

2 Peter: God of Promises

Memory Verse: 2 Peter 1:3-4 "His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."

Background

Second Peter is the 61st book of the Bible and the 22nd book in the New Testament. Peter wrote this letter from Rome soon after his first letter between 64-67 AD. Addressing "those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:" (1:1), Peter wrote to the same recipients as his first letter (3:1). Apparently he had heard reports of false teachers in and among the churches in Asia Minor. Therefore in his second letter, he warns his audience about the insidious nature of false teachers and encourages his people to stand firm and grow in the knowledge of God. Peter wrote this letter knowing that his death was near. "...I know that I will soon put it [the tent of this body] aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me." (1:14). Peter met his death at the hands of the Romans during Nero's Persecution around 67 AD.

The Short Story

Pursue spiritual maturity through the Word of God as a remedy against false teaching and heresy.

What's the Big Idea?

Peter begins his letter with words of great encouragement, reminding his audience that God's "divine power" and His "very great and precious promises" have been given to us so that we may "participate in the divine nature" and escape the corruption in this world (1:3-4). He then calls believers to pursue spiritual maturity, increasing in the qualities of faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly affection, and love (1:5-8). Peter then confirms the authenticity of the written Word of God, not only preserving eyewitness testimony of Jesus Christ, but also showing the reliability and fulfillment of the prophecy of Scripture (1:12-21). Next, Peter warns of false teachers. He informs readers that "They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—...Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories..." (2:1-3). It is a terrible sin to corrupt the Church, and these false teachers with their lies and depravity will bring their destruction upon themselves, being condemned and destroyed with "blackest darkness...reserved for them" (2:1-22). Finally, Peter reminds his readers that the Day of the Lord is coming. Although many may scoff and ridicule people for anticipating Christ's return, believers are not to abandon hope. "But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come..." (3:8-10). In light of this, Peter calls believers to "live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming..." (3:11-12).

So What? Why is this book so important? What was God's purpose for the book?

Peter not only warned his readers about false teachers, he also provided instruction on how to guard against their teachings and the discord that they sow in our families and churches. Repeatedly, he points to the importance of spiritual growth through the proper knowledge of the Word of God (1:4, 19-21; 3:1-2, 14-16). "Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen." (3:17-18). False teachers and heresies are still a reality. However, one day Christ will return and evil will be destroyed forever. We, like Peter's audience, can trust His promises and look forward to living with Him in "a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells" (3:13).

**Material taken from various sources.*

Teaching Text

2 Peter 1:3-4 “His divine power has given us **everything we need for a godly life** through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his **very great and precious promises**, so that through them you may **participate in the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”

Sermon-Based Discussion Questions

- Why would Peter start off with mentioning God’s “divine power”? Why is power so important in the Bible?
- What sort of things has God given each believer to live a godly life? What are you thankful for?
- Why is having more knowledge about Jesus necessary for living out your faith? Explain.
- Why are promises important to the Christian? What do they accomplish? What do they say about God?
- How do we participate in the divine nature of God? What does it look like? How do we apply it?

Practical Application

- If you were to describe your self image, what would it look like? Spiritually? Emotionally? Mentally?
- Which promises of God mean the most to you? Why are they so import to you personally?
- What part of Christ’s nature is most appealing to you? How could you reflect His nature more?
- Where do you need to be more intentional in revealing how God has transformed your life?
- What do you need to let go of so you can embrace more of God’s promises? Why is this hard?

Hitting the Highpoints

- 1:5-11 “For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love...”
- 1:21 “For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”
- 3:17-18 “Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position...”

Bonus Features—The Promise of the Spirit

“The promised blessings of the gospel are very precious; as the great promise of the Old Testament was *the Seed of the woman*, the Messiah (Heb. 11:39), so the great promise of the New Testament is the *Holy Ghost* (Luke 24:49), and how precious must the enlivening, enlightening, sanctifying Spirit be! Those who receive the promises of the gospel *partake of the divine nature*. They are *renewed in the spirit of their mind, after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness*; their hearts are set for God and his service; they have a divine temper and disposition of soul; though the law is *the ministration of death*, and *the letter killeth*, yet the gospel is *the ministration of life*, and *the Spirit quickeneth* those *who are naturally dead in trespasses and sins*. Those in whom the Spirit works the divine nature are freed from the bondage of corruption. Those who are, by the Spirit of grace, *renewed in the spirit of their mind*, are translated into *the liberty of the children of God*; for it is the

Personal Takeaways and Notes