

II Peter

As we continue our study in the Word of God, we want to look at the book of II Peter, and I trust that you'll have your Bible open as we go through verse by verse, looking at this important epistle. Of course, all of them are important. All the books of the Bible are important. The Bible tells us that the Word was given to us for our edification, for our knowledge, and this helps us to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The Bible is given to us that we may grow as Christians and learn the things that God has for us.

Right now, we want to look in the book of II Peter, and as we look there, we want to understand that our joy needs to be full. This is somewhat of what Peter talks about here, and he also gives us some warnings as we look at this book.

The time and place of the writing of this book, and as we look at this, Peter makes reference to his imminent death. In verse 14 of Chapter 1, it says, *Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.*

Jesus Christ revealed this to Peter, that one day he was going to die and also that at this time he evidently had reason to believe and knowing that his death was going to be soon. It's generally accepted that Peter died during the reign of Nero. Since Nero commanded the people there, you'll remember how he was a ruthless dictator. He used to burn Christians. Nero committed suicide in 67 A.D. and the epistle must be dated before then, but the epistle was therefore probably written sometime during 67 A.D. The place of the writing is uncertain, but some believe that it

was written by Peter during his imprisonment at Rome.

What about the purpose of the epistle? Peter states his purpose very clearly in writing this epistle. In II Peter 1:12-15 the Bible says, *¹²Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. ¹³Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; ¹⁴Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. ¹⁵Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.*

So we see that the purpose of this writing is to stir up the brethren. He wanted to stir his brethren up to remember certain things, and we're going to look at some of those things as we go through this epistle. In verse 1 of chapter 3, it says, *This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.* He wanted them to remember certain things, and he had warned these people of certain things that would come about. And just as he was warning them, he's warning us today.

Well, let's look at the introduction now to II Peter, and we see this introduction taking place in verses 1-2. The author once again we see in verse 1 here is Simon Peter, the apostle Peter as stated in the salutation in verse 1. Of course, the writer claims to have been present when the Lord was transfigured on the mount. You remember the transfiguration of Christ that took place in Matthew 17:1-9 we read of there, and in II Peter 1:16-18, it says, *¹⁶For we have not followed cunningly devised fables,*

when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Peter, there, is talking about the transfiguration when Christ was on the mount and he was present there with the Lord, Simon Peter, the writer of this epistle. And he acknowledges acquaintance with the apostle Paul, as we read in II Peter 3:15. It says there, *And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you. So Peter was also acquainted with the apostle Paul.*

And I have no problem accepting Peter the apostle as the writer of this epistle. Notice what he says about himself. He says, "Simon Peter, a servant." He was a servant, and this word "servant" means bond servant. He was sold out to the Lord. This is a far cry from what we saw of Peter's past where he denied the Lord three times just before our Lord was crucified. We see now that Peter says, "Yes, I am a servant. I am a bond servant. I am sold out to the Lord, and I'm ready to lay down my life for my Savior." And, of course, tradition tells us that he did lay down his life for his Lord.

Well, he's a servant as he has said here in verse 1, and he is an apostle. Apostles were those individuals who were chosen by our Lord, and, also, we know that after Judas Iscariot betrayed our Lord, and I believe that Judas Iscariot was not a saved person, that he was replaced by Mathias in the book of Acts. Mathias was chosen, and I believe that after the early church, we see no more apostles.

The church age as we know it today does not contain apostles, does not have apostles. Well, some would disagree with that. That's up to them. They need to get in the Word of God and they need to study the history that's contained in the Bible. Don't look to man for the answers but look to God for the answers. Look in the Scriptures. And if you'll follow the teaching of the Scripture, you'll see that there are no apostles today.

Well, the participants that we see in verse 1 here are those people who are saved. It says there, *Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* He's writing to the saved people in the faith. This letter is addressed to those who have obtained "like precious faith with us by the righteousness of God and Savior Jesus Christ."

The author notes that this is the second epistle he has written to them. In II Peter 3:1, once again, it talks about that. The recipients of the letter were those Christian pilgrims. You can go back and read I Peter 1:1 and 2:11. It talks about these people who were living in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. These are provinces in what is now Turkey.

Peter goes on in verse and he continues greetings here, and he says, *Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.* He says, "Grace and peace be multiplied..." and we see there in that verse grace and peace are multiplied for Christians. And how is it multiplied? Knowledge, through learning. It's through learning more about God the Father and Jesus.

I find that in my dealings with so many Christians today they've stopped growing.

They're not in the Word of God, and this is what Peter is wanting us to do. He's wanting us to get into the Word of God. He wants us to grow in grace and knowledge of our Savior, Jesus Christ. And that's how we learn and that's how we stay strong in the Lord, through learning, through the knowledge of God, and there's one way and only one way to gain that knowledge of God and that is through his Word.

Dr. Henry Morris has said this about this. "Paul normally," he says, "began his epistles with 'grace and peace,' Romans 1:7, but Peter begins with 'grace times peace.'" Dr. Morris goes on to say, "Marvelous is the implication of infinite grace, II Corinthians 8:9, multiplied by infinite peace, Philippians 4:7." He says, "The product can only be eternal fullness of joy."

You can read John 50:11 in connection with that, and in fact, let me read that: *These things*, John says, *have I spoken unto you....* [and this is the Lord speaking through the apostle John here, as the apostle John as writing this down; he says...] *These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full.*

So if you want to learn the things of God and gain the knowledge of God. Get in the Scriptures. If you want the full joy, the joy that is unspeakable through Jesus Christ, it's not only the joy of knowing that you have eternal life, but it's the joy that is multiplied as you study the Word of God. We gain more and more knowledge, more and more joy, as we understand who we are, how we've been saved, and who has saved us, and that is our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Peter says in verse 2, *Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.* Only saved

people can gain this knowledge of God, the knowledge of joy, the knowledge of knowing you have eternal life, and that comes through Jesus, our Lord. The unsaved person today can gain eternal life through the Word of God. The Bible says faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, but until that person comes to that saving knowledge, he will not understand the complete joy, the complete peace that comes through our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Peter continues on in verses 3-21, and he tells us and he was telling these people as he wrote this epistle, "Grow in grace and knowledge." He wants people to understand that they can grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord.

Notice verses 3-4 and we see here we are to grow in grace and knowledge with precious gifts from God. God gives us the gifts. Now notice with me verses 3-4: *³According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: ⁴Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

Once again, he's writing to saved people here. He's writing to people who know Jesus as Savior and these people need to understand... the Christians today need to understand that the divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness. How do you live for the Lord? It's through Jesus Christ. We can't do it though ourselves. We can't do it ourselves. It has to be through the Lord. We can't save ourselves. We can't keep ourselves saved. It's all of God.

And my question today is, do you know Jesus Christ as your Savior? And I have a question

for the Christian today: Is your joy full? Are you in the Word of God? Peter reminds us in this epistle that we are to be in the Word of God to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, and when we do, our joy will be full.

If you've never trusted Jesus as your Savior, you need to have that joy, that joy that is unspeakable, that comes through knowing Jesus as Savior. You need to ask Him to come into your heart today. "Lord, save me. I want to go to Heaven. I want to live for you."

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