

2 Peter

Tuesday Bible Class

March 5, 2007

Intro: In his introductory remarks on his commentary on 2 Peter, A. T. Robertson, in his six-volume commentary on the New Testament, said, regarding 2 Peter,

Every book the New Testament is challenged by some one, as indeed the historicity of Jesus Christ Himself is and the very existence of God. But it is true that more modern scholars deny the genuineness of 2 Peter than that of any single book in the canon (VI, 139).

But in spite of all of the criticism Dr. Robertson treated it like any other book of the Bible.

We need to recognize that many of the so-called scholars are not believers in Christ. And so, even though most of them are well educated, as unbelievers they are not really qualified to pass judgment on the Word of God. But even some who are saved, have questioned its place in Scripture. Much has been written about this controversy, but I find it very wearying to struggle through what has been written about Peter's relationship, or non-relationship to this epistle. But it has been accepted as a real part of the Word of God, like the other books of the Bible, since early in church history. We should have no hesitancy in accepting it as of divine origin. There is nothing in the epistle that is contrary to accepted doctrine about the members of the Godhead or any of the other teachings of the Scriptures. It emphasizes holy living and warns against false doctrine. It fits perfectly into the teaching of the other books of the Bible.

It is short, but it is powerful. It shows the great concern that the Apostle Peter had for the people of God. It seems that it was written in the 60's A.D., probably a year or two after 1 Peter. Peter's statement in 1 Peter 3:1 is a confirmation that this second epistle was written to the same group of churches to whom he wrote his first epistle. It strongly encourages spiritual growth, and warns against any and all departures from the faith. So for these reasons, and others also, we are on good ground and in good company when we accept this epistle as written by the Apostle Peter under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter is shorter than 1 Peter. It can be read easily in fifteen minutes. But it covers a lot of ground for the edification of those of us who know the Lord. And it is full of warnings against false teachers and false teaching. Peter refers to several OT incidents, but I believe I am correct when I say that he did not actually quote from the OT even once. It is an epistle that Christians of all ages and at all levels of spiritual maturity need to read and re-read. The exhortations are few, but those that are included are of tremendous importance.

In a general way I believe we can say that chapter 1 deals with *the present*. Chapter 2 deals with *the past*. And chapter 3 deals with *the future*. These are general divisions because there are some past references in chapter 1. In chapter 2, verse 1, most of the chapter has to do with the past, but he was warning his readers that just as there were false teachers in the past, so they could expect that there would be false teachers to come. Then in chapter 3 we see much of what is to come. However, in verses 2, 8, 14, 15, 17, and 18, we have exhortations that applied to the present.

There are those who have suggested that "knowledge" is the key word of the epistle. See 1:2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 14, 16, 20; 2:9, 20, 21 (2x); 3:3, 18. In most of these it is an experiential knowledge that Peter was referring to, and in some a thorough, personal acquaintance. And it is usually of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

What did Peter exhort, or command, the people to do?

- 1) 1:5-7 – adding to faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love.
- 2) 1:10 – "Make your calling and election sure."
- 3) 1:19 – "Ye do well that ye take heed . . ."
- 4) 3:1-2 – "That ye may be mindful of the words spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment

of us the apostles . . .”

5) 3:8 – “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing . . .”

6) 3:14 – “Be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace . . .”

7) 3:15 – “And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation . . .”

8) 3:17 – “Beware lest ye also, being led away . . . fall from you own steadfastness.”

9) 3:18 – “But grow in grace . . .”

Peter seems to have had at least four purposes:

1) To encourage them.

2) To remind them. See “remembrance” in 1:12, 13,15; 3:1.

3) To warn them.

4) To exhort them.

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When we put 1 Peter and 2 Peter together we see that the Lord’s people to whom Peter was writing did not understand the Lord’s ways with them. Consequently their faith was being tested, tested to the limit. They probably had thought when they first turned to the Lord that life would be entirely different, that most of their troubles were past. But their experience had shown them that was not the case. But we are in basically the same situation today. The world was not a good place to live in those days, and we know that it is not a good place today. Our circumstances are very different today from what their circumstances were in the first century, but basically we live in the same kind of a world that they did, one that is hostile toward God, one that is self-seeking and self-confident, with little or no thought of the consequences of their behavior. And so, as we can see especially from the latter part of chapter 1, the Apostle Peter was concerned for them, deeply concerned. And his concern was increased by the fact that he knew that he was not going to be on the earth much longer. His heart was expressed in all three of these chapters. His concern for the people of God in his generation ought to be our concern for each other as God’s people in our generation. So let us read this epistle, and study it together, as though it had been written for us in the twenty-first century. We need it. Peter would not have had any idea when he penned the words of verse 15 that his epistle would continue to be read, and continue to be up-to-date for the next 2,000 years, and only the Lord knows how much beyond our generation the words of the Apostle Peter would be sorely needed by a suffering church.

Now let us take a brief overview of the epistle. I have already mentioned that there is a distinct and different emphasis in the three chapters into which this epistle is divided. Chapter 1 emphasizes the present. Chapter 2 causes us to look at the past. Chapter 3 turns our attention to the future. The question that seems to run through the epistle is, *Are the promises of God trustworthy, or not?* The Apostle Peter would assure us that they are.

The Outline

- I. **Introduction: The Apostle’s Greeting (2 Peter 1:1-4).** The emphasis is upon *what we all have in Christ*. This is the beginning of what the Apostle Peter would say especially about THE PRESENT.
- II. **THEIR PRESENT NEED (2 Peter 1:5-21).** While there was no difference between the believers, then or now, as to what we have in Christ, yet as far as our growth in the Lord is concerned, there are always great differences. But God’s ultimate purpose for us all is the same. We are saved to be made like our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - A. Their need to add to their faith (1:5-11). Note Peter’s emphasis on “these things” in verses 8, 9,

10, 12, and 15. He was emphasizing their need for spiritual growth.

- B. The Apostle Peter's great concern for them (1:12-21). His concern went beyond his own lifetime, and that is one reason he was writing to them.

- III. **Warnings from THE PAST (2 Peter 2:1-22).** This basically has to do with false teachers, false teaching, and sinful living. This chapter illustrates why it is so important for us to read the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. We need to know about God's judgment of angels, his judgment on the whole world in the days of Noah, Sodom and Gomorrah, and even Balaam. False teachers will lead us into sin. The Bible teaches us that God is not only a God of love, but that He is righteous, and that He judges sin.
- IV. **Assurance regarding THE FUTURE (2 Peter 3:1-16).** Peter began the epistle by speaking about the promises of God; he concludes his epistle on the same note. See verses 4, 9, 13. God's promises are all sure and certain. Therefore, our hope in the promises should affect the way we live.
- V. **Conclusion (2 Peter 3:17-18).** In verse 17 we have a warning; in verse 18 a command to continue to grow in grace and in the knowledge of "our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." To be growing spiritually is our greatest safeguard against sin and false teaching.