

2 Peter

2 Peter 1:1-21

March 12, 2007

I. Introduction: The Apostle's Greeting (2 Peter 1:1-4).

In addition to identifying himself as the writer of this epistle, he emphasized in these introductory *what we all have in Christ*, as compared in the remainder of the chapter where he stressed *that which was the present need of his readers*. And, of course, this would apply also to every true child of God who reads this epistle. So the message of the epistle is timeless.

A. R. Fausset of the JFB commentary made some interesting comparisons between 1 Peter and 2 Peter. And he said that this accounts for the different styles between the two epistles which is why some deny that Peter wrote the second. For example, he mentioned that the sufferings of Christ were more prominent in his first epistle because he object was to encourage *suffering* Christians. The glory of the Lord is more prominent in his second epistle because he was emphasizing *getting a fuller knowledge of the Lord* as the antidote of the false teaching that had even in those days become prevalent, and which threatened to become even more prominent. He pointed out also that the Lord Jesus Christ is referred to as "Christ" most frequently in 1 Peter, while in 2 Peter "Lord" predominates. "Hope" is characteristic of the first epistle; "full knowledge" in the second. Peter emphasized his authority as an apostle in both epistles, but it seems to be stronger in the second. See 2 Peter 3:1-2 as well as his reference to Paul in 3:15-16.

If you are looking for evidence that Peter wrote 2 Peter as well as 1 Peter, Dr. Fausset gives extensive proof that Peter was the writer of 2 Peter just as he did 1 Peter.

When Dr. Fausset referred to *a fuller knowledge of our Lord*, he was referring to Peter's use of the Greek word, ἐπίγνωσις. The simple word for *knowledge* in Greek is γνῶσις. To put the preposition ἐπί on that verb as a prefix makes it mean *knowledge upon knowledge*, or *additional knowledge*, or *a more complete knowledge*. Sometimes it is translated, *a full knowledge*. Peter used some form of this word in 1:2, 3, 8; 2:20, and twice in 2:21. No one know our Lord as fully as He potentially could be known, but all of us must seek to know the Lord better than we know Him now.

Another word that I might emphasize in Peter's epistles, is the word "precious." Whatever is "precious" is of great value, perhaps irreplaceable. It is very dear to us. Peter used some form of the Greek word for "precious" in 1 Peter 1:7, 19; 2:4, 6, 7; 2 Peter 1:1, 4. It is very clear that what is "precious" to a child of God would not be precious to a worldling. We need to ask ourselves if what was precious to Peter, is precious to us.

Much more could be said by way of introduction, but now let us get to the first four verses of chapter 1. As I have said more than once, here the Apostle Peter mentioned what is at this very moment true of all of us. And these truths have been descriptive of us since we first came to the knowledge of Christ as our Savior.

Peter's introduction to this second epistle is in the first four verses of chapter 1. (Read 2 Peter 1:1-4).

1:1 "Simon Peter" – It was characteristic of letter-writing in New Testament times for the one writing the letter to put his name first. We don't do that, but we should. When we get a letter, if we can't tell who it came from by the envelope, we always look at the end of the letter to see whose name is there. I notice that when I take an e-mail to Lucille for her to read, she always looks at the end of the letter first to see whose name is there. So I think that they were smarter about letter writing in the first century than we are today.

When Peter wrote his first epistle, he simply began with, “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.” But here in 2 Peter, it is, “Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ.” Why the difference? Well, I don’t know that we can say for sure. One suggestion in a commentary which has been made up of the commentaries of Robert Leighton and Griffith Thomas and put together by Alister McGrath and James Packer, suggests that it may be “an old man’s reminiscences” (p. 261). “Simon,” or *Simeon*, was the name given to Peter by his parents. It was his original name. “Peter,” which means *a rock*, is the name given to Peter by the Lord. “Simon” represented what he was before he knew the Lord; “Peter” is what the Lord made him afterwards. So, as he began to write informing those to whom he was writing, of the false teachers and teachings that they would have to face, he probably was thinking of the changes that the Lord had made in his life when and since he was saved. In the Gospels he was more like Simon than he was Peter. But in the book of Acts his character is more rock-like. Perhaps he was wondering where would have been, and what he would have been, if the Lord had not saved him. It was a silent tribute to the Lord and to the Gospel that by God’s grace “Simon” represented the past, and “Peter” represented the present.

We not may have two names like “Simon Peter” did, but there is the old and the new about all of us. We are not what we used to be, nor what we would have been, if the Lord had not called us to Himself. And while with all of us there are still remnants of the old that still rise to the surface occasionally, how thankful we should be for what the Lord has done in our lives, and what He continues to do. Some day that transformation will be complete with all of us, and Jude 24 and 25 will be true of all of us.

But just as the Apostle Peter had two names, and also had two titles. He was “a servant and an apostle.” The word which he used for servant was δούλος. Dr. Wuest said that this word is “the most abject and servile term for a slave of the five words the Greeks used when speaking of one who serves” (p. 15). He was a bondservant. He had been purchased by his master. His master’s will took precedence over the servant’s will. He was to live to serve his master. Sometimes the relationship between a bondslave and his master, was a good one. But most of the time it was not good. Peter delighted in being a bondservant of his Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, and was fully committed to do the will of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter felt unworthy of such a position and such a relationship to his Lord.

But as a servant of Jesus Christ, he was also an apostle. An apostle, by definition, is one sent forth from one to another. The One Who had sent him was the Lord. Those to whom he was sent were the people of Israel. Peter was the apostle to the circumcision. Being a Jew himself, he would have been considered a traitor to his people because of his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Doubtless there were many Jews in the areas where the people lived to whom he was writing. He was commissioned as a personal representative of Jesus Christ, to preach the Gospel to them, and then to see them nurtured in the faith. He described them here in verse 1 of this epistle as “to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ.”

“Obtained” is a word which means *to obtain by lot*, by which Peter meant “by divine allotment” (Wuest, p. 16), and this, in turn, meant by God’s choice, or divine election. The faith itself was a gift from God, and how “precious” it was because it was the only way to be saved. It was “like precious faith with us,” Peter said, because it was the same faith that had saved the apostles. God doesn’t have different ways for saving different people. It is “like precious faith” to all!

This salvation was “through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” A righteous God would not lower the standard of salvation for anyone. Peter was saying here what the Apostle Paul said in his second letter to the church at Corinth:

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Cor. 5:21).

Remember also the Apostle Paul's words in Romans 3:24-26:

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

And then we have that famous apostolic greeting. But remember that this also is a prayer. Its prevalence in the NT epistles is a clear indication that we need to pray this prayer often for those Christians we remember in prayer.

1:2 Believers are saved by grace, the grace of God, but we also live by grace. Dr. Wuest calls these "sanctifying grace" and "sanctifying peace." We are saved by grace, and kept by grace. In Peter's first epistle he said that we are "kept by the power of God through faith until salvation." God's grace is a manifestation of His power. In salvation God is 100% successful in 100% of those whom He saves.

But Peter, as his emphasis in both of his epistles reveals, indicated that we are never to be satisfied with where we are today spiritually. He knew that those to whom he was writing had experienced "grace" and "peace," but he wanted their supply of grace and peace to be "multiplied" daily. Every day shows us the need for the grace of God and for the peace of God. But how is it "multiplied" to us? It is "through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." And Peter here used the word for "a full knowledge" of God and of Jesus our Lord." Jesus, the Name given to Him in His humanity, came as a revelation of God. Our experience of grace and peace will be in proportion to our growth in the knowledge of God and of the Lord Jesus. This is experiential knowledge. It needs to be a continually growing knowledge. This is a knowledge which is inexhaustible. As much as we may know, there is always more to learn. The purpose of our trials is to bring us to a place of knowing God in a greater way. Knowing about God is where we start; but knowing God in the daily experiences of our lives, is what Peter had in mind as he prayed for the people of God.

1:3 It is very likely that Peter was taking a swing at the Gnostics and other false teachers who were causing much trouble among the people of God. As the name Gnostic (from the Greek word for *knowledge* indicates, they claimed to have superior knowledge to what the Christians had. But what the Christians needed to know and to remember was that they already had "all things that pertain unto life and godliness." When they were saved they had been blessed "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places," or *in the heavenlies, in Christ*" (Eph. 1:3). So the Christian life does not consist in getting more, but it needs to start knowing that in God, and in Christ, and in the Holy Spirit Who has given us the Scriptures, we already have all that we will ever need for "life and godliness." We need to know what we have (and we learn this from the Scriptures), and then by faith live to know and to please the Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing can come up in our lives for which God and Christ are not sufficient. If we have "all," then no one can give us more!

Verse 1 tells us that we have been chosen for salvation. Here in the latter part of verse 3 we are told that we have been "called to glory and virtue." "Glory" is "godliness," being made like God, and like our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the ultimate purpose of God in our salvation. And it is guaranteed by the "grace" and power of God. The glory of God is God.

But what is "virtue"? The Greek is ἀρετή. The glory and virtue that are spoken of here, are God's glory and virtue. It speaks of the moral excellence of God. In a way it seems to be almost synonymous with "glory." It is similar to the relationship between "life and godliness." All of this has to do with our calling. If any of us had been designing salvation, we would never have conceived of such an amazing purpose, or objective, that God

had in mind before the foundation of the world, and which was the ultimate objective of the Members of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, when Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Paul expressed it in 2 Corinthians 3:18:

8 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Paul was referring to this also in Romans 8:

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified (Rom. 8:28-30).

But the Apostle John probably expressed it in the simplest way possible:

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is (1 John 3:2).

Could we have ever thought of such a plan as the ultimate purpose of our salvation? I doubt it very much. How will such a purpose be finally accomplished? Verse 4 tells us.

March 13, 2007

1:4 It was for this purpose that there has been given unto us, all of us, to believers in all generations, and we all still have them, “exceeding great and precious promises.”

The Bible gives us truth that we need to know, commandments that we need to obey, and promises that we need to believe. A promise is not something for us to do, but it is something that will be done for us. The promises are God’s promises. They are found in His Word. And they are just as valid today as they were when they were first given. They include everything from the beginnings of our salvation to the completion of it when the Lord returns. We don’t save ourselves, but He saves us. Our hope is in the Promiser. “Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25).

God’s promises are “exceedingly great,” a superlative. There are no other promises that can compare with God’s promises because they are not only from Him, but they are designed to accomplish more than any other promises could possibly fulfil. And this is the reason that they are also “precious.” Without these promises the objective of our salvation could never be accomplished. That objective is to make us like Christ. We are being made “partakers” of the divine nature. “That ye might be” should be translated, *that ye might become*. The word “partakers” has the same basic root as the Greek word for *fellowship*. The effectiveness of our salvation is not only dependent upon His promises, but upon Him, Who He is. By birth we were partakers of a sinful human nature; by salvation we are made “partakers of the divine nature.” It is both instantaneous and progressive. We have “escaped,” we have been delivered from “the corruption of this world that is in the world through lust.” See the Apostle John’s definition of the world in 1 John 2:15-17. Robertson quotes an expositor by the name of Strachan who said, “Man becomes either degenerate or regenerate” (VI, 150).

Let us remember that in these verses which form the introduction to his epistle, *the Apostle Peter has declared what we all have in Christ*. In Him we have “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (v. 3). But it is not a passive life. It is a life of faith where we trust the divine promises and continually exercise hope in God and in Christ.

March 19, 2007

While the first four verses of 2 Peter speak of what we all, as believers in Christ, have because of our salvation, beginning with verse 5 the Apostle addressed our present need. Perhaps I should say, *our ever-present need*. As the Lord's people we never get beyond the need that we all have to grow spiritually. And this is what Peter had in mind – their present and continuous need to grow in the Lord. I have given the remainder of chapter 1 this heading in the outline I have prepared for you:

II. THEIR PRESENT NEED (1 Peter 1:5-21).

(Read in the outline what I have said about spiritual growth, and our need for it.)

It is not that we are not to seek what we do not already have because, as the Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 1:3, God in saving us has blessed us “with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” Here, especially in verses 5 through 11, Peter was explaining how, as Peter said in concluding this epistle, we are to “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). Peter had evidently told his readers all of this before, perhaps many times. But now he was writing it down so that after he was gone, they could still read over and over what he had taught them so that they would never forget it. So, if it was that important for the people of God in those days, it has to be important for us today.

1:5 From promises in verse 4, we go to commandments in verse 5. It is by the promises that we partake of the divine nature (v. 3) because we are to believe the promises of God. Faith is our starting point. We, as the people of God, live by faith, faith in God's promises, trusting God to fulfill His promises in our lives. Often there are conditions to God's promises, conditions upon which the Lord will fulfill His promises, and so we need to pay attention to them too.

“Besides this,” meaning that we should never be content with the progress we have made spiritually, but must, in the words of the Apostle Paul, keep pressing on. Matthew Henry said on this point, 2 Peter 1:5-11

In these words the apostle comes to the chief thing intended in this epistle—to excite and engage them to advance in grace and holiness, they having already obtained precious faith, and been made partakers of the divine nature. This is a very good beginning, but it is not to be rested in, as if we were already perfect. The apostle had prayed that grace and peace might be multiplied to them, and now he exhorts them to press forward for the obtaining of more grace. We should, as we have opportunity, exhort those we pray for, and excite them to the use of all proper means to obtain what we desire God to bestow upon them; and those who will make any progress in religion must be very diligent and industrious in their endeavours (VI, pp. 1039, 1039).

Some expositors object to the translation, “besides this,” and say that it should be, “for this very cause” (Wuest, p. 22). He quotes Strachan again who said that the words at the beginning of verse 5 “emphasize the fact of the gifts spoken of in verse 4 as having their logical outcome in character” (*Ibid.*). So the promises which God has given concerning our sanctification, or growth in the Lord, give us the incentive to be diligent, or to be eager and faithful in seeking to develop the qualities of character and life that are latent in the promises. This is why it is so important for us to get familiar with the promises of God's Word, especially those promises that have to do with the way we should live. As the Lord's people we are responsible to give ourselves to the development of these characteristics that Peter is about to mention.

The foundation of the Christian life is faith. Faith is a gift of God which all true believers possess. So we face the needs in our lives confident that God is going to help us, that He will give us the desire to do His will, and

the ability to do it. “All diligence” means that we are to make what Peter is about to tell us the primary objectives of our lives. It should be our goal in all that we are, and in all that we do.

Michael Green in his commentary prefers the word *goodness* in speaking of “virtue.” Peter used this word at the end of verse 3, saying that God “hath called us to glory and virtue.” We know that the object of our salvation is not primarily to get us to heaven (although, thank God, that is a marvelous part of our salvation). But the main objective is to make us like Christ. Romans 8:29 says that we are predestinated by God “to be conformed to the image of His Son.” And with that in mind the verse before, Romans 8:28, says that God works “all things together for good.” So “good” means Christ-likeness. And therefore Michael Green prefers the translation *goodness* as explaining what Peter meant by “virtue.” He says that in non-Christian Greek it means *excellence*, by which they meant the fulfillment of that for which anything exists.

In Proverbs 31:10 Solomon asked the question, “Who can find a virtuous woman?” When we use the word “virtuous” today of a woman, we usually mean moral. Solomon does say in verse 11 that “the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her” but it was “so that he shall have no need of spoil.” That may mean that he was not worried that she would be unfaithful to him, but primarily it meant that she would not waste his money or in any way be more of a hindrance than a help to him. And as you read about the woman that Solomon was describing what you learn is that she is *the ideal wife*. And so in verse 29 Solomon said, “Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.” This means, There have been many good wives in the world, *but you are the best. You are a great example of what a wife should be.* Using the word “excellest” he was saying that you are an excellent wife. That is why *excellence* is often used as a translation of “virtue.” The woman of Proverbs 31 is the kind of a woman the Lord intended for Eve to be, but she failed in the worst way.

So, bringing that word “virtue” into our text here in 2 Peter 1:5, Peter was telling the Christians to whom he was writing that each one needed to be *the ideal Christian*. What is the ideal Christian? Well, if God saved us to be like Christ, then a virtuous Christian, the ideal Christian, is the one who is most like our Savior. That is why Peter closed his epistle by saying, “But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” That is how we grow in grace, but growing to be like our Savior. But won’t that tend to make us proud? No, because you won’t find any pride in the Lord Jesus –just the greatest Example of humility. And so Peter finished his epistle, “To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.” If there is anything in us that resembles what people saw in our Lord while He was here on earth, the glory belongs to the Lord because He is the One Who is making us like Himself.

This word “virtue” comes first in the list of the words we will study because it is to be our purpose from the time we are saved, that we will become like the Lord.

Illustrations: Dr. T. J. Bach and Edith Nanz Willies.

This first word gives us plenty to work on, doesn’t it? But by God’s grace we can thank the Lord that we are all going to make it. There probably will differences as to how we are going to be like Christ, but the Lord is not going to give up on any of us.

But what is the next word? “Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge.” Knowledge was a favorite word of false teachers. Many of them were known as Gnostics. They boasted in their knowledge. But Peter knew that they had no exclusive rights to knowledge. It was one of Peter’s favorite words too. But the knowledge that Peter was talking about was the knowledge of God, revealed knowledge. The knowledge of the false teachers was false knowledge, man’s knowledge which is constantly changing.

You will find many professing Christians who minimize the importance of knowledge, the knowledge of Scrip-

ture, the knowledge that has been given to us by God. They say that they want practical truth, but how can you use practical truth if you don't have a solid doctrinal foundation. True teaching has as its objective the practical application of the truth. How would you like to have an electrician come to work on your home who didn't know anything about electricity? Or how would you like to be operated on by a so-called doctor who had never been to medical school?

Knowledge was an important word to Peter, too. He used it five times in the first eight verses of 1 Peter 1. This word is a great argument in favor of reading the Bible, reading it daily, and reading it over and over again. It is a good argument for comparing Scripture with Scripture. The Bible is its best interpreter. It is a good argument for memorizing Bible verses. If you want the knowledge that Peter was talking about then attend a church where the Word of God is taught. But make sure that Biblical knowledge is what you are getting, not a few verses served up with a lot of man's psychology.

This is a life-long assignment. No one ever knows all that there is to know about the Bible. It is inexhaustible. Yesterday along with many of you I finished reading the Book of Deuteronomy. I hated to finish it. Reading it through this time for was just like reading it for the first time (and yet I have read it many times before). I told Lucille yesterday that I would like to go right back and read it again instead of going on. When I first started attending Central Bible Church while the church was still downtown, I was talking to a man after the service, and he said to me, 'Well, do you think that we got enough this morning to last us all week?' Now I loved to hear Dr. Mitchell teach the Word. In fact, he was the one who really opened my eyes to what expository teaching is. But as wonderful as the message was which we had just heard, we could be blessed by it all week, but we need to be adding to our knowledge by reading the Word every day. When I was growing up my Dad never said to our family as we were eating our Sunday dinner, "Eat all you can because we are not going to have anything to eat until next Sunday. Just as we need food for our bodies every day, so we need food for our souls every day, the food of God's Word. We can't be virtuous Christians unless we are feeding on the Word of God.

5:6 What is the next word? Add "to knowledge temperance," which means self-control. I heard a well-known preacher say yesterday on KPDQ that we should let our children make their own decisions because it would help them with their self-esteem. Where does he find that in the Bible? The thing that I remember about my childhood is that I had too much self-esteem. And it has followed me into my adult life. I never learned it; I was born with it – and so were you! "Temperance" means self-control. You and I will never be like Christ unless we have it.

This word for "temperance" is used only four times in the NT. Two of them are in this verse. The other two are in Acts 24:25 and Galatians 5:23. Let's turn to those passages and see what they tell us about self-control. First, Acts 24:25 tells us that self-control was a part of Paul's message to Felix concerning the Gospel. This means that Paul spoke to Felix about sin. Self-esteem is just a modern day sophisticated term for the flesh.

The other place where you find "temperance," or self-control, in the Bible, is Galatians 5:23. Where does self-control come from? Does it come from you and me? No, it comes from the Holy Spirit. It is a part of "the fruit," not fruits, "of the Spirit. Go back to verse 16 in Galatians 5 and see how Paul contrasted the flesh, or self, and the Spirit of God. If we are going to be virtuous Christians (and remember what "virtue" means), *we will have to learn what it means to "walk in the Spirit."* What does it mean? It means *to walk in dependence upon the Holy Spirit.* We can't do it ourselves. So the word "self-control" teaches us that we can't be virtuous Christians if we seek to do it by ourselves. And how does the Spirit help us? By the Word of God of which He is the Author. Peter was the writer of 1 and 2 Peter, but the Holy Spirit was the Author. And as the Author He is the best One to teach us what it means. Notice what Peter said about how we got the Word, all sixty-six

books of the Old and New Testaments. You find Peter's description as to how we got the Bible. See and read 1 Peter 1:20-21.

Next we come to the word "patience." This is a very interesting word, and it contains a meaning very different from our English word patience, although my dictionary gives the meaning I am going to give to you as a second meaning of the word.

Those of you who were here at Trinity last Sunday morning, will remember (I hope) that I told you that there are three words in 1 John 2:24 that are all translations of the same Greek verb. It is the verb μένω. This can mean I abide, or I continue, or I remain. Well, the Greeks took the preposition ὑπό, and stick it on the front of the verb μένω, and then they had ὑπομένω which means *I remain under*. The noun form from this verb is ὑπομονή. And this is what is translated "patience." But you can see that literally it means *a remaining under, or an endurance, or perseverance*. Therefore the idea in the Greek word for patience is not just waiting, but to persevere which you wait. So when the Scriptures exhort us to be patient as we wait for the Lord to come, or to be patient under trials, it does not mean that we just sit and wait, but that we continue doing what we were doing even though we might be in the midst of a trial. This is what the disciples did when they were told not to preach in the name of Jesus. They went ahead knowing what the consequences would be. This is what Daniel did when the people were told not to pray to any God except the king for thirty days. The penalty would be that any offender would be cast into a den of lions. The Bible tells us about the patience, or perseverance of Daniel. Listen as I read Daniel 6:10:

10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

That is what Peter was talking about. Did Daniel get punished for what He did? But he persevered in doing what he had always done.

The greatest example of perseverance is our Lord Jesus Christ. We read this in Luke 9:51:

51 And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem

Remember also our Lord's prayers in Gethsemane. He persevered even though He knew what it would cost Him in suffering.

So we need to be ready to keep on living for the Lord, and preaching the Gospel, regardless of what the consequences might be.

The next word is "godliness."

March 20, 2007

We had this word in verse 3 (which see). In the NT it is more prominent in the Pastoral Epistles than in any other part of the NT. We have this word here in addition to 1:3, and here in 1:6 and 7, but the same idea is in 2:9, and the word itself in 3:11. It is a word which we could very well spell in English with a capital G. This describes the character of one who is always conscious of God, of His presence, and of the need to please Him. So with this word we have an emphasis in what Peter was telling the Lord's people to be and do in their relationship with God, thus including in these words the third Member of the Godhead, the Father. Green said that godliness "is a very practical awareness of God in every area of life. It is the person who recognizes the sovereignty of God in everything in life, the bad as well as the good. He is the kind of a Christian who firmly believes concerning God that "of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things" (Rom. 11:36). A godly person is one whose primary objective in life is to love the Lord, to please Him, and to glorify Him. Paul told

Timothy that “godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Tim. 6:6). This is a word which constantly deserves our attention to make sure that it is prominent in all we are, in all we say, and think, and do. A godly person prays, “In the sweet fear of Jesus let me begin each day . . .” But a godly person not only begins each day that way, but he lives all day long that way. However, if you begin the day that way, you will probably live throughout the day that way. Psalm 19:14 also is a godly person’s prayer: “Let the words of my mouth . . .” David was expressing his godliness when Shimei cursed him, and Abishai wanted to go to kill him, and David said,

11 And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him (2 Sam 16:11).

But David also followed that statement with this in verse 12:

12 It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day.

So a godly person submits to the Lord, not in a fatalistic, hopeless way, but with the hope that God will be gracious.

Peter added two more words in verse 8 to complete the list.

1:7 “And to godliness brotherly kindness” – The word that is translated here “brotherly kindness,” is the word from which we get the name, Philadelphia. But the emphasis here is not on other people generally, but upon others who know the Lord in particular. The Apostle John made a big point about this in 1 John where he stressed that love for the brethren is one of the main evidences that a person knows the Lord. See 1 John 3:14. If we are truly godly, it will not only be evident in our relationship with God, and our expectation from Him, but it will be seen in our love and concern for all other people who know the Lord. But this is not always easy. Michael Green in his commentary made this statement on page 79:

The very importance and the difficulty of achieving this *philadelphia* is the reason for the considerable stress on it in the pages of the New Testament (Rom. 12:10; 1 Thess. 4:9; Heb. 13:1; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 5:1).

(In this last verse the word for brotherly love was not used by John, but the idea is certainly there in the verse.)

In our KJV text the word for brotherly love is translated, “brotherly kindness.” What exactly is it? It is a unique affection which God has placed in the hearts of His people for each other. It is that fellowship which we enjoy with each other as the children of God. But Peter emphasized that “brotherly kindness,” or *brotherly love*, where we show our special preference for God’s people, is a part of “the love of God [ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ] which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us” (Rom. 5:5). The expositors whose works I have consulted seem to agree that this love is a love in the hearts of all believers toward all men, such as the love of Christ was toward us while we were sinners, enemies of God, totally unworthy that God should have saved any of us. In both of these words for love, ἀγάπη and φιλία, there is the idea of seeking another’s good, his or her’s spiritual good. This ἀγάπη for all men is what makes us concerned to see those who are lost come to Christ for salvation.

He refers to these words in verses 5, 6, and 7, as “these things.” See verses 8, 9, 10, 12, and 15, as I have pointed them out to you before.

March 26, 2007

1:8 Now Peter, beginning with verse 8, encourages his readers to do what he has said in verses 5, 6, and 7. But we need to recognize that only a true Christian will be interested in doing what Peter had written in

those three important verses, 5, 6, and 7. So if verses 1 through 4 do not describe you, then you are not going to be interested in verses 5, 6, and 7. A person who does not know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, is not interested in making the kind of a change that Peter was advocating in 5, 6, and 7. But, if you are a Christian, you will have no argument with the verses we have just covered. You will agree that if a person claims to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, his life will be different from what he was before, different in a godly way. As I have said many times before, believing the Gospel, trusting Jesus Christ as our Savior, we cannot remain the same. The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (or better, *it is a new creation*): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (Read 2 Cor. 5: 14-21 to see how reasonable and logical the Apostle Paul was in teaching that salvation results in holiness of character and of life.)

Having said that, from verse 8 and following we see that the Apostle Peter was showing some of the advantages that are produced by a holy life. The first is that “if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

To refer to “these things” as being “in you,” Peter meant that if there is evidence in their lives that they were adding “these things” to their faith, really growing in the Lord so that there was visible evidence of “these things,” then they could be sure that they would be “neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” And here the Apostle Peter used the word for “knowledge” that means *a full knowledge*.

People who don’t know the Lord have no regard for the truth of God’s Word. It is utterly repulsive to them. That is the reason we have abortion. That is the reason we defend homosexuals. That is why adultery is so prevalent today, and men shamelessly argue about who is the father of Anna Nicole’s baby. The moral standards of the world and the moral standards of the Word are as different as night and day, as separated from each other as the north pole is from the south pole. One is the wisdom of men; the other is the wisdom of God. The wisdom of this world leads to divine and eternal judgment; the wisdom of God leads to divine blessing and the fulness of joy.

“Barren” is translated *useless* in the NASB. James used this word in James 2:20 where he said that “faith without works is dead.” But most of the time it is translated “idle.” For example, it was used by our Lord in one of His parables when He told about a householder who went to find laborers to work in his vineyard. And in the early morning as well as at the third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh hour he found men in the marketplace who were “idle.” They weren’t doing anything that was productive. Cf. Matthew 20:3 and 6. The word was also used by the Apostle Paul in 1 Tim 5:11-13 where we read,

11 But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;

12 Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.

13 And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones had this to say about this word which is translated “barren,” but can also mean *idle* or *dead*.

The trouble with so many of us Christians is that our Christian life is a very idle one. We say we believe “these things,” but what do we do about them? We are very active in connection with other things in which we believe; if it is a club we take our part; if it is a game we enter into it wholeheartedly if it is business we put our energy into it. Yet, here, we claim that God is interested in us, and that Christ has died for us – here we make the biggest claim a man can ever make – but what are we doing about it? Is it leading to any sort of activity? (*Expository Sermons on 2 Peter*, pp. 46, 47).

But what do we find among many professing Christians today? Attendance at church may be once a week, and yet they are not consistent even with that. They don’t go to prayer meetings. They don’t talk about spiritual

things. Many of them do not practice daily Bible reading and prayer. During the week you probably couldn't much of a difference in the way they live from people who make no profession of being a Christian. You see, if we are going to "add" these qualities or characteristics to your live, whatever you want to call them, it is going to take work. It will require faithful Bible reading and much prayer. You won't be able to do it alone; you are going to need the Lord's help. And you are going to need the encouragement of other believers, the kind of help that you will be able to find in church. Dr. Lloyd-Jones continued:

We sit and listen, we receive, but we do nothing – there is no Christian activity in our lives. Let every man examine himself in the light of this word (*Op. cit.*, p.47).

The child of God who is "idle" will also be unfruitful. There will be a lack of that influence that will influence others for good. The first place to look for fruit is in our own lives. In a very real sense "these things" which Peter has mentioned are fruit. Dawson Trotman used to say that "the fruit of a Christian is another Christian." I was in a meeting of The Navigators year ago when Daws was speaking. He called the named of four or five men who were present. And then Daws mentioned one by name (let me call him, Sam) and said, "I had the privilege of leading Sam to Christ. And then in time Sam led Bill to Christ. And Bill led Joe to Christ. And Joe led Frank to Christ." I have forgotten how many men who were present that day where one had been the fruit of the other.

But according to our text the fruit that Peter was talking about was the fruit of a fuller knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Virtue to faith, and knowledge to virtue, and on down the line, leads to greater knowledge, and in this case to a fuller knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. A Christian who obeys the Word of God from the heart not only experiences growth in character, but growth in the knowledge and fellowship with "our Lord Jesus Christ. The full name of our Lord here is very significant. There is a great difference between knowing *about* our Lord, as compared with knowing *Him*. For many years before I went to Dallas Theological Seminary, I had heard *about* Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer and his great Bible teaching. But the day came when I had the privilege of personally meeting Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer. And I was not at all disappointed. It was while I was at Dallas Seminary that I first heard Dr. John G. Mitchell expound the Word as one of the visiting Bible lecturers. But years later while I was teaching at Multnomah School of the Bible that he asked me to be his assistant at Central Bible Church. I don't think that he knew me at Dallas, but I was impressed with him as I listened to him teach. But when I worked with him, that is when I got to know him personally and to love him as we served the Lord together, and as we often prayed together.

All of us here today know the Lord. He has saved us from our sins. We owe everything to Him. But how well do we know Him? That is a question that we all need to ask ourselves. Do I know Him as He is named here, as "the Lord Jesus Christ"? That is His full name and title. I call Him "Lord," but is He really Lord of my life? As Jesus I am reminded of His sevenfold humbling of Himself which is mentioned in Philippians 2, but has knowing Him as "Jesus" humbled my proud heart? As Christ, the Messiah, the Appointed One and the Anointed One, He is the theme of all of Scripture. Do I read my Bible looking for Him, seeking to know Him better?

Before we go on to verse 9 let me remind you that increasing in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ is the way in which we grow more like Him. That is what is being really fruitful.

1:9 Verse 8 tells us a positive result of *adding "these things"* to our own hearts and lives. Verse 9 tells us a very tragic and negative effect if we don't add "virtue" to "faith, and so on.

What a step down it is to move from verse 8 to verse 9. This is the Christian who reads all that we have read up to this point. He probably agrees that what Peter had to say was good, and that it was true. And he even felt that some day he would do it all. *But that time never came. He intended to do it, and was sure that he would*

do it. But he never did.

Consequently spiritual blindness set in. It was not total blindness like he had before he was saved, but it was a blindness which kept him from seeing very far in the future. His interests were centered more in the present than in the future. He had lost sight of the purpose of his salvation. He was so occupied with his present needs and problems that he really had no time to think of what was becoming of him, and certainly not thinking the time when he would not be able to do what he could do now. It will just like the future did not exist as far as he was concerned.

But his blindness had to only affected the future, but it affected the past. He had forgotten the first and most amazing thing that the Lord had done for him. He had “forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.” He still knew that he was a sinner, but he hardly ever, if ever, thanked the Lord for cleansing him from those sins which he had sinned before he had been saved. He never talked much about what the Lord had to do to save him from his sins, from all of his sins. He didn’t think very often about those “old sins” which he regretted that he had committed, and which had been cleansed away by the blood of Christ. He was not totally blind, but very shortsighted.

A lot of Christians are like this. They have many good intentions concerning what they want to do some day, but that day never seems to come. They are saved. They are going to heaven. But the pressures of the present have kept them from making any progress spiritually in their relationship with the Lord. They are sometimes pricked by their consciences, but it never is enough for them to change. They have never really learned that without the Lord they can do nothing. They are respectable, good providers for their families, anxious to see that their family gets to church at least once a week, but that is about as far as they go.

I say that such people are Christians, but in some cases they may not be. And so this is the reason for what Peter wrote in verse 10.

March 27, 2007

1:10 “Wherefore” indicates that what Peter was about to write, is in consequence of what he has just said. It amounts to saying, “If you are not living like a true child of God, then you had better make sure that you are. But notice that he addressed them as if they were truly saved: “My brethren.” It was a tender appeal, not a sharp rebuke. If people claim to know the Lord, we need to give them the benefit of the doubt, but exhort them to make sure.

When Peter spoke of their “calling and election,” he was indicating that no one is truly saved but those who are called by God, and that God only calls those who are the elect. So they were to look for the evidence in their lives that a work of grace, which means *a work of God*, had been done in their hearts.

Statements like this make me wonder why some Bible teachers object to the designation that some are carnal Christians. Paul addressed some in the Corinthian church as being in that condition. He did not mean that they were in some permanent condition of being “carnal,” but that it is possible for a true child of God to be living as though he were not a child of God. What did Paul mean when he wrote to the Galatian churches,

6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

7 Which is not another: but thee be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ.

To be removed from God, would seem to indicate that they were not saved. But to say that they had been “called . . . into the grace of Christ” would indicate that they were saved. There is always the possibility that, if

a person is not living like a Christian, even though he or she professes to be, such a person may not be truly saved. That is the reason that everyone needs to be sure that he is saved by making his “calling and election sure.”

What does “sure” (βεβαίαν) mean? It is placed in an emphatic position. So it probably should be translated, *Make sure of your calling and election.* All of us needs to make sure that God has done a work in our hearts.

Probably if you and I had heard Peter himself curse and deny with oaths that he even knew the Lord after the Lord was arrested, we would have said, “Peter couldn’t have done such a thing if he had really been saved.” But if you had followed him out and seen those bitter tears which he wept, what would you have thought of Peter then. And when the Lord met him in John 21, what did He say to him? “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me . . . ?” Is that the way you would have talked to Peter? His actions seemed to indicate that he didn’t know and love the Lord. *But the Lord knew that he did!* So one of the first ways that you can be sure, or unsure, of your salvation, is to ask yourself how you feel about the Lord. Do you love Him? Could you be happy if you could turn away from the Lord, and never have anything more to do with Him? You would never love the Lord if the Father had not called you, and He would never have called you if He had not chosen you. So think about your relationship to God, and the evidence in your heart (maybe not so much in your life) that there has been a change in your attitude toward God and toward Christ that you could never have given to yourself.

So it is not necessarily that you can tell when you were saved, but that you know down in your heart that a change was made.

To make your calling and election sure, go to 1 John and see how you rate as far as the tests he mentioned are concerned – the test of sin, the test of obedience, the test of how you feel about the Lord’s people, the test of your relationship with the world, the test of what you believe about the Lord Jesus Christ. Probably none of us would get an A+ in any of those tests, but, if you pass at all, you can know that God has done a work in your heart.

But as far as the context of verse 10 is concerned, Peter went on to say, “For if ye do these things ye shall never fall.” What things? Adding to your faith, virtue, and knowledge, and self-control, and perseverance, and godliness, and brotherly kindness, and love – these are “these things.”

But what did Peter mean when he said, “Ye shall never fall”? Was he talking about falling out of salvation? Of course not! Such a thing is not possible. Probably the best interpretation that we can give to the word which the Apostle Peter used, is the word *stumble*. This is a tremendous promise. Peter used a double negative in the Greek, which is an intensive negative, suggesting that there is not the slightest possibility that we would even stumble. But it all goes back to “these things.” It is no wonder that Peter had taught this over and over, and as he was writing he was putting “these things” into a permanent form, not only for those to whom he was writing, but for all succeeding generations, down to the time when the Lord will return.

We all do a lot of stumbling, stumbling over unanswered prayers, stumbling over circumstances in our lives or in the lives of those we love. But stumbling is a sign of weakness. And the way to keep from stumbling in the Christian life, is by continuing to grow. When a little child is learning to walk, he gets better and better as he continues to grow. That is where his strength comes from. The same is true of us as Christians. If you stop growing, you are going to start stumbling. Stumbling is a sign of weakness.

So we have the first benefit, or blessing, resulting by adding “these things” to our faith, in verse 8. We have the second blessing in verse 10, and now we have the third blessing in verse 11.

1:11 It is important to know that the word “ministered” here in verse 11 is the same word that is translated “add” in verse 5. As by God’s grace we minister to ourselves by adding to our faith, this will lead to the Lord ministering to us “abundantly” as we enter “the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” Do you see here that this means that spiritually, the person who has not been able to see “afar off,” is having his vision restored, and now is beginning to see clearly into the future, as well as into the past? This is seeing “afar off,” and yet it may not be as far off as we might think. It is a lot closer now than it was when Peter wrote these words. This is our hope, isn’t it? Life is not always going to be like it is here on this earth. It is amazing that we have any joy here, but by God’s grace we do. I am sure that the Apostle Peter was speaking about the eternal state here, the new heaven and the new earth, a new order with no sin, no pain, no sickness, and no death.

Is it any wonder that Peter made this the subject of his preaching so often? And is it any wonder that the Holy Spirit led him to record all of this in a letter so the Lord’s people could read about it after he was gone? I can’t tell you what it means that that “an entrance shall be ministered unto abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” because I don’t know. But Peter was surely saying that what we do, or don’t do, here and now in this present life, will have an effect, a lasting effect, upon the life to come. And so the words in verses 5, 6, and 7 in this first chapter of 1 Peter should have the highest priority in our lives.

Now we can do one of two things with Peter’s message. We can begin today to obey what he has told us to do. OR as much as we agree with him, we will tell ourselves that we want to do what Peter has said “sometime,” but not now. You and I all know that the things that we delay doing, are usually the things that we never do. May the Lord give us the same sense of urgency about “these things” that Peter had when he wrote this epistle. Notice that twice Peter spoke of *giving diligence* in doing “these things” now, and from now on, in verse 5 and again in verse 10. Peter was not speaking about what we ought to do once in a while when we think about it, or when we are going through a time of suffering and difficulty. **He was speaking about how we are to live.** We can’t do it on our own. Only by God and His grace is such a life possible. But it is possible. May we ask the Lord to help us and to enable us to be strengthening our faith by adding to it virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. We would all do well to memorize the first eleven verses of 1 Peter 1, asking the Lord to write it all upon our hearts.

April 9, 2007

We can gather from what Peter has already said, that he was greatly concerned about the spiritual state of those to whom he was writing. But at this point he added other words to show how greatly he was concerned about them. And so, from verse 12 on down to the end of chapter 1 we see how he expressed his great concern for them.

B. The Apostle Peter’s great concern for them (1:12-21).

1:12 It is very apparent from this verse that Peter was not writing to novices. They knew “these things.” He recognized that they were “established in the present truth,” that is, in what he had just written to them. So their problem was not ignorance. Neither does it seem that they had become complacent about their relationship with the Lord like many Christians have. But he knew, and we should know, that we all need to be exhorted to continue to grow in grace, to continue to walk in fellowship with the Lord. The most mature Christians need to hear what the Apostle Peter said in these verses. I need it, and so do you. Peter would say the same things to us if he were with us today. Peter had a rather rough beginning in his walk with the Lord because he had a strong personality and was very self-confident. The Lord has His own ways of humbling us, and so it is important for all of us to take an inventory of our lives to see if we are as devoted to the Lord as we

think we are, and if we are continuing to grow spiritually. That is what Peter wanted the believers to do to whom he was writing. I doubt if there ever have been many congregations about whom you could say that they were “established” in the truth. Peter used the noun from this verb in the next to the last verse of this epistle, 3:17 where it is translated “steadfastness.” He also used the verb in 1 Peter 5:10 where he told them how he was praying for them – that God would “make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. It is the Greek verb, *στηρίζω*. See also how the Apostle Paul used it in Romans 1:11 and 16:25. This was what James was concerned about in James 5:8 where he encouraged the saints to “stablish,” or *establish*, “your hearts.”

Peter as a servant of the Lord felt, and rightly so, that he had a responsibility in seeing that the believers under his ministry were being established in the truth. And so he said that he did not want to be “negligent.” I think we all know the meaning of that word. He did not want to be delinquent in his duty as an apostle and as a servant of the Lord.

And he went on in verse 13 to say more.

1:13 He believed that what he had said in verse 12, and what he had been doing before that, was the righteous thing for him to do. By this he meant that this was what he was obligated to do as a true servant of the Lord. To put it another way, this was a part of his job description. A true servant of the Lord is going to repeat himself. He will purposely repeat himself, not because he has quit studying, but because this is what the Lord wanted him to do, what he wanted to do, and what the people of God would find profitable.

“As long as I am in this tabernacle,” means *as long as I live*. Peter’s tabernacle was his body. He was distinguishing between himself and his body. When we die we leave this body in which we have lived on earth, but we go to be with the Lord. So Peter considered his ministry a life-long ministry. The people of God always need to be stirred up! I felt greatly stirred up in my soul under the ministry of Paul Felix last week. I am thankful that I didn’t miss a message. And I hope that I will continue to profit from Psalm 119 as he explained it to us. We are stirred up when in our hearts we long for a life of more intimate fellowship with the Lord. We are stirred up when we are turned away from the world and our attention is focused upon God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. To stir people up is to awaken them, to arouse them. This is what the teaching of the Word should do to all of us. The Lord’s people do not necessarily go to sleep in their relationship with the Lord, but they get drowsy, and careless. People who are off and on in their attendance at church need to be stirred up. But in one way or another, we all need to be stirred up. Peter was not talking about the meaningless emotionalism that is often displayed in churches today. He was speaking of a work of the Holy Spirit which needs to accompany the preaching of the Word. So while Peter spoke of the stirring up which he did, he knew that he was only the instrument; it always has to be the Holy Spirit Who actually does the stirring.

1:14 The Lord had revealed to Peter that he did not have long to live, and that made him even more fervent in his desire to minister with real blessing the same vitally important truth that he had taught them before.

When the Apostle Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy, he also knew that his ministry was coming to a close. This is why his exhortations to Timothy were presented as *a charge*. Paul was concerned that there be no letup in the teaching of the Word and the proclamation of the truth. I remembering reading a message of a servant of the Lord (and I have forgotten who it was) who said that we should preach every sermon as though it was our last. The same is true of teaching. And it would apply to the contacts which we have with each other. We never know what burden may be weighing down anyone we meet during any day. We need to be ready to give a word in season, and also on the lookout for an encouraging word from others.

But then in verse 15 Peter took his burden a step further, and 1 and 2 Peter were the result.

1:15 Read this verse very carefully. Not only had the Lord revealed to Peter that he did not have long to live, but He had put it in Peter's heart to commit to writing that truth that he had so frequently proclaimed to them. And we can see some evidence in this verse that Peter knew that his writing would be preserved for the spiritual blessing of future generations. The word "always" seems to suggest that. I don't want to read into this passage anything that is not there, but it seems to me that Peter had some knowledge that he was not only writing for that generation, but also for future generations. Whatever the situation may have been, we know that the needs which Peter was seeking to meet in his generation, would be useful for all future generations. And we can say this for two reasons: first, because the needs of God's people in every generation, and in every nation, are basically the same; and second, because the solution of those needs is always the same. We, a little over two thousand years after Peter wrote this epistle, find it just as true, and just as profitable, as the Lord's people in Peter's generation, found his teaching to be. We may have newer translations, but we do not have a new Bible. From the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation, it all is just as true, and just as important, as each book was when it was first written under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Note the words, "I will endeavor." They are future. He was in the process of writing, and he was expressing his intention to finish what he had started so that those believers would have a permanent record of what he had taught them.

How thankful we all should be for the printed page! Most of us started reading the Bible before we had any idea of what had gone into the writing of it. As a child I know I had the idea that the Bible was written in English, and that all who had a part in writing the Bible, wrote it in English. Then I learned that the Old Testament was written in Hebrew (except for part of Daniel [2:4-7:28] which was written in Aramaic), and that the New Testament was written in Greek, so that it all had to be translated into English. How thankful we should be for our English Bibles.

But then think of all of the wonderful Christian literature, true to the Word, which is available to us today. Many of the books that are available today, were not available when I was in Seminary. But they are available today. And many good books are still being written which help us to understand our Bible.

But why did Peter feel that his teaching was so important and worthy of being preserved? He tells us in the remainder of chapter 1, from verse 16 on. Basically there are two reasons: first, his own personal experience with the Lord Jesus Christ; second, what he called, the "sure word of prophecy."

April 10, 2007

1:16 Peter declared here, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables." "Cunningly devised" means *cleverly invented* (Green, p. 91). The word translated "fables" (μῦθος) can mean something that originated with some man. It can mean an allegory and not to be taken literally. It can mean a fictitious prophecy. The Apostle Paul used the word in 1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:4; Titus 1:14. Trench brings out in his *Synonyms* that this is a word which started out being an equivalent of λόγος, but over time up to the writing of the NT, it came to mean just the opposite: a lie! All teaching that is not consistent with Biblical doctrine falls into this category – a lie! This is why it is so important for us to know the truth. Knowing the truth of God's Word is the only way we can be prepared to detect error. The word μῦθος can be transliterated over into English as a *myth*. And a myth is an imaginary or fictitious person or thing which has no real existence.

Peter had been accused of coming up with a cleverly invented doctrine when he spoke of "the power and

coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” – which most expositors take as a reference to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ when our Lord will come to rule for a millennium, and then ultimately usher in a new heaven and a new earth. Such teaching does seem to be unreal to people who do not know the Lord.

April 16, 2007

Peter concludes his testimony concerning how he saw the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration with the words, “but we were eyewitnesses of his Majesty. The Apostle John who was with Peter testified of it in John 1:18. Furthermore it is confirmed by Matthew (17:1-8), Mark (9:2-10), and Luke (9:28-36). So the testimony is overwhelming that what Peter wrote here was true. They heard the Father’s voice from heaven identifying Who Jesus was. And all of this was given as the reason why Peter had repeatedly spoken to the saints to whom he was writing about “these things.” But he was not finished with his reasons for emphasizing the importance of “these things” as we see in verses 19 through 21 as the word “also” indicates.

These three verses combined give us one of the two major passages of Scripture which speak of the divine origin of the Bible. The other passage is 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

1:19 When Peter wrote these words the NT was in the process of being written, but it was complete as it is now, and has been for many years. But Peter’s reference to the writings of Paul’s epistles in chapter 3, verse 13, shows that some of Paul’s epistles had already been written, and Peter referred to them as being a part of “the other scriptures,” which must have been a reference to the OT Scriptures. Here in verse 19 of chapter 1, Peter was not saying that the scriptures were truer than the experience that he and John and James had on the Mount of Transfiguration, but that it was the Scriptures which God has given us which the ultimate authority of all that we are to believe. The expression, “the word of prophecy,” does not mean just those parts of the Bible which were future when they were written, or those parts which are still future, but he was speaking of the Scriptures as being a revelation from God (as he goes on to explain in the next two verses). And, since it comes from God, a divine revelation, Peter told them, “wherefore ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place.” To “take heed” to anything, by definition, is *to pay close attention to* whatever is being referred to, or *to take careful notice of* it.

Now whatever Peter emphasized as far as the OT was concerned, applies today equally to the writings of the NT. You and I will never read anything that will surpass the Bible in importance. And all that Peter said in this expression, “ye do well that ye take heed,” he expressed in the present tense. So this means that when we read the Scriptures, we always do well when we pay the closest attention to what the Word of God says. And this means not just seeking to understand it, but submitting ourselves to it – believing it, and putting it into practice in our lives.

As I listened with Lucille and Pat, her sister, to the report of the terrible tragedy that took place at Virginia Tech University, and heard the President of the University talk about the counsellors that were ready to help, and then heard the father of one of the girls who was killed eight years ago at Columbine High School in Colorado, and when asked he gave his advice about how to help the students at Virginia Tech get through this tragedy, nothing was said by either one of those men about God, or the Bible, or our Lord Jesus Christ. What those students and the families of those whose children were killed, needed to hear, was the truth of this “word of prophecy.” God is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. The Lord Jesus ever lives to intercede for those who are trusting Him. And, as we learned last Sunday, the Lord Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit as the Comforter. But nobody was talking about Them according to what I heard. We are paying a great price in our country by our rejection of God and His Word. Let us be sure that we are not making the same mistake. Read the Bible. Pay close attention to it. It is the light that shines continually in this dark world from which people

are passing into an eternal night.

There is a lot to think about in verse 19 of 1 Peter 1. And what Peter was saying here needs to be said over and over again “until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your (our) hearts.” What does this mean?

This passage is usually interpreted as referring to the time when the Lord Jesus Christ returns. But I wonder if there is not another idea here. Peter did not speak of the day star arising in the world and over the world, but “in your hearts.” He was appealing to all of his readers to pay the closest attention to the light that is shining in a dark place. Solomon said long ago, “The entrance of Thy words (he was speaking to God) giveth light: it giveth understanding to the simple” (Psalm 119:130). And it is through the reading the Word, or hearing the Word proclaimed, that the light goes on for people. But if this leads to the Day Star arising in their hearts, this is what people need.

I believe that “the Day Star” is a reference to our Lord Jesus Christ.

When the Apostle John was finishing the book of the Revelation, you probably will remember that he finished it with an appeal for people to turn to the Lord. And in doing so, He quoted the Lord Jesus Christ as saying this:

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star (Rev. 22:16).

When you relate this verse to 2 Peter 1:19 I think you can see what the Day Star arriving in your hearts means. It means salvation. The light that is still shining in this dark, dry place, is the Word of God. It tells us of Jesus Christ as the only way to God, and that if we believe in Him we shall be saved. But we must believe in our hearts as Romans 10:9 tells us. If people are going to be saved, they must be born again. And I hope you remember from 1 Peter 1:23 how this takes place. Listen to Peter’s words:

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

Illus: My neighbor who wants me to buy a supply of miniature silver crosses for us to distribute to people in an attempt to lead them to Christ. My response: 1 Peter 1:23.

It is as the Word is given to people that the Spirit of God may use it to cause people to know that salvation is by grace through faith in Christ, and that through the Word they will be brought to trust Him as their Savior. This happens when the Day Star, “the Bright and Morning Star, arises in their hearts, driving out the darkness with the One Who is the Light of the world.

April 17, 2007

1:20 By the words, “Knowing this first,” the Apostle Peter was saying that in our handling of the Word of God, we must always remember what he was about to say. And this is a truth that applies to all of the Word of God, “that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.” Basically this means that no writer of Scripture originated what he had to say. If that had been the case, you would not have the marvelous unity that exists in all of Scripture. Nor would you have the complete reliability that is true of all of Scripture.

Peter was saying that “no prophecy of Scripture,” that is, no part of the Word of God originated, nor was it interpreted, by those who wrote it, that is, *on their own*. The Bible is not the production just of the men who wrote it. And we must always keep this in mind when we are dealing with the Scriptures. As Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:16, “all scripture is given by inspiration of God.” It is God-breathed. God did not just give the

writers of Scripture *the idea* that He wanted to communicate to His people, but He sovereignly led the writers of Scripture in the very words that they used in giving us the Word of God. This is true of all of the books of the OT, and all of the books of the NT.

So verse 20 gives us one part of what we must always remember in reading our Bibles. Verse 21 gives us the other part. Verse 20 tells us what the Bible is *not*; verse 21 tells us what the Bible is. So, “knowing this first” (the words with which the Apostle Peter began verse 20, apply equally to verses 20 and 21. And by the way, in verse 21 we have the only mention of the Holy Spirit in this second epistle of Peter. But what an extremely important reference to the Holy Spirit it is! The Scriptures are *not* the product of men.

1:21 What, then, are we to believe about the Scriptures? They are not the product of man’s will. This applies to Moses, to David, to Solomon, to Daniel, and to all of the writers of the OT. But it applies equally to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, and all of the writers of the NT. Every writer of all of the sixty-six books of the Bible, “spoke” (and here the word “spoke” means that they spoke in their writings) “as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

“Were moved” is passive in the Greek as it is in English which emphasizes not what the writers of Scripture did, but what was done to them.

So the Bible, while written by men, originated with the Holy Spirit. The Bible has been given to us *from God*. And we need to remember this when men come to us with teaching that is in addition to Scripture, or which replaces Scripture.

We have largely lost sight of these truths in our society today. We have turned away from the absolute teaching of Scripture concerning what is true and what is false, as well as from what is right and what is wrong. The emphasis today is that there is no absolute truth, there are no absolutes concerning what is right and what is wrong. The main thing today is that people be allowed to do whatever they want to do. Our politicians take their guidance from what people want, and this has led us into the tragic situations with which we are faced in our country. The truth does not change. Morality is still to be defined in terms of Scripture. Truth and morality are determined by God. And we are being judged, and will continue to be judged with greater and greater severity by the God whose Word is truth. The words of the Apostles Peter and Paul regarding the Bible, are just as true today as they ever were in spite of the way we have turned to evolution, to adultery, to abortion, to homosexuality, to pornography, and now to the terrible abuse of children which has become an uncontrollable problem in our day. Peter goes on to warn us from the past in chapter 2, but people aren’t paying attention to the Bible in our day. And we are paying a great price in many, many ways, but our sins have blinded us so completely that we are oblivious to what is really going on. I am talking about our society generally. God always has had, and always will have, His people who believe His Word, and love His Word, and who seek by God’s grace to live by the Word. May God keep us faithful to the Word of God regardless of the way in which the world is going.

Read Romans 1 and 2 Timothy 3. The “perilous times” of 2 Timothy 3 are here! “Perilous” means *difficult* and *dangerous*. We had another example yesterday of how dangerous it can be in the massacre of more than thirty people at Virginia Tech University. Does it mean anything to us that this is the worst massacre of its kind in our history?

We have just had a marvelous Spring Bible Conference with Professor Paul Felix who ministered to us for four days from Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible, and a chapter in which every verse has something very important and very good to say about God’s Word. And Professor Felix did a great job of reminding us that the

way the Psalmist felt about the Word is God, is the way we should feel about it. The world may be moving farther and farther away from the Bible, and so away from God and away from Christ and away from the Holy Spirit, but we need to be moving closer and closer to God and to Christ and to the Word that God's blessing would be upon us, and His Name glorified in our lives.