

PETER'S EPISTLES

2 Peter: Spiritually Maturing Opposite Apostasy

I. Growing In Our Christian Faith

(2 Peter 1:1-11)

I. Introduction

- A. In A. D. 66, the year before his martyrdom, Peter was concerned that fellow believers might mature in the faith in order to combat the rising opposition of heresies that the Church was already facing. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to the Second Letter of Peter," p. 1765; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 862)
- B. Peter thus wrote this epistle to call believers to spiritual growth in preparation for apostasy, and 2 Peter 1:1-11 starts the letter with a call for believers to mature in Christ. We view it for our insight and edification:

II. Growing In Our Christian Faith, 2 Peter 1:1-11.

- A. Peter's introduction emphasized the great value of the Christian faith that his readers possessed, 2 Peter 1:1:
 - 1. In his greeting, Peter mentioned that his readers had "received by divine will" (*lagchano*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 463) a faith "equal in value" (*isotimos*, Ibid., p. 382) to that of the apostles through the righteousness of God our Savior Jesus Christ, 2 Peter 1:1a.
 - 2. The word "faith" in this context refers to the Christian faith itself (Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 669), not to an immediate gift of faith from God for one to believe the Gospel to be saved as is taught in Calvinism.
 - 3. By the phrase "equal in value," Peter claimed that the faith of his readers was "of equal standing with . . . the apostles' by reason of the impartiality of Christ's blessings," Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to 2 Peter 1:1b.
 - 4. Thus, by God's grace, everyone who puts his faith in Christ has received by God's divine will participation in the Christian faith that presents every believer with all the positional blessing the apostles possessed!
- B. Peter's greeting highlighted the grace and peace of God being multiplied unto Peter's readers in the knowledge of God and our Lord Jesus, emphasizing the need to mature spiritually in Christ for great blessing, 2 Peter 1:2.
- C. Having noted the great value of their Christian faith and their need to grow in Christ for great blessing, Peter called his readers to preserve their commitment to the faith and grow in Christ (as follows), 2 Peter 1:3-11:
 - 1. By His power, God has supplied all we believers need for life and godliness that is attained through our knowledge of God Who has called us to His glory and goodness, 2 Peter 1:3; Ibid., B. K. C., N. T., p. 864.
 - 2. Through God's glory and goodness, God has provided us great and precious promises in Christ that equip us to participate in the divine nature in that we by a life of faith can enjoy the characteristics of God's righteousness and holiness in victory over the world's sinful corruption and lusts, 2 Peter 1:4.
 - 3. Thus, armed with God's bountiful spiritual provisions in Christ and with His promises of equipping us by faith to live holy lives [as is taught elsewhere in Scripture], we are to grow in stages in Christ, 2 Pet. 1:5-7:
 - a. Adding to our faith, we must give all diligence to grow in *aretin*, "moral excellency," v. 5a; Ibid., p. 865.
 - b. Adding to our moral excellency, we need to grow in spiritual "knowledge," *gnosin*, 2 Peter 1:5b; Ibid.
 - c. Adding to our spiritual knowledge, we need to grow in *enkrateian*, "self-control," 2 Pet. 1:6a; Ibid.
 - d. Adding to our self-control, we need to grow in *hypomenen*, "perseverance," 2 Peter 1:6b; Ibid., p. 866.
 - e. Adding to our perseverance, we need to grow in *eusebian*, "reverence for God," 2 Peter 1:6c; Ibid.
 - f. Adding to our reverence for God, we need to grow in *philadelphian*, "brotherly kindness," v. 7a; Ibid.
 - g. Adding to our brotherly kindness, we need to grow in *agapen*, "love" that seeks another's good, v. 7b; Ibid.
 - 4. Peter added that if these qualities are in us in "increasing measure" (NIV) as we continue to grow in our faith, they equip us to be fruitful in the spiritual knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Peter 1:8.
 - 5. Conversely, carnal believers who lack these things are "blind" (*typhlos*) and "nearsighted" (*myopazon*), having forgotten that they have been cleansed from their past sins, 2 Peter 1:9; Ibid.
- D. Thus, Peter called his readers to make their "calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10 KJV), that is, to "confirm" their "profession of faith by godly living," Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to 2 Peter 1:10.
- E. Peter added that "(a) Christian life that can be rewarded" this way "will provide that abundant entrance into heaven," 2 Peter 1:11; Ibid., fn. to 2 Peter 1:11.

Lesson: *Our Christian faith is very valuable to each of us believers, for enjoying God's blessings abound if we grow in our knowledge of the Lord, and all we need by way of positional truth and God's promises of blessing in utilizing that truth are highly rewarding now and in eternity. Thus, we should grow in the faith by God's power.*

Application: *May we grow in the Christian faith by God's power to be blessed in this life and rewarded in eternity.*