

2 Peter 1

These are the leaders notes from the Kielder Bible Study Group for the meeting that was held on 6th March 2012

Read Hebrews 6 1-12 as starter

To recap Peter raised a number of themes his first letter – I have got 10 listed – How many can we can up with?

- declare that we are a special people
- encourage us in our living among pagans
- instructing us to submit to authority, just or unjust
- direct Christian wives about unbelieving husbands and Christian husbands on how to treat their Christian wives
- encouraging righteous responses to unjust treatment
- speaking about Jesus going to the unrighteous
- living for God as Christ did
- suffering for being a Christian
- encouraging church leaders and the flock
- encouraging us to hold on to the end

So moving on to 2 Peter

When was it written – Peter was Martyred by Nero, and as Nero dies in AD68, then it must have been before then probably sometime between AD65 & AD68, if Peter was the author. There is lots of speculation as to who and when it was written but we will assume that Peter wrote it, sometime before AD68

If we remember Silas, the scribe was mentioned in 1 Peter, he is not mentioned in 2 Peter. There is a slight difference in style between the two books, which could be because Silas wasn't the scribe for this letter.

The letter was again written in Greek

This second letter has three main themes in it

- Stimulate church growth
- Combat false teaching
- Encourage watchfulness in view of the Lords return.

So moving to Chapter 1 – The first 11 verses are all one sentence in Greek but will split them up like the translation has done.

Looking at the first couple of verses. This gives us some clues as to who the letter was written?

A - All who are Christian – both gentile and Jew alike

Q He gives a blessing to his readers here can we notice a difference to the blessing's Paul often gives in his letters? A Peter adds the words "knowledge of" Paul normally says from God

Moving on to verses 3 to 4

Q Peter uses a word here that we might think is strange – divine? The dictionary gives it the meaning Having the nature of or being a deity – Why does Peter use this word here? A Stressing that Jesus alone is God and as such has the God of creation's power.

It would probably be good to talk about "Gnosticism" here. Q Does anyone know anything about it?

- "Gnosticism"

Gnosticism comes from the Greek word "gnosis", which means to know, to seek, or to inquire. Gnosticism is a general description of a wide range of religious ideas, which became very popular during the second and third centuries. There were many different gnostic schools, all of which had different beliefs and practices, but who all claimed their particular group had the secret knowledge, which would achieve salvation.

- The origins of Gnosticism

Gnosticism was only in its beginnings during the period of the New Testament, but did not develop to its fullest extent until the middle of the second century. Gnostic thinking probably had its origins in Alexandria in Egypt, from where it spread throughout the Roman empire and infiltrated the church. Its exact origins are unknown, but probably grew out from a group of Jewish scholars in the early first century who were pondering about the character of God, the nature of reality and the problem of evil. In doing this, they reinterpreted their Scriptures and combined them with Greek philosophical thinking and mythological traditions, forming a Hellenistic religious movement. As it began to spread, it soon attached itself to the church, and incorporated some aspects of Christian doctrine into its thinking, particularly Jesus as the ideal redeemer figure. This phase is sometimes called *incipient Gnosticism*, and was opposed by the apostles in the writings of the New Testament.

Tradition from the church fathers states that the father of Gnosticism was Simon Magus, the magician from Samaria, who was severely rebuked by Peter after he attempted to pay money to receive the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:9-24). Following this event, he became a determined opponent of the apostles, particularly of Peter.

So lets read Acts 8 9-24 to remind us of this

Gnosticism was an attempt at answering the centuries-old problem of the relationship between good and evil. Members of the gnostic sects were convinced that they possessed secret and mysterious knowledge, which they had received by

revelation. This knowledge was deeply veiled to the world around them, and could not be found outside the teaching of their group. Gnostics received this knowledge by being initiated into one of the gnostic sects. Salvation was achieved by receiving this esoteric knowledge. In Gnosticism, knowledge took the place of faith, so the gnostics became a club of the illuminated,

- The New Age Movement

Within the modern New Age movement, there is an increasing interest in gnostic writings. There are great similarities between the two. Particularly the absorption of ideas from eastern mysticism, claiming that there are many ways to God not just Jesus, a distortion and misunderstanding of Christianity, the use of Christian terminologies but with a different meaning, teaching that salvation means self-discovery or of the god within you, and a denial of the idea of sin.

So moving back to our Passage what is Peter is reminding his readers? A Jesus is more powerful than Evil desires

2 Peter 1 5-9

Here Peter lists a series of qualities that will add to our faith. Some people argue that increased knowledge means that we do not need self control – Q What do we think about this?

Q Have we noticed what the last characteristic is? – A Love – What does this remind us of? A What Peter said in his first letter about self sacrifice

2 Peter 1 10-11

Q What is Peter encouraging us to be here A all the more eager?? Eager for what?

2 Peter 1 12-15

Q So from these verses we get an idea as to why Peter is writing this letter – Any ideas what it is? A He is aware that he is going to die soon and does not want the Christians to forget the basic truths of the Gospel which he has been talking about previously.

2 Peter 1 16-18

Peter has just said that he will continue to remind Christians of the Basics of the Gospel so he now does this

vs 17-18 refer to the transfiguration. We can read about this in Matthew 17 1-8 - The notes say that Moses represents the old covenant in the Old Testament and the promise of salvation with the Jews and Elijah is the restorer of all things. and They also say it refers back to Psalm 2, which was written for the coronation of a King in Jerusalem, but it links the Father and the Son. Read Psalm 2

And Peter was the eye witness to this Q Can we have a go at putting this in our own everyday language

From the message 6-18 We weren't, you know, just wishing on a star when we laid the facts out before you regarding the powerful return of our Master, Jesus Christ. We were there for the preview! We saw it with our own eyes: Jesus resplendent with light from God the Father as the voice of Majestic Glory spoke: "This is my Son, marked by my love, focus of all my delight." We were there on the holy mountain with him. We heard the voice out of heaven with our very own ears.

2 Peter 1 19-21

Q So what is Peter saying about Prophecy here? A It is not man made but God Inspired..

*19-21*We couldn't be more sure of what we saw and heard—God's glory, God's voice. The prophetic Word was confirmed to us. You'll do well to keep focusing on it. It's the one light you have in a dark time as you wait for daybreak and the rising of the Morning Star in your hearts. The main thing to keep in mind here is that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of private opinion. And why? Because it's not something concocted in the human heart. Prophecy resulted when the Holy Spirit prompted men and women to speak God's Word.

Q So some lessons form the chapter?

- You cannot be a Christian unless you know God/Jesus personally – It is not a hypothetical tick box exercise
- If you know Jesus then you can experience his power, and should want to.
- Prayer comes into this as well, as this is how we get to know Jesus better.
- Lots and lots of Love
- We should be growing in faith
- The history of the church both old and new testament is important.

Q So what are we going to do about this then??