

"1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; 3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 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." 2Pe 1:1-4.

As we begin our study of second Peter it is not very difficult to see the main theme of purpose of this Epistle. Let's read the 2<sup>nd</sup> verse of the letter and the last verse of the letter in 3:18,

1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; 3:18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

That is it. The entire letter will emphasize over and over again how important it is that we grow in our knowledge of Christ. Now of course there is an explicit reason for this as well which is stated in the letter and that is found in 1:16 and 2:1

"1:16 For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty."  
"2:1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves."

Before we continue with our exposition I do want to mention, but not at great length that this is one of those letters that receives much attention as to who the author is. The concern is not the content, it is clearly aligned with the whole canon of Scripture but there are those scholars who because of some historical element or lack of concern by the early church to give much consideration to the importance of this letter believe it is necessary to spend much time debating the authorship.

Now there is some validity to that point because there were false letters in the early church. These are letters not written by the apostles but which bore their names and

D.A. Carson argues persuasively that these differences may be best explained by Peter's use of amanuenses to help him write these epistles. In other words Peter dictated the letter and someone else wrote it so there might be grammatical and other differences from one letter to the next.

Some facts that support Peter's authorship are:

(1) The letter begins with the identification of Simon (the Greek text says "Simeon") Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, as the author. Scholars recognize that pseudonymous writers often wrapped themselves in the mantle of important leaders, and they did not regard this practice as dishonest or misleading. However, it seems unlikely that such an author would state so clearly that he was Peter if he wrote under an assumed name.

(2) II Peter 1:16 indicates that the author was an eyewitness of the life of Jesus.

(3) II Peter 1:17-18 seems to point to the Transfiguration of Jesus (See Matthew 17:1-9; Mark 9:1-8; Luke 9:28-36). Only Peter, James, and John accompanied Jesus to the mount; therefore Peter was one of a very select group that could claim eyewitness experience in regard to the Transfiguration.

(4) Peter 3:1 mentions a previous letter sent by this author, to these recipients. It is, of course, possible that this is another letter (other than I Peter), but the reference to a previous epistle does fit the Petrine model.

(5) II Peter 3:15-16 makes reference to the author's high regard for the writings of the Apostle Paul, a contemporary of the Apostle Peter. Brown asserted that this mention of Paul's writings demonstrates that Peter could not have written I Peter, however, the reasoning seems faulty. Brown believed that this statement in II Peter 3:15-16 refers to the entire body of Paul's writings; therefore, since all of Paul's writings were not collected in a corpus of work until many years after the apostle's

death, the person who wrote II Peter must have penned the epistle at a much later date (perhaps 130 A.D.). It seems feasible that Peter might have known of the writings of Paul; indeed, he may have read several of the works. The statement here does not claim that Peter had read all of Paul's canonical writings, nor does the text imply that all of these epistles had been collected in a single place, only that the author was familiar with Pauline epistles. (Explore the Bible Series:Founders Ministries).

We can move forward with our exposition and speak of the author as Peter.

Let's restate the theme and purpose of this letter and why this letter was written.

The theme is to increase in the knowledge of Christ because there are false prophets who will do all they can to persuade you to listen to them.

Peter's letter certainly loses no appeal to a contemporary audience of Christians or those who claim to be Christians. We are bombarded with secularism and humanistic philosophy and false spiritualism and false prophets in Christian mantels everywhere we turn. The church has lowered its regard for Christ and has promoted a low view of God for many generations. By this I mean we have exalted God, primarily, for what he does to bless us rather than exalt Him, primarily, for who He is and this leads to doctrinal confusion and allows a greater opportunity for false prophets to gain a foot hold in the church. It allows for us to consider Christ through our subjective experience first rather than based on the objective truth we find in God's word.

Peter begins by showing his humility as a brother in Christ:

**"Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:" 2Pe 1:1.**

He calls himself a slave of Christ first and an apostle second and makes sure that the brethren know his is no different than any of them because they all have received a faith of the same kind. This is the mark of a godly man, as he said in his first epistle: **Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed," 1Pet 5:1.**

And this in no way diminishes the fact that elders are to be treated with respect and honored for the office in which God has placed them

**Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you." Heb 13:17. "The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching." 1 Tim 5:17.**

Peter and the brethren shared the same faith. Notice he says it was received. They did not en masse over some period of time cultivate this faith or discover this faith. It was received because it had been given to them, from outside of themselves. Peter the apostle is saying I was saved just like you were. My office does not mean I had some special way of knowing Christ. He may have walked with Christ, o yes, but that did not produce faith. Many walked along Jesus side and deserted Him. The ours he is referring to would be Silvanus from the first letter and whomever he was with while writing this letter.

So the nature of this saved faith is that they all received it.

It is amazing that we struggle with understanding the clear teaching of Scripture. Sometimes the introductions of letters in Scripture, by the words used, are addressing the error or possible errors that were being addressed. Remember, every NT letter is addressing something that is wrong regardless of how much doctrinal or practical teaching is given. It is given in view of some problem or problems that each NT church was struggling with.

For instance if this were written directly to us today, the church across the globe, the words "received faith" might be meant to counter the idea of a self generated faith, a faith in your faith false teaching of the Word Faith heresies and false faith teachers or a "keep the faith baby" kind of understanding.

But Peter is addressing the universality of the common faith that they all received that was a gift from God that came through the preaching of the Gospel and the regenerative work of the Holy Sprit. They understood this. We debate it.

There was no doubt where genuine faith, in light of what false teachers may have been preaching in Peter's day, came from. It came by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Without the righteousness of Christ there is no faith. Without faith in Christ there is no salvation. Without Christ there is no God.

Yes, you heard me correctly. There is no God without Jesus Christ.

It makes no difference who you are or what you believe about God – if you do not believe in Jesus Christ as God then you do not believe in God at all. Your God is then a product of your own imagination and that is idolatry.

The Father and the Son are one. The Spirit of God the Father and the Son are one. Without Christ there is no God. All that we know of God in the New Covenant, in the Spirit Covenant, is finally and fully expressed in Christ. Anyone who attempts to separate Jesus from God, or the Spirit from Jesus or any of them from one another does not know God as He is presented in the Scripture. And if Christ does not have the priority and the pre-eminence then the fundamental understanding of God is not there because the Scripture makes this very clear.

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world." Heb 1:1-2.

And this begins to address the fundamental false teachings of Peter's day and even Paul addresses the same thing in 1 Timothy and other places. The groups who are false may be different but the false teachings, in the end, misrepresent Christ and who he is.

"15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. 19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven." Col 1:15-20.

As Christ is our God and Savior we have received a common faith because of His

The effect is to stress that Christ's unswerving faithfulness to do right is what we depend on, not our own righteousness. Therefore, we do not boast in our faith, for we "obtained" it as a gift, and its foundation is not our righteousness but Christ's who is our God and Savior. We needed to believe in the truth of the words of God concerning the Gospel and trusting the promises that God has made to all who believe the Gospel.

Faith comes by hearing and hearing comes from the word of God. There is no God without Christ; there is no way to please God without Christ and His righteousness under the terms of the New Covenant. We are justified by faith and faith alone. We have believed that Jesus satisfied all of the requirements of God concerning sin and condemnation on our behalf so that we might become the adopted Sons of God in Christ. And Peter is saying that it is no different for him whether he is an apostle and an elder. We all share the same common received faith not by anything that we have done by because of everything that Christ has done for us.

As a result of this common received faith we have been give grace and peace and both can be multiplied, as we know more of Christ.

How is grace multiplied in a believer's life?

A large sum of money was given to Rowland Hill to dispense to a poor pastor. Thinking that the amount was too much to send all at once, Hill forwarded just a portion along with a note that said simply, "More to follow." In a few days the man received another envelope containing the same amount and with the same message, "More to follow." At regular intervals, there came a third, and a fourth. In fact, they continued, along with those cheering words, until the entire sum had been received.

C. H. Spurgeon used this story to illustrate that the good things we receive from God always come with the same prospect of more to follow. He said:

"When God forgives our sins, there's more forgiveness to follow. He justifies us in the righteousness of Christ, but there's more to follow. He adopts us into His family, but

there's more to follow. He prepares us for heaven, but there's more to follow. He gives us grace, but there's more to follow. He helps us to old age, but there's still more to follow." Spurgeon concluded, "Even when we arrive in the world to come, there will still be more to follow."

How is grace multiplied in a believer's life? Well its benefits can never be exhausted, they are eternal. And the more we know of Christ, the more grace is manifested. Grace will be continually manifested to us now in this temporal life and in eternity. It is not about the quantity of grace but about the manifestation of it as we learn more of it as we grow in the knowledge of Christ. This intimacy causes us to understand more of the depth of grace as we learn more of the depth of our sin. As we enjoy and desire our Christ grace is manifested even more. We know this is true even in understanding how God saves us.

When we embrace the Doctrines of Grace where we recognize that the sovereignty of God is responsible for our salvation as opposed to a free will salvation of man having the natural capacity to repent and believe, we have a whole new understanding of grace and how amazing it really is. When we understand salvation only from the subjective point of view of how we needed to respond to the Gospel and do not include what it took for us to respond, then grace, although it still saves us, is diminished in our understanding. We really do not appreciate grace in the same way and that is because there is an element of knowing Christ that is missing in our lives. But the more we know of Christ and His grace, multiples grace in our lives.

My entire Christian life was immeasurably changed when I came to understand the sovereignty of God and so much of the Scripture took on a new and deeper and better meaning because to understand this truth is knowing more of Christ.

It is the same concerning peace. The peace of God that surpasses all human comprehension is multiplied in our lives because Christ is our peace and to know Him more is to have multiplied peace in our lives.

seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and

godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence." 2Pe 1:3.

With this multiplied grace and peace as a result of knowing more of Christ, we realize that it is not just knowledge alone but also by God's divine power that He has provided everything we need to live a godly life and of course that too comes from a true knowledge of Christ. This empowers us for godly living. His divine power is at work in us through the agency of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised that to those who are His sheep they would hear His voice. He called us by His own glory and excellence and He promised that by the power of the Holy Spirit we would be His witnesses and that the Holy Spirit would produce fruit in us, which is what displays our godly living.

Notice that it says granted everything pertaining to life and godliness. He gave us the whole package. There is nothing to earn and nothing to look for. It is all there as a result of being in Christ. Everything that will make us live as a new creature in Christ as a spiritual man in the Spirit Covenant has been given to us. We are lacking nothing as Paul wrote to the Philippians:

"12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." Philippians 2:12,13.

God grants all these things to us for His pleasure and for our benefit so that we can take pleasure in Him.

You see there is a true knowledge of Him and a false knowledge. In this Peter is laying the foundation for addressing the false teachers. No matter what a genuinely false teacher teaches about Scripture, in the end, it is teaching something that is false about Christ because in the end all of scripture's priority is the revelation of Jesus Christ.

He called us by His own glory and excellence, in other words His divine character and high moral quality that impacts all true believers in Christ. His high moral quality may be well spoken of by unbelievers but they cannot speak of his divine nature.

"4 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." 2Pe 1:4.



By his divine nature and his high moral quality He also grants us His precious and magnificent promises.

Verse four is qualifying verse three where it is talking about godly living. When we are living in a godly manner we are partakers of the divine nature. We are identified with Christ because we are able to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust, unlike the false prophets that he will teach about.

These great and magnificent promises tell us that because of Christ we ultimately overcome sin and death and condemnation. Corruption is a gradual process. And even for believers their bodies may corrupt in the grave, but spiritually we are progressing toward glorification. We are new creatures in Christ and part of the everlasting New Covenant and it is a Spirit Covenant that gives life because where the Spirit is there is life and liberty not only in living but also from sin and death. There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. All of these things prove to us that we are incurable lovers of Christ and move us to know Christ more and as we do we will be displaying more of the divine nature which in turn displays more of the glory and excellence of Christ.

Our escape from the corruptions in the world through lust is our knowledge and growing knowledge of Christ as we are partakers in the divine nature and live godly lives.

We seize hold of the promises of eternal life by God's grace and then we continue to seize hold of the promises of Christ as we partake in the divine nature that our salvation produces.

The false prophets have no hope to offer and no promises that are found in Christ.

The world holds out all kinds of false promises that only lead to corruption through lust, which is ungodliness. All kinds of false hopes are given in the promises of the world. It is tragic when that which says it is the church would rather cling to these promises than those of her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.