

Episode: Other Letters Series No. 05

Narrator: John Mark

Primary Scriptures: 2 Peter 1-3

Story Summary: Overview of *2 Peter*

Location: Roman Empire

Time: 60-68 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: 2 Peter 1:3-4, 1:5-8, 1:10-11, 1:20-21; 2:19; 3:8-10, 3:13

According to 2 Peter 3:1, this was the second letter Peter wrote to these dear friends. Assuming this was the same audience as *1 Peter*, these friends were located in modern-day Turkey. Peter wrote both of these letters to stimulate them to think wholesomely.

One major theme of *1 Peter* was to encourage his friends to behave as Christ-followers should. A major theme of *2 Peter* is to warn his friends about false teachers. These themes tie together because the false teachers seemed to have been encouraging unwholesome behavior.

1 Peter 1:3-9 states that God enabled them to live a godly life, and how to progress toward that life, with a final goal of being effective and productive. Following those clear verses, 1 Peter 1:10-11 have been controversial among some Christians through the ages. Those two verses are certainly worth studying.

1 Peter 1:12-21 are Peter's personal assurance of the truth of his witness and the witness of other apostles. These verses set the stage for him to have the authority to berate the false teachers who are teaching dangerous things to his friends. These false teachers are self-condemned, but they are dangerous because they may drag others along with them.

Peter says false teachers are greedy, follow corrupt desires of the flesh, are bold and arrogant, are blasphemers, and seduce the unstable. In an important and timeless proverb, Peter says that people are slaves to whatever has mastered them. He knows the messages of the false teachers have the power to enslave people.

Peter also describes some of the false teachings as denying that the Lord will return and judge people. The false teachers say that, since Jesus hasn't come back yet, He won't come back at all. As an encouragement to his friends to follow good teaching, Peter reminds them of the rewards of being faithful and wholesome when Jesus does return. He says one reason Jesus hasn't come back is that God is patiently waiting for everybody who might possibly repent to do so. What seems like a long time to people on earth is a very short amount of time to God.

Peter tells them the end will surely occur one day. On that day, the earth and heavens will be destroyed and replaced with a new heaven and new earth where righteousness rules. Because of that, they need to be very careful not to fall under the sway of false teachers, but be true to the Lord.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you have what it takes to live a godly life? Why?
 2. Explain the nature of prophets and prophecies.
 3. What is a primary motivation of a false teacher?
 4. Why is it important to remain faithful to Christ?
 5. Why did Peter write 1 and 2 Peter?
 6. Was Peter familiar with some of Paul's writings? What did Peter think of them?
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1. Yes, you do if you are a follower of Jesus. He gives you everything you need, according to 2 Peter 1:3-4. 2. According to 2 Peter 1:20-21 they are carried along by the Holy Spirit, not powered by human will. 3. Greed, according to 2 Peter 2:3. 4. According to 2 Peter 2:20-21, it is better to have never known Christ than to have known him and become unfaithful. 5. To stimulate his readers to think wholesomely, 2 Peter 3:1. 6. According to 2 Peter 3:15, Peter was familiar with at least some of Paul's writings; Peter felt that Paul was given wisdom from God; Paul is consistent in what he writes; Paul addresses extremely complex issues; Paul's letters are hard to understand; some people distort the teachings of Paul; Paul's letters had the same level of authority as Scripture.

Application Questions:

1. Do you want to have the attributes listed in 2 Peter 1:5-7? What does it mean to have them in increasing measure? Do you want to have those attributes for your personal good or to be effective and productive for Jesus?
2. According to 2 Peter 2:19, how does someone become a slave?
3. It has been two thousand years, and Jesus has not returned. Does that make you think He is not coming or that He is still coming? How do you feel when people look down on you for your Christian beliefs?
4. According to 2 Peter 3:10, the Lord will come back in a devastating event. According to 2 Peter 3:11, this future event should affect how you act now. Does it?
5. Even though you have a secure position, what can happen to you? How can you guard against those things happening so that you don't fall from your secure position?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. According to 2 Peter 3:3-4, Peter knew there would be people who would laugh at Christians who expect Jesus to return. Name some reasons that people make fun of Christians. Is there some truth in their comments?
2. Does 2 Peter 3:8-9 possibly explain some differences in how you see the world and how some of your friends or teachers see things?
3. Do you want to have the attributes listed in 2 Peter 1:5-7? What does it mean to have them in increasing measure? Do you want to have those attributes for your personal good or to be effective and productive for Jesus?