

LESSON SIX

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

TEXT: II Peter Chapter 1.

A. **THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER:**

This second epistle of Peter was written to the same people to whom he wrote his first letter (II Peter 3:1). He wrote this letter just before his death toward the end of Nero's reign. It was written before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Peter's martyrdom took place about 68 AD. This letter was probably written either in 66 or 67 AD, about the same time as Paul's second letter to Timothy. Both Paul and Peter knew that martyrdom was near (II Timothy 4:6 and II Peter 1:14).

Peter claimed that he had been present at the transfiguration of Christ (II Peter 1:16-17) and had been warned by Jesus of his impending martyrdom.

Peter warned of the danger of apostasy and false doctrine. The epistle gives a prophetic picture of the apostasy of the last days and urges upon the believer preparedness of heart and life, which alone can fit him to meet the dangers of the last days.

B. **KEY VERSE:**

The key verse for this epistle is II Peter 3:18, *"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."*

C. **SALUTATION: (II Peter 1:1-2).**

Peter stated that he was Jesus Christ's servant and missionary. He wrote to them who had obtained the same precious faith through the righteousness of God. He then uttered a prayer for their spiritual growth. His desire for them was that grace and peace be multiplied. A little later on, Peter wrote about the addition of virtues but here it was the multiplication of grace and peace. These were to be given to them in an abundant measure. This would happen through the knowledge of God. The epistle both began and closed with emphasis upon the knowledge of God.

D. **THE BASIS OF SAVING KNOWLEDGE: (II Peter 1:3-4).**

God has called us to glory and virtue. He has given us all the things that are needed for life and godliness by the power of God through the knowledge of God. The student should note the phrase, "all things." Nothing has been left out—nothing is lacking!

How important is the knowledge of God! It is through the knowledge of God that one is able to receive eternal life.

By this same mighty power, He has given us wonderful promises so that we may escape from the moral decay that is in the world and become sharers of God's nature. Peter described these

promises as being "exceedingly" great. When we consider all that God has promised us, we certainly agree with the apostle that God's promises are "exceedingly" great!

E. EIGHT DIVINE QUALITIES: (II Peter 1:5-8).

Peter named eight virtues, which we are to add to the blessings, which God has multiplied to us. They are steps from earth to glory and will cause the child of God to become fruitful. Without them, he will be barren and unfruitful.

These eight divine qualities are faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. When we add these together, we have for the sum a fruitful life. The foundation one is faith and the crowning one is love.

Again we should note that this fruitful life would be in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

F. MAKING OUR ELECTION CERTAIN: (II Peter 1:9-12).

When these divine qualities are lacking, the professing Christian is short sighted and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from the old life of sin.

Peter exhorted his readers to give diligence, to work hard, to make certain of their calling and election. It is possible to make certain of one's election. One need never be in doubt, but he should never take it for granted. He must work at it and add the virtues already mentioned. By so doing, he will be certain of his election and will never stumble or fall away. Also by so doing, God will open wide the gates of heaven that he may enter into the eternal kingdom of our Lord.

Although his readers already knew these truths, Peter was determined to keep stirring them up by way of remembrance.

G. PETER REMEMBERED THE MINISTRY OF OUR LORD: (II Peter 1:13-18).

In this passage of Scripture Peter recalled two incidents from the ministry of our Lord.

1. HIS DEATH:

Some thirty-seven years before, Jesus spoke to him about the manner of death, which he would suffer. Peter realized that this was now close at hand. He knew that he was going to suffer martyrdom, but did not draw back from it. In fact, he wrote joyfully about it. The expression of "putting off of my tabernacle" is a beautiful way of describing death. Certainly death is not to be feared!

2. MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION:

Peter assured his readers that he was not telling them fairy tales. He had witnessed with his own eyes the splendor and glory of Christ's transfiguration. He had heard with his own ears the majestic voice of God saying, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

Since he was a personal witness, he was able to certify concerning the power of Jesus Christ and the certainty of His return.

H. THE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY: (II Peter 1:19-21).

Every Bible student should carefully study these three verses.

1. VERSE 19:

After testifying of hearing the voice of God upon the Mount, Peter stated that we have a "MORE SURE" word of prophecy. It is quite startling to read that Peter considered the Old Testament Scriptures surer than the literal voice of God, which he had heard. Because of this, they had better heed the Scriptures as a lamp shining in the darkness until the day breaks through the gloom and Christ, the Morning Star, shines in their hearts.

2. VERSE 20:

The truth that must be clearly understood is that no Scripture is a matter of personal interpretation. God's truth is unchanging. A person cannot explain it to his own choosing. If he does so, the truth has not changed. It remains constant.

3. VERSE 21:

We shall quote from the Living New Testament which clearly explains the meaning here. *"For no prophecy recorded in Scripture was ever thought up by the prophet himself. It was the Holy Spirit within these godly men who gave them true messages from God."*

The Word of God is the best defense against apostasy and the Christian's faith should rest squarely upon God's inspired Word.

LESSON SIX

SELF HELP TEST

- A. This letter of Peter's was written about the same time as which one of Paul's?
- B. How does a Christian make his election sure?
- C. Name the EIGHT virtues which when added will cause the Christian to be fruitful.
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
 6. _____
 7. _____
 8. _____
- D. What was the expression Peter used in referring to his soon martyrdom?
- E. Write I Peter 1:21 in your own words.
- F. Give the reference where Jesus told Peter about his martyrdom.