

# **2 Peter 1 - Call to Maturity & Growth; Portrait & Benefits of Growth; Purpose Statement; Coming Kingdom**

## **I. Call to spiritual growth (2 Peter 1:1-21)**

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- (B) Recipients: same as those in the first letter (1:1b)
- (C) Salutation: grace and peace coming through knowledge (1:2)

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## 2 Peter 1

I. Call to spiritual growth (2 Peter 1:1-21)

(1) Introduction (1:1-2)

(A) Writer: Peter (1:1a)

(B) Recipients: same as those in the first letter (1:1b)

**1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:**

**1** Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

**1** From: Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus, the Messiah. To: Those who have received faith that is as valuable as ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus the Messiah.

**1** 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:

- "Simon" - his Jewish name, a transliteration of his name in Greek (*Symeon*, Cf. Acts 15:14)

- "...Peter" - his Greek name

- "...bond-servant" - *doulos*, a common slave

— Peter had a very impressive resume, yet he doesn't tout them here, but instead refers to himself as a common slave and apostle of Christ. Peter never articulated things that would identify himself above other people.

— Peter knew exactly what a "bond-servant" was because Jesus modeled it for him in the Upper Room when He washed the disciples' feet (John 13:3-9)

- "...received a faith" - Calvinists and Reformed theologians point to this verse as a proof-text that unbelievers receive the gift of faith from God so that they are able to believe (see Tag: **Faith As A Gift?**)

— In Greek, the word "faith" here does not have a definite article ("the") so it's speaking about objective faith (Scriptural content; the body of truth committed to believers) rather than subjective personal faith. So "faith" here refers to the body of truth conveyed by the apostles, not personal faith for salvation.

— Throughout Scripture, when "faith" is not preceded by a definite article, it does not refer to personal faith, but receiving objective truth

- An even stronger argument against the Calvinist interpretation of this verse is that *lagchanō* ("we have received") is in the active voice, meaning the object/person did something to receive the action.
- The active voice means the person is not the recipient of the action, it means that they did something to receive the action. If this was something that was being given or done to us, the verb would be in the passive voice. Thus, if this verse was teaching that faith was a gift, *lagchanō* would be in the passive voice, indicating that I received the gift. But it's not.
- "...same kind as ours" - means that he is equal with his readers in honor and privilege
- *The faith of the apostles was no different from the faith of any believer*
- Contrast this with the Gnostic doctrines of the false teachers who spoke of "secret knowledge" attainable by, and available only to, a privileged few
- Demonstrates that Peter is again (as in 1 Peter) writing to a group of fellow believers (Cf. 3:1)
- When Peter wrote his first epistle, his readers were new believers in need of milk. But now they have been saved for some time, so Peter exhorts them to proceed to the meat of God's word.
- The main purpose of this epistle is to ground them in the faith in such a way that they will be protected from false teachers
- "...by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ" - because Jesus did what He did on our behalf, salvation is open to us
- If we've trusted in His finished work, we can have a relationship with Him. If He had not done what He did, that relationship would be impossible.
- Every single human being who ever lived is savable, and salvation is disseminated with impartiality because it is not based on us. If it was based on me and my works, it would be with partiality, but since it's not, and God is not a respecter of persons, salvation is given impartially.
- It would be unrighteous of God to refuse to save anyone who desired to avail himself of the result of the work of the Cross
- God desires that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth

(C) Salutation: grace and peace coming through knowledge (1:2)

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the **knowledge of God** and of Jesus our Lord,

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

2 May grace and peace be yours in abundance through full knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord!

**2** Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

- "...knowledge of God" - a knowledge that only the Holy Spirit can give; knowledge of truth is a key ingredient to resisting the allure of false teachers
- Knowledge in the Bible is two-fold: it includes facts, data and doctrine, which are all important, but it is also relational (Adam *knew* Eve, Gen 4:1); knowledge also includes intimacy with the omniscient God
- Peter wants his audience to have knowledge to reach maturity, and once they have that knowledge, they will be able to resist the allure of Incipient Gnosticism from false teachers
- The knowledge that Peter is talking about here is not the "secret knowledge" that the false teachers thought they had and looked down in their pride on others who didn't have it, but the universal knowledge received from the Bible, which is available to every single believer. Peter takes the false teachers term "knowledge," strips it of their definition, and refills it with a biblical definition.
- In the Greek text, there is only one definite article ("the") followed by two substantives ("God" and "Jesus our Lord"), which means that the terms "God" and "Lord" refer to one Person, not two. Thus, Jesus our Lord is both God and Lord.

## (2) Exhortation to grow (1:3-11)

Why does Peter initially dive into a call to spiritual growth and maturity from his readers before covering the topic of these false teachers? The answer is found in 2:14: because these false teachers prey on the believers who are "unstable" (immature). Since God doesn't order things He doesn't pay for, v3-4 are the tools that God provides (pays for) for the believer to grow in maturity.

### (A) Provision for growth (1:3-4)

#### (a) Divine power (1:3a)

#### (b) Knowledge (1:3b)

3 for **His divine power** has **granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness**, through the **true knowledge** of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the full knowledge of the one who called us by his own glory and excellence.

3 According 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:

- "...His divine power" - everyone has power within themselves to do certain things, but Peter is describing a supernatural power that comes from God Himself, which the believer has

- "power" - *dynamis*, the potentiality to exert force when performing a function \*(Cf. Acts 1:8)
- God is calling us to growth, and the first resource we have to apply to growth is His divine power
- "...granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness" - the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture (Cf. 2 Tim 3:16-17)
- To counter the "secret knowledge" of these false teachers, Peter claims that Scripture is all sufficient for "everything" pertaining to life and godliness
- We have the 66 books of the completed canon, and there is nothing else we need outside of these 66 books when it comes to life and godliness
- "...true knowledge" - *epignōsis*, precise and correct knowledge; used in the NT of the knowledge of things ethical and divine
- This true knowledge is in contrast to the "secret knowledge" of the gnostics

(c) Promises (1:4a)

(d) Divine nature (1:4b)

4 Through these He has granted to us His precious and **magnificent promises**, so that by them you may become **partakers of the divine nature**, having **escaped the corruption that is in the world on account of lust**.

4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

4 Through these he has given us his precious and wonderful promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, seeing that you have escaped the corruption that is in the world caused by evil desires.

4 Whereby 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.

- "...magnificent promises" - God has granted believers "everything" we need in order to mature into disciples in Christ through His promises outlined in Scripture

— The moment a person trusts in Christ, they are not in a situation where they are lacking something and need to go on and get something else (i.e. "secret knowledge")

— Some churches teach a "second blessing" that Christians are lacking and they need to plead to God in order to get

— For Peter's audience, the Incipient Gnostics purported this "secret knowledge" that one would have to go through their system to obtain. Peter refutes this in v3-4 by saying God has already given the believer everything they need pertaining to life and godliness, through the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit and the completed canon of Scripture.

- "...partakers of *the* divine nature" - this does not mean we become gods; many people misinterpret this verse as saying that
  - This is new age thinking, but it's an old lie. It's the same lie that Satan used to deceive himself (Is 14:14). His lie worked so well expelling him from heaven that he decided to try it on our forebears, Adam and Eve (Gen 3:5).
  - While the created (us) can never become the Creator (God), we can "partake" in His divine nature
  - "partakers" - *koinōnos*, partner, associate, companion
  - Because they are "partakers" of God's nature, Christians can share in His moral victory over sin in this life and share in His glorious victory over death in eternal life
  - "divine nature" - at the point of faith, God does not "fix" our old nature, but gives us a new nature. Thus, believers have both the old nature ("flesh") and the new nature ("Spirit"). Rom 7 tells us to reckon the old nature as dead.
  - Now everyday of my life, there is a tug-o-war between the new nature and the old nature, and with the new nature comes new desires.
- "...escaped the corruption that is in the world on account of lust" - a reference to the Incipient Gnosticism and Dualism that Peter is warning his readers is coming
  - It is escaping the licentious teaching of the false teachers of Dualism; they used the teaching of Dualism (physical world bad, spiritual world good) as a convenient cop-out to dismiss moral responsibility.
- If a Christian today is not growing toward maturity, they have no one to blame but themselves. God has provided all the resources we need in order to grow and mature, so if we don't do so, it's our own fault.
  - In Numbers 1-12, God revealed to the Israelites everything they had for victory. If they would've believed it, they would have been victorious in Num 13-14...but they didn't and they weren't. So that generation had no one to blame but themselves.
  - "lust" - lust is a desire for something that is outside of God's will or desire for us; covetousness; a desire for something that is forbidden

#### (B) Portrait of growth (1:5-7)

After covering the tools God gives us to grow in Christ to maturity, Peter describes what a growing Christian looks like. What constitutes a growing Christian? How do we know we're growing? We get an answer to these questions in v5-7.

- (a) Faith (1:5a)
- (b) Excellence (1:5b)
- (c) Knowledge (1:5c)

5 Now for this very reason also, **applying all diligence, in your faith supply** moral excellence, and in *your* **moral excellence, knowledge,**

5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge,

5 For this very reason, you must make every effort to supplement your faith with moral character, your moral character with knowledge,

**5** And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

- In v5-7 Peter uses a literary device called a *sorites* (also called 'climax' or *gradatio*). This differs from other NT ethical lists (except Rom 5:3-5). A *sorites* is a set of statements that proceed, step by step, to a climactic conclusion through the force of logic or reliance upon a series of indisputable facts. Each new statement picks up the last key word or phrase from the preceding one. [Constable]

- "...applying all diligence, in your faith supply" - this shows that we have a role to play in our progressive sanctification. Sanctification, our growth and maturity in Christ, is not something that happens automatically in the life of a believer.

— Calvinism does not teach this fact...in fact they teach the opposite. They believe that through the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, that a believer's growth in Christ is inevitable because you're one of the "elect." If this growth is not occurring, then maybe you aren't one of the "elect." This doctrine removes human responsibility in the spiritual growth process.

— However, that's not to say that believers should just "white knuckle" their spiritual growth through human power alone. Peter just finished giving us four divine resources (power, knowledge, promises, and participation in the divine nature). But I have to appropriate these divine resources as I make moment-by-moment choices in my life.

— There are many commands in the NT that would be pointless if sanctification was solely a byproduct of God and did not involve human volition (do not grieve the Holy Spirit, do not quench the Holy Spirit, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, etc.).

— Some Christians will make tremendous progress in their progressive sanctification, while others will not. And that's what the Bema Seat judgment of rewards will mete out in the end.

— "faith" - the foundation; without faith (trust), it is impossible to please God. If you don't have faith, you don't have a relationship with God at all.

— Once we have applied faith in Christ to rescue me from hell, then God asks us to apply that same faith to next month's mortgage payment (or wherever else we need to depend upon God in our life).

— As we choose to have faith and God meets those needs, our faith is strengthened. As our faith is strengthened, we depend upon God more often, and the cycle continues,.

- "...moral excellence" - goodness; also mentioned as a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23)

- "...knowledge" - see notes on v2

(d) Self-control (1:6a)

(e) Perseverance (1:6b)

(f) Godliness (1:6c)

6 and in *your* knowledge, **self-control**, and in *your* self-control, **perseverance**, and in *your* perseverance, **godliness**,

6 and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness,

6 your knowledge with self-control, your self-control with endurance, your endurance with godliness,

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

- "...self-control" - *egkrateia*, losing emotional control over a minor irritation; disciplined moderation in all things.

— Signs of the lack of self-control include being easily irritated or frustrated, primarily over minor irritations. Self control is also mentioned as a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23).

— As you begin to walk in the Spirit moment-by-moment, the flesh will want to act in an upset way, but the Spirit will tell you that whatever came up is not that big of a deal

— Faith, goodness, and spiritual knowledge are not enough for a Christian's walk. He must also make every effort to practice self-control (used only two other times in the NT (Acts 24:25; Gal 5:23).

— This means to have one's passions under control. It contrasts sharply with the anarchy and lack of control on the part of the false teachers whom Peter will expose in 2 Peter 2.

- "...perseverance" - *hypomonē*, the capacity to continue to bear up under difficult circumstances; grit; patience

— God is teaching Christians about perseverance through their church...often we get frustrated with someone or something in our church, and we immediately want to jump to another church. But there's someone or something in that church that will eventually upset you, so you jump to yet another church.

— Perseverance is growing where you are, blooming where you're planted. Don't think the grass is always greener somewhere else because you'll never develop roots and God can't use you and your gifts if you don't persevere.

- "...godliness" - Christlikeness; reverence for spiritual things

(g) Kindness (1:7a)

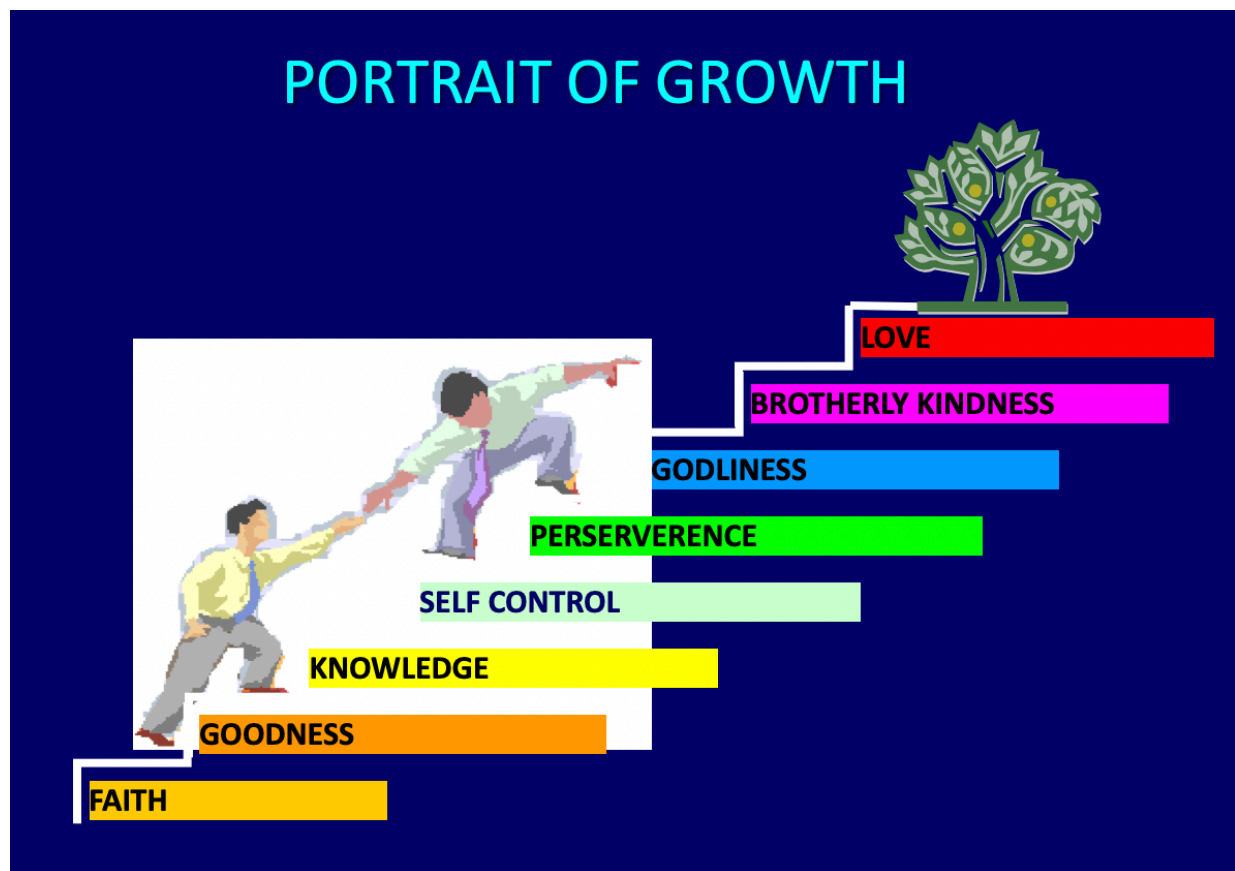
(h) Love (1:7b)

7 and in *your* godliness, **brotherlykindness**, and in *your* brotherly kindness, **love**.

7 and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love.



- 7 your godliness with brotherly kindness, and your brotherly kindness with love.
- 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.
- "...brotherly kindness" - *philadelphia*, having patience with one another, forbearing one another
  - The reason why megachurches are so attractive to many people is because they can get in and out without having to interact or fellowship with anyone else. They can remain anonymous while at the same time reducing their guilt for not going to church.
  - "...love" - *agapē*, a love that gives but doesn't expect anything in return
  - Typically it's used of God's love toward us; when I'm able to give to others without expectation of something in return, or no personal benefit to me, I'm exhibiting the same love that God has for me
  - If we exhibit these characteristics, it reveals that we're maturing to the point that we can identify and reject false teaching



(C) Product of growth (1:8-11)

Since any type of growth involves "growing pains," we may ask why we should even attempt to grow in the first place? Wouldn't it be easier to just remain immature, like a newborn baby? Peter describes five privileges or benefits to growing in Christ in v8-11, not the least of which is a stable life, which is described in v11.

(a) Productivity (1:8)

8 For **if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing**, they do not make you **useless** nor **unproductive in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ**.

8 For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

8 For if you possess these qualities, and if they continue to increase among you, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in attaining a full knowledge of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- "...if" - reiterates the fact that our progressive sanctification is not automatic (Cf. notes on v5)

- "...these *qualities*" - the qualities mentioned in v5-7

- "...are yours and are increasing" - if you are experiencing these qualities and they are actually growing (becoming more prominent/noticeable) in your life, then you're actually growing/maturing.

— This isn't speaking of a perfect, sinless life, but of a life where you sin less

— Peter is saying that if these eight qualities are present and increasing in your life, you can expect to realize five benefits from them:

(1) Productivity (v8)

(2) Harmony with identity (v9)

(3) Sureness of our election (v10a)

(4) Stability (v10b)

(5) Eternal reward (v11)

- "...productivity" - God starts to use your life for eternal purposes. You're no longer just doing activities, but you start seeing results in other people's lives.

— We become not useless, but useful to God; not unproductive, but productive for Him

— It's a wonderful thing to grow in Christ to the point that God begins to use you to bless other people and eternally impact their lives

— This harkens back to the Upper Room Discourse, specifically when Jesus was teaching about the vine and branches (John 15:4-5)

— If we want fruit of an eternal quality in our life, we cannot gin it up through our own effort and strength in the energy of our flesh. The only thing that will *bear* (not *produce*) fruit is remaining connected with Jesus, just as a branch is connected to a vine.

— When we do this, the fruit will come organically, naturally, automatically

— When we do this, we don't prove that we're believers, but disciples (John 15:8)

- "...useless" - idle, inactive, ineffective [ISV]; idleness produces fruitlessness

- Peter stresses that believers must be fruitful; unfruitfulness is counteracted by spiritual growth
- In place of being idle, sluggish or lazy, as was the case in Heb 5:11-14, Peter's readers should "abound" in progressing toward spiritual maturity by means of fruitfulness
- "...unproductive in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" - the more these believers know about Him, the more they will know Him, which in turn produces further spiritual growth
- "knowledge" - *epiginosko*, full knowledge

(b) Vision: living consistently with spiritual identity (1:9)

- 9 For the one who lacks these *qualities* is **blind** or short-sighted, having **forgotten** his purification from his former sins.
- 9 For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins.
- 9 For the person who lacks these qualities is blind and shortsighted, and has forgotten the cleansing that he has received from his past sins.
- 9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.
- "...blind" - *typhlos*, *myopazon*, or myopic; spiritually blind; unable to discern spiritual things
  - Someone who is spiritually blind is unable to think clearly about spiritual things
  - A lack of spiritual growth leads to forgetting "the cleansing...from past sins"
  - Forgetting what salvation cost will result in spiritual blindness and shortsightedness, which leads to spiritual immaturity
  - Spiritual blindness causes one to not see the truth they need to walk in this world, so they stumble; shortsightedness means you can only see things that are near to you, not something looming far off.
  - This type of person is also shortsighted about the future and not challenged by the Second Coming (3:11-14)
  - "...forgotten" - the nice thing about maturing in Christ is that our practice begins to catch up with our position
  - We no longer are "blind" or "short-sighted" but we see (and don't forget) our identity in Christ and why God created us
  - It's easy for us to forget who we are as believers (2 Cor 5:17), our position in Christ. When we lapse back into sin, we fall back to our old nature and it's easy to forget who we are in Christ. In fact, it's so easy to lose sight of our new identity that we can forget ("blind") that our new identity even exists.

— We lapse back into sin and begin to get so comfortable in it that we are blind to who we really are. This happened to the prodigal son, who took his inheritance, bottomed out his life, and returned to his father asking to be a hired servant rather than a son. He never lost his sonship, but he had forgotten about it because he was blind to it.

## Remembrance in 2 Peter

- **Has forgotten that he has been cleansed (1:9)**

- I will always remind you of these things (1:12)
- It is right to refresh your memory (1:13)
- You will always be able to remember these things (1:15)
- I have written both of them as reminders (3:1)
- Do not forget (3:8)
- Bear in mind (3:15)

(c) Assurance (1:10)

(d) Stability: not stumbling (1:10b)

10 Therefore, brothers *and sisters*, be all the more **diligent** to make certain about His **calling** and **choice of you; for as long as you practice these things**, you will **never stumble**;

10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;

10 So then, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election certain, for if you keep on doing this you will never fail.

**10** Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

(3) Further assurance of salvation

— A growing believer gives diligence to making their election sure, which in turn provides a greater level of the assurance of salvation

— When you grow in Christ to maturity and God begins to use you to bless other people, it's a further reminder that we are indeed Christians and belong to Jesus Christ. Because of this, my assurance of salvation begins to deepen.

— Many Christians struggle with their assurance of salvation because they are practicing these qualities or growing in Christ, so their life doesn't mirror their position. If this is your situation, Satan will use that to convince you that you're not a Christian at all.

— But when we're growing in Christ and our practice is catching up with our position, our assurance of salvation deepens because we see the Spirit's fruit being borne in our life.

— Ultimately our assurance of salvation comes from God's promises in the Bible (John 3:16; 5:24, et al)

- "...diligent" - "due diligence" is a stewardship or investor term; manifestation is a confirmation
- "...calling" - this refers to God's efficacious work in salvation (Cf. Rom 1:7; 8:30; 1 Cor 1:9)
- "...choice of you" - election [KJV]; God's work of choosing some sinners (by His grace, not their merits) to be saved (Rom 8:33; 11:5; Eph 1:4; Col 3:12; 1 Peter 1:1)
  - Election is an act of God, but man's action proves His election
  - If a man has saving faith, it is a product of His election. The way to make this election sure for himself is by producing works that are the result of his faith. These works provide valid evidence that His election is sure—that he has been called, chosen, and assured of salvation.
  - Election, of course, precedes calling. A believer shows evidence of his election through his godly life and his growth in the virtues mentioned in v5-7
- "...for as long as you practice these things" - another indication that our progressive sanctification should not be carried out with a "let go let God" mentality (see notes on v5,8)
  - Our part in our sanctification is to obey the many commands that God has given us in His Word and yield our will to the Holy Spirit on a moment-by-moment basis
- "...never stumble" - greater stability
  - As I begin to obey this command, along with the other many commands in the Bible, I begin to become a more stable Christian
  - Peter is concerned about his audience's growth and stability in their walk because he knows that the false teachers prey on weak, unstable Christians (Cf. 2:14)
  - Paul describes how immature believers can be misdirected by false teachers in Eph 4:11-16; he gives this passage as one of the core missions of the church
  - If a believer chooses to not utilize God's resources for growth and remains in a state of immaturity, as is the case for most Christians today, they remain in a state of infancy and immaturity, they lack basic knowledge of the Bible, they are not operating in the spiritual gifts that God has given them, they are like waves tossed to and fro by the wind and are ripe for all types of false teaching (Eph 4:14).

(e) Rewarded in the kingdom (1:11)

11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ **will be abundantly supplied** to you.

11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

11 For in this way you will be generously granted entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus, the Messiah.

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

- "...will be" - future tense, showing this kingdom is yet future; it doesn't sound like Peter believes he's in the kingdom now (Cf. Acts 2:30-35)

— When will this (future) kingdom come: at the "coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v16)

— Peter was premillennial...

— One of the main questions answered in the six Hebrew Christian NT books (Matthew, Hebrews, 1&2 Peter, James, Jude) is: if the King came to earth, where is His kingdom now?

— Peter foreshadows his answer to this question here, by stating that the kingdom is a future reality. In v16-21 Peter will cycle back to this question and give two proofs that the kingdom will come one day.

— Proof #1 is that Peter was an eyewitness to the Transfiguration (v16-18; Cf. Matt 17:1-8), which is a token of the coming kingdom.

— Proof #2 is more sure than even eyewitness testimony (of Peter at the Transfiguration): OT Scripture, which promise that the kingdom will one day come through Israel (v19-21)

- "...abundantly supplied" - believers who are growing toward maturity in Christ will be fully rewarded at the Bema Seat judgment

— This opens up the doctrine that all believers will enter the kingdom, but not all believers will be abundantly supplied/rewarded. All believers enter the kingdom, but not all believers are equally rewarded once they arrive.

— There are many Christians who will stand before Christ at the Bema Seat judgment with no rewards, and there will be many who will stand before Christ "abundantly" rewarded.

— 1 Cor 3:15 opens the door that some (many?) Christians will get into heaven not "abundantly supplied" but rather without any reward in hand, and their clothing will smell like smoke

The believer who develops the seven graces of v5-7 will derive the benefits/privileges of v8-11 and will have an abundance that will be richly supplied when he enters the Kingdom. This is part of the doctrine of rewards. Luke 12:21-32 also speaks of the connection between heavenly wealth and the Kingdom. In order to receive a good position in the Kingdom, believers need to grow in the spiritual life during their life on earth.

(3) Peter's first purpose statement (1:12-15)

(A) Peter's desire to remind (1:12-13)

**12** Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you *already* know *them* and have been **established** in the truth which is present with *you*.

**12** Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you *already* know *them*, and have been established in the truth which is present with *you*.

**12** Therefore, I intend to keep on reminding you about these things, even though you already know them and are firmly established in the truth that you now have.

**12** Wherefore 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.

- Verses 12-15 outline Peter's purpose statement for 2 Peter; this is highlighted again in 3:1-2

- Peter is talking about the basics of Christianity, and reminding them that they already know the basics

— He's telling them that if they master the basics, they will not be swept into false doctrine

— Many Christians today think they need to study false doctrine in order to be aware of it, refute it, and not be swept away by it. However, today there is so much false doctrine out there that it's impossible to be an expert in all of them, or even some of them.

— Peter is saying you don't have to be an expert in false doctrine to know false doctrine when you see it, and not believe it. What we need to do is understand and apprehend the finite revelation God has given us in the Bible.

— The writer of Hebrews echoes this in Heb 5:14 when he says "because of practice (constant use) have their senses trained to discern good and evil." When you're focused on the basics of Christianity and training yourself through practice (constant use), you'll be able to discern false doctrine.

- The two major means of growth is NT revelation (v12-18, including apostolic teaching) and OT revelation (v19-21)

— One of the main purposes of 2 Peter is to remind these Jewish believers about apostolic teaching (Cf. 3:1-2). These believers were already "established in the truth"; now they needed to remember what they were taught.

- "...established" - *stērizō*, the same word Jesus used of Peter in Luke 22:32: "When you have turned again establish your brethren."

— When Peter repented of his denial of Christ, he was then to confirm the other disciples in the faith. Peter is doing this here, by reminding his readers of the things they already know.

**13** I consider it right, as long as I am in this **earthly dwelling**, to stir you up by way of reminder,

**13** I consider it right, as long as I am in this *earthly* dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder,

**13** Yet I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I am living in this bodily tent,

**13** Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;

- "...*earthly* dwelling" - *skeinei*, a temporary abode

— As long as Peter is alive and inhabiting his “tabernacle,” he believes it is right to stir these believers’ remembrance of apostolic teaching

(B) Reason: Peter's imminent martyrdom (1:14)

14 knowing that the laying aside of my *earthly* dwelling is imminent, **as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.**

14 knowing that the laying aside of my *earthly* dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

14 because I know that the removal of my bodily tent will come soon, as indeed our Lord Jesus, the Messiah, has shown me.

14 Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

- Peter is saying that he's close to death, and after his death, he's not going to be around anymore to present these truths to them

— So this is why Peter is writing 2 Peter...to remind them of these truths because one day soon, he wouldn't be around to do this any longer (Cf. 2 Tim 4:6)

- "...as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me" - recalls Peter's conversation with Jesus on the shore of the Sea of Galilee (John 21:18-19)

(C) Peter's action: create a record of his teaching (1:15)

15 And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.

15 And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.

15 And I will make every effort to see that you will always remember these things after I am gone.

15 Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

- In light of his coming death, Peter spelled out his current obligation, which was to ensure ("endeavor") that his readers would continue to remember these things

### **Remembrance in 2 Peter**

- Has forgotten that he has been cleansed (1:9)
- **I will always remind you of these things (1:12)**
- **It is right to refresh your memory (1:13)**
- **You will always be able to remember these things (1:15)**
- I have written both of them as reminders (3:1)
- Do not forget (3:8)



- Bear in mind (3:15)

#### (4) Proof of the coming kingdom (1:16-21)

Peter now comes back to the topic of the kingdom, which he first raised in v11 (before diverting into giving his readers the purpose for his writing (v12-15). In v16-21, Peter gives two proofs for why the kingdom will come in the future (he also used the future tense in v11): Christ's transfiguration, to which he was an eyewitness, and OT prediction, which he says is more reliable than eyewitness testimony.

#### (A) Kingdom guaranteed by the transfiguration (1:16-18) (Cf. Matt 17:1-8)

**16** For we did not follow **cleverly devised tales** when we made known to you the power and **coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were **eyewitnesses of His majesty**.

**16** For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

**16** When we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah, we did not follow any clever myths. Rather, we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

**16** For 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.

- "...cleverly devised tales" - Peter jabs at the gnostics and their "secret knowledge"; Peter is saying that the disciples didn't come up with this kingdom idea and postponement on their own in the backroom, but they were actual eyewitnesses to the "token" of the kingdom, which was Jesus' transfiguration

- "...coming" - *parousia*, normally used in reference to the Second Coming, but here it is used of the Transfiguration. It refers to the Glory of His Coming, as used in Luke 9:27-36.

— In that context, Jesus promised His disciples that some of them were not going to die until they saw the Glory that He would have in the Kingdom and at His Second Coming (Matt 16:28). Six days later (Matt 17:1), Jesus was present with Moses and Elijah, and transfigured Himself.

— The disciples who saw His Glory were Peter, James, John. These three disciples were with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration when the Shekinah Glory penetrated through His body. This enabled them to see the Glory of His Majesty. Therefore, they were the eyewitnesses of His majesty.

- "...eyewitnesses of His majesty" - Peter was an eyewitness to Jesus' transfiguration (Matt 17:1-8)

**17** For when **He received honor and glory from God** the Father, such a declaration as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory: "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased"—

17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"—

17 For he received honor and glory from God the Father when these words from the Majestic Glory were spoken about him: "This is my Son, whom I love. I am pleased with him."

17 For 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.

- "...He received honor and glory from God" - Jesus was always the Shekinah Glory (the visible manifestation of God's presence), but its brightness was veiled by His mortal body — At the Transfiguration, His mortal body temporarily no longer veiled His Glory, allowing the three disciples present to see the His Glory

— Jesus was authenticated to these three disciples by means of the Glory that they had seen, as well as the words audibly spoken by the Father (at the Transfiguration, as well as at Jesus' baptism; Cf. Matt 17:5)

18 and **we ourselves** heard this declaration made from heaven when we were with Him on the **holy mountain**.

18 and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

18 We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain.

18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

- "...we ourselves" - Peter, James and John, along with Moses and Elijah

- "...holy mountain" - Mount Hermon, the highest mountain in Israel; the mountain was not holy before the Transfiguration; it became holy because the glory of the Messiah was revealed there

(B) Kingdom prophesied in the OT (1:19-21)

**19** And so we have the **prophetic word *made more sure***, to which **you do well to pay attention** as to **a lamp shining in a dark place**, until **the day dawns** and the **morningstar arises in your hearts**.

**19** So we have the prophetic word *made more sure*, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

**19** Therefore we regard the message of the prophets as confirmed beyond doubt, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp that is shining in a gloomy place, until the day

dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

**19** We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

- Peter makes a profound statement as to the inerrancy and authenticity of the OT Scriptures (Hebrew Bible)...

- On top of Peter's eyewitness testimony to Jesus' transfiguration, which was a "token" of the coming kingdom, Peter says that the OT prophets who described the kingdom are even more reliable

- "...prophetic word" - OT prophecy regarding the messianic kingdom (see note: **OT Prophets Describe the Kingdom** below)

- "...made more sure" - more sure than what? Peter is talking about eyewitness testimony (Cf. v15-18); he's saying that OT prophecy is "more sure" (more reliable, more true) than eyewitness testimony

- Eyewitness testimony is the most powerful form of evidence in a court of law; Bible prophecy is more powerful and reliable than eyewitness testimony

- It can also be interpreted that the "sure word of prophecy," which refers to the OT, is more reliable and a surer confirmation of God's truth than the voice that came from heaven at the Transfiguration

- Although Peter had a remarkable experience when he witnessed the Transfiguration, the written Word of God (here, speaking specifically of the OT, but also later to include the whole of Scripture) is still a more valid source of authority than anyone's eyewitness experience.

- "...you do well to pay attention" - a command to pay attention to what the Bible says about prophecy

- Because there is no revelation more reliable than Scripture, believers should pay attention to it and give it the highest priority in their lives

- "...a lamp shining in a dark place" - Bible prophecy is a "lamp" in the dark world we're living in. It's a reminder that while the kingdom is postponed, the kingdom will still come one day, and God is still in control.

- If you cut out the study of prophecy from the Christian, their light goes out

- Why is the world a "dark place"? — because the kingdom has not yet arrived and wickedness rules our current world

- The prophets functioned as a light in a dark place because they painted a picture of what the kingdom will be like once it arrives

- If you don't become a student of what the prophets reveal about the kingdom, the only thing you're stuck with is the course of this present world. How depressing is that!

- "...the day dawns" - the fullness of light will not come until the dawning of the day of the Second Coming (a similar point is made in Rom 13:12)
- Believers must take heed to the prophetic Scriptures until the full light of the *parousia*, the Second Coming, dawns. They are to walk in the light of the Word of God because the OT, as well as the NT, is a source of growth.
- "...morning star" - Jesus is described as the morning star (Rev 2:28; 22:16)
- "...arises in your hearts" - refers to the arrival of the kingdom on the earth and the fulfillment of the New Covenant (Jer 31:31-34)

### **OT Prophets Describe the Kingdom**

- (1) Established by God (Dan 2:44)
- (2) Eternal (Dan 7:27)
- (3) Christ's direct rule (Zech 9:9-10)
- (4) Earthly (Zech 14:9)
- (5) Land promises realized (Gen 15:18-21)
- (6) Israel's preeminence (Is 49:22-23)
- (7) Millennial temple (Ezek 40-46)
- (8) Millennial David (Jer 30:9)
- (9) Righteousness (Is 9:6-7)
- (10) Curse curtailed (Is 65:20,22)
- (11) Peace (Is 2:4)
- (12) Prosperity (Amos 9:13-14; Is 65:22)
- (13) Topographical changes (Ezek 47:1-12)
- (14) Immediate answers to prayer (Is 65:24)

20 *But* know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture becomes a *matter* of **someone's own interpretation**,

20 *But* know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a *matter* of one's own interpretation,

20 First of all, you must understand this: No prophecy in Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation,

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

- When Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Amos, et al were writing down these prophecies of the coming kingdom, they were not writing an editorial in a newspaper, giving their own view or opinion on the subject

- "...*someone's own*" - the prophecies in the OT did not originate with the prophets themselves, rather they wrote down what the Holy Spirit inspired them to write

- Unless the Bible is its own interpreter giving us absolute truth, it will become a book of authority subject to “private interpretations” which will only give us relative truth
  - “...interpretation” - *epilyseos*, disclosure; it does not refer to interpretation in the sense of people interpreting Scripture. The issue in this verse is not the *interpretation* of Scripture, but the *source* of Scripture.
  - The context here is not talking about the reader/interpreter, but the author/writer of the Scripture
  - Peter is dealing with the source of prophecy to man, not the interpretation of the Scriptures by man. His point is that the source of prophecy did not have its source in man.
  - Peter may have Jer 23:16 in mind here, which says that the false teachers “speak a vision of their own imagination, Not from the mouth of the Lord.” He also could be referring to Ezek 13:3,6-7.
  - Peter is urging his readers to compare what these coming false teachers will say with Hebrew Bible (the OT) because it came from the mouth of God while He “moved” the prophets. The OT prophets did not speak out of their own interpretation or imagination, but wrote down the words of God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.
- [Deut 18:18; Acts 15:18]

21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men **moved** by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

21 because no prophecy ever originated through a human decision. Instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

- “...moved” - *pherō*, “borne along” or “carried along”; Luke used this word in referring to a sailing vessel carried along by the wind (Acts 27:15,17). The words of the prophets were “carried along” by the Holy Spirit to the extent that they are a mouthpiece for God Himself.

— So just as wind propels a sailboat, the Holy Spirit came upon the writer’s of Scripture in a supernatural way, and they wrote God’s message, not in some sort of private way

— Through this gift of prophecy is how the 27 books of the NT came into existence; prophecy is a revelatory gift

- Peter says that we would do well to pay attention to Bible prophecy because it is like a light shining in a dark place

— The prophets actually penned the Scriptures, but these Scriptures were not disclosed from within themselves; they were disclosed by the Holy Spirit.

— The Holy Spirit is the source of inspiration and the source of revelation. Therefore, the prophets wrote exactly what the Holy Spirit wanted them to write. Using their personalities, their own styles, and their own languages, the Holy Spirit, by “bearing them along,” had them write exactly what is written—word for word.

- Peter makes a tremendous statement about the doctrine of the Scriptures. In the process, he reveals two attributes of the Scriptures:

(1) v19 - what we have in the form of the OT is more reliable than eyewitness testimony. The OT is a more powerful witness to truth and reality than an eyewitness.

(2) v20-21 - Peter's readers could trust the OT prophecies about the kingdom because the OT was divinely authored, while the false teacher dreamed up their doctrine in their own imaginations.