



## The Second Epistle General of Peter

### *The Opening of the Epistle*

#### *2 Peter 1:1-4*

#### I. THE AUTHOR (2 Peter 1:1)

##### A. His Name

1. His birth name was Simon (Matthew 16:17; Mark 1:16, 29-30, 36; Luke 5:3-5, 10; John 1:41).
2. Christ gave him a surname (Matthew 4:18; Matthew 10:2; Matthew 16:17-18; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14; John 1:42; Acts 10:5, 18, 32; Acts 11:13).
  - a. Variations of the name
    - (1) *Peter* (a Greek name)
    - (2) *Cephas* (a Syriac name)
  - b. The interpretation of the name—"A stone" (John 1:42)
3. Much can be learned by studying the usage of these names.
  - a. Simon
    - (1) This name appears fifty times in scripture.
    - (2) In twenty of those appearances, it is paired with Peter.
  - b. Peter—This name appears 166 time in scripture.
  - c. Cephas—This name appears six times in scripture. He was only identified as *Cephas* in the Gospel of John and in Paul's epistles.
  - d. While it is not a hard and fast rule, it is an interesting study to consider what reasons the Lord might have had at times to revert to Peter's given name of Simon.
4. Note: Consider Simon Peter's familial ties
  - a. He was the son of Jona(s) (Matthew 16:17; John 1:42; John 21:15-17). Note: By comparing scripture with scripture, we see that *Bar* means son of (see Acts 4:36 and Matthew 16:17 with John 1:42).
  - b. He was the brother of Andrew (Matthew 4:18; Matthew 10:2; Mark 1:16; Luke 6:14; John 1:40-41; John 6:8).
  - c. He had an unnamed wife (Matthew 8:14; Mark 1:30; Luke 4:38).

##### B. His Introduction

1. A servant; Note: This was missing from the first epistle.
2. An apostle of Jesus Christ
  - a. He was first a disciple—a student.
  - b. He was later identified as an apostle—one sent.
  - c. Note: The word disciple(s) is found 273 times in the New Testament, all of which are found in the gospels and in Acts. The word apostle(s) is found eighty-three times in the New Testament with only eight of those appearing in the gospels.



## II. THE AUDIENCE (2 Peter 1:1-4)

### A. Their Spiritual Condition (2 Peter 1:1)

#### 1. The gift received

- a. The understanding of the gift—"them that have obtained...through"
  - (1) The word *obtain* can suggest something that is gained through one's efforts (1 Corinthians 9:24-25).
  - (2) However, more generically, the word *obtain* means to get possession of.
  - (3) In other words, something that is obtained is in the possession of one and placed into the possession of another.
- b. The identification of the gift—"faith"
  - (1) Note: Before proceeding, it should be noted that there are two potential truths being communicated by the word *faith*. Both interpretations could be considered true, but contextually only one of the two will truly work.
  - (2) First, consider *faith* as in taking God at His word.
    - a) A short definition of faith could be taking God at His word. This faith refuses information that deters one from fully accepting the words of God as true.
    - b) Consider the component parts of faith.
      - i) Knowledge—Faith begins with a knowledge of what it is that should be believed.
      - ii) Assent—Man must also believe the object of faith to be true.
      - iii) Trust—Trust refers to a personal commitment to and reliance upon an object of faith.
    - c) When all things are considered, there is no doubt this concept of faith is a gift from God (Romans 12:3; Ephesians 2:8-9) and would qualify as something that the believer *obtains* from God.
  - (3) Second, consider *faith* as in the salvation.
    - a) Whatever the word *faith* was intended to mean, it was obtained by these believers along with Peter and other believers, and it was obtained THROUGH the righteousness of the Father and the Son.
    - b) According to Romans 5:18, the gift of salvation came by "the righteousness of one." In other words, salvation is obtained through the righteousness of God's Son.
    - c) To consider this reference as referring to salvation should not be considered foreign to the testimony of scripture elsewhere; after all, in 2 Corinthians 13:5, the phrase "the faith" is used describe salvation.
    - d) Furthermore, there is a strong correlation between Peter's second epistle and Jude's epistle which opens talking about "the common salvation" (Jude 1:3).



- (4) Whether this is simply a reference to the virtue of faith or faith in the sense of salvation, the two are so closely linked together that it is not a cause for division. Contextually, one would tend to lean toward faith being a reference to salvation. This would also align the opening words of Peter's two epistles.
  - c. The value of the gift—"precious"
    - (1) Defining precious
      - a) The word *precious* is found seventy-six times in seventy-two verses of scripture.
      - b) The word *precious* is defined as that which is valuable or of great worth or price.
      - c) The scripture identifies a good number of things as being precious. To name a few...
        - i) Earthly provisions
          - (a) Precious life (1 Samuel 26:21)
          - (b) Precious stones (2 Samuel 12:30)
          - (c) Precious jewels (2 Chronicles 20:25)
          - (d) Precious vessels (Ezra 8:27)
          - (e) Precious ointment (Matthew 26:7)
        - ii) Heavenly provisions
          - (a) Precious word of the Lord (1 Samuel 3:1)
          - (b) Precious thoughts toward man (Psalm 139:17)
          - (c) Precious corner stone (Isaiah 28:16)
          - (d) Precious faith (1 Peter 1:7)
          - (e) Precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:19)
          - (f) Precious promises (2 Peter 1:4)
    - (2) Qualifying precious
      - a) Preciousness can exist due to personal appreciation or value (1 Peter 2:7).
      - b) Preciousness can exist due to rarity or minimal availability (1 Samuel 3:1).
    - (3) Applying these truths
      - a) Our faith is precious in its *rarity*.
        - i) Faith/salvation is not minimal in its availability.
        - ii) However, it is rare in the sense that only biblical Christianity teaches and believes that salvation comes simply by placing one's faith in the finished work of its Saviour.
      - b) Our faith should be precious to us in the sense of our *personal appreciation* or value.
  - d. The commonality of the gift (Titus 1:4; Jude 1:3)
    - (1) Like
    - (2) With us
2. The means to the gift
    - a. Through the righteousness of God
    - b. Through the righteousness of our Saviour Jesus Christ



## B. Their Blessing (2 Peter 1:2-4)

1. The desire for future practical blessing (2 Peter 1:2)
  - a. The contents of the blessing
    - (1) Grace unto you
    - (2) Peace unto you
  - b. The extent of the blessing—"be multiplied"
  - c. The means of the blessing
    - (1) The declaration of the means
      - a) Through the knowledge of God
      - b) Through the knowledge of Jesus our Lord
    - (2) The interpretation of the means
      - a) The blessing given in accordance with knowing God
        - i) Almost by default, we interpret this passage to mean that the blessing of grace and peace was given to these believers in accordance with their knowing of God and His Son.
        - ii) Perhaps we would go a step further and suggest that this blessing was to be multiplied to them in accordance with increasing knowledge of God and His Son.
        - iii) Certainly, there is an element of truth to the fact that our personal blessings are proportionate to our pursuit of knowing God and His Son.
      - b) The blessing given in accordance with God's knowledge
        - i) However, it is worthy of our consideration that the blessing was not to be multiplied in accordance with the knowledge these believers had of God, but with the knowledge that God had of them.
        - ii) In other words, the more they served Him and lived lives pleasing unto Him, the more He and His Son would multiply grace and peace unto them.
        - iii) Before one writes off this interpretation, consider the similar phrasing including the word *of* in 2 Peter 1:1—"righteousness of God." Obviously, the phrase in 2 Peter 1:1 is to be interpreted as God's righteousness. It stands to reason that the phrase "knowledge of God" in 2 Peter 1:2 could be interpreted as God's knowledge.
        - iv) In a practical sense, we should expect that God's blessings on our lives come in accordance with God's knowledge of our hearts and lives.
        - v) Contextually, this application or interpretation of the passage seems to be more in alignment. After all, the theme of God's knowledge and the blessings that come based upon that knowledge is continued in the next verses.



2. The knowledge of present and abiding blessings (2 Peter 1:3-4)
  - a. The enablings of the blessings (2 Peter 1:3)
    - (1) The association of the blessings—"According as"
      - a) This ties us back to the previous thoughts.
      - b) The coming context will again point to the gifting of blessings in relation to God's knowledge of the heart and life of the believer.
    - (2) The source of the blessings
      - a) His omnipotence—His divine power
      - b) His omnipresence and omniscience—The knowledge of Him
    - (3) The nature of the blessings
      - a) The gifting of the blessings—"his divine power hath given unto us"
      - b) The gifts of the gifting
        - i) All things that pertain unto *life*
        - ii) All things that pertain unto *godliness*
    - (4) The facilitation of the blessings—"called us to glory and virtue"
      - a) God has called us to glory and virtue. While this is true in the future, it would appear that our focus is on the present Christian life.
      - b) Everything that we need in order to live a glorious and virtuous Christian life has been given unto us.
      - c) Although God has equipped us with such great gifts to live the desired Christian life, the future context will put the responsibility for accessing these gifts and growing up into Christ falls at the feet of the believers (2 Peter 1:5-7).
  - b. The promises of the blessings (2 Peter 1:4)
    - (1) The nature of the promises
      - a) The magnitude of the promises—"great"
      - b) The value of the promises—"precious"
      - c) The exceeding of both—"exceeding"
    - (2) The enablings of the promises—"by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature"
      - a) As it pertains to eternity, believers are predestinated "to be conformed to the image of his [God] Son" (Romans 8:29).
      - b) In the present, God enables us to partake of the divine nature prior to the final change into Christ's likeness.
    - (3) The avoidance of the promises—"having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust"
      - a) Opposite of being like Christ and partaking of the divine nature in the here and now, individuals can succumb to corruption that is in the world.
      - b) This corruption is obtained and entered into by lust (Romans 1:24; Romans 6:12; Romans 13:14; Galatians 5:16-17, 24; Ephesians 4:22; 2 Timothy 2:22; Titus 2:12; Titus 3:3; James 1:14-15; 1 Peter 1:14; 1 Peter 4:2).