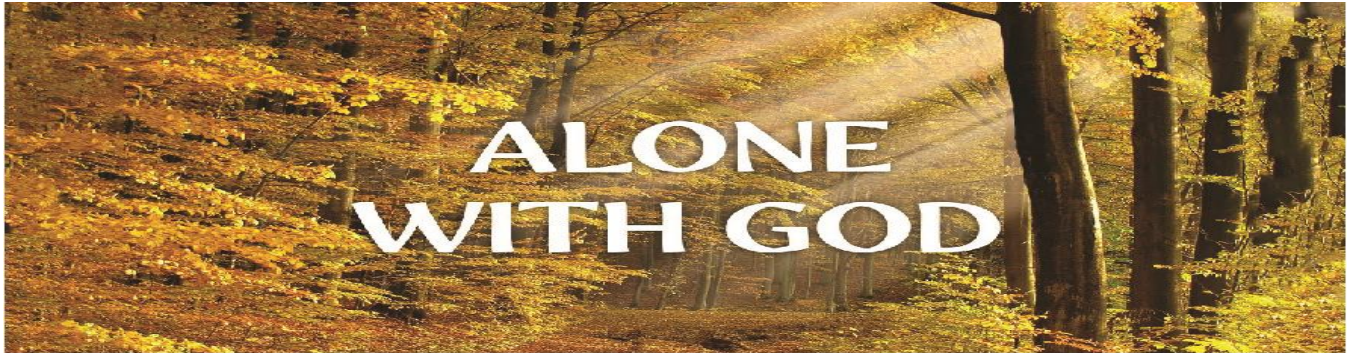


Ministry of Grace Church

2 Peter 1:1-4 - Speaker Notes



Background

Last time we were together we finished going through the book of 1st Peter. It was a letter written to the churches located in what is modern day Turkey. It was written to help those who were suffering for their faith because they were being persecuted by their Jewish brothers as well as by Rome.

Now we come to 2nd Peter. This epistle could be titled “Faithful Living in the Last Days” because it deals with the rise of false teachers and false prophets in the last days. Also, because it deals with the attitudes of non-believers as the time gets closer.

But - Peter opens and closes this letter with the theme of victory, even though within the epistle he focused primarily on how to live when surrounded by the problems and perplexities of the end time. After painting a word picture of these times (in **2 Peter 2:1-3:10**) talking about false teachers, fallen angels, flagrant immorality, and immoral mockers, Peter charges his readers

Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, ... (**2 Peter 3:11-12**).

Faithful living in these difficult last days - that is the lesson Peter would have believers learn through this dynamic letter.

Who Wrote this Letter?

According to verse one of this letter, the author was Simeon Peter (Simon Peter.) Some in the early years of the Christian church, however, doubted that the letter was genuinely Peter’s. There never was any doubt about his authorship of 1st Peter, but there was regarding this letter. The historian Eusebius, who is often referred to as the Father of Church History, recorded in the early fourth century that 2nd Peter was part of the antilegomena. That is, those writings which were “spoken against.” This is not to imply that Eusebius, himself, believed the letter to be a fake, he was simply reporting that there were some who did. Jerome, the Catholic priest who in the late fourth century, translated the Bible into Latin, said,

“Peter wrote two epistles, called ‘catholic,’ that is to say, “general;” the second of which is denied by many to be his, because of the difference of style from the former.”

And Origen, in the early third century said, “Peter, on whom the church is built, has left one Epistle (universally) acknowledged. Let it be granted that he also wrote a second.”

Although there were some in the early church who questioned Peter’s authorship of this letter, there are several good reasons to believe that it is, in fact, the work of Simon Peter just as much as his first general epistle. The first reason is the fact that there appears to be no one of importance in the early church who rejected this as non-authentic. Some doubted, as we just saw, but no one outright rejected it. The only early church fathers who wrote about 2nd Peter are Eusebius, Jerome, and Origen, who all claimed there were some doubters but even these three never revealed in any of their writings that they believed it was not genuinely Simon Peter’s work.

Secondly, by the middle of the fourth century this letter was received by the church universally as the authentic work of Simon Peter. In fact, in the second century Irenaeus, one of the early church fathers, quotes as scripture all of the books that we have in our Bibles today, including 2nd Peter. The third reason to accept this letter as having been written by Simon Peter is based on the fact that the writer claims to be Simon Peter. It also makes reference to the previous letter written by Peter, and in **2 Peter 1:14** the author makes an assertion that only Simon Peter would have made:

“knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has indicated to me ...”

Even Jude, in his short epistle, refers to the contents of this book as being written by one of the apostles:

But you, beloved, must remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, “In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.” (**Jude 17-18**)

Here’s another strong piece of evidence that Peter did, in fact, write this letter. In this letter, Peter warns about false teachers (see **2 Peter 2:1**). But it does not make sense that a false teacher posing as Peter would be writing a letter warning about false teachers. And no unusual, new, or false doctrines appear in 2nd Peter. So, if 2nd Peter were a forgery, it would be a forgery written by a fool for no reason at all.

Finally, the Council of Laodicea in the year 364 carefully considered a number of significant church issues including which writings should legitimately be considered part of the Bible. This council, whose decisions regarding the contents of the Bible have been accepted by the church since that day, included 2nd Peter as part of the Bible and as having been written by the Apostle Peter.

When Was this Letter Written?

The date of 2nd Peter obviously hinges on its authenticity. Those who believe it is a forgery choose some date in the second century. Since we concluded that Peter did indeed write this letter, we believe that it was written shortly before Peter's death. Nero died in A.D. 68, and tradition says that Peter died in Nero's persecution. The epistle was most likely written just before his death; around A.D. 67-68 (see **2 Peter 1:14**).

Outline of This Letter

- I. Salutation (**2 Peter 1:1, 2**)
- II. Call to develop strong Christian character (**2 Peter 1:3-21**)
- III. The rise of false teachers predicted (**2 Peter 2**)
- IV. The rise of scoffers predicted (**2 Peter 3**)

2 Peter 1:1-2

Simeon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received the same kind of faith as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the full knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

Peter opens this letter in a similar manner to his first letter, though with a couple of minor differences. Here, he announces himself not simply as Peter (*petros*) but as Simon Peter (*simeon petros*). Simon (or Simeon) was the name given him at birth, but Peter (*petros*) was the name that Jesus gave him:

And Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. “And I also say to you that you are Peter, ... (Matthew 16:17, 18a)

In his first letter, Peter boldly introduced himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Here he introduces himself first, as a slave or servant, then as an Apostle of Jesus Christ. This is similar to the way that the Apostle Paul introduces himself:

Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, having been set apart for the gospel of God, (Romans 1:1)

Though he had every right to call himself an apostle, it is out of humility that he sees himself first as a slave of God, then as an apostle.

The letter is written to “those who have received the same kind of faith as ours.” The expression “who have received” is translated from a single Greek word, the root of which is *langchano*, which means “to receive by casting of lots.” The implication is that it is something received as a gift, not as something which was earned. This is another piece of evidence that our salvation is a gift, not something that we earned.

Since Peter refers to the salvation of these gentiles as “the same kind of faith as ours,” it indicates that the saving faith of non-Jewish believers is just as effective and priceless as the saving faith of those who have come out of the Jewish faith. It appears from this statement that this letter may have been sent specifically to encourage and build-up the Gentile converts to Christianity.

The end of verse one is sometimes translated, “of God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” This has been used by some to try to prove that Jesus Christ is separate from God. However, the translation we have here in our text (of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ) is more accurate, which makes it clear that Jesus is both our God and our Savior.

Again, some translations such as the KJV and NIV translate the end of the second verse as “through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.” The word in Greek for “through” is *dia*, but that is not the word used here. The Greek word used here is *en*, which means “in,” that is, “in the sphere of.” Thus, our translation (the Legacy Standard Bible, or LSB) has this as, “in the knowledge of God.” It’s a fairly minor point, but it is this: grace and peace do not come as a process (through the doing of something), they are found in something (in a full knowledge of Him, and in an intimate relationship with Him).

Also, the word translated “knowledge” is the Greek word *epignōsis*, which is made up of *epi*, meaning “over or above” and *ginōskō*, meaning “to know, in an absolute sense.” Therefore, it is much more than simply knowing about God. It means having an intimate relationship with Him based on thorough knowledge. It’s not the knowledge that we get by simply being exposed to Him, but the complete knowledge that we get by spending time with Him and by studying His word carefully and thoughtfully. It is the knowledge that we get as we develop an intimate relationship with Him.

Peter now offers a significant benediction to his intended readers. He proclaims that grace and peace should increase to the readers of this letter. Literally, he says, “Grace to you and peace to be filled-up.” That is, grace in the form of forgiveness of our sins by a righteous God through the sacrifice of His son, and peace, that elusive characteristic and quality that only comes to one who is firmly fixed within the body of Christ. Peter is not wishing for a little peace, but that his readers be filled with it.

If you search the New Testament carefully, you will see that God never promises Christians pleasure or comfort. Instead, He promises us peace. The Apostle Paul says that righteousness, peace, and joy are what the kingdom of God is all about:

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. (Romans 14:17)

Notice that Paul also told the Christians in Rome that it is not just peace in general, but peace with God:

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: (Romans 5:1)

Based on this opening section of 2nd Peter, every Christian should know the blessings of grace and peace which come as a result of having a thorough knowledge of God, but that only comes by careful study and consistent reading of His Word and fellowship with Him and His people.

2 Peter 1:3-4

seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

Peter continues his benediction by saying that it is through His Godly power that Jesus Christ has granted us all things that pertain to life and godliness. The verb “has granted” is translated from *dōreomai*, which means “to give a gift” (one that is undeserved). It is expressed here in the perfect tense, indicating past completed action with an ongoing effect, where the emphasis is on the effect.

Some have supposed that this means all things that pertain to spiritual life and godliness, but I am of the persuasion that he means all aspects of life, both this one and the one to come. As born-again Christians we have everything we need to live a peaceful life and to expect eternal life in the grace of God, not because we have done anything, but because He has done everything for us, and He has given it to us through His divine power, though we clearly don’t deserve it.

As we noted above, the act of giving was accomplished in the past, but it has current ongoing consequences. The point when the giving actually took place can be interpreted either as the point in time when we accepted Christ as Lord and Savior or the point in eternity past when He chose us.

Peter seems to imply that we receive everything we need for life and godliness by developing the in-depth, personal knowledge of God in Jesus Christ that we talked about a few minutes ago. He is the one who called us, and He is the one who empowers us.

What I want you to see from these two verses in 2nd Peter is that God shows His grace to us and gives us peace as we recognize and accept who He is and what He has done. And because of His divinity and power, He has called us to Himself and He has given us everything we need for life and for living in a godly manner. But we only get this through understanding and thoroughly knowing who He is, how glorious He is, and how powerful He is.

“**May become partakers**” seems to imply that there is a chance that we might become partakers and yet we might not as well. This is not what the Greek says. It is from the Greek *hina ginesthe koinonoi*. The construction indicates that it is an act of purpose. That is to say, “it is certain that we will participate in the divine nature.”

Peter tells us that “**by these He has granted ...**” This is one of those connective phrases that we need to look at more carefully. This phrase is translated from the Greek words *di hōn*, which literally mean “through which things.” Well, what “things” is he talking about? It could be “glory and virtue,” it could be the “grace and peace” referred to in verse 2, it could be all of these, or it could refer to “His divine power” and “the knowledge of him.” Why? Because Greek is very particular in that a relative pronoun (these) must agree with the noun(s) it is referring to in both gender and number. All of these things are feminine nouns and the Greek pronoun translated “these” is a feminine, plural, relative pronoun, so it can’t refer to only one of these things alone and may refer to them all. However, as I read it, Peter seems to be referring specifically to *His divine power and our in-depth knowledge of Him* from verse three.

Through these things, Peter tells us, God has given us the greatest of precious promises. And what are these promises? They are promises of salvation by grace through faith, of a Savior who will never leave us nor forsake us, of eternal blessing in the presence of our divine creator, of peace and protection in times of suffering, plus many more.

He then tells us that through these things we will “**become partakers of the divine nature.**” This verse is not telling us that we will be gods some day as some false religions erroneously teach. It tells us that we will experience the godliness of God in a very special way, which is reserved only for those who are saved. Peter tells us that we will experience it “... **having escaped the corruption** (literally “decay”) **that is in the world by lusts.**” In other words, we will experience this sharing in the divine nature after we die and are glorified with Christ.

As if the mere thought of being in Heaven and being in His presence eternally wasn’t enough, we will also, somehow, experience the godliness of God in a unique and special way. This, alone, should make the fear of death disappear for any born-again believer!

So What?

Do you have peace with God? Many people are looking for peace. Probably more today than any other time in history. In the early days of the Miss America Pageant all of the contestants were asked what their greatest desire is. It was quite common for them to answer, “world peace.” It’s something that we all crave. We want to be free from fear. We want to be free from worry. We want to find a peaceful place where we can go when the world is closing in on us and overwhelming us. Peter opened this letter with the blessing, **grace and peace be multiplied to you.** This world may be looking for peace, but they don’t realize that there is only one source of true peace, God! I don’t mean just any god or any religion. I mean the God of the Bible, Yahweh and His son Jesus Christ!

The more you learn about God and the more you submit to His lordship over you, the more peace you will have no matter what may be happening around you. Remember, God never promised His followers comfort or pleasure. He promised us peace and Joy. Let me say that again. God never promised His followers comfort or pleasure. He promised us peace and Joy. But how do we find that peace and joy in a world that is coming apart at the seams. We find it with Him and Him alone. I cannot stress enough how important it is for Christians to have daily time alone with God; time when we read His word and pray, not to ask for anything or to tell Him anything, but to hear from Him. Bible reading and prayer are more about hearing from God than anything else.

I have found that “the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension,” spoken of in [Philippians 4:7](#), is most often found in close fellowship with our Lord and God. Too many people say, “I’d like to spend more time with God, I really would. I’d like to spend more time reading my Bible, but I just don’t have time!” Do you have time to get dressed every morning? Do you have time to eat every day? Do you have time to brush your teeth before going to bed? Ladies, do you have time to put on your make-up every morning? Do you have time to check Facebook every day? Do you have time to check out the latest YouTube videos? Every day? Of course you do! These are things we have to do! Or are they?

These things are all a matter of priorities. We choose how to spend our time every day. The real question is, “Where is, ‘spending time with God,’ on your priority list?” If it’s not at the very top, then it’s not really on your list at all. We must recognize that we are what we are, and we have the salvation that we have, only because of who He is and what He has done, not because of anything we have or haven’t done.

Earlier, I talked about the “knowledge of God,” that Peter referred to in verse two. You will recall that this “knowledge” is much more than simply knowing about God. It refers to having an intimate relationship with Him based on thorough knowledge. It’s not the knowledge that we get by simply being exposed to Him, like many Christians are every Sunday morning. Instead, it is the complete knowledge that we get by spending time with Him, reading and studying His word carefully and thoughtfully.

We all get caught up in the day-to-day grind. The problem is that it keeps our focus on ourselves and our own needs. It eventually becomes our purpose in life. It occupies our thoughts, it consumes us, it controls us, it even punishes us! It is not our friend! Its purpose is not to seek the best for us. Its purpose is to use us and to draw us away from God.

Do you know who’s in charge of this day-to-day grind? Our enemy, the god of this world. He wants everyone to be so occupied with living this life for ourselves, that we forget about how God wants us to live our life. Do you know how God wants you to live your life? Think about that for a minute. How does God want you to live your life? It’s really quite simple: He tells us in Luke’s gospel account.

Love the Lord, your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and *love* your neighbor as yourself. ([Luke 10:27](#))

If you can’t find time in your day, every day, to spend time alone with God, reading His word and praying, then your life is out of control. Your focus is on yourself. God says that we are to focus on Him and on others. He never says anything about focusing on ourselves.

I know I’ve given you a lot of things to think about. Let me close by quoting the Apostle Paul from his letter to the believers in Philippi:

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your considerate spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ([Philippians 4:4-7](#))

And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Let’s pray.