise, we will fall away from the path.
- If we make these qualities the focus of our growth in life, we will receive eternal blessings from GOD.

1:12-13

- We humans are forgetful creatures. We quickly forget the wonderful things that have been done for us.
- Do our daily lives reflect that we have forgotten the "cleansing of our former sins"?
- Peter says that you already know these things, but I must remind you of them as long as I am here.

1:14-15

- Peter references the time that Jesus foretold his unnatural death. This can be seen in John 21:18-19.
- He knows that his death is coming and that it will be sudden and violent.
- He wants to make sure that the Christians remember these things after he is gone.