

Sunday November 21<sup>st</sup> 2010  
The Second of Peter  
Part One

1). 2Pe 3:1 ¶ *Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,*

a). Peter's second letter is written to the same audience, within the same geographical region as his first letter and as such, by combining the two letters, we have a complete presentation of that which the Holy Spirit wanted to be understood, not only by those who were the original recipients of the letters, but by all those who would subsequently read them. And notice what the Holy Spirit wants Peter's readers to be mindful of in v2 - *the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,*

This might remind us of the beginning of the Book of Hebrews - Heb 1:1 ¶ *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*

b). And so, as we put these two letters of Peter together we find, presented in microcosm, the same overall structure that we find with regards to all the NT epistles.

c). Let's just look at this for a moment - The subject of 1 Peter is clearly stated as we saw in our study of that Book - 1Pe 1:9 .....*receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.*

d). The subject of the letter called 1 Peter is then the salvation of the soul and this salvation continues to be the focus of 2 Peter. Chapter 1 of 2 Peter deals with faith with respect to the salvation of the soul and then Chapters 2 and 3 deal with apostasy with respect to the salvation of the soul.

e). Now all of the NT epistles, both Paul's and the general epistles [as well as and including 1 Peter], have the salvation of the soul as their focus also, and they all lead into the last of the epistles, the Book of Jude, a Book that deals with apostasy in respect of the salvation of the soul; a Book that comes right before the events of the Judgment Seat recorded in the Book of Revelation.

f). Now the Book of Jude itself is a companion Book to 2 Peter as we have noted before in past weeks. If we would want to understand 2 Peter then Jude gives

us scripture's own commentary on that Book; and similarly if we would understand Jude then 2 Peter provides scripture's commentary for us.

g). Jude itself also begins with faith in respect of the salvation of the soul, as does 2 Peter – Jude 1:3 ¶ *Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.*

h). And then moves to apostasy with respect to the same salvation from v4 onwards, as does 2 Peter in Chapter 2.

i). What we would need to see from these examples is that the Holy Spirit has seen fit to reproduce a pattern within the NT epistles, a pattern that brings us to the same concluding point – teaching, as a warning, concerning apostasy from the faith, standing away from that which would lead to the salvation of the soul.

j). And this of course is perfectly in keeping with the Lord's prophetic teaching recorded in - Mt 13:33 *Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."*

k). And that recorded in - Lu 18:8b *.....Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find the faith on the earth?"* [Grammatically the answer here can only be 'no'].

2). The pattern that we see here in 1 + 2 Peter, Jude and the NT epistles as a whole is neither arbitrary nor coincidental, but rather is quite deliberate on the Lord's part, and as such we need to take particular note of it, because what we see in it can readily be applied to our own experience.

a). We have all been exposed to the teaching of the word of the Kingdom and have been presented with that which scripture has to say about the salvation of the soul, just as Peter's original readers had, just as the recipients of Jude's letter had.

b). But what do we find in Peter in relation to this teaching? – 2Pe 1:12 ¶ *For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.*

c). What do we find in Jude with regards to the same thing? – Jude 1:3 ¶ *Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.*

d). So why will Peter not be negligent to remind them? Why does Jude exhort them to contend earnestly for the faith? Well our answer is in the scripture Jude 1:4 *For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2Pe 2:1 ¶ *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.*

e). It is apostasy – standing away from the faith – the result of the work of the leaven. And I don't think any of us have given this the seriousness which it deserves. Remember within the context of the Matthew 13 parables we find ourselves now a part of Christendom that is almost exclusively the result of the leavening process and we are surrounded by ideas, teachings and practices that are already completely leavened, that if embraced would easily draw us away from the truth - Ga 1:6 ¶ *I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,*

f). This has continually been our challenge over the years and I am fearful even now that some of us may still think that just because we hear a Kingdom message every week we are OK. It is time to wake up from our lethargy, our complacency and engage in the battle, to contend earnestly for the faith, like never before - Ro 13:11 ¶ *And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.*

g). 1Co 15:33 *Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."*  
34 *Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.*

h). We need to be aware that being a Christian and being part of a Kingdom seeking church does not automatically put us on the right path. As we see here in our scripture in 1 Corinthians it is still possible to be ignorant of God in the midst of being in the right place at the right time hearing the right thing.

3). And so, with all this in mind, and with the full assurance that we will profit greatly from this study, let's begin in earnest on the second of Peter –  
2Pe 1:1 ¶ *Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 ¶ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

a). As we have seen several times now Peter begins by drawing attention to a correct relational perspective. Peter is first ‘a bondservant’ and then an ‘apostle’ of Jesus Christ. And this is exactly the way that we should see things. Above all else we need to be first and foremost a bondservant of Jesus Christ.

b). We might remember that the word translated ‘bondservant’ here is the Greek word ‘doulos’ which speaks of the most subservient of all servants. This is the servant whose own will is completely swallowed up in the will of his Master.

c). This should be our intent and our determination and our practice and to be such a servant as this cannot be separated from continual patient endurance in the midst of faithful obedience to the commands of scripture in every aspect of our life on every occasion, irrespective of what it may require of us - 1Jo 2:3 ¶ *Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.*

d). Mt 10:28 *"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell[Gehenna].*

4). 2Pe 1:1 ¶ *Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:*

a). The ‘like precious faith’ here as with the ‘common salvation’ at the opening of Jude both speak of the salvation of the spirit, the free gift of eternal life, the birth from above. This is the common denominator that links all Christians, but the focus does not stay here at this foundational level, because we know that those in receipt of this letter are well grounded in the purpose for their salvation.

b). *2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,[lit. ‘of God, even Jesus our Lord’]*

c). Here in v2 we find the use of a word that appears 3 times in Chapter 1 – the word ‘knowledge’ – ‘epignosis’ – mature knowledge, that which has to do with the meat and strong meat of the word.

d). And immediately we will notice that grace and peace are multiplied to us in the mature knowledge of God, even Jesus our Lord. Without mature knowledge there will be no increase of grace and peace in the life of the Christian. And if we have ever wondered how we access the grace of God in our life, here is our answer.

e). Outside of the grace that is extended to us at the point of our eternal salvation - Eph 2:8 *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,*

The grace of God can only be present and can only increase in our life within our ‘epignosis’ knowledge of God, even Jesus our Lord.

f). Let no one deceive you with empty words – God’s grace is not on tap for anyone who wants it, nor can we impart the grace of God one to another. No, grace is entirely God’s prerogative and is given to those within the context of ‘epignosis’ knowledge. The scripture is very clear.

5). *3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge [‘epignosis’] of Him who called us to glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

a). Then in v3 we see that it is through the ‘epignosis’ knowledge of Him who called us to glory and virtue that His divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness.

b). And again we must see that having the things that pertain to life and godliness only come through a mature knowledge of Christ. These things cannot be accessed apart from ‘epignosis’.

6). *2Pe 1:5 ¶ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

a). In v5-11 we see that producing fruit for the Kingdom is in view and all is intimately connected with the ‘epignosis’ knowledge found in v8.

b). ‘Epignosis’ knowledge is in view with regards to the things to be abundantly supplied in faith in v5-7. With making our call and election sure in v10, and entrance into the Kingdom in v11.

c). What we will come to realize then is that the salvation of the soul cannot be separated from having a mature knowledge, ‘epignosis’ knowledge of Christ and His coming Kingdom.

7). *Eph 1:17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge [epignosis] of Him, 18*

*the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,*

a). ‘Epignosis’ is inextricably linked with the salvation of the soul and as we see here in Ephesians is used in connection with the hope of our calling and our inheritance.

b). Eph 4:13 *till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge [epignosis] of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;*

c). It is also directly related to the process of spiritual maturity that leads to the salvation of the soul as we see in our scripture here.

d). Col 1:9 ¶ *For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge [epignosis] of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge [epignosis] of God; 11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; 12 ¶ giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.*

e). And here again we see the relationship between fruit production and our inheritance within the ‘epignosis’ knowledge of God.

8). A corresponding passage that deals with this mature knowledge can be found in – Col 2:2 *that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge [epignosis] of the mystery of God, Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

a). We are then, according to Colossians to have a mature knowledge of the mystery of God. The name Christ is placed in apposition to the word mystery making Christ the mystery of God. The things concerning this mystery, the things concerning Christ were previously not revealed, but now through the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit - Joh 16:13 *"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 "All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.*

The previously hidden truths concerning Christ are being made known to the saints who will have ears to hear enabling those who do hear to move from ‘gnosis’ to ‘epignosis’ – from knowledge to mature knowledge - from immaturity to maturity.

This will begin in foundation with seeing and understanding the types in Genesis Chapters 1-3 and 24 [as well as every other place in the OT] and is a process described in - 1Co 2:6 ¶ *However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

b). In Colossians 2:2-3 it is only those who come into a mature knowledge of the ‘mystery of God’ who will see the contents of the great storehouse of ‘the treasures of wisdom and knowledge’ in Christ.

c). This is exactly the same as we just saw in 2 Peter 1:2-3 + 8 with receiving an increase of grace and peace, the things pertaining to life and godliness and fruit production. It is only those who come into a mature knowledge of Jesus our Lord, that which is contained in Colossians 2:2-3, who can access these things.

d). And why is God so intent on us understanding this? Well our answer can be found in Colossians 2:4 - Col 2:4 ¶ *Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.*

e). Because of the leavening process there are persuasive words out there that would seek to deceive us into believing we can appropriate the grace of God and His peace and the things pertaining to life and godliness outside of ‘epignosis’ knowledge. This is a lie and constitutes what the scriptures call the doctrine of demons.

9). ‘Epignosis’ having to do with the impartation of things pertaining to life and godliness, according to the scriptures, will allow us to escape the corruption that is in the world. Rejection of ‘epignosis’ though, turning away from the proper, continual study of the scriptures or looking for something to replace it or wanting to add something additional to it will put us in the very dangerous position of being easily entangled in the things which ‘epignosis’ allows us to escape – 2Pe 2:20 *For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge [‘epignosis] of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them*

*and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. 21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."*

a). And as a result of this we will be susceptible to being - Eph 4:14 ...*tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,*

b). It is mature knowledge alone that is the protection from this – Eph 4:11 *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,*

10). And of course to state the obvious, mature knowledge does not come apart from the Word of God. But it will be the Word of God received after a particular fashion –Jas 1:21 *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

a). ‘All filthiness and overflow of wickedness’ must be laid aside prior to receiving the implanted word which is able to save our souls. And this implanted word must be received with meekness, with humility – it is God’s word to which we are to be in submission as a bondservant, we don’t belong to a debating society, nor are there a variety of interpretations that we can choose from. Scripture alone interprets scripture

b). Then if we would continue to receive this word in the way we have just described the word progressively produces the renewing of our mind in ‘epignosis’ knowledge after the image of him that created him, which works the metamorphosis in our life allowing us to escape the entanglements of the world - Ro 12:1 ¶ *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

c). Col 3:10 *and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge [epignosis]according to the image of Him who created him,*

d). It is receiving this word after the correct fashion and the corresponding work of the Holy Spirit alone, to the exception of all else, which will bring us into

the position where spiritual growth takes place, where we partake of the divine nature and victory over the things of the world, the flesh and the devil take place.

e). Church there is no other way for this to happen and the Holy Spirit has been determined in the first Chapter of 2 Peter to bring this to our attention and to bring it to our attention for a specific reason - Col 2:8 *Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.*

11). If the Lord is willing we will continue in 2 Peter Chapter 1 next week.