

The Letters of **Peter**



Lesson 6-Having a Solid and Growing Faith

Focus: 2 Peter 1:1-21

- **Introduction to 2nd Peter:** *The 2nd letter of Peter was not written too long after his first letter. It is believed that Peter's life was taken away sometime around the year AD 64 when the persecution broke out in Rome under Emperor Nero. The first letter had come sometime just prior to that great persecution, so the 2nd letter couldn't have been too far behind! The audience in the second letter is primarily the same as the first--believers who were spread throughout the Roman Empire! It would also have been written from the same location, Rome. It is of note that 2nd Peter has been challenged more than any other New Testament letter for its authenticity as a letter from Peter, for some reasons such as a slightly different Greek level of refinement, and also not being so widespread at an early date. However, the letter's teaching is 100% in line with every other New Testament letter. It has Peter's name on it, and it tells Peter's personal stories and challenges exactly as they are reflected in other parts of the Bible. It even uses the word "tree" to describe the cross, just as Peter did in other places (that vocabulary choice is unique to Peter). Some minor stylistic differences between the 1st and 2nd letters are easily explained by the fact that Peter used Silas as a secretary with his first letter, but not with his second (1 Peter 5:12). We have no reason to ever doubt the authenticity or power of this letter and its message as God's inspired word through His chosen servant! (Peter)*
- *This letter focuses on keeping the pure faith of Israel and not being lost to an unbelieving and wicked world! It reminds us to keep fresh in mind the facts of our faith and also the reasons for our faith! We must grow and have the righteous character of Jesus Christ produced in our lives! The letter begins with the mindset of faith, the goals, and powerful tools from God which are needed in the development of our characters. Then it warns of false teachers, and finally speaks of the scoffers and wicked unbelievers, and even professed believers who will deny or twist God's word to their own destruction. Peter, expecting to die a martyr's death soon at the hands of Roman authorities expresses his strong appeal to all who are God's people to strive diligently to be holy, as we wait for Christ to return, when He will strike down evil, and reward the righteous with the eternal joys of His holy land in the earth made new!*
- *Peter mentions Paul, "our beloved brother," and his writings in chapter 3 of this letter. But, Paul, in his last letter (2nd Timothy), which was also written from Rome (in AD 67) does not mention Peter. That serves to confirm that Peter died earlier than Paul did. Paul was taken captive into Rome in AD 67. Surely, Paul would have spoken of Peter if he was still around at the time. The words of 2nd Peter seal Peter's final message to the world before his death and remind of the truths so essential to our life which Peter was called by God to proclaim! May you be blessed as you study through this series!*
- **A Precious Faith according to the promises (v.1-4)** *Here, warm greetings were made to the believers! By the blessed promises of God we can be partakers of the Divine nature that humans have marred and lost by sin. Let us have the divine image of God restored in us through the blessed gospel, word, and promises of Jesus Christ!*
- **Making our calling and election sure (v.5-11)**
 - It is essential for Christians to grow in the grace of God! We should aim to advance in all these things and to diligently seek the Lord Jesus Christ! The Christian's life is not to be a careless and lazy half-hearted experience! No! We are to grow in the Lord Jesus Christ, to diligently seek Him, to know His ways, and to follow Him always!
 - We must seek the Lord and grow, by knowledge, love and all things. God said, "My people perish for lack of knowledge" in the days of Hosea (Hosea 4:6). Let us not let the same sin cause us to perish today, but let us seek the Lord truly and deeply and let us grow in the sure faith of God!
 - This portion of Scripture is Peter's ladder of faith! He shows the advancement that we are to take in Christian character development! And Peter had experienced these things in his own life! Let us also read here and follow this pattern for our lives so that we may have a successful life in God!

➤ **Peter's care and concern for the Lord's work and His Believers (v.12-15)**

- *The death of Peter had been foretold and prophesied to Peter by Jesus Christ Himself (See John 21:17,18). Peter knew the manner of his death for Jesus had told him. He was now expected death and was ready to accept the death that was for him to experience! He was going to die a martyr's death for his faith and practice of belief. As mentioned in our earlier lessons from this series, Peter was hung on a cross upside down and died in or near the city of Rome.*
- *Before Peter's death, he was expressing his concern for the church and for the People after him. So, he wrote this letter to express some very important information and concerns for the believers. He wanted us to **always remember these heavenly truths!** The truths of the gospel were not to die with him or any other one of the apostles, but they were to live on and to touch and bless our lives today, leading us to a sure faith in Jesus Christ and the gift of eternal life with God.*

➤ **Being Sure of our Faith (v.16-21)**

- (v.16-18) **Witness and Testimony of the Apostles:** The Apostles were "eyewitnesses" of the Lord's glory! They saw the evidence for their faith! They saw the Lord, and they saw God's blessings poured out upon Jesus Christ! They witnessed the power of God and the healing miracles that came through Jesus Christ! **Peter himself** had experienced the power of God greatly overwhelming him on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Apostles, and when they preached the gospel in languages they had never previously learned! (Acts 2:11-16). **Peter knew Jesus personally and well. He also knew and had experienced the miraculous power of God at work in his life!! He could say with all confidence, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables..." "...when we made known unto you" the truths of the gospel! Peter stood strong to testify for his faith and experience in Jesus Christ even here and now at the end of his life, knowing that the end was near and that he was going to die a martyr's death! Peter was ready for it, he expected for it to happen, and he was willing to accept it as something that God had allowed!** Peter was one who had many character struggles in his early days and some difficulties along the road as he began to follow Jesus! He had wrong ideas (Matthew 16:23), and even a faith that was a bit weak under terrible pressures (Luke 22:55-60). He was often outspoken and even said the wrong thing at times, but God saw something really useful and beautiful in Peter that could be used when converted and brought around to where it should be (even as He sees in us too!). Jesus said to Peter, **"When you are converted, strengthen your brethren" (Luke 22:31-34). Peter referred in vs.17-18 of the Mount of Transfiguration experience which he and a couple other of the Apostles and early disciples experienced with Jesus, where God the Father testified to the fact that Jesus was indeed the Promised Messiah (Luke 9:28-36). Peter believed in faith and trust so much that now he freely offered his life to die for the faith he so firmly held! Surely, it was no fable to he or the others and it should be no fable to us either for it is indeed the truth of God from Heaven!!**
- (v.19-21) **Witness and Testimony of the Prophets (And of their prophecies): "We have also a more sure word of prophecy..."** (v.19). Peter essentially said here that one would not have to just take the apostle's own word for it, but that we have the promises and words of the prophets fulfilled and that we can base our faith on that! It is the **more sure word of prophecy!!** And we would do well to take heed to it!! (See Luke 24:25-27, 44; 1 Corinthians 15:3-6; John 13:19; 14:29). See a couple examples such as Isaiah 53 or Psalm 22:1, 16-18.
- *We can live by the words of the prophets and realize that they were revealed by God's special revelation, not by some mere man's own private opinion. The interpretation of such prophecies must come from God and His word as well! We are not to impose our own ideas or make our own private interpretations, but to trust what God has revealed and seek humbly to understand the meaning that God Himself has intended for us! The prophets were moved by God's Holy Spirit and we should trust that the Divine was inspiring much more than just a mere human could offer by him or herself.*

Question (s) for the Heart:

Will you choose to trust in God based on His sure word and to diligently pursue a growing faith experience in God? ____