

Title: Fanning the flame of Truth: An Introduction to 2 Peter (Part 3)

Passage: 2 Peter 1:1b-2

Theme: Introduction to 2 Peter

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{{Read Passage}}

week 3 ==>

I. Fanning the Flame: An Introduction to 2 Peter

Often ignored letter. MacArthur comments that ==>

Second Peter (along with Jude) is viewed by some as the "dark corner" of the New Testament. As a result, it is not often preached, studied, discussed, or quoted." [MacArthur, 1]

He goes on to say ==>

". . . Peter wrote it [this letter] to help believers face a world filled with subtle spiritual deception. . . . Never has Peter's warning been more timely than it is today. The rapid advancement of mass media, coupled with the church's lack of discernment, has allowed doctrinal error to spread like wildfire. False teachers propagate their heresies via television, radio, the Internet, books, magazines, and seminars—doing whatever they can for their own self-promotion. In the process, their deceit lures multitudes to exchange the truth for utter lies (cf. 1 Tim. 1:19; 2 Tim. 2:16-18). To make matters worse, some in today's church, motivated by cowardly fear or rejection or misguided notions of love, are reluctant to expose today's apostates. Instead of countering error, they either embrace it or ignore it in the name of tolerance. [MacArthur, 1-2]

At t/men's conference last month some of us were asked what we thought was t/greatest threat to t/CH today. My answer was 2-fold: First: t/CH's allergic reaction to doctrine. Second, t/rampant ecumenism where most anyone is deemed a Xn so long as they "believe in Jesus."

Those 2 threats (if you want to use that word) are kissing cousins. In that regard, t/ecumenical mind-set is a symptom of t/real problem - t/fact that so many CH's that call themselves Evang. have so little regard for God's Word. This letter, along w/Jude, is a needed corrective.

Next time we'll jump into t/first major section of this letter (vv. 3-11). I'm confident that study will be tremendously rewarding.

Today – we're wrapping up laying a foundation.

We've looked at ==>

A. The Author - Issues of Authorship (1:1a)

We noted that this letter is considered by most scholars today as pseudonymous. They would contend that a 2d c. Xn wrote this letter in Peter's name, likely sometime around AD 150.

While there are some issues related to style & content that would lend some credence to that theory, we would agree w/with N.T. scholar Daniel Wallace who remarks ==>

"In reading the literature, one cannot help but see an element of caprice and double standard, where scholars have already made up their minds despite the evidence" ("Second Peter: Introduction, Argument, and Outline" [Biblical Studies

Press: www.bible.org] [MacArthur, 4]

We take t/writer to be Peter himself ==>

Simon Peter, a slave and an apostle of Jesus Christ . . .

Also from verse 1 ==>

B. The Audience - Issues of Readership (1:1b)

Peter writes ==>

. . . to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

When he says, "The same kind as ours" he may be referring to t/apostles. That would connect to his opening introduction in t/verse=>
Simon Peter, a slave and an apostle of Jesus Christ . . .

1. Another implicit statement of equality among all true believers

Remember, Peter calls himself first a slave of X, THEN his apostle. He's saying, *"I may be one of t/privileged few who were closest to our Master; I may be an apostle—but t/foundational reality is that I am one of His slaves, just as you are. We are all equally slaves of one Master." Because of that, we share a common salvation. There's no apostolic stained-glass righteousness that sets us apart from you."*

There's no difference in t/currency of salvation because it's all grounded in t/perfect righteousness of X.

The fact that they were on the receiving end of this faith, if you will, implies that it's a gift.

Verb λαγχανω means to *receive, obtain* by divine will. It's a word that was used of determining God's will by the casting of lots. Not "chance" but determination. It's to be allotted something. Here, it's allotted faith.

Thomas Adams was an English Puritan. He wrote a mammoth commentary on 2 Peter, almost 900 pages of small type compressed into two columns per page. You think I'm bad. He treats each word as an individual sermon!

I love this unrelated statement that he makes on page 2 (he's actually quoting another, but favorably) ==>

" . . . of all Christians Italians are the worst; of all Italians, the Romans; of all Romans, the priests; of all priests, the cardinals; and commonly the most lewd cardinal is chosen pope."

A quote more applicable to our text ==>

"Thus we have considered this precious jewel of faith, and how we have obtained it: by no worthiness of our own, but by lot; that is, the free gift and disposition of God, who gives it, or denies it, according to his own good pleasure. If he have given thee this lot of believing, the thanks be to him: if thou draw a blank and dost not obtain it, yet he hath done thee no wrong. . . . Faith is God's gift; no man can obtain it, if he detain it."
[Thomas Adams, 13-14]

Certainly t/faith we have to believe t/Gospel is itself a gift of God (Eph. 2:8-9).

b. But here t/word "faith" refers not so much to the subjective element of believing, but to t/objective faith, the body of Xn truth (cf. Jude 3)

Evident in "the same kind as ours". "You have received t/same body of truth that is the Gospel that we did."

(1) Interesting word that Peter uses in that regard: ἰσότιμος,

(a) Greek prep. ἰσό = "the same" or "equal"

Cf. Isotopes ==> Different atoms of the same/equal chemical element.
Isosceles triangle a triangle with two equal sides.

(b) τιμιος, ==> refers to something valuable

Cf. 1:4 (precious).

Equal in value. Same precious faith.

Why I said that there's no distinction in justifying grace. The greatest saint does not possess a higher degree of justification than t/least. It's all Christ!

What does the last phrase in verse 1 say?!

. . . in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

c. Philippians 3

Sometimes I may err by referring to the same passage of Scripture too often (if one can err in doing so). But a favorite text in this regard is in Philippians chapter 3.

(1) Paul's resume' as an unregenerate Jew

{{Read vv. 1-7}}

(2) The Broken Ladder of Religious Achievement (4-7)

Seven Futile Steps Up the Broken Ladder (vv. 5-6) ==>

Circumcised on the eighth day,

from the nation of Israel,

of the tribe of Benjamin,

a Hebrew of Hebrews.

According to the law: a Pharisee.

According to zeal: a persecutor of the church;

according to righteousness that is in the law: appearing blameless.

One Step off the Broken Ladder (7)

But whatever things were gain to me, these things I have counted as loss on account of Christ.

Paul says "I have counted/considered" all of these to be loss to gain X
Two terms from realm of ancient accounting (credits / debits) 1)
"gain" (κέρδος) - 2) "loss" (ζημία)

"I have 2 ledgers : 1 = credit; 1 = debit" ==> "All my accomp. as Jew, all my sin, pride, selfishness, religiosity, that was all on t/gain side of my ledger. & I took all of that & moved it to t/loss side." Why? "For the sake of X" (v. 7), that I may gain X" (v. 8). You can take all that is your life apart from X put that in t/loss column & Him alone on credit side--No comparison! X has to be alone on credit side--Not X + anything else but X alone (nature of true saving faith). "All that I am for all that he is." My sin for his righteousness. My selfish desires for his perfect will.

Verse 8 ==>

Even more than that, I consider all things to be "loss" on account of the surpassing greatness of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things--and I consider them refuse that I may gain Christ.

Look at what Paul says in verse 9 ==>

And that I may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own,

Found in Him how? Not having a righteousness of my own (what's another word for this? Self-righteousness!). What Paul spent his life doing as a Pharisee (1 of only 6k)! Seeking righteousness based on self; on tradition; on Law-keeping.

Under t/bondage/deception of trying to keep all the laws that t/Pharisees had extrapolated from OT; and not only those, but t/fences and traditions that surrounded them.

Paul says, "I'll gladly give that all up!" Why? Because there is no righteousness to be found in keeping the Law!

Rom. 3:20 **because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight...**

"Was the Law bad?" No. God prescribed t/Law--to obey t/Law was to be obed. to God's prescribed will. Rom. 7:12 (Law is holy). Law was good when properly understood. But, t/purpose of the Law was not essentially salvific.

Law was a test of man's obedience; Law served to keep Israel sanctified/separated/pure; Law contained moral principles that are based within very nature of God--principles further illuminated & fulfilled in X & new covenant.

Principally: Law demon. that man needed a Savior--a sufficient Savior (Rom. 7:7 - **I would not have come to know sin except thru the law**). The Law was good when understood correctly. It was never intended to justify sin (it couldn't). It served as a παιδαγωγὸς (tutor) to lead us to JC (Gal. 3:24).

Everyone will 1 day stand before God and have 1 of 2 righteousnesses:
1) a righteousness based on self (self-righteousness) which is no righteousness at all;

2) a righteousness based on (v.9) ==>

. . . but the [kind that comes] through faith in Christ; the righteousness of God based on faith.

Which right. would you rather have? Human right. based on works?
God's right. based on faith?

Word "Righteousness" = forensic term. δικαιοσύνη & Heb. counterpart צְדָקָה - are both legal terms. In a court, judge could declare you righteous, not guilty before t/law.

You couldn't legally declare yourself right. Only t/judge could declare you right. Get t/point? You can declare yourself righteous (thru your works which is no right. at all) or you can be declared righteous by God (thru faith in X).

That comes by faith, by trust. As 1 person put it, faith which is the "Yes of the soul to God"

That's a faith that results in a desire to consider all things as loss to gain, to enjoy, X.

Expands upon what Peter means when he says that he writes ==>

... to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. (sharp's rule).

"And moreover in that he added, "in the righteousness, which God gives," he excludes all human righteousness. For through faith alone we are justified before God; and therefore faith is called the God-righteousness, for it avails nothing before the world, yea, it is even condemned by the world." [Luther, 232-33]

John Murray one of the foremost theologians of the last century. In his wonderful little book, Redemption—Accomplished and Applied, he wrote about the profound significance of the atonement:

"The Father did not spare his own Son. He spared nothing that the dictates of unrelenting rectitude demanded. And it is the undercurrent of the Son's acquiescence that we hear when he says, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, the done" (Luke 22:42). But why? It was in order that eternal and invincible love might find the full realization of its urge and purpose in redemption by price and by power. Of Calvary the spirit is eternal love and the basis eternal justice. It is the same love manifested in the mystery of Gethsemane's agony and of Calvary's

accursed tree that wraps eternal security around the people of God. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32). "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Rom. 8:35). "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38,39). That is the security which a perfect atonement secures and it is the perfection of the atonement that secures it." {Redemption—Accomplished and Applied [Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1955], 78)

What greater gift can anyone receive than God's redemption of sinners unto eternal life through the atoning work of His Son Jesus Christ!

That pretty much covers verse 1 and ==>

A. The Author - Issues of Authorship (1:1a)

B. The Audience - Issues of Readership (1:1b)

As far as ==>

C. The Atmosphere - Issues of Circumstance

And ==>

D. The Abstract - Issues of Content

Both of these points relate to one another.

Why did Peter write this letter? Because t/CH was threatened by false teachers, those who were advancing "**destructive heresies**" (2:1).

AT Robertson ==>

"Peter is here concerned chiefly with the heresies of that general region in Asia Minor that so disturbed Paul . . . and John Paul early foresaw at Miletus these wolves that would ravish the sheep (Acts 20:29f.). In I Peter he (Peter) is is concerned chiefly with the fiery persecutions that are upon them, but here with the heretics that threaten to lead them astray." [ATR, 144]

If we take 1:12 as a summation ==> Peter writes to encourage & exhorting t/CH to "Fan t/Flame of Truth" that they may be established in truth.

That leads us not only to our last point, but also to verse 2 ==>

E. The Address - Opening Greeting (1:2)

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

In 1 Peter, he began by reminding them of their election, that they were chosen by God according to His foreordaining love. Here he reminds them of t/benefit of their election: multiplicity of grace and peace.

Two points in that regard ==>

1. The multiplication of sanctifying grace

2. The foundation of sanctifying grace

1. The multiplication of sanctifying grace

Look at how he begins verse 2 ==>

Grace and peace be multiplied to you . . .

a. Grace (Familiar Greek noun Χάρις)

(1) Unmerited or undeserved blessing or favor

It is unmerited in that you can't earn it. It's not like in RC'sm where you can merit grace by grace. Undeserved in that none of us is worthy of it.

This is why Peter can refer to himself as a slave among slaves (v. 1) & tho an Apost., one who has a common salvation w/all sinners (v. 1).

Grace! None deserve it. Those whom God calls equally receive it!

b. This is present or sanctifying grace that comes from the righteousness of Christ (verse 1)

Saving grace isn't increased. Sanctifying grace is.

"Grace is not simply leniency when we have sinned. Grace is the enabling gift of God not to sin. Grace is power, not just pardon. This is plain, for example, in 1 Corinthians 15:10. Paul describes grace as the enabling power of his work: By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored harder than all of them, yet not 1, but the grace of God which is with me." Grace is not simply the pardon of Paul's sins, it is the power to press on in obedience. Therefore the effort we make to obey God is not an effort done in our own strength, but "in the strength which God supplies, that in everything God may get the glory." (1 Peter 4:11)." [John Piper, cited in Quotation

Past and Current Newsletter, #7, December, 1998]

Grace and peace be multiplied to you . . .

How is it multiplied? Through knowledge ==>

. . . in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

2. The foundation of sanctifying grace

γνῶσις and adds t/prep. ἐπι to it - ἐπιγνώσις = superlative knowledge.

Barclay writes that this word was used by Plutarch to distinguish a scientific knowledge of music from that of a rank amateur.

COL 1:9-10 [we] ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

J.A. Robinson contends that this is knowledge directed toward a particular object. That object is Christ.

In 2:2 Paul writes of the ==>

. . . wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ. 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

a. Familial knowledge of God Through Christ

Family or genetic knowledge that can only come through a change in one's spiritual DNA – New Birth.

b. Something else we see in Philippians 3

(1) 3:10 ==>

I consider all things to be "loss" on account of the surpassing greatness of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord

1 thing to refer to knowledge of X; another to speak of greatness of KOX; Here: it's the "surpassing greatness" of KOX.

Surpassing what? Everything! Tru knowledge of JC surpasses everything (nothing excluded)! Surpasses all your worldly possessions; all your supposed human rights; all your personal & religious achievements; everything!

Matthew 13:44 "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field."

That's a tru knowledge of JC. Like a man who finds something of such great value that he's willing to give up everything he is & has to gain it

(2) Familial knowledge

Not just knowing facts // Intellectualism. *"To know experientially; to know with experience; to know personally; to have a relationship with."* So imp. that t/o Script. idea of "knowing X" is used as a syn. for salvation. IOW - those that are regen. children of God are those who "know X."

John 10 (good Shepherd): 14 "I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me, 15 even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

ISW that t/Father knows me and I know Him (personally) my sheep know me and I know them. That's intimacy. That's tru knowledge.

John 17:3 (Jesus' HP prayer) "And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.

c. How do you increase this sort of knowledge?

It isn't merely academic. I have no doubt hell will be populated by scholars whose theology was orthodox.

(1) Note the connection to vv. 3-11 in that regard

Peter's words here introduce his readers to the content of that section. Verses 3-11 answer t/question, *"How might grace and peace be multiplied to me in the knowledge of Christ?"*

We're not here to simply accrue intellectual knowledge about JC. We're to gain an ever-increasing intimate knowledge of JC.

d. Peace

Where grace is evident in t/heart, peace follows. Progression.

(1) Cf. the flow of Romans 5:1ff.

Grounded in the knowledge of Christ. The more you know about Christ the more grace and peace is multiplied to you!

3. Knowledge includes guarding your heart ==>

"Learn to preserve what thou hast gotten. 'That which ye have already hold fast till I come,' Rev. ii. 25. This was St. Paul's happiness, that having finished his course, yet he had still 'kept the faith,')- 2 Tim. iv.7. The loss of faith is a dangerous shipwreck, 1 Tim. i. 19: if it be possible, save your vessels, save your goods, save your wares, save your bodies; but though you lose all, save your faith, save your souls. Imagine thyself a vessel; the sea this world, thy freight faith. There is a man of war against thee: the bark is diffidence; the soldiers, atheism, heresy, schism, profaneness; the charged cannons and ordnance are pride, lust, hypocrisy, to which drunkenness is the master gunner and gives fire. The arch-pirate is the devil, who so violently assaults us, and boards us with his temptations, that often we are fain to blow up our decks, lose some of our necessary appurtenances; glad, though we leave our case behind us. There be also rocks of persecutions, and gulfs of errors; horrible gulfs in the sea of Rome, dangerous swallows about

Amsterdam. When opinion goes before us, it is a great question whether truth will follow us. Look to thy faith. Shipwreck thy faith, and drown thy soul. Cast Judas out of the ship, and take Jesus in. That ship is troubled that harbors a traitor: the ship is safe that hath in it the Savior; now he hath Christ that hath faith." [Adams, 14-15]

Note that last statement. We must be wary of always talking about our faith as if it has life of its own. Sometimes I hear people say things like, *"Well, so and so doesn't have faith." "I don't know what I'd do without faith."* It's true that without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6) but faith is the golden chain that leads us to Christ. It is Christ we have! Faith did not die for your sins. Faith did not suffer the wrath of God on your behalf.

Peter ends this letter much t/same way as he begins it (Cf. 3:17-18)

"For nothing good have I
Whereby Thy grace to claim.
I'll wash my garments white
In the blood of Calvary's Lamb.
Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain
He washed it white as snow.
[Hymn, "Jesus Paid It All"]