

2 Peter Notes

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Introduction:

Peter knows he is nearing his death and wants to leave a reminder with the Church of what it really means to know Jesus and grow in a relationship with Him. (1 Pet. 1:14-15; 3:1)

The word “know” or “knowledge” is used at least 13 times in this short epistle. (See also John 17:3.)

Chapter 1:

1:1 – “Simon” – means “hearing.”

- “Peter” – means “rock.”
- “bondservant” – (Gr. “doulos”) Lit. “slave with no rights.”
- “apostle” – Lit. “one sent out.”
- “Jesus” – Name spoken 5 times in the first 11 verses.
- “like precious faith” – We have received the same salvation as Peter received.
 - There is no difference in the quality of relationship with God offered to Jews and Gentiles. There is also no difference from the 1st century church to the 21st century church. And there is no difference between any individual believer of our generation.
- “God...Jesus Christ” – Speaking of the deity of Christ.
 - Jesus is God! (Matt. 1:23; 28:19; Luke 1:35; 5:20-21; John 1:1,3,10,14,18; 5:18; Rom. 1:4; 9:5; 1 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:6; Col. 1:15-20; 2:9; Titus 2:13; Heb. 1:3,8; Rev. 1:13-18; 22:13)

1:2 – “Grace and peace” – Always in that order.

- “knowledge” – (Greek “epignosis”) Lit. “experiential knowledge.” The key to our growth and satisfaction is getting to know Jesus better and better. Knowing Him in reality and in revelation.
 - If we seek grace and peace, we will never get it. If we seek Jesus, He will fill us with grace and peace, as well as with a knowledge of Him, and we will have both.
 - We can get caught up in the lessons, fads, and information and yet miss Jesus.

1:3 – “His divine power has given to us” – The strength to live Godly lives is imparted from God Himself.

- “has given” – The tense is literally “has given us once and for all.”
- “all things that pertain to life and godliness” – We lack no good thing. (Ps. 23:1)
- “through the knowledge of Him” – All blessing from God is the result of personally and experientially knowing God in a growing and loving relationship. (John 17:3)
- “virtue” – The moral and energetic excellency of God. (v. 5)

1:4 – “promises” – There are an estimated 7,000+ promises in the Bible.

- “partakers of the divine nature” – Knowing Jesus fills us and changes us. (Col. 1:27)
 - “...we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” (1 John 3:2)
 - “now we see in a mirror...then I shall know just as I am known.” (1 Cor. 13:12)
 - “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of God, are being transformed in the same image from glory to glory.” (2 Cor. 3:18)
- “through lust” – Personal desire is the motivating force that leads to the corruption of the world.

- 1:5 – “diligence” – Relationships require personal and relational effort.
- We are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. (Phil. 2:12-13)
 - “add” – Lit. “to furnish, to supply generously.” (This word is translated “supplied” in v. 11.)
 - The Greek word spoke of a benefactor that sponsored a performing band or chorus.
 - “to your faith” – Everything starts with faith in Jesus Christ. (John 6:29)
- 1:5-7 – “virtue” – Lit. “moral excellence, courage.” Virtue is living according to your design. (v. 3)
- “knowledge” – Lit. “learning, understanding.” The ability to handle life successfully.
 - “self-control” – The ability to deny pleasing things that are not beneficial.
 - “perseverance” – (Greek “hupomone”) The ability to endure the pressures of life.
 - “godliness” – Lit. “the devoted life.”
 - “brotherly kindness” – (Greek “phileo”) Fondness and friendship.
 - “love” – (Greek “agape”) Unconditional love.
- 1:8 – “barren” – Can also be translated “idle, ineffective.”
- “unfruitful” – God wants these qualities not only worked into us, but also to flow through us so we can bear fruit before others that would cause them to see and know God for themselves.
 - The truest evidence of a saved life is a changed life.
 - “in the knowledge of Jesus” – These qualities are not worked into us by our own self-effort or religious strength, but by knowing Jesus and living in that knowledge.
 - Our salvation is worked out the same way it was worked in – by trusting Jesus.
 - “As you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, so walk in Him.” (Col. 2:6)
- 1:9 – “short-sighted” – Lit. “near-sighted.” Forgetting where we have come from and where we are going causes a lack of perspective that thinks of only oneself in the here and now.
- “even to blindness” – Saying we know Jesus, but not changing into an accurate picture of who He is, is a deception. (James 1:23-24)
- 1:10 – “be even more diligent” – Adding onto v. 5.
- “make your call and election sure, if you do these things” – This provides an interesting commentary on the security of the believer.
 - “never stumble” – This is making progress spiritually.
 - Keep moving forward so you don’t go back.
- 1:11 – “entrance...abundantly” – This Greek phrase referred to the welcome athletes received when returning from the Olympic Games victoriously.
- The progress in our walks in this life will dictate our rewards for eternity. Heavenly rewards may be connected with our capacity to enjoy glory.
- 1:12 – “For this reason” – Because of the hope of the abundant entrance into heaven.
- “remind” – The work of the minister is to remind the people of things God has already given to them. A minister ought not to think he is giving people something new or something they haven’t heard before. He is to merely confirm what the Holy Spirit has previously taught.

- 1:13 – “to stir you up” – Biblical knowledge should lead to Christian action.
- “by reminding you” – The primary job of the pastor-teacher is to confirm what God has already spoken to the believer by the Spirit.
 - Jesus said it would be the Spirit that would guide us into all truth. (John 16:13)
 - If it is new, it is not true. If it is true, it is not new. (Never take a man’s word.)
 - The Bereans were more noble because they searched the Scriptures. (Acts 17:11)
- 1:14 – “tent” – Peter speaking of his body. (2 Cor. 5:1-8)
- “Jesus Christ showed me” – “Stretch out your arms...take you...” (John 21:18-19)
- 1:15 – “decease” – Lit. “exodus.” Dying is just moving to heaven.
- 1:16 – “fables” – (Greek “muthos”) Lit. “myths.” The Greek and Roman pantheon of gods were derived from the ancient myths like the Iliad and Odyssey by Homer.
- “eyewitnesses of His majesty” – The Transfiguration is an example of something Peter saw.
- 1:18 – “we heard” – Peter, James, and John.
- “the voice” – Which came as God scolded Peter for proposing to build three shrines.
 - Elijah and Moses were speaking to Jesus of His exodus. (Matt. 17:1-8)
- 1:19 – “prophetic word confirmed” – Or “the more sure prophetic word.” The context of vv. 20-21 to follow reveal that Peter is emphasizing the surety of Biblical revelation in Scripture above even the visible revelation of God on the Mount of Transfiguration.
- The Word of God is now a more sure reality than spiritual experience.
 - “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.” (Matt. 22:29)
 - “a light that shines” – We cannot beat out the darkness, but we can turn on the light.
 - “in a dark place” – This present world. (1 Cor. 13:12; 2 Cor. 3:18)
 - “morning star rises in your hearts” – It is a growing knowledge of God.
 - “...ever brighter unto the perfect day.” (Prov. 4:18)
- 1:20 – “private” – Lit. “his/its own.” (Speaking of the origin primarily, not the interpretation.)
- No single person gets secret revelation from Scripture that cannot be verified in other areas of Scripture or amongst other believers throughout the history of the Church.
- 1:21 – “moved” – Lit. “driven along.” This word was used of Paul’s boat in the storm in Acts 27.
- God was the author, using human pens.

Chapter 2:

2:1 – “false teachers” – The context indicates a misuse of the Scriptures.

- “will be...among you” – There will be false teachers in the Church until the final harvest.
 - The responsibility of church leaders is to feed the flock and warn them of wolves in sheep’s clothing. If there is no warning, then the sheep are only being fattened for the kill.
- “secretly” – These false teachers attempt to hide their true intent, which is often to get the people to follow them.
- “bring in” – Lit. “bring in alongside.” (Jesus and...)
 - Most heresy begins with a truth, but then adds to it or morphs from it into false doctrine.
- “destructive” – Lit. “damnable.”
- “denying the Lord” – Not teaching Jesus as God in the flesh is an immediate indication of a false teacher. (1 John 2:18-29; 4:1-6)
 - The primary subject of the Scriptures is the person and work of Jesus Christ. (John 5:39)
 - They set aside Jesus by making other things more important; reducing Jesus to a model or an example, and no longer looking to Him as the Son of God come to take away sins.
- “bought” – Lit. “redeemed.” Christian redemption through the substitutionary sacrificial atonement of Jesus Christ on the cross is a/the main doctrine attacked by false teachers.

2:2 – “many will follow” – Crowds are not necessarily the sign of God’s blessing. (Matt. 7:22-23)

- “because of whom...blasphemed” – Their misrepresentation of God turns people off to God.

2:3 – “covetousness” – This desire for more is found in both the teachers and their followers.

- “exploit” – Lit. “make merchandise.” (Mark 11:17)
 - Jesus calls the wolves in sheep’s clothing “extortionists.” (Matt. 7:15)
- “deceptive” – (Greek “plastos”) Lit. “plastic, or fake.” Imitation. Hypocrisy.
- “destruction does not slumber” – Their destruction is already on the way.

2:4-10 – One run-on sentence. The point: God punished in the past and will punish these false teachers as well, separating out the righteous before the judgment.

2:4 – “the angels who sinned” – Seems to be speaking of the angels of Gen. 6 that pursued relationships with human women and produced an offspring of giants. (Jude 6)

- “hell” – (Greek “Tartarus”) The other angels who rebelled with Satan were sent to Hades and are now demons actively involved in the present world.
 - “And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man.” (Luke 17:26)

2:5 – “did not spare...but saved Noah” – Punishing some; delivering others.

2:6-8 – “ashes” – The Jordan Valley Rift is 1/5 the circumference of the earth.

- “condemned them to destruction...and delivered righteous Lot” – Another example.
 - The iniquity of Sodom was pride of life, full belly, idleness, and neglect of the poor. (Ezek. 16:49) That iniquity manifested in the sin of aggressive homosexuality.
 - It is a sure sign of God’s judgment when sin is accepted, promoted, and publicly flaunted. (Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9)
- “righteous Lot” – Righteous because of God’s pronouncement, not because of his life.
 - Lot is the example of the saved man with a wasted life.

- 2:9 – “the Lord knows how to deliver the godly” – God does this regarding salvation and regarding eschatology.
- “For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thess. 5:9)
- 2:10 – “authority” – “The authorities that be are ordained of God.” (Rom. 13:1)
- “dignitaries” – Seems to be speaking of angels. (Jude 8-10)
- 2:12 – “natural” – (Greek “psuchikos”) Lit. “of the mind, of the senses.” (James 3:15; Jude 19)
- “brute” – Lit. “unreasoning, irrational.”
 - Animals are capable of functioning according to this means. They have bodies and minds; they don’t have spirits as humans have.
 - “speak evil...do not understand” – They are limited to their senses, and therefore do not understand the things of the spirit. But they aren’t afraid to speak evil of those things even though they do not understand them.
 - “You’re mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.” (Matt. 22:29)
- 2:13 – “wages of unrighteousness” – Exploiting with deceptive words. (v. 3)
- “carouse...carousing” – Lit. “to live luxuriously, to revel in.”
 - They are promoting and practicing publicly the sin that most others will try to hide.
 - “feast with you” – They find place and fellowship within the body of believers. (1 Cor. 11:20-34; Jude 12)
- 2:14 – “eyes full of adultery” – This phrase speaks of a man who cannot see a woman without lustful thoughts toward her.
- “enticing unstable souls” – They lead others into sin. (1 Cor. 5:6,11)
 - Those who are themselves impudent and incessant in sin are very diligent and often successful in deceiving others and drawing some into the same sins.
- 2:15 – “following” – Lit. “to imitate, to follow in another’s footsteps.”
- “way of Balaam” – Using a religious front for personal financial gain. (Num. 22-24; Jude 11; Rev. 2:14)
- 2:16 – “rebuked for his iniquity” – If the mere rebuke of a sinner is enough to make a man return to his duty, surely the rebuke of Balaam by his donkey would have produced this effect.
- “madness of the prophet” – His madness is demonstrated by the fact he spoke back to and threatened the talking donkey.
- 2:17 – “wells” – Finding a water source was very valuable in the middle eastern desert.
- “wells without water” – Lit. “a mirage.” They offer the hope of satisfaction, but provide none.
 - They cannot give what they do not have. They really have nothing to offer.
- 2:18-22 – “they...them” – Refers to the false teachers, not believers.
- 2:18 – “great swelling words of emptiness” – Spiritual wind bags. They are great orators, but without good spiritual content.
- “allure” – Lit. “to catch by bait.”
 - “ones who have actually escaped” – New believers. Genuine, but weak and immature in the faith.

- 2:19 – “promise them liberty” – They are making claims of a deeper lifestyle and deeper truths than the pure truth of the Scriptures.
- “slaves of corruption” – These false teachers cannot overcome their own sin.
- 2:20 – “knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” – This sounds like saving faith. (Heb. 6:4-6)
- “entangled” – Lit. “woven into, embroidered.”
 - In the Parable of the Sower, some seed grows to be entangled by weeds and becomes unfruitful. (Matt. 13:22)
- 2:21 – “better for them not to have known” – They’re held accountable for the light they have.
- Covetousness in the life of a Christian can inoculate us against the truth, making it seem like God is unable to give us the eternal life that He promised for those who trust Him.
- 2:22 – “dog returns to his own vomit” – The nature of these false teachers. (Prov. 26:11)
- They looked good on the outside for a time, but eventually their nature comes through.
 - “vomit” – The violent expulsion from the body of something that is making you sick.
 - If it made you that sick once, why would you eat it again?

Chapter 3:

- 3:1 – “Beloved” – Used 4 times in chapter 3 (v. 1, 8, 14, and 17), as Peter signs off. Although he speaks of the false teacher in chapter 2, his main concern is for the genuine believers.
- “pure” – Lit. “unmixed, sincere, all of one substance.”
 - “reminder” – Peter again tells them he wants them to remember these things. (2 Pet. 1:12-15)
- 3:2 – “words which were spoken before by the holy prophets” – The OT Scriptures.
- “holy prophets” – These stand in contrast to the false prophets.
 - “us, the apostles” – Peter equates the NT apostles and the OT prophets.
 - Peter also includes Paul as an author of Scripture. (v. 15-16)
- 3:3 – “first” – Not in order, but in preeminence. Most importantly.
- “scoffers” – A scoffer is someone who treats lightly that which ought to be taken seriously.
 - “their own lusts” – People often choose not to believe because they prefer to remain in their sinful lifestyle, not because there isn’t enough evidence of the truth. (John 3:19)
 - These include, but are not limited to, the false teachers of 2 Peter 2.
 - “the last days” – The time period between the Messiah’s first and second comings.
- 3:4 – “all things continue” – Uniformitarianism rules out drastic changes due to divine intervention.
- “the promise” – God’s word does not fail. We must not mistake delay for failure.
 - “His coming” – The Bible teaches the imminent return of Jesus Christ. Every generation of the Church is to live as if Jesus could come back in their lifetime.
- 3:5 – “willfully forget” – The heart makes a convert of the mind. They want to forget.
- “word of God” – (Greek “logos”) Used 2 times in the next 3 verses.
 - God’s word reflects God’s character. This is Jesus, in particular.
 - “standing out of water” – Lit. “collected out of the water.” This was when God separated the land from the sea in creation.

- 3:6 – “the world” – This was a global flood.
- “flooded” – Every ancient civilization has a record of a global deluge.
 - One evidence against uniformitarianism. (Matt. 24:37-39)
- 3:7 – “preserved by the same word” – In Jesus, all things are held together. (Col. 1:17)
- The great power holding the elements together is released in nuclear reactions.
 - “reserved” – Lit. “slowly being stored up.” Like water behind a dam.
- 3:8-10 – “longsuffering...day of the Lord will come as a thief” – There is a constant tension between the patience of God and the suddenness of Christ’s return.
- “things must shortly come to pass.” (Rev. 1:1) The Greek for shortly is “en tachos” meaning to rev up and tack out quickly.
- 3:8 – “do not forget this one thing” – Lit. “let not this one thing be hidden from you.”
- We must always remember that God is not a glorified version of ideal humanity.
 - “a thousand years as one day” – Psalm 90:4.
- 3:9 – “Lord is not slack...but longsuffering” – People living in sin, yet not being punished for it aren’t getting away with it, they are just running out of time.
- “God’s kindness leads us to repentance.” (Rom. 2:4)
 - “As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” (Ezek. 33:11)
 - “not willing that any should perish” – This verse actually speaks to the free will of man that can override the desire of God for all of mankind to be saved. “While God is always willing to save man, man is not always willing to be saved” – Wuest.
 - Any delay in Christ’s return is only to the benefit of the scoffers who mock His delay.
- 3:10-12 – “great noise” – (Greek “rhoizedon”) Lit. “sizzling and cracking.”
- “melt...dissolved...dissolved” – Lit. “loosed.” As electron separates from atom.
 - “fervent heat” – Lit. “to burn up, to set on fire.”
 - “melt” - (of verse 12) – Lit. “to make liquid.”
- 3:10 – “as a thief in the night” – If we say there is something that must happen between now and the return of Christ, then we do not believe in the imminent return of Jesus. (Luke 12:39; 1 Thess. 5:2; Rev. 3:3; 16:15)
- “and the works that are in it” – This should keep us from materialism in all forms.
- 3:11 – “what manner of persons ought you to be” – If we truly believe that Jesus Christ could return at any time, then it will affect how we live.
- And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” (1 John 3:3)
 - “what manner” – Lit. “from what country.” It has the idea of foreign.
- 3:12 – “looking for” – The idea is “with expectancy.” (Luke 3:15; Acts 3:5)
- “these things begin to happen, look up...redemption draws nigh.” (Luke 21:28)
 - “hastening the coming of the day of God” – Peter implies that the prayer and faith of believers may hurry the return of Christ and the fulfillment of God’s plans in human history.

- 3:13 – “Nevertheless we” – The believers escape before the burning.
- “new heavens and a new earth” – “God will again ‘bara.’” (Isa. 65:17; 66:22)
 - “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.” (Rev. 21:1)
 - “dwells” – Lit. “is right at home.”
- 3:14 – “Therefore” – The application of these truths to our lives should change us in:
1. Purity – “without spot and blameless (v. 14)...beware lest you also fall (v. 17).”
 2. Intimacy – “grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.” (v. 18)
- “without spot and blameless” – This is the result of the imputed righteousness of Christ in our lives. (Jude 24)
- 3:15 – “the longsuffering of our Lord” – This is written to a Church suffering under Rome and Nero.
- “beloved brother Paul” – Peter speaks of Paul in endearing terms, despite their public conflict of Galatians 2.
- 3:16 – “in all his epistles” – Paul wrote of the second coming of Christ in all his letters.
- “twist” – Lit. “to put on the rack.” These torture the Biblical texts by twisting and stretching them beyond their true meaning. (2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2)
 - “destruction” – Both for now and for all of eternity.
 - “the rest of the Scriptures” – Peter includes Paul’s writings in the divinely inspired canon of Scripture. (v. 2)
- 3:17 – “you know beforehand” – (Greek “prognosco”) Lit. “to make a prognosis.” As a doctor would evaluate a sick patient.
- “lest you also fall” – Peter has seen others fall.
 - “being led away with the error of the wicked” – Our beliefs will affect our behavior.
- 3:18 – “grow” – Lit. “be constantly growing.”
- Only by moving forward can you guarantee that you will not fall backward.
 - “grace” – Peter wrote of the “manifold grace of God.” (1 Pet. 4:10)
 - From Peter’s past failures – cutting Malchus’ ear, denying Jesus, being confronted by Paul in Galatia – to his maturation, his growth is all due to the grace of God.
 - The more we grow, the less we sin, but the more we confess. We grow in grace, not in legalism. Only grace will produce a changed life.
 - “knowledge of...Jesus Christ” – Jesus is “full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)
 - At the end of Peter’s life, he is telling us how to not miss life – know Jesus.