**2 Peter - Introduction**

*"Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior." (3:1-2)*

**Book in a Nutshell**

Having addressed the dangers without (persecution) in the first epistle, Peter here warns of dangers within. He calls them to Christian maturity, to recognize and reject false teachers, and to prepare for the coming of the Lord.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Formulate arguments defending the canonicity of 2 Peter.

2. Explain the phrase, “like precious faith” as it related to the recipients of Peter’s epistle.

3. How important is it that our minds be stirred up “by way of reminder”?

4. How can writing a letter be considered an important action before death?

5. What is Gnosticism?

**Authorship (1:1)**

* The apostle Peter identifies himself as the author of the epistle (1:1)
* 2 Peter is among a group of 7 books that some have questioned as genuinely canonical (also, James, Jude, 2 & 3 John, Hebrews and Revelation).
* Note: There is no substantial or legitimate reason to exclude 2 Peter from the canon.
* Many internal proofs of legitimacy: Claim of authorship (1:1); reference to previous epistle (3:1); claim to be an eyewitness (1:16-18); age of writer, correlating to date of writing (1:13-14).
* Greatest objection are stylistic differences. However, there are many similarities as well, including language used by Peter as recorded in Acts, and words and phrases that are almost unique to the two epistles.

**Written to: The Scattered Elect (1 Peter 1:1-2)**

* Those who have obtained a like precious faith (1:1)
* Recipients of the previous epistle (3:1) - Those who were in need of a “reminder.”

**Date of Writing: (66-67 A.D.)**

* Peter speaks of the nearness of his own death (1:14-15)
* Apparently, most of Paul’s writings were finished, and had been circulated (3:15-16). They had existed long enough to be perverted. Paul’s writings are believed to have been written from 62-66 A.D.
* The incipient Gnostic heresy may be the focus of chapter 2. This heresy was becoming a problem only late in the first century. (See also the language of Jude for comparison).

(**Special Note:** An important argument can be made to the believer that the accepted canon can be acknowledged as accurate and dependable as it is the product of Divine providence. The early church did not “decide” what books were inspired. It simply accepted the inspired writings, and acknowledged them to be inspired. God determines the canon, not men).

**2 Peter - 1**

*“Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (10-11)*

**Chapter in a Nutshell**

Based upon the wonderful blessings (a heavenly inheritance) that we receive through Jesus Christ, the apostle Peter calls the elect to live holy lives before God the Father. The standard for holy living is found in the enduring word.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Explain how lacking spiritual maturity is spiritual near sightedness.

2. Explain the promise, “you will never stumble” (vs. 10).

3. Why do we need to be reminded of what we already know?

4. How did Peter ensure that his reminders would continue following his death?

5. Explain the phrase, “no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation”.

*(Please put answers on back of page or another sheet of paper)*

**Greeting (1-4)**

* We are supplied with all things that pertain to life and godliness (by the Lord Jesus) through the knowledge of the Christ (3)
* Wonderful promises have been given to those who have escaped the pollution of the world (4)

**The Christian Attributes (5-11)**

* The adding of these attributes shows progress and maturity in the Christian (virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, love) (5-8)
* Those who lack them are near-sighted (9)
* Those who develop them are promised salvation (10-11)

**The Importance of Reminders (12-15)**

* Reminders are needed so that Christians will grow and mature in faith (adding the Christian attributes). These reminders help to establish them (12)
* Because of this, Peter was motivated to continue the reminders until his death (which had been predicted by the Lord (13-14)
* Additionally, reminders were needed after his death. (Note: The written word delivered supplies these reminders)

**The Prophetic Word Confirmed (16-21)**

* Peter, as an eyewitness, serves as an apostle of the risen Lord. His testimony is sure and established, and with others serves as the foundation of our faith (16)
* In addition to being an eyewitness of the resurrection (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:5), Peter was an eyewitness to the exaltation of Jesus at His transfiguration (cf. Matthew 17:1-9) (17-18)
* Jesus confirmed (fulfilled) the prophecies concerning the Jewish Messiah, and serves as light of the world, to be heeded by man. (19)
* Prophecy is inspired of God, and the fulfillment of prophecy is proof that Jesus is indeed from God (20-21)

**2 Peter - 2**

*“For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption…” (18-19a).*

**Chapter in a Nutshell**

Peter warns of false teachers who would come to deceive his readers. He describes them so that they will be recognized.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Looking at verses 1-2, find the descriptive words that illustrate the nature of false teachers and their doctrines.

2. What is Peter’s purpose of describing God’s treatment of the ancients in verses 4-6?

3. Will God distinguish between the righteous and wicked? (vs. 7-9)

4. Explain the difference between describing and defining what is a false teacher.

5. Is it possible for a Christian who has obtained a right standing with God to forfeit that standing by teaching or embracing error?

*(Please put answers on back of page or another sheet of paper)*

**Heresies will Come! (1-3)**

* Heresies are inevitable, and are destructive (1)
* False prophets/False teachers (1)
* They will destroy themselves, but will also exploit the faithful (2-3). Many will follow (2)
* By covetousness, with deceptive words (3)

**God will Destroy the False Teacher
(4-11)**

* God historically has punished the wicked: angels, ancient world, Sodom and Gomorrah, (4-6)
* God can deliver the righteous, while destroying the wicked (7-9)
* God is especially unhappy with the presumptuous, who despise authority (10-11)

**A Description of False Teachers (12-17)**

* Impulsive – “speak evil of things they do not understand” (12)
* Sensual – “carousing in the daytime” “eyes full of adultery” “ covetous” (13-14)
* Misdirected – “forsaken the right way” (15-16)
* Vain/Empty – Because of their message: “wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest (17); and because of this, doomed to judgment

**Their Message and End (18-22)**

* These false teachers would advocate licentiousness (incipient Gnosticism) (18)
* They would allure the faithful, this is the reason for the warning – to identify them as dangerous (18)
* False doctrine promises liberty but brings bondage (19)
* Teaching error will condemn the soul of the teacher, and also endangers his hearers if they heed and follow. This section of scripture affirms the possibility of falling away from God’s grace (20-22)

**2 Peter - 3**

*“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing than any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (9).*

**Chapter in a Nutshell**

Peter recognizes that his time among them is short. As such, he gives them a final admonition, reminding them to be steadfast as the Day of the Lord approaches.

**Discussion Questions**

1. How can one willfully forget?

2. Why does this ungodly world continue? Why has God not yet destroyed it?

3. Does verse 8 indicate that to God a day is exactly 1,000 years long?

4. If the physical universe will cease to exist on the day of the Lord, how can the existence of “new heavens and a new earth” be explained?

5. Please explain the two terms found in verse 16, “untaught” and “unstable”?

*(Please put answers on back of page or another sheet of paper)*

**The Promise of God (1-9)**

* Peter again states his purpose to remind them of things already spoken and written by inspiration (1-2), cf. 1:12-15
* Peter predicted that scoffers would arise, who would cast doubt on the promise made by Jesus Christ, that He would come again (3-4). (Note: The scoffers would be characterized by their lusts)
* Those who scoff concerning the promises of God **willfully** forget that God always keeps His promises. Example, the destruction of the world in the flood (5-6)
* The universe exists at God’s pleasure (7)
* God does not reckon time as we do (8)
* We should recognize the fact that the universe continues due to God’s longsuffering towards mankind (9)

**The Day of the Lord (10-13)**

* The day of the Lord will come, when God’s longsuffering is finished (10)
* The day of the Lord (God’s final judgment on mankind) will end the physical universe (10-11)
* Since this event is inevitable, Peter calls his readers to “holy conduct and godliness” (11)
* As Christians, we should live our lives in recognition of God’s inevitable judgment. In so doing, Peter states that we hasten Jesus’ coming (12)
* Our existence after the final judgment is referred to in figurative language as “new heavens and a new earth” (13)

**A Call to Steadfastness (14-18)**

* Peter finishes his epistle with a call for diligence and purity in the face of God’s longsuffering (14-15)
* Paul wrote about God’s longsuffering, and his writings (which are often misunderstood) are equated to other scripture (15-16)
* Christians are to be steadfast, and grow in grace and knowledge (17-18)