

8 February 2026

The Writings of the Apostle Peter

(The Second Letter)

Introduction (vv. 1-2)

The Author, v. 1a

It is interesting that Peter identifies himself as Simon Peter here and “Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ” in the first letter. “Peter (meaning “rock”) is the name given to him by Jesus in Matt. 18:16. Paul calls him Cephas which is the Aramaic equivalent of Peter. Simon means “weak,” Peter “strength.” He is a person that God changed!

He describes himself with two terms: slave and apostle. Two types of slavery existed, involuntary and voluntary, in the first century to express the latter the word is translated as “bondslave.” The apostle literally means “a sent one” suggesting authority.

The Recipients, v. 1b

The intended original audience is unknown and thus designated as a “catholic” or universal (James, two from Peter, three from John, Jude). It was written for all who profess to follow Jesus. They are described in two ways: That they have embraced the apostolic message and that the essence of their faith concerns the purchased gift of divine righteousness (the gift of God) that was meditated through Jesus Christ.

“I Peter” is referred to in II Peter 3:1 (“second letter”) as the second letter to a group of believers, then it is reasonable to suggest that the recipients of both letters are the same. Peter wrote two letters to the same group, but we can only speculate that the two we have are to the same people.

The Greeting, v. 2.

The greeting is also a prayer by Peter for those who have received the message of God’s gift of a divine redemption.

The Content of the Letter (1:3-3:18a)

I. The Message of Peter: A Call to Spiritual Growth, 1:3-11

The call to spiritual growth is the remedy to the intrusion of false teachings though the exact nature of the errors is not revealed. The two letters seem to be coordinated.

I Peter: The problem of suffering for our identity with Christ.

II Peter: The problem of false teachers.

The Answer: Spiritual growth is rooted in a growing appreciation for God's grace through the provision of Christ applied by the presence of God in each of us.

A. The divine provision: the foundation, vv. 3-4

There are wonderfully comforting and assuring statements.

1. the promise of God, v. 3a

The verb "has granted" suggests a fact; it is a verbal form declaring the gift as a present reality though a past gift making a wonderful provision for every believer.

2. the provision of God, v. 3b

This gift of life came to us through God's gift of Christ (the referent of pronouns is ambiguous in Peter's writing). Is it the Father or the Son? Perhaps it is through both!

3. the fruit of God within us, v. 4

God has made promises to us that are irrevocable ("has granted"). The consequence of God's provision is that we have become "partakers of the divine nature." It seems to me that we are "partakers" in the sense of regeneration, the infusion of the character of God.

What is the nature of our being "partakers?" Since God is immaterial in nature, and knowledge of God is reflected to us by His actions and words, it must be moral qualities. This seems most

sensible having been delivered from the penalty of corruption (v. 4a) and the moral exhortation that follows to increase those qualities (“for this very reason,” v. 5a).

B. The believer’s responsibility, vv. 5-7

Because God has provided a wonderfully profound, free gift of forgiveness, and since we possess the life of God through the indwelling Holy Spirit, we have a duty to polish the mirror of our lives to reflect the character of God. To be a child of God is to possess the “DNA” of His character through ours! We are called upon to increase the outward manifestation of the work of God within us.

1. The ground, v. 5a

The foundation of spiritual maturation begins with the gospel, the redemptive work of God. In this instance “faith,” meaning to embrace the witness of Christ by the Spirit, is the place where it all begins and culminates in our assured and final redemption!

2. The manner, v. 5b

“Applying all diligence” suggests the endeavor will be an ongoing endeavor. It indicates our duty.

3. The components, vv. 5c-6

The list is composed of seven moral qualities (perhaps symbolic of completeness). However, the list does not suggest a mechanical sequence or steps (think of the seven qualities as a singularity having multiple facets, not parts but links in a single chain).

- Moral excellence
- Knowledge: awareness that the gospel and morals are intrinsically interrelated, one the cause and the other the effect.
- Self-control: the ability to harness the egocentric pull of our fallen propensities
- Perseverance: steadfast endurance
- Godliness: the term is a compound, the words “good” and “worship.” True godliness is daily living by means of proper affectional thinking.

- Brotherly kindness: the word suggests mutuality of commitment
- Love: the manifestation of care for others even to one's detriment.

C. The consequence, vv. 8-9

1. Stated positively, v. 8

“For” states the benefit of true Christlikeness. It reveals to us, as well as to observers, that we have been changed. Biblical assurance is more than an intellectual embrace of certain truths; it is revealed in our conformity to Christ in moral attitudes and passion. Deep assurance of God's grace in one's life is neither a sum of knowledge nor personal benevolences; it is found in Christ-like morality.

- a) Believers exhibit Christian qualities. How can one be possessed of the Spirit of God and have no evidence of it?
- b) Believers have certain qualities and increasingly so.
- c) Such believers are useful and fruitful to God.
- d) Believers live out what a true knowledge of God means.

2. Stated negatively, v. 9

Believers under the sway of falsity (the possibility of true knowledge without conformity to Christ) are hoodwinked. The lure of other than Christ blinds us to a full embrace of this new reality. Embracing error in behavior destroys true joy, peace, and assurance. It denigrates evangelism and destroys effective witness. It can bring an early exit to heaven!

D. The conclusion: An Abundant Entrance, vv. 10-11

1. A command, v. 10

Once more, and for a third time, the need for diligence appears. The cultivation of the seven moral virtues is evidence, not the cause, of our assurance of redemption. Thereby, God's “calling and choosing you” is made certain. The believer's hope is found in the character of the Father, the work of His son, and the

wooning/renewing of the Spirit. The gospel is a person to be welcomed, a truth to be believed, and a life to be lived, our lives are to be examples of the existence and character of God!

2. A promise, v. 11

The “eternal kingdom” is heaven for the believer. Entrance into His forever-realm-of-rule is described verbally through a future perfect passive verb (“Shall be abundantly supplied”).

II. The Authority Sustaining the Passion of II Peter 1:12-21

A. The desire of Peter, vv. 12-15

1. The quest to remind, vv. 12-13

The desired reminder is to buttress the believers in what they already know. “In the present truth” seems odd because it might suggest an evolution of knowledge. He means what they had heard, the trustworthiness of the divine character, or the accomplishments of Jesus; in essence, it is the gospel. Perhaps a clearer translation is “which is present with you (NASB).

2. The reason to remind, vv. 14-15

The statement of his imminent death helps us to date the letter; Peter was crucified, according to tradition, head down because he thought himself not worthy to die as his Lord. Scholars affix the date of death under Nero between 64-68.

The reference to Jesus, explicating on the manner of Peter's death, as found in John 21:18-19 is cryptic. His death would not be voluntary!

Peter refers to Jesus by His full name. While Jesus is His name, Lord and Christ were titles, The titles became His full name, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord: master, owner, sovereign

Jesus: savior, deliverer

Christ: the Anointed One. Only kings, priests and leaders were anointed. Jesus assumed all three offices.

Thoughts:

1. The word “diligence” occurs three times in our brief passage. It describes the manner of our duty. We are to make consistent effort to reflect behaviorally the life of God that has been implanted in the person of the Holy Spirit of God.
2. What God requires of His children He has “granted” to them. The “grant” is the very life of God revealed through the manifestation of the divine character. We are “partakers” of the life of God. Our duty is to cultivate it.
3. Assurance of God’s mercies through Christ is the fruit of redemption. Redemption implies a change of affections and is revealed in new priorities. I think the greatest evidence that we are the children of God is lives that know and seek conformity to the Lord.
4. God promises to each of His children an “abundant” entrance into glory. Is that not a source of delight and heart-felt hope for us?
5. The greatest threat to maturity is imbibing false truth. We need to be hearers of the Word but also discriminatory. Cling to the Word of God. Flee that which does not conform to it.