

A LOOK AT THE BOOK
2 Peter
CONCENTRATE ON GROWING!

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AUTHOR AND DATE

2 Peter makes a clear claim to have been written by the apostle Peter.

Although external and internal evidence have provided debate, there is no clear evidence to contradict the claim of the book itself.

Debate:

Centers around number of books claiming to have been written by him.

Close parallels to Jude.

There is a qualitative difference between 2 Peter and the pseudonymous writings which claim him as author.

According to tradition, Peter was crucified upside down in A.D. 68.

The book was probably written late in his ministry, perhaps about A.D. 65.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The letter was written to the same group as his first letter (3:1).

They are saints who have been scattered throughout Asia Minor.

They have demonstrated their faith in God.

They have apparently passed through the persecution mentioned in 1 Peter.

They are now struggling against a new enemy: false teachers have come into their midst.

PURPOSE AND THEME

Peter wants the readers of his letter to continue our progressive development in the virtues taught in God's Word.

He wants us to reject the false teachers who are contradicting the truth they've been taught.

They are hindering people's growth.

They are causing stagnation.

In essence, the book contains an exhortation to keep growing and not let the false teachers stop us or "stunt" our spiritual growth.

Since God is going to intervene and judge the world, those who claim to be His people should remain faithful to Him and concentrate on that which will contribute to our growth.

ORGANIZATION

The message divides into four main parts:

Exhortation to grow 1:1-11

The means of growth: the Word of God 1:12-21

In spite of God's provision for growth, many have no interest in growing.

Rejection of growth is introduced as a warning 2:1-22

Exhortation not to be deceived by ignorant critics, but to understand God's plan for the future 3:1-18.

EXHORTATION TO GROWTH 1:1-11

INTRODUCTION 1-2

The introduction identifies Peter as the author and his readers as those who through Christ's righteousness have received a faith as precious as his own.

He has no question about their genuine salvation.

PROVISION FOR GROWTH 3-4

His desire for their continued growth builds on that faith as a starting point 3-11

God has provided everything we need to develop into all that He wishes us to become.

Faith (2) leads to knowledge of Him (3).

Growth is the result of the appropriation of the knowledge He has given to us.

PROCESS FOR GROWTH 5-7

We should attempt to add additional characteristics of a godly lifestyle to those we already display.

God wants us to develop progressively in faith, goodness (moral excellence, virtue), knowledge, self-control, patience (*hupomoné* = perseverance), godliness (*eusebeia* = piety, rightly religious), brotherly kindness (*philadelphia*), and love (*agape*).

REASONS FOR GROWTH 8-9

His reasons for desiring to see this continued growth are both positive and negative.

Positively, their development will protect us from ineffectiveness and unfruitfulness 8

On the other hand, if we fail to develop these characteristics,
we will become near-sighted and blind,
we will forget what we already know about God's cleansing us from sin 9

RESULTS OF GROWTH 10-11

If we pursue these characteristics, we will become certain that God has called us.

As we grow, we become assured that we will not fall but will receive a rich welcome into God's eternal kingdom.

Growing Christians, developing a godly lifestyle, won't have cause to doubt our standing before God.

INSTRUMENTS FOR GROWTH 1:12-21

PETER'S REVELATION 12-18

Peter is convinced they already know the truth he wants to tell us, but he's concerned about the future.

He has written this letter as a means of encouraging us in the future.

His purpose 12-15

He knows that he won't be around much longer.

He wants us to have a permanent record that will continue to remind us after his death.

His confirmation 16-18

He assures us that his message is not his invention.

God gave him the message and confirmed its truth through Christ's transfiguration.

God's voice assured them that the things Christ taught them were true.

PROPHETIC REVELATION 19-21

As Peter became aware of his role as God's messenger, he began to see himself in the prophetic tradition.

His revelation was like that of the prophets.

The major difference is that his message has become even more sure, because of the fulfillment of God's Word we have already seen.

Like the other prophets, his message wasn't his own idea.

He didn't originate it.

Prophecy never came that way!

The Holy Spirit is the One who motivates people to speak for God, just as wind propels a sailboat and moves it onto the sea.

No sailboat can launch itself. It has no power!

It has to wait for the wind in the sail.

Our power must come from God!

God's message through the prophets must be generated by the Spirit.

The Word of God which Peter proclaims will be useful to motivate us to grow.

WARNING CONCERNING FALSE PROPHETS 2:1-22

We need to beware of the false prophets who will come to prevent our growth.

FACT OF FALSE PROPHETS 1-3a

Just as there were false prophets in the past when God spoke to His people, so there will be false prophets in the future to hinder us.

False prophets in the past 1a

False prophets in the future 1b

False prophets at work 1c-3a

Destructive heresies 1c

These false prophets will teach heresy, especially concerning the Person and work of Christ (soteriology).

Denial of truth 2

They will deceive others by denying the truth (bibliology).

Exploitation by fabrication 3a

They will take advantage of us by presenting as truth stories which they have invented.

FATE OF FALSE PROPHETS 3b-9

Condemnation declared 3b

Because of their deceptive teaching, the false prophets are condemned to destruction.

Condemnation illustrated 4-8

Three illustrations of God's judgment previously: (3 sets of contrasts)

The angels 4

Even angels rebelled against God's authority.

God bound them in Tartarus, where they await future judgment.

The ancient world 5

The second illustration contrasts God's judgment of the ungodly for their ungodly deeds, with His protection of Noah and his family.

Sodom and Gomorrah 6-8

Finally, the judgment of the ungodly of Sodom and Gomorrah is contrasted with the preservation of the righteous Lot.

The ungodly burned 6

The righteous delivered 7-8

Conclusion 9

Peter uses these three illustrations to demonstrate that

God is able to protect the righteous

while holding the unrighteous for His judgment.

He has done it in the past and will do it again in the future.

FRUIT OF FALSE PROPHETS 10-22

Peter demonstrates that these false prophets deserve the fate reserved for them by describing their actions and attitudes.

Corrupt desires 10a

They follow the corrupt desires of their sinful nature. (Carnal)

Arrogant slander 10b-12

They have no respect for divinely established authority but arrogantly slander superior creatures, without understanding what they are doing. (Humanist)

Carousing and adultery 13-14

These prophets carouse around in broad daylight, openly flaunting their adulterous ways. (Sensual)

Covetousness 15-16

They continually seek personal gain and are willing to abandon the truth to get more for themselves. (Materialist)

Empty and enslaving words 17-22

They proclaim empty and meaningless words, which promise freedom but produce greater slavery. (Deceptive)

People who follow the teaching of such people demonstrate that they never knew the way of truth.

They profess to know the truth—profess faith in Christ.

They show their true nature.

They would have been better off never having heard the truth, then coming to know it, and then making this choice!

Their choice demonstrates what their true nature is.

EXHORTATION CONCERNING GOD'S PLAN 3:1-18

In order that we might stand firm in the midst of the false teachers and scoffers, Peter wants us to understand God's plan.

REMINDER OF GOD'S REVELATION 1-2

Our thinking must be stirred up so we'll remember what God has said.

A correct understanding of what God is doing, and how it affects our lives, will cause right thinking.

DENIAL OF GOD'S INTERVENTION 3-7

People are going to make fun of Christ's coming.

Arrival of the scoffers 3

Peter warns us that scoffers will come in the last days.

The scoffers will make fun of the idea that God would ever intervene by coming to judge the world.

Therefore they have no fear.
God is a long way off.

They are busy pursuing what they want most out of life.
They don't have time to worry about God right now.

Denial by the scoffers 4

They claim that God never has intervened in human affairs, why should we think He will do it now?

*"God never has intervened;
God never will intervene!"*

So they go about doing whatever they feel like doing!

Ignorance of the scoffers 5-7

Ignorance concerning God's intervention in the past 5-6

The scoffers deliberately ignore God's past intervention in creation and at the flood.

God spoke and created the world 5

God spoke and destroyed the world with a flood 6

They don't reject it because of the evidence, but rather, because they don't want to believe.

Ignorance concerning God's intervention in the future 7

They are also ignorant of the reality of God's future judgment, which will be caused by the same Word of God.

God is going to speak to judge the world and the ungodly.

CERTAINTY OF GOD'S INTERVENTION 8-18

In spite of the scoffers' denial of divine intervention, God is going to judge the world.

God will surely have His day! 8-10

Cause of God's delay 8-9

Why is He taking so long?!!

His delay is not evidence of weakness nor failure.

God is in no hurry! 8

God isn't slow getting around to it! 9a

God is patient to give people time to repent. 9b

Promise of God's intervention 10

Don't get the wrong idea!

Don't misjudge God's patience!

God will have His day!

God will not wait forever!

God's day will come like a thief!

God will judge suddenly, like a thief in the night (unexpected; without notice).

God's day will bring total destruction.

When He does judge, everything will be destroyed, and it will be too late to repent.

Implications of God's intervention 11-13

How should we then live? 11-18

Awareness of the suddenness and severity of God's judgment should produce a change in the lifestyle of God's people.

For our lives 11-12a

We should be motivated to live holy and godly lives.

For earth's future 12b-13

We should eagerly await His coming

Another implication of this judgment for our lives is that God's plan for earth's future ought to produce eager anticipation, as we look forward to the creation of a new home characterized by righteousness.

We're watching for that day 12a

We're doing everything we can to hasten that day 12b

We're looking forward to new heavens and a new earth 13

We're not hanging on to the old one that's going to be destroyed.

Exhortations based on God's intervention 14-18

In the light of God's plan, Peter exhorts his readers.

To strive for holiness 14

We should strive to live holy lives which will be spotless, blameless, and at peace with God.

To understand God's saving purpose 15-16

We should recognize the purpose behind God's patient waiting to judge the earth.

God is concerned for man's salvation.

God's desire should make us patient,

God's desire should make us concerned for the salvation of other people.

To avoid the error of the lawless 17

Peter urges us not to be misled by the false interpretation which lawless people have drawn from God's patience.

They have interpreted God's lack of action as a lack of interest.

God is not waiting due to lack of interest.

God *will* judge the lawless.

Therefore, we ought to remain faithful.

To grow spiritually 18

Finally, we should use our time wisely and dedicate ourselves to continued growth as we await His coming.

This brings us back to the purpose of the book:

If God is going to intervene and judge the world,

We should understand His plan.

We should seek to continue growing in the virtues presented in His Word.

In the light of God's plan for the universe,

We should avoid the errors of the false teachers.

We should seek to keep growing spiritually.