

II Peter 1

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Introduction

Second Peter is placed after First Peter in our Bibles. That is quite obvious, but why is it so placed? Is it only because it is the shorter of the two letters written by Peter, or was it actually written later? With so many of the Books of the Bible the longer ones have been placed first, e.g., the Epistles of Paul and many of the Old Testament prophets. It would seem that this was done in the order of importance at times, as Paul's letter to the Romans; but others, however, may simply have been arranged by placing the longer letter first. This may be true in the case of First and Second Peter; in my Nestle text I find that Πιερρου α' has 9 pages while Πιερρου β' has only 6.

Second Peter was not the best known nor the most widely accepted New Testament Book judging by the position it was given or by how often it was actually mentioned or referred to by the early Church fathers. It has been said that it has "less historical support of its genuineness than any other book of the New Testament." However, without going into a lengthy discussion in regard to who seemed to know Second Peter and who didn't seem to know it, we will simply note that it was accepted by the Church by the end of the Fourth century and that the internal evidence bears out strongly that it cannot be a forgery.

In regard to when it was written, from where, and to whom, it appears quite certain that this can no longer be decided. R.C.H. Lenski claims it was written before what we call First Peter and not to the same readers, but others claim differently. H.C. Thiessen mentions that Zahn thinks Second Peter was written before First Peter, but he himself disagrees and concludes that "all the facts can be reconciled with the view that Second Peter is written to the same people as First Peter," and further believes that Second Peter is earlier than Jude, since Jude cites 2:1 – 3:3, finally concluding that Second Peter was written shortly after First Peter but before Jude, about 66 or 67 A.D.

Comparing Second Peter with First Peter we note that while in I Peter the emphasis is on suffering, here in II Peter the emphasis is on false teachers and false teachings, especially the very emphatic "sure word of prophecy" which is held up as the foundation of faith and certainty. While I Peter offers hope and urges the believers to bear suffering patiently, yes, even with rejoicing, II Peter is a letter of warning and of urging concentration on the fruits of faith it contains a reminder of the sure foundation of faith and the prediction of false teachers who are to be avoided, especially in view of the Day of Judgment. The true knowledge of God and of Jesus will firmly establish their faith and keep them from following any of the false teachers. In this same connection we notice that the word "know" or its cognates occurs 16 times in this letter, 9 of which are in the first chapter, namely, vv. 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 12, 14, 16, 20. This knowledge rests on the facts given by the Holy Spirit to every believer. Thus also in his greeting Peter expresses the prayerful desire that "grace and peace be multiplied" to every reader through the knowledge of God and of Jesus. We can see that this is also a very practical and timely letter for us!

Verses 1-2

Translation

Simon Peter, slave and apostle of Jesus Christ to those who have received faith equally precious with ours in connection with the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ Grace to you and peace be multiplied in connection with knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Word study

Συμεών – Peter’s Aramaic or Semitic name; also in Acts 15:14

δοῦλος – slave; adj. enslaved; as a subst. – male slave or servant

ἀπόστολος – one sent as a messenger or agent, the bearer of a commission; from ἀποστέλλω – I send forth

ἰσότιμον – acc. s. fem. adj. (ἴσος + τιμή) – of equal price, equally precious or valuable. – modifies πίστιν

λαχοῦσιν – dat. pl. masc. part. 2 aor. (λαγχάνω – I set by lot); ἔλαχον is 2 aor. – to have assigned to one, to obtain, to receive

πίστιν – acc. s. noun from πείθω – I persuade, seek to persuade, endeavor to convince; the noun means: faith, belief, firm persuasion (in the N.T., faith in God and Christ).

ἐν – prep. – in the sphere of, in connection with

δικαιοσύνη – (Aleph text [Ⲭ] has εἰς δικαιοσύνην [acc.]) dat. s. fem. derived from δίκη – right, justice; in N.T., judicial punishment, sentence. δίκαιος – adj. – just, equitable, fair; of persons: just, righteous. Then δικαιοσύνη – fair and equitable dealings; acceptance as righteous, justification

τοῦ θεοῦ...Χριστοῦ – gen. of source

χάριν – noun from χαίρω – I rejoice; χαῖρε – Hail!; pleasing show, charm; beauty, kindly bearing, graciousness; generous gift; act of favor, free gift, grace, gracious dealing.

εἰρήνη – fem. noun – peace; a benediction, blessing

Πληθυνθείη – 3 s. 1 aor. optative pass. (πληθύνω – I multiply, increase) from πίμπλημι – I fill, pass. am filled; our form is pass. – to be multiplied, filled, increased

ἐν ἐπιγνώσει – dat. s. of ἐπίγνωσιν – the coming at the knowledge; ascertainment; a distinct perception or impression, acknowledgment. This is stronger than γνώσις! It is a true, clear, full knowledge to which they have been brought; it is personally embraced and has a strong effect on their personal religious life (also 1:8 and 2:20 et al.).

Comments

Simon Peter as the author of this letter gives his full name, Simon, son of John (sometimes rendered Jona) and Peter, as Jesus named him; the latter means a rock, and our Lord thus indicates the firmness of faith with which He will endow him through the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Peter also identifies himself as the servant or bond-slave of Jesus Christ. Comparing this with I Peter we note that there he merely used his name, Peter, and spoke of himself as being an apostle of Jesus Christ; in I Peter he writes to believers scattered throughout the various provinces of Asia Minor and the surrounding area; thus it was sufficient to identify himself as an apostle of the Lord. In II Peter he also uses his Aramaic or Semitic name, Simeon (Simon in some mss.), and then uses the double identification of bondsman and apostle of Jesus Christ; this indicates both his close dependence on Christ as a blood-bought soul who has submitted his will to Christ and also his office of apostle, which is his by commission from the Lord.

In line with this close union and dependence on Christ, Peter addresses his hearers as those who have received faith of equal value with that of Peter himself and other Jewish Christians; this would lead us to believe that Peter is writing to Gentile Christians. Here we note that, according to Acts 11:17 in the discussion of the question whether the Gentiles should be circumcised or not when they were brought to faith, Peter speaks of God giving them “the same gift as He gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.” And later in the

great Jerusalem convention (Acts 15:8ff) Peter states, “God who knows the heart, showed that He accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as He did to us. He made no distinction between us and them.” Thus Peter was convinced that the faith of the Gentile Christians was the same, and of equal value, and in that vein he writes his 2nd letter.

This faith, yours and ours, Peter says, has its basis in the righteousness of God (objective justification); this is as he had stated in the aforementioned Acts 15 passage (v. 11): “we believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.” The Gospel of the Grace of God, as this is offered by the imputing of the righteousness of Christ to the believer, is thus the cause and the basis of this equal faith. The Apostle Paul in Romans also declared that in the Gospel of Christ we hear of God’s righteousness, for “therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith’” (Rom. 1:17). Peter in this letter is concerned that *that* faith based on God’s righteousness be maintained and strengthened over against the false teachers and false teachings of antinomianism.

Peter’s greeting seems to go a step beyond the common, familiar greeting of the Apostle Paul with which we are so well acquainted, in that he says, “May grace and peace be multiplied to you.” Jude 2 uses the same word for multiplied which the NIV translates, “in abundance.” This “Grace and Peace” come from God; both are connected with the knowledge they have of God by faith, which is God’s gift to them; this includes knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Savior; in fact this is none other than the Gospel message, the saving knowledge of the true God and His salvation accomplished by the work of Jesus Christ. This knowledge bestowed by God’s grace produces faith and grants the peace of God. Simply by coming to know about God’s Grace and Peace we have it: Just as Jesus stated (John 17:3), “Now this is eternal life: that men may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom You have sent” (NIV).

Verses 3-11

Translation

As His divine power has freely given us all things, those pertaining to life and godliness, through the knowledge of the One who called us by His own glory and excellence through which (pl.) He has freely given the precious and greatest things promised to us, so that through these you become sharers of the divine nature, while fleeing from the corruption in the world through lust; and for this same reason bringing into play all diligence provide in connection with your faith *excellence*, and with excellence *knowledge*, and with knowledge *self-control*, and with self-control *perseverance*, and with perseverance *godliness* (piety), and with godliness *brotherly affection*, and with brotherly affection *love* (of understanding); for these belonging to you and increasing make you neither idle nor unfruitful in regard to the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; for whoever does not have these is blind with half-closed eyes, having forgotten that he has been cleansed of past sins; therefore, brothers, be more eager to make your calling and election firm (sure); for by doing these things you will never stumble; because in this way there will be richly furnished for you the entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Word Study (Verses 3-7)

Forms of γινώσκειν used in this section:

- v. 3 ἐπιγνώσεως
- v. 5 γνώσις
- v. 6 γνώσει
- v. 8 ἐπίγνωσιν

Ὡς – introduces a Genitive absolute... δεδωρημένης, which is the gen. s. perfect passive participle with active meaning. It comes from the word for gift, and the verb, to give freely. In verse 4 the indicative, 3rd s. perfect passive is used, also with active meaning.

καλέσαντος – is the Gen. s. masc. 1 aor. active participle of καλέω – I call; “of the One who called”

ἰδίᾳ δόξῃ καὶ ἀρετῇ looks like a Dative, but not considered Dative; rather it is instrumental according to Robertson, p. 533; “by means of”

δι’ ὧν is διά and the Gen. pl. of ὅς

τίμια is the pl. adjective – precious, valuable

μέγιστα is the superlative – the greatest

ἐπαγγέλματα is neuter pl. – promised, things promised

The rest of the words in this section will be treated later, some along with the commentary.

Comments (Verses 3-7)

In comparing First Peter 1 with our present chapter of Second Peter, we note that even as I Peter 1:3-9 is a unit and only one extended sentence, so also is II Peter 1:3-9. This is evidence that both have the same author. And there are additional similarities: faith is the vital thing in our hearts as Peter states in both of these great opening sentences (I Pet. 1:5 and II Pet. 1:5). The end of this faith is the “salvation of souls” (I Pet. 1:9) and in II Pet. 1:11 it is “the entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” Also in both letters Peter refers to the prophets, I Pet. 1:10,12 and II Pet. 1:19-21, and in both the ministry of the apostles and Gospel preachers is mentioned, “those who have preached the Gospel to you” (I Pet. 1:12), and “we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II Pet. 1:16). While the particular words may differ, the similarity of thought is quite apparent!

The specific purpose of each letter is different although each has the same basis for achieving that purpose; the knowledge of salvation in Christ is the means of strengthening their hope during time of suffering (I Pet. 1) and also for increasing and fortifying their certainty over against the false teachers (II Pet. 1). While those suffering for Christ need their hope in Christ strengthened, those struggling against loose errorists need true heart-knowledge from Christ which is ever growing and increasing even as they remain in contact with the Word of the prophets, apostles, and Gospel preachers. Because the libertinists make fun of the promise of the Lord’s Coming, the true knowledge of all of God’s promises must be brought to bear so that the real certainty of the Lord’s Coming is made stronger in the believers.

Verses 3-11 we can read as one unit, one grand sentence. Ὡς introduces a genitive absolute clause in which Peter speaks of the divine power of God our Savior by which He has given believers (Peter says, us) *all things* that have to do with spiritual life and godly living; this spiritual life and godly living (piety) come through the true knowledge of God; this knowledge comes from God through His prophets, apostles and Gospel preachers, in short from His Word! It is knowledge supplied by the One who called believers to faith by His own glory and excellence. The glory and excellence of the Calling One is displayed in the Gospel which the Apostle Paul calls “the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth” (Rom. 1:16); these are further illustrated in Peter’s first letter (2:9) where he states, “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of His own, so that you might show forth the excellencies of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.” Along with their call and coming to know the true God, believers have received all the necessary gifts through the working of the Holy Spirit to be alive spiritually and thus living godly lives on earth (II Cor. 4:6).

God our Savior, namely Jesus, has by His divine power, the power of His grace and mercy, given *all things*, all gifts necessary for such new life; this spiritual life began in the conversion of the individual believer through the power of the Gospel as preached and as it empowered Baptism; this new spiritual life is not

neglected by the Savior, but He continually adds and supplies the gifts needed for a God-pleasing life. These gifts are given, Peter states, by God’s divine power and through the knowledge of the One calling; that is, the calling One has revealed Himself to the called person, and through His own glory and excellence He has freely given very valuable and extremely great promises which are intended to serve to strengthen, reinforce and carry forward the faith planted in conversion.

These promises include the promise of Jesus’ second coming toward which believers look in faith and hope as Paul expresses it in Titus 2:13, “while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.” It is God’s promise to believers that they will share “in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light” (Col. 1:12). The clearest statements of these promises are the words of Jesus Himself which the apostles and Gospel preachers no doubt repeated for believers everywhere: John 3:16, “God so loved the world,...that whosoever believeth in Him...have everlasting life.” Also, John 3:36, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” And John 5:24, “He that heareth My Word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life,...is passed from death unto life.” These promises would also include Jesus’ words about spiritual light John 8:12, “I am the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

These promises of God pertaining to spiritual life and Jesus’ Second Coming are called valuable or precious and the greatest: They certainly display God’s great glory and excellence, which is worthy of all praise. By these greatest, valuable and precious promises God produces the *glorious result* that believers actually become sharers in the divine nature. Through His gifts for spiritual living and His greatest promises God is working out the sanctification of believers so that *as a result* they really become sharers or partners in the divine nature. This is the “image” of God which Adam and Eve lost when they sinned; it is restored in believers (Eph. 4:22-24), but only fully realized and enjoyed in heaven. Thus all our Christian and spiritual life is striving toward that goal. And this is what Paul has in mind when he writes to the Corinthians (II Cor. 7:1), “Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, and let us strive for perfection out of reverence for God.”

This striving toward the goal of the divine nature includes a virtual running away from the corruption in the world due to sinful passion; sinful lust is the direct opposite of the fruit of the divine nature. This then means putting off the old self as Paul urges in Ephesians 4:22; that old self is “being corrupted by the deceitful desires.” Paul’s list of the sins of the flesh (Galatians 5:19ff) is also worth noting, for these must be recognized for what they are and deliberately avoided by Christians.

“For this very reason,” Peter continues in verse 5—namely that God has given us all things (spiritual blessings) freely, and the precious and greatest promises, things promised to us, so that we have become true sharers of the divine nature (yes, we really are sons of God now)—he urges, then, that Christians bring into play every effort (diligence) to add fruits of faith to their faith. Peter lists seven that the believer should be working on with God’s help, of course. These ascend from the quality that sets the Christian apart from the unbeliever to that greatest of all which God alone possesses in absolute beauty and perfection, *love!* This is the full range of “faith expressing itself in love,” as Paul says in Galatians 5:6b.

We compare a few recent translations of these words with the KJV:

Greek	KJV	NASB	Williams	Beck	NIV
ἀρετή	virtue	moral excellence	moral character	moral power	goodness
γνώσις	knowledge	knowledge	knowledge	knowledge	knowledge
ἐγκράτεια	temperance	self-control	self-control	self-control	self-control
ὑπομονή	patience	perseverance	patient endurance	endurance	perseverance
εὐσέβεια	godliness	godliness	piety	godliness	godliness
φιλαδελφία	brotherly kindness	brotherly kindness	brotherly affection	brotherly kindness	brotherly kindness
ἀγάπη	charity	<i>Christian</i> love	universal love	love	love

A more complete treatment of ἀρετή is needed here; it is goodness, good quality; a gracious act of God, I Peter 2:9; II Peter 1:3; also virtue, uprightness, as in Philippians 4:8; and II Peter 1:5 (of the Christian).

According to Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, (p. 457ff of vol. I), outside of the New Testament it had so many meanings that this led to misunderstandings: a) eminence, fine achievement; b) manliness; c) merit; d) virtue (the Sophists and Socrates and Plato, esp. in moral philosophy); then in Hellenistic Judaism it came close to δικαιοσύνη; the two words became almost equivalents, especially in the Wisdom literature of the Apocrypha. Later in reference to the gods it became e) self-declaration; finally it also came to mean fortune, success, and thus also special prominence among men, i.e., f) fame.

In the New Testament it is used but once by Paul in Philippians 4:8, “εἴ τις ἀρετὴ καὶ εἴ τις ἔπαινος”; the only other passage where there is reference to human ἀρετή is in our present chapter of II Peter 1:5; in contrast with the secular world it must mean more than virtue (KJV), even as πίστις means more than worldly fidelity. Besides that, it is used of God in verse 3 as well as in I Peter 2:9.

The basic meaning of ἀρετή would certainly seem to be the same especially when used twice in the same section; thus the excellence, i.e., that which is worthy of praise in God, would find its equivalent in the Christian who has been made a sharer of the divine nature through the regenerating power of grace as the Holy Spirit has done His work in him.

What is this ἀρετή then? Is it mere virtue (KJV), praise (Lenski), moral power (Beck), moral character (Williams), or moral excellence (NASB)? I prefer to understand it simply as excellence, obviously in the moral sense, that which is worthy of and attracts praise, whether it be of God or of the Christian, for the Christian is an imitator of God, his Savior! This clearly elevates this quality and fruit of faith above the human level; and this is where, by the grace and power of God through His Word and Spirit, the Christian is! This quality as a fruit of Christian faith is certainly far above the human idea of virtue or heroic manliness. The model of the Christian is, of course, none other than the Savior, Jesus. He did all things well, was worthy of all praise from all sides; in Him there was found no guile; none could convict Him of sin!

For the very reason that God has done all this for us, making us sharers of the divine nature, all we Christians are to exercise our most holy faith so that we add the following qualities and in so doing will be growing and increasing in fruits of faith. We haven't been bought with the price of the blood of Jesus just to sit on the trophy shelf; we are His own to “live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness” (Luther, 2nd Article explanation).

Thus as Peter says with the Aorist participle, *παρεισενέγκαντες*, while bringing into play (bringing in from the side) every effort we are to supply with (add to) our faith the fruits listed; as we grow and mature as Christians we will be fruitful in this way, one good quality followed by another as God gives us increase of faith! The divine nature which is being restored and renewed in us has the power to produce what Peter says it should. Thus looking to Jesus in faith the believer is growing, increasing, and thus adding excellence of moral character as he grows toward the perfect man (Ephesians 4:13-15).

Examples of outstanding believers growing in their Christian faith toward the perfect man are Joseph in Egypt, who went from slavery to prison and then was raised next to Pharaoh; Daniel in Babylon, the wisest of the three presidents over all the provinces, who spent one night in the lion's den; his three friends of like character who were thrown into the fiery furnace because they refused to worship the image the king had set up. In later times we have Stephen, the first Christian martyr making his confession before the Council, and also our own dear Reformer, Luther at Worms. They all added to their faith this quality of excellence.

To excellence, Peter says, add knowledge (γνώσις). True knowledge is needed, and this comes only from God's Word. Billy Dallmann takes it as wisdom, or knowledge with common sense. I Corinthians 14:20, “in understanding be men” is in contrast to what Paul says of the Jews who have a “zeal of God, but not according to knowledge” (Rom. 10:2). Rather as Paul tells the Colossians (v. 1:9f), “we have not stopped

praying for you and asking God to fill you with the *knowledge of His will* through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way; bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.” Here in our verse we have no compound, but the simple vital “knowledge” of, and from, the Word of God. This is a vital quality in this letter especially since Peter is strengthening his readers against false teachers.

To this quality or fruit of faith, “knowledge,” Peter says, add *ἐγκράτεια*, that is, temperance (KJV), self-restraint, *self-control* in all things. This quality the libertinists, as their label indicates, lack entirely; but the Christian must learn to exercise self-control in appetite, temper, tongue, thought, and imagination; this will necessitate drill, training, discipline (Dallmann). “Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (II Timothy 2:3). As such, then, the Christian with true knowledge has the active power to keep all human appetites and desires under control. Paul also illustrates this for us in his own case when he refers to the training athlete and says, “I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize” (I Cor, 9:27). So the believer functions, not by the extremes of the prohibitionists, but by controlling reason, emotions, and will through the knowledge of the Word and Will of God.

The fruit that is to be added along with self-control is *perseverance* (*ὑπομονή*); this means patient endurance, holding out; it is like the anvil that wears out many hammers. This is, literally, remaining under the burden, steady and unwavering; though severely tried and tested, yet constant and enduring. We naturally think of Jesus as He approached that hour of agony: “Not My will, but Thine be done!” And we pray, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” This quality also has its active side as the following will show (Hebrews 12:1): “let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.” And then the author urges us to “fix our eyes on Jesus, the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross.” Also Galatians 6:9 fits here: “Let us not become weary in doing good.” And II Thess. 3:13, “never tire of doing what is right.” I Cor. 15:58, “Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord.”

The Christian, enduring and persevering in his faith through trial and temptation will then be living a godly life; *godliness* (*εὐσέβεια*) is the attitude of standing in awe of God and what He says and wills. It is the quality of the Christian of being like God, or Christlike, in what he is doing; the example of Christ is the model, the ideal: for God was in Christ; He was loyal unto death; so the Christian adds to his faith the quality of godliness following perseverance. The word also occurs in Peter’s statement (Acts 3:12) in reply to the wonder and amazement of the people after the healing of the lame man at the Gate Beautiful: “Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?” And the Apostle Paul uses it (I Tim. 2:2) when encouraging prayer for men in authority, “that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.” In fact in the next chapter Paul calls the Christian religion “the mystery of godliness” (3:16).

To godliness the believer should add *φιλαδελφία*. Like brothers and sisters of the one family of God, the believers should have affection and concern for one another. In his first letter Peter wrote “τὴν ἀδελφότητα ἀγαπᾶτε,” love the brotherhood (I Peter 2:17); natural affection follows this genuine love for the fellow believers on the part of every Christian. The Apostle Paul also takes for granted that the Thessalonians understand and therefore will be practicing this brotherly love (affection). The author of Hebrews recognizes that there is *brotherly affection* among the believers and urges that it continue (Heb. 13:1). So among the true believers there will be this brotherly affection as the Christian community individually add to their common Christian faith all the qualities Peter urges in this letter.

Finally, Peter urges that the believer add the highest fruit of faith to the list of all the qualities already stated: *ἀγάπη*. Here we have, of course, the highest form of love; it goes from God to all men in that amazing way of providing salvation for all mankind. God’s grace wins men, makes them Christians, and then that same high love goes from man back to God in response and also outward toward all men still in need of that Gospel message of Grace! This high “love” is the believer’s joyful response to what God has done for him and grows

to an unlimited extent. Obviously it is so much higher than brotherly affection because it imitates and reflects the great LOVE of God. Numerous Scriptures expound and exclaim on the LOVE of God: John 3:16 “God so loved the world.” Romans 5:8 relates, “But God demonstrates His own LOVE for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” And Paul later exclaims, “Who shall separate us from the LOVE of Christ?” (Rom. 8:39).

This LOVE is emotion; and motion comes out of it; it will move in a practical way to produce good works and prove and show itself; therefore serve one another (Dallmann).

Lenski has repeatedly defined this *ἀγάπη* as the love of intelligence and full understanding which is coupled with a strong corresponding purpose. So God loved the foul world so that He gave His Son into death to atone for all sin and then gave the Holy Spirit to cleanse hearts by faith; this LOVE extends to all men, and now the believers, we, too, are to demonstrate this LOVE toward all men with the hope of freeing them from the eternal trap of their sins.

In urging qualities and fruits to be added by the believer, Peter has gone from faith to the highest love. Faith adds to itself all these fruits and thus with the power of God and His aid comes full cycle to the same type and quality of LOVE that God has always had and still possesses for the whole world. While this LOVE on our part is imperfect on this side of heaven, yet don't we see in this the effect of God's greatest and precious promises that bring us closer to the divine nature? By adding these fruits the believer is growing toward the perfect Man (Christ).

Word Study (Verses 8-11)

ὑπάρχοντα – nom. pl. neuter pres. pt. *ὑπάρχω* = *ὑπό* + *ἄρχω* from *ἀρχή* – a beginning; first place;
vb. to be first, to govern, to be in possession of; have authority over

πλεονάζοντα – nom. pl. neuter pres. pt. of *πλεονάζω* – to increase; from *πολύς* – much, many

ἀρούς – acc. pl. m. (*ἀργός* = *ἀ* + *ἔργον*) – inactive, idle, averse from labor; unprofitable.

ἀκάρπους – acc. pl. m. – fruitless

καθίστησιν – 3 s. pres. ind. act. (*καθίστημι* = *κατά* + *ἵστημι*) – to place, set; constitute, appoint, to set down; make, render, cause to be

εἰς – with reference to, in regard to

πάρεστιν – 3 s. pres. ind. (*παίρειμι*) – to be present

τυφλός – adj. – blind (I John 2:9,11)

μυωπάζων – nom. s. m. pres. pt. (*μύω* – to shut + *ᾠψ*) – close the eyes; be near-sighted; dim-sighted

λήθην – acc. s. (from *λανθάνω* – to be unnoticed) – forgetfulness, oblivion (2 Pet. 1:9)

καθαρισμοῦ – gen. s. – cleansing, purification; (*καθαρίζω* from *καθαρός* – clean, pure.)

πάλαι – adv. – of old, long ago.

διό – on which account, wherefore, therefore; Mt.27:8; I Cor. 12:3

μᾶλλον – adv. (compar. of *μάλα*) – more, to a greater extent

σπουδάσατε – 2 pl. aor. inv. (*σπουδάζω* from *σπεύδω* – to urge on; to be eager; intrans. to hasten)
– to be in earnest about, to strive

βεβαίαν – acc. s. f. (from perf. of *βαίνω*) firm, stable, sure, certain, established

κλήσιν – acc. s. from *καλέω*; a calling, call, invitation

ἐκλογήν – acc. s. from *ἐκλέγω*; the act of choosing out, election

πταίσητε – 2 pl. aor. subj. (πταίω) – to cause to stumble; but intrans. to stumble, stagger, fall, to make a false step
 οὐ μὴ... ποτε – never

Comments (Verses 8-11)

In these verses the grand sentence of 3-11 continues; Peter acknowledges that all these fruits (ταῦτα) belong to Christians; in fact these are increasing in the believers and therefore, even as they increase, the believers are not idle nor unfruitful – a *litotes* – how can a believer be unfruitful if his faith is true, deep, genuine, and growing? All these qualities and fruits of faith, due to the power and aid God supplies, show the believers to be fruitful. There’s no standing still for true believers, no idle claim, “I know everything I was taught at confirmation!” Rather, the believers have these qualities and fruits; as they grow in their faith, they become more and more fruitful; the knowledge they have of Jesus Christ, which comes from Him (He is the Source, the Author and Perfecter of their faith), shows itself in increasing growth. And as the true knowledge grows and deepens, it clearly marks each individual Christian as a growing, fruitful branch on the Vine.

The *litotes* has the effect of highlighting the evident fruitfulness in the true believer. How can it be otherwise: fruit, good works, are obviously to be looked for in the one who remains joined to the true Vine. We note also the statement of James (2:17), “Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself,” and (2:18b), “show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” Thus true faith in the believer will be fruitful, filled with good works.

The key word here again is ἐπίγνωσις, knowledge to which they have been brought; this word contrasts with the errorists who can produce nothing but dead works, useless motion, from their false teachings. “By their fruits shall ye know them” (Mt. 7:16).

The New International Version is quite clear and readily understood in this verse (8): “For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The knowledge of Jesus Christ is the basis for all faith and its fruits; this growing and deepening knowledge of Jesus causes the believers to be continually fruitful and productive.

In sharp contrast to the true believers who are adding fruits to faith even as they become increasingly fruitful, we have the other side: Peter is aware that there are also “hangers on” who are not producing fruit; one who makes the claim to be a Christian, to belong to Christ, and yet does not add any fruit to faith is really blind, that is, he is myopic, near-sighted, and not able to see nor understand the full life the Christian should be living; the cause of this is that he has forgotten what God has done for him in Christ. He has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins; he had his sins washed away in Holy Baptism, but since then he has forgotten this and now he is continuing to live again in those same old sins. Although he had heard the Word, he has only a faint glimmer left, having forgotten the real heart and meaning and purpose of his cleansing. Perhaps he thinks that the Christian Church is a social club, an outward association, and so he may appear from time to time just to “keep up his membership”—so to say—but his heart isn’t in it; he is not a living, producing Christian: He can be described as having a form of religion but denying the power of it. The barrenness of his former life has returned to take possession of his heart.

Now since the danger exists that this could possibly happen to any Christian, Peter makes a strong appeal to his fellow believers; he calls them “brothers” and urges them to make sure that they know where they stand. For their own benefit and encouragement they should review the facts that God has called them to faith in Jesus and that this means that they have already been chosen by God in eternity.

To have this personal assurance of God’s call and election and to understand it in this way is to make it sure for themselves, because they are merely taking God at His Word when through His Apostle He says, “I have chosen you already from eternity!” Their assurance of their call and election will rest on all the gifts of God’s grace that have been supplied for the building and strengthening of their faith; the evidence of their assurance also lies in the fruits which their faith is producing; as they observe these fruits, sometimes to their very amazement, they will gratefully acknowledge that God has called them—how else would they be able to

produce such fruits?—and they will be assured that God elected them in His eternal will and counsel. They are certainly not to question the “why” of their election, since it is of Grace; they know what they were before God’s call to faith, so they will not credit themselves with a lesser resistance than others who are not of the faith. But they are to draw comfort and encouragement for an increasingly God-pleasing life of faith from the fact of their call and their election.

Here we quote the gist from Stoeckhardt’s “Excursus Concerning the Doctrine of the Election of Grace according to Ephesians 1:3-14” (the locus classicus for election). Dr. Stoeckhardt quotes at length *from Lehre und Wehre* (1905), p. 481ff and p. 199-201; also from his *Romans*, p. 403-404.

The Doctrine of the Election of Grace

1. is one of the clear doctrines of Scripture.
2. is a doctrine specifically for Christians (only for repentant believers).
3. in Eph. 1 finds Paul identifying himself and his fellow Christians with the elect.
4. is the truth that God has elected us before the foundation of the world; it is therefore prehistoric, an eternal act of God, an act of His will, a divine decision.
5. as to content and purpose means that we are children of God by faith, for the purpose of proclaiming His praises.
6. is the truth about what God did entirely out of His grace and His mercy, for we are not worthy of such love and honor.
 - a. Grace + mercy = the *causa impulsiva*
 - b. Christ’s merit = the *causa meritoria*

Thus the foundation of our eternal election is firm and immovable.

7. assures us that for Christ’s sake each of us Christians was chosen by God to be His child and an heir of eternal life.
8. is a truth that is irrevocable since it is an act according to the eternal counsel of God which stands forever (acc. to the pleasure of His will, Eph 1:5).
9. is a truth of God even now being carried out as the Gospel brings the elect together from the ends of the earth.
10. includes the comforting assurance that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise through whose power we are kept in the faith.

We return to the discussion of verse 11:

By assuring themselves of their call and election by God, the believers will avoid stumbling and falling from the faith; the means God uses to assure us of our calling and election also richly supply our entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Thus, in this way, as we note all the things supplied to our faith from our calling to faith throughout the time of growing and increasing in the fruits of faith, we also receive full assurance that our way to heaven is being richly supplied by our God and Savior.

After expressing briefly his concern that they keep in mind all these things God has done and still does for them, Peter directs their attention to the solid foundation of all the knowledge of Jesus.

Verses 12 - 21

Translation

Therefore, I shall always be ready to remind you of these things, although you know them and stand immovable in the truth you now have. But I think it is right, while I am in this tent (of my body), to stir you up in remembering, knowing that soon I will be putting off my tent (body), even as our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me; however I shall always be eager to have you make mention of these things after my departure.

For not by following cleverly devised fables did we make known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but as eyewitnesses of His magnificence. Indeed receiving from God the Father honor and glory there came to Him such a voice from the most splendid glory: This is My Son, My Beloved; in Him I am well-pleased.—And this voice we heard coming from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

And we have a firmer (basis) the prophetic Word, to which you do well to take heed as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first that every prophecy of Scripture does not come into existence by private interpretation; for not by the will of man was prophecy ever brought forth, however carried by the Holy Spirit men spoke from God.

Word Study (separate notes)

Comments

In verses 12 - 15 Peter expresses his personal concern for his readers; he feels a definite responsibility toward them as long as he is still living on earth, an obligation to remind them of these things that pertain to their faith, its growth, and their entrance into the heavenly kingdom. They do know about these things as believers, they are directed, or standing immovable, on the path of faith and a fruitful Christian life; they are looking in faith to the coming of the Lord and the consummation of His eternal kingdom. Then they will enjoy bliss and glory. They know these truths for their faith is based on the true knowledge of Jesus Christ; yet Peter, aware that he may soon be martyred, feels that the obligation is properly his to awaken out of sleep, as it were, to stir them up, so that they will never forget these important things.

He feels that very soon he will be martyred as the Lord had indicated to him (John 21:18 + 19); and perhaps Peter had received a more recent revelation (of which we have no positive knowledge). In view of this Peter is very much concerned that the Christians to whom he is writing remember all they have been taught and keep in mind his words of encouragement and warning.

We observe that the Apostle Paul in Romans 15:15f writes “quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again,” even though previously Paul acknowledged that he was convinced “that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another” (v. 14). And St. John in his First Epistle states: “I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it... See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father” (I John 2:21 + 24). John also writes to encourage and strengthen the faith in the believers; this is Peter’s chief concern.

Having expressed his personal concern and urged them to keep on remembering these things, Peter then lays before his readers once more the basis for the knowledge of Jesus and His kingdom. The source of the Christian’s knowledge about the Savior Jesus is not any cleverly designed fairy tales; that type of thing we did not follow, Peter says, when we made known to you believers the power and coming of our Lord, but we were eyewitnesses of His wonderful glory. Peter, together with James and John had seen Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration; at that time Jesus had received honor and glory from the Father. The three were witnesses; they saw what happened, how His face shone like the sun and His clothing became as bright as a flash of lightening. They also heard the voice of God the Father come from heaven and declare: “This is My Son, My Beloved; in Him I am well-pleased!” Yes, these three witnessed with their eyes and with their ears this special display of Jesus’ glory.

Besides the direct revelation of Jesus’ glory on the Mount of Transfiguration (and Peter could have mentioned other revelations), Peter now adds the fact that we the apostles, all of whom were teaching the Word, have a firmer foundation for the truth we made known to you; that firmer foundation is the prophetic Word of God. To this basis for knowledge about Jesus and His coming you believers do well to take heed pay close attention. This prophetic Word is like a light shining in a dark place; the dark place is the dark, murky, filthy heart of natural man; they were all like that once, but now they are light in the Lord. The light of God’s truth,

His Word, from the apostles and Gospel preachers and also from the Scriptures has shined in their hearts; now they have that true knowledge of Jesus Christ, their Savior. Peter urges them to continually take heed to the Prophetic Word, to search the Scriptures like the Berean Christians. Those Scriptures will be a light to them until they leave this earth, until the day of eternity dawns and they will then live in the direct light of God's glory. When they awaken on that Great Day, the Day of the Lord's power and coming, then the morning star will have risen in their hearts.

To emphasize the reliability of the Prophetic Word Peter speaks of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures: knowing (you know) that every prophecy of the Scriptures has not come into existence by private, individual interpretation, but all prophecy has divine origin. Surely these believers also knew of the way God spoke through Moses; they knew the Pentatuch. Moses didn't decide what to tell Israel and her elders, nor what to say to Pharaoh; God gave him the words; Moses didn't give the Law except when God had written it down for him or told it to him. The same was true of every Old Testament Prophet; God gave them the thoughts and the very words (as Scripture elsewhere tells us). So the Prophetic Word is more firm, more sure, because it did not come into existence by man's will, but when God the Holy Spirit moved the chosen men, they spoke what came from God! Thus the Scriptures are the very Word of God. Therefore, heed this firm foundation of the knowledge of your Savior Jesus Christ and let no one draw you away.

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