



Master of Truth

GROWING IN FAITH

2 Peter 1

Teaching Notes

INTRO

Second Peter is a follow-up to 1 Peter. Our phrase for 1 Peter was *Living Hope* amidst suffering. In 2 Peter, we'll look at false teaching, and our phrase for the book is *Master of Truth*. In 2 Peter 2:1, Peter wrote, "But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false prophets among you." These teachers would secretly bring in destructive heresies and even deny Jesus the *Master of Truth*. These were things that would go against the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the face of these heresies, Peter told his readers to hang on to the *Master of Truth*.

The author of 2 Peter was the same as 1 Peter—Simon Peter, who identified himself in 1 Peter 1:1. In 2 Peter 3:1, Peter stated this was the second letter he had written. Second Peter 1:14 states Jesus told him how he would die (John 21:18-19). In verses 16-18, Simon Peter explained he was with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Yet, even with all this internal evidence of Peter's authorship, MacArthur explains:

"However, critics have generated more controversy over 2 Peter's authorship and rightful place in the canon of Scripture than over any other New Testament book. The church fathers were slow in giving it their acceptance. No church father refers to 2 Peter by name until Origen near the beginning of the third century. The ancient church historian, Eusebius, only included 2 Peter in his list of disputed books, along with James, Jude, 2 John, and 3 John."¹

Part of the confusion about authorship is that 1 Peter and 2 Peter used different writing styles. Peter dictated his first letter to his amanuensis, Silvanus. However, Peter either wrote the second letter himself or used a different scribe or amanuensis. Interestingly, Peter used certain unusual words in 2 Peter that he also used in his preaching in Acts. For example, compare the use of the word "obtained" in 2 Peter 1:2 to Acts 1:17; the use of "godliness" in 2 Peter 1:3, 6, 7 to Acts 3:12; and the use of "wages of iniquity" in 2 Peter 2:13, 15 to Acts 1:18.²

Another point of controversy is that the letters of Peter also deal with different themes. For example, "one letter teaches that the Second Coming is near, and one deals with its delay. First Peter, ministering especially to suffering Christians, focuses on the imminency of Christ as a means of encouraging the Christians. Second Peter, dealing with scoffers, emphasizes the reasons why that imminent return of Christ has not yet occurred."³ Some critics of 2 Peter even suggest a false teacher wrote the book as a forgery.⁴

The dating of the book is based on Nero's death in AD 68. Since tradition holds Peter died during Nero's persecution of Christians, Peter possibly wrote 2 Peter between AD 67–68. Peter probably wrote from the prison in Rome while he waited for his execution. Although the audience was not identified in 2 Peter, the assumption is 2 Peter was written to the same audience identified in 1 Peter 1:1.⁵

TEACHING

2 Peter 1:1-3: In verse 1, Peter identified himself as a slave to Christ and as one of the apostles who served personally with Christ. He wrote to believers "who have obtained a faith of equal privilege with ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ." As believers, we have obtained the same status as the original apostles. Verse 2 is a common Christian greeting. Constable describes verses 3-11 as "The Condition of the Christian."⁶ Verse 3 explains God has given us everything we need to live godly lives. By the power of God through Jesus Christ, we have everything *we* need! The power of Christ's resurrection is all we need (Ephesians 1:19 -20; Philippians 3:10).

¹ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), pp. 1924.

² MacArthur, p. 1924.

³ MacArthur, p. 1924.

⁴ MacArthur, p. 1925.

⁵ MacArthur, p. 1925.

⁶ Thomas Constable, *Dr. Constable's Exposition Bible Study Notes: 2 Peter*, p. 13; available at <https://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/2peter.pdf>.



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2 Peter 1:4–7: Here we have been given resources through God’s divine power and Jesus’ resurrection. We have been given great, precious promises that allow us to share in His divine nature and escape all the suffering of the world. These precious promises include that Jesus is coming back and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. That doesn’t mean believers will not go through times of suffering, but we do have the resources to hold on to as we go through these times. We cannot fight false teachings if we don’t know the truth first. Therefore, Peter told believers to supplement their faith with goodness, then continued the progression of one spiritual discipline to another (vv. 5-7). In Mindi’s painting, these “supplements” are shown through the butterflies—faith can be strengthened through the supplements of goodness, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. Constable describes these supplements as:

- **Goodness** is moral excellence, and includes those things that fulfill our purpose or function in Christ properly.
- **Knowledge** is acquired information that is revealed in His Word.
- **Self-control** is being self-disciplined, being able to control our cares and desires.
- **Endurance** or perseverance is the ability to keep on in spite of adversity.
- **Godliness** refers to behavior that reflects the character of God.
- **Brotherly kindness** is the thoughtful consideration of fellow believers.
- **Love** refers to the highest form of love with which God has loved us (John 3:16).⁷

2 Peter 1:8–11: This process leads us to have greater faith. It looks like you have to take each of these supplements and make them part of your life before you can move on to the next supplement. This growth of faith will keep believers from being useless or unfruitful for Christ (v. 8). Peter describes believers who don’t develop these things in their lives as blind and shortsighted, who have forgotten that Jesus cleansed them from sin through His own death and resurrection (v. 9).

CLOSING

Lord, increase our faith, so we can walk out who You are in our lives, despite struggles or difficult circumstances.

⁷ Constable, pp. 20-21.