

The Prophetic Word

Franklin Church of Christ
Edwin Crozier
February 20, 2005
AM Worship

Introduction:

The key word in **II Peter** is “knowledge.” **II Peter 1:2** says grace and peace are multiplied through knowledge. **Vs. 3** says knowledge gives us everything pertaining to life and godliness. **Vss. 5-6** says we must add and increase knowledge. **II Peter 1:8** says we are to be fruitful in knowledge. Twice, Peter gives instruction saying, “Know this first of all” (**II Peter 1:20; 3:3**). Finally, Peter concludes the letter by encouraging the brethren to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” Peter’s emphasis on knowledge is well-founded. **Isaiah 5:13** says, “My people go into exile for their lack of knowledge.” **Hosea 4:6** says, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” According to Peter if we get this right we will have grace and peace (**1:2**), we will be fruitful and useful (**1:8**) and we will not stumble but gain a sure entrance into the eternal kingdom of God (**1:10-11**). Therefore, we need to pay attention to what Peter says about where and how to get knowledge.

Discussion:

- I. Where do we gain knowledge?
 - A. Twice Peter explains how we can gain the knowledge that multiplies grace and peace.
 1. “So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts” (**II Peter 1:19**).
 2. “You should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles” (**II Peter 3:2**).
 - B. To Peter, the long and short of gaining knowledge that leads to salvation is get into the word, pay attention to it and be constantly reminded of it. Jesus rebuked the Sadducees in **Matthew 22:29**, “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.” They did not know God because they did not know God’s word. Consider **John 20:30-31**. John said he wrote the story of Jesus so we might believe in Him. One of the main purposes of scripture is to introduce us to Jesus, to the Father and to the Holy Spirit.
 - C. We may get a great deal of good from our personal thoughts. Self-help books abound and I am a foremost fan of them. Modern philosophers may abound with great discussion. Theologians and religious leaders may say great things. Preachers and teachers may be eloquent and teach us a great deal. However, if we want everything pertaining to life and godliness, we must always get back to the Bible as our basis (**II Peter 1:3**).
- II. Why go to the Bible?
 - A. It is from the Spirit, not man (**II Peter 1:20-21**).
 1. Modernist “Christians” claim the Bible is nothing more than the spiritual literature of various Jewish and Christian cultures, giving us a window into what those cultures thought about God and His world. Peter, however, says very clearly—the scriptures are not a matter of man’s interpretation. When we open our Bibles we are not reading just what men thought about God based on their experiences. That is a good thing considering **Proverbs 14:12**—“There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” Also **Jeremiah 10:23**—“Nor is it in man who walks to direct his steps.”
 2. The prophetic word is from the Holy Spirit. Paul said only the Spirit knows the mind of God and we have received the Spirit’s word (**I Corinthians 2:10-13**). From the word of the Spirit we can learn what God has freely given to us. We should turn to scripture to know Jesus, to know God, to know the Spirit because this is God’s word about Himself.
 - B. Made more sure by eyewitness testimony (**II Peter 1:16-19**).
 1. In **II Peter 1:19**, it appears that Peter is specifically referring to the Old Testament writings which foretold the coming of Christ (**I Peter 1:10-12**). He explains that we ought to pay heed to the prophetic word because we have eyewitness testimony that what was foretold took place exactly as was prophesied.
 2. Peter says that the reports of the coming of the Christ according to prophecy were not cunningly devised fables. He was an eyewitness, as were others. John made the same point in **I John 1:1-4**. He also highlighted his eyewitness perspective in **John 21:24**. The main

point to understand is since we have eyewitness testimony that the promised coming of the Messiah as sacrifice and savior occurred, then we can rest assured that the scriptural promises of His return as judge will also occur. We should turn to the scripture to know God, because the parts that can be verified have been.

- C. It is a light to guide us (**II Peter 1:19**).
 - 1. Peter explains our need to get into the word by describing it as a light in a dark place. We are surrounded by all kinds of opinions and thoughts. As we said earlier, none of these can help, they are all darkness. God's word however is a light. **Psalm 119:105** says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."
 - 2. Peter's word picture describes us as on the path to heaven. However, it is so dark we cannot make out the path. If we step off the path or head down an incorrect fork in the road, destruction awaits. How are we going to be able to see to follow God's narrow and strait way (**Matthew 7:13-14**)? God's word is the light that shines before us, directing us to heaven. We must look into the Bible, because it alone is the light that displays the way we should go.
- D. False teachers abound (**II Peter 2:1ff**).
 - 1. Perhaps the most important reason for us to simply stick with the Bible is that false teachers abound. According to **II Peter 2:18-19**, they will speak arrogant words. They will entice us with deceit. They will appeal to our natural desires. They will promise freedom. But all they will deliver is corruption and destruction.
 - 2. Then **II Peter 2:20-22** explains if we allow ourselves to be enticed back into the ways of the world by destructive teaching, our latter state will be worse than if we had simply never know the way of righteousness. He reemphasized the point in **II Peter 3:16**. If we distort or twist the scriptures, we will be destroyed. There is only one way to avoid the errors of false teaching. Stick with the Bible. Stay in it and never deviate (**II Peter 3:1-2**).

III. How do we gain knowledge from the Bible?

- A. There are no magic formulas for knowing God through His scriptures. There are three principles we must follow.
- B. *Keep studying until you get it.* In **II Peter 1:19**, Peter said we must pay attention to God's word until the light dawns in our heart. You may talk to others. You may read commentaries. You may read other resources. You must always get back to the scripture and study it until it sinks in. This corresponds to **Ephesians 1:18**, in which Paul prayed that the eyes of our heart be enlightened. This does not say pay attention until the Spirit makes us understand, but that by careful, consistent attention to God's word, we will be enlightened.
- C. *Keep studying to get more.* According to **II Peter 1:5, 8**, knowledge must always be increasing. Never believe you have learned enough. Read and reread and reread. Study, study and study some more. Dig deeper and deeper into God's word, learning more and more, increasing in your knowledge.
- D. *Keep studying to remember what you already got.* In **II Peter 1:12-15**, Peter said he was going to do everything he could to remind these brethren of all they had learned through God's prophetic word while he was a live and even after he was dead. Then he reemphasized this need for constant reminder in **II Peter 3:1-2**. Often times, the first step of falling away is to believe we do not need certain teachings anymore because we have already figured them out. Always remind yourself of the light you have already discovered by continual study. The Hebrew writer explains why this is so important in **Hebrews 5:11-6:3**. The Christians could not grow in knowledge because they had forgotten the basics they had already learned.

Conclusion:

As Peter concluded his letter, he summarized saying, "You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (**II Peter 3:17-18**). We must be on our guard against error. Our only defense is knowledge. Our great source of knowledge is Scripture. Let's just stick with that, heeding it until it sinks in and then constantly reminding ourselves what we have learned.